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From the history of Polish adult education theory and practice in the Third Republic of Poland. The Academic Andragogy Society (1993–2023)

Z dziejów polskiej teorii i praktyki edukacji dorosłych w III Rzeczypospolitej. Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne (1993–2023)

Streszczenie. W 2023 r. mija 30. rocznica powołania do życia ogólnopolskiego społecznego podmiotu naukowego o nazwie Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne (ATA). Artykuł przypomina genezę jego powstania, historię i przemiany organizacyjne oraz najważniejsze kierunki działań podejmowanych na przestrzeni minionych trzech dekad.

Autor podejmuje również próbę oceny dotychczasowych dokonań Akademickiego Towarzystwa Andragogicznego w najważniejszych z wyznaczonych w chwili powstania obszarów jego działania. Całość jest zatem interesującym przyczynkiem do dziejów teorii i praktyki polskiej edukacji dorosłych oraz społecznego ruchu naukowego w obrębie nauk społecznych w III RP.

Słowa kluczowe: Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne (1993–2023), andragogika polska, edukacja dorosłych w Polsce, historia polskiej edukacji dorosłych

Abstract: The year 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Academic Andragogy Society (*in Polish*: Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne, ATA), a nationwide social research organization based in Poland. The article

reflects on its origins, history, organizational transformations, and the most important trends in its activity over the past three decades.

The author also tries to assess the achievements of the Academic Andragogy Society in the key areas of its activity specified upon its establishment. The article is an interesting contribution to the history and practice of Polish adult education and the social research movement in social sciences in the Third Republic of Poland.

Keywords: Academic Andragogy Society (1993–2023), Polish andragogy, adult education in Poland, history of Polish adult education

Introduction*

Scientific societies, as defined by the Ossolineum's *Encyklopedia oświaty i kultury dorosłych* [Encyclopaedia of Adult Education and Culture], are “voluntary, non-profit, and self-governing associations of individuals, at least some of whom are engaged in scientific and research activities, formed and maintained to facilitate the development of science” (Rolbiecki, 1986, p. 337) [own translation]. These societies have a long and distinguished tradition in Poland. In fact, the oldest one was established as early as 1720 in Gdańsk under the name *Societas Litteraria (Towarzystwo Literackie)* [Literary Society], dedicated to “the study of philosophical, legal, and historical questions” (Mokrzecki, 2010, p. 23) [own translation]. Subsequently, during the 18th century in the First Republic of Poland similar societies were established in various parts of the country.

The scientific association movement did not die out on Polish soil during the Partitions. In 1918, when a free Poland emerged after 123 years of subjugation, this movement flourished in various directions, currents, and forms, channelling social scientific activity and organizing it around science.

Despite significant ideological and legal-organizational constraints, scientific associations managed to sustain their activities with varying degrees of intensity throughout the post-war decades, including the commu-

* This outline is based on the author's two papers published in the *Andragogy Yearbook* in the following years: Maliszewski, 2018, pp. 41–58; Maliszewski, 2021, pp. 190–209.

nist era. At least some of these associations were able to seize opportunities that arose, particularly during the periods of successive political thaw.

The democratization of socio-political life in Poland after June 1989 also led to a significantly greater freedom of association, a development enthusiastically embraced by many scientific organizations that went on to establish their own societies. In the autumn of 1993, on the wave of social change that was also sweeping through the higher education environment, a new national scientific society was founded whose task, as its founders stated, was to organize various activities “for andragogy and adult education in higher education institutions” (RA, 1994, p. 192). The society was called the “Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne” [Academic Andragogy Society] (ATA).

The newly established Society’s scope of work was delineated in a multifaceted and expansive manner, defining more than a dozen areas of future scientific and socio-educational activities. This suggests that the founders aimed to create an entity that could comprehensively address both national and international andragogical issues while also aspiring to hold a significant position within social circles that animated the scientific life of our country.

In 2023, as the Academic Andragogy Society celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, it is worth even briefly revisiting its origins and history, as well as attempting to outline its achievements to date and to evaluate the activities undertaken over the last three decades.*

The origins of the Society

The idea of establishing a separate scientific society that would bring together experts in andragogy began to take shape in the early 1990s. As time passed, the necessity of forming an organization to consolidate the scattered activities of researchers and academic teachers in the field of adult education became more evident (RA, 1994, pp. 192–194; Pólturzycki,

* Extensive information about the activities and attempts to summarize and evaluate the achievements of the Academic Andragogy Society can be found in articles published in the *Andragogy Yearbook* on its fifteenth, twentieth, and twenty-fifth anniversaries (cf. Pólturzycki, 2007, pp. 21–46; Skibińska, 2012, pp. 79–88; Maliszewski, 2018, pp. 41–58).

1995/1996, pp. 15–24).^{*} The matter was further discussed during subsequent seminars, meetings, and within the Adult Education Team of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Aleksander, 2009, p. 406). Following the discussions among the Polish adult education experts during the Łódź conference titled “Profesjonalizacja akademickiego kształcenia andragogicznego” [Professionalisation of Adult Higher Education] held on 25–28 August 1993, an initiative group of seven members was formed.^{**} The efforts to establish an independent association of andragogists accelerated significantly, and the association was formally registered after just four months (see Table 1).

Table 1. The calendar of the activities for the establishment of the Academic Andragogy Society (Aug–Dec 1993)

Date	Place	Action
28 Aug 1993	Łódź	formation of the initiative group for the Society's establishment
20 Sep 1993	Toruń	presentation of the Society's goals and statutes, and the selection of the Society's name
28 Sep 1993	Łódź	foundation meeting: adoption of the Society's statutes and the election of authorities
31 Dec 1993	Warsaw	Society's registration by the Voivodeship Court in Warsaw, 7th Civil and Registry Division ^{***}

Source: RA, 1994, p. 192; Skibińska, 2012, p. 79.

* See the homepage of the Academic Andragogy Society (<http://www.ata.edu.pl>).

** It was composed of the following professors (listed in alphabetical order): Tadeusz Aleksander (JU), Olga Czerniawska (UL), Józef Kargul (UWr), Franciszek Marek (WSP in Opole), Józef Pólturzycki (UW), Lucjan Turowski (UW), and Eugenia Anna Wesołowska (NCU).

*** As noted by Ewa Skibińska (2012, p. 79), a change in the registration status of the ATA occurred after 15 years: “Due to a change in legislation, on 21 October 2008, the Academic Andragogy Society was entered in the National Court Register, kept by the District Court for the capital city of Warsaw, 12th Economic Division of the National Court Register, under number: KRS0000316711” [own translation].

Statutory authorities in historical perspective

The General Assembly

The highest authority of the Academic Andragogy Society is the General Assembly, which convenes every three years. Its competences encompass a range of responsibilities, including formulating the Society's programme and strategic directions, evaluating task completion, adopting and amending the Statutes, determining membership fees, electing the President and seven other members of the General Board, as well as appointing other Society officials, such as the three-member Audit Committee and the three-member Collegiate Court (Articles 18–21 of the Statutes of the Academic Andragogy Society as of 28 September 1993, hereafter referred to as the Statutes).

Throughout the ATA's history, ten General Assemblies have taken place, all focusing on reporting and electing. Although the Statutes allow for such a possibility, during the course of the Society's thirty years of operation, there has never been a need for an Extraordinary General Assembly. This demonstrates the Society's consistent, harmonious, and transparent functioning, successfully avoiding potential challenges and disruptions.

The General Assemblies held on 28 September 1993, 24 January 2008, and 12 June 2017 stand out as particularly important events in the ATA's history. As previously mentioned, the first marked the official commencement of the Society's activities through the approval of the Statutes and the election of authorities. The two subsequent General Assemblies led to changes in the position of the President of the ATA Board.

The Academic Andragogy Society's tenth General Assembly took place in Łódź on 27 June 2022, following two postponements due to the coronavirus pandemic – in accordance with national legislation and the ATA Statutes.*

General Board of the ATA

The main responsibilities of the ATA Board encompass overseeing the Society's daily operations, such as managing assets, executing resolutions made during the General Assembly, managing the admission and exclusion of members, and representing the Society outside. Between consec-

* For the detailed legal basis, see Maliszewski, 2022, pp. 25–26.

utive General Assemblies, the General Board is authorized to make decisions on the Society's organizational issues falling within the competence of the General Assembly, if necessary. However, these decisions require approval from the subsequent General Assembly of the ATA members (Article 23 of the Statutes). It is evident, therefore, that the effective and seamless day-to-day operation of the entire organization as well as the proper implementation of its policies depend of the efficiency and dedication of the General Board and its President.

Prof. dr hab. Józef Pólturzycki was elected the first President of the General Board of the Academic Andragogy Society. He held this position for five consecutive three-year terms, until January 2008 when he resigned from standing for re-election for the sixth term.

The first term General Board consisted of seven other members, elected by the first General Assembly. Pursuant to the ATA Statutes (Articles 21–22), two Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and three Board members were elected from within this group.

Table 2. The composition of the ATA General Board for terms 1 to 5 (28 Sep 1993 to 24 Jan 2008)

No.	Name and surname	Position
1.	prof. dr hab. Józef Pólturzycki	President of the Board
2.	prof. dr hab. Olga Czerniawska	Vice President
3.	prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Aleksander	Vice President
4.	dr hab. Janina Elżbieta Karney, UW Professor	Treasurer
5.	prof. dr hab. Eugenia Anna Wesolowska	Secretary
6.	prof. dr hab. Józef Kargul	Member
7.	prof. dr hab. Franciszek Marek	Member
8.	dr hab. Lucjan Turowski, UW Professor	Member

Source: <http://nauka-polska.pl>; Pólturzycki, 2007, pp. 21–22.

The General Assembly convened in Warsaw on 24 January 2008 marked a change in the leadership of the ATA General Board. Dr hab. Ewa Skibińska, UW Professor, was appointed President of the Board. She held this position for three terms until 2017, which clearly shows that the members of the Academic Andragogy Society highly appreciated her professional competence and her management of the Board's operations.

The seven remaining individuals who were elected to the General Board in January 2008 also extended their social mandate to continue serving on the Board for two consecutive terms during the General Reporting and Election Assemblies of 2011 and 2014. However, there were minor adjustments in the roles or affiliations of certain members within the Board. Notably, there were three instances of scientific promotions.*

For the purposes of this paper, the composition of the three General Boards, all chaired by President E. Skibińska, is presented in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3. The composition of the ATA Board for the 6th term (24 Jan 2008 to 14 Apr 2011)

No.	Name and surname	Position
1.	dr hab. Ewa Skibińska, UW Professor	President of the Board
2.	dr hab. Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec, NCU Professor	Vice President
3.	dr hab. Agnieszka Stopińska-Pająk, US Professor	Vice President
4.	dr Wojciech Horyń	Treasurer
5.	dr Krzysztof Pierścieniak	Secretary
6.	dr hab. Zofia Szarota, UP Professor	Member
7.	dr Artur Fabiś	Member
8.	dr Tomasz Maliszewski	Member

Source: Antosz, 2007, p. 261.

Table 4. The composition of the ATA Board for the 7th term (14 Apr 2011 to 15 May 2014) and for the 8th term (15 May 2014 to 12 Jun 2017)

No.	Name and surname	Position
1.	dr hab. Ewa Skibińska, UW Professor	President of the Board
2.	dr hab. Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec, NCU Professor	Vice President
3.	dr hab. Agnieszka Stopińska-Pająk, WSB Professor	Vice President
4.	dr hab. Wojciech Horyń, WSH and later AWL Professor	Treasurer
5.	dr Tomasz Maliszewski	Secretary

* **Habilitations:** Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec, 10 November 2009 (see the *Andragogy Yearbook*, 2009, pp. 429–431; Zofia Szarota, 16 November 2010 (see the *Andragogy Yearbook*, 2010, pp. 281–283; Wojciech Horyn, 21 June 2011 (see <http://nauka-polska.pl>).

Table 4. The composition of the ATA Board for the 7th term (continued)

No.	Name and surname	Position
6.	dr hab. Zofia Szarota, UP Professor	Member
7.	dr Artur Fabiś	Member
8.	dr Krzysztof Pierścieniak	Member

Source: Maliszewski, 2011, p. 366; 2014, p. 562.

In its 30th year of existence, the Academic Andragogy Society is led by its third President, dr hab. Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec, NCU Professor, who was elected to this position twice – for the ninth and tenth terms, counting from 1993. The first election took place at the General Assembly in Warsaw on 12 June 2017. The other seven members of the ATA General Board for the ninth term were also appointed. In comparison to previous years, there was one personnel change (Table 5).

Table 5. The composition of the ATA Board for the 9th term (12 Jun 2017 to 27 Jun 2022)

No.	Name and surname	Position
1.	dr hab. Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec, NCU Professor	President of the Board
2.	prof. dr hab. Elżbieta Dubas (UL)	Vice President
3.	dr hab. Agnieszka Stopińska-Pająk, AWSB Professor	Vice President
4.	dr hab. Wojciech Horyń, AWL Professor	Treasurer
5.	dr hab. Tomasz Maliszewski, AMW Professor	Secretary
6.	dr hab. Zofia Szarota, UP Professor	Member
7.	dr hab. Artur Fabiś, UP Professor	Member
8.	dr Krzysztof Pierścieniak (UW)	Member

Source: Litawa, 2017; Maliszewski, 2017.

In the summer of 2022, dr hab. Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec was re-elected as President of the Society's General Board. Significant changes in the composition of the ATA Board also occurred at that time (see Table 6).

Table 6. The composition of the ATA Board for the 10th term (27 Jun 2022 to the present)

Position	Name and surname
President of the Board	dr hab. Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec, NCU Professor
Vice President	dr hab. Tomasz Maliszewski, AMW Professor
Vice President	dr hab. Agnieszka Stopińska-Pająk, AWSB Professor
Treasurer	dr hab. Martyna Pryszmont (UWr)
Secretary	dr hab. Wojciech Horyń, AWL Professor
Member	dr hab. Agata Chabior, JKU Professor
Member	dr hab. Beata Cyboran, UP Professor
Member	dr Ewa Dębska (UW)

Source: Maliszewski, 2022, p. 29.

Audit Committee

Another significant statutory body of the Academic Andragogy Society is the Audit Committee. It is responsible for conducting regular reviews of the Society's activities. This encompasses evaluating procedures related to the acquisition and allocation of financial resources, as well as reporting to the General Assembly and recommending the approval (or denial) of the discharge of the outgoing Board (Article 27 of the Statutes). Given its powers, the Audit Committee plays a significant role in ensuring the effective functioning of the ATA. It controls the actions of both the President and the General Board, acting on behalf of all members of the Society.

Between 28 September 1993 and 24 January 2008, spanning the first fifteen years of the ATA's existence (the Society's authorities terms 1–5), the Audit Committee was chaired by dr hab. Jerzy Semków, UWr Professor.

The composition of the Audit Committee during the subsequent four terms of the Academic Andragogy Society's authorities is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. The composition of the ATA Audit Committees from 2008 to the present

Term	Chairman	Deputy Chairman	Secretary
6: 24/01/2008–14/04/2011	dr hab. Elżbieta Dubas, UL Professor	prof. dr hab. Józef Kargul	dr hab. Jerzy Semków, UWr Professor
7: 14/04/2011–15/05/2014	dr hab. Elżbieta Dubas, UL Professor	prof. dr hab. Józef Kargul	dr hab. Jerzy Semków, WSA Professor
8: 15/05/2014–12/06/2017	prof. dr hab. Elżbieta Dubas, UL Professor	dr Beata Cyboran	dr Renata Konieczna- -Woźniak
9: 12/06/2017–27/06/2022	dr Beata Cyboran	dr Renata Konieczna- -Woźniak	dr hab. Agata Chabior, JKU Professor
10: 27/06/2022– to the present	dr Małgorzata Olejarz, UZ Professor	dr hab. Agnieszka Szplit, JKU Professor	dr Aleksandra Litawa

Source: Antosz, 2007, p. 261; Majchrzak, 2014; Litawa, 2017; Maliszewski, 2022, p. 29.

Collegiate Court

The fourth and the last element of authority of the Academic Andragogy Society is the Collegiate Court (Articles 30–34 of the Statutes). According to the Statutes, the Court’s responsibilities include addressing disputes or conflicts. This, for example, involves resolving instances of members’ non-compliance with the Society’s regulations and decisions, or handling complaints pertaining to violations of broadly defined rules of collegiality, provided that only cases “arising within the scope of the Society’s activities” are subject to consideration. Depending on the seriousness of the offence and the attitude of the accused, the Collegiate Court possesses the authority to impose a range of punishments on ATA members, varying from a warning to expulsion from the Society.

The reassuring fact is that throughout the 30-year existence of the Academic Andragogy Society, there has never been an occasion where this authority had to initiate a procedure and enforce any of the sanctions specified in the Statutes against a member of the Society.

The first General Assembly of the ATA members, held at the end of September 1993, appointed doc. dr Mieczysław Marczuk from the University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska in Lublin as the Chairman of the Collegiate Court (RA, 1994, p. 192). The composition of the Collegiate Court over the past decade is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8. The composition of the ATA Collegiate Courts from 2008 to the present

Term	Chairperson	Deputy Chairperson	Secretary
6: 24/01/2008–14/04/2011 and 7: 14/04/2011–15/05/2014	dr Grażyna Orzechowska	dr Anna Panek	dr Joanna Stelmaszczyk
8: 15/05/2014–12/06/2017 and 9: 12/06/2017–27/06/2022	dr Monika Sulik	dr Agnieszka Majewska- -Kafarowska	dr hab. Sylwia Słowińska, UZ Professor
10: 27/06/2022– to the present	dr Monika Sulik	dr Agnieszka Majewska- -Kafarowska	dr Kinga Majchrzak-Ptak

Source: Antosz, 2007, p. 261; Majchrzak, 2014; Litawa, 2017; Maliszewski, 2022, p. 29.

Members of the Academic Andragogy Society (1993–2023)

The Statutes of the Academic Andragogy Society, adopted on 28 September 1993, recognize two types of membership: ordinary and honorary.

Ordinary membership

Ordinary membership in the Academic Andragogy Society is open to academic teachers, researchers, teachers, and organizers of adult education (Article 10 of the Statutes).

Individuals who participated in the meetings held in Toruń and Łódź in the latter half of September 1993 are recognized as the founding group of the ATA (see Table 1). They declared their willingness to contribute to the establishment of an independent association of andragogists by providing their personal details and signing one of two collective lists. At that time, 41 individuals signed either the Toruń or Łódź list and were designated as the founding members of the Academic Andragogy Society (RA, 1994, p. 192; Pólturzycki, 2007, p. 22).

According to the provisions in the Statutes, next individuals seeking membership in the ATA must receive recommendations from at least two active members and submit a written declaration. As previously mentioned, the decision to admit new members rests with the General Board, which determines such matters through resolutions (Article 11 of the Statutes).

Table 9. Members of the Academic Andragogy Society (1993–2023)

Year	Number of members
1993	41
2008	68
2013	82
2018	83
2022	82
2023	84

Source: *List of founding members...* [no date]; Maliszewski, 2018; Pryszynt, 2022.

Honorary membership

Since the inception of the Academic Andragogy Society, there has been a provision in the Statutes that gives the General Assembly the authority to confer the title of Honorary Member on individuals from Poland and abroad who have demonstrated exceptional contributions in the field of adult education and andragogy. This requires a General Assembly resolution approved by a two-thirds majority (Article 12 of the Statutes).

This provision was first applied after 15 years of the Society's establishment, in January 2008. Prof. dr hab. Józef Półturzycki,^{*} the first President of the ATA, and four other distinguished professors who actively contributed to the Society (see Table 10) were honoured with the title in recognition for their contributions to the Society's activities and growth. Dr hab. Ewa Skibińska and dr hab. Jerzy Semków, both distinguished individuals, were granted honorary membership during the General Assembly of Members in the summer of 2022.

Table 10. Honorary Members of the Academic Andragogy Society

No.	Name and surname	Resolution date
1.	prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Aleksander	24 Jan 2008
2.	prof. dr hab. Olga Czerniawska	24 Jan 2008

* Professor Józef Półturzycki was also awarded the title of Honorary President of the ATA (see <http://www.ata.edu.pl/czlonkostwo.html>).

Table 10. Honorary Members of the Academic Andragogy Society (continued)

No.	Name and surname	Resolution date
3.	prof. dr hab. Józef Kargul	24 Jan 2008
4.	prof. dr hab. Józef Pólturzycki	24 Jan 2008
5.	prof. dr hab. Eugenia A. Wesołowska	24 Jan 2008
6.	dr hab. Jerzy Semków	27 Jun 2022
7.	dr hab. Ewa Skibińska	27 Jun 2022

Source: Antosz, 2007, pp. 262–263; Maliszewski, 2022, p. 30.

The Society currently has 84 members, including four Honorary Members, following the deaths of Professor Olga Czerniawska (1930–2020), Professor Józef Pólturzycki (1934–2021), and Professor Eugenia A. Wesołowska (1929–2016).

The Society's selected activity directions in years 1993–2023

Primary focus areas

Now, years later, it is worth revisiting some of the key areas on which the Society intended to focus, as outlined in the Statutes adopted during the foundation meeting of the Academic Andragogy Society in Łódź on 23 September 1993. These areas include (based on Article 7 of the Statutes):

- a) organizing, developing, and improving various forms of university adult education, including the education and training of adult education specialists in academic circles;
- b) developing andragogy as a theory of adult education, increasing its scientific contributions, and promoting its dissemination through publications and lectures at teacher training and educational sciences faculties;
- c) conducting research and fostering innovations in adult education, andragogy, and related sciences to advance adult learning and education;
- d) organizing and running non-academic adult education forums using university resources, including courses, adult schools, folk

- high schools, open universities, summer schools and universities, and distance learning;
- e) collaborating with open adult education institutions as well as private and social organizations to promote andragogy, deliver teacher training, engage in methodological and curricular development, provide expert opinions, and explore diverse forms of educational collaboration;
 - f) promoting national traditions in adult education, contemporary developments in adult education in other countries, and the efforts of international organizations in this field;
 - g) running an independent journal on andragogy and adult education, initiating publications and other forms of sharing information and experiences, including the organization of national adult education conferences;
 - h) advocating educational policy and adult education stances to the authorities of the Republic of Poland, including the Sejm and Senate, the Government of the Republic of Poland, specific ministries, social and trade unions, and various educational institutions;
 - i) collaborating with other Polish educational associations for the advancement of adult education and andragogical thinking and engaging in joint initiatives with international sister associations.

It is worth attempting to assess the extent to which the tasks assigned to the Society three decades ago have been successfully implemented.

Let us try. It appears certain that all the objectives outlined in the Statutes of the Academic Andragogy Society in the early 1990s have been successfully fulfilled. In many instances, the “fulfilment” within the individual areas of activity mentioned above has evolved into (long-)lasting, even systematic solutions. This has been confirmed by earlier analyses, including the one conducted in 2008 on the occasion of the Society’s fifteenth anniversary by prof. dr hab. Józef Pólturzycki, then President of the General Board (Pólturzycki, 2007, pp. 21–46), another in 2013 for the Society’s twentieth anniversary by dr hab. Ewa Skibińska, UW Professor, the next President of ATA (Skibińska, 2013, pp. 79–88), as well as two papers published in the *Andragogy Yearbook* for the quarter century of the ATA (Maliszewski, 2018, pp. 41–58; Solarczyk-Szwec, 2018, pp. 59–64).*

* To avoid the repetition, the author of this article directs the Reader to these papers.

The results of the analysis of the Academic Andragogy Society's achievements further confirm these observations. Let us briefly review the Society's most significant courses of action.

Selected examples of the ATA activities

Let us begin with the publishing activity. Since its establishment, the Society has been publishing two scientific periodicals. They have been regularly included in the Ministry of Education and Science's (formerly the Ministry of Science and Higher Education) successive lists of ranked journals. The first journal is *Edukacja Dorosłych* [Adult Education], with dr hab. Agnieszka Stopińska-Pająk, AWSB Professor, as the editor-in-chief since 2018, and the second is *Rocznik Andragogiczny* [Andragogy Yearbook], with dr hab. Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec, NCU Professor, as the editor-in-chief since 2013. Both these journals serve as important platforms for scientific communication among Polish specialists in the theory and practice of adult education and culture. For many years, the ATA also published its own serial publication titled *Biblioteka Edukacji Dorosłych* [Adult Education Library], which released numerous single and multi-author monographs on a wide range of andragogical issues in Poland and abroad. The most recent 46th volume was published in 2015 and was dedicated to prof. dr hab. Olga Czerniawska on her 85th jubilee birthday (Woźnicka (ed.), 2015). Time will tell if and when next volumes of the *Library* will be published.

As far as the scientific activity is concerned, for many years the most significant endeavours have been Polish National Andragogy Congresses. They always bring together not only members of the Academic Andragogy Society but also numerous other theorists and practitioners interested in adult education in its broadest sense. They offer a platform for presenting research findings and reflections, and an opportunity for discussion with fellow participants. Four Congresses have been organized so far (Table 11), each in collaboration between the ATA and a selected academic community.

Table 11. Polish National Andragogy Congresses (2009–2022)

No.	Title	Place	Date	Co-organizer
1.	"Edukacja dorosłych jako czynnik rozwoju społecznego" [Adult education as a factor of social development]	Kraków	23–24/06/2009	The Department of Social Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Institute of Pedagogy, Jagielloonian University (and other)
2.	"Teoria i praktyka edukacji dorosłych w procesie zmian" [Adult education theory and practice in the process of change]	Toruń	15–16/05/2013	The Faculty of Education, Nicolas Copernicus University in Toruń
3.	"Dorośli w edukacji. Nowe konteksty, odmienne perspektywy, innowacyjne rozwiązania" [Adults in education. New contexts, new perspectives, innovative solutions]	Warszawa	12–13/06/2017	The Faculty of Education, the University of Warsaw
4.	"Edukacja dorosłych – w stronę zrównoważonego rozwoju" [Adult education – towards sustainable development]	Łódź	27–28/06/2023	the Department of Andragogy and Social Gerontology, the University of Łódź

Source: Romanowska, 2009, p. 38; Majchrzak & Solarczyk-Szwec, 2013, p. 29; Skibińska, 2017, p. 1; Dubas, 2022, p. 14.

Throughout its existence, the Academic Andragogy Society has organized numerous scientific conferences, and it continues to do so. Some of these conferences were recurring events, such as the "Toruńskie Konferencje Andragogiczne" [Toruń Andragogy Conferences] held from 1993 to 2000, the "Konferencje Dolnośląskiego Koła ATA" [Lower Silesian ATA Circle Conferences] from 2001 to 2008, and the "Zakopiańskie Konferencje Andragogiczne" [Zakopane Andragogy Conferences] from 2004 to 2018. Others were one-time events, often organized to commemorate anniversaries and conducted in collaboration with various academic institutions and educational organizations from both Poland and abroad (see <http://www.ata.edu.pl/konferencje.html>). Since June 2021, the Society has regularly organized

online national discussion seminars, drawing from the experiences of its members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The increasing scientific reputation of the Society is evident in the fact that the ATA has received requests from various organizations over the years, seeking its endorsement for seminars, conferences, and other events. There are several such requests every year, including international initiatives.

Since its inception, the Academic Andragogy Society has been dedicated to fostering the scientific and professional development of the younger generation of adult education theorists and practitioners. An important tradition of the ATA in this respect was the organization of Summer Schools for Young Andragogists (their last editions were organized as Summer Schools for Andragogists and Counsellors), which was a scientific initiative for the younger members of the Polish andragogy community. They were supervised by prof. dr hab. Józef Kargul. Between 1999 and 2015, sixteen editions of Summer Schools for Young Andragogists took place in Zielona Góra and Wrocław (Matusiak, 2015, pp. 393–401).

It is worth noting that in recent years, the Academic Andragogy Society has not only continued successful endeavours from the past but also sought new opportunities and embraced new challenges. One of the most significant recent initiatives of the Society has been the establishment of the annual Academic Andragogy Society Award for a Scientific Monograph in Andragogy. Prof. dr Józef Kargul chaired the award committee until 2020, and prof. dr Elżbieta Dubas serves as the committee chair for the years 2021 to 2024. Five individuals have so far received this award for publications (see Table 12).

Table 12. The ATA awards for outstanding monographs in andragogy

Year	Author	Bibliographical description of monograph
2018	Sylvia Słowińska	<i>Sensy oddolnych inicjatyw kulturalnych w interpretacji ich realizatorów</i> [The meaning of grassroots cultural initiatives as interpreted by their implementers]. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, Zielona Góra 2017 [ISBN 978-83-7842-301-0]

Table 12. The ATA awards for outstanding monographs in andragogy (continued)

Year	Author	Bibliographical description of monograph
2019	Arkadiusz Wąsiński	<i>Autokreacja małżonków bezdzietnych do wielowymiarowego rodzicielstwa adopcyjnego. Perspektywa pedagogiczno-antropologiczna</i> [Multidimensional adoptive parenting: childless couples' self-creation – an educational-anthropological perspective]. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2018 [ISBN 978-83-8142-049-5, e-ISBN 978-83-8142-050-1]
2020	Joanna Golonka-Legut	<i>Edukacyjny potencjał indywidualnego doświadczenia życiowego</i> [Educational potential of individual life experience]. Oficyna Wydawnicza „Atut”, Wrocław 2019 [ISBN 978-83-7977-406-7]
2021	Monika Chmielecka	<i>Transformacja w coachingu. Doświadczenia uczenia się dorosłych</i> [Transformation in coaching. Adult learning experiences]. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2020 [ISBN 978-83-8142-713-5, e-ISBN 978-83-8142-714-2]
2021	Martyna Pryszmont	<i>Metodologia jako sztuka wyjścia. Podejście badawcze i praktyki edukacyjne w andragogicznych studiach nad macierzyństwem</i> [Methodology as the art of exit. Research approaches and educational practices in andragogical maternity studies]. Oficyna Wydawnicza „Atut”, Wrocław 2020 [ISBN 978-83-7977-505-7]

Source: <http://www.ata.edu.pl/nagroda-za-wybitna-monografie.html>; Maliszewski, 2021, pp. 201–202.

Conclusions

As mentioned in the introduction to this overview, scientific societies in Poland have a rich history of more than three hundred years. From this perspective, the Academic Andragogy Society, despite its 30-year existence, remains a young and still developing organization. Given the specific nature of the Polish scientific community dedicated to the theory and practice of adult education, it also remains relatively modest in size. Nevertheless, based on the analyses conducted so far and a review of over two hundred reports published in successive volumes of the *Andragogy Yearbook*, which detail the Society's activities, its participatory roles, or ini-

tatives carried out under its patronage* from 1993 to 2023, along with about one hundred reviews and discussions of publications authored by its members,** either within the Society or initiated by it, it becomes evident that the accomplishments of the Academic Andragogy Society during the past thirty years are remarkable both in quantity and diversity. Moreover, as many authors have pointed out, the Society's accomplishments carry considerable scientific significance and maintain a high level of quality.

Certainly, much of this success can be attributed to the scientific and social involvement of individual ATA members. Equally important have been the development and promotion strategies adeptly formulated by successive presidents and general boards. These strategies have received validation through assessments by successive audit committees, in conjunction with relevant guidelines and resolutions adopted during general assemblies. The collaborative synergy effect has also played a pivotal role in these achievements.

Thus, as highlighted by prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Aleksander, an Honorary Member of the ATA, in his textbook on andragogy a dozen years ago, the Academic Andragogy Society is an important entity performing “an integrative and coordinating function [...] for the andragogical environment in our country” (Aleksander, 2009, p. 405) and stands as a significant institution that “influences the shape and dynamics of the development of adult education theory and practice” (ibidem, p. 406).

In this thirtieth-anniversary year, there is hope that this will persist in the future.

In conclusion, it is worth revisiting the question of what initiatives like the Academic Andragogy Society offer their members today if they are still eager to engage actively in the activities undertaken for and initiated within such a social scientific organization.

Indeed, it seems that much of the answer can be found in this article: the diversity of programmes offered, the search for suitable working methods, the adaptable response to the expectations of the scientific community and public demand, and more. This is the distinctive strength of the Academic Andragogy Society, as it consistently redefines the forms, meth-

* Cf. the contents of the “Aktualia” [News] sections in successive volumes of the *Andragogy Yearbook* from 1994–2023.

** Cf. the contents of the “Recenzje” [Reviews] sections in successive volumes of the *Andragogy Yearbook* from 1994–2023.

ods, and content of its activities while remaining faithful to the objectives and tasks formulated during its inception in the early 1990s. At that time, it was emphasized that “the socio-educational movement of the ATA [...] will strive for the advancement and improvement of various forms of adult education, as well as for research and theoretical analysis in andragogy and related sciences” (RA, 1994) [own translation].

Significant and valid insights into what the Academic Andragogy Society offers to its contemporaries can be found in the observations that Hanna Solarczyk-Szwec made a few years ago. She noted that it “fulfils a broad sense of belonging, guarantees personal contact, facilitates direct dialogue, provides stability in unstable professional life, [...] and stands as an environment characterized by respect and recognition [...]” (Solarczyk-Szwec, 2018, p. 62) [own translation]. This is another, much broader reason why it can be concluded that the ATA has many more years of fruitful work ahead for the Polish andragogy community.

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I. ANDRAGOGIKA – METODOLOGIA I DYLEMATY

