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THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY INCUNABULA WITHIN COLLECTION OF LIBRARY OF CARMELITE CONVENT IN CZERNA

St Elijah Monastery in Czerna was founded by Agnes of Teczynska Firley in 1631. Several years later (1640) Bishop of Przemyśl and Grand Crown Chancellor Piotr Gembicki consecrated the shrine. That Monastery has continued to exist until today, which deserves to be emphasised.

Within the framework of the Carmelite faction, both spiritual and intellectual one, a book has been significant. From the very beginning of existence of the monastery, literary works have been gathered not only to serve the purpose of the liturgy, but also to expand knowledge and spirituality to the extent of asceticism, preaching, theology in its broad meaning. Books most often were donated or inherited. The library old resources in Czerna currently include 14 incunabula. The first attempt to catalogue them was made by Józef Długosz in 1965 in the article *Biblioteka klasztoru oo. Karmelitów Bosych w Czernej*, published in volume 11 of ABMK magazine. The subsequent catalogue was compiled by Michał Spandowski in: *Incunabuly w Bibliotekach Polskich. Centralny Katalog*, edited by A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, developed by M. Bohonos, E. Szandorowska, vol. 1, Warszawa 1970¹. Since they are scarce in number, I have let myself cite all the titles including typography and the year of publication:

1. Sirectus Antonius *Formalitates moderniores de mente Scoti* [Bologna, Henr. de Haarlem et Io. Walbeck, post 1484], 4^{o2}.
2. Ioannes Nivicellensis *Concordantiae Bibliae et Canonum*, Basel [Mich. Furter ?] 31 I 1489. 2^{o3}
3. Thomas de Aquino *Opuscula* (71). Ed. vitamque s. Thomae praefixit Antonius Pizamanus. Venezia, Herm. Lichtenstein, 7 IX 1490. 4^{o4}
4. Gritsch Joannes *Quadragesimale* [Strassburg, Typ. Vitas Patrum] 5 II 1484. 2^{o5}
5. Duranti Guillelmus *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*. Strassburg [Typ. Iordani = Ge. Husner] 1 IX 1488. 2^{o6}

¹ W. Graczyk, *Księgozbiór klasztoru-eremu karmelitów bosych w Czernej od XVII do końca XIX wieku. Studium z dziejów kultury intelektualnej i duchowej*, Kraków 2011, p. 123, 203.

² The Library of Carmelite Convent in Czerna (hereinafter referred to as BKC), sygn. Inc. 7.

³ BKC, sygn. Inc. 5.

⁴ BKC, sygn. Inc. 9.

⁵ BKC, sygn. Inc. 4.

⁶ BKC, sygn. Inc. 3.

6. *Biblia, cum postillis Nicolai de Lyra et expositionibus Guillelmi Britonis in omnes prologos s. Hieronymi et additionibus Pauli Burgensis replicisque Matthiae Doering – Nicolaus Lyra: contra perfidiam Iudaeorum, cum additionibus Francisci Moneliensis.* Ed. Paulus a Mercatello. Venezia [Io. Herbort pro] Io. de Colonia, Nic. Jenson et sociis, 31 VII 1481. 2^o ⁷
7. Thomas de Aquino s. *Catena aurea super quattuor Evangelistas.* Venezia Herm. Lichtenstein et Io. Hamman, 4 IX 1482. 2^o ⁸
8. Augustinus Aurelius s. *De Trinitate.* [Basel] Io. Amerbach, 1489. 2^o ⁹
9. *Biblia cum postillis Hugonis de Sancto Charo* [Basel, Io. Amerbach pro Ant. Koberger, I) post 29 X 1498, non post 1499, II) non post 1499, III) non post 1500, IV) non post 1501, V) 1501, VI) 1501/2, VII) paulo post 7 XI 1502]. 2^o ¹⁰
10. *Biblia cum additione Menardi monachi.* Nürnberg, Ant. Koberger, 10 XI 1478. 2^o ¹¹
11. Gratianus *Decretum.* Venezia Bern. Stagninus, 9 VIII 1487. 2^o ¹²
12. Thomas de Aquino s. *Scriptum super quarto sententiarum.* Köln, Henr. Quentell, 2 II 1480. 2^o ¹³
13. Schedel Hartmann *Liber Chronicarum*, Lat. Nürnberg, Ant. Koberger, 12 VII 1493. 2^o ¹⁴
14. Petrarca Francesco *Opera.* Lat. Ed. Sebastianus Brant (?) Basel, Io. Amerbach, 1496, 2^o ¹⁵

That not too big a collection of books accounts for the following thematic divisions: Bible and comments, concordances, theology, canon law, liturgics, preaching, history, literature. In terms of numbers, the fifteenth-century library resources of the Convent in Czerna presents itself as follows:

S.N.	Thematic Division	Number of Bibliographic Items
1.	Bible and comments	3
2.	Concordances	1
3.	Theology	5
4.	Liturgics	1
5.	Canon Law	1
6.	Preaching	1
7.	History	1
8.	Literature	1

⁷ BKC – not.

⁸ BKC, sygn. Inc. 8.

⁹ BKC, sygn. Inc. 1.

¹⁰ BKC – not.

¹¹ BKC, sygn. Inc.2.

¹² BKC – not.

¹³ BKC, sygn. Inc.10.

¹⁴ BKC, sygn. Inc. 6.

¹⁵ BKC – not.

The map of publishing houses, that we may specify based on the collection of incunabula, apparently encompasses six cities in Europe at that time, in which the art of publishing developed fastest and proved a very high technological advancement. These are: Bologna, Basel, Venice, Strassburg, Nuremberg, Colony.

When reviewing the printing centres and the typographic publishing houses represented in the collection of Tarnów incunabula, the XV-century Helvetia (now Switzerland) with its crucial printing centre deserves attention – Basel, which has played a significant role in the typographic output of contemporary Europe. There is no doubt that the manufacture of books in Basel had close connections with the area of southern Germany and was one of those cities, by means of which the Germanic world came into contact with the Italian Renaissance for the first time, while Basel itself became the centre of German humanism in the era of the development of great woodcut art¹⁶. In the collection in question, there are four prints that are derived from this centre: Ioannes Nivicellensis *Concordantiae Bibliae et Canonum*, Augustinus Aurelius s. *De Trinitate*, *Biblia cum postillis Hugonis de Sancto Charo*, Petrarca Francesco *Opera*.

German printing was developing rapidly in the XV century. In the collection described, it is represented by the most outstanding publishing houses of its era: Cologne, Nuremberg and Strasbourg, in which the printing art was of a high standard. Two prints come from: Nuremberg (*Biblia cum additione Menardi monachi*, Schedel Hartmann *Liber Chronicarum*) and Strasbourg (Gritsch Joannes *Quadragesimale*, Duranti Guillelmus *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*) and one print comes from Cologne typography: Thomas de Aquino s. *Scriptum super quarto sententiarum*.

The third important printing centre in the XV century was an Italian one. Its output in the collection described is represented through two topographies in Bologna (Sirectus Antonius *Formalitates moderniores de mente Scoti*) and Venice (Thomas de Aquino *Opuscula*, *Biblia, cum postillis Nicolai de Lyra et expositionibus Guillelmi Britonis in omnes prologos s. Hieronymi et additionibus Pauli Burgensis replicisque Matthiae Doering – Nicolaus Lyra: contra perfidiam Iudaeorum, cum additionibus Francisci Moneliensis*, Thomas de Aquino s. *Catena aurea super quattuor Evangelistas*, Gratianus *Decretum*).

All of the XV-century prints found in the library old resources in Czerna were printed in Latin and constituted the output of the printing workshops located in six urban centres overall. All of the printers mentioned below played a significant role in the development of European printing, e.g.: Henryk de Haarlem and Jan Walbeck (Bologne), Michał Furter (Basel), Jan Amerbach (Basel), Antoni Koberger (Nuremberg) or G. Husner (Strasbourg).

The content of the incunabula of the Czerna library, including the diversity of the theological "creativity" of its era, is quite interesting. It is worth emphasising that the church libraries through the ages stored the Bible, its numerous commentaries, the works of recognised theologians or in the field of church law and preaching. Theology, namely the science about God, was the queen of all sciences in the Middle Ages¹⁷. Works of a synthetic

¹⁶ Especially due to the great council which took place here in the years of 1431-1449. Cf. S. Dahl, *Dzieje książki*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1965, p. 165.

¹⁷ J.M. Marszalska, *Piętnastowieczny księgozbiór Biblioteki Wyższego Seminarium Duchownego w Tarnowie*, ABMK, 80/2003, pp. 179-202.

nature, capturing the entirety of faith and morality (e.g. theological summa) were – especially in the Middle Ages – very popular¹⁸.

Even though the collection of the incunabula in Czerna is small, it undoubtedly contains the works of great importance to the culture and history of the European medieval theology. There are various editions of the Bible in it: the Venetian edition from the publishing house of Antoni Koberger – of 10 November 1478¹⁹; of 31 July 1481 – with the commentaries of Franciscan Nicholas of Lira, William Britto, Paul Burgendis and St Jerome²⁰, and a bible concordance issued by Johannes Nivicellensis on 31 January 1489.²¹

In the Middle Ages the sentences and summa, the aim of which was to introduce the people to the truths of faith and to explain the basic theological concepts, were very popular²². Dominican Thomas Aquinas is the most prominent representative of the medieval theology. The library owns his *Opuscula*, issued in Venice in 1490²³, and *Catena aurea super quattuor Evangelistas*, issued also in Venice in 1482²⁴, as well as *Scriptum super quarto sententiarum*, issued in Cologne in 1480.²⁵ The works by St Augustine were especially popular in the Catholic Church. In the monastic library in the stock of incunabula, there is one of his works – *De Trinitate*, issued in Basel in 1489.²⁶

Liturgy as the science of content and form of the cult of the Catholic Church is a science on the verge of dogmatics and the canonic law. As an independent theological discipline, it developed in the West in the IX century, thanks to writers such as Alcuin or Amalarius of Metz²⁷. William Durand's *Rationale divinorum officiorum* was one of the most popular and widespread works. It was a liturgical treaty originated in Italy around 1286. Its author explained the sense of the Christian liturgy and described the meaning of signs and gestures. This work, in the Strasbourg edition of 1488, has been preserved in the monastery library.²⁸

Besides the books on theology in the monastic collection of the XV century book, a work used for preaching purposes can be found. It may be exemplified by *Quadragesimale* by *Ioannes Gritsch*, issued in Strasbourg in 1484.²⁹ Law was a significant source of knowledge, the comprehension of which was necessary in pastoral work. The resource includes a monumental work of medieval casuistry by Gratian *Decretum*, issued in Venice in 1487.³⁰ This treaty was very popular in the Middle Ages, for centuries it served as a textbook of church law.

¹⁸ A. Świerk, *Średniowieczna Biblioteka klasztoru Kanoniku Regularnych św. Augustyna w Żaganiu*, Wrocław 1965, p. 69-71; J. Rył, *Biblioteka katedralna w Gnieźnie*, ABMK, 33/1976, p. 237-297; J.M. Marszalska, op. cit. pp. 179-202.

¹⁹ BKC, sygn. Inc. 10.

²⁰ BKC, sygn. Inc. 6.

²¹ BKC, sygn. Inc. 2.

²² A. Świerk, *Średniowieczna Biblioteka klasztoru Kanoniku Regularnych św. Augustyna w Żaganiu*, pp. 80-81.

²³ BKC, sygn. Inc. 9.

²⁴ BKC, sygn. Inc. 8.

²⁵ BKC, sygn. Inc. 10.

²⁶ BKC, sygn. Inc. 1.

²⁷ J.M. Marszalska, op. cit., p. 186.

²⁸ BKC, sygn. Inc. 3.

²⁹ BKC, sygn. Inc. 4.

³⁰ BKC – nie not.

Evaluating the content of this small collection, the dissertation *Chronica mundi* by Hartmann Schedel issued in Nuremberg in 1493, very popular in the Middle Ages, should be mentioned.³¹ Completing the review of the substantive content of the collection, it is necessary to indicate the presence of one work of literature, namely *Opera* by Francesco Petrarca, published in Basel in 1496.³²

The collection of the incunabula in the library in Czerna is not a collection of one place and thus of one religious environment. Therefore, as far as it is concerned, it is hard to draw deeper conclusions concerning the very act of collecting it and the demand for philosophical and theological literature that shaped its religious attitude. However, it must be emphasised that even though the collection of the incunabula from the library of the monastery in Czerna is provenance and thematically diverse, it is in a sense an expression of religious and intellectual culture of the diocesan and religious clergy of its time³³.

The incunabula currently stored in the collections of the library of the monastery in Czerna are not a provably homogenous group of books. They come from church institutions and from individuals, including the clergy. This is evidenced by the provenance records:

1. from the Reformed Franciscan Church in Przemyśl – *Conventui Praemyslensis Reformatorum post obiit applicatur*³⁴. The record is undated;
2. from the Parish Church in Krzeszowice – *Ex libris Ecclesiae Krzeszovicensis*³⁵. The record is undated;
3. from Stanisław Prokop of Gołuchów Gołuchowski, the apostolic protonotary, parish priest in Bejsce near Pińczów and royal secretary – *Conventus Sancti Deserti Carmelitarum Discalceatorum 1666. Ex donatione Perillustris ac Rndi Dni Stanislai Procopij de Goluchow Goluchowski Parochi Beijsensis Protonotarii Apostoli SRM Secretarij. Oretur pro eo*³⁶;
4. from Konstanty Macewicz – *Wielebnemu Jmci Xiędzu Sołtysiak Prowicjalowi Zakonu i Przeorowi Konwentu oo. Karmelitów Bosych na Czerney, ofiaruje Konstanty Macewicz*³⁷;
5. from priest Wincenty Smoczyński, the parish priest in Tęczynek – *X Wincenty Smoczyński, 1864 oraz Ks. Dr Wincenty Smoczyński Proboszcz w Tęczynku*³⁸.

A few comments should also be made in respect of the binding of the incunabula. A part of them has a binding from the era of Thomas de Aquino s. *Catena aurea super quattuor Evangelistas*, *Biblia cum postillis Hugonis de Sancto Charo*, *Biblia cum additione Menardi monachi*, Thomas de Aquino s. *Scriptum super quarto sententiarum*, Augustinus Aurelius s. *De Trinitate*, Schedel Hartmann *Liber Chronicarum*. It may be dated to the first half of the XVI century at its latest.³⁹ The others: Sirectus Antonius *Formalitates moderniores de mente Scoti*, Ioannes Nivicellensis *Concordantiae Bibliae et Canonum*, Thomas de Aquino

³¹ BKC, sygn. Inc. 6.

³² BKC – not.

³³ W. Graczyk, op. cit., p. 132.

³⁴ BKC, sygn. Inc. 6.

³⁵ BKC, sygn. Inc.10.

³⁶ BKC, sygn. Inc. 2

³⁷ BKC, sygn. Inc. 1

³⁸ BKC, sygn. Inc. 7; BKC, sygn. Inc. 4; BKC, sygn. Inc. 5.

³⁹ W. Graczyk, op. cit., p. 130.

Opuscula, Gritsch Joannes *Quadragesimale*, Duranti Guillelmus *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, *Biblia, cum postillis Nicolai de Lyra et expositionibus Guillelmi Britonis in omnes prologos s. Hieronymi et additionibus Pauli Burgensis replicisque Matthiae Doering – Nicolaus Lyra: contra perfidiam Iudaeorum, cum additionibus Francisci Moneliensis, Gratianus Decretum, Petrarca Francesco Opera*, have a secondary binding.

The binding that originates from this era is usually a beech or oak plank covered with brown leather. The surface is divided into the middle field or a mirror, and the surrounding boarders. The corners of the front and rear fixtures are provided with protective, elaborate fittings or bumps. The books are closed with one or two buckles. The surfaces of the bindings preserved (sometimes already a bit blurred) figural, geometric or floral motifs. Unfortunately, not all of the bindings from that era are well preserved. Some of them already show traces of the passage of time and devastation. This is evidenced by, among others, missing corner fittings, traces of clasps, tears in the leather on the surface of both sides of the binding, and finally a broken board of the binding (Augustinus Aurelius s. *De Trinitate, Biblia cum postillis Hugonis de Sancto Charo*). The remaining incunabula have a secondary binding, probably made after the original one had been damaged. As a rule, such a binding was a quite stiff cardboard which was covered with marbled paper. The spine was often bound in brown leather or light yellow parchment. Such bindings do not have any artistic value. The vast majority of the incunabula framed in this way come from the book collection of priest W. Smoczyński⁴⁰.

Even though it is not a large book collection in the quantitative sense, it reflects the interests and needs of the environment. The fact that those books served the monks in deepening their knowledge, especially theological, is evidenced by the traces of reading (smudged corners of the pages or underlined text fragments). Reading the book, for a Carmelite friar, was an important element of his intellectual and spiritual formation, a specific path on which the friar went towards the One whom he wanted to offer his life behind the walls of the enclosure.

The fifteenth-century incunabula within collection of library of Carmelite convent in Czerna Summary

The monastery dedicated to St Elijah in Czerna was founded by Agnes of Teczynska Firlej in 1631. From its beginning the monastery collected works both for the celebration of liturgy and so as to deepen the knowledge and spirituality in the areas of asceticism, preaching and theology. Books usually came from donations and legacies. Currently in the resource library of old prints in Czerna there are 14 incunabula. The incunabula are not uniform provenance band books. They come from the ecclesiastical institutions, from individual persons and from the clergy. Some of the incunabula have an original binding, other have been replaced or refurbished. Though it is a small collection of books, in terms of quality it reflects the interests and needs of the environment. The smudged corners of the pages and the highlights made of a part of the text can testify that these books were used by monks in deepening their knowledge.

⁴⁰ W. Graczyk, op. cit., p. 130.

Keywords: incunabula, Carmelite, convent, Czerna, books

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