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(eds.)

# *Poesis Artificiosa*

Between Theory and Practice

# Introductory Note

In 1668, the Carmelite Paschasius (a Sancto Johanne Evangelista) published in Würzburg a book entitled *Poesis artificiosa,* comprising a collection of miscellaneous poetic forms calculated to impress the readers. The term *poesis artificiosa* had been adopted to refer to elaborate poetic forms, particularly those composed in Latin. Part and parcel of companions to rhetorics and poetics, *poesis artificiosa* was to absorb both visual poetry and poetic compositions characterised by elaborate metre, extraordinary word order and puns. Poetic practice of that ilk had already been in place no later than in ancient times. Registered in the literary heritage of both the ancient Greeks and Romans and in the Far and Middle East were works formally arranged into a specific shape or fashioned to evoke a particular reading effect. The tradition of pattern poetry was preserved in the Middle Ages largely owing to such authors as Optatianus, Venantius Fortunatus, or the later exponent – Hrabanus Maurus. Written not only in Latin but in vernacular languages and defined in poetics and rhetorics companions, elaborate poetic forms were domesticated and practiced regularly by sixteenth century European poets. Pattern poetry gained in unprecedented popularity in the Baroque – a period most inclined towards all manner of 'special effects'. This period was also heavily marked by the overall absorption and flourishing of emblematics, hieroglyphics, iconology, and other forms underscoring visual qualities of work, resulting from the association that had developed between *poesis* and *pictura.* The tradition of pattern poetry was still going strong in the eighteenth century Carmelite, Jesuit and Franciscan orders. This was because traditional means of poetic expression proved futile for the purpose of communicating one's faith. The literary form of *poesis artificiosa*, in contrast, went hand in hand with religious content, enriched meditation and spiritual experience. Opacity and polysemy were to serve as a metaphor for a Christian's way to God – complex and unfathomable. Impermeable to thought, such content could be better communicated via works that banked on the reader's sight as primary medium of interpretation.

These works fulfilled a similar function in the Protestant tradition. In both Christian traditions elaborate poems were composed not only to communicate religious devotion, but also to commemorate the mighty as well as to glamorise momentous events.

The title of the book extended before the reader's eyes seeks to do justice to the content it promises. The works elaborated on in the respec-

tive chapters are derived from the literary legacy of Middle Europe (mainly The Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, German Pomerania, and Silesia), namely from the cultural circles in which *poesis artificiosa* was luxuriating most vividly – which is, however, not to say, in the same manner. In the following texts cited and discussed are examples of practical application of pattern poetry in religious works (as in the articles by Angelika Modlińska-Piekarz, Jarosław Nowaszczuk, Rafał Wójcik, Anna Kapuścińska and Piotr Urbański), in works intended for the commemoration of the departed (Agnieszka Borysowska, Elwira Buszewicz), in poems featuring panegyric content (Bartłomiej Czarski and Barbara Milewska-Waźbińska, Magdalena Piskała).

The remaining chapters refer to theoretical and literary genetics aspects. Magdalena Górska, for that matter, ventures to explicate the link between visual and emblematic poetry. Jakub Niedźwiedź interrogates the aspects of *poesis artificiosa* based on poetics emerging from The Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Maciej Pieczyński seeks to illuminate the theory and practice of *ars combinatoria* and Piotr Rypson investigates the proteus poem. It has been agreed that to assure maximum readability of the volume delving into this convoluted, centuries-long poetic tradition, chronological order will serve best as organising principle. We are full of hope that this collection of scholarly papers will not fail to inspire our dearest readers and animate further research.

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# Early Fifteenth Century Acrostics
# in the Cistercian Codex from Rudy

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Among medieval manuscripts in Wrocław University Library there is a codex with a shelf number I O 101 from a Cistercian monastery at Rudy in Silesia.[1] Judging from the colophon on fol. 298r,[2] the manuscript seems to have been written around 1427, and includes 305 paper leafs and parchment protecting leafs between pages. The codex is rather small in size – 15x10,5 cm.[3] Its catalogue record notes the collective title: *Liber precum,* or, alternatively, *Orationale* on account of its contents, for the book contains 197 texts that include prayers, songs and hymns, all religious in character. The bulk of the texts is well-known and recorded by Chevalier, Dreves and Walther. The majority of them have been included in repertories and bibliographies, many have been published separately. Some have remained anonymous though a great number has been identified in the course of time and their authorship is known to medievalists. The authors include: Thomas Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, bishop Etmund, Conrad of Haimburg, Arnest of Pardubice (Pardubitz), Philippus de Grevia, Pseudo-Bonawentura, Peter Damian, Bede Venerabilis, St. Augustin, St. Bonaventure, Pseudo-Ambrose, Udalric Wessofontan (i.e. Ulrich Stöcklin von Rottach, himself the author of many acrostics), Hildebert, bishop of Le Mans (*episcopus Cenomanensis*), Albert of Prague, Hermann Joseph and St. Anselm (of Canterbury). Polish contribution to the codex is *Oratio de sancto Stanislao* with the incipit *O flos decus ecclesie, o gloriose lumen…*[4]

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1   See Stanisław Rybandt, *Katalog ksiąg zachowanych z średniowiecznej biblioteki cystersów w Rudach* (Warszawa: PAX, 1979), 46–47. See also: Stanisław Rybandt, "Średniowieczne opactwo cystersów w Rudach," *Prace Wrocławskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego* A ser., 195 (1977); Stanisław Rybandt, "Z problematyki rękopisów średniowiecznej biblioteki cysterskiej w Rudach," *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka* 24 no. 1 (1969): 1–10; Stanisław Rybandt, "Oprawy nacinane introligatorni cysterskiej w Rudach," *Roczniki Biblioteczne* 21 no. 3–4 (1977): 581–594; on the monastery: Leszek Kajzer, ed., *Opactwo cysterskie w Rudach na Górnym Śląsku w świetle badań terenowych w latach 1992–1995* (Katowice: Centrum Dziedzictwa Kulturowego Górnego Śląska, 2001).

2   Wrocław University Library MS I O 101, fol. 298: *Explicit orationale conscriptum in monasterio Ruda anno domini millesimo CCCC XX VIIᵒ*.

3   Detailed description see: <www.manuscriptorium.com> (accessed 10.12.2010).

4   Wrocław University Library MS I O 101, fol. 182r–v.

From among the 197 texts included, there are six that are particularly noteworthy as far as the context of elaborate and artistic poetry is concerned. They share a common feature – nearly all were written in the acrostic form. Three of them are not recorded in repertories and bibliographies. The present article deals with the following texts:

1. *Oratio ad beatam virginem*, with the incipit: *Mater dya, rei via…*, written on fol. 49r–49v;[5]

2. *Oratio de sancto Bernardo*, with the incipit.: *Bernarde sanctissime, optine virtutem…*, written on fols. 211r–212r;[6]

3. *Oratio de sancta Hedvigi*, with the incipit.: *Hedwigis preclarissima stirpe procreata…*, written on fols. 229v–230r;[7]

4. *De tribus regibus oratio*, with the incipit. *Magi reges incliti te Christe adorant…*, written on fols. 230r–230v;[8]

5. *Orationes rhytmicae de apostolis*, with the incipit. *Petre princeps fidei…*, written on fols. 230v–231v;[9] (the only work from among the discussed group which is not an acrostic);

6. *Oratio de sancta Maria Magdalena*, with the incipit: *Maria spes venie…*, written on fols. 292r–292v.[10]

Marian prayers, prayers of St. Bernard and St. Mary Magdalene are scattered throughout the codex, whereas prayers of St. Hedwig, of the Magi (The Wise Men of Bethlehem) and of Apostles are placed next to each

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5   Chev. not recorded; Chev. = Ulysse Chevalier, *Repertorium hymnologicum: Catalogue des chants, hymnes proses sequences, tropes en usage dans l'Église latine depuis les origins jusqu'a nos jours*, 6 vols. (Louvain: Imprimerie Lefever; Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1892–1920). Unedited.

6   Chev. not recorded. Unedited. Another transmission in the codex of the University Library in Budapaest MS Cod. 109 (=Cod. Lat. 109), fol. 127r; cf. Peter Tóth, ed., *Catalogus Codicum Latinorum Medii Aevi Bibliothecae Universitatis Budapestinensis* (Budapest 2008), 285.

7   Chev. 27579. Edited in: Henryk Kowalewicz, "*Hedwigis praeclarissima*: Zabytek dawnej liryki na Śląsku," *Eos* 62 (1974): 139–141. It is the only text where this codex is noted in context of the prayer. *Analecta hymnica* does not note Wrocław University Library MS I O 101 by the edited texts.

8   Chev. not recorded.

9   Chev. 14867; Edited in: *Anal. hymn*, 15:177–178 (Anal. Hymn. = Maria Guido Dreves, ed., *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, 55 vols. (Leipzig: Fues [R. Reisland], 1886–1922).

10  Chev. 38822; Edited in: *Anal. hymn.*, 33:140–142.

other. Further on in the text the reader will find a discussion on particular works but now let us ponder a while on the three last mentioned texts. There is an interesting colophon placed following the prayers of apostles. It reads: *Prescriptas oraciones compilavit dominus Johannes monachus in monasterio Heynrichow ordinis Cysterciensis quondam episcopus*.

The colophon attracted attention of Henryk Kowalewicz, who wrote about it in his article devoted to prayer of Saint Hedwig.[11] Kowalewicz mentions this Latin sentence and states: "Consequently, it is also the prayer of Saint Hedwig that must have originated in Henryków and must have been written by a Cistercian monk."[12] This statement and its implications were subsequently repeated again in another article by the same author, written three years later, devoted to the cultural expansion of Silesia in the Middle Ages.[13] If Kowalewicz was right in saying the above, then the authorship of Jan of Henryków would have to be also attributed to the prayer of the Magi and the prayer of apostles (the St. Hedwig prayer is preceded by *De sancta Maria Magdalena oratio* composed by Konrad of Haimburg). The confidence and certainty in which Kowalewicz's claim was proposed is puzzling. Strangely enough, he also did not mention in the cited article the two remaining pieces that could have been attributed to, unknown at the time, an author from Henryków monastery. One might conjecture that the researcher's intention was to reexamine the subject in a later text but the untimely death of the professor put a stop to his work.[14] Throughout the thirty six years that have elapsed since the publication written by Kowalewicz, researchers have been only repeating after him that Jan of Henryków was one of the poets writing in Silesia at the turn of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century and that he was actually the author of *Hedwigis praeclarissima*.[15] One may

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11   Kowalewicz, *"Hedwigis praeclarissima,"* 139.

12   Ibid., 139. Kowalewicz uses the singular form of the place name, namely: *Ruda* (*at Ruda in Silesia*, p. 139) to indicate the place of origin of the codex. The name town requires the plural form: *Rudy*.

13   Henryk Kowalewicz, "Ekspansja kulturalna Śląska w wiekach średnich," in Roman Heck, ed., *Średniowieczna kultura na Śląsku: Zbiór materiałów sesji naukowej Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Ziemi Brzeskiej i Instytutu Historycznego Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Brzeg 18–19 X 1974* (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniw. Wrocławskiego, 1977), 64–65.

14   His further willingness to continue the investigation is indicated explicitly in the following statement: "The precise time of the origination of the work cannot be **yet** [emphasis mine] determined; with all probability it may be the beginning of the fifteenth century or the latter half of the fourteenth century." Ibid., 139.

15   Zbigniew Zielonka, *Geografia życia literackiego polskiego kręgu kulturowego na Śląsku* (Słupsk: WSP, 1994), 93. See also Stefan Nieznanowski and Janusz Pelc, eds.,

wonder, however, that nobody has followed the trails suggested by the Poznań-based scholar, nor questioned or challenged the claimed author-ship of the prayer of St. Hedwig. The above mentioned colophon, how-ever, includes two pieces of information that require further examination and provide some clues to ponder on.

Firstly, it is the use of the word *compilavit*,[16] that is a bit puzzling here. Kowalewicz, an outstanding expert in medieval Latin, chooses to treat the word as a synonym of the word *composuit.* Indeed, the word *compilare* was sometimes used in the meaning of "write, make up,"[17] but within the given context in another place of the codex (fol. 141v), author-ship of St. Augustine is clearly stated by using *componere*: *Has tres se-quentes oraciones composuit Augustinus.* Compilation is not identical with a composition of a new work and, in this particular case, would rather re-fer to something more like a compilation of a set of prayers, meaning se-lecting them and introducing a practical arrangement in their order of placement in the codex. Opinions on the meaning of the word in the giv-en context vary and are subject to change. Scholarly discussion involving medievalists and classicists, however, yields no decisive results. Some scholars believe that the word's primary meaning, within this particular context, is "compilation" of prayers to be included in the codex (this group includes the present writer), while some others still assert that it was Jan of Henryków who wrote at least the three prayers that are fol-lowed by the colophon.[18] It seems that the most reasonable solution to this stalemate situation is to accept the opinion expressed by Wiesław Wydra, who underscores the fact that unless a proof that unequivocally

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*Nurt religijny w literaturze polskiego średniowiecza i renesansu* (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1994), 28.

16  *Compilare* – 'rob, pillage, snatch/steal (from another author), plagiarize'; cf.: Mar-ian Plezia, ed., *Słownik łacińsko-polski* (Warszawa: PWN, 1959), 1:627-628.

17  Marian Plezia, ed., *Słownik łaciny średniowiecznej w Polsce* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1959-1967), 2:736: *Vincencius dictus Kadlub cronicam compilavit Polonorum* (MPH II, 876). With reference to Wincenty Kadłubek, it is justified to use the word as the chronicler "compiled" his work from various sources.

18  Those in favour of the compilation include Prof. Lucie Doležalová from Charles University in Prague, Dr. Farkas Gábor Kiss from ELTE University in Budapest and the present writer. The scholars who defend the use of the word *compilare* in the meaning "composed, written, created" include, *inter alia,* Prof. Mikołaj Szy-mański. Prof. Wiesław Wydra of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań be-lieves that the question cannot be ultimately resolved unless we encounter a proof that would unequivocally indicate the authorship to that of Jan of Hen-ryków or some other person. I acknowledge and thank all those who provided me with their opinion.

shows the apparent authorship has been provided, the prayers in question should be "attributed" to Jan of Henryków.

The thesis proposed by Kowalewicz can be supported, however, by the fact that the name of the mysterious Jan appears again in another place in the codex, namely in *Commendatio pia,* written on leaf 232v–233r, where we read in the incipit: *Ego miser et indignus peccator Johannes commendo me hodie…*, and the name mentioned here refers to the author rather than to the copyist. If this is the case, then we would be able to add another work, although not a poetical one this time, to those already mentioned. Moreover, in the Lehnin manuscript,[19] written a hundred years later, in which there is a copy of the prayer of Saint Mary Magdalene (*Maria spes veniae*), in some other acrostic devoted to the saint, i.e. the one with the incipit *O, dilectrix Iesu Christi*, the first letters form the following names: O MARIA MAGDALENA IOHANNES.[20] The Lehnin codex also includes a prayer of St. Hedwig and of Mary Magdalene that are included in the Rudy codex, which originated a century earlier. It might have been so then that Johannes of the acrostic included in the Lehnin codex is identical with the mysterious Jan of Henryków, and his possible authorship should be then also extended to this particular work hitherto known only from the only copy in the Lehnin codex (Berlin codex).

Secondly, Kowalewicz did not manage to identify closer the said Jan of Henryków, who is clearly mentioned in the colophon as *quondam episcopus*. None of the scholars who later cited Kowalewicz made any slightest attempt to identify the person of Jan of Henryków (or to make a more thorough research on him). Things as they were, however, between the beginning of the fourteenth century and the year 1427, the Cistercian monastery at Henryków accepted two bishops bearing the name of Jan.[21] They were: Johann, bishop of Lubusz (Lebus), who died on 13 February 1303, or 1304, and who seems to have lived too early to be the author of

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19   The repeatedly cited Berlin codex: Staatsbibliothek in Berlin MS Cod. Berolinen. IV° 29, fol. 331v. See also: *Anal. hymn.*, 33:140; Valentin Rose, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*. Bd. 13: *Verzeichnis der lateinischen Handschriften*. Bd. 2, Abt. 1. (Berlin: A. Asher&Co., 1901), 730 (no. 723, shelf number: theol. oct. 23).

20   *Anal. hymn.*, 33:139–140.

21   Krzysztof R. Prokop, *Biskupi pomocniczy w diecezjach polskich w dobie przed-trydenckiej*: *2. poł. XIII – 1. poł. XVI w.* (Kraków: privately published by the author, 2002) does not record them. The same applies to: Piotr Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce w latach 965–1999: Słownik biograficzny* (Warszawa: Pax, 2000).

the works in question; and Johannes Janonis von Borsnitz elected bishop of Lubusz in 1397 and recorded in Henryków obituary as *Johannes Bornicz de Crena* who died on 9 July. He was mentioned to have been a benefactor, not a monk, though being a benefactor did not necessarily exclude him from being a person who entered the monastery.[22] In the light of the above remarks, the person of Jan of Henryków still remains mysterious. In my opinion, the question of the alleged authorship of *Hedwigis praeclarissima* should be treated with more caution, though. In view of our current knowledge, it is highly probable that Jan of Henryków can be identified with Johann Janonis von Borsnitz.

Kowalewicz rightly points out in his article that the prayer of St. Hedwig must have originated within the Cistercian order,[23] and most likely somewhere in Silesia as most of poetic works honouring St. Hedwig originated at the time in that particular area. With all probability one may then claim that Silesia was also the area where the prayers of the Magi and the prayers of Apostles originated. This may just as well apply to the three remaining anonymous and not recorded works, i.e. the prayer of Mary, St. Bernard and St. Mary Magdalene. The more so that the prayer of Mary Magdalene is also included in another Cistercian manuscript (Lehnin manuscript).

All the above mentioned prayers, except *Orationes de apostolis* are composed in the form of a classic acrostic structure (none is an abecedarius, mezostic or a telestich).

1. *Oratio ad beatam virginem*, with the incipit: *Mater dya, rei via…*, written on fols. 49r–49v.[24]

The prayer to the Holy Virgin occupies nearly one and a half page of the manuscript. It is not recorded. As of now, only one copy from the Rudy codex is known. The prayer consists of five rhythmical parts, in which the initials form the word MARIA.

The whole poem with one accord continues steadfastly in prayer and supplication to Mary. Two lines make up for a praise in Our Lady in-

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22  Heinrich Grüger, "Der Nekrolog des Klosters Heinrichau (ca. 1280–1550)," *Archiv für schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 32 (1974): 71. See also, by the same author: Part 1: *Archiv für schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 31 (1973): 36–69; Part 2: *Archiv für schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 33 (1975): 9–27.

23  There are five known texts of the prayer of St. Hedwig, University Library in Wrocław MS I O 101 from Rudy Śląskie being the earliest one. Cf. Kowalewicz, *"Hedwigis praeclarissima,"* 140.

24  Chev. not recorded.