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“None of Us is this Zeuxis Heracleotes”: The Illustrational Dilemmas of Cracow Publishers¹

Renaissance publishers very often directly addressed the prospective readers of the books published at their printing houses. In various dedications, prefaces, afterwords, etc., they presented a broad behind-the-scene picture of their editorial efforts, in this suggestive way attempting to shape the general views concerning the status and significance of *ars artium*. These texts provide important information about the editors' scholarly, social and professional contacts, as well as the circumstances in which various texts were created and all kinds of problems the editors encountered in their endeavours.² Parallel to the development of the art of printing, an increasing amount of attention was given to the illustrations intended to accompany the texts. A critical analysis of these allegedly autobiographical texts must, of course, take under consideration their extreme subjectivism and reputation-building rhetorical strategies, which sometimes were highly conventional. Nevertheless, the intentional self-exposures found in these texts reveal to us the real or proclaimed intentions and frustrations of Renaissance publishers. This is all the more interesting considering that many of them were not only astute businessmen and talented craftsmen; they also had considerable intellectual ambitions, were ready to express

- 1 The article presents the results of research conducted as part of the *Obraz modyfikowany: recepcja grafiki w Królestwie Polskim od schyłku XV po początek XVII wieku. Przedmioty – osoby – środowiska – procesy* [Reframed image: reception of prints in the Kingdom of Poland from the end of 15th to the beginning of the 17th century. Objects – people – milieux – processes] project financed by the National Science Centre (no. 2015/17/B/HS2/02469).
- 2 The vast specialist literature on this subject results from an eminently interdisciplinary research; see esp.: J. R. Henderson, “On Reading the Rhetoric of the Renaissance Letter”, in: *Renaissance-Rhetoric*, ed. H. F. Plett, Berlin 1993; B. Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470–1600*, Cambridge 1994; K. Dunn, *Pretexts of Authority. The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface*, Stanford 1994; B. Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge 1999; *Self-Presentation and Social Identification. The Rhetoric and Pragmatics of Letter Writing in Early Modern Times*, eds. T. van Houdt, J. Papy, G. Tournoy, C. Matheeußen, Leuven 2002 (*Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia*, vol. XVIII); E. L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 2005; A. Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, New Haven–London 2011, pp. 164–166.

themselves in writing and were proud of their belonging (or aspiring to belong) to the *respublica litteraria*.³

An examination of authorial commentaries by Cracow publishers indicates that the issues of book illustration began to more clearly impinge on their awareness in the second half of the 16th century.⁴ Interestingly, their direct statements on this topic, even though few, clearly show their critical approach to the images included in their own publications.⁵ An analysis of the contents of those texts, supported by an investigation of the pictorial material in question, shows that the publishers'

3 See C. Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio umanista e editore*, Milano 1995; J. Pirożyński, *Johannes Gutenberg i początki ery druku* [Johannes Gutenberg and the beginnings of the age of print], Warsaw 2002, pp. 165–167; L. Febvre, H.-J. Martin, *Narodziny książki* [original title: *L'apparition du livre*, Paris 1958], translated by A. Kocot, M. Wodzyńska-Walicka, Warsaw 2014, pp. 225ff. Also: M. Rokosz, *Wenecka oficyna Alda Manucjusza i Polska w orbicie jej wpływów* [The Venetian printing house of Aldo Manuzio and Poland in the circle of its influence], Wrocław 1982; J. Pelc, *Słowo i obraz. Na pograniczu literatury i sztuk plastycznych* [The word and the image. On the borderline between literature and visual arts], Cracow 2002; J. S. Gruchała, *Iucunda familia librorum. Humanisci renesansowi w świecie książki* [*Iucunda familia librorum*. Renaissance humanists in the world of books], Cracow 2002.

4 Earlier, much more attention was paid to problems with printing texts in the Polish language and the attendant typographic issues, cf. Hieronymus Vietor's forewords (for their brief discussion, see *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku*, tom 1: *Małopolska*, część 1: *Wiek XV–XVI* [Printers in Old Poland from the 15th to the 18th century, vol. 1: Lesser Poland, part 1: 15th and 16th century], collective work, ed.-in-chief A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, Wrocław 1983, pp. 350–352). Even in the foreword to a work as richly illustrated as *O ziołach y o mocy ich* [On herbs and their power] by Stefan Falimirz (Cracow 1534, published by Florian Ungler) there is a rather conventional, if enthusiastic, eulogy: "[...] my dear Florian not only never stinted on his great expense, but also with tireless attention he looked how these Polish books could be best and most appropriately adorned and beautified with new letters and lovely images (cf. T. Ulewicz, "O reklamie wydawniczej w pierwszej połowie XVI wieku, krakowskich impresorach-nakładcach oraz o polskich listach dedykacyjnych oficyny Wietora" [On publishing advertisements in the first half of the 16th century, on Cracow printer-publishers and on Polish dedicatory letters from Vietor's printing house], in: idem, *Wśród impresorów krakowskich doby renesansu* [Among the Cracow printers of the Renaissance era], Cracow 1977, p. 116ff).

5 Among the many studies on forewords by Polish publishers, see: A. Czekajewska, "O listach dedykacyjnych w polskiej książce XVI wieku" [On dedicatory letters in Polish books of the 16th century], *Roczniki Biblioteczne*, 1962, vol. 1, fasc. 1–2, pp. 21–55; A. Czekajewska, "Kultura umysłowa Polski XVI wieku w świetle listów dedykacyjnych" [Intellectual culture in 16th-century Poland in the light of dedicatory letters], *Studia i materiały z dziejów nauki polskiej*, 1965, series A, fasc. 7, pp. 47–109; Ulewicz, *O reklamie wydawniczej...*, p. 108ff; R. Ociecek, *Ślaworodne wizerunki. O wierszowanych listach dedykacyjnych z XVII wieku* [Fame-imparting images. On 17th-century dedicatory letters in verse], Katowice 1982; J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *Czcionką i piórem. Jan Januszowski w roli pisarza i tłumacza* [With a type and a pen. Jan Januszowski as writer and translator], Cracow 2007, pp. 33–43; J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, "Przedmowa wydawcy jako świadectwo recepcji dzieła poety. Jan Januszowski o Janie Kochanowskim" [The publisher's foreword as indicative of the reception of a poetic work. Jan Januszowski on Jan Kochanowski], in: *Silva rerum philologicarum. Studia ofiarowane Profesor Marii Strycharskiej-Brzezina z okazji Jej jubileuszu* [*Silva rerum philologicarum*. Studies presented to Prof. Maria Strycharska-Brzezina on her jubilee], Cracow 2010, pp. 129–136 ("Biblioteka LingVariów", vol. 10).

objections were not only conventional expressions of modesty, but an indication of their growing awareness of how complex the matter of book illustration truly was; these publishers understood that the functions of book illustrations vary and transcend the simple pictorial interpretation of the text. It seems obvious that the criticism was caused by the publishers' awareness of the achievements of foreign centres of printing. Such parallels were never expressly suggested in the forewords themselves;⁶ but it cannot be doubted that this wider European context influenced the views of publishers active in a city, which was an internationally recognised centre of culture and scholarship. Also, it is important to note that the publishers who disparaged the illustrations in books they themselves had published belonged to a consecutive generation of illustrious printer families; this means they had an exceptionally good grounding in the editorial profession and a fine awareness of its special character as one combining elements of craftsmanship, art, business and an intellectual pursuit.⁷

A critical, even though still rather laconic, reference to the illustrations is found in the most prominent work to come out of the printing house belonging to the Szarfenbergers, a family of printers and publishers originating from Silesia.⁸ In a Bible published in 1561 by the Heirs of Marek Szarfenberger – which was the first Roman Catholic edition of the entire Scripture to be published in the Polish language – a short apology for its unsatisfactory graphic arrangement was placed right after the *Foreword to the reader*: "My dear reader, please do not be offended that not uniform are the figures set in this Bible, that is some are large, some smaller".⁹ This inconsistency in the sizes of the illustrations in the Szarfenberger Bible resulted from the fact that the set of woodblocks used in its printing was not homogeneous – some of them had actually been cut far earlier, in the 1530s, to illustrate Luther's Bible (sic!) published at Hans Lufft's printing house in Wittenberg.¹⁰ Re-using graphic matrices originally produced for other publications was standard practice

6 References to the work of printers outside the Commonwealth are found in Jan Januszowski's preface to *Nowy charakter polski* [The new Polish character] (Cracow 1594).

7 This observation was often made in reference to the achievements of the Manuzio, Estienne, Froben, Koberger, Giunti or Barbou families. See D. F. McKenzie, "Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices", *Studies in Bibliography*, 1969, no. 22, pp. 1–75; Richardson, *Print Culture...*, op. cit.

8 Cf. *Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, p. 231ff.

9 *Biblia to iest Xiggi Starego y Nowego Zakonu na polski ięzyk z pilnością według łacińskiej Biblii od Kościoła Krześcijańskiego powszechnego przyjęty, nowo wyłożona* [The Bible i.e. the Books of the Old and New Scripture, diligently translated into the Polish language according to the Latin Bible accepted by the Christian Church and newly explicated]; copy: MNK VIII-XVI.52 (text under the preface). This remark was accompanied by the comment that the reasons for this should be shrouded in silence, since they must be sought in the interference of "third parties". Cf. E. Belcarzowa, *Polskie i czeskie źródła przekładu Biblii Leopolicy* [Polish and Czech sources of the translation of the Leopolite Bible], Cracow 2006.

10 On the sources of illustrations for both editions of the Leopolite Bible (1561 and 1575), see E. Chojecka, *Deutsche Bibelserien in der Holzstocksammlung der Jagellonischen Universität in Krakau*, Baden-Baden 1961.

at the time;¹¹ this actually makes the fact that the author of this contrite comment (most probably Mikołaj Szarfenberger, who signed the foreword) felt it necessary to apologise for the shape of the illustrations quite inexplicable. The essential reason may have been his perception that this book was of special importance, as it was produced during a period of vigorous religious controversy in the Commonwealth and constituted the Roman Catholic answer to Protestant texts printed in Polish.

The surplus of copies of the Bible on the book market and the resulting problems with selling them, which was an issue at the turn of the 15th century, was replaced by new challenges in the 16th century, namely by editions in national languages and, above all, involvement in propaganda and religious debates.¹² An analysis of the types of publications coming from the Szarfenberger house indicates that these printers were quite familiar with the themes of the religious controversies of the day.¹³ Hence they were also aware that competition on the market of religious printed matter had acquired a new dimension. It is precisely in the Szarfenberger Bible, which thanks to the ecclesiastic who corrected the text is known in the history of book printing as the Leopolite Bible¹⁴, that the issue of the 'war of images' fully emerges; this was a polemic that forced the Cracow printers to face the fact that woodcut images had begun to go far beyond their simple, strictly illustrative functions and had become important carriers of ideas and intellectual contents.¹⁵ Thus it became necessary to avoid the risk of having a conflict of messages. Some of the illustrations for this Catholic Bible were to be printed from woodblocks made for Luther's Bible and, consequently, they contained clearly anti-papal motifs;

11 Cf. A. Griffiths, *The Print before Photography. An Introduction to European Printmaking 1550–1820*, London 2016, p. 132ff.

12 Specialist literature on this subject is vast; see R. Wittmann, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*, München 1991, p. 43ff; *La Réforme et le livre. L'Europe de l'imprimé (1517 – v.1570)*, ed. J.-F. Gilmont, Paris 1990; J.-F. Gilmont, *The Reformation and the Book*, Ashgate 1998; *The Bible as Book. The First Printed Editions*, eds. K. van Kampen, P. Saenger, London 1999.

13 *Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, pp. 261–262, 269; G. Jurkowlaniec, *Sprawczość rycin. Rzymska twórczość graficzna Tomasza Tretera i jej europejskie oddziaływanie* [The agency of prints. Tomasz Treter's Roman engravings and their European influence], Cracow 2017, pp. 57–58, 78 ("Ars vetus et nova", vol. XLIV).

14 Neither the first (1561) nor the second (1575) edition of this Bible mentions the person who translated the Vulgate into Polish. Scholars are still at odds regarding this matter (for an overview of the hypotheses, see Pietkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 217–218). The only person mentioned is the proofreader of the translation and the editor, a professor of the Jagiellonian University, Jan Nicz from Lvov (i.e. Leopold, hence the Leopolite).

15 The didactic value of illustrations in Bibles was mentioned already in the Cologne Bible from 1478; the scholarly value, in turn, was a distinctive feature of illustrations to the Geneva editions of the Bible. Special cognitive qualities were ascribed to illustrations in bibles printed in national languages, cf. R. Pietkiewicz, *Pismo święte w języku polskim w latach 1516–1638. Sytuacja wyznaniowa w Polsce a rozwój edytorstwa biblijnego* [Scripture in the Polish language in the years 1516–1638. Religious situation in Poland and the development of biblical editorship], doctoral thesis, University of Wrocław, Faculty of Philology, Institute of Library Sciences, Wrocław 2002, p. 16ff (online version: <http://digital.fides.org.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=728&dirids=1>).

these had to be eliminated by subjecting the wood blocks to very peculiar censorship, e.g. in the illustration to Chapter 11 of the Apocalypse of St. John, two upper diadems of the papal tiara worn by the beast declaring war to two witnesses were removed. Such denomination-related modifications of illustrations were a frequent phenomenon at the time.¹⁶ Its source lay in the pragmatism of the publishers, who were not only mindful of securing their more costly enterprises (and an illustrated edition of the entire Scripture was certainly one of those) and wished to avoid any clashes with bodies of ecclesiastical and secular censorship, but also – which will be discussed later – they did all they could to cut costs. It is not impossible that the apology found in the foreword to the Leopold Bible was an attempt to reduce any problems connected with the illustrations to solely formal issues connected with the then-widespread practice of re-using graphic matrices – while the true problem (then still a new one in Cracow) was that the intellectual and polemic potential of the images was being used in the battle of creeds.¹⁷

The critical approach to illustrations was expressed again in another publication to come out of the Szafrankers' press, i.e. the 1568 book *Herbarz, to iest zbiór tutecznych, postronnych y zamorskich opisanie* [The herbal, that is a description of local, foreign, and overseas herbs] by Marcin Siennik. In his dedication to Jan Herbut, the publisher, who in this case was solely Mikołaj Szafrank, reported the behind-the-scenes circumstances of the book's publication, thus highlighting his altruistic motives ("since [it is] both needed and has often been enquired about by people") (Fig. 1).¹⁸ He also declared that his intention had been to provide the readers with a work that would include the most recent developments in the art of healing and the preparation of remedies, but this ambitious plan could not be carried out for financial reasons: "But since I was at this time unable to find a man who could do it, and even if I had him my modest fortune would not bear this expenditure, especially if the appearance of the herbs were to be depicted anew, I was forced to

16 Cf. *Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, p. 263; Pietkiewicz, op. cit., p. 215 and esp. pp. 226–230, 377–378; Jurkowlaniec, *Sprawczość rycin...*, pp. 31–32. Cf. N. de Hommel-Steenbakkers, "Censorship or Self-Protection? Modifications in Apocalypse Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Bibles Printed in the Low Countries", in: *Infant Milk or Hardy Nourishment? The Bible for Lay People and Theologians in the Early Modern Period*, eds. W. François, A. den Hollander, Leuven 2009, pp. 191–221.

17 Interestingly, in the second edition of the Szafrank Bible, published in 1575 under changed political and religious circumstances, the illustrative material was even more diverse, but this critical passage on the illustrations was omitted; also, the title of the entire work was modified, e.g. the words "adorned with figures" were added.

18 *Herbarz, to iest zbiór tutecznych, postronnych y zamorskich opisanie...* [The herbal, that is a description of local, foreign, and overseas herbs...]; copy: National Library, Warsaw, inv. no. SD XVI E90. Great demand for such "para-medical" herbalist literature was reported by other publishers as well, e.g. Christian Egenolff (Cf. A. Arber, *Herbals: Their Origin and Evolution, a Chapter in the History of Botany, 1470–1670*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1938, p. 209ff; D. Landau, P. Parshall, *The Renaissance Print: 1470–1550*, New Haven–London 1994, p. 247ff) or Łazarz Andrysowicz (in a dedication to another work by Marcin Siennik, *Lekarstwa doświadczone* [Tested remedies], published in 1564).

put this venture aside because, as I have said, the sum would have been great and I would not have been able to carry the costs". In the end, Szarfenberger limited himself to "amending" earlier texts.¹⁹



Fig. 1. Marcin Siennik, *Herbarz, to iest ziół tutecznych, postronnych y zamorskich opisanie [...]* [The herbal, that is a description of local, foreign and overseas herbs...], ed. Mikołaj Szarfenberger, Cracow 1568, National Library, Warsaw, inv. no. SD.XVI.F90, source: Polona

Problems with finding a qualified woodblock cutter, as noted by the publisher, were very familiar to printers and publishers active in many milieus of the time. Even in the case of the most prestigious works, finding a skilled *Formschneider* could be problematic, as confirmed by the letters of Conrad Peutinger that refer to the

¹⁹ It was a *sui generis* revision of a work by Hieronim Spiczynski *O ziołach tutecznych y zamorskich y mocy ich* [On local and overseas herbs and their power], published by Helena Unglerowa in 1542 and then by the Heirs of Marek Szarfenberg in 1556. Spiczynski's work was itself a compilation; based on *O ziołach y o mocy ich* [On herbs and their power] by Stefan Falimirz published in 1534 by Florian Ungler. See J. Czapla, "Niezwyczajne zwierzęta w wyobrażeniach uczonych XVI-wiecznej Rzeczypospolitej. Fauna egzotyczna w traktacie Stefana Falimirza *O ziołach y o mocy gich*" [Strange animals in the perceptions of scholars in the 16th-century Commonwealth. Exotic fauna in the treatise *On herbs and their power* by Stefan Falimirz], *Rocznik Biblioteki Naukowej PAU i PAN w Krakowie*, 2013, no. 58, pp. 357–367 (with a list of earlier literature on the subject).

“paper” commissions from Emperor Maximilian I.²⁰ The lack of a suitable cutter often caused delays, or, as was in this case, forced the publishers to make use of illustrations that had been produced for earlier publications.²¹ This method had an additional advantage, as signalled by Szarfenberger in his preface, namely that it helped to cut costs: cutting a large set of woodblocks meant a considerable outlay. Analyses of the most lavishly illustrated editions from the 15th and 16th centuries have shown that high costs were generated due to the fact that this stage of preparing a book for print was highly time- and work-consuming.²² Mindful of their profit, the publishers tried to avoid “excessive” expenses on the one hand, but, on the other, were very happy to flaunt them; hence this “cost-saving” paradigm was a recurring motif in their forewords and dedications. This partially reflected the realities of the contemporary publishing market, where editors often tottered on a thin line between success and bankruptcy, with either outcome depending on a variety of economic, social, political and artistic factors.²³ Financial problems are an integral part of the history of early printing, and the publishers’ supplications and dedications were a popular method of seeking support among patrons, clients and, ultimately, readers.²⁴

A more unusual point in the foreword to the herbal by Marcin Siennik was the fact that the word “depicted” (archaic Polish: *wykonterfetowane*) was used there to

20 Similar problems delayed the publication of *Genealogy of the House of Habsburg and Triumphal Procession*. Cf. Landau, Parshall, op. cit., pp. 207, 209; L. Silver, “The „Papier-Kaiser”. Burgkmair, Augsburg and the Image of the Emperor”, in: *Emperor Maximilian I and the Age of Dürer*, ed. E. Michel, M. L. Sternath, exhibition catalogue, Albertina, Wien 2012, pp. 91–99.

21 In 1551, after Helena Unglerowa’s death, the Szarfenbergers purchased her printing press with all of the paraphernalia (*Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, p. 260). This is probably how they came to own the woodblocks used in 1534 and 1542 in the printing of earlier herbals. On filiations in herbalist publications: J. Rostański, *Nasza literatura botaniczna XVI w. oraz jej autorowie lub tłumacze: studyjum krytyczne* [Our botanical literature of the 16th century and its authors or translators. A critical study], Cracow 1888; J. Kołodziejczyk, “W poszukiwaniu źródeł do botanicznej księgi herbarza Stefana Falimirza” [In the search for the sources for the herbalist book on botany by Stefan Falimirz], *Archiwum Historii Medycyny*, 1957, vol. 20, no. 1–2, pp. 35–44; J. Szostak, “Zielnik Stefana Falimirza z 1534 roku” [The herbal by Stefan Falimirz from 1534], *Ze skarbcza kultury* 1977, fasc. 28–29; J. Szostak, *Farmakognozja, farmacja galenowa i aptekarstwo w renesansowych zielnikach polskich* [Pharmacognosy, Galenic pharmacy and apothecary practice in Polish Renaissance herbals], Warsaw 2006 (with an extensive list of earlier literature on the subject).

22 See the remuneration for Sebolt Gallensdorfer, a *Formschneider* hired to cut the woodblocks for Hartmann Schedel’s *Chronicle of the World*. E. Rücker, *Hartmann Schedels Weltchronik, Das größte Buchunternehmen der Dürer-Zeit. Mit einem Katalog der Städteansichten*, München 1988.

23 L. Febvre, H.-J. Martin, *Narodziny książki* [original title: *L’apparition du livre*, Paris 1958], translated by A. Kocot, M. Wodzyńska-Walicka, Warsaw 2014, p. 17ff.

24 See R. Chartier, “Princely Patronage and the Economy of Dedication”, in: *Forms and Meanings*, Philadelphia 1995, pp. 25–42. On the functions of dedications on loose prints, see M. Bury, *The Print in Italy 1550–1620*, London 2001, p. 78. In the context of Poland, interesting conclusions are drawn from dedications by Hieronymus Vietor (*Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, pp. 350–352) and Jan Januszowski (*ibid.*, pp. 94–97).

denote the making of the images of plants that were to be included in this work. In the Renaissance, the Latin term *contrafacere* made a considerable career in many national languages, with the important gloss that its meaning was not limited to the simple “making an image” but included the suggestion that the image was, in fact, objective, consistent with nature or even declared as “true”.²⁵ The popularity of this term indicates that there existed a need to describe the new function (and form) of images in which the deciding factor was their “authenticity”. Interestingly, in 16th-century prints, mainly German ones, this term and its derivatives were applied in reference to various images – but all of them were ones in which the common factor was the need for fidelity with respect to some model (e.g. portraits, cityscapes, maps, depictions of contemporary events, images of holy relics, etc.).²⁶ Of course, the fact that Szarfenberger used the term *wykonterfetować* is not sufficient to draw conclusions regarding his awareness of Renaissance theories concerning the mimetic nature of art or of the broad issues of similarity and imitation.²⁷ However, by then he already had one published herbarium under his belt (1556), so he may have been quite familiar with the issue of the special expectations – on the part of both the authors and the readers – with regard to illustrations in texts that either were or aspired to be scholarly; and Renaissance herbals certainly belonged to these. In their case, important criteria were accuracy of the information they communicated and the already-mentioned conformity with nature, which would make it possible to unmistakably identify the described and depicted plants in their natural state. Leading publications of this kind clearly demonstrate how great a value was attached to illustrations in Renaissance herbals.²⁸ In the case of the herbal by Otto Brunfels, published in 1530 in Strasburg by Johannes Schott and illustrated by Hans Weiditz, the very title *Herbarum vivae eicones* indicates that “living” images of plants constituted its key element. In the introduction to *De historia stirpium Commentarii Insignes* (Basel 1542, published by M. Isengrin), its author Leonhard Fuchs accused the illustrators of being more ready to “vaunt their talent” than to follow nature; however, in the very same work the artists involved in producing its illustrations

25 Chiefly P. Parshall, “Imago contrafacta: Images and Facts in the Northern Renaissance”, *Art History*, December 1993, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 554–579; Landau, Parshall, op. cit., pp. 237–240. In Polish, the terms *konterfetować* and *kontrefetować* signified “to represent”, “to imitate”, but also “to mock”, “to ape”. *Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku* [Dictionary of 16th-century Polish], vol. 10, Wrocław 1976, pp. 584, 586–587.

26 Landau, Parshall, op. cit., pp. 237–239.

27 Cf. A. Fulińska, *Naśladowanie i twórczość. Renesansowe teorie imitacji, emulacji i przekładu* [Imitation and creativity. Renaissance theories of imitation, emulation and translation], Wrocław 2000.

28 Specialist literature on this topic is vast; see esp. A. Arber, *Herbals: Their Origin and Evolution, a Chapter in the History of Botany, 1460–1670*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1938; W. Blunt, *The Art of Botanical Illustration*, 2nd ed., London 1951; F. D. Hoeniger, “How Plants and Animals were Studied in the Mid-Sixteenth Century”, in: *Science and the Arts in the Renaissance*, eds. J. W. Shirley, F. D. Hoeniger, Washington D.C. 1985, pp. 130–148; F. Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer and the Animal and Plant Studies of the Renaissance*, Boston 1988; Landau, Parshall, op. cit., pp. 247–255; Pettegree, op. cit., pp. 291–295.

were honoured in an exceptional way, namely, their portraits were included in the book (Albrecht Meyer and Heinrich Füllmaurer were depicted as the *pictores operis*, while Veit Rudolf Speckle was described as the *sculptor*). In the foreword to the illustrated edition of the *Kraüterbuch* by Hieronymus Bock (Strasburg 1546), the significance of illustrations was stressed by the publisher, Wendel Rihel, who turned the readers' attention not only to their costliness, but also to the problems attendant on their proper execution, for instance the difficulties presented by acquiring the botanical “models”. The foreword to the following edition of this work, issued in 1560, contains a *sui generis* overview of the characteristic features of illustrations contained in contemporary handbooks of botany; in this context the excellent quality of woodcuts created by David Kandel for the current book was, of course, highlighted. In sum, the illustrated herbals of that period constituted a unique field for experimentation, not only a ground for the analysis of the relationship between art and nature, but also an area where steps towards the development of the empirical sciences were being made.²⁹

It cannot be ruled out that what Szarfenberger had in mind while writing his foreword were illustrations found in herbals of the era; in the text itself he cited the authority of Pietro Mattioli and his achievements in the field of medicine, thus proving his knowledge of the contemporary book market.³⁰ The contrast between illustrations produced in his lifetime, for instance those in the Prague edition of Mattioli's *Commentarii* from 1563, and woodcuts in his own publication, where some woodblocks were used more than once to illustrate several plants (e.g. the illustrations showing cumin and coriander), may have made the Cracow printer feel the need to justify himself before his readers. What is more, the reasons for his self-critical observations may even have been provided by the local production: just a few years earlier, in 1564, Łazarz Andrysowicz had published *Lekarstwa doświadczone* [Tested remedies], another work by Marcin Siennik in which the text was accompanied by a sizeable set of woodcut representations of medicinal plants.³¹ In Szarfenberger's defence we must recall that the use of second-hand woodblocks, which could be bought or rented out, was standard practice, particularly in the case of richly illustrated books; and contemporary herbals certainly belonged to those. Even in Cracow alone we can find another example of this practice – in a book which, in addition, also includes the publisher's critical commentary. *Herbarz Polski*

29 Very interesting argumentation was used during the lawsuit brought by Johannes Schott against Christian Egenolff, accusing the latter of plagiarising the work by Brunfels. It gives us insight into various (artistic, cognitive and legal) aspects of the problem. Landau, Parshall, op. cit., pp. 245–258.

30 Pietro Andrea Mattioli's *Commentarii* were published since 1544, their illustrated editions appeared a decade later, and they were published in national languages in the 1560s. In the course of the 16th century, the book appeared in over 60 editions.

31 Copy: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław, inv. no. XVI.Qu.1848. In the foreword to the reader, Siennik commented on the importance of illustrations, pointing out that they aided the “recognition” of plants, and added that “the printer and I diligently made it so as to give each herb its own shape”.

[The Polish herbal] by Marcin of Urzędów, published in 1595 by Jan Januszowski, contains the following observation: "It would have been proper to adorn this Herbal with more perfect images and provide each herb with its own image".³² In addition, further on the publisher, similarly as Szarfenberger had done before him, pointed out that an attempt to cut a special woodblock for each plant described in the book would have made "the work impossible to finish, and the cost incalculable".

Jan Januszowski, the publisher of *Herbarz Polski*, was Mikołaj Szarfenberger's most serious competitor.³³ As the son of Łazarz Andrysowicz, owner of the Oficyna Łazarzowa printing house, and Barbara, the widow of the famous publisher and printer Hieronymus Vietor, he was exceptionally well prepared for his profession. In addition, similarly to many of the outstanding publishers of his era, he was very well educated, with wide interests and excellent contacts at the royal court and among the highest aristocracy.³⁴ His ambitions regarding illustrative material were considerable, as shown by his endeavour to create a series of images of Polish monarchs with brief commentaries (*eicones*), modelled on similar works that had been issued abroad. What Januszowski planned to create was a publication embedded in the tradition of the Renaissance "cult" of *uomini illustri*, and thus representing one of the most characteristic genres of the era. Even though the concept for it was formed as early as in the 1570s, the series entitled *Ikones Książąt y Królów Polskich x. Jana Głuchowskiego* [Father Jan Głuchowski's Icons of Polish Princes and Kings], saw the light of day only in 1605.³⁵ Januszowski was the author of its concept, the editor who overlooked the entire work process and the man responsible for the final effect; hence his foreword presenting the background of its issue, entitled *Krótki wywód tytułu tych ksiąg, do łaskawego Czytelnika* (A brief explication of the title of these books, to the kind Reader), was very personal in its tone.³⁶ In it, Januszowski devoted much attention to the function of the "depictions" (archaic Polish: *konterfety*), thus amply demonstrating his knowledge of various theories of pictorial resemblance and, in effect, producing a text that provides essential information regarding opinions on

32 Copy: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław, inv. no. XVI.F.4233, under the author's foreword.

33 The term "rivalry" is entirely applicable here, considering that the *Acta castrensia Cracoviensia* mention that at one time Januszowski beat Szarfenberger so badly that blood flowed (*Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, p. 79).

34 Above all, *ibid.*, pp. 69–99; Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *Czcionką i piórem...*, op. cit.

35 A remark on Januszowski harbouring such a plan appears in the royal privilege from 1578 (*Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, pp. 73, 88). The Cracow printer was beaten to it by Tomasz Treter, who published *Regum Poloniae icones* (Rome 1591), later popularised by Arnold Mylius through his *Principum et regum Polonorum imagines ad vivum expressae* published in Köln in 1594. See Jurkowlaniec, *Sprawczość rycin...*, pp. 276–278.

36 *Ikones Książąt y Królów Polskich x. Jana Głuchowskiego [...]* [Father Jan Głuchowski's Icons of Polish Princes and Kings ...]; copy: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław, inv. no. XVII-15407. Cf. also: J. Głuchowski, *Ikones królów i książąt polskich. Reprodukacja fototypiczna wydania z 1605 r.* [Icons of Polish Princes and Kings. Phototypic reproduction of the 1605 edition], ed. B. Górská, Wrocław 1979.

the functions of depictions as held in 16th-century Poland.³⁷ Januszowski referred to the commemorative, evocative and cognitive functions of "portraits": "For when we look at some painted image, we swiftly impress it on our minds and we at once assume some acquaintance with that unfamiliar personage". At the same time, he emphasised his disappointment with the illustrations in his long-planned *Ikones*. Attempting to justify his failure in this matter, Januszowski reported the unfortunate incident that ruined his plans: "an expert craftsman brought over from Germany" had been "without any fault or cause accidentally shot and killed".³⁸ The subsequent lamentation on the loss of this accomplished woodblock cutter who, as it turned out, could not be replaced by anyone very much resembles the complaints found in the foreword to Siennik's *Herbarz*, and yet again it indicates that the position of a skilled *Formschneider* on the contemporary printing market was very high indeed. It was precisely in the 16th century that the woodcut technique reached the apex of its artistic potential.³⁹ Masters of this art, i.e. independent woodcut engravers and skilled *Formschneider* craftsmen alike, designed or cut loose prints and book illustrations, making use of the monochromatic technique or producing chiaroscuro prints, and by cooperating with many publishers they developed careers that exceeded the boundaries of their own local regions.⁴⁰

The woodblock cutter's death prevented Januszowski from completing the *Ikones* with images of the last monarchs, namely Henri de Valois and Stephen Báthory. He was also forced to print some depictions from woodblocks used in earlier books, e.g. *Sigismundi Tertii electi Poloniae regis ... Cracoviae ingressus* (Cracow 1587, published by Jakub Siebeneicher), Stanisław Sarnicki's *Statuta i metryka przywilejów koronnych* [The statutes and certificate of royal privileges] (Cracow 1594,

37 For instance, he cited Cicero and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which was then ascribed to him.

38 The woodblock cutter Jörg Brückner, brought over from Wrocław, was shot to death by students from the Jerusalem student residence in June 1594. Januszowski had complained about this already in the afterwords to Stanisław Sarnicki's *Statuta i metryka przywilejów koronnych* [The statutes and certificates of royal privileges], printed in the same year (*Do łaskawego Czytelnika* [To the kind Reader], p. 1315; copy: National Library, Warsaw, inv. no. SD XVI.F.901). Głuchowski, *Ikones królów i książąt polskich. Reprodukacja...*, pp. VI–VII; *Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, pp. 88–89, 92.

39 In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, both in Italy and in Poland, the technique of making woodcuts went through a considerable formal transformation, which was decisive to the recognition of its artistic potential and later development. Cf. Landau, Parshall, op. cit., pp. 33–46, 169ff; G. Trassari Filippetto, "Tecnica xilografica tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento: 'il nuovo stile'", in: *A volo d'uccello. Jacopo de' Barbari e le rappresentazioni di città nell'Europa del Rinascimento*, Venezia 1999, pp. 51–57.

40 A good example of this are the careers of Jost de Negker (who corresponded with, e.g., Emperor Maximilian I) or Hieronymus Andreae, extolled in Johannes Neudörfer's *Chronicle* (1547). The status of the *Formschneiders* is confirmed by their signatures. Cf. Landau, Parshall, op. cit., p. 200ff; G. Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints 1490–1550*, British Museum 1995. On *chiaroscuro* woodcut, see A. Gnann, *In Farbe! Clair-obscur-Holzschnitte der Renaissance. Meisterwerke aus der Sammlung Georg Baselitz und der Albertina in Wien*, exhibition catalogue, Albertina, Wien 2013.

published by Jan Januszowski) and *Kronika polska* [The Polish chronicle] by Marcin and Joachim Bielski (Cracow 1597, published by Jakub Siebeneicher).⁴¹ These highly varied origins of the illustrations partially explain Januszowski's need to express his dissatisfaction with the result ("tolerable *Ikones*, for there were none others to be had"). This "aesthetic" approach on behalf of the Cracow publisher is not surprising, since his earlier publications already show him as a man of discerning tastes, sensitive to the graphic aspect of his books and ready to use various techniques (e.g. multi-coloured printing) to achieve the desired effect.⁴²

Further on in his foreword, Januszowski revealed what models he had used and for what reason: "[...] a large part [of the *ikones*] were taken from the royal seals for greater similarity".⁴³ Making use of historical iconographic materials was typical of Renaissance culture and its "archaeological" predilections. Januszowski may have been familiar with this approach from the period of his studies in Padua, but he may also have been inspired by the local, Cracow tradition of book illustration. After all, not only Tomasz Treter, who had acquired his taste in Rome and whose *Regum Poloniae icones* (Rome 1591) gave Januszowski an indirect impulse to double his efforts regarding his own venture, made use of historical iconographic records.⁴⁴ They had already been used in the *Chronica Polonorum* by Maciej of Miechów (Cracow 1521, published by Hieronymus Vietor) and in Siebeneicher's already mentioned *Sigismundi Tertii electi Poloniae regis... Cracoviae ingressus* and *Kronika* by Marcin and Joachim Bielski.⁴⁵ Januszowski must have been particularly concerned with issues

41 Głuchowski, *Ikones królów i książąt polskich. Reprodukacja...*, pp. VII–VIII.

42 *Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, p. 83; Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *Czcionką i piórem...*, p. 27. Analogous conclusions are drawn from the analysis of Januszowski's printer's signet (with the device *Ingenio et arte*). Cf. J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *Sygnety drukarskie w Rzeczypospolitej XVI wieku. Źródła ikonograficzne i treści ideowe* [Printers' signets in 16th-century Commonwealth. Iconographic sources and ideological contents], Cracow 2015.

43 The images of Louis of Anjou, Ladislaus Jagiello and Casimir the Jagiellon were based on sphragistic sources.

44 In the foreword, Januszowski cites Mylius's work *Principum et regum Polonorum imagines ad vivum expressae*, published in Köln in 1594, which is a slightly altered repetition of Treter's work (J. Głuchowski, *Ikones królów i książąt polskich. Reprodukacja...*, p. VII). On Treter's publication and the iconographic sources for its illustrations, see B. Stawiarska, "Źródła ikonograficzne pocztu władców polskich Tomasza Tretera" [Iconographic sources for Tomasz Treter's pictorial catalogue of Polish monarchs], *Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk. Sprawozdanie nr 98 za 1980, Wydział Nauk o Sztuce*, Poznań 1981, pp. 63–67; Jurkowłaniec, *Sprawczość rycin...*, pp. 267–277.

45 Cf. E. Chojecka, "Drzeworyty Kroniki Joachima Bielskiego i zaginione gobeliny Anny Jagiellonki. Ze studiów nad związkami artystycznymi Krakowa i Brzegu w XVI wieku" [Woodcuts from Joachim Bielski's *Chronicle* and Anna Jagiellon's lost tapestries. Studies on artistic connections between Cracow and Brzeg in the 16th century], *Roczniki Sztuki Śląskiej*, 1970, no. 7, pp. 37–73; B. Miodońska, "Władca i państwo w krakowskim drzeworycie książkowym XVI wieku" [The ruler and the state in book woodcuts made in Cracow in the 16th century], in: *Renesans. Sztuka i ideologia. Materiały Sympozjum Naukowego Komitetu o Sztuce PAN, Cracow, czerwiec 1972 oraz Sesji Naukowej Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Kielce, listopad 1973* [The Renaissance. Art and ideology. Materials from the scholarly symposium of Art Research

of similarity and "veracity" since he returned to them once again, apologising for the quality of the illustrations and stating that the reader should "be mindful that none of us is this Zeuxis Heracleotes so that he could so render a person, not having ever learnt to do this or not having ever seen that person in his life, as he did, who carefully painted a child holding some grapes in its hand and birds came to them as if they had been real and pecked at that painting; who as Pliny attested 'pen-niculum ad magnam gloriam perduxit'; in these here images you will not see such mastery". By citing Pliny's tale about the rivalry between Zeuxis and Parrhasius and the painted grapes that appeared so real that the birds came to peck at them, Januszowski used one of the most popular anecdotes on art.⁴⁶ This long reference to one of the most frequently read authors of the era is not surprising, considering the publisher's excellent education.⁴⁷ Also, Januszowski often availed himself of literary *topoi* in order to express praise; it is not surprising that he made use of the same rhetorical device to express disapproval. This motif was popular in artistic eulogies, but above all – and as pertains to the current argument – it referred to the mimetic quality of art as a criterion in its assessment.⁴⁸

In the context of Januszowski's views regarding the sought-after qualities of images as expressed in his foreword to the *Ikones*, one more work connected with him must be mentioned here, as it indicates that portraiture was of special interest

Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow, June 1972, and the scholarly session of the Association of Art Historians, Kielce, November 1973], Warsaw 1976, pp. 45–96; *Drukarze dawnej Polski...*, pp. 197–198; *Poczty władców polskich. Tradycja państwowości* [Catalogues of Polish monarchs. The tradition of statehood], exhibition catalogue, The Presidential Palace Gallery, Warsaw 2005.

46 *Naturalis Historia*, lib. XXXV. Pliny's work was published for the first time in Venice in 1469 by Johannes de Speyer, and by the end of the century it had gone into fifteen editions. See L. Armstrong, "The Illustration of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* in Venetian Manuscripts and Early Printed Books", in: *Manuscripts in the Fifty Years after the Invention of Printing: Some Papers Read at a Colloquium at the Warburg Institute on 12–13 March 1982*, ed. J.B. Trapp, London 1983; H. Jones, *Printing the Classical Text*, Utrecht 2004; S. Blake McHam, *Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance: The Legacy of the 'Natural History'*, New Haven 2013. In Cracow, Hieronymus Vietor was the first to print Pliny's work (C. Plinius Secundus, *Liber septimus naturalis historiae, cum annotationibus M. Wolfgangi Guglinger*, 1526).

47 His own texts betray his familiarity with many ancient authors. Cf. J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *Czcionką i piórem...*, p. 98ff.

48 Specialist literature on this topic is vast; see esp. N. Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, New Haven 1983; L. Barkan, "The Heritage of Zeuxis: Painting, Rhetoric and History", in: *Antiquity and its Interpreters*, eds. A. Payne, A. Kuttner, R. Smick, Cambridge 2000, pp. 99–109; *Deceptions and Illusions. Five Centuries of Trompe l'Oeil Painting*, ed. S. Ebert-Schifferer et al., exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Washington 2002, p. 19 and pp. 109–121; S. Blake McHam, "Erudition on Display: The 'Scientific' Illustrations in Pico della Mirandola's Manuscript of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*", in: *Visualizing Medieval Medicine and Natural History, 1200–1550*, eds. J. A. Givens, K. M. Reeds, A. Touwaide, London – New York 2006, pp. 112–113 ("AVISTA Studies in the History of Medieval Technology, Science and Art", vol. 5); S. Clark, *Vanitas of the Eye. Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, Oxford 2007, pp. 23ff, 136ff.

to him. This work – a very personal one – is a diploma he commissioned to celebrate his own ennoblement (1588, Fig. 2). It stands out due to its deluxe form, but also due to its meticulously devised decorative programme, which presented the publisher's career through various coats of arms and portraits placed among floral scrolls. The portraits show not only the monarchs during whose reigns he was active – one of them is, in fact, conjectured to be his own likeness.⁴⁹



Fig. 2. Diploma of Jan Januszowski, National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 1793, © MNW

⁴⁹ It is not clear when the diploma (National Museum in Warsaw, Iconography and Photography Collection, inv. no. 1793) was made; the most frequently given date is the early 1590s. Cf. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, *Czcionką i piórem...*, pp. 7–9; J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, "O dyplomie nobilitacyjnym Jana Januszowskiego i portrecie renesansowego wydawcy" [On Jan Januszowski's ennoblement diploma and the Renaissance printer's portrait], *Terminus*, 2008, no. 10, fasc. 1 (18), pp. 67–87.

The publishers’ forewords as analysed here give us insight into the extent of their awareness of the current professional challenges, including these challenges’ intellectual dimension. They also show how expectations regarding book illustrations changed over time and how they served as a focus point for the era’s key artistic and cognitive challenges. In their forewords, Szarfenberger and Januszowski informed their readers about these problems, and thus a growing circle of recipients was increasingly more aware of the “art of the book”, i.e. the complex processes of editing a text and the value of its appropriate presentation. Of course, it would be wrong to (*nomen omen*) lose sight of the more pragmatic aspect of this illustrational problem, which was eloquently expressed by one of the most eminent printers of the era, Johannes Grüninger, who was active in Strasburg, in a letter to Willibald Pirckheimer as occasioned by a disagreement regarding the appearance of Ptolemy’s *Geography* that was being prepared for publication. The publisher avowed that it was the illustrations that made a book valuable and, ultimately, sellable.⁵⁰

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

Abstract

Renaissance publishers very often directly addressed the readers of the books that were published in their printing houses. In various dedications, prefaces, afterwords, etc., they presented the broad behind-the-scenes view of their editorial efforts, thus in this suggestive way attempting to shape universal views on the status and significance of *ars artium*. These authorial texts are an important source of information regarding the editors’ scholarly, social and professional contacts, as well as of the circumstances in which the various texts were created and all kinds of issues the editors encountered in their endeavours to publish them. Together with the development of the art of printing, an increasing amount of attention was given to the illustrations that were to accompany the texts. A critical analysis of these allegedly autobiographical texts must, of course, take under consideration their extreme subjectivism and reputation-building rhetorical strategies, which at times were highly conventional. Nevertheless, the intentional self-exposure contained in these texts reveals to us either the real or proclaimed intentions and frustrations of Renaissance publishers.

An examination of authorial texts by Cracow publishers indicates that the issues of book illustration began to more clearly impinge on the publishers’ awareness in the second half of the 16th century. Interestingly, their direct statements on this topic, even though few, clearly show their critical approach to the images that were included in their own publications. An analysis of the contents of those texts, supported by an investigation of the pictorial material in question, shows that the publishers’ objections were not only conventional expressions of modesty, but an indication of their growing awareness of how complex the matter of book illustration truly was; these publishers understood that the functions of book illustrations varied and transcended a simple pictorial interpretation of the text.

50 Cf. *Die Koberger. Eine Darstellung des buchhändlerischen Geschäftsbetriebes in der Zeit des Überganges vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit*, Leipzig 1885, reprinted Amsterdam–Wiesbaden 1967, pp. 130–139, app. no. 106–121.

The forewords written by the Szarfenbergers (*Biblia Leopoldy*, 1561; *Herbarz, to iest zbiór tutecznych, postronnych y zamorskich opisanie* by Marcin Siennik, 1568) and Jan Januszowski (*Ikones Książąt y Królów Polskich* x. Jana Głuchowskiego, 1605) reveal the extent of their awareness of the current professional challenges and transformations in expectations concerning book illustrations, which mirrored, perhaps even on a magnified scale, the central artistic and cognitive challenges of the era. An analysis of these texts reveals that the publishers were well aware of the conflicts between creeds, in which the intellectual and polemic potential of images was often brought into play. They were also conscious of the cognitive qualities of illustrations and cognizant of theories regarding the mimetic nature of art. Another topic recurring in their forewords was that of the difficulties connected with finding a qualified woodblock cutter. Financial problems were an integral part of the history of early printing, and the topic of (excessive) expenses connected with preparing a large set of woodcuts is equally noticeable in these forewords, thus showing that Renaissance Cracow was not an exception to this rule.

Thanks to these authorial confessions of Cracow publishers, a growing circle of recipients was increasingly more aware of the “art of the book”, i.e. of the complex processes of editing a text and the value of its appropriate presentation.