

The Most Recent Kashubian Literature: The Situation Today, Achievements and Tasks for the Foreseeable Future

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Introduction: The Kashubians and a Short History of Their Literature

About the Kashubians

The Kashubians are a small West Slavic ethnic group who now populate the northern-central part of Poland, bordered by the Baltic Sea on the north and the town of Chojnice on the south and the cities of Słupsk on the west and Gdańsk on the east. Historically, the land of the Kashubians (previously called the Pomeranians) was several times larger, spanning the territory from the Baltic Sea to the Noteć river and between the Wisła and Odra rivers.

According to the 2011 Polish census, there are more than 233,000 Kashubians in Poland, while the number of Kashubian speakers was found to be a little over 108,000.¹

¹ Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Ludność. Stan i struktura demograficzno społeczna. Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011* [Population. The Socio-Demographic State and Structure. The National General Home and Population Census 2011], Warszawa: Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych [The Statistics Publishers' Institute], 2013 http://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/LUD_ludnosc_stan_str_dem_spo_NSP2011.pdf [accessed: 20.08.2014]

First Publications

Although the oldest Kashubian text was printed in 1586,² Kashubian literature is much younger. Its beginnings are associated with both the writing and publishing activities of Florian Ceynowa (1817–1881). Influenced by the Slavists, such as “the awakener of Sorbian” Jan Arnošt Smoler,³ Ceynowa came to the conclusion that the Kashubians, with their differences from Polish speech and culture, are a separate nation. He also determined that they should have their own spelling and literature, which he began to create.

Ceynowa published his first Kashubian texts in the magazine *Jutrzenka* [The Dawn] in 1843.⁴ In the following years, he released, among others, his journalistic and literary texts written in the Kashubian

2 It was a religious book entitled *Duchowne piesnie d. Marcina Luthera y ynßich naboznich męzow Zniemieckiego w Slawieŝky ięzik wilozone Przes Szymana Krofea, sluge słowa Bożego w Bytowie* [The Spiritual Songs of dr. Martin Luther and Other Pious Men, Translated from German to the Slavic Tongue by Simon Krofej, Servant of the Word of the Lord in Bytow] by Szymon Krofej. According to some Kashubian studies, i.e. Ferdinand Neureiter’s *Historia literatury kaszubskiej* ([History of Kashubian Literature]; trans. by Maria Bodużyńska-Borowikowa, Gdańsk: Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie Oddział Miejski Gdańsk, 1982, p. 22), the oldest Kashubian text is *Dutki brzeskie* [The Brest Files] written in 1402; however, certain Kashubian linguists, such as prof. J. Treder, are uncertain if the text was written by a person of Kashubian or Polish origin (see: Treder, Jerzy. ed. *Język kaszubski. Poradnik encyklopedyczny* [Kashubian. An Encyclopaedic Guide], Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego and Oficyna Czac, 2002, p. 47.)

3 Jan Arnošt Smoler (1816–1884)—a Sorbian philologist and writer. Author of, among other, *Mały Sserb aby Serske a Njemske Rosmłowenja* [The Little Sorb, or the Sorbian-German Phrasebook] (1841). Chief editor of *Časopis Maćicy Serbskeje* [The Sorbian Motherland Magazine] between 1848 and 1852. Together with Leopold Haupt he collected and published Sorbian songs *Pjesnički hornych a delnych Łužiskich Serbow* [Songs of the Upper and Lower Sorbs] (1841, 1843).

4 There were two texts: *Wiljéjá Noweho Roku* [New Year’s Eve] and *Szczōdráki* [*Szczōdráki* is the name given to traditional customs for celebrating the Epiphany], see i.e.: Treder, Jerzy. ed., *ibid.*, p. 30.

language (i.e., the 1850 dialogue *Rozmowa Pólocha s Kaszebą* [Dialogue between a Pole and a Kashubian]). Also, in the years 1866, 1868 and 1879, Ceynowa edited and financed the publication of the first Kashubian journal, *Skôrb Kaszëbsko-słowjnskjè mòvé* [The Treasure of the Kashubian-Slovincian Tongue].⁵

After Ceynowa, the next Kashubian writer of note was Hieronim Derdowski (1852–1902)—the first Kashubian poet, and also one of the greatest. His first lyric work was an extensive poem entitled *O Panu Czorlińscim co do Pucka po sece jachól* [About Mr. Czarliński, Who Went to Puck to Buy Nets]. This work, Derdowski's most notable literary achievement, was first released in 1880 and subsequently reprinted several times, recently in 1990⁶ and 2007.⁷

More and More

At the very end of the nineteenth century, in 1899, Aleksander Majkowski (1876–1938), the most famous Kashubian writer ever, author of the great novel *Žécé i przigodě Remusa*⁸ [The Life and Adventures of Remus], published his first literary work: a poem entitled *Jak w Koscérnje koscelnygo obrele abo Pięc kawalerów a jedna jedyno brutka*⁹ [How They Chose a Sacristan in Kościerzyna, or Five Bachelors and Only One girl]. Later, Jan Karnowski,¹⁰ Leon Heyke¹¹ and Franciszek

5 Published in 13 numbers—six in 1866, six in 1868 and one in 1879.

6 Hieronim (Jarosz) Derdowski, *O Panu Czorlińscim co do Pucka po sece jachól. Żelgoł dlo swojch druchów kaszubściech Jarosz Derdowski* [About Mr. Czarliński, Who Went to Puck to Buy Nets. Jarosz Derdowski Lied for His Kashubian Comrades] (Gdańsk: Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, Oddział w Gdańsku, 1990).

7 Hieronim Derdowski, *Ō panu Czôrlińscim, co do Pucka po sécë jachól* (Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski, 2007).

8 The first full edition was published in 1938.

9 Aleksander Majkowski, *Jak w Koscérnje koscelnygo obrele abo Pięc kawalerów a jedna jedyno brutka* (Gdańsk: Publishing House, 1899)—Motoki, the only information provided is “Drukiem i nakładem B. Milskiego” [Printed and released by B. Milski], but the name of Milski's company is unknown.

10 Jan Karnowski (1886–1939)—his first literary publication was a book of poetry *Nôwotné Spiewë* [New Songs] (1910), a work still one of the best books

Sędzicki¹² appeared on the literary field; all of them are recognized today as classics of Kashubian literature.

Beginning with the early years of the twentieth century, one notices an increasing number of people who write literary texts in the Kashubian language. This is due, among other reasons, to the publishing of regional magazines, including those specifically aimed at a Kashubian audience, such as the prewar: *Gryf* [The Griffin], *Zrzesz Kaszëbskô* [The Kashubian Union], *Klëka* [The News], *Przyjaciël Ludu Kaszubskiego* [The Kashubian People's Friend], *Gazeta Kartuska* [The Kartuzy Gazette] or *Vjorny Nasziñc* [The Loyal Compatriot].

After World War II

World War II and the subsequent reign of communists in Poland, with its restrictions on civil liberties, discrimination and censorship of the Kashubian language, inhibited the development of Kashubian literature. The *Zrzesz Kaszëbskô* magazine, which had been revived after the war, was again closed down in 1947. A similar end met the short-lived periodical *Kaszëbë* [Kashubia], founded in 1958 and suspended in 1961. Fortunately, the next Kashubian journal met a different fate. Established

of poetry in Kashubian literature. He was also the author of prose texts (i.e. *Wôrzałowé żëcé* [Life of Worzała]), dramas (i.e. *Zôpis Mestwina* [Mestwin's Testament]) and memoirs (*Moja droga kaszubska* [My Kashubian Journey]).

11 Leon Heyke (1885–1939)—his first published texts were a series of poems printed in the magazine *Gryf* between 1911 and 1912. In 1927, Heyke published a book of poetry, *Kaszëbski Spiewe* [Kashubian Songs]. Other literary publications include: *Podania Kaszubskie* [Kashubian Tales] (1931), *August Szloga* [August Szloga is the name of one of the characters] (1935), and the extensive historical poem *Dobrogost i Miłoslawa* [Dobrogost and Miłoslawa], a three-part work published in its entirety in 1999.

12 Franciszek Sędzicki (1882–1957)—first published in 1905 a poem entitled *Fręc — Chłop za innych pięć* [Frank – A Man Worth Five] (in *Družba* [The Groomsman], an appendix to *Gazeta Gdańska* [The Gdańsk Gazette]). In 1911, Sędzicki published his first book of poetry, *Dumki z kaszubskich pól* [Ballads from the Kashubian Fields], where alongside the poems written in Polish language, six in Kashubian can be found.

in 1963 the *Biuletyn Zrzeszenia Kaszubsko-Pomorskiego* ([Bulletin of the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association]; renamed *Pomerania* in 1969) has survived on the publishing market and has been an asset in the effort to recover Kashubian literature.

After 1989

Significant changes occurred in all spheres of life and culture after 1989. The fall of communism marked the end of limitations such as censorship or rationing paper for the publication of magazines and books. In the early 90's, the Kashubian language was introduced in schools,¹³ new Kashubian publishing houses were launched (i.e. *Arkun* [Tempest] est. in 1990 or *Region* [Region] est. in 1992), new magazines appeared on the market (i.e. *Tatczężna* [Homeland] in 1990). Kashubians started to have fixed broadcasts on both radio (i.e. *Na bôtach ě w bôrach* [In Boats and in the Woods] in 1990 on Radio Gdańsk) and television (*Rodnô Zemìa* [Native Land] in 1990 on TVP Gdańsk).

In present-day society, the importance of Kashubian keeps growing. Today, over 17,000 children and teenagers learn the Kashubian language in school.¹⁴ In October 2014, the University of Gdańsk introduced a new study specialization: Kashubian ethnophilology. The names of many towns and villages in the region are Kashubian-Polish bilingual. Kashubians celebrate their special events and days, such as Kashubian Unity Day. They also have their own radio, Radio Kaszëbë, on air since 2004. Furthermore, they are active on the Internet, for example on social networking sites; until recently, the most popular website was the Kashubian address (www.naszekaszuby.pl), but it has been replaced by social media activity, on Facebook in particular.

The rebirth of Kashubian culture after 1989 was noticeable in the literary sphere as well. In the last twenty-five years, there have appeared

13 The first school with the Kashubian language as a subject was the Kaszubskie Liceum Ogólnokształcące [Kashubian Secondary School], opened in Brusy in 1991.

14 Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko Pomorskie, *Krótkà historia jëzyka kaszubskiego* [A Short History of the Kashubian Language], <http://www.kaszubi.pl/o/reda/artykulmenu?id=395>, [accessed: 05.09.2014]

many new authors, and not only young ones, born in the 70's and 80's, but also older ones, such as Wojciech Kiedrowski (born in 1937),¹⁵ Henryk Musa (born in 1947)¹⁶ or Stanisław Bartelik (born in 1950).¹⁷ Quite a number of literary works have been published, including post-mortem works, such as the poem *Dobrogost i Miłoslawa*¹⁸ by Leon Heyke, published in 1999, or Aleksander Labuda's collection of poems *Ewanielskô spiewa*¹⁹ [The Gospel sings], published in 2002. Reissues are also very popular; i.e., Majkowski's *Žécé i przigòdë Remùsa* has been reprinted several times over the last twenty-five years, i.e. in 2009²⁰ and 2013.²¹

15 Wojciech Kiedrowski (1937–2011) published his first poem „*Kaszëbizna pogranicza*” [Borderland Kashubian] in *Zsziwk* [The Notebook] no.1 (1995). Above all, however, W. Kiedrowski was a Kashubian book editor and publisher (he was the owner of a publishing house, Oficyna Czëc).

16 Henryk Musa (1947): his first Kashubian poems can be found in his book of poetry *Mòje Kaszëbë* [My Kashubia] (2007). So far, he has published about ten books of poetry, although some of them are written exclusively in Polish.

17 Stanisław Bartelik (1950): his first poem *Wiater ë bùczy* [Wind and Beeches] was published in 1990 in the magazine *Norda*. So far, he has published two books of poetry: *Chòc mië szëmią jiné drzewa* [Though Other Trees Rustle 'Round Me] (2000) and *Bestré szczescé* [Motley Luck] (2013) and a book of short stories, *Farwë žécégò* [Colours of Life] (2006).

18 Leon Heyke, *Dobrogost i Miłoslawa. Kaszëbszczé spiewë dziejowé w trzech brawãdach* [Dobrogost and Miłoslawa. Kashubian historical chants in three tales] (Gdańsk: Oficyna Czec, 1999).

19 Aleksander Labuda, *Ewanielskô spiewa* (Wejherowo-Banino: Rost, 2002).

20 Aleksander Majkowski, *Žécé i przigòdë Remùsa. Życie i przygody Remusa* (Kartuzy and Gdynia: Oficyna Czëc and Wydawnictwo Region, 2009).

21 Aleksander Majkowski, *Žécé i przigòdë Remùsa. Kaszëbszczé zwiercadło*, [The Life and Adventures of Remus. The Kashubian Looking-Glass] (Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Region, 2013).

The Most Recent Kashubian Literature (From 2000 to 2014): Present State and Achievements of Kashubian Literature

1. Authors and Publications

During the period between 2000 and 2014, there have been over ninety authors whose Kashubian-language texts have been published, mostly in magazines. This number includes older authors who have released their first literary texts in the 1960's and 70's and who have long been recognized, such as Stanisław Pestka²² and Stanisław Janke.²³ The number also includes younger authors who made their first steps in the Kashubian literary field in the 90's: Ida Czaja, Eugeniusz Pryczkowski, Bożena Ugowska, Roman Drzeżdżon, Michał Pieper, Łukasz Jabłoński or Maciej Dorau,²⁴

22 Stanisław Pestka (pseudonyms: Jan Zbrzyca, Jón Zbrzęca): born in 1929, one of the greatest Kashubian poets. His first literary publication was in *Pomerania* magazine in 1969. Books of poetry: *Południca* [Południca is a being from Kashubian demonology] (1976), *Wizrë ë duchë* [Signposts and Spirits] (1986) and *Wieczórny widnik* [The Evening Horizon] (2002). Another book written in Kashubian: *W stolëcë chmùników* [In the Capital of Skyscrapers] (2011).

23 Stanisław Janke (1956): first publication in 1977 in *Pomerania* magazine. Among others, author of: poetry books, such as *Ju nie jem motélnikiem* [I Am No Longer a Butterfly] (1983), *Do biôlégo rena* [‘Til the Break of Dawn] (1994) or *Piesniodziejanié* [Songmaking] (2003; this book contains a translation from Polish of a Japanese poem written by Murō Saisei); books of prose *Liskawica* [Lightening] (1988) and *Psë* [Dogs] (1991); dramas, i.e. *Jak Kulombószów Krésztof Amerikę wëkrił. Na podstawie tekstu A. Budzisz* [How Christopher Columbus Discovered America. Based on the Text by A. Budzisz] (1989, together with Jerzy Łysk); and translations into Kashubian, i.e. *Pón Tadeusz* [Sir Thaddeus] (in 2012, original: *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz).

24 Ida Czaja (1968): first publication in 1990: poems *Ewa* [Eve] and *Kain* [Cain] published in *Tatczëzna* magazine. Eugeniusz Pryczkowski (1969): first publication in 1990: poem *Rodnô Mòwa* [The Mother Tongue] in *Tatczëzna*. Bożena Ugowska (maiden name Szymańska) (1971): first publication in 1994: poems in *Pomerania* magazine. Roman Drzeżdżon (1972): first publication in 1999: poems in *Pomerania*. Michał Pieper (1973): first publication in 1996: poems in *Zymk* and *** *Chcã sã ceszëc ë redowac* [I Want to Rejoice and Be Glad] in *Pomerania*; Łukasz Jabłoński (1975): first publication in 1998: short story *Dawnota* [The Olden Days] in *Pomerania*. Maciej Dorau (1981): first publication in 1999: poem *Dórënk* [The Gift] in *Norda* magazine.

among others. As for the number of authors who published their first literary work in the 21st century, there are no less than thirty. Most of these new writers were born in the 1970's or 80's, i.e. Tomasz Fopke, Anna Maria Rózek, Hanna Makurat, Ala Skiba, Karolina Serkowska, and the monk Zbigniew Joskowski,²⁵ but some were born even later, after 1990, like Mateusz Meyer, Adam Hebel or Gracjana Potrykus.²⁶ Only a few are older, i.e. Zbigniew M. Jankowski or Ewa Warmowska.²⁷

In the last fifteen years, at least fifty books of poetry written in the Kashubian language, or partly in Kashubian, were published. Books with new prose written between 2000 and 2014, including anthologies published after prose competitions are less numerous, about twenty-five. There are only a few drama books.

Between 2000 and 2014, books in Kashubian, including literary ones, have most often been published either by the following private publishing houses: Częc,²⁸ Rost [Forward] and Region, or by institutional ones: Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie [The Kashubian-Pomeranian

25 Tomasz Fopke (1973): first publication in 2000: a poem *Nigdē docc* [Never Enough] in *Norda* magazine. Anna Maria Rózek (maiden name Bartkowska) (1982): first publication in 2000: poems in *Pomerania*. Hanna Makurat (1982): first publication in 2005: poems in *Kaszëbskô Ôdroda* [The Kashubian Rebirth] magazine; Ala Skiba (1984): first publication in 2004: poems in *Zymk* 4. Karolina Serkowska (1986): first publication in 2002: poems in *Pomerania*. The monk Zbigniew Joskowski (1979): first publication in Kashubian language in 2004: a religious book *Przez Krziż do Bôga* [Through the Cross to God].

26 Mateusz Meyer (1991): first publication in 2008: a short story *Zemia wejrowskô to taczi môl, dze...* [The Wejherowo Lands Are This Place Where...] published in an anthology with works sent to a local literary competition. Adam Hebel (1992): first publication in 2008: poems in *Zymk* 7. Gracjana Potrykus (1995): first publication in 2009: a poem *Remùsu!* [Remus!] in *Stegna* magazine.

27 Zbigniew M. Jankowski (1950): first literary publication in 2000: poem *Prôwda...* [Truth...] in *Pomerania* magazine. Ewa Warmowska (1959): first publications in 2004: poems in *Pomerania*.

28 This word is particularly difficult to translate into English, as in Kashubian it has many meanings: 1) to experience sensations, to feel; 2) to sense, to perceive; 3) to hear. It was most probably selected as the company name because of this polyvalence.

Association], Muzeum Piśmiennictwa i Muzyki Kaszubsko-Pomorskiej [The Museum of Kashubian-Pomeranian Literature and Music] and Kaszubski Instytut [The Kashubian Institute]. Literary works have also been published by Kashubian magazines, mainly by: *Pomerania* and its literary appendix *Stegna* [The Path], *Ódroda* [Rebirth], *Norda* [The North] (the Kashubian appendix to *Dziennik Bałtycki* [The Baltic Daily]), *Naje Gòchë* [Our Gochy], *Gazeta Kartuska* and *Zymk* [The Spring].

The last one, *Zymk*, was a magazine of the informal Kashubian literary group *Zymk*, which is of particular interest. In the period 2000–2014, *Zymk* was the only significant Kashubian literary group and had a sizable impact on the development of Kashubian literature. In 2000, Michał Pieper and Roman Drzeżdżon decided to organize meetings of young Kashubian writers. The first meeting took place in March, 2001 at the Muzeum Piśmiennictwa i Muzyki Kaszubsko-Pomorskiej in Wejherowo. The meeting included five writers: Michał Pieper, Roman Drzeżdżon, Piotr Ciskowski, Sławomir Formella and Grzegorz J. Schramke. The name of the group—*Zymk*—was also given at this event. Meetings of *Zymk* have occurred once to several times per year and have mostly taken places in the Muzeum Piśmiennictwa i Muzyki Kaszubsko-Pomorskiej, where young authors had the occasion to present their works. They also discussed Kashubian literature and the direction it should take, discussing questions such as: *Does it makes sense to translate works from Polish into Kashubian, since all Kashubians know the Polish language?* During the course of more than ten years of activity, the group has also printed nine literary books; although poetry was the main genre, prose, songs and dramatic works were also included. In total, *Zymk* magazine has printed literary works of thirty authors, mostly in their 20s and 30s, including (in addition to the writers mentioned above): Zbigniew Joskowski, Karolina Serkowska, Anna Maria Bartkowska (currently Róžek), Hanna Makurat, Ala Skiba (currently Dzierżak), and the youngest—Mateusz Meyer, Adam Hebel and Tomasz Urbański. The latest meeting of the literary group took place in December 2012.²⁹ Among other things, the writers planned to publish the next—tenth—edition of *Zymk*.

29 Grégór J. Schramke, *Cëż ù ce, Zymkù?* [What's New With You, Zymek?], in: *Stegna*, no. 1(2013), p. 9.

Recently, the Internet has played an important role in the development of Kashubian literature. Kashubian literary works, as well as translations into Kashubian, can be found on many websites (www.zymk.net; www.czetnica.org; www.akademiabajkikaszubskiej.pl) or the authors' private sites, such as Roman Drzeżdżon's website (www.belok.kaszubia.com), Tomasz Fopke's website (www.fopke.pl); Hanna Makurat's website (www.meta-fizyka.blogspot.com) or Mateusz Tytus Meyer's website (www.tites.kaszubia.com). Since October 2013, there has been a Facebook page *Lëteracczi Kaszëbsczi Salón* [The Kashubian Literary ParLOUR] for writers and readers in the Kashubian language.

2. Topics and Themes Commonly Developed in Recent Kashubian Works

In recent Kashubian literature, especially in the period 2000–2014, we can notice some noteworthy changes, mainly in poetry and prose.

2-1. Poetry

In today's poetry, we see a lessening of the trend of writing poems in which the Kashubian authors incite, sometimes in an alarming or even forceful manner, to respect the language and culture of their fathers, as can be seen in the works of J. Karnowski,³⁰ A. Labuda³¹ or J. Trepczyk.³²

Labuda's poem *Chto...* [Who...] is a good example of this type of poetry:

Chto...

Chto bëlnym chce Kaszëbą bëc,
Ten mùszi pò kaszëbskù czëc
Kaszëbską krew, w swich żëłach miec
I òkã dëszë mùszi zdrzec
Na biédny kròj, co w zmòrnym snie
Ju sëtme dludżich wieków je.

Who...

Who wishes to be a virtuous Kashubian
Must feel in Kashubian
Kashubian blood in his veins must flow
And he must look with the eye of his soul
at the wretched land, which in heavy sleep
has lain these seven long centuries.

30 i.e. the poem *Jó bëm leno chcòł...* [I Would Only Want...] from the book of poetry *Nòwotné Spiéwë* (1910)

31 i.e. poems from a book of poetry published fifteen years after poet's death and entitled *Kaszëbsczim jësmë lëdã* [We Are the Kashubian People] (1996).

32 i.e. the poem *Rzeczëta...* [Tell me...] from the book of poetry *Moja stegna* [My Path] (1970).

Chto bëlnym chce Kaszëbą bëc,
Ten mùszi pò kaszëbskù tzëc
Swòjszi zwëk i swòjszi strój,
Swòjszi głos i piesni trój,
Swòjszi wësziw, swòjszi tuńc
I naj' znak, naj' czòrny juńc.

Who wishes to be a virtuous Kashubian
Must respect in Kashubian
Homely tradition and traditional dress
Homely voice and bounty of songs,
Homely embroidery, homely dance
And the emblem that is ours —
our black beast.³³

Chto bëlnym chce Kaszëbą bëc,
Ten mùszi pò kaszëbskù žëc
I mòcną wiarą mùszi miec
I taczé słowa do se rzec:
Brat za bratã mdzemë stac,
Kaszëbskò mùszi z grobù wstac!

Who wishes to be a virtuous Kashubian
Must live in Kashubian
His faith must be great
And these words he must speak:
Brother with brother will stand strong
Kashubia from the grave must rise!³⁴

(Kaszëbsczim jëmë lëdã [We Are the Kashubian People], 1996)

It seems that for numerous recent poets, the lyric self, introspection and reflecting on everyday life and problems, around Kashubian reality or even the World itself, is much more important. There are several possible explanations for this trend, beginning with the simple conviction that there are enough inflammatory poems which call for the betterment of the position of Kashubian. Another explanation is that by touching on subjects pertaining to a global community, the Kashubian authors are trying to extract themselves from a limited environment and public in order to reach a wider audience. This might also be an attempt to impress that there need not be such a demarcation between “us and the rest of the World,” because, although they are a distinct culture, the Kashubians feel part of the global community.

Another trend in recent Kashubian poetry, visible now more than ever before, is an inclination toward reflective and philosophical poems, focusing on subjects such as life’s transience and death (i.e. *Ūmarłã jem*³⁵

33 The “black beast” is the griffin.

34 Trans. by Grzegorz Schramke and Joanna Kowalewska.

35 Hana Makùròt, “Ūmarłã jem,” in: *Zymk. Zëhdzenié Młodëch Ūtwòrców Kaszëbszczich. Zsziwk 6* (Gdiniò-Wejrowò-Gduńsk: Wëdòwizna Region, Mùzeùm Pismieniznë ë Mùzyczci Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrsczi and Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrsczé Zrzeszenié, 2007), p. 49.

[I'm Dead] by H. Makurat or *Wspòmink*³⁶ [The Reminiscence] by I. Czaja), the role of the poet in the World today (i.e. *Czë jesz mòżesz bëc*³⁷ [Could You Still Can Be] by S. Janke), the condition and problems of the ordinary man (*Spòwiédz szarégò czlowieka*³⁸ [Confession of a Common Man] by Z. M. Jankowski or *Kùnc dnia*³⁹ [The End of Day] by S. Bartelik).

Let us illustrate this trend with one of the enumerated poems:

Stanisław Janke

Czë jesz mòżesz bëc

Mòsz prawie wszëtkò
co le chcesz miec
reno na friszték
gazetà pàkatą òd zdarzeniów
a jesz do tegò taskã
skòpicã kawë z mlékã
znów na pòłnié
mileczny ùsmiëwk białczy
z ùrzmą ceplëch bùlew
na letkòstrawną wieczierzã
redosny zwãk telewizyjnych reklamów
òbròzk z pòsobnegò
wszechswiata dostónkù
në a pò tim całim
dniu z czeliszkã kòniakù

Could You Still Be

You have almost everything
you could possible want
in the morning for breakfast
the paper fat with news
and as a side, a cup
overflowing with coffee and milk
then for lunch
your wife's beloved smile
with a pile of steaming potatoes
as a light supper
the cheery tunes of TV commercials
a picture from the next
universe of riches
and at the end of this whole
day with a glass of cognac

36 Ida Czajinò, *Czòrny kléd* [The Black Gown] (Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Region and Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie Oddział w Gdyni, 2012), p. 14.

37 Stanisław Janke, *Pò mie swiata nie mdze* [After Me There Will Be No World] (Wejrowò: Mùzeùm Pismieniznë ë Mùzyczi Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrsczi and Starostwo Powiatowe w Wejherowie, 2007), p. 34.

38 Zbigniew Jankòwsczi, *Spòwiédz szarégò czlowieka*, in: *Òdroda. Pismiono Wòlnëch Kaszëbów* [Rebirth. The Magazine of the Free Kashubians], no. 7 (2003), p. 14.

39 Stanisław Bartelék, *Chòc mie szëmiã jiné drzewa* [Though Other Trees Rustle 'Round Me] (Gduńsk: Rost, 2000), p. 20.

w rãce biédzysz sã	in your hand you struggle
z òdpowiedzenim na pëtanié	to answer the question
czë jesz mòżesz bëc pòetą	could you still be a poet. ⁴⁰

(*Pò mie swiata nie mdze* [After Me There Will Be No World], 2007)

The themes explored, the construction of the lyric subject—these are a few of the factors that make contemporary Kashubian poetry more universal, closer to Polish and, in a wider sense, European poetry.

These non-agitational poems are also a sign of the times, informing us that, according to at least some authors, Kashubian literature can perfectly fulfil its role of saving and developing Kashubian language (which is still threatened with extinction) by telling not of things or places directly related to the Kashubian and Kashubia, but rather of things which can be important or interesting for a much wider audience, be it of Polish, Italian or Spanish readers.

The most recent Kashubian poetry has also entered into new thematic areas. A demonstration of this expansion is Tomasz Fopke's book of erotic poetry *Szlachama kusków*⁴¹ [By Trails of Kisses] published in 2002. Older Kashubian love poems are full of tenderness and eroticism which are very poetic and gentle, as exemplified by the love lyrics of Leon Heyke. i.e.:

Dzëczé gãšë

Òd bòru mgła zachòdzy,
Zakriwò dól i wies,
Pòdleczy wicher słotny
I sã zagùbi gdzes.

A mie ze snu wëriwò
Żalòsny z wiòdra krzyk,
To leczą dzëczé gãšë,
Jò widzã dłudzi cyg.

Wild Geese

The fog comes from the woods
Covers the village and the vale
There blows a rainy gale
then it disappears somewhere

And I am wakened from my sleep
By a pitiful shriek from thin air
It is the wild geese in flight
I can see their file is long

40 Trans. by G. Schramke and J. Kowalewska.

41 Tómk Fòpk, *Szlachama kùsków* (Gdiniò: Wëdòstwò Region, 2002).

Jak pôcorë nawiti
Na wiôldzi cemny sznur
Z północë òne szëmïã
Na półudniowy tur.

Like beads threaded
Into a thick, dark rope
From the north they thrum
On the southerly trail.

Lecëta, miłë ptôchë,
Przez mòji dzëwczï dóm,
Rzeczëta ji: „Jô teskniã
I żdżã tu smùtnie sóm”.

Fly, dear birds,
Through my beloved's home
Tell her: “I am pining
and keeping sad, solitary watch.”

Krziknita ji: „Jô przïndã
Niech òna na mie żdze.
I mòja wiernò miłosc
Ji pòzdrowienië sle”.

Shout to her: “I will come,
She must wait for me.
And my faithful love
Sends her tender greetings.”

I gãsë òdlecałë,
Zdżinãlë w gãsti mgle,
A słodczë no marzenië
Znów òtulëło mie.

And the geese flew away,
Disappearing in the thick fog
And this sweet dreaming
Wrapped ‘round me again.⁴²

(*Kaszëbski Spiewë* [Kashubian Songs], 1927)

Tomasz Fopke's volume is, however, a poetic journey across a...
naked woman's body:

Łónkò z pùnkã

Dëchtowno splãtoné wietwie sromnégò gradła
skrëwają wstëdlëwie białogłowską jómkã
Zómk kùnsztowny...
Dwie pórtë i zwónk przë dwiërzach...
Ten wlëze bënë — chto znajë zómkòwi szifer
Bëlly gòsc — mdze dlëzi przë stole
Nieròczony — niech sã nie wòzi zómków dobëwac!

(*Szlachama kùsków*, 2002)

42 Trans. by J. Kowalewska.

The Pubes and the Little Slit

Thickly entangled branches of the fanny's cluster
bashfully shroud the maiden's burrow
That exquisite castle...
Two wickets and a bell by the door...
Will enter he who knows the castle cipher
The accomplished guest will revel by the table longer,
The unbidden—dare he not storm castles!⁴³

(*Szlachama kùsków* [By Trails of Kisses], 2002)

Eroticism here is both quite strong and physical, which is unusual in poetry; it is further intensified by illustrations drawn by Tomasz Górecki. The popularity of this small tome was such that a second edition was released; also, a continuation entitled *Szlachama wzdichnieniów*⁴⁴ [By Trails of Sighs] was printed in 2007.

Also in 2007, Tomasz Fopke published another interesting volume of poetry *Esesesë do Pana Boga* [SMSes to God].⁴⁵ This is a collection of short poems, almost like mobile phone messages, which are a kind of humorous prayers to God. In other words, the prosaic object that is the mobile phone with its even less poetic function of sending text messages was remarkably manipulated in order to create poetry.

Another interesting usage of prosaic “tools” to create a poetic world is the poem *Matematika žëcò*⁴⁶ [Mathematics of Life] by Ala Skiba. In this work, components of life such as friendship, everyday problems or wedding vows are, in a poetical way, linked to mathematical concepts and branches such as integrals, functions differential calculus, and so on. It is worth adding that this poetess graduated with a degree in chemical technology from Faculty of Chemistry of the University of Gdańsk in 2008.

43 Trans. by J. Kowalewska.

44 Tómk Fópka, *Szlachama wzdichnieniów* (Gdiniô: Wëdôwizna Region, 2007).

45 Tómk Fópka, *Esesesë do Pana Boga* (Gdiniô: Wëdôwizna Region, 2007).

46 Ala Skiba, “Matematika žëcégò,” in: *Zymk. Żëndzenié Młodëch Ûtwórców Kaszëbskich. Zsziwk 4* (Gdiniô and Wejrowò: Wëdôwizna Region and Mùzeùm Pismieniznë ë Mùzyczi Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrszczi, 2004), p. 37.

Although today's phenomenon of secularization, the loss of God and the increasing absence of people in churches is noticeable throughout Europe (to a lesser degree in Poland and the Kashubia region), recent Kashubian literature is full of religious themes. You can find poems praising the goodness of God, texts full of devotion, but also ones addressing rhetorical questions to God about the World, people, situations described in the Bible or even the nature of God. These are poetical prayers to God, but also very light and humorous short poems. These works are written not only by older authors, but also younger ones such as A. M. Bartkowska,⁴⁷ M. Dorau,⁴⁸ R. Drzeżdżon,⁴⁹ T. Fopke⁵⁰ and of course, the monk Z. Joskowski.⁵¹

It is worth presenting the following two poems, which touch upon religious subjects, but differ entirely in both mood and approach to the subject:

Zbigniew Joskowski

Przed Twòją piãknoścą

Bë òpisac Cebie, lëdzóm słów felëje,
bò cëż znaczą słowa wedle Twi piãknoścë...
Dzysò òkò nie widzy, le serce czëje
i teskni, bë ùzdrzec Twą piãknośc w wiecznoścë

47 i.e. poems *Snicé* [Dreaming] published in *Ódroda* Jan. 2003 and *Przepùstka do raju* [The Permit to Heaven] published in *Zymk. Zéńdzenié Młodëch Ùtwórców Kaszëbszczich. Zsziwk 3* (Gdiniò: Wëdòwizna Region, 2004), p. 6.

48 i.e. the poem *Bòżò Mäka* [A Roadside Cross] published in *Zymk. Zéńdzenié Młodëch Ùtwórców Kaszëbszczich. Zsziwk 3* (Gdiniò: Wëdòwizna Region, 2004), p. 15.

49 i.e. the poem *Prówda* [Truth] publ. in *Zymk. Zéńdzenié Młodëch Ùtwórców Kaszëbszczich. Zsziwk 5* (Gdiniò and Wejrowò: Wëdòwizna Region and Mùzeùm Pismieniznë ë Mùzyczi Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrszczi, 2006), p. 10.

50 i.e. the poetry book *Esesesë do Pana Boga* [SMSes to God].

51 Author of many religious poems. They can be found in, for example, two of his books of poetry *W remionach Piãknoścë* [In the Arms of Beauty] in 2007 and *Który odziewasz kwiaty/Chtëren òblòkòsz kwiatë* [You Who Adorns Flowers] in 2012.

Mě mómě — jak zôrno — baro mólé serce,
jak piôscki pùstini wëpraglë miłoscë,
i reniã nas dzysôdniã tesknotë kòlce...
Ale Të, Bòze, zgòjisz wszëtškò w wiecznoscë.

Całi swiat stwòrzony Twòją rãką, Bòze,
Przed Twòją piãknoścã klëknąc leno mòże...

(*W remionach Piãknoscë*, 2007)

Faced with Your Beauty

To describe you, humanity lacks the words,
for what value hold mere words when contemplating your beauty...
Today, the eye does not see, but the heart feels
and yearns to look upon your beauty in Eternity

We have a tiny heart — like a seed,
like the sands of a desert thirsting for love,
and today the thorns of yearning wound us...
But you, God, will heal all in Eternity.

All the world was created by your hand, God,
It can but kneel in the face of your beauty...⁵²

(*W remionach Piãknoscë* [In the Arms of Beauty], 2007)

Roman Drzeżdżon

Prôwda

To nie je prôwda
Że Jô
(pisóny z wiôldzi lëtrë)
Jem
Namieniony dzes tam wësok
Przez Tegò Co Gò Zwią Jak Zwią
Bò Zwac Mùszã

The Truth

It is not true
That I
(written with a capital letter)⁵³
Am
somewhere up there Destined
by Him-Whom-They-Name-As-They-Name-
-Because-They-Must-Name-Him

52 Trans. by J. Kowalewska.

53 In Kashubian, the pronoun “I” is normally written with a miniscule letter (“jô”).

Nie je to prôwda	It is not true
Że Jô	That I
(malowóny grëbszim pãdzlã)	(painted with a broader brush)
Jem môlińczim szwach robòkã	Am a tiny weak worm
Jaczi za sztërk mdze wcësniony	Who in a moment will be ground
Bòzim Bótã w pich	into the dust by God's Shoe
Jô Jem Jaczi Jem	I Am Who I Am
ÒN (wëżi Pòzwóny Jak Pòzwóny)	HE (Named As He Was Named above)
Mùjkò le mie pò szadëch klatach	Just strokes my tousled hair ⁵⁴

(from: *Zymk* 5 [The Spring], 2005)

2-2. Prose

Even more new trends have appeared in Kashubian prose than in poetry. First of all, literary genres which had not existed in Kashubian literature before have developed. An excellent illustration is the work of Jón Natrzecy (pseudonym of Piotr Dziekanowski): in 2008, he published a science-fiction novel entitled *Nalazlé w Bëtowie*⁵⁵ [Found in Bytów] and in 2011, he released the crime story *Kòmùda* [Sombreness].⁵⁶ It is noteworthy to add that Piotr Dziekanowski is not only a writer, but also the co-owner and editor-in-chief of the magazine *Kurier Bytowski* [The Bytów Courier]. The magazine has organized three editions of a literary competition for science-fiction texts, which, although they have enriched the Kashubian science-fiction genre, are of lesser quality than *Nalazlé w Bëtowie*.⁵⁷

Another new genre is fantasy. Works include G. J. Schramke's *Òdstąpienie* [The Retreat] published in *Zymk* 2 (2002)⁵⁸ or *W pòdzemny*

54 Trans. by G. Schramke and J. Kowalewska.

55 Jón Natrzecy, *Nalazlé w Bëtowie* (Bëtowò: Kurier s.c. Bytów, 2008).

56 Jón Natrzecy, *Kòmùda* (Bëtowò: Kurier s.c. Bytów, 2011).

57 i.e., the first edition of this competition was won by Piotr Lessnau (in 2008). His s-f story was then published at least one time—in the magazine *Stegna* 2.2008.

58 Grégòr Jarosz Schramke, *Òdstąpienie*, in: *Zymk. Zéndzenie Młodëch Ùtwórców Kaszëbsczich. Zsziwk 2* (Gdiniò: Wëdòwizna Region, 2002), pp. 15–21.

sódze [In a Dungeon], the winning story of the Jan Drzeżdżon General Polish Prose Competition, subsequently published in the anthology *Rost na kamiznie* [Life on the Rocks] (2008).⁵⁹

The years 2000–2014 have seen not only the appearance of new literary genres, but also a widening of subject matters. In addition to traditional patriotic texts concentrating on the struggle to maintain Kashubian, memoirs, humorous tales, stories related to life in the countryside and in earlier times, to name a few long-standing themes, Kashubian literature is now enriched by works focusing on the psychological or the sensational and thrilling. To the first type belong works such as the dark tale of an alcoholic entitled *Drapce* [The Claws],⁶⁰ while among the latter we can find the story *Cegła na cegle* [Brick by Brick],⁶¹ about a psychopath who is enclosing his beloved in walls of brick; both texts come from the pen of G. J. Schramke.

The year 2011 saw an extraordinary addition to Kashubian literature, namely, Jón Zbrzëca's (Stanisław Pestka)⁶² collection of essays and reportages (or "watercolours," as their author calls them), entitled *W stolëcë chmùrników* [In the Capital of Skyscrapers]. In his book, the writer describes, among others, the tragedy of the September 11th, 2001 and its military and social effects, making many in-depth reflections about the culture, history and specifics of living in the USA. The work is not only an attestation of Pestka's literary talent, but also a manifestation of

59 Grégòr Jaroslów Schramke, *W pòdzemny sódze*, in: *Rost na kamiznie. Antologia prozy kaszubskiej* [Life on the Rocks. An Anthology of Kashubian Prose], Stanisław Janke, ed. (Gdańsk and Wejherowo: Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie and Muzeum Piśmiennictwa i Muzyki Kaszubsko-Pomorskiej w Wejherowie, 2008), pp. 44–56.

60 Grégòr J. Schramke, *Drapcë*, in: *Zymk. Zéńdzenié Młodëch Ùtwórców Kaszëbszczich. Zsziwk 7* (Gdiniò, Wejrowò and Gduńsk: Wëdòwizna Region, Mùzeùm Pismieniznë ë Mùzyczi Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrszczi w Wejherowie and Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrszczé Zrzeszenié, 2008), pp. 53–71.

61 Grégòr J. Schramke, *Cegła na cegle*, in: *Lédze są lédzama. Dzysdniowò kaszëbskò proza*, [People Are People. Contemporary Kashubian Prose] (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Zrzeszenia Kaszubsko-Pomorskiego, 2014), pp. 197–220.

62 Jón Zbrzëca (Stanisław Pestka), *W stolëcë chmùrników* (Gduńsk: Instytut Kaszubski w Gdańsku, 2011).

his sensitive soul and ability to make keen, precise observations, traits stemming from the fact that Pestka is both a poet and a journalist. Moreover, Pestka was an eyewitness to the tragedy in Manhattan,⁶³ which makes the book even more poignant and noteworthy.

Below is an excerpt from one of his „watercolours”:

It does not surprise me that people who continue to believe, in spite of the horrid truth, that their loved ones are alive, are still coming here [to the Washington Arch (probably)—added by G. Schramke]. Probably the easiest explanation is that, bewildered by the explosion and temporarily covered by ashes, they lost their memories, but are now recuperating, thanks to treatment at the nearby hospital. Hope compels them to freeze in painful suspense; sometimes, it is impossible to keep from crying out: “Has anyone seen my John?”

There, a photo of a smiling woman, a dispassionate caption in the corner: “Rosemarie C., mother of six, lost in the WTC catastrophe. Family seeking any information.”

Alisha Levin worked in a bank on the 82nd floor; her family and friends beg cruel fate to let her escape from the fiery madness. Then a name with a familiar ring, ending in -ski.⁶⁴ The family gives a rather detailed description of the missing person, along with distinctive traits: big, blue eyes, light hair, a small, comely figure.

And yet again that heartrending question, written by a child’s hand: “Has anyone seen my Daddy?! If yes, please call, this is my phone number...”

There isn’t even a shadow of hope in the African-American girl, announcing that her mommy will not make it from out of the flames of the WTC—only tears are left.⁶⁵

Noteworthy are also two books by Artur Jabłoński: *Namerkôny* [Marked]⁶⁶ published in 2013 and *Smùgã* [Sideways]⁶⁷ published in

63 Stanisław Pestka had been in USA from the spring of 2001 to January 2002 (information given by S. Pestka).

64 Polish and Kashubian surnames often end in -ski.

65 Jón Zbrzëca (Stanislôw Pestka), *W stolęcë chmùrników* (Gduńsk: Instytut Kaszubski w Gdańsku, 2011), p. 106; the excerpt trans. by J. Kowalewska.

66 Artur Jablonszi, *Namerkôny* (Gdiniô: Wydawnictwo Region, [2013]).

67 Artur Jablonszi, *Smùgã* (Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Region, 2014).

2014. The first one is an interesting novel of manners, with the action starting in the 1960s and leading up to the 2060s; it also contains fantastic elements (souls as birds) and a daring erotic moment.⁶⁸ The second one, the winner of Jan Drzeżdżon General Polish Prose Competition in 2013, is a mystery-thriller novel, with psychological elements, audacious erotic moments and well-written naturalistic portraits and descriptions.

2-3. *Drama*

The years 2000–2014 have seen even less innovation in drama than in poetry and prose. Although many new dramatic works have been written recently, most of them are designed to be school pageants and are not particularly well-written; many of these were authored by Teresa Wejer.⁶⁹ A few examples of texts which not only are of a higher literary value, but also often pertain to present-day issues, include: *Niesama* [She's Pregnant]⁷⁰—a comedy by Roman Drzeżdżon about a daughter who became pregnant; *Kawel* [Fate]⁷¹—a thriller drama by Grzegorz Schramke about a girl's revenge on her ex-boyfriend; and *Smãtkòwò spiëwa* [The Song of Smętek]⁷² by Adam Hebel, which recounts a journalist's change of heart

68 This erotic moment is based on the short story *Jastra* written by A. Jabłoński for the Jan Drzeżdżon General Polish Prose Competition of 1998, where it won the 2nd prize and was later published in the anthology *Kaszëbskò nôtëra* [The Kashubian Nature] (2001).

69 Between 2006 and 2013, Teresa Wejer published over 20 texts this kind in the magazine *Stegna*. Ten of them have been published as a compilation of short dramas to be enacted by school-age children *W krójlñie Grifa* [In the Land of the Griffin] by Elżbieta Pryczkowska, Teresa Wejer and Dorota Formela.

70 Rómk Drzëżdżónk, "Niesama. Ûceszny dokòz na binã w dwóch zdrzadniach z glëpilogã" [She's Pregnant. A Comic Scenic Work in Two Acts with Epilogue], in: *Zymk. Zëndzenië Młodëch Ûtwórców Kaszëbszczich. Zsziwk 8* (Gdiniò and Wejrowò: Wëdòwizna Region and Mùzeùm Pismieniznë ë Mùzyczi Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrsczi w Wejrowie, 2009), pp. 7–22.

71 Grégór Schramke, "Kawel. Binowi dokòz w trzech zdrzadniach. Na trzech aktorów" [Fate. A Drama in Three Acts. For Three Actors], in: *Stegna*, no. 4 (2011), pp. 15–17, no. 1 (2012), pp. 10–15 and no. 2 (2012), pp. 11–16.

72 Hébel Adóm, „Smãtkòwò spiëwa”, in: *Stegna*, no. 2 (2011), pp. 20–24 and no. 3 (2011), pp. 10–14.

towards Kashubian: after waking up from a dream touching upon issues concerning Kashubian nationality, history, and dying language, he refuses to write a tawdry article for his Polish editor-in-chief.

2-4. *Translations*

In order to give a complete presentation of the most recent Kashubian literature, translations should also be mentioned. Although translations are not a part of native literature, they do enrich it and often have an impact on its development. The number of translated works, both into and from Kashubian, has started to increase in recent years. A few examples from the period 2000–2014 include, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*,⁷³ the Gospels,⁷⁴ and a Polish literary masterpiece, Adam Mickiewicz's national epic *Pan Tadeusz*.⁷⁵ Also of note is the translation of the Japanese *Ogura Hyakunin-issshu* by Witold Bobrowski, with the Kashubian title *Wiérztnica z Ogura abò sto piesni òd sta piesniodzejów* [The Ogura Collection, or One Hundred Songs by One Hundred Poets];⁷⁶ this work won first place in the translation category at the Targi Książki Kaszubskiej i Pomorskiej "Costerina 2014" [The Kashubian and Pomeranian Book Fair "Costerina 2014"].

73 William Shakespeare, *Rómeò i Julia*, trans. by I. Czajinò (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Zrzeszenia Kaszubsko-Pomorskiego, 2013).

74 *Ewanielie na kaszëbsczi tołmaczoné* [Gospels Translated into Kashubian]. Trans. by ò. Adam Ryszard Sikora (Gduńsk: Zarząd Główny Zrzeszenia Kaszubsko-Pomorskiego, 2010).

75 Adam Mickiewicz, *Pón Tadeusz, to je òstótyny najachùnk na Lëtwie. Szlacheckò historiò z rokù 1811 i 1812 w dwanòsce knégach wiérszã* [Sir Thaddeus, or the Last Lithuanian Foray: A Nobleman's Tale from the Years of 1811 and 1812 in Twelve Books of Verse], trans. by Stanisław Janke (Wejrowò and Gduńsk: Muzeum Piśmiennictwa i Muzyki Kaszubsko-Pomorskiej w Wejherowie and Wydawnictwo Maszoperia Literacka, 2010).

76 Fujiwara no Teika, *Wiérztnica z Ogura abò sto piesni òd sta piesniodzejów*, trans. by W. Bòbrowszcziach (Głodnica-Wejrowò: Akobi B. Kodlewicz, 2013).

Most translations from Kashubian have been into English and have been of classic works, such as Hieronim Derdowski's⁷⁷ *Kaszubes at Vienna* or Aleksander Majkowski's⁷⁸ *The Life and Adventures of Remus*.

Summary: Problems and Tasks for the Future

As is often the case with regional languages, Kashubian is in danger of extinction. There have been active attempts to destroy the language in the past, especially during the communist period. Although such destructive policies have been abandoned, it is difficult to deny the domination of Polish culture and language among the Kashubians, as can be seen by that fact that the Kashubian language is being used less and less, especially by children and young people. In fact, in school, many young Kashubians learn what should be their native tongue as a foreign language. That is why the role of literature, alongside the role of family, the educational system, the church, and the media, is crucial in order to protect and develop the Kashubian language.

At first sight, it would appear that Kashubian literature is faring well. Unfortunately, appearances are deceiving. This article makes several lists of authors and work that are extensive—but also essentially exhaustive. One very positive factor is that these works are readily available on the market, along with translations of attractive titles from foreign languages. Moreover, Kashubian literature is branching into new areas liked by many readers, such as science-fiction, fantasy, thriller (including psychological or crime stories) or even comic books. If Kashubian literature is to fulfil its role of being read, it must be attractive to the reader. To this end, it has to be both of good quality and related to areas—whether by genre or topics—which are liked by readers.

With regards to poetry, most works have not yet reached a high artistic quality. The best poetry books published between 2000–2014 were

⁷⁷ Hieronim Jarosz Derdowski, *Kaszubes at Vienna. For the 200 th Anniversary of the Liberation of Germans and Christianity from the Turkish Yoke in AD 1683*, trans. by B. Krbeček and S. Frymark (Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski, 2007).

⁷⁸ Aleksander Majkowski, *The Life and Adventures of Remus*, trans. by B. Krbeček and K. Gawlik-Luiken (Gdańsk: Instytut Kaszubski, 2008).

written by S. Pestka (*Wieczorny widnik* [The Evening Horizon]),⁷⁹ S. Janke (*Piesniodzejanié* [Songmaking],⁸⁰ and *Pò mie swiata nie mdze* [After Me There Will Be No World]),⁸¹ I. Czaja (*Kropla kërwi. Dergnienié* [A Drop of Blood. A Twitch],⁸² and *Czórny kléd* [The Black Skirt]),⁸³ H. Makurat (*Chlëw* [Pigsty]⁸⁴ and *Testamehtë jimaginacji* [Testaments of the Imagination])⁸⁵ and G. Potrykus (*Zderzenia* [Collisions]).⁸⁶ Other fine poems from this period have been published by R. Zmuda-Trzebiewski, T. Fopke, R. Drzeżdżon, K. Serkowska, A. Hebel, M. Meyer and others.

In recent years few new dramatic works have appeared in Kashubian literature; most of these are text written for school theatres. The task for the future is to improve the poor condition of Kashubian drama, especially since dramatic works could be enacted by Kashubian amateur theatres, of which a few are currently in operation.

Today, the biggest role in European, and perhaps even in world literature, is played by prose, which undoubtedly has the highest number of readers. It is therefore incredibly important for new Kashubian prose to be written, especially in an innovative way. Unfortunately, too few works of this kind have been written to attract a general and wide audience, and even less the youth. More works for children are needed. Even though there are quite a lot of fairy tales and legends, such as the bilingual *Leg-*

79 Jan Zbrzyca (Stanisław Pestka), *Wieczorny widnik* (Gdańsk: Zarząd Główny Zrzeszenia Kaszubsko-Pomorskiego and Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2002).

80 Stanisław Janke, *Piesniodzejanié* (Gdańsk: Oficyna Czëc, 2003).

81 Stanisław Janke, *Pò mie swiata nie mdze* (Wejrowò: Mùzeùm Pismieniznë ë Mùzyczi Kaszëbskò-Pòmòrszczi and Starostwo Powiatowe w Wejherowie, 2007).

82 Ida Czajinò, *Kropla krëwi. Dërgnienié* (Kartuzy-Banino-Pelplin: Wydawnictwo Rost, 2007).

83 Ida Czajinò, *Czórny kléd* (Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Region and Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie Oddział w Gdyni, 2012).

84 Hana Makùròt, *Chlëw* (Gdiniò: Wëdòwizna Region, 2010).

85 Hana Makùròt, *Testamehtë jimaginacji* (Kartuzy: Oficyna Czëc, 2011).

86 Gracjana Pòtrëkùs, *Zderzenia* (Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Region, [2012]).

endy kaszubskie. Kaszëszczé legëndë [Kashubian Legends]⁸⁷ by Janusz Mamelski, there are only a few adventure stories and no children's novels. Furthermore, there are no books for older children reminiscent of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* or the Harry Potter series, nor are there horrors or supernatural romance novels like *Twilight*, a hit among teenagers, nor novels like *The Lord of the Rings*, *Eragon* or *Anne of Green Gables*. Even for slightly older readers there is no fiction similar to *A Game of Thrones* or Terry Pratchett's works, no romances like *Wuthering Heights* or Harlequins; all that there is of contemporary Kashubian fiction is a few crime stories, psychological works, and thrillers.

In truth, apart from *The Life and Adventures of Remus* and a few shorter works, we do not really have high-quality publications of popular fiction that could gain Polish and even European markets, and thereby increase the value of the Kashubian literature and promote it, among Kashubians as well. I hope these kinds of works will appear in the future, even in the near future. It would be ideal for a writer to venture outside the Kashubian market, since it would bring him not only fame, but also profit, a prosaic factor that is nonetheless essential. This would also benefit literature itself, as the author could dedicate himself to writing and hopefully publishing more valuable texts.

Disappointingly, none of the recently published Kashubians are professional writers. Their incomes come mainly from their jobs as teachers, journalists, museum workers, etc. This situation is all the more regrettable given the fact that among the texts sent for literary competitions and small publications there are many belonging to gifted writers. The Kashubian writers' problem is that the potential audience for their works is rather small. Kashubian-speaking Kashubians number, as previously stated, a little over 108,000, but the number of people familiar with the language of their ancestors to a high enough degree to enable them to understand a literary text is smaller. It is also important to remember that the Kashubian language was not introduced as a school subject until 1991. As a result, many older Kashubians, although they have a good command of the spoken language, are not familiar with the Kashubian

⁸⁷ Janusz Mamelski, *Legëndy kaszubskie. Kaszëbszczé legëndë* (Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Region, 2008).

alphabet and spelling system, which is quite different from that of Polish; they therefore cannot read Kashubian and are generally unwilling to take up the task of learning to do so. Yet another factor further narrowing the potential reader base is the simple fact that not everyone likes to read books.

One solution for Kashubian writers is to produce texts in both Kashubian and in Polish. Unfortunately, this solution has a drawback: in attempting to enter into the Polish market, the author focuses his energy on writing in Polish instead of Kashubian. This is detrimental to Kashubian literature, as works of quality which could enrich the native literature, augment in fact the Polish literary base. One example of a bilingual writer is Jan Piepka (1926–2001), who wrote poetry in Kashubian and poetry, short stories and novels in Polish. Another eminent prose-writer is Jan Drzeżdżon (1937–1992), whose Kashubian works amount to only two books of verse and a few prose books, whereas his Polish-language publications, mainly novels, number about twenty.

The crux of the matter here is to determine whether a given author who decides to write in Polish did so out of the desire to enter into the Polish market for mainly financial reasons, or because he or she felt a greater attachment to Polish culture and therefore dedicated his or her talent to enriching it.

Based on this work, we have come to the conclusion that there are several tasks ahead for Kashubian literature: to find more writers, to produce works of higher quality, and to create more literary genres focusing on themes more attractive to the average reader and to a younger audience.

When it comes to finding new authors and encouraging them to keep on writing, *Zymk* played a crucial role in its day. This was a place which allowed writers to take their first steps in Kashubian literature. Organizing meetings and publishing texts required self-discipline from the participants and forced them to find the time to pour their ideas out on paper. Such an organization would undoubtedly be useful today. In addition, such an organization could also serve as a place for self-improvement by, for instance, discussing works read during the meetings. This educational initiative has today been taken up by, for example, the *Lëteracczi Kaszëbsczi Salón* on Facebook or sporadically organized

writing workshops. However, it is my opinion that such undertakings would benefit from more rigorous organization. One idea that holds merit is a regular (yearly, quarterly, etc.) week-long writing workshops where young writers would learn composition, character development techniques, etc., at the end of which the best works would be published and financial aid would be granted for a defined amount of time, with the possibility of extending the term should the recipient prove to be honing his or her talent. Another way of supporting young Kashubian writers would be monetary grants in order to, for instance, finish a novel. An illustration of how such grants could be accorded: a competition for “started novels” could be held, where the jury would select from among the submissions (presentations of a detailed plot and a few chapters) the most promising and valuable one. The grant would not only allow the winning author to finish the work, but also give him or her the guarantee for the publication and promotion of the book, as well as royalties. In addition, the author would be assured translations and publications of his or her works in Polish and English. The purpose of this would be the support of a valuable writer, as well as the promotion of Kashubian literature in Kashubia, Poland and worldwide.

The above-described initiatives imply a considerable amount of financial resources. It is my opinion that it is currently possible to obtain them. Given the European Union’s policy of supporting and protecting its smaller nations and ethnic groups and the Polish government’s legal protection of the Kashubian language, obtaining a grant to finance such undertaking is entirely within the realm of possibility.

As for increasing the attractiveness of Kashubian literature and targeting young readers and the “average man,” these are not the only goals to work towards. What must be taken into consideration is the possibility that even if these aims are achieved, the Kashubian reader might still prefer works written in Polish. This could be due to the supremacy of Polish language and culture within the Kashubian reality. The Kashubians are educated mainly in the Polish language (it is the language in which students learn i.e. mathematics or the environmental sciences), which is the main tool for communication and the language used in the media, both written and spoken. It is for these reasons that it is easier for Kashubians to read Polish literature; given the choice between, for example, a crime

novel in Kashubian and in Polish, both of comparable literary quality, the Kashubian reader will most often choose the Polish novel, precisely because of its ease of assimilation. How then can the average Kashubian reader be encouraged to reach for the work in Kashubian instead of the Polish one? It is my belief that there is a need to build up a feeling of self-awareness and ethnic pride. The Kashubians should feel a need for access to their products and to be proud of them, in the spirit of *This is ours, Kashubian, made by our people*. Of course, this should not be an attitude of *It is good because it is ours*, but rather *It is good because it is good and it is ours*. This principle should apply not only to literature, but to consumer goods as well. This national pride is already present to some degree, as can be exemplified by the popularity of “Östri mòzdrech kaszëbsczy” [spicy Kashubian mustard].

Another way of encouraging the Kashubian reader to reach for a Kashubian book is to meld the universality I discussed earlier with the local. The action of the crime novel *Kòmùda* is set in Kashubia. Combinations of this kind are something which should be exploited. Another possible combination would be Harlequin-type novels in which the action would take place in Kashubia and/or the characters would be Kashubian. However, these combinations of universal-local should not be over-used, as readers could eventually reject books on sight, associating them as yet another novel with the action situated in Kashubia. An avenue worth exploring might be to merge the universal and the local in horror or fantasy works and to use native demonology and old folk beliefs, such as the Kashubian amalgam of a zombie and a vampire named “òpi.”

What matters most is not to neglect the promotion of native literature in Kashubia and on a larger scale. Much has been done to this end; several audiobooks have been recorded, and the novel *Namerkôny* was emitted on the air waves of Zwãkòwi Téater Radia Kaszëbë [The Radio Kaszëbë Audio Theater]. But there is still much to be done. The Radio’s idea of using the air waves to emit novels has much merit, seeing as the recording of *Namerkôny* is still available on-line.⁸⁸ Such initiatives are worth continuing. An endeavour which would undoubtedly serve to

88 Artur Jabłoński, *Namerkôny*, <http://radiokaszebe.pl/sluchaj/audiobooki-audycje/a-jablonski-namerkony> [accessed: 14.01.2015]

raise Kashubian literature's popularity would be to go even further and make feature films based on selected Kashubian works (although the first Kashubian-language feature film premiered in 1971, that is still much to be done in the domain on cinematography, especially since there are only a few of these pictures shot). An important element of promoting Kashubian literature are foreign translations, particularly into Polish, given that the Kashubians live within the country of Poland and a part of them speak only Polish. However, English is not to be neglected, due to its increasing importance throughout the world. In addition to translations themselves, an effort must be made to promote them in both Polish and Anglophone media. Considerable financial input would be required in order to achieve this, by publishing a sponsored article, releasing a presentation on the air waves or simply advertising on websites.

Where translations are concerned, it is necessary to stress that translations into Kashubian are equally important for the development of Kashubian literature and reader base. At the fore, translations into Kashubian should include valuable literary works which do not exist in Polish or which are practically unavailable due to lack of re-editions. This would eliminate competition from the Polish-language market. There are many examples of works from around the world which have not made much of an appearance on the Polish market, such as the English science-fiction novels by Leo Frankowski (i.e. *The Fata Morgana*⁸⁹). This author is of particular interest to the Kashubians, for Frankowski authored a series (unfortunately, unfinished) in which the protagonist was their countryman (*A Boy and His Tank*,⁹⁰ *The War with Earth*,⁹¹ *Kren of the Mitchegai*⁹²); it must also be noted that only one of his novels was translated into Polish.⁹³

89 Leo Frankowski, *The Fata Morgana* (New York: Bean Publishing Enterprises, 1999).

90 Leo Frankowski, *A Boy and His Tank* (New York: Bean Publishing Enterprises, 1999).

91 Leo Frankowski and Dave Grossman, *The War with Earth* (New York: Bean Publishing Enterprises, 2003).

92 Leo Frankowski and Dave Grossman, *Kren of the Mitchegai* (New York: Bean Publishing Enterprises, 2004).

93 Leo Frankowski, *Chłopiec i jego czołg* [A Boy and His Tank] (Warszawa: ISA Sp. z o.o., 2002).

If translations into Kashubian of novels popular among readers through the world were to be undertaken, the effort would be justified only if the Kashubian translation were released at the same time as the Polish one; a lower price than that of the Polish version would be an added incentive. An illustration of this idea: if J. K. Rowling were to publish a new series of Harry Potter's adventures, a Polish translation of the first book would appear on the market in six months. It would be ideal if the Kashubian version were released at the same time—or even earlier—in an edition of similar or superior quality, but at 50% of the price of the Polish release. Given these conditions, I believe that the Kashubian version would certainly be attractive to the reader, who might then be tempted to buy it instead of the Polish edition. Such an increase in competitiveness is feasible thanks to the protection which is given to the Kashubian language and the preventative measures taken against its extinction.

There are many tasks ahead for Kashubians aiming for the development of their literature, but there are also a myriad of opportunities. The tasks and prospects discussed above are not exhaustive, but rather serve as a presentation of the subject and possible courses of action. It is my opinion that many of these goals are attainable even in the near future. If they are attained, and subsequent undertakings are realized, then the Kashubian literature and language will not only stay alive, but also flourish.