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JESSE’S TREE AND THE ALTAR OF THE HOLY CROSS IN THE POST-DOMINICAN CHURCH IN KLIMONTÓW NEAR SANDOMIERZ. FROM BIBLICAL TEXTS AND PATRISTIC INTERPRETATIONS TO IMPLEMENTATION IN CHURCH ART

ABSTRACT: The article presents issues concerning the interpretation of the prophecy of Isaiah (11, 1-3) in the works of religious art. One of these works is the altar in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów near Sandomierz. The town belonged to the Ossoliński family from the 15th century. In the first half of the 17th century, a Dominican church and monastery were built in Klimontów. In the altar, made around mid-17th century, there is a carved and gilded wood of Jesse. The image of the Tree of Jesse surrounds the main part of the altar. It presents the content of the passions (from the top: the Veil of St Veronica, Judgment on Jesus, crucifix). The author of the article discusses the meaning of individual parts of the altar. He emphasizes that the content of the Virgin Mary – which appears in other representations of the Tree of Jesse – has not been shown in it. In the altar the following idea was realized: announcement – fulfilment (an event from the New Testament is the fulfilment of what was announced in the Old Testament). In this case, the Tree of Jesse (the genealogy of Christ) foreshadows a Saviour from the lineage of David. He is the king who triumphs from the cross.

KEYWORDS: Jesse’s Tree, Klimontów near Sandomierz, Theodor Galle, Dominicans.

Introduction

The memory of our ancestors constitutes an important part of the identity – “specificity” – of every human being. It allows them to place themselves in a generational line at least closest to them, and, if possible, also further down the line. This kind of memory is captured in lists of relatives in a straight line. There are, of course, more elaborate presentations of genealogical relationships, recording

the “web” of kinship also in collateral lines.¹ Graphic representations of these relationships are referred to as the family tree.² Genealogical lineages played, and often still do, an important social role by facilitating the identification of characters, being one of the elements confirming the hierarchy and often the system of one society or another (e.g. genealogies of nobility, genealogies of royal families, etc.). Some genealogies, especially those included in the biblical books, acquire sacral and theological dimension and carry different ideological content.³ Considerable significance in this context lies in the genealogies of Christ written in the Gospels of Matthew (Mt 1:1-16) and Luke (Lk 3:23-38). Matthew the Evangelist presents us with a list from Abraham to Joseph – “Mary’s husband, of whom Jesus was born, whom they call Christ” (Mt 1:16);⁴ it is thus a list of descendants (starting with an ancestor and leading up to one of the descendants). St Luke, in turn, speaks of the ancestors of Jesus – from Joseph to Adam (he therefore includes a list of ascendants). The ideological dimension of these presentations (Matthew drew attention to Christ’s royal dignity, Luke to his priestly dignity) is subject to theological interpretations.⁵

¹ See, e.g. *Genealogia*, by W. D w o r z a c z e k, Warszawa 1959, pp. 15-29.

² The family tree is a way of presentation of “the reproduction of the offspring of an individual in the form of a more or less branched tree, usually an oak or laurel. On the trunk and branches of the tree, white circles or shields with the names of the family members were placed. The name of the progenitor was at the bottom, at the base of the tree. Below it, ever higher, went the descendants in a straight line of the oldest, while the crowns, branches and twigs were followed by the younger lines. At the top of the crown, generations contemporary with the painting were positioned”; *ibidem*, p. 37. The issues concerning the tree or rather different kinds of genealogical trees are discussed and illustrated by Christine K l a p i s c h - Z u b e r, *L’Arbre des familles*, Paris 2003.

³ See: e.g. N. L o h f i n k, *Geschlechtsregister*, [in:] *Bibel Lexikon*, ed. H. H a a g, Einsiedeln-Zürich-Köln 1986, kol. 574-576.

⁴ *Biblia w przekładzie księdza Jakuba Wujka z 1599*, transcription of „B” type of the original text of 16th century and introductions J. F r a n k o w s k i, *Prymasowska Seria Biblijna*, Warszawa 1999, p. 1954.

⁵ J. H e u s c h e n, J. B u r k a r d, *Stammbaum Jesu*, [in:] *Bibel Lexikon*, kol. 1633-1635. See commentaries [in:] *Ewangelia według św. Mateusza*. Introduction – translation – commentary, by J. H o m e r s k i, *Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu*, eds. E. D ą b r o w s k i, F. G r y g l e w i c z, vol. 3 p. 1, Poznań-Warszawa 1979, pp. 70-75; *Ewangelia św. według św. Łukasza*. Introduction – translation – commentary, by F. G r y g l e w i c z, *Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu*, eds. E. D ą b r o w s k i, F. G r y g l e w i c z, vol. 3 p. 3, Poznań-Warszawa 1974, pp. 125-126. Synthesizes the issue of the genealogies of Christ contained in the above-mentioned Gospels: Hugolin

In both lists a figure of David, son of Jesse, is exposed, extremely important for the theology of the Messiah's descent from the House of David, which is exposed in the New Testament (Lk 1:32; Rom 1:3; Acts 2:25-37; 13:22-37) and has its origin in the Old Testament books. The prophecy recorded in the Book of Isaiah (Iz 11:1-3) assumes profound importance:

„Et egredietur virga de radice Jesse//et flos de radice eius ascendet// et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini//spiritus sapientiae et intellectus// spiritus consilii et fortitudinis//spiritus scientiae et pietatis//et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini”;⁶

„I wyndzie Różdźka z korzenia Jessego//a kwiat z korzenia jego wyrośnie// i odpocznie na nim Duch Pański,//duch mądrości i rozumu, //duch rady i mocy, // duch umiejętności//i bogobojności.// I napełni go duch bojaźni Pańskiej”.⁷

(See also Iz 7, 14; 53, 2; Jer 23, 5; 33, 15; 2 Sam 7, 12-16; Mih 5, 1-4; Zah 3, 8; 6, 12; Rom 15, 12)

(“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
The spirit of the Lord will rest on him –
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord –
and he will delight in the fear of the Lord”).⁸

L a n g k a m m e r, *Boże Narodzenie w świetle Nowego Testamentu*, Bibliotheca Biblica, ed. M. R o s i k, Wrocław 2011, pp. 10-16.

⁶ Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem. Editio quinta, rev. R. W e b e r, editionem quintam emendatam retractatam praeparavit R. G r y s o n, Nördlingen 2007, p. 1108.

⁷ Biblia w przekładzie księdza Jakuba Wujka, p. 1485. See, commentary [in:] *Księga Izajasza I. 1-39*, Introduction, translation, commentary, L. S t a c h o w i a k, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski. *Pismo Święte Starego Testamentu*, ed. L. S t a c h o w i a k, vol. 9, p. 1, Poznań 1996 pp. 255-256.

⁸ See: online translation: Isaiah 11:1-3 NIV – The Branch From Jesse – A shoot will – Bible Gateway.

The interpretation made in early Christianity of the prophecy of Isaiah indicates, as expressed by St Ambrose (c. 339-397) while commenting on the Gospel of Matthew, that “radix enim est familia Judaeorum, virga Maria, flos Mariae Christus”; “the root is the Jewish family [Jesse – L.W.], the wand is Mary, the flower of Mary is Christ”.⁹ A similar interpretation was provided by St Jerome (c. 347-419) in his commentaries to the same Gospel¹⁰ and the Book of Isaiah.¹¹ The Marian overtones of Isaiah’s prophecy were accentuated by Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) in his work *On Births and Deaths of the Patriarchs*: “Maria, quae interpretatur domina siue inluminatrix, clara stirps Daud, uirga Jesse, hortus conclusus, fons signatus, mater Domini [...]”.¹² This interpretative line was somewhat confirmed by Bede the Venerable (Venerabilis; c. 672/673-735) explaining in his treaty *On the Tabernacle* what the allegoric understanding of some passages included in the Holy Bible conveys “uerbis uidelicet ut Esaias ait, Egredietur uirga de radice Jesse, et flos de radice eius ascendent, quod est aperte dicere, Nascetur uirgo Maria de stirpe Daud et Christus de stirpe eius orietur”; And the words by Isaiah: A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit denote – to be explicit – that the Virgin Mary will be born from David’s generation and Christ will arise from his generation”.¹³

⁹ [Ambrose] Ambroise de Milan, *Traité sur l’Évangile de S. Luc*, 2, 24, texte latin, introduction, traduction et notes de G. T i s s o l, SCh, 45, Paris 1956, p. 83; cf. also 3, 8, pp. 123-124; [Ambrose] Ś w. A m b r o ż y, *Wykład Ewangelii według św. Łukasza*, 2, 24, trans. W. S z o ł d r s k i, PSP, vol. 16, Warszawa 1977, p. 60; cf. *Ibidem*, 3, 8, p. 100.

¹⁰ [Jerome] S. H i e r o n y m u s, *Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri IV*, 1, 2, 23, eds. D. H u r s t, M. A d r i a e n, CCSL, vol. 77, Turnhouti 1963, p. 16; cf. *ibidem*, 2, 12, 44, pp. 99-100; H i e r o n i m z e S t r y d o n u, *Komentarz do Ewangelii według św. Mateusza*, trans. J. K o r c z a k, ŻMT, vol. 46, Kraków 2008, pp. 17, 80.

¹¹ [Jerome] S. H i e r o n y m u s, *Commentariorum in Esaiam libri XII-XVIII*, 16, 19/21, ed. M. A d r i a e n, CCSL, vol. 73A, Turnhouti 1963, p. 688.

¹² Isidorus H i s p a l e n s i s, *De ortu et obitu Patrum*, 66, 1, introducción, edición crítica y traducción por C. Chaparro G ó m e z, Auteurs Latins du Moyen Âge. Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2012, p. 191.

¹³ B e d a V e n e r a b i l i s, *De Tabernaculo*, 1, v. 789-792, ed. D. H u r s t, CCSL, vol. 119A, Turnholt 1969, p. 25; B e d a, *O przybytku. De tabernaculo*, fragment trans. [in:] A. B o b e r, *Anglia. Szkocja, Irlandia. Teksty źródłowe do historii Kościoła i patrystyki I-IX w.*, Lublin 1991, p. 49. See also: *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum*, ed. J. Carracedo F r a g a, CCSL, vol. 108E, Turnholt 1996, pp. 18 (19, 2 – interpretation

Representations of the genealogy of Jesus in art

Graphic representations of these interpretations, showing the genealogy of Christ framed in the form of the so-called Tree of Jesse, as it were, signalled in Carolingian miniature paintings (9th-11th centuries),¹⁴ commenced to be popularised from the 11th century in the art of the Latin Church and Orthodox Church. We can distinguish several variants of the theme without entering into any detailed classification.¹⁵ The basis was the image of a tree – a vine (cf. Jn 15:1-7) – as if growing out of Jesse who was standing, more often lying (or reclining, supported on the elbow), and overtaken by sleep (cf. e.g. Gen. 28:12-15). In the earliest variant (11th century) we can see seven doves in the branches symbolising the same number of gifts of the Holy Spirit. In other, later representations, the crown of the tree is taken by Mary and Christ (often Mary and the Child) in an axial arrangement. They are depicted majestically (e.g. Mary Throning); from around 1300, Mary is represented as the finial of such a composition. On either side of these figures, usually in the lower parts of the tree, we can observe prophets and kings (holding banners with their names or proper dicta). In this way, the aforementioned message of Isaiah and the Gospel genealogy of Christ were combined. Such realisations were enriched with other themes (e.g. the theme of seven doves, the Throne of Grace, the Tree of Life, the Pieta, etc.). From the 14th century, the image of Christ on the cross was positioned in the crowning or the upper part of the Jesse Tree, emphasising the salvific and passion overtones of the Isaiah's

of Iz 11, 1-3 with reference to 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit), 44 (41,1 – Maryja, as „Jesse virga”), 50(42,5 – „Christus Jesse virga”).

¹⁴ The miniature painting from the Gospel Book from the abbey in Lorsch represents the genealogy of Christ (on the Rhine, near Worms). The Codex was created in c. 810 and belongs to the group of a few oldest Gospel Books from the times of Gospel Book of Charlemagne. The presentation of genealogy of Christi is included in the part of the Gospel Book which is at present kept in Bucharest in the Library of the Academy of Sciences. The above theme has also been depicted in the miniature in the Gospel Book from the Saint-Bertin abbey (in Saint-Omer), was created at the end of the 10th century and is now kept in the City Library in Boulogne-sur-Mer. See also: P. S k u b i s z e w s k i, *Malarstwo karolińskie i przedromańskie*, Malarstwo europejskie w średniowieczu, Warszawa 1973, 1, pp. 21-22, 228; K. K u c z m a n, J. S a m e k, *Drzewo Jessego*, [in:] *Encyklopedia katolicka* (KUL), vol. 4, Lublin 1983, kol. 248.

¹⁵ The systematizing approach, see [in:] G. S c h i l l e r, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 1, Güsterlach 1966, pp. 26-33.

prophecy. In the late 15th and 16th centuries, images of the Jesse lying or sitting (inspired by the images observed in the treaty *Speculum humanae salvationis*)¹⁶ became widespread in the Norman art (especially in miniature painting and stained glass windows), and gradually in other fields. From the 15th and 16th centuries onwards, the Tree of Jesse displayed the Marian content (in the western tradition) more vividly, as if intertwining with the content expressed in the representations of the theme of Arbor Virginis (the genealogical tree of the Mother of God, oftentimes restricted to the person of Joachim and Anne) referring to Immaculate Conception.¹⁷ The Tree of Jesse was portrayed in different material and with the use of various art techniques¹⁸.

¹⁶ E. Mâle, *L'art. Religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge en France. Etude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration*, Paris 1995, pp. 82, 485; the first edition of this work was published in 1908.

¹⁷ See also: *ibidem*, pp. 216-217.

¹⁸ The issues connected to the Tree of Jesse have been discussed in many publications, both synthesising and presenting individual monuments. See, inter alia, as it were, classic depictions by J. Corblet, *Etude iconographique sur l'arbre de Jessé*, Paris 1860; E. Mâle, *L'art. Religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge en France*; E. Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIIe siècle en France*, Paris 1928, pp. 168-172; R. Ligtenberg, *Die Genealogie von Christus in de Beeldende Kunst der Middeleeuwen, Voornamelijk van het westen*, „Oudheikundig Jaarboek”, 9(1929), pp. 3-54; A. Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, Oxford-London 1934; P. Deschamps, *L'Arbre de Jessé de l'église de Saint-Bris*, „Congrès Archéologique de France, Auxerre”, 116(1958), pp. 184-188; J. R. Johnson, *The Tree of Jesse Window of Chartres: Laudes regiae*, „Speculum. A Journal of Mediaeval Studies”, 36(1961) No. 1, pp. 1-22; M. L. Thérél, *Comment la patrologie peut éclairer l'archéologie? A propos de l'Arbre de Jessé et des statues – colonnes de Saint-Denis*, „Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale”, 6(1963), pp. 145-158; L. Kalinowski, *Virga versatur. Uwagi na temat ikonografii witraży romańskich z Arnstein nad rzeką Lahn*, [in:] *Ibidem, Speculum artis. Treści dzieła sztuki średniowiecza i renesansu*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 607-619; *Vlaamse Kunst van de oorsprong tot heden*, eds. H. Liebaers, V. Vermeersch, Atwerpen 1990; A. Guerreau-Jalabert, *L'arbre de Jessé et l'ordre ecclésiastique de la parenté*, [in:] *Marie. Le culte de la Vierge dans la société médiévale*, eds. D. Iogna-Prat, E. Palazzo, D. Russo, Paris 1996, pp. 137-170; J. Wirth, *L'image à l'époque romane*, Paris 2005, pp. 416-423; J. Błaszczyk, *Wyobrażenie Drzewa Jessego w sztuce średniowiecznej*, [in:] *Wielkopolska-Polska-Europa. Studia dedykowane Alicji Karłowskiej-Kamzowej*, ed. J. Wiesiołowski, cooperation J. Kowalski, Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk. Wydział Nauk o Sztuce. Prace Komisji Historii Sztuki, vol. 34, Poznań 2006, pp. 237-258. See also: K. Kuczmań, J. Samesk, *Drzewo Jessego*, kol. 247-250. The theme of the Tree of Jesse in the light of the issues concerning genealogy in the Middle Ages was presented by Christiane Klapisch-

Representations of the Tree of Jesse in art in the Polish lands

Representations of the Tree of Jesse in Poland were first presented in the form of Romanesque miniatures adorning the liturgical codices. The earliest of these, created in Bohemia in the last quarter of the 11th century, was donated shortly after its completion to the cathedral in Plock (? the year in question? by Judith of Bohemia, wife of Wladyslaw Herman). In this *Evangelistarium, known as the Pultusk Codex (Golden Codex of Pultusk)*, we observe Jesse resting on a kind of chair and supporting a “wand” with seven spurs (they are not surmounted by doves); he is accompanied by Isaiah and Christ.¹⁹ More elaborate depictions of the subject have been preserved in the miniatures adorning subsequent two liturgical manuscripts created already in the 13th century in the local, Silesian Cistercian scriptorium in Lubiąż for the local convents.

Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres. Essai sur l'imaginaire médiéval de la parenté*, Fayard [Paris] 2000, pp. 51-57, 224-227, 317-319, and passim. In recent years an interesting monograph referring to the shaping of the artistic presentation of the motif of the Tree of Jesse was proposed by Francesca Braida, *L'invention iconographique du songe de l'Arbre de Jessé*, [in:] *Le rêve médiéval*, eds. A. Corbellari, J. Y. Tilliette, Recherches et Rencontres. Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Genève, Genève 2007, 25, pp. 137-171. The album publication of the most significant monuments, mainly in the area of France, was discussed by Etienne Mandrangs with the cooperation of Jeanne Mandrangs, *L'Arbre de Jessé. De la racine à l'esprit*, Géménos 20

¹⁹ *Evangelistarium pultuskie* (The Princes Czartoryski Library. Czartoryski Foundation at the National Museum in Kraków; ref. Ms 1207, k. 11v) belongs to a group of codices of the Bohemian school, creating under the influence of the monastic centre in Bavaria (Regensburg?). Also the *Evangelistarium gnieźnińskie (Codex aureus Gnesnensis)*, the Gospel from the Cathedral of St Vit and the Vyšehrad Codex (the so-called Coronation Gospel of Vratislaus) belong to the same group. In the Vyšehrad Codex we can observe the miniature considered as the oldest representation of the Tree of Jesse. The research into this issue was summarised by Jean Wirth in the following way: “La première représentation connue de l'arbre de Jessé se trouve dans l'Évangélaire du couronnement du roi Vratislas, provenant de Visegrad et daté de 1085-1086 (Prague, Bibliothèque universitaire, ms. XIV A. 13, fol. 4v)”; J. Wirth, *L'image à l'époque romane*, p. 417. It should, however, be stressed that the sequence in which this group was created has not been determined. We cannot exclude that the Pultusk *Evangelistarium* is the earliest. See: *Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska do schyłku XIII wieku*, ed. M. Waliński, vol. 1, *Dzieje Sztuki polskiej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1971, pp. 256-268, 532 (ill.); vol. 2, *Dzieje Sztuki polskiej*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1971, pp. 745-746.

Psalterium nocturnum of 1240 (as is inferred by Konstanty Jażdżewski, the codex could have been created to the order of Princess Hedwig, wife of Henry the Bearded) was used by the Cistercian community in Trzebnica, whereas *Antiphonarium* of the years 1280-1290 by monks from Lubiąż.²⁰ It needs to be accentuated that the representation of the Tree of Jesse found its reflection in the Cistercian art owing to the ardent devotion to the Mother of God present in this order, as was stressed by Marie-Madeleine Davy.²¹ The miniatures with the Tree of Jesse existing in the aforementioned books signalize the variety of the approach to the above topic in later Gothic and early-Renaissance monuments created in the Polish lands – in the Pomerania (in the Teutonic state), in Silesia and mainly in Lesser Poland. It is exposed

²⁰ In Trzebnicki *Psalterium nocturnum* (The University Library in Wrocław, ref. IF 440), the illumination was placed at the beginning of the codex (f. 1 verso) depicting Jesse in the reclining position (f. 1 verso) from whom a tree is growing with the figures of David, Mary and Christ positioned axially (from the bottom). On both sides of the image there are three Old Testament prophets holding banners with fragments of the sentences telling about the Saviour's birth. *Psalterium nocturnum* was created under the influence of Saxon-Turin illumination art. See: *Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska*, vol. 1, pp. 270-271, 552 (il.); vol. 2, p. 769; J. B ł a s z c z y k, *Wyobrażenie Drzewa Jessego*, p. 247 (here in the context of the belonging of the miniatures to separate groups with the images of the Tree of Jesse. See also: K. J a ż d ż e w s k i, *Biblia Henrykowska IF 13 i Psalterz trzebnicki IF 440. Dzieła kaligraficzne cystersa lubiąskiego z l. 1238-1245*, „Studia Źródłoznawcze”, 25(1980), pp. 110-117.

In the *Antiphonarium* of Lubiąż (The University Library in Wrocław, ref. IF 401, k. 200 v) the subject is inscribed in the initial N(ativitas). From the reclining Jesse a tree is growing with “fruits” – medallions representing Christ's ancestors (four medallions on the heraldic left, three on the right); at the top, on the right, there is yet another figure (Isaiah?). At the top of the tree a bust of Christ is presented in a cross nimbus, surrounded by a heart-shaped medallion. See: *Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska*, vol. 1, pp. 272, 584 (il.); vol. 2, p. 727; A. K a r ł o w s k a - K a m z o w a, *Malarstwo śląskie 1250-1450*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1979, p. 9; J. B ł a s z c z y k, *Wyobrażenie Drzewa Jessego*, p. 242 (here with a remark referring to the heart-shaped medallion: “The cult of the Heart of Jesus, which appeared in the mature Middle Ages, spread by German mystics, usually combined with the images of the tools of the Passion and the Infant Jesus, here constituted a somewhat separate and early example”). See the monograph referring to the two codices mentioned and the images of the Tree of Jesse found in them prepared by Dominik T a b o r, *Iluminacje cysterskich kodeksów śląskich XIII wieku*, Kraków 2004, passim.

²¹ M. – M. D a v y, *Symbolika romańska (XII w.)*, trans. K. W a k a r, La Nouvelle Marianne. Nowa Marianna, Warszawa 2001, pp. 249-251.

in illumination²² in the representations of stained glass²³ and wall²⁴ painting, as well as in the embroidery adorning chasubles.²⁵ The earliest sculptural representation of the Tree of Jesse in Poland was made

²² *Graduale de tempore et de sanctis*, Biblioteka Seminarium Duchownego w Pelplinie, ref. L 13, k. 151, codex of the 1370s was created in Pelplin; *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce*, eds. A. S. L a b u d a, K. S e c o m s k a, cooperation A. W ł o d a r e k et al., vol. 1-3, *Dzieje Sztuki Polskiej*, Warszawa 2004, vol. 2, p. 3; vol. 1, p. 469; vol. 2, pp. 380-382; vol. 3, p. 601 (il.). *Missale Cracoviense (Mszał jagielloński katedry w Gnieźnie; Mszał gnieźnieński)*, Biblioteka Archidiecezjalna (katedralna) w Gnieźnie, ref. Ms 139, k. 267 v, codex was created before 1501, Kraków; *ibidem*, vol. 1, vol. 443; vol. 2, pp. 332-333; vol. 3, p. 527 (il.). *Missale Cracoviense*, Archiwum Krakowskiej Kapituły Metropolitalnej na Wawelu, No. 4KP, k. 300, c. 1500, Kraków; contractor: Maciej of Drohiczyn and cooperators, Wawel studio; *ibidem*, vol. 1, p. 442 and footnote 85 (concerns Maciej of Drohiczyn); vol. 2, pp. 362-363 („Bordiury z Drzewem Jessego na k. 300 oparte na niezidentyfikowanym zbiorze graficznym, stanowią wariant takiego samego przedstawienia w Graduale Olbrachta”; p. 363), vol. 3, p. 535 (il.). *Gradual (Graduale) Jana Olbrachta*, Archiwum Krakowskiej Kapituły Metropolitalnej na Wawelu, No. 44 (Part II), k. 148 v, 1499-1506, Maciej of Drohiczyn and cooperators, Wawel studio; *ibidem*, vol. 1, passim (o Graduale Jana Olbrachta); vol. 2, pp. 360-362; vol. 3, p. 532 (il.).

²³ Włocławek, cathedral church, stained glass painting in the presbytery, c. 1350, Toruń studio; *ibidem*, vol. 1, pp. 208-209; vol. 2, pp. 137-138, il. No. LXXVI-LXXIX. Kraków, St Mary's Church, stained glass paintings created in the years 1360-1400; Lech Kalinowski assumes that one of the panels (today non-existent) could represent the Tree of Jesse; *ibidem*, vol. 1, p. 198.

²⁴ Małujowice (woj. opolskie), parish church, wall paintings, of the years 1370-1380 (Stage I); *ibidem*, vol. 2, pp. 73-74. Działoszyce (woj. świętokrzyskie), parish church, chancel, painting from the third quarter of the 15th century, the Tree of Jesse?; *ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 32. Also Toruń, parish church dedicated to St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist, chancel, paintings of the years 1380-1390 (Stage III); *ibidem*, vol. 1, p. 212 (a remark of L. Kalinowski telling us that in the church dedicated to Saints John the Baptist and the Evangelist “the Tree of Jesse underwent complicated theological transformation”); vol. 2, p. 99 (“in the centre, the Crucifixion on the Living Cross (rising from the side of Jesse), on both sides of the cross Mary and the holy women, St John the Evangelist, the centurion and the Jews, and the kneeling Ecclesia and Synagogue; at the top, the Last Judgement”), 632 (schemat 8). See also: J. D o m a s ł o w s k i, A. K a r ł o w s k a - K a m z o w a, M. K o r n e c k i, H. M a ł - k i e w i c z ó w n a, *Gotyckie malarstwo ścienne w Polsce*, Poznań 1984, pp. 99, 139-140, 301 (fig. 34).

²⁵ J. S a m e k, *Res – imagines. Ze studiów nad rzemiosłem artystycznym czasów nowożytnych w Polsce (lata 1600-1800)*, „Rocznik Historii Sztuki”, 8(1970), p. 192; *Idem*, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewa Jessego w sztuce polskiej wieku siedemnastego (Z zagadnień ikonograficznych w rzemiosle artystycznym)*, [in:] *Prace z Historii Sztuki*, vol. 11, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Warszawa 1973, p. 55.

between 1477 and 1489 by Veit Stoss. It occupies the predella of the main altar in Krakow's St Mary's Church.²⁶ The subject was also depicted in 16th-century works of the mature Renaissance.²⁷

A marked increase in the number of depictions of the Tree of Jesse in Poland occurred in the period between the 1630s and the early 18th century.

²⁶ J. S a m e k, *Zapomniane źródło inspiracji predelli ołtarza Wita Stwosza w kościele Mariackim w Krakowie*, „Folia Historiae Artium”, 15(1979), pp. 25-40. At this point it is worth quoting Jerzy Gadomski, who, speaking of the ideological programme of St Mary's Altar, stressed that “the thoughts expressed, not devoid of theological complexities, were the domain of educated specialists and must have originated from them. The relevant creators of the content programme of the altarpiece should probably be sought among the professors of the theological department of the University of Kraków” (this remark can also be applied to the predella of the altarpiece); J. G a d o m s k i, *Wit Stwosz w Krakowie – pytania bez odpowiedzi*, [in:] *Wokół Wita Stwosza. Wystawa w Muzeum Narodowym w Krakowie marzec – maj 2005*, eds. D. H o r z e l a, A. O r g a n i s t y, Kraków 2004, p. 21. See also: J. D ę b i c k i, *Filozofia sztuki Wita Stwosza*, Kraków 2018, pp. 291-335 and passim.

²⁷ The painting in the predella of the altarpiece from the Chapel of St Anne, made in 1546; the chapel is located at the chancel of the parish church of St Margaret in Gostyń, Greater Poland. The representation showing reclining Jesse and 12 ancestors of Jesus (six to the right and left), and two figures of the prophets, is crowned by an image – in half-figure – of Mary wearing a crown and holding the Child. It is worth adding that near Gostyń (on the Holy Mountain) there is a Marian sanctuary with a painting which is worshipped since second half of the 15th century. See: J. S a m e k, *Res – imagines*, p. 192; M. B i e r n a c k a, *Niepokalane Poczęcie*, [in:] M. B i e r n a c k a, T. D z i u b e c k i, H. G r a c z y k, J. S. P a s i e r b, *Maryja Matka Chrystusa*, IkonoGRAFIA Nowożytna Sztuki Kościelnej w Polsce, ed. J. S. P a s i e r b, vol. 1. Nowy Testament, Warszawa 1987 t, p. 40 and fi. 19. The tree of Jesse was also represented on the woodcut adorning the title page of the New Testament of the so-called Gospel of Leopolita, published in the Szarfenberger publishing house in 1561. A woodcut by Erhart Schön (1491-1542), a disciple of Dürer, active in Nuremberg, belonged to the illustrative stock of the Prague Bible, which was stamped in 1537 by Pavel Severýn. The above collection was purchased by Mikołaj and Stanisław Szarfenberger in Prague before 1560. See: J. M u c z k o w s k i, *Zbiór odcisków drzeworytów w różnych dziełach polskich w XVI i XVII wieku odbitych, a teraz w Bibliotece Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego zachowanych*, Kraków 1849, pp. 1-3; *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku*. Vol: 1. Małopolska, p. 1: *Wiek XV-XVI*, ed. A. K a w e c k a - G r y c z o w a, Wrocław – 1983, p. 261; J. S a m e k, *Res – imagines*, p. 192. The representation of the Tree of Jesse in the altarpiece in the parish church in the village of Brok near Ostrow Mazowiecka, to the south of Łomża, requires research. The altarpiece was identified as the late Renaissance; W. J e m i e l i t y, Brok, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka (KUL)*, vol. 2, Lublin 1985, kol. 1087. At the top of the tree a statue of the Child Jesus in a glory; J. S a m e k, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, p. 54 footnote 27.



1. The altar of the Holy Cross in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów, the general view, *phot. E. Niebelski*



2. The image of Jesse, the altar of the Holy Cross in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów, *phot. E. Niebelski*



3. Figure of the prophet – fragment of the altarpiece of the Holy Cross in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów, *phot. E. Niebelski*



4. Fragment of the altarpiece of the Holy Cross – figures pressing wine grapes, *phot. E. Niebelski*

Most currently known works presenting the subject at the time were created in Lesser Poland.²⁸ This period, in a way, inaugurates one of the reliefs belonging to a cycle of woodcarving representations located on the backboards of the stalls in the chancel of St Mary's Church in Krakow. It was created, like the entire cycle, in the years 1636-1637 by Fabian Möller. The model for the woodcarver working in Krakow was, as Beata Frey-Stecowa stated, the copperplate engraving found in the *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*, which was published in 1609 in Antwerp by the Plantinian publishing house led by Jan Moretus. The engravings for this and the previous of 1600 edition was made by Theodoor Galle (the 1609 edition contains a richer set of illustrations).²⁹ The presentation of Jesus' ancestors in the above engraving is consistent with the one in *Officium*. In the branches of the tree (vine?) growing out of Jesse, Möller depicted twelve ancestors of Jesus arranged in two columns to the right and to the left of the same tree, with each containing three figures shown to the waist. B. Frey-Stecowa notes that Fabian Möller reproduced quite faithfully the appearance of the progenitor, following the engraving in *Officium*, positioned in the so-called Sansovino pose in the overgrown area, but while creating other parts of the relief, he treated the prototype more freely. Not only did he increase the number of branches of the tree growing out of Jesse's side, but he also crowned it with three figures, namely the figures of the Infant Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and not, as in the engraving, a representation of Madonna and the Child".³⁰ The whole scene, as Jan Samek stressed, is characterised by "rigorously applied symmetry", and "decorativeness with an equal filling of the double-arched field of the relief, and, with reference to the figural sculpture, schematism, with the exception of the more carefully treated figure of Jesse".³¹

²⁸ J. Samek, *Res – imagines*, pp. 188-193; *Idem, Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 45-54.

²⁹ B. Frey-Stecowa, *Ryciny w Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis z antwerpskiej oficyny wydawniczej „Officina Plantiniana” i ich recepcja w sztuce polskiej XVII wieku*, [in:] *Inspiracje grafiką europejską w sztuce polskiej. Czasy nowożytne*, eds. K. Moisań-Jabłońska, K. Ponińska, Warszawa 2010, pp. 80-85, il. 45, 46, see there the remarks on the state of the preservation of the copies of *Officium* in Poland; p. 81 – footnote 13.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 83.

³¹ J. Samek, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, p. 46.

The researcher made a hypothesis that for the 17th-century realisations of the topic in the Polish lands the representation in the predella of the altar of Veit Stoss from St Mary's church could serve as "the example and pattern"; also the contractors must have used "patterns that graphics provided". The formulated hypothesis can be supported, as J. Samek claims, by the fact that the presentations of the Tree of Jesse adorn altarpieces of a few churches in Lesser Poland (including the one in post-Dominican church in Klimontów).³² It is worth adding that a unique piece of woodcarving from this area, also used to furnish the church, is a kind of columnar rendition of the theme in the pulpit of the Poor Clares' Church in Stary Sącz, made in the early 1670s (twelve figures of Israeli kings, situated in pairs one above the other – from the base to the top of the pulpit, are crowned with a figure of the Mother of God and the Child standing on a globe surrounded by a serpent).³³

The Jesse Tree was also made for the altars in the Silesian churches: the Dominican (now post-Dominican) in Racibórz and the parish church in Żory.³⁴ In the second half of the 17th century,

³² J. Samek, *Res – imagines*, pp. 192-193; see also: *idem*, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, p. 57; K. Kuczma, J. Samek, *Drzewo Jessego*, kol. 249. 17th century representations of the Tree of Jesse can be seen in the following altarpieces of the churches in Lesser Poland: Retable of the main altar in the parish church in Biecz – "which is most probably the earliest of the 17th century altars with the Tree of Jesse in Lesser Poland", (J. Samek, *Problem aktualności Drzewa Jessego*, p. 47); the retable was made before the half of the 17th century. The retable of the altar in the Loretan chapel (1673-1680) in the parish church in Książnice Wielkie. The retable of the altar in one of the chapels at the chancel of the parish church (in the 18th century it was the collegiate church) in Brzozów; the masterpiece was made at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. See: J. Samek, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 48-49, 52; *Idem*, *Res – imagines*, pp. 188-189.

³³ J. Samek, *Res – imagines*, pp. 190-191; *Idem*, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 51-52.

³⁴ The Tree of Jesse can be found in the retable of the altar of Our Lady of the Scapular, located in the south chapel of the Dominican church in Racibórz. The work was created in 1659 (by Salomon Steinhof?). Two branches growing out of Jesse, in the predella of the altarpiece, form the circular framing of three paintings housed in the main part of the retable. Each branch comprises eight busts of Jesus' ancestors – with banners expressing their names. In the finial there is a figure of the Virgin Mary on a crescent; *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 7. Województwo opolskie, z. 13. *Powiat raciborski*, by T. Chrzanoski, M. Kornecki, Warszawa 1967, p. 45, fig. 83. The altar from the church in Żory does not exist (it was destroyed during

the subject was further realised in different kinds of works, so to speak, non-woodcarving and non-monumental. We should first mention the painting representation on a plank (so far not included in the existing analyses of the representations of the Tree of Jesse in Poland), now in the vestibule of the refectory of the Jasna Góra monastery. Made after 1651 in a local workshop, it once adorned (until 1922) the door of one of the cabinets in the treasury of the Jasna Góra basilica; it belonged to a group of 24 such painted door panels installed in this room. Ewa Smulikowska noted that the artist of the depiction of the Tree of Jesse was modelled, as in the case of other representations in the mentioned panels, on engravings by Theodor Galle illustrating the second edition of a Marian treatise by the Jesuit John David, which was published in 1618 in Antwerp (*Pancarpium Marianum. Septemplici titulorum serie distinctum*).

The Jasna Góra Tree of Jesse depicts the busts of fifteen Israeli kings (with David) arranged symmetrically in flower cups growing out of three branches on both sides of the main trunk. The lower ones show three figures, while the central ones three on the left (heraldic) side, two on the right, while the upper ones contain two figures each. Mary and the Child emerge from a lily at the top of the tree, framed in a half pose. At the base of the painting we can find a Latin phrase drawn from the aforementioned iconographic model (VIRGA, PARENS FLORIS, QUEM SPIRITUS ILLE CORONAT/NOS TIBI TE NOBIS INSEVISSE VELLIS).³⁵ The painted panel from the former Jasna Góra treasury is therefore the second example – after the aforementioned plaque from St Mary's Church – of the “model” influence of Teodor Galle's engravings, published by the Plantyniańska publishing house on the local artists realising *inter alia* the theme of the Tree of Jesse. The above depictions, as can be noticed, differ as to the number of kings represented (twelve – fifteen), however,

World War II). See: J. S a m e k, *Res – imagines*, pp. 189-190; *Idem, Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 49-50, 53-54 (here a more detailed description of the retable with the Tree of Jesse in the church in Żory – on the basis of the preserved photograph).

³⁵ E. S m u l i k o w s k a, *Skarbiec Jasnogórski – narodu skarbnica*, [in:] *Jasnogórska Bogarodzica 1382-1982*, ed. J. M a j d e c k i, Warszawa 1987, pp. 87-90, see also: Z. R o z a n o w, E. S m u l i k o w s k a, *Zabytki sztuki Jasnej Góry. Architektura, rzeźba, malarstwo*, Katowice 2009, pp. 128-129, 318 (fig. 257).

a rigorous symmetry is maintained in both, as can be evidenced by Jan Samek's comment quoted above. Both expose Marian content. In the 17th century, especially in its second half, the Tree of Jesse was shown also in the works of artistic craftsmanship – embroidery and goldsmithing. Dated at the first half of the century is an embroidered chasuble from the Dominican church in Kamień Koszyski (former Chełm diocese, Liuboml deanery, now in Ukraine; the monastery belonged to the Polish province of the order). The model for the composition of the Jesse Tree was probably drawn from the above-mentioned engraving by Theodor Galle, illustrating *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*.³⁶ The embroidered depiction of the genealogy of Christ can also be found on the antependium of the side altar of the parish church in Murowana Goślina (near Oborniki), made in the first half of the 17th century.³⁷

However, the representations of the Tree of Jesse expressed in goldsmith works come from the second half of the century. These are: the box for hosts located in the parish church in Piotrków Trybunalski (made in 1663) and the monstrance from the post-Cistercian monastery in Henryków (made in 1671).³⁸

³⁶ Cf. J. Samek, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, p. 50. The author also mentions a chasuble from the parish church in Kocin (near Pińczów); there are embroidered images on the column of the chasuble which may have been part of a presentation of the Jesse Tree; *ibidem*.

³⁷ Four figures of Christ's ancestors are depicted on the floral thread growing out of reclining Jesse, arranged to the right and left of the main short branch, on which the whole figure of Mary with the Child in gloria is shown, *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 5. *Województwo poznańskie*, eds. T. Ruszczyński, A. Sławska, iss. 15. *Powiat obornicki*, by J. Galicka, J. Kaczorowska, H. Sygietyńska, Warszawa 1965, p. 6 and fig. 75; J. Samek, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 50-51.

³⁸ J. Samek, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 52-53; *Idem, Res – imagines*, p. 191. On the monstrance from Henryków, which was made by Chrystian Mentzel I (1668-1699), Jesse in a standing position supports with outspread hands a vine, as if, growing out of his head. On both sides of the central axis of the representation we can perceive six figures of Israeli kings; in the centre, the figure of Mary formed around the host vessel; and above the head of the Mother of God a branch surmounted by the IHS monogram in gloria. The inscription in the banner bears: VIRGA JESSE FLORUIT DE QUA NATUS EST. "The Henryków monstrance is so far the only representation of its kind preserved in Poland"; J. Samek, *Polskie złotnictwo*, Wrocław – 1988, p. 152 and fig. 161.

When analysing 17th-century depictions of the Tree of Jesse, Jan Samek stated that they can be divided into four groups (four modes of representation) taking into account the images crowning the whole composition: “[1] a tree crowned by the figures of Mary, the Infant Jesus and Joseph, [2] a tree with an image of the Mother of God or the Mother of God with the Child in the finial (with half figures or whole representations of the descendants of the patriarch), [3] a tree with the group of the Visitation and figures of the prophets, and finally [4] a tree with a crucifix on top”. This list can be supplemented with “[5] a tree adorned with a statue of the Infant Jesus in gloria”. The researcher stressed that only the second, distinct group is more representative.³⁹ However, let us accentuate at the same time that the first group is exemplary of the outstanding artistic achievement, which situates itself at the top of the artistic development of the modern representations of the Tree of Jesse. It is an etching by Silesian artist Michael Willmann, created in 1675 and commissioned by Bernard Rosa, the abbot of the Cistercian order in Krzeszów. Willmann’s work is a kind of paraphrase of the theme of the Tree of Jesse, based on the genealogy of Christ offered in the Gospel of Luke. An oil sketch was based on the etching in Willmann’s workshop in Lubiąż, and later (1678) a large-scale painting, which hung in the main altar of the church in Krzeszów (after 1734, the painting was moved from this location; today it is kept in the altar of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, located next to the Loretto Chapel). The aforementioned etching was copied several times by other artists.⁴⁰ The indicated presence of the theme in the Polish lands, and especially its popularity in the art of the 17th century in Lesser Poland, was connected with the development of the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – having its reflection, *inter alia*, in the liturgical calendar of the then Krakow diocese.⁴¹

³⁹ J. Samek, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, p. 54 and *ibidem*, fn. 27; *Idem, Drzewo Jessego*, kol. 249.

⁴⁰ A. Kozioł, *Rysunki Michaela Willmanna (1630-1706)*, Wrocław 2000, pp. 128-129 (fig. 44), 136, 207-208, 213, 235-239, 328, 437, 467-468; *Idem, Angelus Silesius, Bernhard Rosa i Michael Willmann, czyli sztuka i mistyka na Śląsku w czasach baroku*, Wrocław 2006, pp. 285-287 (fig. 102).

⁴¹ J. Samek, *Res imagines*, p. 192. The author mentions the introduction of the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary by Bishop Jan Konarski in the Diocese of

The Tree of Jesse in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów

One of the 17th century presentations of the Tree of Jesse is to be found, as has already been mentioned, in the former Dominican church in Klimontów. The monastery and church were founded by Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński, the founder (1604) and owner of this town. The Dominican friars were present in Klimontów from 1613, while in 1620, the construction of their church and part of the monastery were completed; in the following years, all the monastic buildings of this extensive complex were erected. The consecration of the church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Jack took place not until in 1633 (by Bishop Suffragan of Krakow, Tomasz Oborski).⁴² It should be added that in the 1620s Klimontów gained yet another

Kraków in 1509, referring to the works by Maria Goetel-Kopffowa; see also: *Eadem, Konarski Jan*, [in:] *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 13, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1967-1968, p. 459). See also: H. Wąsowicz, *Kalendarz ksiąg liturgicznych Krakowa do połowy 16 wieku*, Lublin 1995, p. 354. See also: J. S a m e k, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 56-57; here, *inter alia*, about the establishment of the Knights Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in 1616 in Vienna by Emperor Ferdinand II, to which “numerous Polish magnates belonged”, and about the foundation of the Order of the Immaculate Conception in 1637 by Władysław IV. Among those involved in spreading the cult of the Immaculate Conception were for example the Jesuits. See also: M. B i e r n a c k a, *Niepokalane Poczucie*, pp. 27-93.

⁴² The history of the church, architecture and decorations of the Dominican church in Klimontów are described by Wawrzyniec K u k l i ń s k i, *Miasto prywatne Klimontów i jego kościoły*, Sandomierz 1911, pp. 1-4, 149-208; Eugeniusz Niebelski, *Klimontów, miasto prywatne rodu Ossolińskich 1240-1990*, pp. 91-115; *Idem, W dobrach Ossolińskich, Klimontów i okolice*, Klimontów 1999, pp. 71-90; here the attached monograph by Elżbieta Graboś, *Tajemnice klasztoru na wzgórzu*, pp. 111-136 (p. 130 – the act of the consecration of the Dominican church translated into Polish); E. N i e b e l s k i, *Dominikanie w Klimontowie Sandomierskim (1613-1901)*, [in:] *Między Wisłą a Pilicą. Studia i materiały historyczne*, vol. 6, eds. L. M i c h a l s k a - B r a c h a, B. W o j c i e c h o w s k a, Kielce 2005, pp. 83-99. The functioning of the order was discussed by Sławomir K i c i ń s k i, *Życie codzienne dominikanów w Klimontowie u schyłku XVII i w początkach XIX stulecia*, [w:] *Kościół katolicki w Małopolsce w średniowieczu i we wczesnym okresie nowożytnym*, eds. W. K o w a l s k i, J. M u - s z y ń s k a, Kielce-Gdańsk 2001, pp. 115-149. The elements of church decorations were presented by Elżbieta G r a b o ś, *Malowidła w klasztorze Ojców Dominikanów w Klimontowie*, „Zeszyty Sandomierskie”, 4(1997) No. 6, pp. 41-45. See also the bibliography in the above-mentioned works by E. Niebelski. See also: J. Z u b, *Klimontów – kolegiata, klasztor dominikański*, Tarnobrzeg 2001.

(wooden) church founded by Jerzy Ossoliński, the next owner of the city. In 1626, it became the parish church. Several years later, in a different place, the construction of a new, brick parish church dedicated to St Joseph was initiated. In 1640, Jerzy Ossoliński founded the college of canons (approved in 1648 by the Krakow Bishop). The church dedicated to St Joseph – once the collegiate – is the Dominican architectural hallmark of Klimonów.⁴³

In the 17th century the Dominican church gained rich interior décor along with paintings placed in its altars. Particular significance was attached to the representation of the Virgin Mary and the Child (of 17th century) similar to the Byzantine iconographic type called Eleusa. The above painting was worshipped by the faithful and was called the miraculous.⁴⁴ The temple was with eight altars together with their furnishings. Particular attention should be drawn to the altar of the Holy Cross near the main entrance – “at the fourth bay of the nave”.⁴⁵ It has a magnificent altarpiece. A woodcarving work, created most probably before the mid-17th century, and after 1633,⁴⁶ kept in gilded tones, and conserved in the 1980s,⁴⁷ is the highly interesting, outstanding realisation of the theme of the Tree of Jesse.

⁴³ The history of the parish and collegiate churches in Klimontów was proposed by W. Kukliński and E. Niebelski in the works referred to in the earlier part of this article. The analysis of the architecture of the church was conducted by Adam B o c h n a k, *Kolegiata Świętego Józefa w Klimontowie*, Kraków 1925; See also: Z. B a n i a, *Kolegiata w Klimontowie – jak naśladowano architekturę rzymską i jak się kojarzyła Bazylika Św. Piotra na Watykanie*, [in:] *Studia nad sztuką Renesansu i Baroku*, vol. 10. *Programy ideowe w przedsięwzięciach artystycznych w XVI-XVIII wieku*, ed. J. R o l s k a - B o r u c h, Lublin, pp. 35-44; J. Z u b, *Klimontów – kolegiata, klasztor dominikański*.

⁴⁴ See: the above works by W. Kukliński and E. Niebelski. See also: A. W i t k o w s k a, J. N a s t a l s k a - W i ś n i c k a, *Ku ozdobie i obronie Rzeczypospolitej. Maryjne miejsca święte w drukach staropolskich*, Lublin 2013, pp. 312-313 (there bibliographical references).

⁴⁵ E. N i e b e l s k i, *Klimontów*, p. 109; *Idem*, *W dobrach Ossolińskich*, p. 86.

⁴⁶ *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 3 (*Województwo kieleckie*), z 11 (*Powiat sandomierski*), by J. Ł o z i Ń s k i, T. P r z y p k o w s k i, Warszawa 1962, p. 17. In the act of consecration of the church (1633) the altar of the Holy Cross was not mentioned, see: E. G r a b o ś, *Tajemnice klasztoru na wzgórzu*, pp. 126, 130.

⁴⁷ The note on the reverse of the black and white photograph of the altar before the conservation, made by the then parish priest Fr. Stanisław Wróbel: “Following the recommendation of Bishop Walenty Wójcik and Bishop Stanisław Sygnet, I handed the altar of the Cross and the Wardrobe of the Confraternity of the Rosary to the staff of Visual Arts in Kraków on 27 September 1984. The altar will be returned after the completion of the conservation works in 1988, and the wardrobe in December 1986.

It consists of two parts: the main part and the side part which surrounds the main part. The main part, consisting of two levels and the finial, contains three representations arranged on a vertical axis in quarters with a “pyramid” arrangement: the widest at the bottom, in the lower level, narrower in the middle, and narrowest at the top. In the lowest quarter, which has a semi-circular vault with images of two cherubim in its upper part, the crucifix is placed on the black background. The central part of the altarpiece is occupied by a rectangular painting illustrating the scene of the condemnation of Jesus (more on this later in the text). While in the upper quarter with an arched finial, we can see a painting depicting the Veil of St Veronica, on which the head of Christ is depicted with a crown of thorns. The quarters possess a type of framing. The lower one is columnar; the columns with spiral shafts, typical of Baroque, are entwined with vines. The entire lower level has a shape of a triumphal arch. The upper quarters are flanked by the human figures in long flowing robes. The central quarter is framed by two “caryatid” figures, each holding a closed book. At the top of the altarpiece we can notice two figures – positioned one on the right, and the other on its left. With both hands, they grasp branches of the vine that wrap around this quarter, as if unravelling them and showing the image of the Veil of St Veronica. The side part depicts Jesse and his descendants. This woodcarving list of Christ’s ancestors is framed in the form of the family tree, or rather a “genealogical vine”. The figure of David’s father is shown below the lower quarter, in the predella, in the reclining position, supported on his right elbow. A vine is growing out of Jesse, encircling the main part of the altarpiece, writhing along its rims and, at the height of the upper quarters, climbing higher in three vertical branches. The central one crowns the entire composition, embracing the shield with the IHS monogram and extending above it in the shape of the forked cross with a branch protruding from between its open arms, to which the titulus is attached (a table bearing letters INRI, which stands for Christ’s guilt). In the flowery chalices growing out of the vine we can perceive bearded figures taken to the waifs of the descendant of Jesse with their characteristic hairdresses (with a tuft of hair protruding from the top of the head).

Fr. Wróbel Stanisław; took under his care Jacek Hajto, ID [...].” The parish archive in Klimontów.

Almost every figure – except one – holds a closed or open book. However, the figure uppermost, on the offshoot on the heraldic right side of the altar, holds another object – probably a musical instrument. We can therefore see here an image of David. It appears to be difficult to identify other representatives of the Jesse family by name, presented on the altar in Klimontów (perhaps there were some references inscribed on the flower cups, from which these figures grow). On the heraldic left side of the altar there are currently six effigies, while on the right there are four, originally there were also six.⁴⁸ There were once twelve figures in total. Representations placed equally on both sides in pairs: three pairs on the heraldic left and two (earlier three) on the right. Each pair has vertical arrangement, that is figures were placed one on the other, keeping the distance between each pair. Among the vines, we can notice quarters with the crucifix at the level of the upper part, two naked women – one on the right, the other on the left, placed on the branch and supporting it with their hands. The other hand is lifted up, in the gesture pointed at the middle part of the altar. With their feet, they knead the wine grapes.

The even arrangement of the images of the descendants of Jesse, their symmetrical arrangement and number, as well as the pose in which the Patriarch was depicted, enable us to assume that the model used for the whole depiction was the engraving by Theodor Galle kept in the already mentioned edition of the work *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*. In the Klimontów altar the arrangement of individual pairs of Christ's ancestors was modified in an interesting way, which appear in a vertical, not horizontal, arrangement, or slightly diagonal-horizontal, as in the engraving. Such transformation of the arrangement of the characters seen in the figure (“verticalization of the arrangement”), the transformation which emerges as if spontaneously – it can be said that implied by the “model” arrangement, caused that “the effect of entwining” of the main part of the retable by the Tree of Jesse was clearly achieved.

⁴⁸ Prior to the conservation of the Holy Cross altarpiece (see footnote above), there were four figures of the descendants of Jesse on its right and left sides. As a result of the restoration, elements that had previously fallen out of this arrangement were added. Two figures were added on the heraldic left side at the central quarter of the main section. Two analogous figures on the right side were lost (destroyed?) before conservation. A number of figures on both sides of the altar is therefore uneven. See also: *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 3, part 11, illustration.

Certain differences between the engraving in the *Officium* and the Klimontów realization are as well visible in the details referring to the attributes of the Jesse's descendants. Their heads are not adorned with crowns as are the rulers, who Galle envisaged. Consequently, the Klimontów figures do not hold any other attribute of royalty – sceptres (but each holds a book); thus these are not so much figures of the kings, but prophets. It should be emphasised that in the Dominican church we can find a painting based on the engraving from *Officium* created in the 2nd quarter of the 17th century, i.e. in the period when the analysed Tree of Jesse was probably created. On the door of the wardrobe of the Confraternity of the Rosary (established in Klimontów in 1613 by the Dominicans) we can notice the scene of Annunciation. Beata Frey-Stecowa accentuated that the painter faithfully imitated the illustration placed in *Officium*, depicting this theme – “he only added a banderole with the text of Angelic Salutation, intertwined in a spring of lilies, which is held in the hand of the Archangel”.⁴⁹

The composition of the Klimontów altar of the Holy Cross is coherent, we perceive a harmonious combination of its two parts, which as if refer to one another. At the same time, we can see the “colour” contrast between the main part, kept in dark tones (especially the crucifix quarter) and the gilded side quarter. Two representations of the Cross build the axis of the composition: at the top (forked cross) and at the bottom (crucifix). However, Jan Samek stated while comparing the altars from the Tree of Jesse, found in several centres, that “the early Baroque side altarpiece in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów is less happily designed [...] it is precisely a normal two-level retable, to which branches from the figures of the kings were added, growing from the figure of Jesse in the predella”.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ B. Frey-Stecowa, *Ryciny w Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*, p. 92. The author points to other centres in the Polish lands, in which we can find works based on the engravings in *Officium*; she mentions Dominican centres (Piotrków Trybunalski and precisely Klimontów). She stresses that “we can therefore assume that the copies of this richly illustrated book could have been in the monastery libraries and were made available to artists by their principals. It was used by painters, as well as by the representatives of other artistic disciplines, that is woodcarvers and stucco artists”; *ibidem*, p. 95.

⁵⁰ J. Samek, *Res – imagines*, p. 189. A similar statement in yet another article; *Idem*, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, p. 54: „The Klimontów retable is heavily destroyed [words written before the renovation of the altar, L.W.], which does



5. The Veil of St Veronica, the altar of the Holy Cross in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów, *phot. E. Niebelski*



6. The painting from the middle quarter of the altar of the Holy Cross in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów, *phot. E. Niebelski*



7. The wardrobe of the Confraternity of the Rosary, the Annunciation Scene, the post-Dominican church in Klimontów, *phot. E. Niebelski*



8. The post-Dominican church in Klimontów, *phot. E. Niebelski*

It appears to be somewhat difficult to agree with this claim. Two parts of the altarpiece were not juxtaposed without any closer relation they held with each other. To the contrary, they complement each other in terms of content and cross-refer each other. The aforementioned “verticalization of the arrangement” of the figures of the descendants of Jesse, were harmonised with individual segments of the upper part of the altar, so that each pair of prophets is placed at the level of each of the segments. A vine bush, growing out of Jesse and being a “transmitter” of floral caps from which prophets emerge, appears to penetrate to the column shafts of the lower level; a motif of the vine bush is also present in other places of the main part.

The altar carries ideologically rich content referring to the Old and New Testaments. It shows how the messages (prophecies) contained in the Old Testament reality were realised in their salvific fullness through the passion and death of Christ on the cross. Figures in the upper quarter tilting the branches of the vine and revealing the Veil of St Veronica mark this interpretative perspective.

The side, “vine” part of the altar – and at the same time of Old Testament – does not restrict itself to the presentation of the Jesse’s descendants, is not merely the (“selective”) illustration of the earthly genealogy of Christ. The number of 12 represented figures not adorned with crowns relates, as can be inferred, to the entire Chosen People (twelve generations of Israel); it is as well a figure of the Group of Twelve (Apostles). Another figure was also woven into the vine. Naked figures pressing the fruit of the vine probably allude to the Mystic Press, depicting the passion of Christ.⁵¹ Additionally, these figures directly indicate (by a gesture of the hands) that their action refers to the reality depicted in the main part of the altarpiece. The whole vine bush is also a figure of the cross, which is the tree of life (*crux florida*), it is also a bush which transforms itself into a forked cross, *crux dolorosa*.⁵²

not impede the positive evaluation of stucco art, despite the fact that with reference to composition, the architectonic part remains only loosely connected to the Tree of Jesse”.

⁵¹ On the meanings linked to the Mystic Press, see, *inter alia*, D. Forstner, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, trans. W. Zakrzewska, P. Pachciarek, R. Turzyński, Warszawa 1990, pp. 428-430; S. Kobieltus, *Krzyż Chrystusa. Od znaku i figury do symbolu i metafory*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 51-54.

⁵² On these representations of the Cross, see: S. Kobieltus, *Krzyż Chrystusa*, p. 80. Cf. J. J. Kopeć, *Męka Pańska w religijnej kulturze polskiego średniowiecza. Studium*

In the main part, passion content was exposed. However, a Marian theme, which in fact appears in all publications referring to the theme of the Tree of Jesse (excluding the representations, in which only the gifts of the Holy Spirit were depicted) was omitted. Due to this, the Klimontów altar is so unusual, one may even say: outstanding. It is worth quoting here the opinion of Jan Samek, one of the most eminent experts in the history of the artistic craftsmanship in Poland. He once stated that the Klimontów altarpiece possesses “perhaps the most isolated iconographic concept of the Tree of Jesse in the 17th century”.⁵³ The identification of the events depicted in the upper and lower quarters is not complicated, but what is intriguing is the scene in the middle quarter. It can be considered at first, as the painting realisation of the theme of *Ecce homo* theme.⁵⁴ The painting depicts a tormented, half-naked Jesus, sitting on a platform covered with a cloth that can be considered as a cloak. A crown of thorns is on his head. In his crossed hands, tied with a cord, he holds a leafy reed. The condemned man is indicated by a gesture of the hand by a figure in a red robe, wearing a turban of the same colour on his head. He points to two spectators standing behind in white robes and turbans. The scene takes place in an interior with a window opening having a semi-circular vaulted ceiling. The window is above these three figures, to the left of Christ. This representation, however, does not “adhere” to the Evangelic description, according to which Jesus, as can be read in the translation of the Bible by Wujek, came “forth the town hall” (outside) “wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe” (Jn 19,5).⁵⁵ The Saviour is not clad in this robe, but sits on it. The situation depicted in the middle quarter may refer to a different passage in the Gospel of John, in which Pilate points out Jesus to the Jews – flogged and mocked (by implication: wearing the crown of thorns and with a reed in his hand) saying the words:

nad pasyjnymi motywami i tekstami liturgicznymi, *Textus et Studia Historiam Theologiae in Polonia Excitatae Spectantia*, 3, Warszawa 1975 pp. 109-110.

⁵³ J. S a m e k, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, pp. 54.

⁵⁴ This is how this scene is identified by Jan S a m e k, *Problem aktualności tematu Drzewo Jessego*, p. 54.

⁵⁵ The Bible in the translation of Fr. Jakub Wujek, p. 2142; [the second quote from the Bible Gateway website, accessed on 28.11.2022: John 19:5 KJV – Then came Jesus forth, wearing the – Bible Gateway, J.S-W.].

“Behold your King!” (Jn 19, 13-16).⁵⁶ Soon after, giving in to the demand of the Israelite elders, he delivered him to be crucified. However, a different interpretation of the scene seems more likely. The figure of the condemned man depicted in this painting resembles the image of the Christ of Sorrows, with the visible instruments of the Passion found in one of Theodore Galle’s engravings in *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis* (1609). The similarity is evidenced not only by the pose in which the artist depicted the Saviour (the positioning of the lower parts of Christ’s legs deserves our attention – crossed, left foot behind the right, as in the engraving), but also the shape of the reed and its leafage. We can, however, notice differences in the arrangements of hands (in the Galle’s illustration the right hand of Christ crosses the left which rests on it, hands are tied with rope; whereas in the Klimontów altar the right hand is placed on the left, both are tied). Christ’s hands are probably not marked with nail wounds, as we can see in the engraving (the details referring to the hands, however, are not clearly marked in the painting). Moreover,

⁵⁶ In the translation by Wujek we read: „A Piłat usłyszawszy te mowy, wywiódł przed ratusz Jezusa i siadł na stolicy sądowej na miejscu, które zową Litostrotos, a po żydowsku Gabbata. A był dzień przygotowania Paschy, godzina jakby szósta i rzekł Żydom: Oto król wasz! A oni wołali: Strać, strać, ukrzyżuj go! Rzekł im Piłat: Króla waszego mam ukrzyżować? Odpowiedzieli najwyżsi kapłani: Nie mamy króla, jeno cesarza”, J 19, 13-15; *Biblia w przekładzie księdza Jakuba Wujka*, p. 2142. Other translations also hold that Pilate sat on the judgement seat. It should, however, be stressed that for instance in the Paulist Bible this fragment was translated in the following manner: „Kiedy Piłat usłyszał te słowa, polecił wyprowadzić Jezusa na zewnątrz i posadzić [emphasis by L. W.] na ławie sędziowskiej”; *Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu. Najnowszy przekład z języków oryginalnych z komentarzem*, by the team of the Polish Bibliists from the initiative of the Society of St Paul, Częstochowa 2009, p. 2380. See the commentary to this fragment, *Ewangelia wg św. Jana. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz*, by L. S t a c h o w i a k, *Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu*, Poznań-Warszawa 1975, eds. E. Dąbrowski, F. Gryglewicz, vol. 4), p. 370. The scene on the central quarter of the Klimontów altar would not have referred to the situation depicted in the translations of the Bible of the time (from the 17th century), but would have borne witness to a different reading of the meaning of the quoted passage from the Gospel of John.

We should as well emphasise that the painting does not illustrate the theme of Pensive Christ (Tormented Christ, sitting on the rock scrap, waiting pensively/in sorrow for crucifixation). On different representations touching upon the theme of Tormented Christ, see monograph by Grażyna Jurkowlaniec, *Chrystus Umęczony. Ikonografia w Polsce od XIII do XVI wieku*, Warszawa 2001.

the painter did not include the tools of the Passion. He added the three mentioned figures.⁵⁷ The whole scene, in which the image of Christ is depicted, as we may think, on the basis of the engraving from *Officium*, is probably a kind of “authorial” elaboration of the theme that had gained popularity since the late 16th century in connection with the apocryphal texts of Pilate’s judgment, which were then discovered. The judgment of Jesus (*Iudicium sanguinarium*) was interestingly developed in modern art.⁵⁸ In the painting from Klimontów, we can observe most probably a variant of this theme, restricted to a few figures; a figure in the red robe is Annas or Caiaphas, not Pilate. When interpreting the scene presented in the middle quarter as the Judgment of Jesus, we can assume that the figures standing on both sides of this quarter are judges (though we can see in them also the prophets).

The main element of the altarpiece is of course the crucifix. Father Wawrzyniec Kukliński, who was the parish priest of Klimontów in the years 1893-1912,⁵⁹ tells us about the period in which it could be created. We read in his work published in the book form in 1911: “the fifth altar by the great church door depicts Jesus Crucified. At the top of the image [altar!, L. W] there is the crowning of the Lord Jesus [Veil of St. Veronica?]. this image [=altar] is all gilded with woodwork, badly damaged, has a mensa with no *portatile*. On the antepedium there is the image of St Thomas, the statue of Jesus of the ancient sculpture is said to have been given to Jasiiek Ossoliński, called the Sheep, by Jadwiga, the daughter of Bolesław the Pious, the Duke of Kalisz, and wife of Władysław the Elbow-high, and who was inherited by Jan Zbigniew Ossoliński, who, after founding the church, placed it in the altar”.⁶⁰ The author of these words refers to the statue of Christ, rather than to the entire crucifix. He indicates that the statue existed during Jadwiga’s lifetime (c. 1266-1339), wife of

⁵⁷ Cf. The illustration depicting the Teodor Galle’s engraving presenting the Christ of Sorrows [in:] B. Frey-Stećowa, *Ryciny w Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*, fig. 75 and *ibidem*, p. 94.

⁵⁸ See: T. Dziubecki, *Ikonografia Męki Chrystusa w nowożytnym malarstwie kościelnym w Polsce*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 36-45; R. Rupiewicz, *Sąd nad Jezusem. Studium ikonografii oraz źródeł od chrześcijańskiego antyku do nowożytności*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 96-130.

⁵⁹ E. Niebelski, *Klimontów*, p. 149; *Idem*, *W dobrach Ossolińskich*, p. 176.

⁶⁰ W. Kukliński, *Miasto prywatne Klimontów*, pp. 186-187.

Władysław the Elbow-high, died as Poor Clare from Sącz.⁶¹ The account telling us about the donation of the statue (crucifix) to Jasiiek the Sheep (†1396) is described as a “tale”. This suggests a certain “fluidity”, non-obviousness and low verifiability of the noted information. Without considering the issue further, it should be emphasised that the figure of the Crucified does not display any stylistic features that are typical of the 14th century (or older) crucifixes. The inclination of Christ’s head to the right hand, the shape of his head and the crown of thorns, the slight spread of both arms, not bent in the elbows, fingers of both hands clenched on the nails, the arrangement of legs, where the right is slightly turned to the left, hammering of feet with only one nail (right to the left), the curve of the body in the S-shape, the form of musculature, the form of perizoma, allow us to state that the figure of Christ from the altar in Klimontów was created in the period as the remaining elements of the discussed altarpiece.⁶²

Quarters in the main part of the altarpiece present Passion scenes existing in different variants of the Way of the Cross, which commenced to shape the 17th century Poland, gradually taking the form of fourteenth station at the end of the century, also known today.⁶³ Scenes depicted in the main part of the altar of the Holy Cross can be considered as a sui generis contribution to this issue (the order of stations – middle quarter: Jesus is condemned to death (Judgement of Jesus); upper quarter: Veronica wipes Jesus’ face; lower quarter: Jesus dies on the cross). Additionally, the presentation of the Passion scenes expose yet another motif – essential from the perspective of the dignity of Christ. Starting from the middle quarter, the royal attributes of the Saviour were portrayed. The Pilate’s statement: “Behold your King” is as if illustrated.

⁶¹ See also, *Genealogia. Tablice*, W. D w o r z a c z e k, Warszawa 1959, tabl. 2. See also: K. P i e r a d z k a, *Jadwiga (zm. 1339), królowa Polski, żona Władysława Łokietka*, [in:] *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 10, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1962-1964, pp. 290-291; F. S i k o r a, *Ossoliński Jan (zm. 1396)*, ibidem, vol. 24, Wrocław – 1979, p. 400.

⁶² The issue of the stylistics of the figure of the Crucified from the altar of the Holy Cross requires further research. We shall as well examine the information noted by Fr. Kukliński concerning the origins of this statue.

⁶³ This issue requires further analysis with reference to the altar in Klimontów. About the shape of the Way of the Cross, see, inter alia, *Droga krzyżowa. Dzieje nabożeństwa i antologia współczesnych tekstów*, J. J. K o p e ć, Poznań 1975, pp. 24-134; *Idem, Droga krzyżowa*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. 4, Lublin 1983, kol. 215-221.

Christ bears his sceptre (a reed of disgrace) and a cloak, the crown – of thorns (visible in the Veil of St Veronica) and the throne, that is the cross.⁶⁴ The lower level of the altarpiece has, as we all know, the shape of the triumphal arch. The Crucified Christ placed on the Arc de Triomphe is the one who triumphs thanks to the cross – solemnly manifesting his royalty. The main part of the altar displays Christ, who in his passion appears as the King, sends us to the herald which Mary received from Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation, that the Lord will give her Son the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Lk 1, 31-33). The events exemplified in individual quarters present us with the realization of this herald. The Marian theme, though not expressed explicitly, is then present in a non-manifest form.

Conclusion

The altar in the post-Dominican temple in Klimontów is a very inspiring work of sacral art. It contains ideologically rich content set in the perspective of figure and fulfilment (type – antitype). The representation of the Jesse's Tree is combined with the Passion content, which, however, carries the meaning not only doloristic in nature, i.e. linked to the Way of the Cross, but above all emphasises the royal dignity of Christ, triumphant through the Cross. The ideological content of the altar in Klimontów, do not, of course, exhaust the issues concerning this monument. Questions arise, or rather research postulates, about where (in which workshops) the Christ figure and other parts of the altar were created. Did the priors of the first decades of the order play any inspirational role in the creation of these parts and in determining the “ideological direction” of the whole altarpiece? What is the fate of the antepedium with the image of St Thomas and whether it is ideologically linked to the content of the altarpiece? How significant was the influence of the engravings contained in *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis* on other objects decorating the interior of the church and monastery beside those mentioned in this article? Did the cult significance of the Dominican sanctuary of the Holy Cross relics in the church dedicated to St Stanislaus in Lublin, emerging clearly after 1618,

⁶⁴ About the cross as the Throne of Glory, see also: S. K o b i e l u s, *Krzyż Chrystusa*, p. 81.

influence the “ideological content” of the altar of the Holy Cross in the post-Dominican church in Klimontów? Also the location of the discussed monument is particularly important from the comparative perspective of the presentation of the genealogy of Christ in the European art, especially of the old Netherlands in the first half of the 17th century. As can be inferred, there are many more questions, which may only prove that the altar in the church in Klimontów constitutes a fascinating example of the richness of the religious culture of the old times. It also unravels the richness of inspirations that can be drawn from the biblical and patristic texts.

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