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The Image of the Lithuanian and Ruthenian Legacy of the Jagiellons in 16th-Century Pictorial Catalogues of Polish Monarchs*

In the 16th century, new forms of social communication allowed the process of universalisation and integration of historical representations to gain momentum.¹ This process encompassed multi-ethnic communities and led to a gradual consolidation of national polities. This article focuses on selected aspects of this phenomenon as illustrated by a sample of both visual and literary materials dedicated to the Lithuanian and Ruthenian heritage of the Jagiellons in the pictorial catalogues of Polish monarchs. These aspects mainly centre around the role of the pictorial catalogue – a popular medium that sustained the collective memory – in the integration of Lithuanian and Ruthenian traditions in the Kingdom of Poland.

The chronological framework of the following reflections includes the dynamic development of Polish historiography and of the illustrated printed book. In the 16th century, modern Polish historiography took growing interest in Lithuania and Ruthenia, deepened by the preparations for and the signing of the Union of Lublin treaty (1569) on the one hand, and by discussions on the distinctiveness of these territories and their connection to the Crown on the other. This was also a time when the first works that considered the history of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as inseparable were written. Simultaneously, one can notice increased production and widespread reception of the illustrated printed book, which was eagerly used to disseminate current political messages.

The transition from a personal union between Poland and Lithuania to a real union, the subsequent political, legal and structural changes, and the preparations

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1 The animated debate on the role of prints in nation-building processes, initiated by Benedict Anderson’s influential study *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1st ed. 1983), was summarised e.g. by Trish Loughran, *Books in Nation*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam, Cambridge 2015, pp. 36–52.

for the union of churches, signed in Brest (1596), were all inseparably connected with the concept of the “cultural union” or, to cite the conception proposed by Oskar Halecki, the coexistence and mutual influence of the Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian traditions.² This raises the question of the role of the printed visual and textual message in facilitating the coexistence and gradual assimilation of these traditions in the Crown.

Surprisingly, the 16th-century popular image of the first Jagiellons and their spouses remains peripheral to the contemporary scientific interests of historians in general and historians of art and literature in particular. In fact, only two researchers, namely Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg and Alvydas Nikžentaitis,³ pursued this subject, albeit viewing it from entirely distinct perspectives. Bömelburg focused on Polish literary sources and observed that, in the Crown, the aforementioned century lacked a consistent image of the Jagiellons and that opinions about the first Jagiellons in the first two decades of the century were largely negative. These opinions were disseminated through antecedent chronicles, in particular the *Annals* of Jan Długosz.⁴ By contrast, Nikžentaitis focused on the polarised, stereotypical evaluation of Ladislaus Jagiello and his cousin Vytautas in Lithuanian historiography and

2 O. Halecki, “Zagadnienia kulturalne w dziejach Unii Jagiellońskiej” [Cultural issues in the history of the Jagiellonian Union], *Przegląd Historyczny*, 1926–1927, no. 26, pp. 396–408; G. Błaszczyk, “Zagadnienia kulturalne w unii polsko-litewskiej (1385–1569)” [Cultural issues in the Polish-Lithuanian union (1385–1569)], in: *Kultura Litwy i Polski w dziejach. Tożsamość i współistnienie. Materiały międzynarodowej konferencji zorganizowanej w dniach 15–17 października 1998* [The culture of Lithuania and Poland throughout history. Identity and coexistence. Materials from the international conference organised on 15–17 October 1998], ed. J. Wyrozumski, Cracow 2000, pp. 31–49.

3 H.-J. Bömelburg, “Das polnische Geschichtsdenken und der Piasten- und Jagiellonenkult in der Frühen Neuzeit”, in: *Die Konstruktion der Vergangenheit. Geschichtsdenken, Traditionsbildung und Selbstdarstellung im frühneuzeitlichen Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. J. Bahlcke, A. Strohmeyer, Berlin 2002, pp. 193–220; idem, “Historia narodowa w interregnach (1572–1587). Jej popularyzacja i zorientowanie na „Piastów” i „Jagiellonów”” [National history in the interregnum periods (1572–1587). Its popularisation and orientation on ‘Piasts’ and ‘Jagiellons’], in: idem, *Polska myśl historyczna a humanistyczna historia narodowa (1500–1700)* [Polish historical thought and humanistic national history (1500–1700)], translated by Z. Owczarek, Cracow 2011 (German ed. 2006), pp. 213–234 [with interesting remarks on Ladislaus Jagiello being evoked in texts supporting Ivan IV as a candidate to the Polish throne, pp. 220–221]; A. Nikžentaitis, *Witold i Jagiello. Polacy i Litwini we wzajemnym stereotypie* [Vytautas and Jagiello. Lithuanians and Poles in mutual stereotypes], translated by I. Fedorowicz, K. Korzeniewska-Wolek, K. Linka, Poznań 2000. For the perception of Ladislaus Jagiello during and immediately after his reign, see K. Biedrowska-Ochmańska, J. Ochmański, *Władysław Jagiello w opiniach swoich współczesnych. Próba charakterystyki jego osobowości* [Ladislaus Jagiello in the opinions of his contemporaries. An attempt at assessing his personality], Poznań 1987; S. K. Kuczyński in the synthetic text *Władysław Jagiello* [Ladislaus Jagiello], in: *Życiorysy historyczne, literackie i legendarne* [Historical, literary and legendary lives], series 2, ed. Z. Stefanowska, J. Tazbir; selection of illustrations Sz. Gąsowski, Warsaw 1989, pp. 47–78, briefly discussed the image of Jagiello in texts of culture, starting from the *Annals* of Jan Długosz through 18th-century operas and ending with the *Idea i miecz* [An idea and a sword] television show (1978).

4 Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, p. 150.

journalism, seeking to discover a reflection of contradictory interests and political relations between Poland and Lithuania. He also observed that “in the 16th century, not only did the dynasty become an important consolidating agent of the Lithuanian national polity, but it also brought Lithuanians and Poles closer”.⁵ Nevertheless, the cultural consequences of this proximity remained beyond the scope of Nikžentaitis’ short study.

On the other hand, the depictions of Ladislaus Jagiello were analysed relatively well, even though the authors of the iconographic studies seldom took into consideration the genealogical context in which the vast majority of the monarch’s depictions existed between the 16th and 18th centuries.⁶ The dynastic aspect of the representations of the Jagiellons was more prominent in research on the symbolism of power and on graphic art and pictorial catalogues of the 16th-century monarchs. These studies underlined the importance of royal representations in research on the collective imagination, with a focus on the mechanisms shaping historical representations and national awareness.⁷ The research perspective assumed in those

5 Nikžentaitis, op. cit., pp. 47.

6 J. Ruszczycówna, “Z badań nad ikonografią Władysława Jagiełły i Zygmunta Augusta” [From the research on the iconography of Ladislaus Jagiello and Sigismund Augustus], *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, 1979, no. 23, pp. 211–260; J. T. Petrus, “Ikonomia króla Władysława Jagiełły” [Iconography of King Ladislaus Jagiello], in: *Na znak świetnego zwycięstwa. W sześćsetną rocznicę bitwy pod Grunwaldem. Katalog wystawy* [As a sign of a glorious victory. On the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald. Exhibition catalogue], vol. I: *Studia*, scientific ed. D. Nowacki, pp. 221–268; and the popular version of the study: idem, *Portrety króla Władysława Jagiełły* [Portraits of King Ladislaus Jagiello], Cracow 2010; M. Walczak, “Portret konny króla Władysława Jagiełły w kaplicy Trójcy Świętej na zamku w Lublinie” [Equestrian portrait of King Ladislaus Jagiello in the chapel of the Holy Trinity at Lublin Castle], in: *Patronat artystyczny Jagiellonów* [The Jagiellons’ artistic patronage], ed. M. Walczak, P. Węcowski, Cracow 2015, pp. 305–320. The publications on Ladislaus Jagiello’s tombstone constitute a separate group, recently summarised by M. Janicki, “Problem datowania nagrobka Władysława Jagiełły w świetle źródeł i dotychczasowej literatury” [The issue of dating Ladislaus Jagiello’s tomb in the light of the sources and existing literature], in: *Patronat artystyczny Jagiellonów*, pp. 321–358. The iconography of Jagiello in foreign works of art, however, was studied to a small extent.

7 B. Miodońska, “Władca i państwo w krakowskim drzeworycie książkowym wieku XVI” [The ruler and the state in book woodcuts made in Cracow in the 16th century], in: *Renesans. Sztuka i ideologia. Materiały sympozjum naukowego Komitetu Nauk o Sztuce PAN, Kraków, czerwiec 1972, oraz sesji naukowej Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Kielce, listopad 1973* [The Renaissance. Art and ideology. Materials from the scholarly symposium of Art Research Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow, June 1972, and the scholarly session of the Association of Art Historians, Kielce, November 1973], scientific ed. T. S. Jaroszewski, Cracow 1975, pp. 45–96; E. Chojecka, “Znaczenie kulturowe grafiki polskiej XVI wieku” [Cultural significance of Polish graphic art of the 16th century], in: *Dawna książka i kultura. Materiały międzynarodowej sesji naukowej z okazji pięćsetlecia sztuki drukarskiej w Polsce* [Books and culture in the past. Materials from the international scholarly session to celebrate the 500th anniversary of printing in Poland], Wrocław 1975, pp. 86–114; T. Jakimowicz, “Przeszłość i teraźniejszość w sztuce wieku XVI w Polsce” [The past and the present in Polish art of the 16th century], in: *Świadomość historyczna Polaków. Problemy i metody badawcze* [Historical awareness of the Polish people. Issues and research methods], ed. J. Topolski, Łódź 1981, pp. 154–204; eadem, *Temat*

works was reinforced by a deeper understanding of genealogy, which took into consideration its role in enhancing the dynasty's prestige and legitimacy, as well as its organisational and explanatory function in terms of the historical and social reality, particularly in the culture of the nobility. This perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the role the pictorial catalogues of the monarchs played in the 16th century with regard to the assimilation of the Jagiellons' Eastern lineage in the Kingdom of Poland.

An investigation into the perception of Ladislaus Jagiello and the first two generations of his descendants, as well as their family connections, in 16th-century pictorial catalogues is crucial for understanding the ambiguous role that the image of the ruling dynasty played in consolidating the multi-ethnic national polity and its diverse heritage. In this context, the perception of the Jagiellonian dynasty's founder, who was born of a Lithuanian father and a Ruthenian mother, is of great importance. Długosz also mentions the reluctant opinions about the Lithuanian duke as expressed by noblemen during the Council of Cracow (1385), as they "considered it upsetting and hurtful to put on the throne a foreign, barbaric duke, disregarding their own Catholic princes".⁸ However, these opinions are not recalled in the 16th-century pictorial catalogues.⁹ It is not the "foreign" or "barbaric" origin of the monarch, but his Lithuanian descent that is accentuated. It is therefore crucial to examine the significance of this change and to observe how the ethnonym for Jagiello was perceived and represented in the visual and literary contents of 16th-century pictorial catalogues. Where would the adjective "Lithuanian" be situated on the semantic "ours – theirs" axis?

The subsequent noteworthy aspects pertain to the popular 16th-century perception of both the Eastern royal spouses and speculations over the legitimacy of

historyczny w sztuce epoki ostatnich Jagiellonów [Historical topic in the art of the late Jagiellon period], Warsaw–Poznań 1985; eadem, "Wizerunki władców Polski w „Chronica Polonorum” Macieja z Miechowa. Problem kreacji i funkcjonowania źródła obrazowego" [Images of Polish monarchs in *Chronica Polonorum* by Maciej of Miechów. The issue of the creation and functioning of a pictorial source], in: *Studia nad świadomością historyczną Polaków* [Studies on the historical awareness of the Polish people], ed. J. Topolski, Poznań 1994, pp. 68–81; Z. Piech, *Monety, pieczęcie i herby w systemie symboli władzy Jagiellonów* [Coins, seals and coats of arms in the system of symbols of Jagiellon power], Warsaw 2003.

8 In the original version: Grave enim et molestum nonnullis consiliariis videbatur propriis principibus et catholicis neglectis preteritisque extraneum et barbarum ad fastigium regale evehere: *Ioannis Długossi Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, vol. 10, 1370–1405, board of eds. S. Gawęda et al., Latin text prepared by D. Turkowska, commentary Z. Perzanowski, Warsaw 1985, p. 145. Polish translation: *Jana Długosza Roczniki czyli Kroniki sławnego Królestwa Polskiego* [Annals or chronicles of the famous Polish Kingdom, by Jan Długosz], vol. 10, 1370–1405, board of eds. S. Gawęda et al., Latin text prepared by D. Turkowska, M. Kowalczyk, translated by J. Mrukówna, ed. and commentary Z. Perzanowski, Warsaw 2009, p. 192.

9 The account of the nobility's reluctance to accept Jagiello during the Council of Cracow was omitted in Maciej of Miechów's chronicle, which was based on the *Annals*. The chronicles of Marcin and Joachim Bielski do not mention it either.

Jagiello and Sophia (Sonka) of Halshany's children. The first concern involves dynastic marriages and their role in facilitating mutual political and cultural connections.¹⁰ The long tradition of Polish–Lithuanian marriages went back to the 1279 marriage of Boleslaus II, the prince of Plock and Masovia, and Gaudemunda, the daughter of Traidenis.¹¹ This union secured peaceful contacts between the lands, laid the foundations for the marriage of Jagiello and Hedwig, and broke the taboo on marriages with “pagans” or with spouses of a different faith.¹² Jagiello's first marriage legitimised his reign in Poland, even though it did not produce a male heir and only his sons from his fourth marriage, to Sophia of Halshany, established the Jagiellonian dynasty. Attempts to challenge the legality of his marriage to Hedwig, based on her betrothal to William the Courteous, and rumours of Sophia's infidelity spread in the early years of Ladislaus of Varna's reign, undermined the House of Jagiellon's legitimacy and their reign over Poland. The gradual disappearance of these accusations from the pictorial catalogues proves that in the 16th century the prestige of the dynasty was on the increase and that its members had obtained the status of hereditary heirs to the throne.

The depiction of Elena of Moscow's parentage remains a secondary topic. This Muscovite princess, related to the Paleologian dynasty and wife to Alexander Jagiellon, is still considered a controversial figure.¹³ Did the Byzantine connections of the daughter of Ivan III the Great and Zoe Paleologina surface in the analysed material? If so, how were they represented in the visual and literary representations?

10 Multiple studies on this subject were conducted in recent years, e.g. T. Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, New York 2013, *The Man behind the Queen: Male Consorts in History*, ed. C. Beem and M. Taylor, New York 2014 and *Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics 1550–1800*, ed. A. Morton and H. Watanabe-O'Kelly, London 2016. For the political and culture-forming role of Polish–Lithuanian marriages, see e.g. G. Błaszczyk, *Dzieje stosunków polsko-litewskich od czasów najdawniejszych do współczesności* [The history of Polish–Lithuanian relations form the earliest period to the present day], vol. 1: *Trudne początki* [The difficult beginnings], Poznań 1998, pp. 106–129, with extensive references to previous literature on the subject.

11 Ibid., pp. 89–90, 107.

12 Ibid., p. 107. Following the synod convened in 1309 by the papal legate, it was forbidden to wed daughters, granddaughters and cousins to “heretics, schismatics, Ruthenians, Bulgarians and Lithuanians”: A. F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach Europy Zachodniej XIV–XV w.* [Poland in Western European views, 14th and 15th century], Warsaw 1968, p. 152.

13 Cf. Z. Wdowiszewski, *Genealogia Jagiellonów i Domu Wazów w Polsce* [The genealogy of the Jagiellons and the House of Vasa in Poland], Cracow 2005, p. 108; U. Borkowska, *Dynastia Jagiellonów w Polsce* [The Jagiellon dynasty in Poland], Warsaw 2011, pp. 515–517. That Ivanovna was ambiguously perceived in the Crown in the 16th century has been recently mentioned by G. Mickūnaitė, *United in Blood, Divided by Faith: Elena Ivanovna and Aleksander Jagiellończyk*, in: *Frictions and Failures. Cultural Encounters in Crisis*, ed. A. Bues, Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 181–200, with extensive references to sources and previous literature on the subject.

Maciej of Miechów and Justus Decius. The beginning of dynastic history

The *Chronica Polonorum* of Maciej of Miechów, first published in Cracow in 1519 and later reprinted in an extended and revised version in 1521, is a source of inestimable value for research on the perception of the Jagiellons and the changes it underwent in the first two decades of the 16th century. The earliest example of a conceptually unified pictorial catalogue of monarchs comprises representations of 24 princes and kings of Poland, from the legendary Lech to Alexander Jagiellon. The iconography was modelled on book illustrations (the *Liber chronicarum* of Hartmann Schedel, 1493, and the title page of *Chronicon Abbatis Urspergensis* of Konrad of Lichtenau, 1515), individual images (prints by Urs Graf) and seals of majesty. The set of woodcuts depicting the monarchs was widely reproduced and promptly acquired the status of a reliable historical source.



Fig. 1. Representation of Casimir the Great, in: Maciej of Miechów, *Chronica Polonorum*, Craccoviae 1521, p. CCXXII; National Library in Warsaw, SD XVI.F.803 adl. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/3807850/249/>. [accessed 30 May 2017]

The woodcuts feature the genealogy of Sigismund the Old as connected to his royal power, the roots of which go back to the coronation of Boleslaus the Brave. The iconographic programme of the chronicle emphasised the close connection between the monarch and the state, as it was the monarch who guaranteed the state's



Fig. 2. Representation of Louis the Great, in: Maciej of Miechów, *Chronica Polonorum*, Cracoviae 1521, p. CCXLVIII; National Library in Warsaw, SD XVI.F.803 adl. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/3807850/275/>. [accessed 30 May 2017]



Fig. 3. Representation of Ladislaus Jagiello, in: Maciej of Miechów, *Chronica Polonorum*, Cracoviae 1521, p. CCLXVIII; National Library in Warsaw, SD XVI.F.803 adl. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/3807850/295/>. [accessed 30 May 2017]

sovereignty.¹⁴ The iconographic scheme of the reigning monarchs, based on seals of majesty, was used to portray kings from Casimir the Great (Fig. 1) to Alexander Jagiellon.¹⁵ It implied a conceptual compatibility of the image of a king seated on the throne with that of a sovereign ruler. The consistent employment of this convention to portray every member of the Jagiellon dynasty emphasised their family connections to the Houses of Piast and Anjou, and pictured them as their political heirs. The heraldic programme of seals became reduced to its most significant components – the coat of arms of the Kingdoms of Poland and Hungary (in the representations of Louis the Great, Fig. 2, and Ladislaus of Varna).¹⁶ The title of Grand Duke

¹⁴ Jakimowicz, *Przeszłość i teraźniejszość...*, pp. 170–171.

¹⁵ Teresa Jakimowicz was the first to observe the conceptual and iconographic correlation between the depictions of enthroned monarchs in Maciej of Miechów's chronicle and the seals of majesty: eadem, *Problem kreacji...*, pp. 76–77.

¹⁶ In the case of Casimir the Great, also the coat of arms of Sieradz Land was emphasised. Cf. the 1336 seal of majesty of Casimir the Great, National Archives in Cracow, signature Perg 20.

of Lithuania as held by Jagiello (Fig. 3), Ladislaus of Varna, Casimir the Jagiellon and Alexander Jagiellon was in no way emphasised in the heraldic programme of the woodcuts as the chase (Polish: Pogoń) coat of arms was omitted, even though it was shown in their seals of majesty. The Lithuanian roots and Ruthenian family connections played a secondary role in the *Chronica Polonorum*. The dynastic aspect, included in an extension of the pictorial programme, was only introduced by the genealogical woodcut and by Decius's texts appended to the second edition of the chronicle.

The pictorial catalogue of monarchs, identical in both editions, was complemented by the textual message of the chronicle, the first edition of which (from before 1514) included a synthesis of Polish history until 1480, whereas the section on the period 1480–1506 was developed between 1515 and 1518.¹⁷ Maciej of Miechów based his work mostly on Długosz's *Annals* and, later, on his own observations and reflections. Just as the chronicler, he painted an unfavourable image of Jagiello and his mother, who was of "Greek faith" (*ritu Graecorum femina*) and from whom the Polish monarch had supposedly inherited his belief in all sorts of superstitions.¹⁸ Following Długosz, the chronicler also summarised the trial

17 H. Barycz, "Życie i twórczość Macieja z Miechowa" [Maciej of Miechów: life and work], in: *Maciej z Miechowa 1457–1523. Historyk, geograf, lekarz, organizator nauki* [Maciej of Miechów 1457–1523. A historian, geographer, medic, organiser of scholarship], ed. H. Barycz, Wrocław 1960, p. 45; idem, *Szlakami dziejopisarstwa staropolskiego* [Tracing the Old-Polish historical writings], Wrocław 1981, p. 34; Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, p. 127.

18 Interestingly, when enumerating the pious deeds of Jagiello (p. 291), Maciej of Miechów does not list the enterprises the king founded in "Ruthenia" as quoted by Długosz, nor does he mention his alleged preference towards them. Cf. W. Swoboda, "Bizancjum w przekazach *Annales* Jana Długosza" [Byzantium as recorded in the *Annales* by Jan Długosz], *Balkanica Posnaniensia*, 1989, no. 4, pp. 27–55; G. Jurkowlanec, "West and East Perspectives on the "Greek Manner" in the Early Modern Period", in: *East Meets West. At the Crossroads of Early Modern Europe*, ed. G. Jurkowlanec, J. J. Łabno, Warsaw, 2010 [= *Ikonotheka*, 22], pp. 83–84; eadem, "The Artistic Patronage of Ladislaus Jagiello: Beyond the Opposition Between Byzantium and the Renaissance", in: *Bizancjum a renesansy. Dialog kultur, dziedzictwo antyku – tradycja i współczesność* [Byzantium and Renaissances. Dialogue of Cultures, Heritage of Antiquity, Tradition and Modernity], ed. M. Janocha et al., Warsaw 2012, pp. 271–281. For the "Ruthenian-Byzantine" foundations of Jagiello and the discussion on their function and specificity, see A. Różycka-Bryzek, "Bizantyńsko-słowiańskie malowidła w gotyckich kościołach Polski pierwszych Jagiellonów" [Byzantino-Slavic paintings in the Gothic churches of the first Jagiellons], in: *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny*, vol. 6: *Kultura artystyczna* [History of the Lublin region, vol. 6. Artistic culture], Lublin 1992, pp. 313–347; eadem, "Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła w Polsce wczesnojagiellońskiej. Problem przystosowań na gruncie kultury łacińskiej" [Byzantino-Ruthenian paintings in Poland of the early Jagiellons. The questions of adaptation within Latin culture], in: *Polska – Ukraina. 1000 lat sąsiedztwa* [Poland – Ukraine, a 1000 years of neighbourhood], vol. 2, Przemyśl 1994, pp. 307–326; eadem, "Malowidła ścienne bizantyńsko-ruskie" [Byzantino-Ruthenian wall paintings], in: *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* [Gothic painting in Poland], ed. A. S. Labuda, K. Secomska, Warsaw 2004, vol. 1, pp. 155–184; A. Sulikowska, "At the Crossroads of Traditions: Orthodox Church Paintings in the Reign of the Jagiellons", in: *East Meets West...*, pp. 33–41.

of Queen Sophia, who had been accused by Vytautas of infidelity. Even though Maciej of Miechów criticised the calumny spread by the Lithuanian duke, this passage was censored, as it attacked the good name of the dynasty.¹⁹ Another delicate aspect which failed to gain the approval of Jan Łaski, the primate of Poland, and his entourage, concerned Lithuania's independent position in the royal elections. As Ferdynand Bostel observed, the first edition of the chronicle included a passage stating that, following the death of Casimir Jagiellon, the Lithuanians elected his son, Alexander, to be their grand duke, which is why only John Albert and Sigismund the Old were considered as pretenders to the Polish throne. It was thought that this passage overly emphasised the Lithuanian hegemony.²⁰ In consequence, a small but significant alteration was introduced into this passage, stating that Alexander was elected "in compliance with the desire and will of Casimir, who on his deathbed revealed to the Lithuanians this wish".²¹ This adjustment can be classified among the numerous allusions that emphasised not so much the want for closer ties with Lithuania, as Bostel would see it, but rather Poland's leading political role in the union, increasingly apparent in Polish chronicles and poetic pictorial catalogues of the monarchs. These shifts in emphasis, which the censors introduced particularly frequently in the passages on Alexander's reign,²² were well in accordance with the chronicle's visual programme that focused on underlining the legitimacy of Jagiellon reign in Poland and Hungary. This further confirms that the iconography of the chronicle's *editio princeps* did not raise the censors' doubts.

After the 1519 edition was banned from circulation, a new version of the chronicle was developed in Cracow in 1521. As Decius mentions in the revised edition, "in the passages on the lives of John Albert and Alexander, some information was added and some omitted at the senate's request".²³ The passages that presented Jagiello in an unfavourable light and raised doubts as to the dynasty's legitimacy were thoroughly rephrased.²⁴ Three texts by Justus Decius, Sigismund the Old's secretary, were also appended to the new edition, namely *De vetustatibus Polonorum*,

19 F. Bostel, "Zakaz Miechowity" [Maciej of Miechów's ban], *Przewodnik Naukowy i Literacki*, 1884, no. 12, p. 19.

20 Ibid., p. 19.

21 Translated after Bostel, op. cit., p. 20.

22 The negative accounts of Alexander Jagiellon's reign did not influence the assessment of his Muscovite wife. Two cursory comments, describing Elena Ivanovna as "filia Iwan ducis Moskouiae" (p. CCCLXIII) and "Helena de Moscouia, scismatica" (pp. CCCLXXII), focus solely on her line of descent and faith.

23 The passage on the senate's censorship also mentions the first edition of the chronicle: In Alberti Alexandrique regum vita, quaedam cum indice non concordant, quod biennio posteaquam opus absolutum erat, addita quaedam sunt, quaedam etiam reiecta senatus iussu accedente, illa tu quoque cognoscens emendabis: Maciej of Miechów, *Chronica Polonorum*, Cracoviae 1521, p. CCCLXXIX. Polish translation: Bostel, op. cit., p. 14.

24 Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, p. 132; K. Podlaszewska, "Pierwsze wydanie *Kroniki Macieja z Miechowa* w zbiorach UMK w Toruniu" [The first edition of Maciej of Miechów's Chronicle in the collection of the Copernicus University in Toruń], in: *Studia o Działalności i Zbiorach Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika* [Studies on the Endeavours and

De Iagellonum familia and *De Sigismundi regis temporibus*,²⁵ which were more successful in eulogising the Jagiellons than the censors' efforts.²⁶ The first text lays the foundations for acceptance of Jagiello's eastern roots by introducing Rus into the founding myth of Lech and Czech.²⁷ Decius also equates the Polish-Lithuanian state with Sarmatia, which is an opportunity to accredit Sarmatian ancestry to the Prussians, Lithuanians and Ruthenians.²⁸ The two remaining texts describe the dynasty's ancient lineage and its contributions to the Kingdom of Poland.

In the very introduction to the *De Iagellonum familia* treatise, Decius remarks that "foreign, but vastly distinguished [is] the House of Jagiellon that comes from the Lithuanians",²⁹ and that Lithuania was a part of Sarmatia, its people becoming Catholic together with the Jagiellons. "And since to this day many kings born in this dynasty reigned over the Kingdoms of Poland, Hungary and Bohemia, [since] it is said that distinguished maidens [of this House] were wed to many a noble ruler, it appeared beneficial to me to describe this dynasty in one book, and to append their depictions in a [family] tree".³⁰ The two-page family tree (Fig. 4) of the Jagiellons on the opening pages of *De Sigismundi regis temporibus* should therefore be regarded as an inseparable component of Decius's works which intends to glorify the royal family that exercised power in the three kingdoms.

De Iagellonum familia includes a favourable description of Algirdas, presented as a brave warrior, and of Jagiello, the victor of battles with the Teutonic Knights and an eager promoter of the Catholic faith in Lithuania. The description of Jagiello's fourth wife, in the text named Sophia of Kiev, who was baptised in the Western

Collections of the Copernicus University Library], scientific ed. B. Ryszewski, vol. 1, Toruń 1980, pp. 189–210.

25 Of these three texts, only the treatise on the reign of Sigismund the Old was published in a critical edition and translated into Polish: *Jodoci Ludovici Decii De Sigismundi regis temporibus liber 1521*, Kraków 1901; J. L. Decjusz, *Księga o czasach króla Zygmunta* [A book about the times of King Sigismund], translated by a team [...] under the supervision of Kazimierz Kumaniecki, Warsaw 1960.

26 The widespread influence of Decius's work and its effect on the perception of Jagiellons, also beyond the boundaries of the Kingdom of Poland, is observed by Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, p. 138.

27 J. Decius, *De vetustatibus Polonorum*, Craccoviae 1521, p. 3; Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, p. 148. Prior to Decius, the legend of Lech, Czech and Rus appeared in *Kronika Pulkawy* [Pulkava's Chronicle] and *Kronika wielkopolska* [The Greater Poland Chronicle]. On the other hand, Rus is mentioned neither by Długosz nor by Maciej of Miechów: W. Paszyński, *Sarmaci i uczeni. Spór o pochodzenie Polaków* [The Sarmatians and the scholars. The debate on the origins of the Polish people], Cracow 2016, pp. 91, 217.

28 Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, p. 134.

29 *Externa sed longe clarissima Iagellonum ex Lithuanis accita familia*: J. Decius, *In librum de Iagellonum familia praefatio*, p. XXXIV.

30 *Quom uero ex ea familia in hanc aetatem Poloniae Hungariae Bohemiaeque regnis plures reges nati sunt, ac plerisque clarissimis principibus inclytae uirgines per connubia iunctae tradantur. Ex usu mihi uisum est libro uno eam familiam describere, in arbore quoque depictam hic inserere*: idem, *De Iagellonum familia*, p. XXXVI. I would like to thank Katarzyna Jasieńska-Zdun for her linguistic help with Latin citations.



Fig. 4. Two-page family tree of the Jagiellons, in: Justus Decjusz, *De vetvstatibvs Polonorum liber I; De Jagellonvm familia liber II; De Sigismvndi regis temporibvs liber III*, Craccoviae 1521, family tree [n.p.]; National Library in Warsaw, SD XVI.F.643 adl. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/9908504/61/>, <https://polona.pl/item/9908504/62/> [accessed 30 May 2017].

rite and gave birth to heirs to the throne, is more detailed. Rumours of her alleged infidelity are completely omitted. Decius then mentions Ladislaus of Varna and his ill-fated campaign against the Ottomans, and moves on to the accession of Casimir Jagiellon to the throne, the royal origins of his wife, and the long list of their descendants. The laconic remarks about Algirdas and Alexander are uncontroversial. The denial of the crown to Elena of Moscow (or *Ruthena* in Decius's terms) was interpreted as a proof of respect for and protection of the Catholic faith by the Poles. Although the author makes frequent references to Maciej of Miechów, he draws selectively on his texts, thus completely disregarding information that was inconvenient to the court's policy and critical of the Jagiellons.

The anonymous family tree shows a genuine Jagiellon lineage, incorporating 87 figures differentiated by physiognomy, pose, attire, attributes and gestures, just as the treatises on the House of Jagiellon and on the reign of Sigismund the Old included short descriptions of every member of the dynasty and their kin, from Algirdas to Sigismund the Old and his wife Bona.³¹ The family tree depicts every

31 Barbara Miodońska associated the creation of the family tree with the Master of the Wawel *Collectarium*, who may have made preparatory drawings for the woodcut: B. Miodońska,



Fig. 5. Representation of Ladislaus Jagiello, a part of the family tree illustrating Decius's treatise, in: Justus Decjusz, *De vetvstatibvs Polonorum liber I; De Jagellonvm familia liber II; De Sigismvndi regis temporibvs liber III*, Craccoviae 1521, family tree [n.p.]; National Library in Warsaw, SD XVI.F.643 adl. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/9908504/61/> [accessed 30 May 2017].

member of the dynasty and their numerous kin from neighbouring ruling Houses (the Habsburgs, the Griffites, the Silesian Piasts etc.). Each representation is accompanied by an inscription with the name and office held by the depicted person (*rex*, *dux*, *palatinus*, *cardinalis*) and/or their family connections; the latter being the main means of identification for women (*uxor* or *coniunx*, *filia*, *filius*). The woodcut does not run short of references to Maciej of Miechów's chronicle either. The representations of Jagiello (Fig. 3, Fig. 5), Ladislaus of Varna, Casimir Jagiellon and John Albert correspond to those seen on the pages of the *Chronica Polonorum*. All iconographic details, such as the absence of the crown in the depiction of Elena of Moscow, are explained in the contents of the chronicle and in Decius's texts.

The oldest known history of the Jagiellonian dynasty, which circulated in 1521, changed the unfavourable image of the Jagiellons that, owing to medieval sources, was still current in the first two decades of the 16th century. By means of its passages and illustrations it established a laudable narrative of Sigismund the Old's predecessors, which offered no space for controversies related to Jagiello's "pagan" roots or to the legitimacy of his heirs. The origins of the Jagiellons, presented on a semantically capacious network of ethnogenetic references, allowed for the image of both Algirdas and Jagiello to be rooted in Polish historical representations, and for the Polish and Lithuanian histories to be bound together more tightly.³²

Małopolskie malarstwo książkowe 1320–1540 [Book painting in Lesser Poland 1320–1540], Warsaw 1993, p. 152.

³² The incompatibility of Polish and Lithuanian ethnogenetic myths and the divergent understanding of the Sarmatian image in the Crown and the Grand Duchy is mentioned in

The Jagiellons in the noblemen's narratives of Marcin and Joachim Bielski

The emphasis on genealogical categories was stronger in the Polish-language narratives of the nobility than within court circles. The works of Marcin and Joachim Bielski, i.e. noblemen's narratives, adopted the perspective of Maciej of Miechów's chronicle and Decius's texts from the second edition of the *Chronica Polonorum*. They tied the dynasty's lot to the history of the nobility, presenting it in the context of the religious, heraldic and socio-ethical interests of Polish noblemen.

The first two generations of Jagiellons were still represented in an unfavourable way, although the pejorative assessment of Jagiello, visible in Długosz's *Annals*, was significantly played down. In the *Kronika wszytkiego swiata* [Chronicle of all the World], of which three editions with a non-unified set of illustrations were published in Cracow under the reign of Sigismund Augustus (*in quarto* in 1551 and *in folio* in 1554 and 1564, with new visual content), Marcin Bielski puts emphasis on Jagiello's contribution to promoting Christianity and erecting churches in Lithuania. He mentions, however, that "with his brothers, [he] used to be a great oppressor of the Kingdom of Poland, until the good Lord opened his eyes with Holy Baptism".³³ The text also enumerates the superstitions, or "practices bordering on witchcraft" in Bielski's terms, that Ladislaus Jagiello was believed to have inherited from his Ruthenian mother.³⁴ Nevertheless, the author does not allude to accusations regarding Sophia of Halshany's infidelity; the only reason for the noblemen's dislike for Ladislaus of Varna's accession to the throne was supposedly his young age.³⁵ It is noteworthy that Jagiello allegedly favoured the Lithuanians over the Poles. This reflects the xenophobic attitude of the nobility towards foreign pretenders to the throne, which was particularly visible in the times of interregnum.³⁶

In the "re-Catholicised" and significantly expanded edition of the *Kronika polska* [Chronicle of Poland], initiated by Marcin and completed by Joachim Bielski, published in Cracow in 1597, the image of Ladislaus Jagiello was further modified in response to the actual religious and cultural needs following the signing of both

A. Tereškinas, *Imperfect Communities: Identity, Discourse and Nation in the Seventeenth-century Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, Vilnius 2005, pp. 282–284.

33 M. Bielski, *Kronika wszytkiego swiata na sseć wyekow, monarchie czterzy rozdzielona, s Kozmografią nową y z rozmaitemi krolestwy tak poganskimi zydowskymi yako y krześcianskymi, s Sybillami y prorocłwy ich, po polsku pisana s figurami [...] od poczatku aż do [...] 1551 [...] między ktoremi też nasza Polska na ostatku zosobna yest wypisana* [The Chronicle of all the world divided into six centuries, four monarchies, with a new Cosmography and various kingdoms pagan, Jewish and Christian, with their Sibyls and their prophecies, written in Polish with figures [...] from the beginning to [...] 1551 [...] among which also our Poland is described separately, at the end], w Krakowie 1551, fol. 237.

34 Ibid., fol. 237.

35 Ibid., fol. 238.

36 See Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, p. 227.

the Union of Lublin and the Union of Brest.³⁷ The *Kronika polska* did not mention the Lithuanian duke's attacks on Poland, and the king's uncommon practices were alluded to without bringing up their supposedly Ruthenian origins or connections to witchcraft. What was more prominent in this edition, as opposed to the previous ones, was the relationship between the king and the Lithuanian nobility, which was detrimental to Polish political interests. According to Jagiello's description that completes the account of his reign, the king "cherished his Lithuanian people more than he did ours, so that every Lithuanian distress, especially from Prussia, was to be relieved by Poland. Rightful would Lithuania then be to call him the father of fatherlands, and to consider him a saint".³⁸ Just as Długosz's *Annals*, the *Kronika polska* also mentions the Ruthenian paintings funded by Jagiello in Gniezno, Sandomierz and Wiślica. The first king of the Jagiellonian dynasty was thus pictured as a leader of two clearly distinct nations (Polish and Lithuanian) and a man operating at the intersection of two diverse cultures which were not subjected to any evaluative assessment unless they were detrimental to Polish traditions and interests.

The descriptions of the reigns of Casimir the Jagiellon, John Albert and Alexander Jagiellon are free from the pejorative opinions that were still present in the first edition of Maciej of Miechów's chronicle. A significant role in the interpretation of their respective periods of reign is attributed to the religious aspect, which is particularly visible in the passage on Elena of Moscow. Marcin Bielski observes that the "Muscovite queen" was the daughter of Prince Ivan and was not crowned as she would not renounce her "Ruthenian" faith. "Indeed," he continues, "she had her Ruthenian chapels in the castle, yet in church she would run from the pipe organs, calling them bagpipes".³⁹ With this curious detail the chronicler, an ardent advocate of the Reformation, recorded that Alexander's Muscovite wife was culturally alien. The fact that this passage might contain a criticism of the customs accompanying the Catholic liturgy is implied by its omission from the 1597 edition of the *Kronika polska*. Joachim Bielski, who had converted to Catholicism in 1595 and tried to underplay the dissenting perspective of his father, added in its lieu a passage on the queen's negative attitude towards the Catholic Church and the Pope's aversion to her upholding the "Ruthenian customs and Greek faith".⁴⁰

Despite the numerous supplements incorporated into the chronicle's contents between the years 1551 and 1564, the literary narration of the first Jagiellons remains unchanged. Greater discrepancies occur in the texts of *Kronika wszytkiego swiata* and

37 Permission to circulate the chronicle was granted posthumously: *ibid.*, p. 182.

38 J. Bielski, *Kronika polska Marcina Bielskiego nowo przez Ioach. Bielskiego syna iego wydana* [The Polish chronicle of Marcin Bielski newly published by his son Ioach(im)], w Krakowie 1597, p. 248.

39 Bielski, *Kronika wszytkiego swyata*..., fol. 258 v.

40 This passage is worth quoting in full: "[Queen Elena] was not crowned, for she would not renounce her Greek faith and abhorred the Catholic faith. And she had her chapels, where she would partake in Ruthenian service. The Pope was not content to hear that the king could not put an end to it": Bielski, *Kronika polska Marcina Bielskiego*..., p. 494.

the *Kronika polska*, the latter edited by Joachim Bielski.⁴¹ These differences suggest that the figures of the first Jagiellons were used in religious disputes and in attempts to formulate the first confession-oriented descriptions of the history of Poland.

The visual content differs in each of the three editions of the *Kronika wszytkiego swiata* and the *Kronika polska*. In Marcin Bielski's works, the pictorial catalogue of monarchs is non-uniform and embedded in a broader visual narration that unveils the history of the world, from its biblical origins to contemporary times.⁴² The woodcut series opens with a scene of the creation of Adam and Eve and with representations of biblical and ancient rulers followed by Christian rulers and "Turkish kings". The pictorial catalogue of the kings and princes of Poland, in a separate book and with a portrait of Sigismund Augustus at the very end, concludes the series. The illustrations were modelled after woodcuts from Schedel's chronicle, Maciej of Miechów's *Chronica Polonorum*, Protestant bibles, and numismatic and cosmographic treatises (in particular after Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*).⁴³ The depictions of the Jagiellons in the 1551 edition were based on woodcuts from Maciej of Miechów's chronicle. The same woodblock was used for depictions of Casimir the Great and Ladislaus of Varna (Fig. 6); such is also the case of the prints showing Ladislaus Jagiello (Fig. 7) and Casimir the Jagiellon. The majority of Jagiellon kings, just as in the case of Ladislaus the Short and Casimir the Great, were portrayed with a closed crown on the head, which was a way of emphasising the sovereignty of their power⁴⁴ that dated back to the coronation of Ladislaus the Short. Interestingly, only Jagiello and Casimir the Jagiellon are shown with the escutcheon of the Kingdom of Poland. The depictions of John Albert and Alexander Jagiellon indicate them as less important to the visual message of the chronicle since they are both represented with an open crown, i.e. in a convention typical of the depictions of princes in Maciej of Miechów's *Chronica Polonorum*.

41 D. Śnieżko, *Kronika wszytkiego swiata Marcina Bielskiego. Pogranicze dyskursów* [Marcin Bielski's Chronicle of all the world. The borderline of discourses], Szczecin 2004, pp. 34–55.

42 Cf. I. Chrzanowski, *Marcin Bielski. Studium historyczno-literackie* [Marcin Bielski; A critical historical study], Lviv–Warsaw 1926; Śnieżko, op. cit., pp. 12–13.

43 Jakimowicz, *Temat historyczny...*, p. 74.

44 Cf. A. Gieysztor, "„Non habemus caesarem nisi regem”. Korona zamknięta królów polskich w końcu XV i w wieku XVI [“Non habemus caesarem nisi regem”. The closed crown of Polish kings in the late 15th and 16th century], in: *Muzeum i twórca. Studia z historii sztuki i kultury ku czci prof. dr. Stanisława Lorentza* [The Museum and the creator. Studies in the history of art and culture in honour of Prof. Stanisław Lorentz PhD], Warsaw 1969, pp. 277–292; B. Miodońska, "Korona zamknięta w przekazach ikonograficznych z czasów Zygmunta I. (Uwagi w związku z rozprawą Aleksandra Gieysztor, „Non habemus caesarem nisi regem”. Korona zamknięta królów polskich w końcu XV wieku i w wieku XVI. Muzeum i Twórca. Studia z historii sztuki i kultury ku czci prof. dr. Stanisława Lorentza)" [The closed crown in iconographic records from the period of Sigismund I. (Notes on Aleksander Gieysztor's study "Non habemus caesarem nisi regem". The closed crown of Polish kings in the late 15th and 16th century. The Museum and the creator. Studies in the history of art and culture in honour of Prof. Stanisław Lorentz)]], *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 1970, no. 32, pp. 3–18.



Fig. 6. Representation of Ladislaus of Varna, in: Marcin Bielski, *Kronika wszytkego swyata*, Kraków 1551; Jagiellonian Library, „Cim. 4059, fol. 238. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/11232558/556/> [accessed 30 May 2017].



Fig. 7. Representation of Ladislaus Jagiello, in: Marcin Bielski, *Kronika wszytkego swyata*, Kraków 1551; Jagiellonian Library, Cim 4059, fol. 228. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/11232558/536/> [accessed 30 May 2017].

The most significant change in the representations of the Jagiellons in Bielski's chronicle concerns the way in which Ladislaus Jagiello is depicted in the 1554 and 1564 editions. The woodcut accompanying the description of his reign stands out among the other illustrations of the chronicle due to its considerable size (17 cm × 15 cm, Fig. 8). It shows the monarch in profile, dressed in a fur cloak and in a hairnet that was fashionable in 16th-century courts. Above the king's head are the Polish and Lithuanian coats of arms. Originally, this woodblock was used to portray Sigismund the Old in the 1524 edition of the Sejm (parliament) statutes.⁴⁵ Janina Ruszczyćówna claims that the use of Sigismund the Old's woodblock to illustrate the text on Ladislaus Jagiello in the 1554 and 1564 editions of the chronicle suggests that this version of the royal portrait was outmoded in the second half of the 16th century.⁴⁶

45 H. Blumówna, "O pierwszych portretach świeckich w krakowskich drukach renesansowych" [On the first lay portraits in Cracow Renaissance prints], in: *Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie. Rozprawy i sprawozdania, rok 1952* [The National Museum in Cracow. Studies and reports, 1952], Cracow 1954, p. 82; J. Ruszczyćówna, "Nieznane portrety ostatnich Jagiellonów" [Unknown portraits of the last Jagiellons], *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, 1976, no. 20, p. 20; Śnieżko, op. cit., p. 45.

46 Ruszczyćówna, *Nieznane portrety...*, p. 20.



Fig. 8. Representation of Ladislaus Jagiello, in: Marcin Bielski, *Kronika, tho iesth, Historia Swiata, ...*, Kraków 1564, University of Warsaw Library, fol. 381r. Source: University of Warsaw Library

The image was repeatedly published and imitated between the years 1524 and 1554 as the portrait of Sigismund the Old. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that the analogy between the founder of the Jagiellon dynasty and his recently deceased descendant had been intentional. This would confirm that Jagiello was seen as a worthy forefather of the last Jagiellons.

Joachim Bielski's *Kronika polska* is illustrated with numerous heraldic representations and images taken directly from Maciej of Miechów's work (the woodcut on the opening pages of the *Kronika polska*) and from the third edition of Marcin Bielski's *Kronika wszytkiego swiata* (the depictions of twelve voivodes, Leszko's race for the crown and the battle scenes of Wiśniowiec, Orsza and Obertyn).⁴⁷ A set of 42 depictions of monarchs was prepared for the chronicle, from Lech to Stephen Báthory, in which each of the rulers and their reign was distinguished by the insignia, symbols and allegories.⁴⁸ A distinct subset in the pictorial catalogue are depictions of monarchs from Ladislaus the Short to Casimir the Jagiellon (with the exception of the equestrian depiction of Ladislaus of Varna), which are faithfully modelled after the seals of majesty.⁴⁹ They emphasise not only the prestige of sovereign royal authority but also its territorial extent.

47 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, p. 39.

48 Jakimowicz, *Temat historyczny...*, p. 86.

49 Ibid., s. 86. The exceptional meaning of Ladislaus of Varna's depiction in the iconographic programme of *Kronika polska* is discussed by Jakimowicz (pp. 111–112).

Fig. 9. Representation of Ladislaus Jagiello, in: Joachim Bielski, *Kronika polska Marcina Bielskiego nowo przez Ioach. Bielskiego syna iego wydana*, W Krakowie 1597; Jagiellonian Library, Cim. 8176, p. 271. Source: POLONA, Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa, <https://polona.pl/item/11232853/288/> [accessed 30 May 2017].



Due to a different arrangement of the legend, the equal status of Poland and Lithuania are more strongly emphasised in the programme of the prints showing Ladislaus Jagiello (Fig. 9) and Casimir the Jagiellon than they were in their seals of majesty. The image from Jagiello's seal, faithfully copied by the printmaker, features the king seated on a Gothic throne of a complex architectural structure, including a polygonal canopy with tracery and pinnacles, and a footrest.⁵⁰ A patterned fabric with a heraldic eagle motif, supported by two figures, adorns the splat. The king holds an orb topped with a cross in his left hand, and a sceptre ending in a trefoil in his right. The crown on his head features three trefoils. He has a cloak thrown over his shoulders, beneath which a tight-fitting doublet and hose are visible. Seven

⁵⁰ For Ladislaus Jagiello's seal of majesty, see M. Gumowski, *Pieczęcie królów polskich* [Seals of Polish kings], Cracow 1919, No 13, 14, p. 14; I. Sułkowska Kurasiowa, *Dokumenty królewskie i ich funkcja w państwie polskim za Andegawenów i pierwszych Jagiellonów 1370–1444* [Royal documents and the function in the Polish state during the Anjou and early Jagiellon rulers, 1370–1444], Warsaw 1977, p. 51; S. K. Kuczyński, *Polskie herby ziemskie. Geneza, treści, funkcje* [Coats of arms of Polish lands. Origins, contents, functions], Warsaw 1993, pp. 25–26; Piech, op. cit., pp. 44–54; R. Jaworski, "Władca idealny w świetle alegorycznego opisu pieczęci majestatowej Władysława Jagiełły" [The ideal ruler in the light of the allegorical description of Ladislaus Jagiello's seal of majesty], in: *Monarchia w średniowieczu – podstawy ideowe, władza nad ludźmi, władza nad terytorium. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi* [Monarchy in the Middle Ages – rule over the people, rule over the territory. Studies presented to Prof. Henryk Samsonowicz], ed. J. Pysiak, A. Pieniądz-Skrzypczak, M. R. Pauka, Warsaw–Cracow 2002, pp. 321–333.

heraldic shields surround the monarch: the Eagle (functioning as the coat of arms of both Poland and Cracow Land) and the Chase (*Pogoń*, the emblem of the Grand Duchy and possibly of Vilna Land; the Eagle and the Chase are depicted in accordance with heraldic courtesy),⁵¹ followed by the coats of arms of Kalisz Land (Greater Poland), Sandomierz Land, Kuiavia, Dobrzyń Land and Ruthenia.⁵² Each shield, with the exception of Ruthenia's, is carried by an angel. The styles in the seal's inscriptions emphasise Jagiello's royal status and his supreme authority over Cracow Land, Sandomierz Land, Sieradz Land, Łęczyca Land and Kuiavia. His authority over the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as well as over Pomerania and Ruthenia plays a secondary role.⁵³ In the print, the same circumscription was typeset in Antiqua font and divided into two rows. That way the inscription about Lithuania and Jagiello's royal status was placed in the upper middle part of the print.⁵⁴ An analogous measure was applied in the print showing Casimir the Jagiellon in order to demonstrate appreciation for the title of Grand Duke of Lithuania.

The "Eastern" representation of Jagiello in Tomasz Treter's pictorial catalogue of monarchs

Tomasz Treter's depiction of the ruler, created for the *Regum Poloniae icones* cycle of copperplates that was published in Rome in 1591, constitutes an unprecedented representation of Jagiello's Eastern heritage. The cycle, currently known from three

51 Cf. Piech, op. cit., p. 54.

52 I adopted the alternating order of enumerating the coats of arms, starting from the dexter side, from Zenon Piech: *ibid.*, p. 45. A different order was adopted by an anonymous author of the *Figurae sigilli Regis* blazon at the turn of the 15th century. The first part of his work is dedicated to the coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the following chapter refers to the coat of arms of Sandomierz Land and Dobrzyń Land, and at the end he blazons the coats of arms of Ruthenia, Kuiavia, Kalisz Land, and the Eagle.

53 The legend, printed in gothic minuscule, is as follows: s[igillum] · wladislaus · dei · gra[tia] · rex · polonie · n[ec]no[n] · t[er]raru[m] · cracovie · s[an]domirie · syradie · la[nci]cie · cuyauie · litwanie · p[ri]nceps · sup[re]m[us] · pomoranie · russieq[ue] · d[omi]n[us] · [et] he[re]s · e[tc].

54 LITWANIAEQ[UE]. WLADISLAUS DEI GR[ATIAE] REX: Bielski, *Kronika polska...*, p. 271. The same print was used in a 17th-century edition of Klemens Janicki's *Vitae regum Polonorum*, which was accompanied by the Polish-language work by Jan Głuchowski *Ikones Książąt Y Krolow Polskich... Do tego są przyłożone wiersze lacińskie Iana Ianiciusza ... De vitis Regum Polonorum* [Icons of the Polish Princes and Kings... To those appended are Latin verses by Ian Ianicius... De vitis Regum Polonorum], W Krakowie 1605, p. 80; J. Głuchowski, *Ikones książąt i królów polskich, reprodukcja fototypiczna wydania z 1605* [Icons of the Polish Princes and Kings, phototypic reproduction of the 1605 edition], Wrocław, 1979. In both verse lives, preceded by the woodcut, the Lithuanian descent of Jagiello is emphasised in the opening verses. The first two verses of Janicki on Jagiełło are as follows: "Hic gentilis errat, Litauus, de stirpe Iagello / Vir bonus, et tantas inter honestus opes". Głuchowski, however, puts the following words in Jagiello's mouth: "I am the famous Jagiello Ladislaus / a man of virtue and grandeur / the last idolater of the foul Perkunas / of the false Lithuanian deity".

copies, contains 44 representations of Polish monarchs, from Lech to Sigismund III Vasa.⁵⁵ Specialist literature discusses at length the sphragistic, painterly, sculptural and graphic designs used by Treter, and describes the artistic and conceptual message of the pictorial catalogue.⁵⁶ It has also been noted how unique the representation of Jagiello was, modelled on the Ruthenian paintings that decorate the walls of the chapel of the Holy Trinity in Lublin.⁵⁷ However, the significance of using a Ruthenian pattern and the reason for its long presence in the king's iconography in 17th- and 18th-century pictorial catalogues remain a question that has yet to be answered in full.

Ladislaus Jagiello's depiction in the *Regum Poloniae icones* was modelled on a painting of the king kneeling in an "act of personal religious devotion",⁵⁸ which

55 Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, A.gr.: 296/1–44; Royal Library in Stockholm, 161 I 2 j.; Escorial, 28–III–9bis, fol. 69–79; G. Jurkowlaniec, *Sprawczość rycin. Rzymska twórczość graficzna Tomasza Tretera i jej europejskie oddziaływanie* [The causality of prints. Tomasz Treter's Roman graphic output and its European influence], Cracow 2017, p. 268. The description of the Swedish copy of the *Icones* with a suggestion of a new publishing attribution can be found in: K. Mroziejewicz, *Regum Poloniae icones* Tomasza Tretera ze zbiorów Królewskiej Biblioteki w Sztokholmie i szwedzkie wątki w losach serii [Tomasz Treter's *Regum Poloniae icones* from the collection of the Royal Library in Stockholm and the Swedish episodes in the history of the series], *Folia Historia Artium. Seria Nowa*, 2017, no. 15: pp. 25–34. Another widely recognised version is the 18th-century edition of the series, which served as an illustration to *Polska Kongars Saga*, a Swedish-language pictorial catalogue of monarchs by Johan Göstaf Hallman, Stockholm 1736; H. Widacka, "Szwedzki poczet władców polskich czyli Tomasz Treter redivivus" [The Swedish pictorial catalogue of Polish rulers, or Tomasz Treter redivivus], *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 69, 2007, Nos. 3/4: pp. 189–201; E. Zillén, "Poczet królów polskich i bajka lafontenowska w moralizatorskim dziele osiemnastowiecznej literatury szwedzkiej" [The catalogue of Polish rulers and La Fontaine's fable in the moralising work of 18th-century Swedish literature], *Prace Polonistyczne*, 2014, no. 69, pp. 131–143.

56 M. Ochońska, "Zabytek szesnastowiecznego rytownictwa "Regum Poloniae Icones" Tomasza Tretera w zbiorach Ossolineum" [The monument of 16th-century engraving: Tomasz Treter's *Regum Poloniae Icones* in the Ossolineum collection], *Ze skarbca kultury. Biuletyn informacyjny Zakładu im. Ossolińskich – Biblioteki Polskiej Akademii Nauk*, 1955, vol. 1, no. 7, pp. 273–289; Chojecka, *Drzeworyty kroniki Joachima Bielskiego...*, pp. 60–62; L. Kajzer, "Średniowieczne źródła pomysłów ikonograficznych Tomasza Tretera" [Medieval sources of Tomasz Treter's iconographic ideas], *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 1972, no. 4, pp. 507–514; B. Stawiar-ska, "Źródła ikonograficzne pocztu władców polskich Tomasza Tretera" [Iconographic sources of Tomasz Treter's catalogue of Polish monarchs], *Sprawozdania Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk. Wydział Nauk o Sztuce*, no. 98 from the 1980 cycle of publications (Poznań 1981), pp. 63–67; T. Chrzanowski, *Działalność artystyczna Tomasza Tretera* [Tomasz Treter's artistic activity], Warsaw 1984, pp. 163–173; Jakimowicz, *Temat historyczny...*, pp. 85–86; J. Talbierska, *Grafika XVII wieku w Polsce. Funkcje, ośrodki, artyści, dzieła* [17th-century graphic art in Poland. Functions, centres, artists, works], Warsaw 2011, pp. 106–107; Bömelburg, *Polska myśl historyczna...*, pp. 419–420; Jurkowlaniec, *Sprawczość rycin...*, pp. 268–277.

57 Ruszczyćówna, *Z badań nad ikonografią Władysława Jagiełły...*, p. 231; Petrus, op. cit., pp. 230–241.

58 Ruszczyćówna, *Z badań nad ikonografią Władysława Jagiełły...*, p. 231; Petrus, op. cit., pp. 230–241.



Fig. 10. Representation of Ladislaus Jagiello, in: Tomasz Treter, *Regum Poloniae icones*, Romeae 1591; print No 35. A copy of a pictorial catalogue in the collection of the Royal Library in Stockholm, 161 I 2 j. Photo by Lina Löfström Baker, Royal Library in Stockholm

decorates the south-west corner of the chapel.⁵⁹ This was a part of a multi-figural foundation composition, where the Virgin enthroned with Christ-Emmanuel was the conceptual centre.⁶⁰ As Anna Różycka-Bryzek observed, the Lublin depiction of the king has the features of a portrait and is congruent with the comprehensive description of the monarch's appearance in Długosz's chronicle.⁶¹

In his own rendition of the portrait (Fig. 10), Tomasz Treter did not forgo the particular characteristics of the original. He did, however, reject the kneeling pose, which was typical of the images of donors and founders, and instead showed the monarch from the waist up. He also slightly modified the monarch's attire, adapting it to the fashion of his times.⁶² It is difficult not to agree with Janina Ruszczyćówna's claim that portraying the king in more modern robes might have facilitated the wide reception of this representation in the 17th and 18th century.⁶³ In contrast,

⁵⁹ It is possible that the printmaker used the same model when working on Jagiello's representation for the famous *Treter's Eagle* (1588). However, as Ruszczyćówna observes, the correlation between the depiction of the monarch and its Ruthenian origin is not as striking as it is in the copperplate from *Regum Poloniae icones*: Ruszczyćówna, *Z badań nad ikonografią Władysława Jagiełły...*, p. 231.

⁶⁰ Różycka-Bryzek, *Bizantyńsko-ruskie malowidła...*, pp. 117–121.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 118. The widespread familiarity with Długosz's literary portrait of Ladislaus Jagiello, in particular among the sixteenth-century chroniclers, is discussed by Janina Ruszczyćówna: *Z badań nad ikonografią Władysława Jagiełły...*, p. 218.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

the founder's gesture, which Treter copied, gradually became incomprehensible and, in consequence, it started to be omitted in the 17th- and 18th-century iconography of the monarch.⁶⁴

An attempt to answer the question regarding the significance of selecting a Ruthenian model and the popularity of Treter's depiction of Ladislaus Jagiello would necessitate a reconstruction of Treter's view on the church union, which would be complicated due to the scarcity of sources, as well as a deeper analysis of the perception of the so-called Ruthenian paintings in late 16th-century Poland, which exceeds the scope of this article. What is worth noting is the more profound interest in Eastern artistic heritage that is closely related to the imminent signing of the union. References to Jagiello's foundations, which were absent since the times of Długosz and reappeared in, for example, Joachim Bielski's *Kronika polska*, can be considered proof of this heightened interest. Furthermore, 16th-century historiography, along with the pictorial catalogues discussed herein, laid the foundations for an evaluation-free acceptance of the Ruthenian and Lithuanian tradition of the Jagiellons, as well as for its gradual incorporation into the cultural legacy of the Commonwealth. It is also worth mentioning that the review of available iconographic sources, which was the basis for Treter's critical apparatus, and the choice of the Lublin painting as a model for his work, suggest that in the eyes of the artist this painting had the authority of an ancient, credible visual message. Treter's *Regum Poloniae icones* included individualised depictions of monarchs that aimed to represent a faithful and synthetic image of their personalities and reign. Referring to the Ruthenian artistic legacy from the period of the king's lifetime can therefore be considered an attempt at a more comprehensive description of both the monarch and his reign.

Conclusion

Ethnic traits and a shared origin were important cognitive categories in the period when national polities in Poland were being formed.⁶⁵ An analysis of the dynamics discernible in the representation of the Lithuanian and Ruthenian legacy of the Jagiellons is therefore of great importance for understanding the nation-building processes ongoing at the time. The bonding material of these processes was the community of representations as based on the ethnogenetic myth and on symbols of continuity and sovereignty of the royal authority. What is typical of 16th-century works on the first Jagiellons is that the literary narrations were not uniform, as

⁶⁴ Petrus, op. cit., p. 236.

⁶⁵ M. Niendorf, *Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie. Studia nad kształtowaniem się narodu u progu epoki nowożytnej (1569–1795)* [The Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Studies on the shaping of a nation at the threshold of the modern era (1569 – 1795)], translated by M. Grzywacz, Poznań 2011, p. 104.

opposed to the relatively steady image of the Jagiellons that was discernible in the pictorial catalogues of the monarchs.

Textual narratives were much quicker to react to the actual political, cultural and religious needs than their visual counterparts. The publishing history and reception of Maciej of Miechów's chronicle is a good example of this phenomenon. The intervention of a censor caused the original text of the *Chronica Polonorum* to lose its critical tone towards Ladislaus Jagiello and his descendants. The subsequent authors who quoted this source selectively chose the information that was needed and disregarded the chronicler's unfavourable assessments; meanwhile, the anonymous woodcuts illustrating the volume were remarkably popular, to the extent that they were repeatedly copied and imitated. The visual narration of Maciej of Miechów's work, which referred to the iconography of seals of majesty, depicted Ladislaus Jagiello and his descendants as sovereign rulers, relatives of the Piast and Anjou monarchs and continuers of their political legacy. In this way it put an end to speculations about the legitimacy of their reign and facilitated integration of the new dynasty into the long tradition of Polish kingship.

The Lithuanian roots and Ruthenian family relations of the Jagiellons began to be emphasised only in the second edition of the chronicle thanks to Decius's treatises which focused on the dynasty and to the family-tree woodcut that accompanied it. The appended narrations incorporated the Lithuanians and Ruthenians into the Sarmatian shared origin and glorified the royal family by depicting its numerous connections with neighbouring ruling houses, among which were Lithuanian, Ruthenian and even Muscovite families.

Finally, the Eastern heritage of the Jagiellons in the Polish-language narrations of the nobility were, in turn, presented in the light of the religious, socio-ethical and political attitudes of Polish noblemen, to whom a xenophobic perspective was quite familiar. The main emphasis was on the connection of the king to his lands and people. It encouraged the recipients to reflect on the nature of the relationship between Poland and Lithuania as well as on the relationship between Polish and Lithuanian nobility. In this context, the image of the Jagiellons was subordinate to the nobility's discourse of identity.

The use of a Ruthenian painting as a model for the depiction of Jagiello in Tomasz Treter's *Regum Poloniae icones* constitutes a unique way of invoking the monarch's Eastern heritage. This act is proof of interest in the Eastern artistic tradition and of its gradual integration into the cultural heritage of the Crown on the eve of the Union of Brest. In these attempts at both a universalisation and integration of Lithuanian and Ruthenian traditions, the image of Jagiello played a leading role.

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

Abstract

This article analyses the dynamics that were present in the manner of representing the Lithuanian and Ruthenian legacy of Ladislaus Jagiello and of the first two generations of his descendants in popular 16th-century pictorial catalogues of Polish monarchs. The catalogues actively supported the collective memory and facilitated the integration of Lithuanian and Ruthenian traditions in the Kingdom of Poland.

An analysis of the textual and visual message of Maciej of Miechów's *Chronica Polonorum* (1519, 1521), of the treatises by Justus Decius appended to it in 1521, the illustrated chronicles of Marcin (1551, 1554, 1564) and Joachim (1597) Bielski, and the visual contents of Tomasz Treter's *Regum Poloniae icones* (1591) series has shown that a typical feature of 16th-century works on the first Jagiellons is the non-uniformity of their literary narrations, which contrasts with the relatively stable image of the Jagiellons in the pictorial catalogues. The textual narratives were much quicker to react to the current political, cultural and confessional needs than their visual counterparts, and they accordingly adjusted the literary image of the first Jagiellons. In the dynastic narrations the unfavourable image of the Jagiellons, still present in the first two decades of the 16th century, was replaced by a laudatory narrative concerning the predecessors of Sigismund the Old, which brought into prominence the dynasty's ancient lineage and its contributions to the Kingdom of Poland. The Eastern roots of the Jagiellons were assimilated into the Polish historical representations by crediting the Lithuanians and Ruthenians with a Sarmatian genealogy. The narratives of the nobility dating from the second half of the 16th century associated the dynasty's history with that of the nobility and presented it in the light of the religious, heraldic and socio-ethical interests of Polish noblemen. Ladislaus Jagiello was therefore depicted as a leader of the Polish and Lithuanian nations, operating at the intersection of two diverse cultures, i.e. cultures which were not subject to any evaluative assessment unless they were detrimental to Polish traditions and interests. The last discussed pictorial catalogue, i.e. a series of depictions of monarchs by Tomasz Treter, is a rare example of reaching back to Jagiello's Eastern heritage by choosing a Ruthenian painting as a model for his depiction. The use of a Ruthenian representation of the king from all the paintings funded by Jagiello is proof of interest in the Eastern artistic tradition and of its gradual integration into the cultural heritage of the Crown on the eve of the Union of Brest (1596).