

*Zuzanna Flisowska*

UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

## Biblical Typologies as Means of Visual Exegesis: The Case of Aleksander Tarasewicz

Aleksander Tarasewicz (ca. 1650–1720/27?) is a good example of a modern-era artist who originated from a cultural borderland – a conclusion that springs from an analysis of his surviving prints and documents which confirm the commissions he received from various patrons. Viewed against the background of the rather unoriginal works of graphic art that were produced in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Commonwealth, his artistic maturity and successful commissions for very diverse milieus are indeed surprising. In addition, his extant works attest to his mobility – he worked in Hłusk, Vilnius, Lvov, Zamość, Cracow, Słuck, Czernihów and at the Pechersk Lavra in Kiev.<sup>1</sup>

The illustrations for religious prints made by Tarasewicz were commissioned by Orthodox, Uniate and Roman Catholic patrons. But it is most probably his secular works – portraits and illustrations for occasional prints, theses or panegyrics – that are the best testimony to his talent; for instance, one of Tarasewicz's works also constitutes one of the most interesting portraits of King John III in the graphic medium.<sup>2</sup> He was also able to adjust his means of artistic expression to the background of his patrons and the topics they commissioned him to illustrate.

It must be noted that the scholars who researched the graphic output in the region in question differ in their assessment of Tarasewicz's identity. Mieczysław Gębarowicz suspected that the first name initial referred to two men, i.e. father and son – Aleksander and Antoni – whose work he considered to be quite distinct

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1 The most recent analysis of the life and oeuvre of Aleksander Tarasewicz is found in Jolanta Talbierska's monographic study on graphic art in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The monograph includes the summary of the current state of research on Tarasewicz's oeuvre: J. Talbierska, *Grafika XVII wieku w Polsce: funkcje, ośrodki, artyści, dzieła* [17<sup>th</sup>-century graphic art in Poland: functions, centres, artists, works], Warsaw 2011, p. 191.

2 Most probably modelled on the half-length portrait of the king in the Nieborów Palace. Cf. H. Widacka, *Lew Lechistanu* [The Lion of Lechistan], Warsaw 2010, p. 50; Talbierska, *Grafika XVII wieku...*, p. 196.

in terms of stylistics.<sup>3</sup> Some historians of art, e.g. Waldemar Deluga, also share this view.<sup>4</sup> Jolanta Talbierska, in turn, believes that we are dealing with the work of a single artist whose output was varied in its form precisely because he was adjusting the means of his artistic expression to the expectations of the denominational group commissioning a given work. In her opinion, Aleksander assumed the monastic name of Antoni while working for the Lavra.<sup>5</sup>

In the Polish collections, the largest number of prints by Aleksander Tarasewicz is held by the National Library in Warsaw (including loose prints from books illustrated by the artist) as well as in the University Library in Warsaw, the library of the Metropolitan Seminary in Warsaw, the National Museums in Warsaw, Cracow (The Princes Czartoryski Collection) and Poznań, and at the National Ossoliński Institute in Wrocław.<sup>6</sup>

The relatively high artistic level of Tarasewicz's output has encouraged scholars to seek connections that might link him to Western European centres of graphic art, which attained technical mastery at that time and played a significant cultural role. It is assumed that he may have travelled throughout Europe and may have even been an apprentice at one of the leading Western European workshops.<sup>7</sup>

While this hypothesis has so far not been verified, it is beyond doubt that Tarasewicz was familiar with Western European graphic patterns and made use of them in designing his own compositions. Regardless of whether he had the opportunity to become acquainted with them during a European journey or whether he came to know them from prints and engravings found in various libraries in the Commonwealth, elements attesting to connections with Western European graphic art are clearly discernible in some of his works. In order to understand the artistic life of the Commonwealth of that time and to discover what cultural patterns (and to what extent) were crucial in those days, it is important to identify and describe these connections.

Jolanta Talbierska discusses the portrait of Tomasz Piasecki of the Janina coat of arms, which includes the allegories of virtues based on the works of Marten de Vos, as an example of Tarasewicz's inspiration with Western prints.<sup>8</sup> A similar artistic circle can be cited as an inspiration for various elements in Tarasewicz's graphic cycle illustrating a prayer book compiled by the Augustine monk, Fulgenty Dryjacki,

3 M. Gębarowicz, "Wawrzyniec Laurenty Kszczonowicz, nieznaný sztycharz drugiej połowy XVII wieku" [Wawrzyniec Laurenty Kszczonowicz, an unknown engraver of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century], *Folia Historiae Artium*, XVII, Warsaw 1981, pp. 49–117.

4 W. Deluga, *Grafika z kręgu Ławry Pieczarskiej i Akademii Mohylańskiej XVII i XVIII wieku* [Graphic art from the circles of the Pechersk Lavra and Mohyla Academy in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century], Cracow 2003, p. 31.

5 Talbierska, *Grafika XVII wieku...*, p. 204.

6 Cf. Ibid., pp. 359–364, with a full list of works in Polish collections.

7 The hypothesis that Tarasewicz was an apprentice at the Kilian workshop in Augsburg was first proposed by Georg K. Nagler (G.K. Nagler, *Die Monogrammisten*, vol. I, Leipzig 1887, p. 571, no. 1356). Cf. Talbierska, *Grafika XVII wieku...*, p. 205.

8 Ibid., p. 197.

published in Vilnius in 1682. I wish to propose here that the formal and ideological basis for this cycle derives from the same Western circle.

I shall attempt to demonstrate that, when compared with engravings by Theodor Galle of Antwerp, this cycle proves similar on many levels – from the details through the compositional schemata and the contents of selected representations to the structure that determined the manner of using the image and thinking about the Bible. In Tarasewicz's culturally diverse oeuvre, this cycle is an excellent indication that he was a part of a Western European circle within which compositional patterns and iconographic motifs were exchanged. Moreover, the artists from this milieu developed a characteristic type of illustrated prayer book that was popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (particularly in milieus associated with the Jesuits).<sup>9</sup>

According to surviving documents researched and published by Konstancija Čepienė and Irena Petrauskienė, Aleksander Tarasewicz was active in Vilnius in the 1680s and worked for the Vilnius Academy publishing house.<sup>10</sup> The city, which boasted Jewish, Catholic (Jesuit, Franciscan and Basilian) as well as Uniate (The Holy Ghost House) printing presses, was an important centre of multi-cultural book printing and graphic production.<sup>11</sup> In the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Academy's publishing house was decidedly in the lead.<sup>12</sup>

Concurrently, it seems important to note that this publishing house was managed by the Jesuits, who were famed throughout Western Europe for the value they attached to cooperating with leading centres of printing production.<sup>13</sup> Their impressive achievements in this respect, e.g. loose prints and illustrated books

9 From the most recent studies on the topic, see the analysis of illustrated prayer books and catechisms by Jan David in: A.-K. Sors, *Allegorische Andachtsbücher in Antwerpen*, Göttingen 2015.

10 K. Čepienė, I. Petrauskienė, *Vilniaus akademijos spaustuves leidiniai, 1576-1805. Bibliografija*, Vilnius, 1979.

11 Cf. M. Kałamajska-Saeed, "Wilno jako ośrodek graficzny w XVII w. Postulaty badawcze" [Vilnius as a centre of graphic art in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Research postulates], *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 1993, vol. 55, no. 2–3, pp. 199–211; *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku*, part 5, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie* [Printers in Old Poland from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, part 5, Grand Duchy of Lithuania], ed. A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, K. Korotajowa, W. Krajewski, Wrocław–Cracow 1959, pp. 141–148.

12 The printing house was moved from Brześć by Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł in 1575 and turned over to the Jesuits. The monks, who arrived in Vilnius in 1569, operated the Vilnius Academy from 1579 onwards. Ca. 1586 Radziwiłł's printing house was taken over by the Academy, becoming one of the leading centres of printing in the country. Talbierska believes that the Jesuits actually wished to organise a school of graphics, since basic drawing and graphic skills were taught at the Academy. Cf. Talbierska, *Grafika XVII wieku...*, p. 91. Subsequent chapters in the history of the Vilnius Academy are described by Ludwik Piechnik in the series *Dzieje Akademii Wileńskiej. Rozkwit Akademii Wileńskiej w latach 1600–1655* [The history of the Vilnius Academy. The heyday of the Vilnius Academy in the years 1600–1655], 4 volumes, Rome 1984–1990.

13 An emblematic example of this is the connection between the Jesuits and the Plantin-Moretus publishing house, developed due to Jerónim Nadal's prolonged effort concerning the publication of his famous *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, See M. B. Wadell, "Evangelicae

produced by the most outstanding graphic artists of the era, are widely known. It is therefore not surprising that Talbierska postulates that it was actually one of Vilnius's Jesuits who stood behind the iconographic programme of Tarasewicz's cycle. Whereas this issue is difficult to resolve unless some additional archival information is found, the influence of the Jesuit printed materials that arrived in the Commonwealth at the time and provided inspiration for local artists is evident in the prints themselves.<sup>14</sup>

Dryjacki's prayer book was printed in two parallel language versions: in Latin, as the *Thesaurus sacratissimae vitae passionis pretiosissimi sanguinis D. n. Iesu Christi in augustissimo Missae sacrificio depositus*,<sup>15</sup> and in Polish, as *Skarb żywota y krwie Iezusa Pana z Oyców SS. w ofierze Mszy S. złożony* (Figs 1, 2, 4).<sup>16</sup> The book was conceived as an aid in experiencing the holy mass in a pious manner. Its central part is therefore a representation of the three ways of fruitfully participating in the holy mass: by contemplating events from the life of Jesus Christ, by reciting the chaplet or the rosary. To this, the fundamental articles of faith and prayers were added as potentially useful to the book's readers in their daily religious practice.

As much as can be inferred from the surviving copies, the book's two editions differed slightly with respect to the number and arrangement of the chapters, albeit the basic structure and function of the books are identical, regardless of the language version. They open with a print showing St. Augustine with the *arma passionis*, the episcopal endorsement, an annual calendar with an enumeration of the holy days, an explication of the fundamental articles of faith and a litany; additionally, the Latin version has a dedication to Jakub Ludwik Sobieski, the son of King,

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Historiae Imagines. Entstehungsgeschichte und Vorlagen", *Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis/Gothenburg Studies in Art and Architecture*, III, Göteborg 1985.

- 14 Examples of Western composition patterns transferred by means of prints in Jesuit prayer books to the art of the Commonwealth were given by, among others, A. Gronek, "Stopień adaptacji cech renesansowych we lwowskim malarstwie cerkiewnym w pierwszej połowie wieku XVII" [The degree of adaptation of Renaissance features in Lvov icon painting of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century], in: *Bizancjum a Renesansy. Dialog kultur, dziedzictwo antyku. Tradycja i współczesność* [Byzantium and Renaissances. Dialogue of Cultures, Heritage of Antiquity. Tradition and Modernity], eds. M. Janocha, A. Sulikowska, I. Tatarova et al., Warsaw 2012, pp. 359–368; S. Laporte, "Dialogue artistique avec les estampes des Pays-Bas méridionaux", in: *Bizancjum a Renesansy...*, pp. 299–306; W. Deluga, "Grafika" [Graphic art], in: *Sztuka iluminacji grafiki cerkiewnej* [Illumination in Orthodox Church graphics], exhibition catalogue, Warsaw 1996, pp. 30–31.
- 15 A well-preserved copy at the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius, signature L-17/3. Available online: <http://elibrary.mab.lt/handle/1/1587?locale-attribute=en> [accessed 28 April 2017].
- 16 An extant copy in Wrocław, in the National Ossoliński Institute Library, signature XVII-6472. Available online through the Lower Silesia Digital Library: <http://www.dbc.wroc.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=36668> [accessed 28 April 2017]. In addition, prints of varying quality are extant in the National Library in Warsaw, signature G.2166-2201. For their list, see Talbierska, *Grafika XVII wieku...*, pp. 361–362.



**Fig. 1.** Aleksander Tarasewicz, VII (*Epistola*); Fulgenty Dryjacki, *Thesaurus sacratissimae vitae*, Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, L-17/3, fol. 25 v



**Fig. 2.** Aleksander Tarasewicz, XI (*Dominus vobiscum*); Fulgenty Dryjacki, *Thesaurus sacratissimae vitae*, Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, L-17/3, fol. 29 v

John III. Then follows the main part with the three methods of participating in the holy mass. The first method is illustrated with several engravings by Tarasewicz the second and third include one engraving each. The next section is on the “pious way of taking the Most Blessed Sacrament”, illustrated with the image of Christ bearing the cross; then followed by expiatory psalms, the Litany to All Saints and the Liturgy of the Hours (illustrated at the beginning and at the end with images of monks praying before an altar). The Wrocław copy contains several additional prayers and a description of the Brotherhood of the Consolation of the Virgin Mary.

The Wrocław copy is less well preserved and the section concerning the first way of participating in the holy mass is incomplete. The missing parts include, among others, the title page of the first section and fifteen engravings by Tarasewicz with a commentary.<sup>17</sup> The engraving with the figure of Christ, the one that opens

<sup>17</sup> The chapters: I (*Accessus*), IV–X (*Introitus*, *Dominus vobiscum*, *Collecta*, *Epistola*, *Graduale*, *Munda*, *Evangelium*), XXI (*Memento*), XXII (*Manus expansæ*), XXVIII (*Expressio crucis*) and XXXII–XXXV (*Communio*, *Meditatio*, *Ablutio*, *Dominus vobiscum*) are missing.



**Fig. 3.** Theodoor Galle, *Tria praecepta virtutum incentiva*; Jan David, *Veredicus christianus*, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Res/4 L.eleg.m. 46, fol. 96a recto (= Tafel 36)



**Fig. 4.** Aleksander Tarasewicz, XXIX (*Pater noster*); Fulgenty Dryjacki, *Thesaurus sacratissimae vitae*, Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, L-17/3, fol. 47 v

the Liturgy of the Hours, and the description of the Brotherhood are missing from the Vilnius copy.

The section concerning the first way of participating in the holy mass is central to investigating the place and role of an image in a printed work. This section describes the way events from the life of Christ are commemorated at subsequent stages of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. From the theological point of view, this is an implementation of commemorative allegoresis, which has been known in Western Christianity since the early Middle Ages. In the medieval tradition there were two basic methods of implementing it: by interpreting particular elements of liturgy as allegories of events from the life of Christ or as allegories of events from only the Passion. This combination is, of course, derived from the perception, which was obligatory in Christian theology, of the eucharistic sacrifice as commemorating and concretising the Passion of Christ. Allegoresis was popular in the Middle Ages and present in the works of art of that period; after the Council of Trent it disappeared

from the main current of theology but, as can be observed here, it was still present in the devotional discourse.<sup>18</sup>

This part of the book, consisting of thirty-nine chapters, has been preserved in its entirety in the Vilnius copy, which is in Latin; it is therefore on this copy that the present analysis must be based. The chapters in this part are constructed by following the same pattern. Each of them consists of a full-page engraving followed by a text, which also fills one page. This image-and-text set refers to the subsequent parts of the holy mass, to which a pertinent event from the life of Christ is fitted. The engraving shows the interior of a church with an ongoing service of the Eucharist, and the commentary refers to the given event. In every case the text is a prayer taken from the writings of St. Augustine, sometimes with an addendum of a single sentence by another Church Father (i.e. in this book by Saints Gregory, Ambrose, Fulgentius, John Chrysostom, Leo, Jerome, Ephrem and Cassiodorus). Thus, this part of the book does not contain any original texts by the author of the prayer book, even though the selection and arrangement of the quotations are, of course, his work and are consistent with the conventions of the devotional text writing of the era.

The part of the holy mass to which a given chapter refers is identified by the title of the engraving; a separate field in its top part contains the successive number, the inscription *Sacrificii Missæ Canon minor* or *Canon maior*, and the term for the part of the liturgy: *ACCESSVS*, *CONFITEOR*, *OSCVLVM ALTARIS*, etc. The title of the commentary, in turn, contains a reference to the relevant event in the New Testament, phrased as a request to consider it during the part of the liturgy shown in the engraving.

The composition of the image itself is also based on an unchanging pattern, which is repeated in almost every chapter. The engraving shows the interior of the church with an altar at which a priest, assisted by an altar boy, is saying mass. Their gestures are intelligible enough for the reader to recognise the relevant stage of the liturgy. Apart from these two figures, there are a few believers in the church, usually shown at the very edge of the composition and sometimes only in part. They are shown from the side or from behind, in a sitting or kneeling position, in many cases reading prayer books. Thus, also these figures fulfilled a rhetorical function since the actions in which they engaged were most probably shared by the readers who made use of the book. The readers could identify themselves with these believers, which made them involved in the presented scene. However, the main topic of the engraving is the third element that is consistently repeated in each chapter: a scene from the life of Christ upon which the reader has been asked to reflect. This scene is shown as an altarpiece painting.

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18 For more on this tradition and its persistent continuation in 18<sup>th</sup>-century texts, see M. Kuran, "O przykładach zastosowania alegoryzmów rememoratywnych w dwóch XVIII-wiecznych kazaniach" [On the examples of re-memorative allegorisms in two 18<sup>th</sup>-century sermons], *Liturgia Sacra*, 2012, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 101–112.

All these elements may be considered illustrations to the text of the prayer book, as the latter focuses on the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the scenes from the New Testament. Yet Tarasewicz added one more important element that was not contained in the textual programme of the prayer book; consequently, the book's visual aspect far exceeds the textual framework as established by Dryjacki. This element, appearing only in the image, not in the text, is a scene from the Old Testament (or, less frequently, an allegorical composition or an illustration to the Apocalypse of St. John), which constitutes a commentary to the scene from the life of Christ. Making use of the topography of a church building, Tarasewicz always placed this scene in the background of his compositions. These additional scenes are placed in the openings of doors or windows, inside arches leading to side naves or, more rarely, as paintings hanging on the side walls of the church. They include figures which the Christian tradition typically understood as prefiguring Jesus Christ, but also other images which seem to have been created solely for the needs of this graphic cycle.<sup>19</sup>

According to these patterns, therefore, most of the engravings contain three semantic levels that generate a complex system of references: to the Old and New Testament, to the liturgy and to the observers/participants.<sup>20</sup> In most cases, these are supplemented with quotations from the Bible placed in ribbons by the altar and by appropriate *sigla* directly by the biblical scene.

In this manner, the space of the church becomes a frame, and the liturgy – an opportunity for presenting an exegetic interpretation of the life of Christ by linking it with other passages from the Bible. The manner of showing additional scenes as embedded in the building's architecture by making use of doors, windows and medallions hanging on the walls brings to mind Western European biblical illustrations from the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among the earlier examples of this type of composition to be used in prints illustrating biblical texts were the *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* by the Jesuit Jerónim Nadal, which were very popular and widely influential, also in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. This compositional type quickly came to be widespread in devotional graphics, so it would be difficult to convincingly point to a single model on which Tarasewicz may have based his work.

The typological pairs, which Tarasewicz quotes after the oldest Christian exegesis and iconographic tradition, include, for example, the Annunciation – the

19 For a complete list of chapters and their respective typological paints, see M. Janocha, *Missa in arte polona. Ikonomia mszy świętej w średniowiecznej i nowożytniej sztuce polskiej* [*Missa in arte polona. Iconography of the holy mass in medieval and early modern Polish art*], Warsaw 1998, pp. 93–95; only in the case of print XXIX (*Pater noster*) should the identification of medallions representing the Seven Sacraments be changed due to a comparison with the model: Theodoor Galle's print *Septem signa stupenda* from *Messis myrrhae et aromatum* by Jan David, see below.

20 Exceptions from this compositional pattern of two exegetic representations are found in print no. X (*Evangelium*), in which instead of two scenes there are oval emblems suspended on columns, and prints no. XI (*Dominus vobiscum*), XVI (*Suscipe*), XXVI (*Memento defunctorum*), XXIV (*Ablutio*) and XXIX (*Pater noster*), in which the composition is limited to just one biblical representation.



Original Sin; the Incarnation – Jacob’s ladder; the Last Supper – the sacrifice of Melchizedek; the cross of Christ – the bronze serpent; and the Resurrected Christ – Jonah. For instance, in print no. 2 (*Confiteor*) the picture in the main altar shows a rather conventionally presented scene of the Annunciation, with the Virgin Mary kneeling on the right-hand side and the Dove emerging from the cloud in the upper left section. Further back, in the arch, the compositional pattern of the Annunciation is repeated by its anti-type: the sin of Adam and Eve. They are also shown kneeling and looking upwards, to God appearing on a cloud. The biblical parallel is thus not only illustrated through the accumulated elements but also highlighted by the compositional analogy. The exegetic problem has been expressed through visual means. The text accompanying the engraving instructs the reader to reflect on the Incarnation, without mentioning Adam and Eve.

Yet those biblical motifs which are juxtaposed in an unexpected and surprising manner are particularly worth noting since they encourage reflection on, and the investigation of, the principle that links the two Testaments. Engraving no. 7 (*Epistola*) prompts the meditation of the Flight to Egypt. This scene is represented in the main altar; the pediment of the retable contains the words that Joseph heard in his dream: “Esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi”.<sup>21</sup> The arch leading to the side nave contains a scene which at first may seem enigmatic – beasts and monsters surrounding a walled city standing on a hill. Above it is a ribbon with a quotation from Psalm 104 (103): “Montes excelsi cervis, petra refugium herinaciis”.<sup>22</sup>

This psalm, extolling God as the creator of all things in nature, does not belong to typical texts understood as prefiguring events from the New Testament, but taken out of context and juxtaposed with the promise of sanctuary for the Virgin, Joseph and the Christ Child, this passage acquires a new meaning. It is no longer simply a triumphant description of natural harmony, but a celebration of God as the protector of the humankind; at the same time, of course, it describes and helps to interpret the main scene by focusing attention on God’s miraculous intervention in the fortunes of a defenceless family.

Such an erudite play on biblical quotations is not unusual in Tarasewicz’s cycle; many other engravings contain illustrations of single sentences from the Bible, found specifically in order to provide an exegetic tool for interpreting events from the life of Christ. Chapter 37 focuses on the Ascension, even though the image placed in the main altar is captioned with a quotation from another locus in the Gospel, one preceding not only the Ascension, but even the Passion of Christ: the words “Vado parare vobis locum” are uttered during the Last Supper.<sup>23</sup> To the left, in a window, there is an image of a gate hovering on a cloud. The compositional parallel with Christ on a cloud in the main altar suggests the meaning of the juxtaposition: the reader is to interpret Christ as a gate leading to Paradise.

21 Matt. 2, 13.

22 Ps. 104 (103), 18.

23 John 14, 2.

But the artistic invention can be appreciated fully only upon looking for the source of the symbolic image in the window, facilitated by the accompanying inscription "Gen. 28". The twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Genesis describes the famous history of Jacob, who in his dream saw God and a ladder with angels ascending and descending on it. Upon awakening, Jacob said: "This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven".<sup>24</sup> It is worth noting that it is those words that were alluded to in the engraving, not Jacob's ladder, which is far more familiar in the iconography (which, in fact, appears in Chapter 4 of the cycle, in the context of the Nativity). Again, what we are dealing with here is a very creative selection of unobvious quotations.

Apart from these symbolic types, Tarasewicz included in his cycle some rarely used narrative representations intended as parallels to the life of Christ. The episode meditated upon in Chapter 18 (*Secreta oratio*) is the Arrest of Christ (captioned as "Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt [eum] Ioan. 18").<sup>25</sup> The typological parallel to it is the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines, described in the book known today as the First Book of Samuel.<sup>26</sup>

The association between Jesus Christ and the Ark of the Covenant is, of course, not an original idea, since it arises directly from the reading of the New Testament, particularly of the so-called Sermon on the Mount, during which Christ explicitly compared his words with the Torah. However, a juxtaposition of the capture of the Ark and the Arrest of Christ is rare in early iconographic tradition. The fact that this particular scene from 1 Samuel was used, even though it is not an obvious one, results from the resurgence of Old Testament motifs in early modern graphic art.

Theodoor Galle's engraving in a book compiled by the Dutch Jesuit, Jan David, *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae* (Antwerp 1607), may be an important reference point for this iconographic motif. This work comprises two parts, titled separately as *Messis Myrrhae et Aromatum* and *Pancarpium Marianum*; each part includes fifty illustrations which constitute an important element of the book's programme and a pointer to its reading. The first part is intended as a guide to meditation on the Passion of Christ, and the second focuses on the Virgin Mary.<sup>27</sup> The first volume seems to be crucial in Tarasewicz's inspiration for his cycle made for the *Thesaurus*.

Its overall conception derives from the typological tradition of reading the Bible: the frontispiece shows two gardens and the figures of the Groom, Christ, the Bride and the soul, all deriving from the Song of Songs. The Groom leads the Bride to a garden in which the *arma passionis* are displayed, and each of these is the topic of a subsequent chapter. Thus, the following engravings show either an instrument of the Passion or a scene from it, as well as scenes from the Old Testament that provide a commentary to the former. In each case there are a few additional scenes, and the

<sup>24</sup> Gen. 28, 17.

<sup>25</sup> John 18, 12.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Sam. 4, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the already mentioned monographic study by Sors, *Allegorische Andachtsbücher...*, esp. pp. 103–116.

same gestures or objects appear in them as in the scene with the instrument being meditated upon.

Letters of the alphabet found on every print and referencing the section of the book which explains the motifs shown in the engraving are a crucial aid in identifying the scenes.<sup>28</sup> In most cases, identification of these small-scale images that often show marginal events mentioned in the Old Testament requires a profound familiarity with the biblical text and the ability to find a shared element in them. The overall mechanism is thus similar to that in Tarasewicz's book: an erudite selection of references to the Old Testament is used in the exegetic interpretation of the life of Christ.

The topic of Chapter 8 in the prayer books is the Arrest of Christ (*Manuum iniectio*). In the foreground is the Olive Garden, where soldiers are binding the hands of Christ (identifiable by the letter C). In the background, following the pattern of each print, are four scenes depicting parallel events or gestures described in the Old Testament. In the bottom right, marked with the letter D, is the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines. An inscription in the ribbon reads: "Arca Dei captaest. 1. Reg 4." This similarity of iconographic motifs is worth noting, but it does not necessarily prove that the two prints are interrelated.

Yet the allegorical composition placed in the main altar in print no. 29 (*Pater noster*) is certainly based on one by Theodoor Galle. It shows a cross surrounded by seven numbered medallions. The motifs shown in them are barely legible, particularly because there is no caption to help the reader, but a clue to their contents is provided by the title of the chapter and the prayer which follows the illustration: "Pars 3. Super Host. Propitiat. Cons. 7. Signa stupenda & verba". Thus, this part of the liturgy focuses on the signs that accompanied the death of Christ, yet only a comparison with the illustration to Chapter 43 of the *Messis myrrhae et aromatum: Septem signa stupenda* helps one to decipher what exactly each medallion represents (Fig. 5).

Galle's composition is far more complex than Tarasewicz's reworking of the scene; it contains more details and is provided with inscriptions. Galle shows Christ on the cross surrounded by seven medallions joined with a ribbon and supported by angels.<sup>29</sup> Two additional groups of angels among the clouds are shown in the background; its bottom section depicts the City of Jerusalem. On the ribbon connecting the medallions there is a quotation from the Book of Jeremiah: "Quis audivit talia horribilia, quæ fecit [nimis] virgo Israel? Ier 18".<sup>30</sup>

The medallions are numbered in the same way as in Tarasewicz's work, i.e. looking from the left-hand end of the ribbon: 5, 3, 2, 1, 7, 4, 6. They are captioned with the names of the strange phenomena that accompanied the death of Christ:

28 A method typical of Western illustrated devotional literature of the era. See Sors, *Allegorische Andachtsbücher...*, pp. 181–182.

29 The same compositional pattern is used by Galle in Chapter 41: *Septem Christi verba*. It must be pointed out that also Dryjacki's text refers to the seven extraordinary events that accompanied the death of Christ, as well as to his seven words spoken on the cross, i.e. the *topoi* presented on both prints arranged by Galle as an image of the cross surrounded by seven medallions.

30 Jer. 18, 13b.



**Fig. 5.** Theodoor Galle (43) *Septem signa stupenda*; Jan David, *Messis myrrhae et aromatum*, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, Th Pr 560, Table between pages 170 and 171 (Table 43)

“Petræ scissæ sunt”; “Velum templi scissum est”; “Clamans expiravit”; “Sol obscuratus est; Effluxit sanguis et aqua”; “Terramotus magnus factus est”, and “Monumenta aperta sunt”, respectively. These captions make it possible to identify the elements in Tarasewicz’s print. Medallion 5, showing tall mountains, symbolises the rocks splitting, a divided length of fabric – the curtain of the Temple tearing in two, a swan – Christ crying out before his death, the sun obscured by the clouds – darkness, a lamb with a banner and chalice – the blood and water that flowed from Christ’s side, a city with a collapsing tower – the earthquake, and four tombs with bodies inside – the tombs opening.

Print no. 11 (*Dominus vobiscum*), i.e. the interior of the church which, when compared to other prints, is relatively original, provides another clear indication that Tarasewicz modelled his work on that of the engraver from Antwerp. The main altar is here seen frontally, from afar. The centre is occupied by the nave with the believers sitting in the stalls; there is a pulpit on the right. This novel composition is a relatively faithful repetition of Theodoor Galle's print in another work by Jan David, *Veredicus christianus* (Chapter 36, *Tria praecepta virtutum incentiva*) (Fig. 3). When considering the elements which are similar to those in the works of Galle it is worth noting that the motif of *manus Dei* in Chapter 1 of the *Thesaurus* and in Chapter 50 of the *Messis Myrrhae* is executed in a very similar manner.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate indisputably that Tarasewicz was familiar with the engravings of Theodoor Galle and modelled his work on them while designing illustrations for the *Thesaurus*. To what extent the illustrated prayer books by Jan David and other Jesuits who cooperated with outstanding engravers and vigorously active printing houses were an inspiration to the creators of the Vilnius book as a source of visual exegesis remains an open question. It seems, however, that the role of this publication, the role of the images in it and the fact that numerous original typological pairs were used in it places the book firmly within the Western European current of modern-era biblical illustration.

*Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz*

## Abstract

In the 1680s Aleksander Tarasewicz produced a cycle of prints illustrating the *Thesaurus sacratissimae vitae passionis pretiosissimi sanguinis D. n. Iesu Christi*, a prayer book compiled by the Augustine monk Fulgenty Dryjacki. The book was published by the Vilnius Academy publishing house, which was managed by the Jesuits; this publishing house was one of the most important centres of graphic art in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. Tarasewicz's engravings stand out due to their complex iconographic programme and their composition, which refer to illustrations in prayer books that were popular in Western Europe at the time. The most interesting iconographic element are typological scenes from the Bible, which Tarasewicz included in most of the illustrations. Their analysis reveals which prints he used as his models, thus documenting Western aspirations in the art of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Vilnius.