

Printed emblems and manuscript meditations from the Norbertine nunnery*

Drukowane emblematy i rękopiśmienne medytacje z klasztoru norbertanek

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Abstract. The aim: The article discusses a “hybrid volume” – a book that integrates engravings (mechanically reproduced pieces) and handwritten texts. More specifically, it is an emblem book that combines engravings and a Polish translation of *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae* by Jan David. The Polish text has never been published in print. The engravings come from a series issued by the Antwerp print atelier of Theodoor Galle. **Conclusions:** The texts were composed in 1670' by an anonymous translator, and the volume itself was most likely created later in a convent. The book belonged to a nun and has been preserved in the library of the Norbertine nunnery in Imbramowice, Poland. The essay analyses this volume as an example of multimedia hybridity in books manufactured centuries ago. It argues that the construction of such volumes might have served a spiritual purpose, constituting an aid to immersive reading, meditation, and prayer.

Keywords: emblems, hybrid volume, meditation, post-Tridentine monastic books, nunnery.

The volume I discuss in this essay is an example of an emblem book that combines engravings pasted on the surface of its plain pages and an unpublished handwritten Polish translation of *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae* by

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Jan David. It has been preserved in the library of the Norbertine nunnery in Imbramowice, Poland. In my text, I share preliminary observations on this volume, and thereby provide a case study in the history of what has been called ‘mixed media’ and ‘hybridity’.¹ This volume is all the more fascinating because it was compiled not in the period of transition between manual and mechanical reproduction of texts and images, but at a time when books (with their textual and pictorial contents) were predominantly, almost exclusively, press-produced.

Interactions of print and manuscript in emblem books

Before I turn to the volume in question, it would be useful to introduce it with a few words about the birth and popularity of the emblem, and to provide examples of various interactions between the printed and handwritten components of emblem books.

The emblem is a genre at the intersection of literature and the visual arts, joining word and image. This essential conjunction took its cues from several pre-existing sources, but it was officially initiated by a collection of compositions by Andrea Alciato (1492–1550). According to theoreticians the ideal emblem should comprise three parts – *inscriptio* (a title and motto), *pictura* (an enigmatic picture), and *subscriptio* (an epigram and prose passage) – with the last element guiding the interpretation of the first two. The moralizing message of the emblem is revealed by the text presented alongside the picture; neither can be fully comprehended without the other. Alciato’s *Emblemata* is generally held to constitute the birth of the emblem itself and of the emblem book (a volume containing a series of emblems). The first, unauthorized, edition of Alciato’s work was printed in 1531, and within a period of two hundred years, over 170 editions were produced – both in Latin and in numerous

¹ S. Hindmann, *Cross-fertilization and experiments in mixing the media*, in: *Pen to press. Illustrated manuscripts and printed books in the first century of printing*, eds. S. Hindmann, J.D. Farquhar, Baltimore 1977, p. 101. For the tangled interactions between manuscript and print and various forms of multimedia hybridity in books manufactured centuries ago, see W. Sherman, H. Wolfe, *The Department of Hybrid Books. Thomas Milles between manuscript and print*, “Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies” 2015, no. 45/3, pp. 457–458, as well as other contributions in this issue of JMEMS. For the Polish text preserved in the volume see J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, “Raj Oblubieńca i Oblubienice” (przekład “Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae” Jana Davida) w bibliotece siostr norbertanek w Imbramowicach, in: *Źródła i sensy. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Januszowi S. Gruchale z okazji siedemdziesiątej rocznicy urodzin*, eds. J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, M. Komorowska, Kraków 2024. The present text reiterates and develops some observations first introduced in this Polish-language paper.

vernacular languages. Before long, other publications containing allegorical illustrations with accompanying explanatory texts in verse or in prose began to appear, emulating Alciato's collection. Cautious estimates suggest that before the end of the seventeenth century more than 3,000 editions of books utilising the emblematic mode were produced in Europe.² These books (emblem books) served as means of entertainment, recreation or instruction; they were both studied as intellectual puzzles and used for private meditation and prayer.³

Early modern emblem books, where both printed and manuscript materials interacted, were a familiar phenomenon.⁴ These volumes offer valuable insights into practices related to both reading and the adaptation and manipulation of images. A printed emblem book was commonly filled with annotations anchored in the printed material contained within, such as translations of the inscriptions (mottoes) or subscriptions (explanatory verses) of particular compositions. Proprietors and readers adapted and customised the books' visual and textual contents, thereby creating vernacular responses to their classical didactic messages (this was often the case with Alciato's

² P.M. Daly, *The emblem in early modern Europe. Contributions to the theory of the emblem*, Farnham 2014, pp. 4–5; idem, *The Union Catalogue of Emblem Books Project and the Corpus Librorum Emblematum*, "Emblematika" 1988, vol. 3; idem, *How many printed emblem books were there*, in: *In nocte consilium. Studies in emblematics in honor of Pedro F. Campa*, eds. J.T. Cull, P.M. Daly, Baden-Baden 2011.

³ The literature on "things emblematic" is ever-growing. General works of bibliography concerning the emblem, as well as author-specific bibliographies and catalogues, are listed in S. Rawles, *Emblem bibliography*, in: *Companion to emblem studies*, ed. P.M. Daly, New York 2008. Apart from volumes in the series AMS Studies in the Emblem, Imago Figurata Studies, Glasgow Emblem Studies, numerous monographs and collected volumes have been published, as well as contributions in the journal "Emblematika: Essays in Word and Image". For Polish-Lithuanian emblem culture an unsurpassed study remains J. Pelc, *Słowo i obraz. Na pograniczu literatury i sztuk plastycznych*, Kraków 2002.

⁴ *Bibliography of emblematic manuscripts* (eds. S. Sider, B. Obrist, Montreal-Kingston 1997) lists over 430 items, some being hybrid volumes, that combine printed and manuscript materials. Nationally oriented bibliographies add to the list. See e.g. P.F. Campa, *Emblemata Hispanica. An annotated bibliography of Spanish emblem literature to the year 1700*, Durham 1990; L. Grove, D. Russel, *The French emblem. Bibliography of secondary sources*, Geneva 2000, especially pp. 159–164; A. Adams, S. Rawles, A. Saunders, *A bibliography of French emblem books*, 2 vols., Geneva 1999–2002. Growing number of case studies and editions of manuscript sources also includes examples from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. See e.g. H. Keferstein, B. Wojczulanis, *Polska wersja rękopiśmienna emblematów Georgette de Montenay*, "Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie" 1967, vol. 3; *Miłości Boskiej i ludzkiej skutki różne. Wraz z siedemnastowieczną polską wersją tekstów do "Amoris divini et humani effectus varii"*, eds. J. Pelc, P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, Warszawa 2000.

exemplars) scriptural or religious teachings, or civic and political instruction.⁵ The source texts and the emblems' *picturae* were used to create fresh meanings; the message of particular emblems was often reshaped to suit the needs of new audiences, and the book's form and function were changed accordingly. One popular variety of such a repurposed emblem book was the *alba amicorum* (books of friends), a printed volume containing handwritten signatures, poems and notes (as well as figurative representations and coats-of-arms) that early modern students and travellers collected from their acquaintances.⁶ Some emblem books used as media for *alba amicorum* were copies consisting of printed quires interpolated with blank leaves. Later in the life of the book, the white folios were filled and embellished with hand-written texts and pictures. Before the De Bry family in Frankfurt started to offer emblem books for sale as *Stammbücher*, the interleaving of printed sheets with blank ones was carried out during the binding of the volume. Another category of emblem book in which print and manuscript interact were handwritten codices interpolated with elements from printed books and print series. Woodcuts and engravings (or even figures excerpted from printed images) could be sourced from printed volumes or sheets and pasted onto white pages, while the unbound quires could be interpolated with engravings. To my knowledge such hybrid emblem volumes are not very common.⁷ That is one of the reasons why I think it is worthwhile to look at an exemplar that has been preserved in the library of the Norbertine nuns in Imbramowice abbey, some 30 km north of Kraków, Poland.

⁵ Examples are studied i.a. by K.A.E. Enenkel, *Customization of a Latin emblem book by a vernacular owner: Unknown German poems to a copy of Vaenius's Emblemata Horatiana* (first edition, 1607), in: *Customized books in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1700*, eds. C. Fletcher, W.S. Melion, Leiden 2024; W. Harms, *Emblemata secreta. Anonyme emblematische Versändungen über politische Ereignisse von 1620 bis 1630 unter pfälzisch-reformierten Autoren*, in: *Emblems from Alciato to the tattoo*, eds. P.M. Daly et al., Turnhout 2001.

⁶ There has been a considerable increase in published scholarship on the subject, with the standard reference work being W. Klose, *Corpus Alborum Amicorum CAAC Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Stammbücher des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1988. More recent case studies include C. Coppens, *An Album Amicorum as a source of provenance*, "Bibliologia" 2010, vol. 5; M.R. Wade, *Dorothea of Anhalt, Fürstin von Braunschweig-Lüneburg. The emblem book as Stammbuch*, in: *Frauen – Bücher – Höfe. Wissen und Sammeln vor 1800*, eds. V. Bauer et al., Wiesbaden 2018.

⁷ See e.g. results of 'nuns handiwork' in J. Hamburger, *Nuns as artists. The visual culture of a medieval convent*, Berkeley 1997; M. Gaudio, *Cutting and pasting at Little Gidding. Bible illustration and Protestant belief in seventeenth-century England*, in: *Ut pictura meditatio. The meditative image in Northern art, 1500–1700*, eds. W.S. Melion et al., Turnhout 2012.

The hybrid copy and its printed model

The volume belonging to the Norbertines in Imbramowice is an example of an emblem book which combines handwritten text with engravings pasted on the surface of the book's pages. The engravings come from a series from the Antwerp print atelier of Theodoor Galle; the series was first published in 1607. The text pages contain a handwritten Polish translation of *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae* (Paradise of the Bride and Groom) by Jan David. *Raj Oblubieńca i Oblubienice* (as the Polish title goes) is the work of an unidentified author (or perhaps authors). Dates on the title pages preserved in the volume suggest that the translation was created between 1671 and 1675, while the copy itself might have been produced later in the seventeenth century or (more probably) early in the eighteenth century (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). I have found no record of this text ever having been printed, and it is unclear why the translation was never published.⁸ However, in all probability, even if *Raj Oblubieńca i Oblubienice* is now known only in the unique Imbramowice copy, it was not the only exemplar of this text that was in circulation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁹

Since the volume now in Imbramowice was designed and executed to look and feel like a printed book, it will be of value to consider its printed template: *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*. The *Paradisus* (Antwerp: Balthasar and Jan Moretus) is an emblem book composed by Jan David (1546–1613), a renowned Jesuit preacher and apologist, who was active predominantly in the Southern Netherlands, in the Province of Flanders.¹⁰ The *Paradisus* can perhaps be called an anthology, since it is comprised of two works – separate, yet

⁸ See e.g. J. Tazbir, *Bariera druku i gusta czytelnicze w dobie baroku*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce" 1985, vol. 30; idem, *Książka rękopiśmienna w Polsce i Rosji (XVI–XVIII w.)*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 1986, vol. 77, no. 4; *Staropolska kultura rękopisu*, ed. H. Dziechcińska, Warszawa 1990; A. Karpiński, *O konsekwencjach wieku rękopisów. Rekonstruowanie epoki*, in: A. Karpiński, *Tekst staropolski. Studia i szkice o literaturze dawnej w rękopisach*, Warszawa 2003; R. Wójcik, *Uwagi na marginesie książki Marka Prejsa "Oralność i mnemonika. Późny barok w kulturze polskiej"*, "Terminus" 2011, vol. 11.

⁹ We know that similar meditation cycles have circulated in many handwritten copies, see e.g., M. Mielezko, *Emblematy*, eds. R. Grześkowiak, J. Niedźwiedz, Warszawa 2010; R. Grześkowiak, *Anonimowe dzieło emblematyczne na kanwie cyklu rycin "Cor Iesu amanti sacrum" Antona Wierixa z drugiej połowy XVII stulecia*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 2013, vol. 104, no. 3; *Karmelitańskie adaptacje Pia desideria Hermana Hugona z XVII i XVIII wieku*, eds. R. Grześkowiak, A. Nowicka-Struska, J. Gwioździk, Warszawa 2020; R. Grześkowiak, *A guide to the heavens. The literary reception of Herman Hugo's Pia desideria in the Polish–Lithuanian commonwealth*, Leiden 2023, p. 37 et passim.

¹⁰ For David's biography see: J. Andriessen, *Joannes David*, in: *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, Brussels 1964, vol. 1, p. 379.

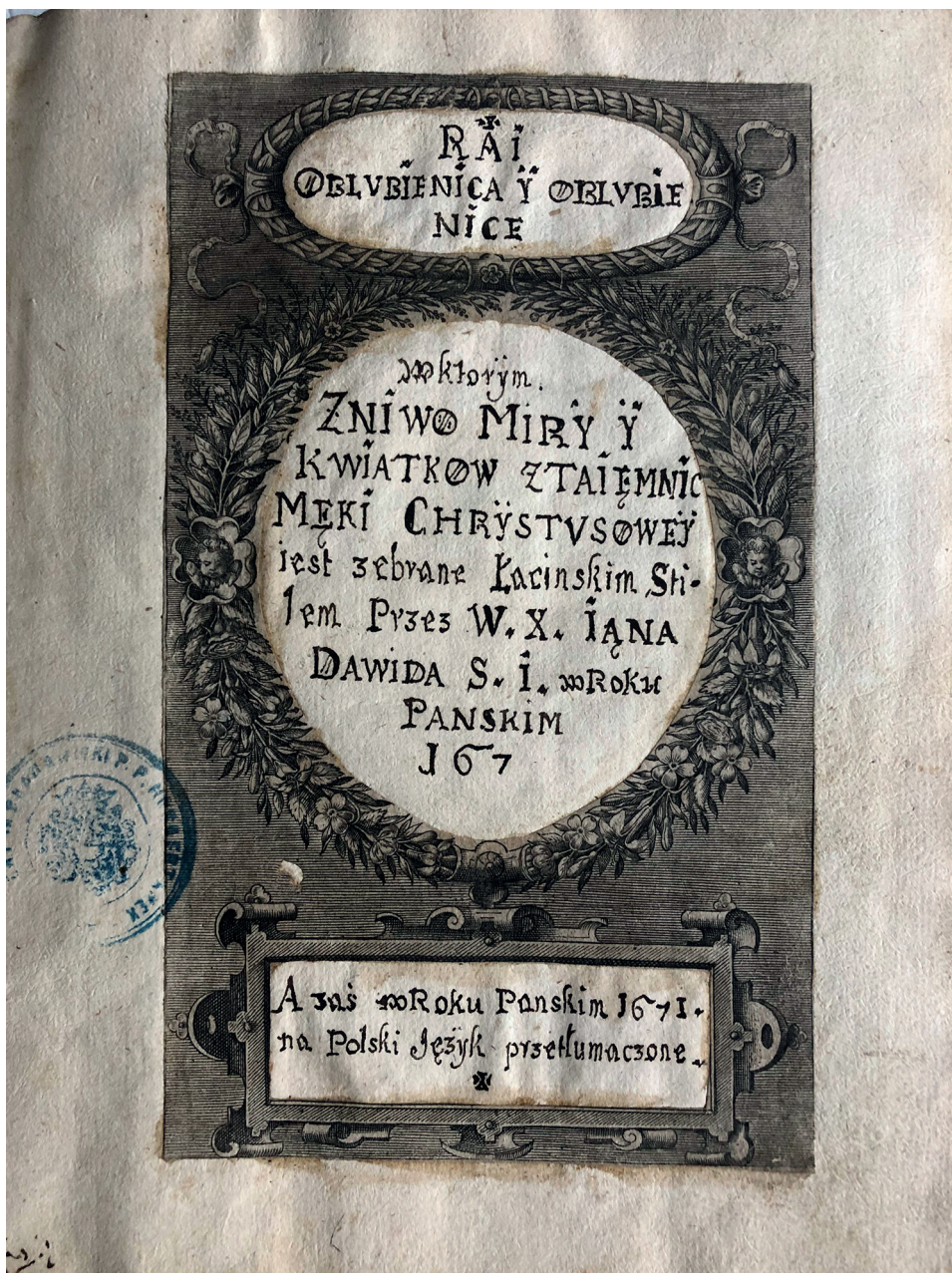


Fig. 1. The title page of the Polish *Messis myrrhae* (*Żniwo mirry... w roku Pańskim 1671 na język polski przetłumaczone*) in the hybrid volume *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*

Source: Biblioteka Klasztoru P.P. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach.

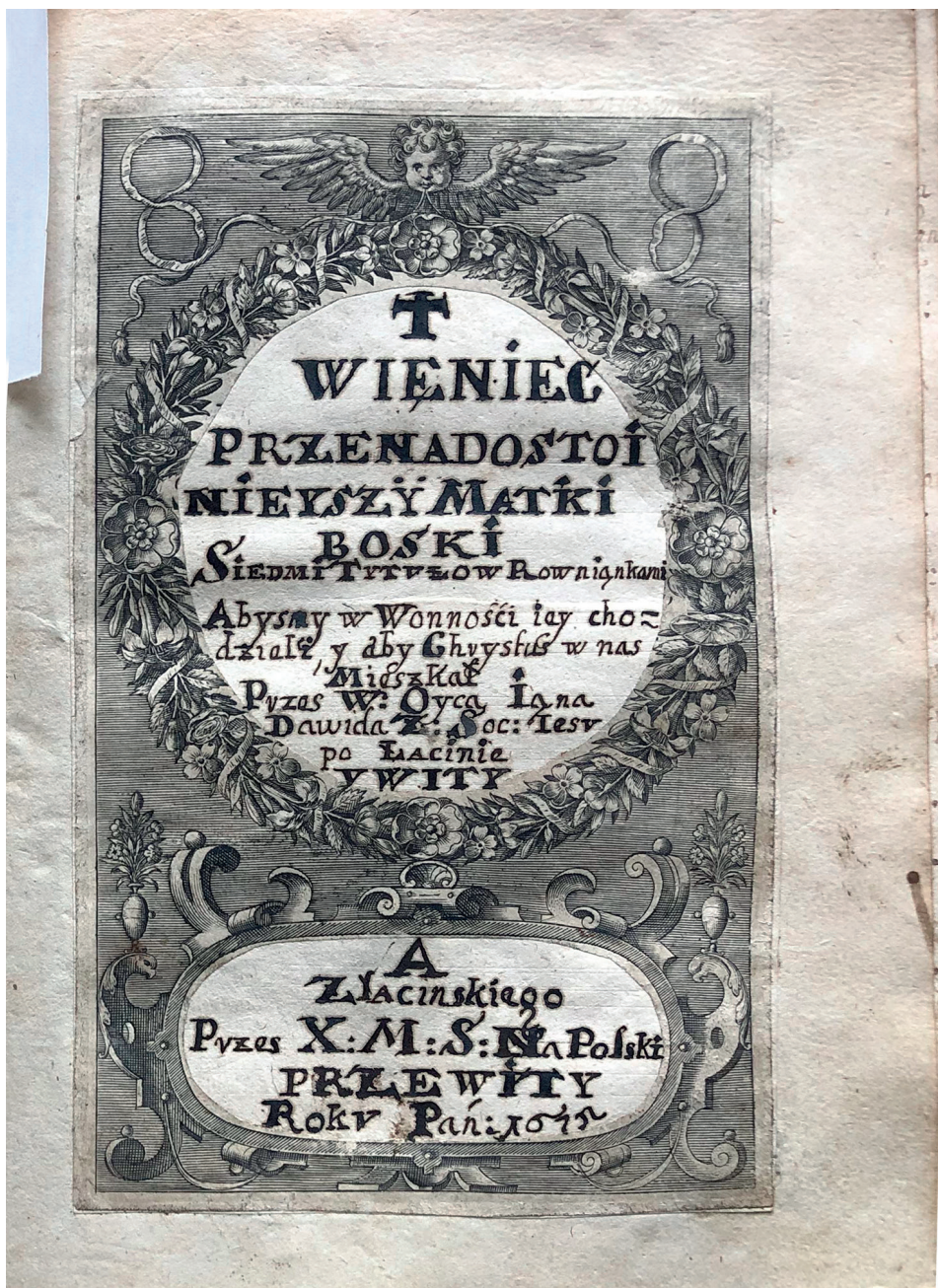


Fig. 2. The title page of the Polish *Pancarpium Marianum* (*Wieniec... po łacinie uwity a z łacińskiego na polskie... przewity roku Pańskiego 1675*) in the hybrid volume *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*

Source: Biblioteka Klasztoru P.P. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach.

interconnected, having related content and sharing the same structure. The first work is *Messis myrrhae et aromatum ex instrumentis ac mysteriis Passionis Christi* (Harvest of Myrrh and Spices from the Instruments and Mysteries of Christ's Passion), with fifty meditations on the passion of Christ, and the second is *Pancarpium Marianum* (Marian Garland), with the same number of meditations on the Virgin Mary. Together these two cycles function as 'sequential spiritual exercises'.¹¹ Exegetical and contemplative, yet anchored in orthodox readings of Scripture, they were dedicated to the Archdukes Albert and Isabela, and offered an introduction to the practices of mystical devotion to both lay and secular readers, particularly students at the Jesuit Colleges and Jesuit scholastics.¹²

Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae, first published in 1607 (and later reprinted in 1618 and 1623) belongs to a series of 'emblem books or books with emblems' (to use Peter Daly's expression) that David composed between 1601 and 1610, and had printed with the Plantin Press in Antwerp (the other titles being *Veridicus Christianus*, 1601, *Occasio arrepta, neglecta*, 1605, and *Duodecim specula*, 1610).¹³ By publishing these works, David became one of the Jesuit's order earliest and most influential emblematisers.¹⁴ In his books 'heterogeneous elements, each with a different narrative status, are brought together in the same space: the episodes of salvation history, meant to be the subject of meditation; the moral lessons to be drawn from these episodes; the symbolic motifs

¹¹ W.S. Melion, *Emblemata solitariae Passionis. Jan David, S.J., on the solitary passion of Christ*, in: *Solitudo. Spaces, places, and times of solitude in late medieval and early modern cultures*, eds. K.A.E. Enenkel, C. Göttler, Leiden 2018, p. 247.

¹² Ibidem, p. 249.

¹³ P.M. Daly, *The emblem...*, pp. 4–5. Details about editions in D. Imhoff, *Jan Moretus and the continuation of the Plantin Press. A bibliography of the works published and printed by Jan Moretus I in Antwerp (1589–1610)*, Leiden 2014, pp. 220–236.

¹⁴ On Jesuit emblematics see P.M. Daly, G.R. Dimler, *The Jesuit emblem in the European context*, Philadelphia 2016, with its extensive listing of earlier publications; W.S. Melion, *The Jesuit engagement with the status and functions of the visual image*, in: W. de Boer, *Jesuit image theory*, Leiden 2016; R. Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem. Status, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVIIe siècle*, Geneva 2005. On David's emblematic theory and practice, see: L. Lieb, *Emblematische Experimente: Formen und Funktionen der frühen Jesuiten-Emblematik am Beispiel der Emblembücher Jan Davids*, in: *The Jesuits and the emblem tradition*, eds. J. Manning, M. van Vaeck, Turnhout 1999; A.-K. Sors, *Allegorische Andachtsbücher in Antwerpen. Jan Davids Texte und Theodor Gallés Illustrationen in den jesuitischen Buchprojekten der Plantiniana*, Göttingen 2015; R. Dekoninck, A. Guiderdoni-Bruslé, M. van Vaeck, *Emblemata sacra. Emblem books from the Maurits Sabbe Library, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*, Leuven 2006, pp. 55–62; as well as recent studies by W.S. Melion, who is working on a book project on David (most relevant for this study are his *Emblemata solitariae Passionis*, quoted above, and *Meditative images and the portrayal of image-based meditation*, in: *Ut pictura meditatio*, eds. W.S. Melion et al.).

and objects that convey them and, finally, the voices that narrate and interpret all of the preceding elements.¹⁵

The book audience in Poland-Lithuania was also familiar with Jan David's works. This is confirmed by over 70 copies of his books recorded as having been preserved in Polish libraries. Many have provenances indicating that they constituted part of local book collections already in the 17th century.¹⁶ The reception of David's work is visible both in Polish literature and in works of visual art created in Poland-Lithuania.

David's works were emblematic experiments: complex structures much more complicated than the tri-part form associated with Alciato.¹⁷ The characteristics of their innovative format are clearly visible in the organisation of the contents of the *Paradisus*. The illustrated copy of the *Paradisus* has an engraved title page (Fig. 3), with each work also including its own title page; 51 engravings have been inserted on separate leaves between the printed sheets (the first engraving is signed by Theodoor Galle). Each meditation operates emblematically, comprising a title (a motto), a distich (an epigram serving as a *subscriptio*), and a lengthy commentary – a meditation closed by a prayer. These verbal components of the emblem are presented alongside the engraving, with the title placed above a *pictura* and verses below it (not only in Latin, but also in French and Dutch translations) (Fig. 4). The engravings each show several scenes from a story evoked by the composition's title, while the capital letters

¹⁵ R. Dekoninck, A. Guiderdoni-Bruslé, M. van Vaeck, op. cit., pp. 57–58.

¹⁶ P. Buchwald-Pelcowa, *Emblematyka w polskich kolegiach jezuickich*, in: *Artes atque humaniora. Studia Stanisłao Mossakowski sexagenario dicata*, eds. A. Rottermund et al., Warszawa 1998, pp. 177–178; A. Kapuścińska, *Theatrum meditationis. Ignacjanizm i jezuityzm w duchowej i literackiej kulturze I Rzeczypospolitej – źródła, inspiracje, idee*, in: *Drogi duchowe katolicyzmu polskiego XVII wieku*, ed. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, Warszawa 2016, pp. 221–223; A. Ceccherelli, *Poeta jezuitów. Studium translatorsko-kulturowe o Wirydarzu Stanisława Grochowskiego*, in: *Barok polski wobec Europy. Sztuka przekładu*, eds. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, M. Prejs, Warszawa 2005; C. Sommervogel, S.J., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. 12, Bruxelles-Paris 1891, pp. 1847; J. Golonka, J. Żmudziński, *Muzeum 600-lecia Jasnej Góry. Przewodnik*, Częstochowa 1994, pp. 84, 107; Z. Rozanow, E. Smulikowska, *Zabytki sztuki Jasnej Góry. Architektura, rzeźba, malarstwo*, Katowice 2009, pp. 128–129, p. 307; B. Frey-Stecowa, *Wzory graficzne w dziejach malarstwa jasnogórskiego*, in: *Ex voto. Studia dedykowane Ojcu Janowi Golonce OSPPE*, Częstochowa 2012, pp. 197–198; K. Moisan-Jabłońska, *Polskie przygody grafiki zachodnioeuropejskiej XVII–XVIII*, Ciche 2013, pp. 284–285; J. Dzik, *Obrazy o treściach mariologicznych w kaplicy Grobu Matki Boskiej w zespole Kalwarii Zebrzydowskiej. Z badań nad recepcją grafiki w malarstwie polskim XVII w.*, "Folia Historica Cracoviensia" 2008, vol. 14.

¹⁷ On the various structural forms of emblems see e.g. D. Graham, *Emblema multiplex. Towards a typology of emblematic forms, structures and functions*, in: *Emblem scholarship. Directions and developments. A tribute to Gabriel Hornstein*, ed. P.M. Daly, Turnhout 2005; P.M. Daly, *The emblem...*, pp. 131–150.

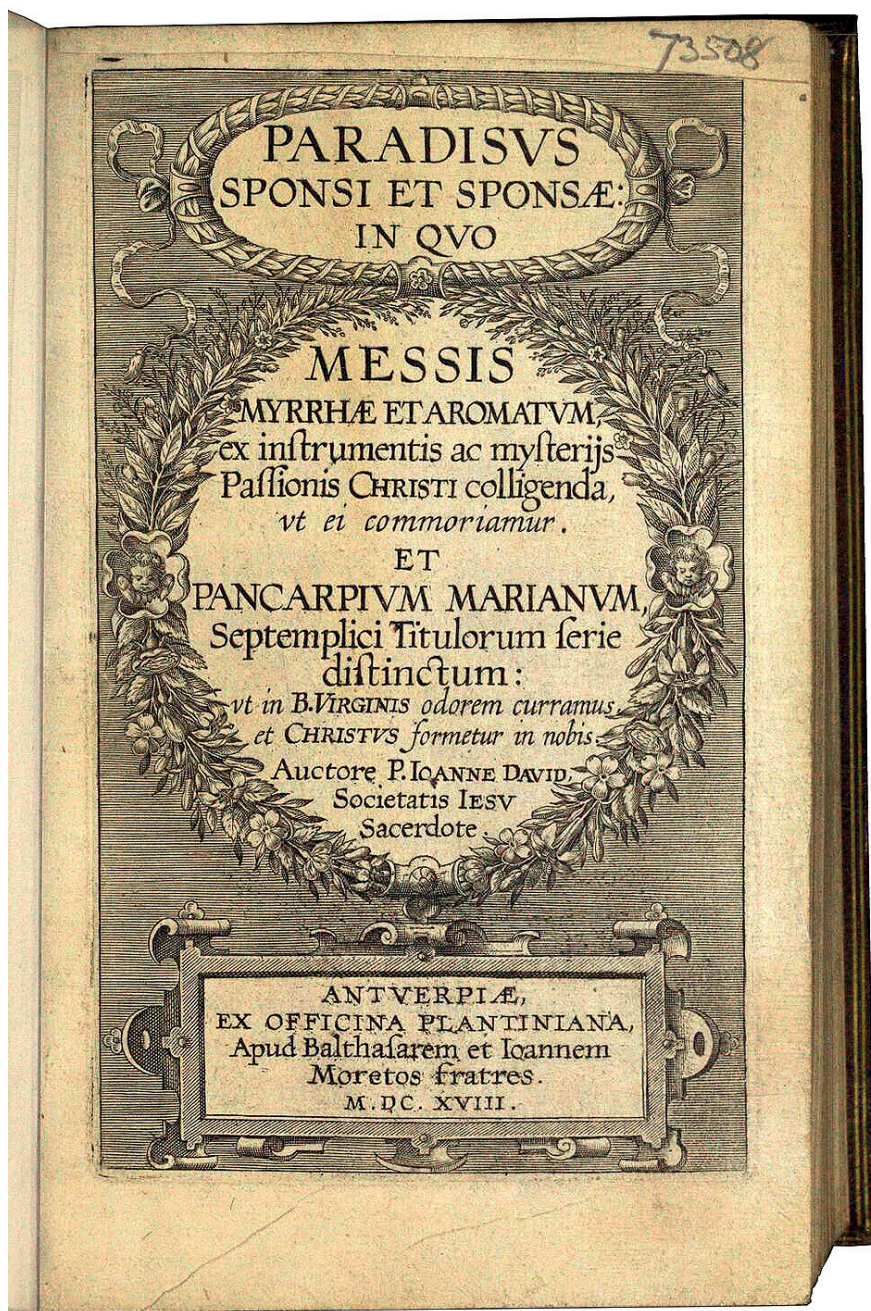


Fig. 3. Title page in: Jan David, *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*, Antwerpen 1618

Source: Wellcome Collection.

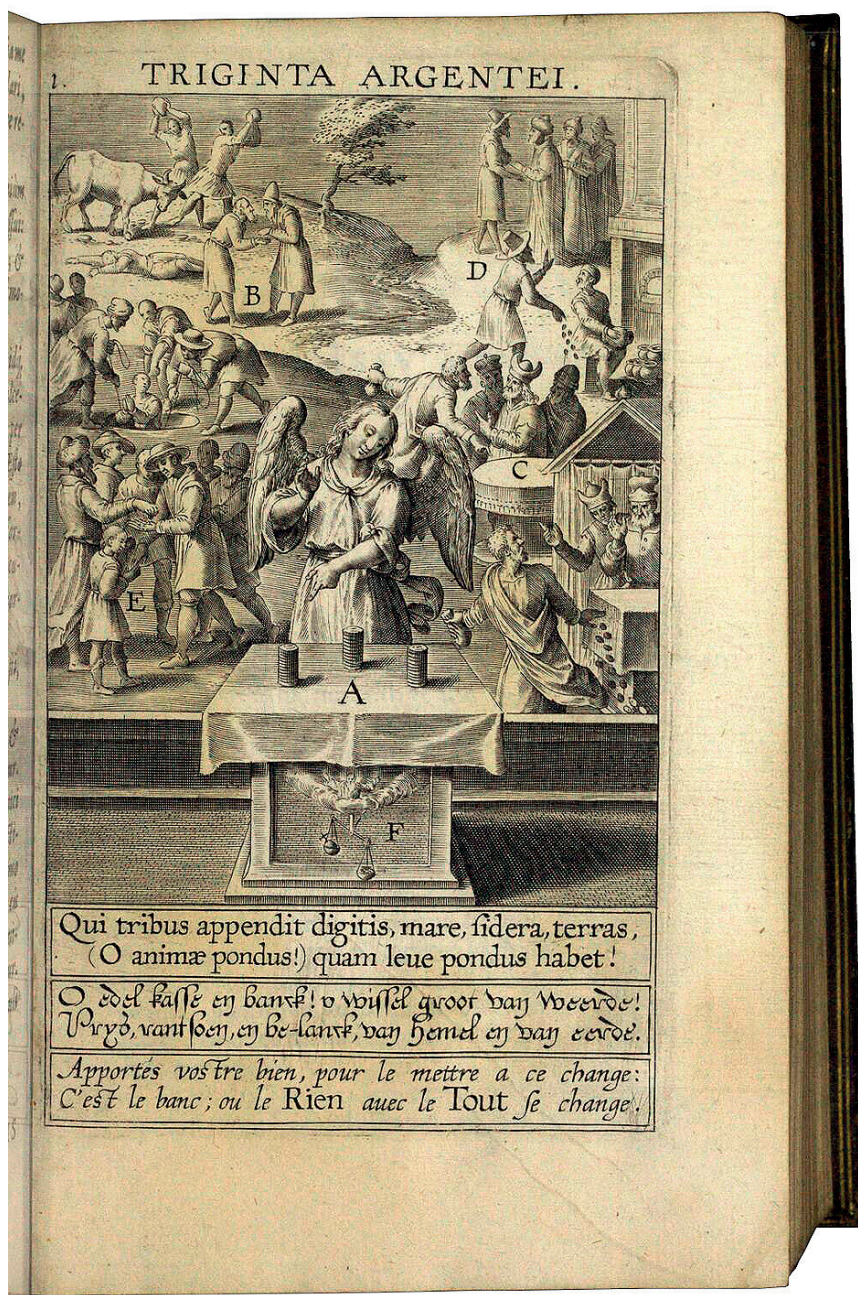


Fig. 4. Triginta argentei in: Jan David, *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*, Antwerpen 1618

Source: Wellcome Collection.

inscribed in the illustration refer the reader/viewer to the relevant passages in the commentary. As in other emblematic volumes where David's texts and Galle's engravings interact 'the *picturae*, first and foremost, amplify and intensify the verbal images generated by [...] [the text – J.K.Z.], making them more substantial, legible, affective, and compelling. The figures and their attributes are rendered more tangible [...], which invest the speech with concrete details having the power of persuasive demonstration.'¹⁸

However, this elaborate, 'full' structure was not characteristic of all copies of the *Paradisus*. Like the 1595 edition of Jerónimo Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* and David's own *Veridicus Christianus*, some copies of the *Paradisus* were sold without illustrations. Moreover, among the illustrated copies now available, the sequence of engravings is interspersed variably within the work. Most often the images are positioned at the beginning of each chapter (either on the left or right of the opening, with the page containing the beginning of the text facing or following the engraving), but sometimes the series of engravings is galleried either before or after David's text. At the same time, since Theodoor Galle, following in his father's footsteps, continued to operate as a publisher of prints and owned the copperplates engraved for the *Paradisus*, a series of engravings inscribed with a set of polyglot distichs circulated independently of the meditations.¹⁹ Galle had them printed in batches, several months or even years after the print run of the text was produced. As a result, his clientele expanded to include print collectors, as well as (as the Imbramowice volume evidences) those who would use the engravings to create hybrid books combining printed and manuscript material.

¹⁸ W.S. Melion, *Figured personification and parabolic embodiment in Jan David's Ocasio arrepta, neglecta*, in: *Personification. Embodying meaning and emotion*, eds. W.S. Melion, B.A.M. Ramakers, Leiden 2016, p. 409.

¹⁹ On the partnership between The Plantin Press and the Galle atelier in the production of David's emblem books see D. Imhof, *From Arnold Nicolai to Peter Rubens. Book illustration under Plantin and the first Moretuses*, in: *Un siècle d'excellence typographique: Christophe Plantin & son officine (1555–1655)*, eds. G. Proot et al., Paris 2021, pp. 102–104, 110 et passim; K.L. Bowen, *Working practices in Antwerp: the Galle*, "Print Quarterly" 2009, vol. 26; eadem, *Illustrating books with engravings. Plantin's working practices revealed*, "Print Quarterly" 2003, vol. 20; D. Imhof, *Joannes David's emblem books: successful co-operative ventures between the Galle print workshop and the Moretus press*, in: *El sol de occidentesociedad, textos, imágenes simbólicas e interculturalidad*, eds. C. López Calderón, J.M. Monterroso Montero, Santiago de Compostela 2020; M. Sellink, *Joannes David, Veridicus Christianus*, in: *The illustration of books published by the Moretuses*, ed. D. Imhoff, Antwerp 1996; K.L. Bowen, *Declining wages for the printing of book illustrations. Arrangements between the Galle family of printmakers and the managers of the Officina Plantiniana in seventeenth-century Antwerp*, "Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis" 2004, vol. 87; eadem, *Philips Galle, His descendants, and print workshops in seventeenth-century Antwerp*, "Print Quarterly" 2009, vol. 26.

It is impossible to say whether the engravings used in the production of the hybrid volume discussed in this paper come from a copy of David's work (composed of sheets printed by Moretus and engravings from Galle's studio). There are many copies of emblematic books from which the *picturae* were cut or torn out shortly after they were produced. The engravings could thus have been obtained from sheets which were sold separately from the text printed by Moretus and which cost less than the materials needed to assemble a 'complete' copy of the *Paradisus*. Such printed pictures found their way to Poland in the luggage of people travelling from Western Europe, in private shipments, and among goods imported by booksellers.²⁰

The Polish print-manuscript copy of the *Paradisus* was designed to imitate a full version of the printed work. The creator of the hybrid volume reworked the content of the title page present in printed copies of David's work, which exhibited two titles. On consecutive pages of the volume now in Imbramowice, engravings were inserted as opening *exordia* at the beginning of each meditation, on the left-hand page (Fig. 5). Prints were carefully pasted onto the sheets, providing a visual accessory to the emblem's verbal components. Blank pages marked with the relevant numbers (pen annotations, with no traces of glue or the pictures previously pasted onto the pages) suggest that not all the engravings were available to the compiler, who nevertheless must have had a perfect concept of the book layout and structure, and an overview of the available set of engravings. These tiny notes on the blank pages seem to indicate that the text was written first. Over the course of time, the majority of the folios that were (or could reasonably have been) augmented with engravings, went missing. They were neatly cut out or simply torn out (Fig. 6). It seems that the manuscript initially contained a total of ca. 85 engravings distributed across the folios (some were cropped, resulting in the removal of polyglot verses). As a consequence, only 15 of Galle's engravings (plus two title page borders) have survived in the hybrid volume until the present day.

The hand-written pages, attributable to a single hand, display lengthy meditations, while the translations of the distichs were omitted from the work. Each meditation starts on the right of the opening, on a page capped by a chapter heading in capital letters. The text, concluding with a prayer, is spread over several pages, with the copyist following the design of the printed template (albeit less closely when writing the meditations from *Wieniec*). An effort

²⁰ See F. Dietz, *Media literate Catholics: Seeing, reading and writing in Early Modern Participatory Culture*, "Authorship" 2013, vol. 2 (2). On the circulation of graphic prints in early-modern Europe see G. Jurkowlaniec, *Sprawczość rycin. Rzymska twórczość Tomasza Tretera i jej europejskie oddziaływanie*, Kraków 2017; D. Paisey, *Prints at the Frankfurt Book Fairs, 1568–1600*, "Print Quarterly" 2006, vol. 23; E. Różycki, *Inwentarz księgarni Andrzeja Dobrzyca we Lwowie z 1674 r.*, "Roczniki Biblioteczne" 1998, vol. 42, p. 75.



Fig. 5. An engraving pasted on the left-hand page of the opening and the text page in the hybrid volume *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*
Source: Biblioteka Klasztoru P.P. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach.

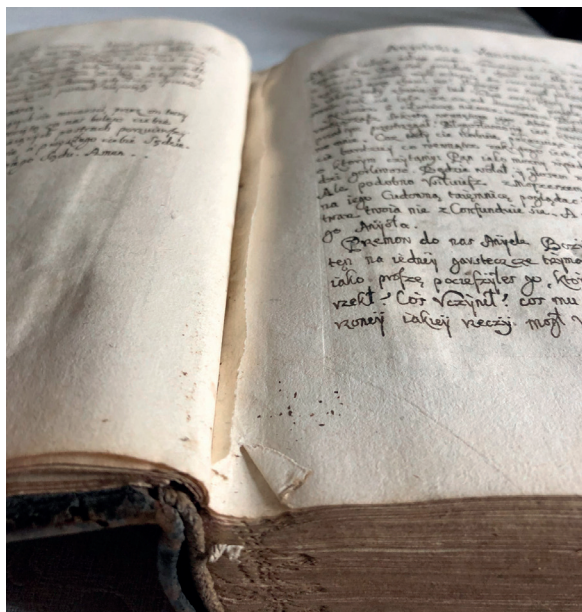


Fig. 6. A text page and a place where an engraving could have been pasted in the hybrid volume *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*

Source: Biblioteka Klasztoru P.P. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach.

was made to justify the text area, and (as in editions of the *Paradisus*) capital letters referring to the figures which populated the images were placed in the margins of the main body of the text. The effect was uniformity in the page and conceptual consistency throughout the volume.²¹

People, dates, places

Little, or almost nothing, is known about the persons behind the production of the hybrid volume, about the time and place of the manufacturing of the copy itself, or about the composing of the Polish texts it preserves. Since the time of its production, the book currently in Imbramowice has lacked front-matter or any paratextual apparatus, such as a dedication, that could provide knowledge on these circumstances. The only straightforward information the volume contains is that about the years when the *Paradisus* was translated into the vernacular. The title pages in the copy indicate that the Polish versions of *Messis myrrhae* and *Pancarpium Marianum* were composed in 1671 (*Żniwo mirry... w roku Pańskim 1671 na język polski przetłumaczone*) and in 1675 (*Wieniec... po łacinie uwity a z łacińskiego na polskie... przewity roku Pańskiego 1675*) respectively (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). The translator of the second work was a clergyman, but only his initials have been recorded on the hybrid title page of *Wieniec*: X. (for 'ksiądz', which means 'priest') M. S. Even if we assume a monastic context for the volume – and I realise that the nuns themselves maintained spiritual diaries, described their mystical experience, composed religious songs, and wrote *vitae* of their saints and leaders – it is highly doubtful that the translator of *Żniwo mirry* was a woman for whom the rendition of the meditations into Polish would have been a spiritual practice. It seems more probable that both cycles of meditations (and not only *Wieniec*) were translated by clergymen, not least because the contents of the books present in the libraries of the post-Tridentine convents and in nuns' cells in Poland-Lithuania were often composed by the sisters' chaplains or confessors, who translated or adapted popular Latin, Italian, and Spanish works.²²

²¹ On the imitation of printing by copyists in female convents see A. Nowicka-Struska, *Rękopisy karmelitanek bosych w XVII i XVIII wieku. Ekspresja artystyczna i sztuka pisanja*, in: *Marginalia w książce dawnej i współczesnej*, ed. B. Mazurkova, Katowice 2019.

²² K. Górski, *Uwagi o rozmyślaniach staropolskich*, in: *Przełom wieków w literaturze i kulturze polskiej*, eds. B. Otwinowska, J. Pelc, Wrocław 1984; J. Gwioździk, *Kultura piśma i książki w żeńskich klasztorach kontemplacyjnych dawnej Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku*, Katowice 2015; K. Kaczor-Schleier, *Perswazja w wybranych medytacjach siedemnastowiecznych z klasztoru norbertanek na Zwierzyńcu*, Łódź 2016.

These texts (prayers, meditations, and poems) might have been created in a specific environment, and for a relatively narrow group of nuns from one house or congregation, but at least some of them enjoyed a wider readership. Even if they rarely appeared in print, they circulated in hand-written copies among members of religious communities, and found their way into the hands of lay audiences, especially women. Naturally the reverse direction for transfer of devotional texts was also possible, as some of these works were composed for or dedicated to noblewomen of powerful families living 'in the world'. Only later were copies disseminated within female webs of kinship and friendship – webs that included sisters, cousins, aunts, and acquaintances who took the veil.

It is within these female networks that the hybrid copy of *Raj Oblubieńca i Oblubienice* might have been produced, in all probability in a religious house. Female convents had a long-established tradition of handiwork that included copying and decorating books (also by pasting into them mass-produced images or fragments of them) and producing devotional drawings. The manufacture of texts and pictures was regarded as a form of worship, an act of devotion. At the same time, the lives of nuns testify the use of images and illustrated books as instruments of affective piety and aids to meditative prayer.²³ Even if it is predominantly works of the arts and crafts produced by mediaeval nuns that have become the object of scholarly scrutiny, the production of books and devotional images, as well as volumes that combined both, remained an indispensable part of the nuns' monastic routine well into the modern period.²⁴

The volume under discussion has been preserved in the library of the Norbertine nuns in Imbramowice, a small settlement where sisters of this contemplative order, formed in the tradition of Augustinian spirituality,

²³ J.F. Hamburger, *Nuns as artists...*, pp. 177–211. On the monastic use of prints, see P. Schmidt, *Gedruckte Bilder und handgeschriebene Büchern. Studien zum Gebrauch von Druckgraphik im 15. Jahrhundert*, Cologne 2002; idem, *The use of prints in German convents of the fifteenth century. The example of Nuremberg*, "Studies in Iconography" 2003, vol. 24. For examples from early-modern Poland-Lithuania see M. Borkowska, *Życie codzienne polskich klasztorów żeńskich w XVII–XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 1996, p. 129; R. Grześkowiak, J. Niedźwiedz, *Nieznane polskie subskrypcje do emblematów Ottona van Veen i Hermana Hugona. Przyczynek do funkcjonowania zachodniej grafiki religijnej w kulturze staropolskiej*, "Terminus" 2012, vol. 14; J. Gwioździk, *Przekaz wizualny w staropolskiej komunikacji społecznej lwowskich benedyktynek*, in: *Wspólnota pamięci. Studia z dziejów kultury ziem wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. J. Gwioździk, J. Malicki, Katowice 2006, pp. 313–314.

²⁴ J.F. Hamburger, *Nuns as artists...*, p. 211. See as well objects (nos 144, 160, 187–295) in the catalogue *Les dominicaines d'Unterlinden*, vol. 2, Colmar 2000, pp. 105, 120, 136–161.

have been living since the thirteenth century.²⁵ The nunnery in Imbramowice is one of only two female Premonstratensian convents (alongside the one in Zwierzyniec in Kraków) that have survived in Poland to the present day, as all other female Norbertine communities were abolished at the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the Partitions of Poland.²⁶ The convent and its inhabitants collected books from the early years of the nunnery's existence, though in July 1710, when a great fire destroyed nearly all the buildings of the house in Imbramowice, both its library and the volumes the sisters themselves possessed (they were allowed books of their own) were almost completely lost. Only 38 items were saved from the fire, mostly liturgical books stored in the church's sacristy.²⁷ Later in the 18th century, when the buildings were renovated, manuscript and printed volumes started to return to Imbramowice. They were assembled in part through purchases on the open market. More important were gifts: books were donated by lay and secular patrons, received from other convents, and brought to the nunnery by women joining the community. For example, in 1717, the nunnery received the books of a deceased Kraków cathedral canon, Marcin Węgrzynowicz, who was a frequent visitor to the nunnery. In 1720, another priest, Dominik Lochman (died 1742), contributed to the revival of the library in Imbramowice monastery by donating his private collection of Polish works to the Norbertine nuns.²⁸ The accumulation was rapid: when in 1739 the sisters in Imbramowice received a library cabinet, one of them noted in the convent chronicle: 'we already possess more than seventy spiritual books in Polish.'²⁹

²⁵ M. Sebald, *Siedemsetletnie (r. 1226–1926) dzieje klasztoru PP Norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, Przemysł 1926; J. Zdanowski, *Klasztor i kościół SS. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, Kraków 1958; H. Pieńkowska, "Fabryka" kościoła i klasztoru ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach, "Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Komisji Naukowych" 1977, vol. 20/1, pp. 67–92; L. Sobol, *Kultura klasztoru ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, Kraków 2007; B. Skrzydlewska, *Kroniki imbramowickie jako źródło wiedzy o wielopłaszczyznowej działalności klasztoru Norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, in: *Z książką przez życie*, ed. A. Krawczyk, Lublin 2008.

²⁶ M. Dębowska, *Klasztor norbertanek w Imbramowicach. Studia i materiały*, Lublin 2012, p. 17; M. Borkowska, *Zakony żeńskie w okresie potrydenckim*, in: *Zakony i klasztory w Europie środkowo-wschodniej, X–XX wiek*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, Lublin 1999, p. 198 et passim.

²⁷ R. Nir, *Rękopisy liturgiczne biblioteki pp. norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, "Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny" 1976, vol. 29, no. 1; W. Bielak, *Księgozbiór panien norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" 2011, vol. 95.

²⁸ H. Pieńkowska, op. cit., pp. 78–79; W. Bielak, op. cit., pp. 6–7.

²⁹ 'Już mamy więcej niż siedmdziesiąt książek polskich duchownych'. Quoted after: Z. Grothówna, *Kronika klasztoru siostr norbertanek w Imbramowicach 1703–1741*,

Was the volume created in this particular nunnery (perhaps after the disastrous fire of 1710), read there and then survived in the same place until today? In all probability not; a negative answer is suggested by the marks of ownership on the volume's binding. The Imbramowice book is bound in tooled, dark-brown leather over paper; the clasps have not been preserved; the edges are gilded and gauffered. Both covers are modestly decorated: they were stamped with an IHS monogram and the letters B R Z S N in the centre, all contained within a multiple frame of plain and ornamental lines (most of the original gilt is faded and tarnished) (Fig. 7). The monogram, surrounded by rays, should be interpreted here as an element of Norbertine iconography (even if in early modern times it tended to be understood as representing *Jesuitica*), a visual symbol of Jesus and his name, and of a Eucharistic cult propagated by St Norbert and the Premonstratensian community.³⁰ I suggest that the letters stand for the owner's initials and in all probability should be read as: B (surname) R (name) Z<akonnica> (nun) S<więtego> (of saint) N<orberta> (Norbert).³¹ I have found no information about a nun whose initials would be 'B. R.' and who would have lived in Imbramowice nunnery in the late seventeenth century or in the following decades. The book apparently came to Imbramowice from one of the Norbertine convents in Poland, in all probability from Zwierzyniec (just outside the city walls of Kraków, the Polish Kingdom's capital city, about 40 km south from Imbramowice) or from Busko (in Lesser Poland, some 80 km east of Imbramowice), as both congregations had close ties with Imbramowice and at the time were home to nuns with the initials B.R.³²

In Busko the Norbertine convent was dissolved in 1818.³³ The Busko sisters moved first to Pińczów, then (in 1860), to Imbramowice, transferring there

eds. W. Bielak, W. Żurek, Kielce 2011, p. 248. See as well K. Targosz, *Piórem zakonnic. Kronikarki w Polsce XVII w. o swoich zakonach i swoich czasach*, Kraków 2012.

³⁰ Zob. D.B. Goldstrom, *Duchowość norbertańska duchowością eucharystyczną*, Kraków 1991; P. Dudziński, *Monogram Chrystusa*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 13, ed. E. Gigilewicz, Lublin 2009, p. 165; A. Wagner, *Superekslibris polski. Studium o kulturze bibliofilskiej i sztuce od średniowiecza do połowy XVII wieku*, Toruń 2016, p. 344–345.

³¹ I am grateful to Maja Cubrzyńska-Leonarczyk for this suggestion. There are also supralibros making use of coat of arms that were stamped on the book bindings of volumes owned by the Norbertine nuns. See for example the supralibros of Dorota Kątska (the abbess in Zwierzyniec convent) composed of her Brochwicz coat of arms and the letters DKXZZP. See A. Dygat, A. Rybak, *Odrodzenie klasztoru zwierzynieckiego za księni Doroty Kątskiej (1591–1643)*, "Nasza Przyszłość" 1977, vol. 47, fig. 27. See A. Wagner, op. cit., p. 44.

³² M. Borkowska, *Leksykon zakonnic polskich epoki przedrozbiorowej*, vol. 2: *Polska Centralna i Południowa*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 162, 479–481 lists Barbara Raszowska in Busko and Barbara Ręczynska (Rejczyńska), Barbara Radomska, Barbara Ruskowska in Zwierzyniec.

³³ P.P. Gach, *Kasaty zakonów na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej i Śląska, 1773–1914*, Lublin 1984, p. 105, 113; A. Szylar, *Przyczynek do dziejów norbertanek buskich w XVIII*



Fig. 7. The upper cover of the hybrid volume *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae*

Source: Biblioteka Klasztoru P.P. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach.

i początkach XIX wieku, "Nasza Przeszłość" 2009, vol. 112. On the community in Busko in early modernity and at the time of the convent's dissolution see: A. Szylar, *Busko w świetle opisu wizytacji biskupa Michała Jerzego Poniatowskiego z roku 1782*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" 2011, vol. 96; F. Kiryk, *Dzieje Buska w XII–XVI wieku*, "Studia Kieleckie" 1985, vol. 3/47.

as much of the convent's possessions as they were allowed, devotional books included. If the copy of *Raj Oblubieńca i Oblubienice* was first used in Busko, then the former owner of the volume might have been Barbara Raszowska, a choir nun in Busko, who occupied some of the highest and most important offices in the convent governance, being the teacher of novices (since 1737) and the deputy treasurer.³⁴ However, it seems more likely that the book of David's meditations came to Imbramowice from Zwierzyniec. The Norbertine convent (the first Premonstratensian house in Poland) was founded two kilometers from the walls of Kraków in the mid-twelfth century.³⁵ It was not closed down during the years of partitions of Poland and is still in existence today. The library of the Zwierzyniec house was considerable from its beginnings, but the book collection grew especially during the post-Tridentine era under the community's renewer, Dorota Kątska, and a number of her energetic successors.³⁶ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several choir sisters with the initials R.B. lived in Zwierzyniec: Barbara Rzeszowska, Barbara Ręczynska (Rejczyńska), Barbara Radomska and Barbara Ruszkowska. The latter began her novitiate in the Zwierzyniec community in 1696 and died as prioress in 1748.

In this phase of my research, I am unable to determine neither for whom the Polish translation of *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae* was created, nor who authored the Polish text. The hybrid volume that has been preserved in Imbramowice was certainly owned by a nun, a Norbertine sister. In all probability it was fabricated in a nunnery.

Conclusions

With its images printed (in Antwerp) and its text handwritten (in Poland) the Imbramowice copy of the Polish *Paradisus* is an artifact constructed of fragments, a work of craft performed by a scribe and a collagist, copying, cutting and pasting.³⁷ The volume hidden away in Imbramowice is a unique book that testifies to the copying of texts, as well as how mass-produced woodcuts and

³⁴ M. Borkowska, *Leksykon...*, pp. 159–166.

³⁵ K. Kramarska-Anyszek, *Dzieje klasztoru PP. Norbertanek w Krakowie na Zwierzyńcu do roku 1840*, "Nasza Przyszłość" 1977, vol. 47; A. Dygat, A. Rybak, op. cit., pp. 171–210.

³⁶ J. Gwioździk, *Norbertańscy święci i błogosławieni w Księdze żywotów świętych dedykowanej ksieni Dorocie Kątskiej z klasztoru na Zwierzyńcu*, in: *Premonstratensi na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu i epoce nowożytnej*, ed. J. Rajman, Kraków 2007.

³⁷ J.F. Hamburger, *The visual and the visionary. Art and female spirituality in late medieval Germany*, New York 1998, p. 13.

engravings functioned within convent walls in the post-Tridentine period.³⁸ It was used in spiritual practice, constituting an aid to immersive reading, concentration, and prayer. Perhaps creating volumes that made use of closely intertwined visual and textual materials inspired an especially intimate connection with the book as a physical object that contained the Christian message. As a hybrid volume, it combined handwritten *soliloquia* and printed pictures that mutually reinforced each other's teachings; working on it invited meditation on both the text and the images, rendering the work more memorable to the reader/viewer, who at the same time was also the maker of the book. The process of creating such a volume might have been meditative, contemplative and exegetical. It was a spiritual exercise providing an attentive nun with the possibility of entering into another mental space.

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³⁸ We know most about these types of activities in Benedictine convents (see e.g. a monograph by J. Gwioździk, *Kultura pisma...*, as well as smaller works by the author) and those of Discalced Carmelites (see e.g. studies by A. Nowicka-Struska, *Księga fundacyj klasztorów karmelitanek bosych prowincji polskiej Ducha Świętego – projekt historiograficzny, artystyczny, literacki i niezwykła książka rękopiśmienna krakowskich zakonnic z początku XVIII wieku*, "Facta Simonidis", vol. 15 (2)). About texts and books created for the Norbertine convent in Zwierzyniec see A. Dygat, A. Rybak, op. cit., pp. 171–210, as well as studies by Katarzyna Kaczor-Scheitler, i.a. her book-length study *Perswazja w wybranych medytacjach siedemnastowiecznych z klasztoru norbertanek na Zwierzyncu*. On the coexistence of print and manuscript in books (especially those produced in convents) see e.g. W. Sherman, H. Wolfe, op. cit.

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Drukowane emblematy i rękopiśmienne medytacje z klasztoru norbertanek

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie – nieznaney dotąd literaturze przedmiotu – książki zawierającej sporządzony w latach 70. XVII wieku anonimowy polski przekład *Paradisus Sponsi et Sponsae* Jana Davida. Artykuł zawiera deskrypcję materialności tomu (łąającego przepisany ręcznie tekst z miedziorytami powielonymi w Antwerpii, w pracowni, którą kierował Theodoor Galle) oraz jej analizę. Prowadzą one do **wniosków** na temat okoliczności powstania książki: w środowisku zakonnym, na przełomie XVII i XVIII wieku. W artykule podjęto także próbę identyfikacji siostry, która była właścicielką książki. Tekst analizuje odkryty w bibliotece klasztoru sióstr norbertanek w Imbramowicach tom jako przykład książki hybrydowej, łączącej środki przekazu (rękopis i druk). Dowodzi, że wytwarzanie podobnych książek mogło służyć pogłębionej lekturze, modlitwie i medytacji.

Słowa kluczowe: emblematy, tom hybrydowy, medytacja, księgozbiory zakonne po soborze trydenckim, klasztor żeński.

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