

# Magdalena Piskała

## What Is *Orbis Polonus*? A Few Remarks on the Generic Ambiguity of Szymon Okolski's Heraldic Work

The answer to the question of what *Orbis Polonus* by Szymon Okolski<sup>1</sup> is and what genre of Old Polish literature it represents may be banal and simple. It is an armorial. But if we take into account the fact that such genre had not become a topic for any theoretical inquiry of literary scholars, either those interested in poetry and verse forms or those focused on rhetoric and broadly understood prose—certainly not until the book was written—then the answer is no longer that obvious, because no framework in which armorial might fit had been defined or clearly distinguished.

Despite heated debate concerning the superiority of literature over visual arts (or vice versa) that had been vital for the Renaissance and continued to raise pulses in the following century not only among readers of Horace's *Ars poetica* but also among some students of Aristotle,<sup>2</sup> no one bothered to think about whether the armorial should be a book of arms and, therefore, be classified as belonging to visual arts, or whether the pictures could be discarded altogether and replaced with verbal characterization. The fact that there were books being published about the principles of blazoning—though their intent was rather to explicate the coats of arms than to describe them—might lead us to conclude that the word was, in essence, the stuff that armorials were made of. Yet evidence to the contrary can be found in medieval rolls of arms or the early modern *Wappenbuch* by Johann Siebmacher, that is, the books (or rolls) of arms containing nothing more than pictures of particular coats of arms along with their names. Additionally,

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<sup>1</sup> Sz. Okolski, *Orbis Polonus*, 3 vols (Cracoviae: typis Francisci Caesarii, 1641–1645). Hereafter referenced in the text by volume and page number in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the subject, see e.g. H. Markiewicz, *Ut Pictura Poesis... A History of the Topos and the Problem* (Charlottesville, 1987), pp. 535–558; Ch. Braider, "The Paradoxical Sisterhood: 'ut Pictura Poesis'," in G.P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literature Criticism*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 168–175.

in the seventeenth century, some propositions of hatching systems, whereby heraldic tinctures could be consistently depicted in monochromatic print, were advanced by Pietrasanta and Marcus Vulson de la Colombière. On the other hand, the presence of illustrations was not a necessary condition for treating a text as an armorial either, which can be evinced by *Clenodia seu Insignia Regni Poloniae* attributed to Jan Długosz, since it had both illuminated and non-illustrated copies. *Demokryt śmieszny* by Mateusz Ignacy Kuligowski had no engravings, even though no one doubts today that a part of it is, indeed, an armorial.<sup>3</sup>

There were no rules prescribing what content an armorial should include. Hence, it is unclear whether the name should be restricted to the books focusing solely on displaying coats of arms or whether it may also refer to books that present coats of arms alongside other content. If we follow some contemporary scholars of the problem in assuming that heraldic content need not be dominant, and therefore count *Zwierzyniec* by Mikołaj Rej (Cracow, 1562)<sup>4</sup> or the “little armorial” [herbarzyk], as it has been called, that was modeled after it, namely Paprocki’s *Panosza* (Cracow, 1575),<sup>5</sup> as representing “heraldic literature” simply on the grounds that there are heraldic engravings accompanying some of the texts—despite the fact that only some of the octastichs comprising *Panosza* qualify as *stemmata*,

<sup>3</sup> See M.I. Kuligowski, *Demokryt śmieszny, albo śmiech Demokryta chrześcijańskiego...* (Wilno: w drukarni Soc. Jesu, 1699), pp. 142–259.

<sup>4</sup> See W. Dworzaczek, “Herbarze,” in *Literatura polska. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, vol. 1 (Warszawa, 1984), pp. 344–345; I.M. Dacka, *Korona polska Kaspra Niesieckiego: pomnik staropolskiego piśmiennictwa heraldycznego* (Warszawa, 2004), p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> The name “little armorial” [herbarzyk] was used in reference to *Panosza* by Włodzimierz Dworzaczek in *Genealogia* (Warszawa, 1959), p. 109, while he was quoting a supposedly full title of the work as “Panosza, tj. herby znakomitych familii województwa ruskiego i podolskiego,” whereas in reality the full title was *Panosza to jest wystawienie panów i paniąt ziem ruskich i podolskich z męstwa, z obyczajów i z inszych spraw pocziwowych, któremi oni porównali z onymi greckimi i trojańskimi mężni także też mądrimi rzymskimi i inszych państw rozmaitych rycerzami, z oratory i filozofy, ośmiu wirszów tylko co przedniejsze opisane. Masz też króle polskie zmarłe, wojewody wołoskie sąsiady przyległe, insze króle rzymskie i inszych narodów hetmany ich sprawne, z rozmaitemi sprawami ich króćce opisane*. The misquotation was not of Dworzaczek’s own making, as it had first appeared in an article by Norbert Malinowski, “Rys historyczno-krytyczny piśmiennictwa heraldycznego polskiego,” *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 27/3 (1847), p. 476, which is regarded as the first study on the history of Polish heraldic literature. It is obvious that Malinowski did not see the book at all and, except for citing the erroneous title, the date, and the printer of the work and volunteering that the book was rare and its pagination, “as rightly pointed out by our bibliographers, completely incorrect,” refrained from commenting on it altogether. Julian Błaszczczyński then reproduced the erroneous title in his entry about armorials for *Encyklopedyja powszechna Orgelbranda* (*Encyklopedyja powszechna* (1862), s.v. “herbarze,” p. 596). Though founded upon error, the generic qualification of *Panosza* has persisted. Mariusz Kazańczuk in his *Staropolskie legendy herbowe* (Wrocław, 1990) calls it “a regional armorial in verse” (p. 36), elsewhere labeling it as “a poetic armorial” (“Staropolskie herbarze,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 93/3 (2002), p. 38). The term “armorial” has recently been used in reference to *Panosza* by a monographer of Paprocki’s life and work, Bogumiła Dumowska in her *Bartosz Paprocki herbu Jastrzębiec – renesansowy pisarz spod Sierbca. Czasy, człowiek, dzieło* (Sierpc, 2015), pp. 20, 79, 93.

and the rest are *icones*<sup>6</sup>—will then, by the same token, illustrations depicting armorial bearings of Church hierarchs in the 1574 edition of the lives of Gniezno archbishops by Klemens Janicki<sup>7</sup> make the book an “institutional armorial” as well? Is each and every chronicle containing descriptions of armorial bearings a “marginal armorial”? Isn’t it a bit of a stretch to classify a work of verse attributed to Marcin Paszkowski, though sometimes published under the names of Wawrzyniec Chlebowski and Aleksander Żórawski, that bears the long title of *Wizerunk wiecznej sławy Sauromatów starych pobudzających młodź rycerską ku naśladowaniu spraw ich od szlachetnej Pallady z gniazda cnót ich w ojczystym Parnasie ubudowany*<sup>8</sup> as one of seventeenth-century armorials solely on account of the fact that it mentions a long list of Polish armorial achievements that—though a testimony to the author’s knowledge in this respect—are accompanied neither by heraldic description (except for rudimentary blazons of Drzewica and Gryf dictated by rhyme and rhythm) nor by illustrations, not to mention the complete lack of genealogical information?<sup>9</sup> It seems reasonable to restrict the generic name of “armorial,” and perhaps even the broader terms of “heraldic literature” or “work of heraldry,” so that it (or they) would apply to texts that have armorial bearings as at least one of their subject matters, to the exclusion of texts where coats of arms appear to serve merely as a stylistic or pictorial decoration meant to make the book more attractive or to augment its panegyric qualities.

It is difficult to clearly define what range of subject matters, apart from the presentation of armorial bearings, might be appropriate for an armorial.

<sup>6</sup> Note some confusion as to generic qualification of the poems collected in *Panosza*. Bogumiła Dumowska has clearly failed to discriminate between *stemmata* and *icones*, as she has summed up her analysis of the work, saying: “It is a collection of poems on coats of arms that presents ‘famous men’ and brings numerous allusions to the world of Antiquity” (Dumowska, *Bartosz Paprocki*, p. 93). The description contains an obvious contradiction: poems on coats of arms, viz. *stemmata*, are defined as pieces of verse that elaborate heraldic motifs; poems presenting “famous men” are usually called *icones*, and in early printed books, they were sometimes provided either with engraved portraits of the personages described or with their coats of arms, which, however, did not make them *stemmata*. In the case of *Panosza*, *stemmata*, as clearly indicated by their titles, are part of the editorial frame. These are: “Na Lwa, starożytny klejnot zacnego województwa ruskiego,” and “Na zacny i starożytny klejnot pana Mikołaja Mieleckiego.” Few others are included in the collection proper: “Na zacny klejnot sławnego miasta Lwowa” (f. G<sub>1v</sub>), “Na herb Leliwa ich mościów panów Sieniawskich” (f. U<sub>1r</sub>), “Na zacny klejnot Słońce sławnej ziemi podolskiej” (f. U<sub>3r</sub>).

<sup>7</sup> K. Janicki, *Vitae Archiepiscoporum Gnesnensium* (Cracoviae: in officina Stanislai Szarffenberg, 1574).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. K. Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, 24 (Kraków, 1912), p. 127 and Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, 14 (Kraków, 1896), pp. 166–167.

<sup>9</sup> See Dacka, *Korona polska Kaspra Niesieckiego*, p. 22. For the purposes of this paper the following edition is used: *Wizerunk wiecznej sławy Sauromatów starych pobudzający młodź rycerską ku naśladowaniu spraw ich od szlachetnej Pallady z gniazda cnoty ich w ojczystym Parnasie ubudowany, a przez Aleksandra Żórawskiego w przykłady mężów rzymskich onych wielkich miłośników ojczyzny spisany i do druku podany* (s.l., 1626), f. A<sub>2r</sub>–A<sub>2v</sub>.

What is the proper complement to depicted coats of arms? Is it genealogical and historical information, ethical discourse on the nature of nobility, or perhaps some description of noble houses and their members in psychological terms? At first blush, the last of these options may seem controversial, yet we do encounter such content in the *Clenodia* by Jan Długosz, whence it spread to other Old Polish armorials, including *Herby rycerstwa polskiego* by Bartosz Paprocki (Cracow, 1584), *Nauka dobromilska* by Jan Szczęsny Herburt (Dobromil, 1615), and finally, *Orbis Polonus* by Okolski.

The literary production of the day, especially in Poland, is of little help when it comes to answering these questions. There is a myriad of armorial bearings in Old Polish literature. A vast majority of early prints featured *stemmata* as part of the editorial frame, typically on the verso of the title leaf.<sup>10</sup> Occasional prints, produced mostly within the circles of Jesuit colleges to honor their generous donors, abounded in heraldic poetry. Seventeenth-century occasional sermons, especially the funerary ones (not to mention the visual decoration of this kind of ceremony), rarely did without heraldic references, which often appeared in their titles as well.<sup>11</sup> Handbooks of rhetoric, following this trend, included collections of heraldic conceits. One might even talk about a “heraldic rhetoric” that emerged in the mid-seventeenth century and consisted of mostly handwritten handbooks of rhetoric that had a separate part devoted to allusions to arms (“allusiones ad stemmata”).<sup>12</sup> Yet the phenomenon was hardly limited to manuscripts; even as popular a handbook as *Suada Civilis* by Jan Kwiatkiewicz featured a part devoted to coats of arms and the ways they could be deployed as rhetorical devices in oratory and occasional literature, and the material was even conveniently organized according to particular heraldic insignia or charges. The introduction to the book discusses allusions to the following arms and charges: Orzeł (*Aquila*), Jastrzębiec (*Accipiter*), Topór (*Ascia*), Janina (*Campus*), Korczak (*Canis dimidius vulgo Korczak*), Łabędź (*Cygnus seu olor*), Korwin (*Corvinorum stemma*), cross or a cross and a half (*Crux vel sesqui crux*), Wieniawa or Pomian (*Caput uri*), Pogoń (*Eques et equus*), Nałęcz (*Fascia seu Nałęcz*), Jelit (*Hastae*), Habdanka, river or rivers (*Fluvius vel fluvii*), fire-spitting lion (*Leo ignem vomens*), crescent (*Luna*), Łódź or Korab (*Navis*), Poraj (*Rosae flores*), horseshoes (*Solea*), stars (*Stellae*), arrows (*Sagitta*), and towers

<sup>10</sup> For more on the subject, see: F. Pilarczyk, *Stemmata w drukach polskich XVI wieku* (Zielona Góra, 1982), and B. Czarski, *Stemmata w staropolskich księżkach, czyli rzecz o poezji heraldycznej* (Warszawa, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> B. Rok, “Druki żałobne w dawnej Polsce XVI–XVIII w.,” in H. Suchojad (ed.), *Wesela, chrzciny i pogrzeby w XVI–XVIII wieku. Kultura życia i śmierci* (Warszawa, 2001), p. 198; S. Baczewski, “Propagandowa rola szlacheckiego pogrzebu z XVII wieku w świetle kazań pogrzebowych,” in H. Suchojad (ed.), *Wesela*, pp. 208–209; M. Skwara, introduction to *Polskie drukowane oracje pogrzebowe XVII wieku. Bibliografia* (Gdańsk, 2009), p. 70.

<sup>12</sup> See M. Kazańczuk, “Herby w dawnej Polsce,” *Nauka*, 4 (2006), pp. 117–127.

(*Turres*).<sup>13</sup> Anthologies of quotes grouped according to particular armorial bearings that were meant for all sorts of occasional usage constituted yet another heraldry-related literary phenomenon of the Saxon period. Neither the heraldic rhetoric handbooks nor the heraldic *florilegia* could have had any impact on *Orbis Polonus* as they reached the peak of their popularity not earlier than in the second half of the seventeenth century. It was not so, however, with the profusion of school poems on heraldic themes, sermons, and funerary prints—Okolski had seen a whole lot of them and utilized them in his work. Additionally, one must bear in mind the host of occasional prints published within the Cracow Academy circles to commemorate the award of bachelor degrees: they were filled with fictitious coats of arms, created exclusively for these booklets.<sup>14</sup> One does not detect any sign of them in *Orbis Polonus*, but the Blackfriar might have read some of them nonetheless.

And then there are books that we now call armorials, even though they do not yield to any reasonable classification. There is no indication that the structure of *Orbis Polonus* was in any way influenced by the collections of *icones* with heraldic illustrations of the likes of *Zwierzyniec* by Rej or *Panosza* by Paprocki. It does, however, exhibit some influence of numerous lives of bishops provided with heraldic illustrations, written both in verse and in prose, notwithstanding the fact that they are generally presumed not to belong to heraldic literature. Okolski was acquainted not only with the collection by Janicki but also with the series on Płock bishops by Stanisław Łubieński,<sup>15</sup> the lives of bishops and archbishops of Cracow composed in verse by Krzysztof Kaćki,<sup>16</sup> as well as the work by Jakub Skrobiszewski that contained *icones* of Lvov bishops in verse,<sup>17</sup> and portraits of Wrocław bishops composed in verse and prose by Stefan Damalewicz.<sup>18</sup>

Okolski knew the *Clenodia* by Długosz only indirectly, that is, in fragments and without illustrations, but with the characterizations of noble houses. He also had only second-hand knowledge of Długosz's catalogue of

<sup>13</sup> J. Kwiatkiewicz, *Suada civilis, oratoriae atque politiae nostratis ingenio accomodata ut et Phoenix rhetorum, in quo fundamenta necessaria et species rarioris eloquentiae ostenduntur...* (Coloniae Agrippinae: apud Wilhelmum Metternich, 1697), pp. 38–74.

<sup>14</sup> P. Buchwald-Pelcowa "Stemmaty akademickie," in *Emblematy w drukach polskich i Polski dotyczących XVI–XVIII wieku. Bibliografia* (Wrocław, 1981), pp. 51–52; academic stemmata of this kind, most notably the ones employing the motif of a book, are also discussed in A. Dzieciół, *Książka jako symbol w kulturze polskiej XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1997), pp. 63–64.

<sup>15</sup> S. Łubieński, *Series, vitae, res gestae episcoporum Plocensium* (Cracoviae: in officina Francisci Caesarii, 1642).

<sup>16</sup> K. Kaćki, *Vitae archiepiscoporum et episcoporum Ecclesiae Cracoviensis...* (Cracoviae: in officina Lazari, 1593) and the same (Cracoviae, 1633).

<sup>17</sup> J. Skrobiszewski, *Vitae archiepiscoporum Haliciensium et Leopoliensium* (Leopoli: in officina typographica Ioannis Szeligae, 1628).

<sup>18</sup> S. Damalewicz, *Vitae Vladislaviensium episcoporum...* (Cracoviae: ex officina Francisci Caesarii, 1642).

banners, *Banderia Prutenorum*, through *Herby rycerstwa polskiego* by Paprocki and *Kronika polska* by Joachim Bielski (Cracow, 1597). The *Ręka tertio* coat of arms (Okolski, 2:605) that Okolski conjured up through a misreading of *Banderia Prutenorum*, as well as some details regarding the banner of Henry of Meissen recounted as part of the discussion of the Grotty arms (1:253) are evidence that he used a Polish version with black-and-white illustrations.

Okolski was a thorough student of *Gniazdo cnoty* (Cracow, 1578) and *Herby rycerstwa polskiego*. The former book was a publishing phenomenon, an amalgam of visual art and literature, stemming from the abovementioned formal ambiguity of books of heraldry, or—more precisely—of heraldry and genealogy. The result was a word-and-image composition that combined heraldic illustrations with family trees and portraits of some of the most illustrious members of the noble houses. At the level of the word, the work struck a balance between a collection of *stemmata*, a second-estate chronicle (as indicated by the overall chronology and portraits of consecutive monarchs),<sup>19</sup> and a book of genealogy, but also between panegyric and ethical treatise employing examples of both commendable and deplorable behavior. *Herby rycerstwa polskiego* was a book of different character. It was mostly a heraldic-and-genealogical work written solely in prose that included excerpts from documents or texts that bore testimony to the information relayed about particular house members. It was also a treatise about nobility with a separate chapter on the most ancient, legendary arms, which was informed by Valerius Anshelm Ryd's catalogue,<sup>20</sup> though it lacked a part on how to design and decode armorial bearings—a part characteristic for heraldic compendia produced in the West at the time.

Okolski had close at hand *Kronika polska* by Bielski, a book that we would today call a marginal armorial, which was a valuable source of heraldic information for the Blackfriar. And finally, he knew *Artes Dobromilenses* by Herburt, an example of an alphabetically ordered armorial, additionally—which is important for *Orbis Polonus*—supplied with an anthology of Latin texts (with Polish translation) meant for young people not so much to improve their philological skill as to “promote virtue” and civic attitudes among them. There is, however, no indication that Okolski had read any other alphabetically ordered Polish books of heraldry: *Summariusz klejnotów abo herbów państwa i rycerstwa Korony Polskiej i W[ielkiego] Ks[ięstwa] Litew[skiego] z różnych autorów: a mianowicie z Bielskiego, z Paprockiego i skryptów S.S. Jagodyńskiego zebrany, a dla snadniejszego nalezienia czytelnikowi wedle obiecādła sporządzony i wydany* by Stanisław Giermański (Cracow, 1621) or *Kleynoty*

<sup>19</sup> Kazańczuk, *Staropolskie legendy herbowe*, pp. 26–28.

<sup>20</sup> V.A. Ryd, *Catalogus annorum et principum geminus ab homine condito usque in praesentem... annum deductus et continuatus* (Bernae: per Mathiam Apiarum, 1540).

*abo herby państwa i rycerstwa powiatów i miast głównych Korony Polskiej* (Cracow, 1630) attributed to Jan Aleksander Gorczyń.<sup>21</sup> There is furthermore no indication that Okolski was familiar with possibly the only Polish work classified as an “armorial in Western style,” namely, *Arma Regni Poloniae* by Marcus Ambrosius de Nissa (Antwerp, 1562). Okolski did, however, refer occasionally to heraldic works by foreign authors. The most important of those was the Latin-language compendium ordered according to visual symbols (ordinaries and other charges) compiled by Silvestro Pietrasanta, *Tesserae gentilitiae* (Rome, 1638).

Familiarity with these texts must have had an impact on the final shape of the work composed by Okolski, and it must have informed the author as to the purposes a book of heraldry ought to serve. According to the Dominican, it was supposed to encourage virtuous behavior and inspire blue bloods to emulate their forefathers in their nobility and at the same time extol the greatness of Polish nobility around the world; it was meant to be a handy compendium for orators and authors of occasional literature and a source of information on Polish coats of arms and noble houses that had been omitted by other heraldic writers. Such were the goals expressed by the author in the preface,<sup>22</sup> and they had an undeniable impact on the structure of the book, which clearly differed in form from its predecessors.

That Okolski strove to fulfill the goals he had set for himself is evinced already by his choice of language, even though a Latin-language armorial was nothing unusual in European literature. What is unusual, however—and not just in the context of Polish books of heraldry—is the foundation that had been set to enable communication with the virtual reader who did not know the Polish nobility and was not aware of their virtuous deeds. Contrary to what it had been in the case of *Tesserae gentilitiae*, the foundation did not consist of principles of heraldry and similarities shared by various family emblems across Europe, which would enable Okolski to set Polish coats of arms side by side with armorial bearings of other nations (which is not to say that Okolski abandoned such comparisons altogether); it was instead a symbology construed as the study into the nature and meaning of symbols (and not necessarily heraldic ones). The coat of arms and its interpretation form the crux of the armorial. Other content, even though

<sup>21</sup> The catalogue of early prints of the Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences assumes Gorczyń's authorship (<http://baza1-bis.man.poznan.pl/cgi-bin/makwww.exe?B-M=03&IM=03&TX=&NU=01&WI=GORCZYŃbJANbALEKSANDER>). The armorial has also been published as Gorczyń's by the Digital Library of Wielkopolska: <http://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=54151&from=publication> See also: Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, 17 (Kraków, 1899), pp. 239–240. On the subject of both books, see Dacka, *Korona polska Kaspra Niesieckiego*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>22</sup> Okolski, *Orbis Polonus*, vol. 1, f. [1]r–v.

discussed in separate chapters of each entry devoted to a particular coat of arms, that is, the description of the arms (*delineatio*), the legend about award of the arms (*origo*), or the history of the house bearing it (*linea familiae*), plays an important role, which is, however, subordinate to the heraldic sign, its nature and meanings. This has further implications.

Firstly, by putting the emphasis as he did, Okolski set his work apart from Western European armorials that continued the long tradition of medieval rolls of arms and limited themselves to displaying coats of arms, as was the case with the armorial bearings presented in the aforementioned *Wappenbuch* by Siebmacher, and refrained from analyzing the meanings they might carry. In Poland, the tradition of the so-called “Western style” books of arms had been weak anyway, its only instance being the aforementioned *Arma Regni Poloniae* compiled by Marcus Ambrosius de Nissa, based on the manuscript by Długosz.<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, the focus on symbolic significance of armorial bearings inevitably drew *Orbis Polonus* closer to symbological and emblematic compendia of the era. It can be seen at several levels. First of all, they all shared the same sources of interpretation. These were the ancient hieroglyphics (as they were interpreted and understood at the time), emblems, coins, and other artifacts. Obviously, Okolski sought to elucidate the meaning of signs depicted in Polish armorial bearings by examining similar ancient symbols. Among the sources he consulted for this purpose were popular publications about Antiquity, such as: *Genialium dierum libri sex* by Alessandro Alessandri (Rome, 1522), *Antiquitatum Romanarum corpus absolutissimum* by Johannes Rosinus and Thomas Dempster (Paris, 1613), or *Julius Caesar* by Hubert Golzius.<sup>24</sup> Yet Okolski was even more apt to look for suitable analogies in books specializing in deciphering both old and newer symbols. *Hieroglyphica* by Pierio Valeriano (Venice, 1549),<sup>25</sup> *Polyhistor* by Nicolas Causin,<sup>26</sup> *Iconologia* by Cesare Ripa (the 1593 Rome edition), a selection of heroic symbols by Salomon Neugebauer,<sup>27</sup> *Symbola heroica* by Claude Paradin (Antwerp, 1583), *Symbola divina et humana* by Jacob Typotius (Prague, 1600–1603), *De symbolis*

<sup>23</sup> Z. Wdowiszewski, “Marek Ambroży z Nissy i jego *Arma Regni Poloniae* z 1562 roku,” *Miesięcznik Heraldyczny*, 13/11 (1934), pp. 166–170, and 13/12 (1934), pp. 177–186.

<sup>24</sup> H. Goltz, *C. Julius Caesar, sive Historiae imperatorum caesarumque Romanorum ex antiquis numismatibus restitutae* (Brugis Flandrorum: apud Hubertum Goltzium, 1563).

<sup>25</sup> Based on certain pieces of information found in *Orbis Polonus*, it may be concluded that Okolski used the edition of G.P. Valeriano Bolzani, *Hieroglyphica, sive de sacris Aegyptiorum, aliarumque gentium litteris commentariorum libri LVIII cum duobus aliis ab eruditissimo viro annexis...* (Coloniae Agrippinae: sumptibus Antonii Hierati, 1614).

<sup>26</sup> N. Causin, *Polyhistor symbolicus, electorum symbolorum et parabolarum historicarum stromata, XII libris complectens* (Parisiis: sumptibus Romani de Baeuvais, 1618).

<sup>27</sup> S. Neugebauer, *Selectorum symbolorum heroicorum centuria gemina enotata atque enodata* (Francofurti: apud Lucam Iennis, 1619).



*heroicis libri IX* by Silvestro Pietrasanta (Rome, 1634), *Delle imprese trattato* by Giulio Cesare Capaccio (Naples, 1592), or *Teatro d'imprese* by Giovanni Ferro (Venice, 1623) are among well-known works<sup>28</sup> that were sources as important and quoted by the Dominican as often as works of heraldry and histories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is pertinent and worth mentioning that some of the compendia just listed were prefaced with introductions that discussed various word-and-picture forms and kinds of sign, touching upon the topic of coats of arms and coins as well. Ferro's study that discussed heraldry in chapters about armorial bearings, crests, shields, and helmets may serve as a good example.<sup>29</sup> The fact that these symbolic worlds—all the definitions proposed at the time to set particular kinds of symbol apart and neatly distinguish various word-and-picture genres notwithstanding—overlapped and complemented each other can also be seen in the oeuvre of Pietrasanta, who was equally interested in the meanings of both heroic symbols and armorial bearings. Thus, Szymon Okolski's inquiry was not all that pioneering or at odds with the mainstream European semiology of the era; on the contrary, his attempts to decode meanings hidden in coats of arms by employing all available symbological compendia and anthologies of *symbola heroica*, which were often provided with rich commentaries, seem quite natural for the time period.

The form of *Orbis Polonus* was also influenced by collections of literary emblems. Okolski knew and cited Andreas Alciatus,<sup>30</sup> Julius Wilhelm Zingref,<sup>31</sup> Paolo Maccio,<sup>32</sup> or Tomasz Treter,<sup>33</sup> among others. The armorial included *stemmata*, closely related to emblems, as well. Taken from various occasional prints and editorial frames of books, they function as codas in the symbolic–ethical parts of the discourse and decorate the genealogical part, providing the whole with a suitably panegyric dimension and simultaneously serving as examples for those who might wish to fashion their own occasional compositions after them.

Anyone who has ever come across Okolski's book will have probably noticed a peculiar way in which the entries are structured, since in addition to parts that impart heraldic and genealogical information (*delineatio*, *origo*, *linea familiae*), they include subchapters dedicated to semiotic–ethical

<sup>28</sup> See also M.K. Górska, "Emblematyka jako źródło staropolskiej erudycji. Geneza i funkcja materiału symbolicznego w polskich kompendiach," in I. Dacka-Górzyńska and J. Partyka (eds), *Staropolskie kompendia wiedzy* (Warszawa, 2009), pp. 99–132.

<sup>29</sup> G. Ferro, *Teatro d'imprese*, vol. 1 (Venetia: apresso Giacomo Sarzina, 1623), pp. 264–282.

<sup>30</sup> Okolski made use of the following edition: A. Alciati [Alciatus], *Emblemata cum commentariis amplissimis...* (Padua: Petro Paulo Tozzi, 1621).

<sup>31</sup> J.W. Zingref, *Emblematum ethico-politicorum centuria* (Francofurti ad Moenum: apud Johann Theodor de Bry, 1619).

<sup>32</sup> P. Maccio, *Emblemata* (Bononiae: Clemens Ferronius excudebat, 1628).

<sup>33</sup> T. Treter, *Symbolica vitae Christi meditatio* (Brunsbergae: typis Geor[gi]i Schönfels, 1612).

discourse.<sup>34</sup> Such parts are supplied with headings that point to the way in which the discourse is proceeding, for example, “Constantia militaris,” Korszak (Okolski, 1:458); “Ipsa et vera gloria,” Korony (1:455); or “Finis optimus rerum,” Kornic (1:451), which bring to mind lemmas. Many of the headings have been taken directly from collections of heroic symbols. From Paradin’s book, Okolski borrowed the inscription “Insperatum auxilium,”<sup>35</sup> which he used whilst discussing the meaning of the Hełm coat of arms (1:279). From the same source came the “Tutum te in littore sistam”<sup>36</sup> heading for the Radzic (2:576). Pietrasanta or Typotius provided the armorial with the lemmas: “Nil sine Deo,” Świeńczyc (3:141);<sup>37</sup> “Iam in auge,” Makarowiczów (2:216);<sup>38</sup> “Custos non dormit,” Łukocz (2:208);<sup>39</sup> and “Non degenerabunt,” Niemczyk (2:275).<sup>40</sup> And “Iove dingus,” Wąż quinto (3:284), on the other hand, is doubtless a reference to Zingref’s emblem.<sup>41</sup> If one adds to the mix the engraving of the arms, which may well serve as icon, and the argument associating the symbols in the illustration with the lemma heading, one gets a perfect example of emblematic structure. In the case of many coats of arms, where there is more than one subchapter elucidating the meanings of the heraldic sign, we could even talk about emblematic variants that, referring to a single engraving but under different mottos, elaborate and develop the motifs drawn from pictorial symbols of the heraldic achievement. And let us point out that the elaborations are carried on as ethical discourse, which makes one think about Okolski’s armorial as being a collection of politico-ethical emblems addressed to Catholic nobility in the vogue of those composed by Diego Saavedra for Christian princes, even though there is no evidence to suggest that Okolski ever read *Symbola christiano-politica. Idea principis christiano-politici centum symbolis expressa*.<sup>42</sup>

And perhaps we could take *Orbis Polonus* for a collection of forecasts akin to those proffered by astrology, with the only difference being that the auguries are made based on the symbolism of armorial bearings and not on the positions of heavenly bodies. Such a reading is warranted by the first

<sup>34</sup> For more on the subject, see e.g. J.Z. Lichański, “Szymon Okolski – retoryka, historia, heraldyka,” *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego*, 24/13 (2014), pp. 91–114.

<sup>35</sup> See C. Paradin, *Symbola heroica* (Antwerpia: ex officina Christophori Plantini, 1583), p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> See Paradin, *Symbola*, p. 113.

<sup>37</sup> See S. Pietrasanta, *De symbolis heroicis libri IX* (Antverpiae: ex officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1634), p. 204; J. Typotius, *Symbola divina et humana pontificum, imperatorum, regum ... ex museo Octavii de Strada...*, vol. 1 (Pragae: Egidius Sadeler, 1600), f. 46.

<sup>38</sup> See Pietrasanta, *De symbolis*, p. 24; Typotius, *Symbola*, vol. 1, f. 19.

<sup>39</sup> See Typotius, *Symbola*, vol. 1, f. 48.

<sup>40</sup> See Pietrasanta, *De symbolis*, p. 46.

<sup>41</sup> See Zingref, *Emblematum ethico-politicorum centuria*, f. Q<sub>2</sub>v.

<sup>42</sup> Some similarities between the two works have been indicated by B. Milewska-Ważbińska, “*Orbis Polonus* Szymona Okolskiego jako świadectwo kultury literackiej XVII wieku,” in I. Dacka-Górzynska and J. Partyka (eds), *Staropolskie kompendia wiedzy*, p. 161.

one hundred pages of the first volume, where the entries are subdivided into *fausta* or *magna omina* and *praeustoditiones*, or “good omens” and “forewarnings.” Even though such captions disappear from the subheadings pretty quickly—the last reference to forecasts can be found in “Omen felicitates aeternae,” in the Korony entry (1:454)—the notion of divining the future from armorial bearings permeates the whole armorial.

But if we take a closer look at stylistic qualities of the prose of *Orbis Polonus*, which adheres to the rigors of rhetorical art and is encrusted with numerous references to other authors and virtually interwoven with quotes in the Lipsian style, then, in conjunction with its moralizing content, *Orbis Polonus* begins to resemble a collection of occasional sermons functioning in a universe of heraldic associations. The case for classifying *Orbis Polonus* with this kind of oration could be made even stronger by reference to its emblematic structure.<sup>43</sup> One obvious difference would be the lemma and its function. In sermons, biblical verses were preferred, because they served also as the theme of the discourse whose purpose was naturally to bear on the meaning of the Scriptures and not of armorial bearings. In Okolski—the fact that the text abounds in references to the Bible and theological writings notwithstanding—the family coat of arms is the focal point and the thing in need of elucidating, even though the overall spirit of these elucidations is easy to guess: the author was, after all, a member of the Order of Preachers.

The similarity to the occasional sermon, in conjunction with the directly expressed authorial intent to make the armorial a convenient resource for occasional oratory and literature, inevitably leads us to pause over a suggestion that the book is not so much an armorial as it is a handy rhetorical compendium offering selected motifs, conceits, and quotations that are ready to use in panegyric texts. Such books of heraldic rhetoric were indeed produced in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but not earlier than in the second half of the seventeenth century. More often than not, they functioned solely as handwritten copies. Perhaps the best known of them are *Rhetor Polonus* by Jan Kołozwarski, which was written concurrently with the armorial, and the anonymous *Orator Polonus*.<sup>44</sup> But there were more compendiums that instructed orators on how to employ heraldic motifs.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps the strangest instance of this kind of literature—an anthology of quotes from Latin poets, both ancient and modern, ordered according to the names of

<sup>43</sup> For more on the subject, see D. Platt, *Kazania pogrzebowe z przełomu XVI i XVII wieku. Z dziejów prozy staropolskiej* (Wrocław, 1992), pp. 121–154.

<sup>44</sup> For more on this text, see Błeszczyński, “Herbarze,” p. 597, and Kazańczuk, “Staropolskie herbarze,” pp. 42–43.

<sup>45</sup> See M. Trębska, “Wykłady i przykłady ornamentacji stemmatycznej w rękopiśmiennych podręcznikach dla mówców w zbiorach Biblioteki Narodowej. Rekonesans,” *Rocznik Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego*, 13 (2014), pp. 195–208.

arms and particular charges—was put together by Gabriel Rzączyński and appeared in print in Poznań in 1700 under a rather long title of *Gemmae antiquiorum quinquaginta et trium poetarum stemmatibus Polonorum omnibus hoc est coronis meritorum insertae et materiae panegyricae, genethliacae. nuptiali, funebri etc. accommodatae*, and it must have become popular enough to have had three editions in different variants.<sup>46</sup> It might be said that it was a typical product of the Saxon period, but it was also Okolski's idea taken to extremes, because Okolski had treated the armorial as a proper place to present a wide array of associations, including literary ones, that could go with a coat of arms. On the other hand, it seems that Okolski himself was only improving on what Herburt had proposed, because he infused his book of heraldry with quotes aimed at inspiring virtue and patriotism in young readers just the same as Herburt had done in his bilingual supplement to *Artes Dobromilenses*. Thus, they are hardly products of accident; instead, they point to a direction in which the genre of armorial had been evolving in Polish literature. This tendency also shows that information about arms and genealogies of noble houses need not be the dominant theme of an armorial.

Furthermore, Okolski's book may be taken to be a history, a chronicle of the noble estate of sorts. Such reading may be hampered by the alphabetical ordering of the content, but the absence of territorial emblems and lack of interest in the arms of Polish royal dynasties (no entry about the Snopek [withy] of the house of Vasa; the Zęby [teeth] coat of arms discussed without any mention of Stephen Báthory; no mention of the Jagiellonian dynasty when the Pogoń coat of arms is discussed; no entry devoted to the Orzeł [eagle] of the Piasts, even though some princely houses without armorial bearings have been presented, such as the princes of Pruńsko, the Koreckis, and the Olelkowieczs) indicate that it has been written from the point of view of the noble families to the exclusion of the state. The fact that approximately half of the whole text recounts heraldic legends and origins of family lines might be enough to support the claim that we are, indeed, dealing with historical writing, and the armorial bearings and their names are simply there to make the presentation of histories of particular noble families more perspicuous.

The foregoing is only meant as a list of possible ways in which the work by Okolski may be comprehended in the context of genres that were practiced at the time, and which can be associated with *Orbis Polonus* thanks to numerous hints dropped by the author. It would be hard to give a straightforward and definite answer to the question of what the book is in terms

<sup>46</sup> For more on Rzączyński's anthology, see I.M. Dacka-Górzyńska, "Wokół herbów – erudycje Gabriela Rzączyńskiego," in I.M. Dacka-Górzyńska and J. Partyka (eds), *Staropolskie kompendia wiedzy*, pp. 133–156.

of simple generic labels. It is virtually impossible to determine whether it is predominantly an armorial, a collection of politico-ethical emblems, a collection of sample sermons with heraldic motifs, a chronicle of noble houses, a collection of heraldic divinations about the future, or a dictionary of the symbols that can be found in armorial bearings. Perhaps the easiest solution would be to label *Orbis Polonus* as a “heraldic compendium,” but due to the fact that the author had no interest in the principles and history of heraldry—understood as the study of arms, their design, and proper depiction—such qualification would not be satisfactory either.<sup>47</sup> It seems more fitting to apply to *Orbis Polonus* the concept of “great parataxis”<sup>48</sup> derived by Michał Głowiński from linguistics in order to define the structure of discourse in *Legenda Młodej Polski* by Stanisław Brzozowski. Great parataxis is a kind of discourse where each subject matter is as important as each independent clause of a compound sentence, and therefore none is dominant. In other words, *Orbis Polonus* is neither this nor that to the exclusion of other qualifications; it is, instead, all these things at once.

*Translated by Jan Hensel*

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<sup>47</sup> To be sure, Okolski was criticized for his lack of interest in the study of heraldry. See D. Braun, *De scriptorum Poloniae et Prussiae historicorum, politicorum et iurisconsultorum typis impressorum ac manuscriptorum in bibliotheca Brauniana collectorum...* (Coloniae, 1723), p. 77.

<sup>48</sup> M. Głowiński, “Wielka parataksa. O budowie dyskursu w *Legendzie Młodej Polski* Stanisława Brzozowskiego,” in *Ekspresja i empatia. Studia o młodopolskiej krytyce literackiej* (Kraków, 1997), pp. 265–305.