

CAST OUT OF REALITY IN THE LABYRINTH ON THE SEA: ZBIGNIEW HERBERT'S CRETE AND ITS MYTH

Joanna Kruczkowska

University of Łódź

Labyrinth on the Sea, the 1973 collection of essays by the Polish poet Z. Herbert, was a fruit of his journey to Crete in 1964, but due to political circumstances the book appeared only posthumously, in 2000. Herbert's encounter with Crete reads as a privileged pilgrimage on the one hand, and an empirical inspection of mythical reality on the other. This survivor from the twentieth-century history perceives the Cretan landscape as mediating between Greek antiquity and contemporaneity, and finds the key to its description in compassion. His meditations are contextualised in this paper by Freud, Eliade and Campbell writing on the (un)reality of myth.

Whoever comes here with the palette of an Italian landscape painter will have to abandon all sweet colours. The earth is burnt by the sun, parched from drought, it has the colour of bright ash, sometimes of grey violet or violent red. The landscape is not only before your eyes but also beside you, behind you, you feel its intrusion, its siege, its intense presence...

Between light and shadow a sharp line cut by the diamond, without the whole scale of grey and half-shadow known from the countries of the North. The Greeks covered the stones of their temples with murals in order not to go blind. But before their sanctuaries rose up in the sun, Greece's heart was already beating under the earth. One must begin one's wanderings from caves, labyrinths and crevices.

This will be an attempt to describe the landscape and its apparently direct results. (Herbert 2010d: 441)¹

This quotation from Zbigniew Herbert's essay "Attempt at a Description of the Greek Landscape" signals a few *leitmotifs* of his pre-occupation with Greece: the omnipresence of landscape; the underground; myth; elusiveness of the subject; appearance versus reality. Published seven years before his essay entirely devoted to Crete (1973),

1. Most of the passages from Herbert's essays in this article are quoted in Alissa Valles' translation from his *Collected Prose* (Herbert 2010). The rest (mainly excerpts from his notebooks, letters etc.), unless marked otherwise in the bibliography, is provided in my own translation.

the "Attempt" opens with the image of the Δικταίον Άντρον², heralding the significance of Crete in Herbert's overall Greek meditations, further stressed by the title of the posthumous collection of his Greek essays: *Labyrinth on the Sea* (2000).³

Prompted by this title and the major part of Herbert's Cretan essay, we will focus this analysis on three basic themes: the mythical versus the real in his experience of landscape and travelling; his reworking of Cretan myth; and the necessary biographical context for these texts. Since the mythical perspective in Herbert's Greek essays is a complex one and contextualising it is not an easy task, we shall leave his acute observations of the "wonderful life" of contemporary Greece until the end of this paper as a valuable travel-writing angle to this overall mythologising structure.

The origins, the form and the fate of the manuscript of *Labyrinth on the Sea* reveal momentous details about the author and his approach to the subject. The essays document his travels in Greece in 1964⁴ and were published in the press in 1965-73 (Herbert 2000b: 208). The one devoted to the revolt of Samos, which Herbert did not visit, was initially dedicated to the Czech poet Miroslav Holub. This dedication, together with the passage concerning censorship in ancient Athens, was removed by Polish censors on its first publication in 1972: four years after the Prague Spring, a year after Holub was banned in Czechoslovakia, and at the time when Herbert was protesting against censorship before being banned himself in Poland a decade later. The fact that political innuendoes enter his work on – in this case – antiquity is not a coincidence: classified largely as a Neo-classicist, a moralist and a politically engaged writer (the tags now revised by literary critics⁵), this long-standing candidate for the Nobel Prize, friend

2. Herbert's most famous book of essays, *Barbarian in the Garden*, also opens with a descent into a cave (Lascaux).

3. *Labyrinth on the Sea* contains also both of the mentioned essays, which were first published in journals: "Attempt at a Description of the Greek Landscape" (1966) and "Labyrinth on the Sea" (1973). In the course of this article, I am referring to two versions of the "Labyrinth": the essay in the book, quoted here in translation (Herbert 2010e), and preliminary notes for it from Herbert's "diary": "Dziariusz grecki" of 1970 (Herbert 1999a).

4. According to Herbert's private notebook, his Cretan journey of September 1964 included: 12 Sep – Heraklion, 13 – Knossos, 14 – Malia, 15 – Heraklion, 16 – Phaestos, 17 – Psychro. He might have stayed on the island also on 18-19 Sep. I am grateful to the Director of the Manuscript Section at the National Library in Warsaw, Henryk Citko, for providing me with this information.

5. Although metaphysical, philosophical and sensuous aspects of Herbert's poetry have been raised previously, they have come to the fore of the critical debate only in the last fifteen years.

and rival of Czesław Miłosz, who, contrary to Miłosz, did not decide to emigrate, often commented on modernity in the language of classical myth and history.

Travelling from the Eastern Bloc was not an easy task, taking into account that its citizens, with few exceptions, simply did not have passports. Visits to “befriended” countries were a privilege of the elite. Herbert owed his travels mainly to foreign literary prizes and lectures, and lived through them precariously, “wrestling with the world” (Herbert 2006a: 177): short of money and developing, as a result of bad conditions, serious health problems. His travels were a pilgrimage rather than tourism which he detested and regarded as a sort of exile (Herbert 1999a: 43). We can illustrate these points with a fragment from his letter to Miłosz about his first Greek journey of 1964:

I got a visa for five days only ... because the [Greek] king doesn't like Communists [and Herbert being all his life an anti-Communist!...] I must say I'm a bit anxious about this meeting with the “Greek miracle”. I'm not sure if it's not better to have countries populated only by the imagination. And this condition of a tourist which does not correspond with my character, the tourist who slides on the surface of reality like a drop of water down the window.

[Signed:] Zbigniew pilgrim.⁶

(letter of 6 Sep 1964 from Brindisi, Herbert 2006b: 46-47)

While the tourist's sliding on the surface of reality may not have been so disastrous as being cast out of it in Heraklion⁷, both experiences turn out to be trying for this hunter of myths. Paradoxically so, for in common understanding, ever since the Enlightenment, myth has been perceived as unreal or denying reality. Despite Herbert's poetic persona of Mr Cogito and the link with Descartes, his wanderings in the Cretan labyrinth seem to reveal more affinities with Mircea Eliade's concept of sacred and profane time, or with Joseph Campbell's ideas of mythical heroic acts being reiterated in certain places, than with the Age of Reason.

6. He managed to prolong his visa but extended his stay illegally: “The day of departure... I hand down my passport with the long expired visa to an officer who tries to strike a contact with me. I make a gesture that I do not understand, I do not understand any language [Herbert spoke German, French and English], I simply cannot speak... [The officer] consults his boss who eventually surrenders. He puts a stamp in my passport and says in purest Polish *do widzenia* [good bye], which should surprise me but does not. It's not only big deals that are handled by gods... I shall make an offering to Hermes” (Herbert 1999a: 57).

7. Discussed below.

Essentially, Herbert was very much *in touch with reality*, which is manifest in his poems about the material world including nature. The “study of an object”⁸ was his private ontology in the chaos of history, securing unequivocal permanence against changing ideologies, with the stasis of the object giving meaning to movement (Herbert 1999b: 163-164). As a native of Polish Lwów [Lvov], the poet had first-hand knowledge of two totalitarian systems, German and Soviet, which invaded Poland on 1 and 17 September 1939 respectively, forcing him – after he became a member of the underground anti-Nazi and anti-Communist Armia Krajowa [Polish National Army] – to leave his home city for ever in 1944.⁹ This experience was partly responsible for his lifetime resistance to abstractions and his devotion to empirical reality, which he manifested in his philosophical, political and artistic views. Seeking reality in myth, he relied on the senses to substantiate, correct or deny not only his background knowledge of it but also the myth itself, as on his first meeting with a Greek temple in Paestum, where the mythical Doric shrines built in “an age of heroes chasing game with a club” gain validity in empirical reality sporadically fortified by the imagination:

So I see them for the first time in real life, with my own eyes. In a moment I can go there and put my face to the stones to test their smell, pass my hand along the columns’ fluting. One must free oneself, [purify oneself]: forget about all the photographs, diagrams, guides seen, all the lectures on the immaculate purity and loftiness of the Greeks...

[a] sense of what a Greek temple is. One must spend at least a whole day *in the ruins* [among the columns] to understand the life of stones in the sun... I touch [the stone] and feel the warmth of human flesh. Green lizards run across it like shivers... The columns drink the sunset’s live fire. Soon they will stand in the darkening air like a charred forest. (Herbert 2010b: 18-25)¹⁰

8. The title of his third collection.

9. Lwów was invaded by the Red Army and surrendered on 22 Sept 1939; it was taken over by Germans on 30 June 1941, and recaptured by the Soviets on 27 July 1944. The latter event was helped by the Armia Krajowa who organised an uprising in the city. Their commanders were soon arrested by the NKVD and forced to leave, together with the majority of the Polish population of Lwów.

10. I italicise words in the translations of Herbert’s poems and prose in the case when they differ from the original with a change of meaning or context. In square brackets, I supply either: 1. alternative translation; 2. words missing (here: “purify oneself”); 3. adjustments of the text to the needs of quoting in this article; or 4. my own comments. In *Collected Poems* (Herbert 2009a), Alissa Valles includes Czesław Miłosz’s and Peter Dale Scott’s translations, and omits Bogdana and John Carpenter’s. In this article, citations from *Collected Poems* have been signed only for Miłosz’s and Scott’s translations; otherwise the poems have been trans-

Herbert's ontology, as one can infer, is not purely materialistic. Apart from the processes of anthropomorphising the inanimate evident in the excerpt above, he often attributes ethical or metaphysical value to objects (as in "Pebble" or "Objects") or vice versa, material value to metaphysical phenomena (as in "Mr Cogito. The Soul's Current Position" where the soul assumes the form of a rock). The most unswerving of the senses verifying reality is touch: primary in human life, for Herbert it becomes the ultimate judge authenticating testimony of other senses ("Troubles of a Minor Creator"), "growing on the edge of truth" and "returning to things their stillness", with mistrust laying "its fingers in the world's wound / to divide thing from appearance" ("Touch" Herbert 2009a: 64).

Unmentioned in Herbert's essays is the fact that his European pilgrimages must have felt privileged, stimulating a sense of mission: not only to grant Polish readers a mental journey, but also, in personal terms, to corroborate the tradition he was acquainted with through his extensive reading. In this mission, he lived through failures of great expectations (Cretan frescoes), awakenings of a *blasé* tourist (guided in Phaestos by Alexandros described by Henry Miller in his *Colossus of Maroussi*), sudden blackouts of sensitivity (the third day at the Archaeological Museum of Athens), but first and foremost, through neophyte-like worship of miracles (e.g. the Hagia Triada sarcophagus) and everyday life (e.g. the Heraklion marketplace and street life).

The quote from the letter to Miłosz exemplifies yet another dimension of Herbert's journey: the imaginary one, linked to his literary activities. Translation was an example of such spiritual travelling. As one of Cavafy's translators claims (Antoni Libera, in: Kawafis 2011), Herbert engaged in rough rendition of Cavafy, believing translation to offer the profoundest insight into foreign poetry. The only surviving explicit trace of this activity is his poem "Journey" of 1975 opening with a line from "Ithaca". However, quite a few of his poems can be read as a poetic dialogue with the Alexandrian, a fact which recently led to an experiment of translating Cavafy into Polish via... Herbert (Kawafis 2011).¹¹ While abroad, Herbert also spent a

lated by Alissa Valles. The poems from *Mr. Cogito* (Herbert 1993) and *Poezje wybrane* (Herbert 2000c) have been signed for the Carpenters.

11. Herbert may have translated from German, while Libera (Kawafis 2011) from French, English and Italian via Herbert. Both types of practice – Herbert's second-hand and Libera's fourth-hand translation – can be interpreted in terms of rewriting as proposed by André Le-fevere in *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. I discuss the issue of Cavafy translation and reception in the article "Cavafy in Poland" (Kruczkowska 2015).

lot of time in libraries completing his essays and poems with historical information, where, like Cavafy, he would contemplate marginal events and figures.

Ultimately, the form and the fate of the manuscript of the *Labyrinth on the Sea* can be conceived of as a journey. Herbert's wayfaring in Greece has been rendered in the form of essays, the genre whose loose philosophical structure and lightly-sketched technique is exceptionally suited for physical and intellectual wandering. The etymology of the word "essay", French *essai*, exactly reflects Herbert's aim: "an *attempt* to describe the landscape". His was the Mediterranean landscape of the soul, a heritage of Greece and Rome, although inspected from the distance of a "barbarian" suspicious of the ideal "gardens". The book manuscript fell prey to chance or politics: delivered to the publisher in 1973, it was withdrawn by the author after the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981 (Herbert 2000b: 207),¹² when the author became the icon and spokesman of the dissident conscience, consequently banned and published underground. Despite "living by" the unchanged manuscript for twenty five years Herbert did not publish it, which seems a symbolic act matching the ending of his essay and the form of his book: "I wanted to describe", he sums up his attempt – *essai* – with a sense of failure.

In the *Labyrinth* this endeavour is closely related to landscape. "I went to Greece to encounter the landscape", he opens his "Attempt at a description", and concludes at the end: "I am aware that what I have written does not correspond to its title. Too often have I diverted from the theme of landscape into the realm of legend and history" (Herbert 2010d: 440, 461). Although the poet apparently identified landscape with nature, he practically described it as a fusion of natural, cultural and historical phenomena. Such a notion of landscape has been advocated by ecocritics in recent decades. A Greek geography scholar, Theano Terkenli, defines "landscape identity" as "simply an idea with a history, a geography, an imagery and a vocabulary or [one which] depends on such in order to assume reality and presence" (Terkenli 2001: 202). With a shift of emphasis from "vocabulary" to "culture", this perception matches Herbert's approach in the Greek essays.

12. Herbert signed the contract with the publisher in 1965, but deposited the manuscript only in 1973, having had difficulties in "coping with [his] booklet of essays". In 1973, he read five of these essays in a Polish Radio broadcast. The manuscript was withdrawn by his wife, Katarzyna Herbert, acting on his behalf, in December 1982 (Citko 2014).

Herbert the sceptic remains acutely aware of "the lure of description and the failures of mere descriptiveness" (Herbert 2010d: 461): the temptations of *mimesis* on the one hand, and on the other, the hiatus between the author's subjectivity and the object's elusiveness. The issue of literary equivalence of perception appears to him more comprehensible than the fit of illusion he endures in Heraklion, causing profound irritation and abhorrence:

I walk into town on an uphill road that seems to go on forever, though the evidence of one's eyes refutes it. The dimensions of light have frozen and though I hear the crunch of gravel under my feet and the sound of my own steps, I seem not to be moving at all, sunk up to my neck in the heat, drowned in the glare. I begin to suffer a painful loss of reality. I see now as if in a dream, askance, unable to communicate with my body, moving like a pendulum – motionless, bound to blank space, fixed once and for all as if in a photograph, caught in the trap of appearances, with a heavy shadow on my back. I will be haunted for many years by this image and the memory of the walk up steep Handakos Street, an image of being fettered, as if death had just then touched me for the first time, in the blinding midday sun.

I rented a ... room ... and rushed to the museum ... to surround myself with objects, many objects, in the hope that I would forget that shameful episode and the nauseating sense of being cast out of reality. (Herbert 2010e: 398)

This account could have been written by an Existentialist writer: the protagonist of Albert Camus's *The Stranger*, for instance, is similarly cast out of reality at his mother's funeral because of bodily sensations caused by heat and fatigue.¹³ Analogously, Herbert's "loss of reality" originates in his body (movement, temperature, visual and auditory perception). Almost immediately, these sensations are being transferred onto the intellectual, psychological and moral level. First, the mind transposes and reverses reality, producing paradoxical antithetical impressions (stasis vs. movement, shadow vs. midday sun); then the psyche produces a negative psychosomatic reaction (entrapment, pain, disability, nausea); and in retrospect, the consciousness judges the value of the experience (shame). As usual for Herbert, objects grant relief and rescue; already in his first collection *Chord of Light* (1956) he addresses them as follows:

13. "L'éclat du ciel était insoutenable... Les pieds y enfonçaient [dans le goudron] et laissaient ouverte sa pulpe brillante... J'étais un peu perdu entre le ciel bleu et blanc et la monotonie de ces couleurs... Tout cela, le soleil, l'odeur..., la fatigue d'une nuit d'insomnie, me troublait le regard et les idées... Je sentais le sang qui me battait aux tempes... [J]e ne me souviens plus de rien" (Camus 2011: 14-15).

with great immobility explaining by dumb-signs
 to a *sorry* intellect: we are genuine – [the poor]
 [a]t last the fidelity of things opens our eyes
 (“Stool”, transl. Miłosz & Scott, Herbert 2009a: 41).

Another lapse of feeling happened to Herbert a few days before, in the Archaeological Museum in Athens. Revisiting it on the third day after the initial illumination, he faces “a paralysis of sensitivity” which “pitifully attacked the centres of despair”. On the constant lookout for *θάμπος*, “the holy shudder in places once inhabited by gods” (Herbert 1999a: 48), the pilgrim comes to slide on the surface of reality like a tourist who cannot even mourn his deplorable emotional atrophy. This transport into stupor from the reality of myth evoked by art provides a converse example of Herbert’s shuttling between two worlds. Similarly, when the Knossos frescoes in the Heraklion Museum completely fail to move him, Herbert resorts to his intellectual powers in order to rescue “the holy shudder”. Although the carnal frame interferes, he tries to resist it by desperately clutching to the mind in hope of spiritual resurrection:

I always wanted to love, to adore, to fall on my knees and bow down before greatness ... I entered the museum in Heraklion ... [and stood in front of] the frescoes I knew from reproductions in innumerable histories of art, those praised by experts as masterpieces of ancient painting.

And? Nothing. I looked dully, without emotion or sympathy ... I quickly attributed this to my own indisposition, one way or another the sea journey on the battered *Theseus* had worn me out, I was stupefied by the heat of noon, and hungry, but not hungry enough to achieve heavenly ascension...

I called knowledge to the aid of my failing sensitivities. (Herbert 2010e: 399)

It seems worthwhile to compare Herbert’s lapses of reality with Sigmund Freud’s experience on the Acropolis, described in his letter to Romain Rolland (1936).¹⁴ Freud’s Greek experience involved a similar revelation of discrepancy between the two worlds. Herbert in his letter to Miłosz expressed anxiety about “meeting with the ‘Greek miracle’” despite being well prepared for it: there was “no other building in the world [but Acropolis] that has so enduringly occupied my imagination” (Herbert 2006b: 46). In contrast to the Pole who planned his journey long ahead, Freud and his brother spontaneously decided to visit Athens and got “remarkably de-

14. I express my thanks to Maria Athanasopoulou (University of Thessaloniki) who suggested adding this text to my analysis.

pressed" as the plan turned out to be "quite impracticable". The "saw nothing but difficulties in the way of carrying it out", including lack of passports (Freud 1953b: 1). Similar difficulties stood in Herbert's way, although possibilities far more limited than Freud's made him more determined in his stratagems. Freud, when he finally climbed the Acropolis and looked at the landscape, suddenly experienced "a surprising thought":

"so all this really does exist, just as we learnt at school!" ... [T]he person who gave expression to the remark was divided ... from another person who took cognizance of the remark; and both were astonished, though not by the same thing. The first behaved as though he were obliged, under the impact of unequivocal observation, to believe in something the reality of which had hitherto seemed doubtful. (Freud 1953b: 2)

The "incredulity of this kind" which is "obviously an attempt to repudiate a piece of reality" by the person "wrecked by success" of the arrival (Freud 1953b: 2-3) was not experienced by Herbert in Greece despite his wondering whether "it's not better to have countries populated only by imagination". "Wrecked by success" of his journey, Herbert still checks if reality is real; disillusioned, he suffers "a paralysis of sensitivity"; yet when his Greek journey is over he jots down with enthusiasm: "Greece proved its worth!" (Herbert 2002: 106). While psychoanalysis (unlike Heraclitus, Descartes, Nietzsche and other philosophers) was foreign to Herbert's worldview (Ruszar 2005: 257), the feeling which Freud identifies as *derealization* appears to be similar to the poet's "displacements" from reality. Freud speculates that

the actual situation on the Acropolis contained an element of doubt of reality ... [T]he whole psychological situation ... seems so confused and is so difficult to describe ... Such a feeling [of 'What I see here is not real'] is known as a feeling of derealization.

These derealizations ... are certainly failures in functioning and, like dreams ... they are abnormal structures. These phenomena are to be observed in two forms: the subject feels either that a piece of reality or that a piece of his own self is strange to him. In the latter case we speak of "depersonalizations"; derealizations and depersonalizations are intimately connected ... [I]n the derealizations we are anxious to keep something out of us ... Depersonalization leads us on to the extraordinary condition of "double conscience", which is more accurately described as "split personality". (Freud 1953b: 4)

Herbert's "loss of reality" during which he could see "as if in a dream, ... unable to communicate with [his] body" can be partially interpreted in

terms of the Freudian “failure in functioning”, as an amalgam of derealization and depersonalization. Herbert’s first description of his Handakos Street episode can be related to Freud’s “split personality”: “I walk a little street and see myself from a great distance walking the little street from the harbour to town” (Herbert 1999a: 51), though it can also be identified as exteriorisation or out-of-body experience.

Beyond the Freudian comparative frame, one can detect a vast network of mythographic reference intertwined in Herbert’s grid of sensory details of “that shameful episode”: eternity, stasis, dream, exteriorisation, appearance, image, memory, spectrality, finally, death as the utmost state of non-reality. All of these elements hinge on the notions of myth advocated by Jung, Eliade or Joseph Campbell. On discussing Gnostic texts in his *Myth and Reality*, Eliade writes about “the soul’s fall into Matter (Life) and the mortal ‘sleep’ that ensues”, i.e. the earthly existence of the soul juxtaposed with its “extraterrestrial origin” (Eliade 1963: 132). In fact, both dimensions can be found in the passage from Herbert’s *Labyrinth*. When Herbert seeks reality in the physical world (Matter), it is Matter (body and weather conditions) which stimulates the soul’s fall into Myth belonging to an alternative reality. Myth “awakens and maintains consciousness of another world”, Eliade continues, a “beyond [,] ... the plane of absolute realities. It is the experience of the sacred ... which gives birth to the idea that something really exists”. Myth is the model of “the world of axiological values [,] ... transcendent ... paradigms for all human activities” (Eliade 1963: 139, the last element obviously a Jungian concept). Herbert on boarding the *Theseus* heading for Crete seems to enter the labyrinth and starts perceiving the island largely through the mythical lens. His description of the journey commences with a vision of an island-goddess emerging from the sea:

Early in the morning I step out onto the upper deck of our ship. On the planks stained with tar and oil the bodies of men and women are strewn in disarray, as if some feast had ended in a slaughter. I am alone amid sleepy exhalations. I want to see Crete emerge from the sea.

High up, above the misty horizon, barely visible, something faint, an opacity of the sky, a grey mark taking on a shape, and then I see clearly a mountaintop suspended in the heights like in a Japanese landscape painting. I go on watching as the mountain grows, descends slowly, majestically, as if down a staircase, until a mountain chain settles on the sea before my eyes, filling the horizon.

And there is the island.

This is how Crete began for me, from the heavens, like a deity. ("Labyrinth" 398)

This private mythical encounter with Aphrodite-Crete embodied in the unfolding animated landscape ends up in an autogenous Genesis. The awestricken lonely individual is watching the miraculous creation in the sacred, not profane, time. This is the moment of hierophany defined by Eliade in *The Sacred and the Profane* as the manifestation of the sacred, "something of a wholly different order" in "the mysterious act", "in objects that are integral part of our natural 'profane' world" (Eliade 1968: 11). The feeling of the sacred accompanied Herbert after his first Greek journey undertaken in 1964 with a couple of friends, Magdalena and Zbigniew Czajkowsky, to whom he wrote later: "I'm at my mother's, she is very ill. I'm trying not to give in though. Greece keeps shining bright, and I protect this little flame like a sanctity. It helps". (Herbert 2006a: 73). The impression of movement, characteristic of Herbert's observations about Greek landscape in general, was also connected with the mythical dimension: "One of the most powerful experiences I kept having in Greece was the sensation of movement, as if my eyes were constantly being opened to the painful drama of the earth's birth" (Herbert 2010d: 440). In this all-Greek context, Crete's birth strikes a note of peaceful magic, akin to Herbert's perception of islands in general as strange and spiritual entities of a different order. On the occasion of his visit to Holy Iona a year before his Greek journey he writes:

For unknown reasons I have been haunted by an image of an island for quite some time. Islands are alien to the landscape of my childhood. I was born in Central Europe, mid-way between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. The landscape of my youth is the periphery of Lwów: ravines and gentle slopes covered with pine trees on which the first powder snow blooms most beautifully. The sea was something unimaginable there, and islands had a foretaste of fairy tales. (Herbert 2009b: 95)

Just as the sea remained beyond the reach of the child's imagination, so the Greek landscape, including "the truly indescribable Ionian Sea" ("Prayer of the Traveller Mr Cogito" Herbert 2009a: 348), escaped Herbert's definition years later. The importance of Greek islands for the poet's biography becomes evident in the thanksgiving and pleading "Prayer", his *summa vitae*, an extremely rare address to God in his poetry. Out of twenty-one stanzas, six are devoted to Greek islands (the Ionian Islands and Crete), one to the Acropolis, and one to "Greek hospitality" on the

Hebrides. Even in “the landscape of his youth” the poet imagines Greece as a refuge; Lwów right before the Second World War becomes a vantage point for Greek colonies on the Black Sea: “a watershed and near thunder [of the “second Persian war”] told us to flee to the Greeks / their colonies on the seaside were not all that far away” (“Photograph” Herbert 2009a: 369).

In his poetry collection *Inscription* (1969) preceding the *Labyrinth*, Herbert meditates on the Knossos landscape, emphasising the detachment of nature and civilisation. This admirer of the Old Masters, to whom he devoted a book of essays *Still Life with a Bridle*, portrays the tension between nature and suffering in a manner similar to Pieter Bruegel’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*¹⁵ and its description by W. H. Auden in the “Musée des Beaux-Arts”:

The hill facing Minos’s palace is like a Greek theatre
tragedy leaning its back against the impetuous slope
rows of fragrant shrubs curious olive trees
applaud the ruins

[In reality,] Between nature and human fate
there is no essential connection
the saying that grass mocks catastrophe
is the *whim* of the inconsolable and fickle [figment, concoction]

An odd case: two straight parallel lines
will never intersect not even in infinity

That’s all you can honestly say about it

(“The Hill Facing the Palace” Herbert 2009a: 252).

Herbert’s evocation of Greek theatre in this poem summons the spirit of ancient tragedy with its merciless fate, irresolvable conflict and monumental scenery. Except for the affectionate attitude towards vegetation, this description radically differs from the later one in the “Labyrinth”. In the latter, Herbert observes the *integrity* of the Knossos landscape with the “profane” natural world, where nature assists architecture:

I walk the Kairatos valley to see the palace set against the landscape. It’s
not really set against the landscape but grows out of it, organic like a tree.

15. Herbert reverses the myth in another allusion to Bruegel’s painting: Daedalus “looks into the sun” and teaches his son that “The universe is sheer light” while Icarus suffers physically when flying, “immersed in the dark rays of the earth” (“Daedalus and Icarus”, in: Herbert 2009a: 51).

It flows down the gentle slope in ridges, like a cascade. (1st version, Herbert 1999a: 54)

[While Mycenae cannot build outward and are] closed into the tight armour of walls [, a] habitat deep rather than spacious, as if modelled on a cave, ... [t]he roofs dragged here from a land of mist and rain [,] ... the royal palace at Knossos [is] ... quite open to the air and sun. It gave me an impression of a honeycomb, because it could be enlarged at will, a "blossoming system" [from the central courtyard,]... and at the same time its "organic" quality was based on its being rooted perfectly in the terrain, on the natural use of elevations and declivities. Terraces lovely as cascades of water run down the hillside. (2nd version, Herbert 2010e: 425)

Certifying "a point well known from history textbooks" that the best point of departure for Minoan Crete is Mycenae, Herbert comes to the conclusion that the comparison "has an incontrovertible force of revelation" (Herbert 2010e: 424). Together with the "passion for movement in Minoan art" (1999a: 54-55) Knossos becomes the revelation of the sacred but on a natural and human scale, different from his earlier description of the same "impetuous slope". Although struck by the theatricality of Knossos architecture, the erudite observer is moved not by Evans's extravaganza but by Minoan figurines and ceramics "as if life on Minos's island had been a game, a somewhat shallow amusement, superficial, carefree" (2010e: 426). Looking at the "chess board" in the museum, he speculates: "It must have been a royal game, where Minos had a greater number of pawns. A touching entertainment between an earthquake and a barbarian attack" (1999a: 55). Characterising Cretan painting as "the slight, frivolous Rococo" (2010e: 401), he eventually experiences illumination at the Hagia Triada sarcophagus where "animals are depicted with extreme tenderness and a sort of melancholic sympathy" (1999a: 56). Hypothesising that our belief in the Minoan culture as peaceful and "benign" may be just a "delusion, caused by the need to believe in a golden age, in the innocent childhood of humanity" (2010e: 424), the poet concludes on his Knossos visit:

There is no path to the world but the path of compassion.

... It seems that the hubris of great civilizations was foreign to the inhabitants of ancient Crete... It is as if the unleashed elements¹⁶ were too great and cruel in proportion to what they destroyed. Their ruins are the ruins of a cradle, the ruins of a child's room. (Herbert 2010e: 438)

16. Herbert devotes a part of his Cretan essay to the cataclysm which destroyed the Minoan civilisation; see the concluding paragraph of this paper.

Herbert finds the key to the Cretan landscape and culture in compassion, a fact which, as we will see, manifests itself in his approach to the labyrinth.

Arriving in Crete on the *Theseus* and exploring Heraklion and Knossos, Herbert could repeat after Freud: "When first one catches sight of the sea, crosses the ocean and experiences as realities cities and lands which for so long had been distant, unattainable things of desire – one feels like a hero who has performed deeds of improbable greatness" (Freud 1953b: 5), especially since Freud traces back this feeling to the poverty and limitations of his youth. Some of these sentiments resonate in Herbert's narrative; the heroic sensation, however, is hardly attainable for the "worn out, stupefied and hungry" pilgrim despite his being the sole survivor on the "battered *Theseus*" amid the "slaughtered" bodies. The survivor figure recurs in the context of his visit to the Acropolis suffused with memory (not its "disturbance" as in Freud) and a sense of mission:

If I drew from this a strange feeling, the happiness of the endangered, it probably was because I was conscious of the extraordinary fact that "I made it" before the Acropolis and I shared the fate of all human creations on the dark promontory of time, faced with an unknown future. (Herbert 2010a: 500)

"The one who made it" has been chosen by "blind fate" but decides to become a conscious envoy of "those who didn't make it" (Herbert 1973): not only the living but also the dead. The compassion of this survivor of wars and invasions for the ruins of the Acropolis and Knossos stems also from the experience of the country whose capital was erased from the face of the earth, and the experience of his native city lost for him for ever. In Herbert's view, history often amounts to a series of slaughters, "heroes being slain / and heroes slaying" ("Tamarisk", transl. Miłosz/Scott, Herbert 2009a: 200).

The trope of the hero in the Cretan context is intricately linked with the trope of the labyrinth and its two male protagonists: Theseus and the Minotaur. Already before going to Crete Herbert puts himself in the position of a literary Theseus: lost in the Athenian labyrinth, he gives up his quest "with an empty head, ... a handful of unrelated words, an Ariadne's thread which leads to nowhere" (Herbert 1999a: 44). Mid-way through his Knossos visit, he decides to "wander at random" in order "to move architecture, to make it vibrate" and to revive the past (1999a: 53-54). The author of *Labyrinth* may be acting in a similar way to Joseph Campbell's hero

on entering the sacred space. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* Campbell writes that

For a culture still nurtured in mythology the landscape ... is made alive with symbolical suggestion... Wherever a hero ... has wrought, ... the place is marked and sanctified. A temple is erected there to signify and inspire the miracle of perfect centeredness; for this is the place of the breakthrough into abundance. Someone at this point has discovered eternity. The site can serve, therefore, as a support for fruitful meditation... The one who enters the temple compound and proceeds to the sanctuary is imitating the deed of the original hero. His aim is to rehearse the universal pattern as a means of evoking within himself the recollection of the life-centering, life-renewing form. (Campbell 2008: 34-35)

Just as Campbell's hero, Herbert searches for symbols in the place of discovery, miracle and fruitful meditation, the centred ("honeycomb", "blossoming system") and eternally relevant landscape. He is indeed trying to resuscitate the unknown history of "Crete the mysterious, its lips and eyes firmly shut, defending itself [,] ... a seismic island ... of uncertain and unsteady hypotheses" (Herbert 2010e: 424). Yet towards the end of his life he seeks forgiveness for being "too timid in labyrinths and caves" ("Prayer" 347). And first and foremost, by contrast with the mythical hero, he does not kill the dragon.

Contrary to the official version of the myth, Theseus in Herbert's stories is the villain, not a role model. In his treatment of the Cretan narrative the poet engages in *mythopoesis* rather than mythography, rewriting the myth in the symbolic or/and contemporary context. If we applied Lillian Feder's classification to Herbert's *mythopoesis* it would fall into the third category:

Myths are used in literature in three major ways: mythical narratives and figures are the overt basics on which plot and character are created; or they are submerged beneath the surface of realistic characters and action; or new mythical structures are invented that have a remarkable resemblance to traditional ones. (Feder 1980: 53)

Jill Scott advocates a similar definition of *mythopoesis* "as the creative means by which myth achieves its translation to new times and new spaces". She provides examples of writers who "use mythopoesis to demystify myth", further arguing that *mythopoesis* "seeks to incorporate new social configurations into the larger story of humanity" (Scott 2004: 58-59). While Herbert indeed reworks and demystifies the Cretan myth, it would be a simplification to state that he updates it with the contextual

frame of a totalitarian system. Also, instead of “otherness” and “foreignness” which Scott identifies as one of the driving forces of *mythopoesis* (2004: 65), Herbert adopts, in reference to the Minotaur, the opposite method: of familiarisation.

Instead of putting himself in Theseus’ shoes, the poet follows his “key of compassion” and chooses the Minotaur for his alter ego. “I have always sympathised with the Minotaur rather than Theseus” (Herbert 1999a: 55) or “or any other sly-boots” (2010e: 427), he writes when describing the Psychro seal with the monster whose human legs are “pathetically thin and vulnerable” (1999a: 55): “Poor Minotaur! From my earliest childhood I felt ... compassion for the half-beast half-man trapped in the labyrinth and in an alien human history full of cunning and axes” (Herbert 2010e: 427). Herbert calls the Theseus legend “anti-Cretan”, its hero personifying “a typical Greek admiration for cleverness – or intelligence – triumphant over dark forces” (2010e: 427). Ironically, in one of his most famous poems it is the mythical torturer Procrustes who expresses a pejorative opinion about Theseus:

my life was taken by Theseus the murderer of the innocent Minotaur
the one who *went through* the labyrinth with a *woman’s* ball of yarn
[was exploring / sissy]
an impostor full of tricks without principles or a vision of the future
 (“Damastes [a.k.a. Procrustes] speaks”, transl. J. & B. Carpenter, Herbert 2000c 143).

Simultaneously with his Cretan trip and essay, the poet publishes an alternative, allegedly historical, version of the Minotaur story in his collection *Mr. Cogito* (1974). Preceding the poem quoted above (1983), the assessment of Theseus in the 1974 story is already similar to that of Procrustes. The narrative apparently follows the logic of research rather than feelings or emotions, and advocates a reinterpretation of the myth.

The true history of the prince Minotaur is told in the script Linear A, which has not yet been deciphered. Notwithstanding later gossip he was the authentic son of King Minos and Pasiphaë. The boy was born healthy, but with an abnormally large head which the fortune-tellers interpreted as a sign of future wisdom. In reality, with the years the Minotaur grew into a strong and somewhat melancholy – nitwit. The king decided to turn him over to the priesthood. But the priests explained that they could not admit the abnormal prince because it would lower the authority of religion, which had already been damaged by the invention of the wheel.

Consequently, Minos brought over an engineer then fashionable in Greece, Daedalus – creator of a noted branch of pedagogical architecture. This is how the labyrinth was built. By a system of corridors, from the simplest to the more complicated, by a difference in levels and a staircase of abstractions it was supposed to initiate the prince Minotaur into the principles of correct thinking.

So the miserable prince mooned about in the corridors of induction and deduction, pushed by his preceptors; he looked at the instructive frescoes with a vacant stare. He didn't understand a thing.

When King Minos had exhausted all his resources he decided to get rid of the disgrace to the family. He brought over (also from Greece, which was famous for capable people) the skilful murderer Theseus. And Theseus killed the Minotaur. On this point, myth and history are in agreement.

Through the labyrinth – by now an unnecessary school primer – Theseus returns carrying the huge, blood-stained head of the Minotaur, its eyes bulging, where for the first time wisdom began to sprout – which usually is brought by experience. (Herbert 1993, transl. J. & B. Carpenter)

The *dramatis personae* and the labyrinth, as well as the only “hard fact” of the myth – the murder – are the only historical elements of this story. The rest – causes, effects, circumstances, even the protagonist's origin – is fiction. Nevertheless, the poet in a plainly ironic way presents himself not only as a historian but also a seer or god disposing of a superior knowledge of the past as well as of the truth and the essence of things (*istota*¹⁷). The border between myth and history is arbitrary since the ground of historical research – the source – is not verifiable, being either incomprehensible (the “yet undeciphered” script Linear A) or simply absent.

The intellectually feeble Minotaur is subjected to a sequence of authoritarian or even totalitarian frameworks – religion, education, philosophy, logic, state, family – intended to “rehabilitate” or rather “repair” him; the ultimate “corrective measure” is death. Although the narrator lists these measures in an objective tone, the middle paragraph betrays his attitude with the tiny word “miserable”. Instead of the deliverance of Athenian youth or the Cretan royal house, the labyrinth becomes the scene of a *crime*, while the Minotaur, instead of being a monster, is a human¹⁸ *victim*

17. At the beginning of the fourth sentence, Herbert uses the idiom “W istocie”, translated by the Carpenters as “In reality”, and by Valles as “In fact” (Herbert 2009a: 308). While both are correct, the phrase literally means “in the essence [of things]”.

18. As Herbert observes in the “Labyrinth”, Greek art does not “portray the Minotaur as a repulsive beast ... [but as] handsome and defenceless. He has the well-shaped body of a young man” (Herbert 2010e: 427).

of not only the assassin but first of all, of civilisation. The labyrinth symbolises systemic oppression and oppression by abstract ideas. As Marta Drażyńska-Suchańska observes, compassion in Herbert's story "can be perceived as a way of undoing the myth": the poet sympathises with the Minotaur to the extent that he completely omits the theme of the Athenian offering (Drażyńska-Suchańska 2010: 295-297).

Just as Herbert's whole text undermines the meaning of "truth" and "correctness", so does its ending mock the meaning of "wisdom". On the one hand, the ending parodies symbolic interpretations of the labyrinth as a place of quest or initiation, discussed for instance by Eliade in his *Ordeal by Labyrinth*. On the other, the term "wisdom" is used twice in Herbert's text: the "wisdom" of the last paragraph refers us to the same word in the first one. In both cases, it is connected with the abnormal head: the mark of difference. Herbert first demystifies antiquity with its prophets and oracles; then the heritage of antiquity: Enlightenment with its cult of reason and state; and eventually, the reaction to Enlightenment: Romanticism with its belief in the foresight of simpletons. Although the ending seems to caricature empiricism, rather than superficial intelligence it conveys the notion of a broader wisdom about life, the life which the Minotaur was denied by derision, objectification, and exclusion. Herbert's attitude remains the one of compassion, in line with all his writings expressing support for the subjugated, the imperfect, the ostracised, in defence of independent choices and of a life allied with the senses. Just as his Minotaur, Herbert detested labyrinthine "staircases of abstractions" ("Phone Call" Herbert 2009a: 549); his poetic persona, Mr Cogito, "never trusted / tricks of imagination" and "didn't appreciate labyrinths":

he would rarely soar
on the wings of a metaphor
and then fell like Icarus
into the embrace of the Great Mother ...

he wanted to make it [i.e. the imagination]
an instrument of compassion

("Mr Cogito and the Imagination", transl. J. & B. Carpenter, *Poezje* 109-111).

Consistently throughout his oeuvre, Herbert speaks for the chthonic, biological and material reality (Antaeus, Marsyas, the Minotaur, objects, nature) against the flights of the error-prone mind. He makes Antaeus the patron of refugees "who take on the shapes of incomprehensible mutants

or even monsters" against the "nomads of civilization" who "forget that chasing after the sun and global utopias must end in catastrophe" (Herbert 2010c: 311).

The penultimate poem of the *Epilogue of the Storm* continues Herbert's private version of the Minotaur story. Just as his "History of the Minotaur" published 25 years earlier (Herbert 1993), the poem focuses on the severed head of the Minotaur – more human than Theseus again, yet this time endowed with the power of vengeance:

Theseus is passing through a sea	[the ocean]
of bloody columns leaves restored	
in a clenched fist he holds a trophy	
– the scalped head of the Minotaur	
Bitterness of victory [a]n owl's shriek	
measures down with a <i>coppery stick</i>	[copper measuring cup]
so that he will feel the sweet defeat	
to the end a warm breath in his neck	

("Head" Herbert 2009a: 70).

Although the first stanza could herald Theseus' triumphant progression, his deed is interpreted in reverse: the contrast of bitter and sweet with its oxymoronic load ("bitterness of victory" and "sweet defeat") epitomises his defeat juxtaposed with the Minotaur's victory. The revenge belongs to the defeated.¹⁹ If only understated, this is a *moral* defeat and an *eternal* victory: the murder becomes a remorse of Theseus' guilty conscience,²⁰ while the Minotaur's breath – *πνεύμα* – remains alive and haunting throughout his assassin's life, further immortalised in Herbert's poetry. The Polish idiom *czuć na karku* ("feel something at one's nape / at the back of one's neck") may refer to someone's age, to a breath of a rival or a person hurrying you, eventually, to the breath of death. At the same time, the Minotaur's presence is not spectral but very concrete and realistic: it is not only a breath, but "a *warm* breath". The senses again substantiate reality,

19. As Natalia Jakacka rightly observes, the killing of the Minotaur was a turning point for Theseus, whose further deeds turned out to be a series of failures. I attribute this effect in the poem to the power of the Minotaur's revenge, while she interprets the poem as depicting Theseus making a holy offering of the Minotaur (Jakacka 2005).

20. In an interview, Herbert stated: "I turn to history not for lessons in hope, but to confront my experience with the experience of others and to win for myself something which I should call universal compassion, but also a sense of responsibility, a sense of responsibility for human conscience" (quoted in the Introduction to Herbert's *Selected Poems*, transl. John & Bogdana Carpenter, Oxford 1977).

while Theseus initially passing through the ocean of “bloody columns leaves restored” seems as symbolic and unreal as his surroundings which can be interpreted in psychoanalytical and poetic terms as symbols of the unconscious (the ocean and the forest). The borders of reality and myth remain blurred, especially since the severed head is also an object of psychoanalytical and poetic research, having been a potent mythological and Biblical symbol. As the poem’s penultimate position in Herbert’s last collection indicates, the poet attributed great significance to the Cretan myth, which he revisited until the end of his life.

As we can see from the analysis of Herbert’s essays, during his Cretan journey the poet-pilgrim who “always wanted to love, to adore, to fall on [his] knees and bow down before greatness”, on the constant lookout for *θάμπος*, undergoes occasional lapses of reality and falls into both Matter and Myth. He reinterprets the Cretan myth by revising the positions of victors and victims, by exposing the “alien human history full of cunning and axes” as the history of vanquishers and replacing it with the history of the vanquished recovered from oblivion and restored to their proper place. Engaging in *mythopoesis* Herbert customises the myth via the processes of familiarisation. While his struggle to describe the Greek landscape underscores the impossibility of the venture, further reinforced by the peculiar fate of his *Labyrinth* manuscript, he finds some keys to stay attuned to the Cretan song, mainly in basic human faculties and in a sense of mission propelled by his own biography. This barbarian savant ends his meditations on a note of compassion, aligning himself with a crippled Crete against historical and natural disasters.

It would be natural to end this analysis here. Yet Herbert’s remarks concerning the life of *contemporary* Greece – its marketplaces, streets, tavernas and means of transport – deserve attention not only as a travel-writing feature of his essays but also as another implementation of their basic theme, i.e., the intersection of the mythical with the real. The poet often juxtaposes mythology or legendary history with his modern surroundings. While waiting six hours in Piraeus for his ship he observes that “ordinary timetables do not hold good in this homeland of myths, in a country where the clocks measure millennia” (Herbert 2010e: 397). This assertion opening the whole collection sets his two temporal perspectives at the very beginning, with the prevalence of cosmic time or the sacred time of myth. Herbert’s occasional irony attests to his awareness that this perspective, characteristic for Romantic philhellene travellers, had already been abolished

by Romantics themselves. Scrutinising the prospective passengers of the *Theseus*, the poet recognises a racial blend of Albanian, Bulgarian and Turkish features quite distant from the depictions on Greek vases or in Praxiteles' sculptures. On this occasion he recalls P. B. Shelley's visit to a Greek ship in Livorno with "a crowd that looked like Gypsies, yelling, gesturing, smoking, eating and playing cards like barbarians" (Herbert 2010e: 397), and concludes that "peoples have more important, more basic things to worry about than whether or not they resemble the ideals dreamt up by Romantic humanists" (Herbert 2010e: 398).

In fact, the contemporary Greece which Herbert cherishes is the peasant one: the "jittery ship full of noise, filth, unbearable odors, and wonderful life" (Herbert 2010e: 398), buses with hens, the airport like "a big meadow without goats or sheep" (Herbert 2010e: 439), the "meat and fruit neighborhood" in Heraklion with the "racket of a Turkish bazaar" (Herbert 2010e: 406), or Greek cuisine which is "rustic and fulfills one's dreams of paradise, where everything should be sweet and rich" (Herbert 2010e: 407). Despite such mythical Cretan *topoi* as the island and the ship – the *topoi* continually fostered by contemporary Greeks who trade myth as a tourist commodity by, for instance, naming ships after legendary heroes – he sums up his most memorable description of the Heraklion marketplace as "an appendage of Asia" (Herbert 2010e: 406).

He highlights the theatricality of both Cretan life²¹ and Cretan landscape: theatre seems to occasionally negotiate between reality and myth in his Greek essays. There is a sense of such theatricality in his correlation of food consumption in public places on the one hand, and fate or "the original sin of civilization" on the other:

In the middle of the little Venizelou Square there is the Venetian well of Morosini surrounded by restaurants and cafés – favoured spots of evening get-togethers. It was here I usually had dinner and pondered the [Minoan] catastrophe. For nothing encourages brooding on the end of the world so much as a pleasant August night, a sky full of peaceful stars and the surrounding bustle of people at dinner. (Herbert 2010e: 431)

This is probably one of the moments when the poet experiences "the contours of time, of past and present" beginning "to erode" (Herbert 2010e: 437). He tried "to trick fate out of one more day" to stay on Crete, telling

21. By describing, for instance, a butcher who "puts on a free show called 'quartering an ox'" and whom he compares to critics "hacking and ripping blindly" his literary output in the future (2010e: 407).

himself that "I need to see much more than [Heraklion and Knossos] because *to see means to believe*, and I wanted to believe in the reality of the Great Mother" (Herbert 2010e: 437, emphasis added). He could not bear being cast out of reality in this land conditioned by ancient history and myth but sought to associate all these dimensions in the way similar to his "patron saint's", *Sanctus Cicerone* Alexandros of Phaestos, who "resurrected life from stone and enthusiasm from the most blasé visitors" (Herbert 2010e: 437). Towards the end of Herbert's meditations on "the island of hypotheses", the poet formulates an invocation: "Ah, Alexandros, Alexandros, if you were always at my side I could move mountains ... We might ... make a covenant across time, reconcile the dead with the living" (Herbert 2010e: 438). Exactly this reconciliation is, in my opinion, a major conclusion of Herbert's journey, a covenant between antiquity and contemporaneity mediated by the Cretan landscape.

REFERENCES CITED

- Campbell, Joseph (2008), *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Novato: New World Library.
- Camus, Albert (2011), *L'étranger* (1942), e-books libres et gratuits, accessed 25 September 2014. http://www.ebooksgratuits.com/pdf/camus_l_etranger.pdf.
- Citko, Henryk (2014), Private correspondence, e-mail of 20-21 Oct.
- Drażyńska-Suchańska, Marta (2010), "Empatia – emocje i styl [Empathy: Emotions and Style]" in: *Pojęcia kiełkujące z rzeczy. Filozoficzne inspiracje twórczości Zbigniewa Herberta* [Concepts Sprouting from Things. Philosophical Inspirations in Zbigniew Herbert's Work], Kraków: Platan, 279-304.
- Eliade, Mircea (1963), *Myth and Reality* [Aspects du mythe], transl. Willard R. Trask, New York: Harper & Row.
- (1968), *The Sacred and the Profane*, transl. Willard R. Trask, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Feder, Lillian (1980), "Myth, poetry, and critical theory", in: J. P. Strelka (ed), *Literary Criticism and Myth*, London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 51-71.
- Freud, Sigmund (1953b), "A disturbance of memory on the Acropolis (1936)", in: James Strachey (ed), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XXII (1932-1936), London: Hogarth, 237-248. Quoted from: Michael Newman, accessed 25 September 2014. <http://pl.scribd.com/doc/68155992/A-Disturbance-of-Memory-on-the-Acropolis>, 1-6.
- Herbert, Zbigniew (1973), "Akropol i duszyczka [Acropolis and the Little Soul]", *Więź* 4.
- (1991), *Barbarzyńca w ogrodzie* [Barbarian in the Garden], Lublin: Test.
- (1993), "History of the Minotaur", in: *Mr. Cogito*, transl. John & Bogdana Carpenter, Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 37.
- (1999a), "Dziariusz grecki (Notatki) [The Greek Diary (Notes)], 1970", *Zeszyty Literackie* 68 (4): 43-61.
- (1999b), "Sztuka empatii. Rozmowa ze Zbigniewem Herbertem [The Art of Empathy: Interview with Zbigniew Herbert]", interview by Renata Górczyńska, *Zeszyty Literackie* 68 (4): 156-165.
- (2000a), *Labirynt nad morzem*, Warsaw: Zeszyty Literackie.
- (2000b), "Nota wydawcy [Editor's Note]", in: *Labirynt nad morzem*, 205-209.

- (2000c), *Poezje wybrane. Selected Poems*, transl. John & Bogdana Carpenter, Czesław Miłosz, & Peter Dale Scott, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
 - & Henryk Elzenberg (2002), *Korespondencja* [Letters], Warsaw: Zeszyty Literackie.
 - (2006a), "Herbert i Kochane zwierzątka {Listy do Magdaleny i Zbigniewa Czajkowskich} [Herbert and Beloved Animals. Letters to Magdalena & Zbigniew Czajkowski]", Warsaw: Rosner.
 - & Czesław Miłosz (2006b), *Korespondencja* [Letters], Warsaw: Zeszyty Literackie.
 - (2009a), *Collected Poems 1956-1998*, transl. Czesław Miłosz, Peter Dale Scott & Alissa Valles, London: Atlantic Books.
 - (2009b), "Holy Iona, czyli kartka z podróży [Holy Iona, or a Postcard from a Journey]", in: *Barbarzyńca w podróży* [Barbarian in the Journey], Warsaw: Biblioteka Polityki, 95-96.
 - (2010), *The Collected Prose 1948-1998*, ed. Alissa Valles, New York: Ecco.
- Herbert's essays from *The Collected Prose*:
- (2010a), "Acropolis" [from *Labyrinth on the Sea – LS*], transl. Alissa Valles, 395-525.
 - (2010b), "Among the Dorians" [from *Barbarian in the Garden*], transl. Michael March & Jarosław Anders, 14-25.
 - (2010c), "Antaeus", transl. John & Bogdana Carpenter or Alissa Valles, 307-311.
 - (2010d), "Attempt at a Description of the Greek Landscape" [from *Labyrinth on the Sea*], transl. Alissa Valles, 440-461.
 - (2010e), "Labyrinth on the Sea", transl. Alissa Valles, 395-439.
- Jakacka, Natalia (2005), "Współczucie dla Minotaura [Compassion for the Minotaur]", in: J. M. Ruszar (ed), *Czulość dla Minotaura*, Lublin: Gaudium, 25-29.
- Kawafis, Konstandinos [Cavafy, C. P.] (2011), *Jeżeli do Itaki wybierasz się w podróż...* [As you set out for Ithaca...], transl. Antoni Libera, Kraków: Znak.
- Kruczkowska, Joanna (2015), "Cavafy in Poland", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 39.2: 266-285.
- Ruszar, J. M. (ed) (2005), *Czulość dla Minotaura. Metafizyka i miłość konkretnego w twórczości Zbigniewa Herberta* [Tenderness for the Minotaur. Metaphysics and Love of the Real in Zbigniew Herbert's Work], Lublin: Gaudium.

Scott, Jill (2004), "Translating myth: the task of speaking time and space", in: Katherine M. Faull (ed), *Translation and Culture*, Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 58-72.

Terkenli, Theano (2001), "Towards a theory of the landscape: the Aegean landscape as a cultural image", in: *Landscape and Urban Planning* 57: 197-208.