

Čapská, Veronika: *Mezi texty a textiliemi. (Swéerts-)Šporkové, textové praxe a kulturní výměna na přelomu baroka a osvícenství [Between texts and textiles. The (Swéerts-)Sporck family, textual practices, and cultural exchange at the turn of the Baroque Period and the Enlightenment]*.

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Examining three striking themes that Veronika Čapská was engaged with years earlier – piety, self-presentation, and cultural transfer – her new book combines these motifs by evaluating an integrated body of sources originating in the circle of the (Swéerts-)Sporck family in the first half of the 18th century. The very title of the book employs concepts that, in a study of texts, concentrate especially on their social and material nature. Without disregarding what the texts are actually saying, Čapská focuses her attention on, in particular, the social processes connected with the production, reproduction, patronage, translation, and distribution of texts. She combines approaches from literary theory, history, and social anthropology while making use of behaviour theory and action theory for her overall perspective. The specific (Swéerts-)Sporck material has allowed her to look at literary practice in a somewhat surprising analogy with the production and movement of textiles – which in many respects fulfilled the same or similar role as books did in the (Swéerts-)Sporck environment. That is where the title *Between Texts and Textiles* comes from, which is not only an allusion to the well-known etymological relationship of the words *text* and *textile* (from the Latin term *texere*, to weave), but also refers to the particular functional analogy between texts and artefacts. In turn, the title blurs the boundary between the two terms.

Unlike previous research into the Sporck family, with interest in Count Franz Anton Sporck (1662-1738) predominating, Čapská focuses primarily on Sporck's two daughters, Maria Elenora (1687-1717) and especially Anna Katharina (1689-1754), and places them in the role of main actors. Although their intellectual activity was in many respects directed by their father, both nevertheless followed their own aims and ambitions. To such ends, Čapská sees the main source of their emancipation being, for the most part, connected to their religious environment, which, together with their aristocratic upbringing, had extreme influence on their disposition.

The book is divided into five parts that map out various types of textual practice. The first is devoted to the translation activities of the Sporck sisters in the period 1702-1725. Čapská starts from contemporary translational concepts that regard translation as a form of authorship that is even more important because the translation represents essentially a more extensive body of texts than the original. Čapská begins the chapter with Lawrence Venuti's classification of translations into

domestication and foreignization. Although she tries to break away from the dichotomy between “faithful” and “free” translation – while presenting translation fundamentally as an aesthetic, self-disciplinary practice that, among other things, helped the recently ennobled family to consolidate its social status – it is apparent that the issue of fidelity is not so easy to leave behind. This is all the more true considering that the entire translation discourse of the time circled around the notion. Čapská shows how the category of fidelity functioned – or rather, failed to function – in the translations undertaken by Maria Elenora and Anna Katharina against the backdrop of contemporary conventions that perceived translation – unlike authorship – in feminine terms (“unfaithful beauty”). They added their own forewords, or whole chapters, to the texts they translated, shifted their meanings, and adapted them to the domestic cultural environment, thereby crossing the border between translation and authorship.

Čapská’s theme in chapter two is the commissioning of texts to exhibit the prestige of the family. A significant generational change comes with the ascent of the new generation. While Count Sporck commissioned prestigious documents addressed in the first place to readers in aristocratic circles, his heir Anna Katharina and her husband Franz Karl Swéerts-Sporck (1688-1758) put emphasis on less remarkable homiletic and biographical compositions, particularly sermons linked with rituals of transition. Čapská focuses on the writings of two clergymen in the service of the Sporcks, Wilhelm Löhrer (1669-1750) and Gregor Zinck (1708-1770), members of the Servite Order. In their biographies of the Sporcks, they project a model of sainthood in the case of Anna Katharina and the somewhat delicate motif of the reformed sinner in the case of Franz Karl.

The subject of the third chapter is the patronage of personal devotional literature (*Erbauungsliteratur*), motivated on the one hand by an effort to ignite religious fervour, and on the other hand by the high childhood mortality in the (Swéerts-)Sporck family and the endeavour to preserve the life and health of the single male heir. Čapská confirms the conclusions of earlier research that considers the expansion of this type of literature at the beginning of the 18th century as an instrument to cultivate emotion and self-reflection. Of great benefit, as well as strikingly unusual in the context of literary practice, is the family’s connection to the anthropology of the gift. Focusing on this connection, the author not only explains the distribution of the books printed by the (Swéerts-)Sporcks, but also the profit they made from their extensive book patronage.

The fourth chapter deals with the manuals on economics authored by Franz Karl based on his own experience as a manager and on his reading. According to Čapská, an important feature of these texts is the close connection of economics to religion and the all-pervading topic of order. However, it is interesting that Franz Karl did not have these books printed but used his knowledge of economics to secure the favour of important aristocrats, who he advised on how to restructure their management productively. These activities allowed him to strategically reinforce his own social position.

In the last part, Čapská focuses on Anna Katharina’s correspondence with the monks of the Sonnenburg monastery in Tyrol. Firstly, she indicates the extremely

performative nature of the epistolography of the time, which enabled Anna Katharina to be active through textual practices. In addition, Čapská uses the letters as an important source to not only provide specific data about the numbers of books the (Swéerts-)Sporcks distributed through the monasteries in Sonnenburg and Innsbruck, but also to reconstruct the poorly investigated paths these books took from writing to production to distribution. At the same time, she also understands all these textual practices as various media forms of cultural transfer. For example, in the chapter on translation, she shows how through text production and distribution Spanish and French mysticism penetrated the lands of the Habsburg monarchy; in the chapter on devotional texts, she presents the way in which mystical and ascetic models of saintliness from the Roman Catholic lands of southern Europe became a part of personal biographies; and in the chapter on correspondence, she observes that Anna Katharina introduced the Tyrolean type of embroidery with beads and enamel to the Bohemian lands.

Like every inspirational work, Čapská's book raises a number of questions on the margins of the topic, which are only mentioned by the author or only emerge from her conclusions. Although the activities of the (Swéerts-)Sporcks undoubtedly supported the literization of society, as Čapská assumes with great enthusiasm, one has to reflect on what type of reader (and readership) they helped to shape. Such a reflection poses, for instance, the very basic question to what extent did the books that the (Swéerts-)Sporcks published and distributed contribute to the development of praxeological forms of reading – that is, reading aimed at pursuing specific practices, especially religious ones (prayer and so on) – or whether they were able to cultivate the critical thinking of readers as well.

Thanks to new sources that have remained until now on the edge of scholarly interest and which Čapská, with her sense of subversion, calls “marginal sources”, she uncovers “marginalized” textual practice and “marginalized” actors, which through her anthropological perspective acquire new dimensions and meanings.