The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the aesthetic attitudes of two major publishers active in Cracow in the second half of the 16th century: Mikołaj Szarfenberger (1519–1606) and Jan Januszowski (1550–1613). In the dedications and prefaces, they presented a broad view of their editorial efforts and the circumstances in which their publications were created. A critical analysis of these texts indicates editors’ growing awareness of how complex the matter of the “art of the book” truly was.

Keywords: book illustrations, art of the book, woodcut illustrations, Renaissance, editor’s preface, Cracow publishers.
In the early modern era, writings on art were a rarity in the Kingdom of Poland. This makes the preserved texts even more precious, as they offer an insight into what was expected of art and what was believed to be its purpose. Interestingly, among the authors of these few reflections on art, there are quite a few publishers, who – similarly to the many eminent representatives of this profession in other countries – were often highly educated, had a broad spectrum of interests, and were very well connected with the highest elites. It goes without saying that more was expected of “the art of the book” than of “simple” representations that were not meant to illustrate a specific text. The challenges that printing houses and, first and foremost, publishers had to face were recounted in numerous commentaries they left in the volumes published in the 16th century Cracow, the capital of the Kingdom of Poland. These texts demonstrate the publishers’ exceptional awareness of the intricacies of the profession dedicated to “the art of the book”, including its technical, artistic, commercial and intellectual aspects. The prefaces, dedications and afterwords they wrote for the works published in their printing houses were often very personal; in addition, they constitute an excellent proof of their knowledge of various theories of pictorial likeness, cognitive functions of illustrations, and their polemic potential. Surprisingly, these texts did not become the subject of research as an important source of information on the artistic and aesthetic transformations of “the art of the book”. It is worth noting, however, that they are a brilliant demonstration of how the expectations of readers have changed, along the key dilemmas of the epoch1.

In this context, I would like to focus on the attitudes of two major publishers active in Cracow during the second half of the 16th century: Mikołaj Szarfenberger (1519–1606)2 and Jan Januszowski (1550–1613)3. Both were quite prolific “writers”, eager to describe their endeavours and create the appropriate presentations for their publications4. Such an

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1 The first results of my research on the editors’ texts were published in: Joanna Sikorska, „’None of us is this Zeuxis Heracleotes’: The Illustrational Dilemmas of Cracow Publishers”, in Ikonotheka 27 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2017), 171-186.


4 Earlier editors’ commentaries – e.g. those by Hieronymus Vietor or Florian Ungler – focused mainly on the challenges of printing in Polish and the related typographic issues. See Tadeusz
approach could be due to the fact that both of them were born into established families of printers. As a result, they were exceptionally well prepared for editorial work and had an unparalleled understanding of the profession’s intricacies. This article does not intend to examine the general aesthetic attitudes of the above-mentioned Cracovian editors, but rather aims to analyse what they appreciated as professionals and what were their sources of inspiration.

Indisputably, the quality of illustrations can be regarded as Mikołaj Szarfenberger’s key challenge. The first comment regarding book illustrations can be found in the most prestigious publication to come out of the printing house run by the Szarfenbergers. In the Bible published in 1561 by the Heirs of Marek Szarfenberger, there was a brief “apology” for the unsatisfactory quality of the illustrations. This Bible was the first Roman Catholic edition of the entire Holy Scripture in Polish, and the aforementioned apology read as follows: “Kind reader, do not be offended at the uneven figures set in this Bible, that is that some are larger, and some are smaller”.

This inconsistency in the size of illustrations in the Szarfenberger Bible resulted from the use of a heterogenous set of woodblocks. Some of them had been cut as early as the 1530s to illustrate the Luther Bible published by Hans Lufft’s printing house in Wittenberg. However, re-using printing matrices originally produced for other publications was standard practice at the time. Therefore, it is not obvious why Mikołaj Szarfenberger, whose name we see signed under the foreword, felt the need to apologise for the discrepancy in the illustration sizes. The main reason may have been his understanding of the role of this edition of the Bible: it was published during the period of fierce religious disputes and constituted the Roman Catholic “response” to Protestant texts issued in Polish. The Szarfenberger’s Bible revealed the full extent of the debate about the role of illustrations. Publishers in Cracow

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5 Miły czytelniku proszę by cię to nie obraziło, iż nie jednostajnemi figurami tę Biblię robiona, to jest jedne wielkie, a drugie mniejsze, in: Biblia to jest Księgi Starego y Nowego Zakonu na polski język z pilnością według łacińskiej Biblii od Kościoła Krześcijańskiego powszechnego przyjętey, nowo wyłożona (Cracow, 1561). Copy: National Museum in Cracow, inv. no. MNK VIII-XVI.52.

had to face the fact that woodcut images had transgressed their “simple” illustrative purposes, thus turning into an important vector for content and ideas. Thus, it became necessary to avoid the risk of sending contradictory messages. Some of the illustrations in this Roman Catholic Bible were printed using woodblocks made for the Lutheran Bible, which contained explicitly anti-papal themes that had to be removed – meaning the woodblocks had to be censored. Such confessional alterations of illustrations were quite frequent at the time – a reflection of the pragmatic approach of contemporary publishers, who wanted to secure their costly undertakings (and an illustrated edition of the entire Scripture was by all means one of them) and steer clear of any clashes with the church and secular censors. In addition, they were trying to keep their costs low. It cannot be excluded, however, that the apology in the foreword to the Szarfenberger’s Bible was an attempt to reduce any questions regarding the illustrations to the merely formal issues, connected with the then common practice of re-using printing matrices, while the actual problem (at the time still a new one in Cracow) was the conflict of creeds, which exploited the argumentative potential of imagery. Interestingly, in the second edition of the Szarfenberger’s Bible, published under different political and religious circumstances in 1575 and containing even more heterogenous illustrative material, the critical passage on illustrations was omitted. The title of the publication was also modified, e.g. to include the words “adorned with images”.

This critical approach to illustrations reappeared in another publication of the Szarfenberger’s printing house, namely in Herbarz, to jest ziół tutecznych, postronnych y zamorskich opisaniu [“The herbal, that is a description of local, foreign and overseas herbs”] by Marcin Siennik, published in 1568. The publisher, this time Mikołaj Szarfenberger himself, in his dedication to Jan Herburt described the behind-the-scenes circumstances of the book’s publication, stressing his altruistic motives (“because it was needed, and people often enquired about it”). His intention was to provide readers with a handbook of the most recent developments in the field of medicine and preparation of remedies, but he had to abandon the ambitious plan of publishing a fully original work due to financial constraints: “I was...
unable to find a man skilled enough and willing to do this work; and even if I had found one, my modest fortune would not have been enough to bear this expenditure, especially if images of herbs were to be created anew. I was forced to put this venture aside since, as I have said, it required a great sum of money that I could not afford." In the end, Szarfenberger limited himself to "amending" earlier publications. In those times, finding a qualified wood cutter was a common problem among printers and publishers in many circles. Even in the case of the most prestigious publications it was not easy to employ a skilled *Formschneider*. Without an expert craftsman, work was often delayed, or – as happened in this case – publishers had to rely on illustrations made for earlier publications. This method allowed to resolve another major issue that was also mentioned in the foreword, namely that cutting a large set of wooden printing blocks was a considerable expenditure. Mindful of their profit, the publishers were on the one hand trying to avoid "excessive" spending, but on the other they readily flaunted their expenses; hence this "money-saving" paradigm was a recurring theme in their forewords or dedications. This reflected, to a certain extent, the realities of the publishing market at the time, where editors often walked a thin line between success and bankruptcy, and their fate depended on a host of economic, social, political and artistic factors. Financial difficulties were an inseparable part of the history of early printing houses, and editorial supplications and dedications constituted popular ways of obtaining financial support.

What was quite original in the foreword to Marcin Siennik’s herbal was the use of the word “wykonterfetowane” [an archaic Polish word meaning “depicted”] to denote the making of the images of plants in this publication. In the Renaissance, the Latin term “contrafacere” gained popularity in many national languages, and its semantic scope was not limited to the simple “crafting of an image”, as it also suggested that the message carried by the image was, in fact, objective, consistent with nature, and even “true”. The popularity of this term indicates that there existed a need to describe the new function (and form) of images, in which the decisive factor was their

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8 Marcin Siennik, “Ale iżem człowieka tym czasem potrafić do tego nie mogł, któryby się tej pracy podjął: a choćbym snadz y tego miał, tedyby tego nakładu moja uboga maietność niewyniosła, a zwłaszcza gdyby figury ziół nowo właśnie wykonterfetowane były, musiałem to przedsiewzieć na stronę odkożyć, gdyż jako powiadam wielka summa a koszem tego odprawić bym niemogł”, in *Herbarz, to iest ziół tuctycznych, postrownych y zamorskich opisaniu* (Cracow, 1568). Copy: National Library in Warsaw, inv. no. SD XVI E90.
“authenticity”\textsuperscript{9}. Naturally, the use of the term “wykonterfetować” alone cannot allow us to assume that Szarfenberger was well versed in Renaissance theories of mimetic art, or in the vast subject of similarity and imitation. However, as a publisher who had already published one herbal (1556)\textsuperscript{10}, he must have been aware of specific expectations, from authors and readers alike, regarding illustrations of texts that were or aspired to be scholarly – such as Renaissance herbals. Two things were important here: accuracy of the information they communicated, and the already mentioned precise depiction of the natural world that would allow to unmistakably identify the described and depicted plants. Leading publications of this genre exemplify the importance attached to the quality of illustrations. For instance, the very title of the book by Otto Brunfels (illustrated by Hans Weiditz, published in 1530 in Strasbourg by Johannes Schott): \textit{Herbarum vivae eicones} indicated that “lifelike” images of plants were a key feature of this handbook. Illustrated herbals from that time provided an interesting field for experimentation, which not only allowed to examine the relationship between art and nature, but also contributed to the development of empirical sciences\textsuperscript{11}. It cannot be ruled out that when Szarfenberger was writing his foreword, he had in mind illustrations found in other works published at the time. In this text, he referenced Pietro Mattioli and his achievements in medicine, proving by the same token that he was well acquainted with the realities of the publishing market. The contrast between illustrations adorning books published in his time (e.g. those from \textit{Lekarstwa doświadczone} [Tested remedies] published in 1564 by the Cracovian publisher Łazarz Andrysowicz\textsuperscript{12}) and woodcuts in his own publication, where some printing blocks were used more than once to depict several plants, may have prompted him to justify himself in the eyes of his readers\textsuperscript{13}.

\textsuperscript{9} See esp.: Peter Parshall, „Imago contrafacta: Images and Facts in the Northern Renaissance”, \textit{Art History} 16, no. 4 (December 1993), 554-579.

\textsuperscript{10} Hieronim Spiczyński, \textit{O ziołach tutecznych y zamorskich y o mocy ich…} (Cracow 1556). Copy: National Library in Warsaw, inv. no. SD XVI.F.32


\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Lekarstwa doświadczane, które zebrał uczony lekarz pana Jana Pileckiego, którym są przydane lekarstwa kośkie z ćwiczeniem tego lekarza. Przydaliśmy y figury zioł rozmaitych ku lekarstw […] znowu na światło wydane} (Cracow 1564). Copy: National Library in Warsaw, inv. no. SD XVI.Qu.170.

\textsuperscript{13} Sikorska, “None of Us is this Zeuxis Heracleotes”, 179-180.
A reflection on these texts, supported by the analysis of the illustrations, leads to the conclusion that these complaints were not a mere convention or a demonstration of the author’s modesty. They should be perceived as a sign of a growing awareness of the complex role of illustrative material, and of understanding the various functions of images that went beyond simply adding a visual layer to the text. It seems plausible that such critical remarks were inspired by comparisons with the achievements of foreign printing houses. Even though it was not explicitly stated in the analysed forewords, the European context unquestionably shaped the outlook of publishers in a city that was an internationally recognised centre of culture and science.

Indisputably, Mikołaj Szarfenberger’s greatest rival was Jan Januszowski. The term “rivalry” is quite justified here – *Acta castrensia Cracoviensia* contain a mention of Januszowski beating Szarfenberg until he spurted blood. As the son of Łazarz Andrysowicz, owner of the Oficyna Łazarzowa printing house, and Barbara, widow of the famous publisher and printer Hieronymus Vietor, Januszowski was exceptionally well prepared for the editorial profession. He had an in-depth understanding of the artistic, commercial and intellectual facets of the trade. His ambitions regarding illustrative material were considerable, as was demonstrated by his intent to create “eicones”, a series of portraits of the rulers of Poland with brief commentaries, modelled on similar volumes published abroad. Januszowski intended to create a publication in the tradition of the Renaissance “cult” of *uomini illustri*, which was one of the most characteristic genres of that period. The concept of this work goes back to the 1570s, but the series entitled *Ikones Książąt y Królów Polskich x. Jana Głuchowskiego* [Father Jan Głuchowski’s Icons of Polish Princes and Kings] was not published until 1605. Januszowski was here the author of the concept, the editor in charge of the whole process and the person responsible for the final effect. Consequently, his foreword includes a very personal back story behind the creation of the book. The publisher devoted much attention to the role of

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14 *Drukarze dawnej Polski*, 79.
“konterfety” (depictions), showing himself knowledgeable of various theories of pictorial resemblance (he referenced Cicero, among other authors). As a result, he created a text of crucial importance for understanding old Polish views on the purpose of images. He stressed the commemorative, evocative and cognitive functions of “portraits” (“For when we look at some painted image, we swiftly impress it on our minds and we at once assume some acquaintance with that unfamiliar person”\textsuperscript{17}). At the same time, he emphasised his disappointment with the illustrations in his long-planned \textit{Ikones}. In an attempt to justify this failure, Januszowski disclosed “criminal” circumstances that ruined his plans; he wrote that he had brought over “an accomplished craftsman from Germany (…) who was most unfortunately shot dead, without any fault or cause”. This referred to the incident in June 1594, in which Jörg Brückner, a wood engraver invited from Breslau (present-day Wrocław), was shot dead by students living in the Jerusalem Students House. Laments over the loss of an expert wood engraver, for whom Januszowski did not manage to find a substitute, are reminiscent of grievances expressed in the foreword to Siennik’s \textit{Herbal}, and again prove that skilled \textit{Formschneiders} enjoyed a high position on the publishing market at the time. It was in the 16th century that the art of woodcut reached the apex of its artistic potential, and those who mastered it – independent engravers and talented \textit{Formschneiders} alike – pursued careers that stretched beyond the borders of their home regions. A good point in case is the “career” of Jost de Negker who exchanged correspondence with, among others, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I Habsburg\textsuperscript{18}.

The woodcutter’s death prevented Januszowski from completing the Ikones with depictions of the last two kings of Poland – Henri de Valois and Stephen Báthory; he was also forced to print several images from the woodblock that had been used to illustrate a few earlier publications. Such heterogenous origins of the illustrations partly explain the compulsion of the publisher to express his dissatisfaction with the outcome (“tolerable \textit{Ikones}, as there were no others”). This “aesthetic” approach of the Cracovian arch-typographer comes as no surprise – in his earlier publications, he had already shown himself as a person of discerning taste, sensitive to the layout

\textsuperscript{17} Bo gdy baczymy iaki obraz malowany wnet sobie na umyśle fizeruiemy y zaraz oney nieznaioney persony znajomość niejaką bierzemy.

\textsuperscript{18} Landau, Parshall, \textit{The Renaissance Print}, 200ff.
and ready to apply various techniques (such as multicoloured print) to achieve the desired effect. Later in the foreword, Januszowski revealed which templates he had used, and for what purpose: “a major part [of the ikones] were taken from royal seals, to achieve greater resemblance”. This was the source of the depictions of Louis the Hungarian, Władysław II Jagiello and Casimir IV. Using historical iconographic sources was a typical feature of Renaissance culture and its predilection for “archaeology”. Januszowski may have come across this approach during his studies in Padua, but he may just as well have been inspired by the local, Cracovian tradition of book illustrations (of which the most famous example is *Chronica Polonorum* by Maciej of Miechów, published in Cracow in 1521 by Hieronymus Vietor). Achieving resemblance and ‘veracity’ of representation must have been of tremendous importance to Januszowski, because he raised this issue once again, apologising to his readers for the quality of illustrations: “be mindful that none of us is like Zeuxis Heracleotes so that he could render a person, not having ever learnt to do this or not having ever seen that person in his life, like did he, who painted a child holding grapes so painstakingly that birds came to them as if they had been real and pecked at that painting; he who attested Pliny’s *penniculum ad magnam gloriam perduxit*; in these here images you will not see such mastery”19. By citing Pliny’s tale about the rivalry between Zeuxis and Parrhasius and the painted grapes that appeared so real that birds came to peck at them, Januszowski used one of the most popular anecdotes on art at the time20. This long reference to one of the most frequently read authors is not surprising, considering the publisher’s excellent education. His own texts reveal numerous allusions to ancient authors. Januszowski often availed himself of literary *topoi* to express praise, therefore it should not come as a surprise that he made use of the same rhetorical device to express disapproval. References to this theme were popular in artistic laudations, but above all – which is important in this case – they meant that the mimetic quality of art was highly valued.

Januszowski’s comments also reveal a growing awareness of the achievements of the leading foreign printing centres and the value (both

19 *mając to na baczeniu, że żaden z nas nie jest on Zeuxis Heracleotes, aby który miał tak właściwie trafić osobę nie ucząc się tego nigdy, abo nie widziawszy iey iako żywiła, on był misternie dziećę iagody w ręce dzierżące wymalował, iż się do nich, iako prawie istnych ptacy złatwyali, a ono malowanie skubli: któryś świadectwem Pliniusznym ‘penniculum ad magnam gloriam perduxit’: tu tego mist最受 w tych obrazieh nie obaczysz.

20 *Naturalis Historia*, lib. XXXV.
artistic and commercial) of the appropriate layout of a book. As has already been mentioned, the publisher had a strong aesthetic sensitivity, and he understood the importance of illustrations and typography. For this reason, Januszowski aspired to create a new Polish “national” typeface. This was the purpose of *Nowy karakter polski* [New Polish Character] (1594). In this publication, he made an attempt to create a dedicated typeface, motivated by a sense of “rivalry” with other “nations”. In the foreword to this book, Januszowski stressed that: “publishing (...) new and unusual things is risky” (*wydawać (...) rzeczy nowe y niezwyczayne niebezpieczno*). He also boasted of his knowledge of the achievements of the leading publishers of the day, emphasising at the same time that they benefited from the funding of generous patrons. It is certain that Januszowski believed that they had been able to develop their art thanks to this financial support: “We heard of the Roberts, Henris and Stephens from Paris who received major sums from the private treasure of king Henry II, if I remember correctly, to save their publications of Greek typefaces. We also heard of the commendable Aldus Manutius of Venice, who grew so large in this profession because of the dignified Pope Pius V that also his children are not less worthy of the grace and generosity. Also, within our living memory, we heard of Plantin, to whom I cannot see an equal nor do the centuries to come seem likely to bring an equal to him, who received twenty-four thousand crowns as support from King Philip of Spain.” This is how Januszowski displayed his ambition and willingness to compete with other publishers. In the last sentence, he referred to *Biblia Regia* (*Biblia Polyglotta*), Christophe Plantin’s

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22 His belief in the development of the art of printing under the auspices of monarchs was also presented in the decoration programme of Januszowski’s ennoblement diploma (*National Museum* in Warsaw, inv.no. 1793 MNW), which presents the printer’s own depiction among portraits of Polish rulers during whose reign he was active. Por. J. Kiliańczyk-Zięba, „Czcionką i piórem…”, s. 7-9; Justyna Kiliańczyk-Zięba, „O dyplomie nobilitacyjnym Jana Ianuszowskiego i portrecie renansowego wydawcy”, *Terminus*, no. 10, fasc. 1 (18), (2008): 67-87.

23 *Tak o onych Robertach y Henrykach Stephanach w Paryżu słychamy, że je król francuski Henryk jeśli się nie mylę Wtóry do wydania karakterów greckich z skarbu swego znacznie ratował. Tak y o onym w godność zwołanym Manucjuszu w Weneciej, że Pięż Pontificis Max. Libertate takim człowiekiem w tej profesjiej urosł, że y w potomstwo jego też nie mniej godnego tej tuki y szczodrości zwaki wielkie dotąd się okazują. Tak y on za naszej pamięci Plantyn któremu równia dotąd jeszcze nie widzę y podobno tak laconc wieki nie ujrzę miał podporę od króla Philippa Hiszpańskiego dwadzieścia cztery tysiące koron.*
monumental and multilingual masterpiece (1568–1572). Praising “local achievements” in various forms was one of the major themes of Renaissance culture, but – at the same time – Januszowski’s aesthetic taste was unquestionably shaped by “pan-European” influences. The publisher had already made it clear in his private correspondence with Bishop Marcin Kromer (1512–1589), humanist, historian and diplomat, when he was preparing Missale Varmiense for print. In his letter dated 1585 he wrote as follows: “However, when choosing the ornamental typeface, I would go for one that even our adversaries would find praiseworthy. The sun has not turned away from us, and if we have the right tools, we can equal anyone in terms of taste.”

Conclusion

The publishers’ forewords analysed in this article reveal the extent of their authors’ awareness of the professional and intellectual challenges of their trade. Their stimuli came from different centres (e.g. Venice, Paris, Antwerp, Konigsberg), which were praised for various reasons: artistic, cognitive or confessional. This diversity of motivation ought to be particularly stressed. The publishers’ texts give an insight into the changing expectations regarding the form of the book and book illustrations, and how books reflected the major challenges of the time. In their forewords, Szarfenberger and Januszowski signalled these issues to the readers, increasing popular awareness of the “art of the book”, i.e. the complex process of editing a text and the importance of giving it an appropriate presentation. As a result, the texts formulated by these Cracow-based publishers give us a rare insight into their awareness of current professional challenges and readers’ expectations regarding the “appearance” of books.

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Studies


Santrauka

Knyga kaip redaktorinė dilema. Krokuvoš Renesanso laikų leidėjai ir jų estetinės perspektyvos

Joanna Sikorska

Reikšminiai žodžiai: iliustracijų knyga, knygos menas, medžio rašinių iliustracijos, Renesansas, redaktoriaus pratarmė, Krokuvos leidėjai.