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RELIGIOUS CONTENT IN MEDIEVAL
SCHOOL HANDBOOKS AND READERS

The institutions and behaviour we observe in the area of religion are
only the result of flourishing ideas; if the ideas cease to flourish,
different kinds of behaviour decline and institutions become defunct.
Any research into religiosity should be preceded by the study of
religious ideas for two methodological reasons: for the sake of schol-
arly completeness and because they provide us with a conceptual or
even a theoretical frame. If the assessment of medieval devotion
is dependent on creative sources processing ideas (texts and works
of arts), we have to include them as fundamental, primary research
objects, not just as surface phenomena resulting from historical pro-
cesses. Finally, the efficiency factor: as our access to the observable
religious phenomena in past ages is not so simple as today, we depend
on those sources not only because we strongly believe them to be
primary, but because they are sometimes the *only ones* available.

In the Middle Ages schools and teaching methods and materials
used in education were important sources of religious ideas and means
of their transfer and inculcation. My article discusses examples of the
devotional issues occurring in schoolbooks not as the main subjects
of teaching, but as secondary motifs used for the sake of translating
scholarly topics into a fully Christian idiom.

Books selected for my research contain works on poetry and parts
of school curricula, especially the almost fully medieval reader *Auctores
octo morales*.

Handbooks on grammar, rhetoric, or theory of literature may on
the side mention issues relating to theology, exegesis, and liturgical
elements such as religious instruction and devotional practices. As the
same handbooks were known to clerics, the non-theological content
of the books gives us the idea of general education of the clergy, who

organised the process of Christian enculturation through liturgy and in addition to traditional schooling.

Typical of the whole educational system of the time, for respective authors and even works, is the coexistence of education and upbringing. Education of the day was mainly preoccupied with upbringing, and it was not until the Enlightenment that more emphasis was put on learning.

In the presented research I followed the theory of spiritualisation and transcendentalisation of the sacred. Its practical appearance was *sacramentalism*, a concept of the Church as the only dispenser of the sacraments, and of sacraments as the only forms of contacts between man and God available in this world, thence the only forms of the presence of the sacred in the human world. This concept developed in the period after the great Eucharistic discussion and its consequence, the Gregorian revolution of the 11th century.[1]

I

LITURGY, FORMS OF PIETY, AND TRADITIONS

Focusing on school education, one cannot forget that of equal significance, as regards the rudiments of faith and required behaviour, was liturgy and the pertinent religious instruction. Cultural implications of liturgy are multiple; they exceed the legitimisation of faith, though they can be given this attribute as a generic term.[2] What matters here is, however, a full range of issues outside ritual: popular culture (for example festivities in towns during liturgical holidays), a calendar, time, chronology (the system of measuring time itself; hagiographic, historical, and also private, within care of the souls of the dead, commemoration), fraternities (individual chapels, holidays, processions, meetings), theatre and stage performances (in the background liturgical drama and in general liturgical means of expression, forms, and subject matters).

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[1] I presented this more thoroughly in *Teatr i sacrum w średniowieczu. Religia – cywilizacja – estetyka* (Wrocław, 2001).

[2] Common uniform behaviour fills up culturally meaningful reality and confirms the authenticity of faith ('aura of factuality' by Geertz; orthopraxis), cf. Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images 400–1200* (Cambridge, 1998); 'religion of types of behaviour', cf. Dąbrówka, *Teatr i sacrum*.

As far as the aspects of liturgy are concerned, one must not forget about preaching, often discussed with regard to its structure and content, yet most closely relating to liturgy.

Iconographic programmes of didactic, memorative, moralist, and exegetic nature[3] serve to explain and propagate consecutive motifs of the Catholic faith such as the Ten Commandments, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the three theological virtues, the four cardinal virtues, the seven deadly sins, the seven (previously six) acts of mercy.[4] Each of these cycles has been widely depicted both in literature and iconography, the effects of which should be included among the factors confirming faith in its specific manifestations. Forms of piety have left a number of traces in literature, even in the comic genre (satirical parodies, jokes) and in ritual dramas (the cathedral festival of fools, numerous rituals in folklore), and finally in children's games.

I repeated a similar conviction in my preface to the work entitled *Średniowiecze. Korzenie* [The Middle Ages: Roots],[5] where I devoted the second chapter to an example of the handbook on liturgy (*Codex Mathildis*)[6] and returned to the matters of liturgy and forms of piety in a number of other places.

Prayers were indeed fundamental texts for learning the elements of a language – both Latin and vernacular languages. The first text in medieval English primers is the *Ave Maria*.[7] Cathedral choristers together with their teacher celebrated the Saturday office of the

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[3] Cf. recently Miriam Gill, 'The Role of Images in Monastic Education: The Evidence from Wall Painting in Late Medieval England', in George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (eds.), *Medieval Monastic Education* (London and New York, 2000), 117–35.

[4] Rulers and saints are presented as the performers of the acts of mercy, e.g. St Hedwig of Silesia in the miniature of her *Life* from 1353; cf. Curt Schweicher, 'Barmherzigkeit (Werke der)', in Engelbert Kirschbaum (ed.), *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie* (Rome, 1968), i, col. 245–52.

[5] Andrzej Dąbrówka, *Średniowiecze. Korzenie* (Warsaw, 2005), 9: 'liturgy cannot be separated from religious instruction and from the upbringing which uses art, because liturgical books, or the ones which teach liturgy, were also educational aids'.

[6] Cf. *Kodeks Matyldy*: *księga obrzędów z kartami dedykacyjnymi. Codex Mathildis: liber officiorum cum foliis dedicationis*, ed. Brygida Kürbis *et al.* (Cracow, 2000).

[7] Georgiana Donavin, 'Alphabets and Rosary Beads in Chaucer's An ABC', in Scott D. Troyan (ed.), *Medieval Rhetoric: A Casebook* (New York, 2004), 25–39, esp. 33.

Blessed Virgin Mary.[8] One can even speak of Mary's patronage over the seven arts, and in particular of promoting in her cult and artistic tradition the skill of writing, and especially reading.[9] Not surprisingly, model poetry reached for the Marian subject, for example a long rhythmic poem in the *Ars poetica* of Gervase of Melkley. Eustache Deschamps mentions in his groundbreaking art of dictamen *L'art de dictier* (1392) that the *sirventes* genre is a five-strophe poem, such as the *chant royal*, which usually speaks of the Virgin Mary or of the Lord God.[10] The appearance of the Polish hymn *Bogurodzica* [Godes Mother] from this perspective may not be that mysterious, and the liturgical and educational context augments my thesis on the milieu of Gniezno Cathedral as the cradle of this 'mother of Polish songs'.[11]

Didactic works of religious content were compiled by great poets. Chaucer wrote a Marian prayer in the form of an English *abecedarius* designated for adults – the French at the London court, who could also benefit by it in learning English – for he gathers, apart from the Marian vocabulary, names of figures in social life and courtly titles.[12] The structure of verses with alphabetical first lines is compared with a rosary, the early form of which was a loose collection of beads to count consecutive words of praise for Mary; the circularity of its structure (the last sentence travesties the first one) and the recurrence of component Marian apostrophes are of prayerful and memorative nature.[13] The greatest medieval

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[8] Testified for the cathedrals in Salisbury, Exeter, Winchester, Durham, and for monastic houses; Nicholas Orme, *Education in the West of England, 1066–1548* (Exeter, 1976), 72, 44; *idem, English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London, 1973), 246–7.

[9] Numerous images and such accounts with *Maria* are discussed by Donavin, 'Alphabets', 34.

[10] *L'art de dictier*, 82, quotation after: Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi, 'Eustache Dechamps' *L'art de dictier*: Just What Kind of Poetics Is It? Or: How Robert O. Payne Launched My Career in Deschamps Studies', in John M. Hill and Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi (eds.), *The Rhetorical Poetics of the Middle Ages: Reconstructive Polyphony. Essays in Honor of Robert O. Payne* (Madison, 2000), 29–44, esp. 38. The printed edition: Eustache Deschamps' *L'art de dictier*, ed. Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi (East Lansing, 1994).

[11] 'Matka pieśni polskich', *Pamiętnik Literacki*, xcvi, 2 (2005), 51–63.

[12] Donavin, 'Alphabets', 31.

[13] *Ibidem*, 33.

Polish poet, Władysław of Gielniów (d. 1505), often had recourse to alphabetical forms.[14]

The liturgical circumstances of the emergence of vernacular literature get increasingly well described, but even here the tendencies appear to blur this connection, which is proved for example by the French practice, according to which it is said that the oldest poem in French is the 'chant of Eulalie', not the 'sequence of St Eulalie'.

Certainly, there is no exaggeration in Evelyn Vitz's claim, who says, propagating the idea of 'liturgy as education', that

> the Catholic liturgy was the major source of education about their faith for laymen and -women of the Middle Ages. It was in church, and through church services, that people learned what it meant to be a Christian; that was their most important religious 'school'.[15]

This happened literally within the implementation among monastic novitiate (usually as regards the oblates) of chanting and liturgy, which entailed 'intoning Psalms and hymns, reciting litanies, reading lessons [performing the reading], and singing' during canonical hours and at Mass as well.[16]

The cultural range of liturgy was not noticed (as Vitz explains) as a result of ignoring it in previous syntheses on medieval religious life and depreciating (after the Second Vatican Council) the medieval liturgy as one inaccessible to the faithful – incomprehensible, inaudible, almost excluding, and certainly keeping the listener in passivity,[17] which was followed by – also to a certain extent the 'post-counciliar' – dismissiveness towards popular religion.

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[14] Wiesław Wydra, *Władysław z Gielniowa. Z dziejów średniowiecznej poezji polskiej* (Poznań, 1992); Roman Mazurkiewicz (ed.), *Cantando cum citharista. W pięćsetlecie śmierci Władysława z Gielniowa* (Warsaw, 2006).

[15] Evelyn B. Vitz, 'Liturgy as Education in the Middle Ages', in Ronald B. Begley and Joseph W. Koterski (eds.), *Medieval Education* (New York, 2005), 20.

[16] Susan Boynton, 'Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education', in Ferzoco and Muessig (eds.), *Medieval Monastic Education*, 7–20, esp. 8, 12–16.

[17] Vitz quotes as proof the poverty of parts devoted to liturgy in the works by André Vauchez, Rosaline and Christopher Brooke and others (Vitz, 'Liturgy', footnote 6, p. 31). Polish historians of liturgy were in this respect more diligent (Paweł Sczaniecki, *Służba Boża w dawnej Polsce. Studia o Mszy św.*, series 2 [Poznań, 1966]; Bogusław Nadolski, *Liturgika*, 4 vols. [Poznań, 1989–92], chap.: 'Zgromadzenie liturgiczne jako proces komunikacji' [i, 91–128]). The civilising dimension of liturgy is proven in the works by Yitzhak Hen.

Evelyn Vitz's exclusion of the sacraments from the liturgy circle and its limitation to church services is inaccurate. Even if not each of the sacraments is closely linked to the 'church' liturgy (the links of Confession, Marriage, and also of Anointing of the Sick are weaker), they function inseparably within the system and regulate numerous attitudes. The sacraments partially go beyond the common church liturgy, yet liturgy does not only mean services in front of the high altar, and the sacraments are not only isolated experiences, they are the organisational form of religious life as a whole. Confession and Penance are linked to such phenomena as pilgrimages, charity, and foundations. The whole system of social control, ranging from the home and neighbour observation, through the confession diagnostics, to legal and canon regulations, can be associated with marriage. The Anointing of the Sick, usually performed by the deathbed at home of the sick person, also had its own liturgy. It was usually combined with the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, and took place in a wider ritual context of vigils, prayers, and chants. The oldest Polish dramatic text *Skarga umierającego* [The Complaint of the Dying Man] (in a copy from 1463) was indeed a ritual drama performed by the deathbed.

Liturgy was perceived already by the contemporaries as a source and guarantor of moral norms. Their rather systematic description and continuous explanation were the subject of sermons, especially of the Sunday cycle.[18] David d'Avray used the picture of drops of water wearing a channel in the rock to illustrate this activity.[19]

Jussi Hanska, in the conclusion to his conception of research on the corpus of sermons, of which only some percentage have been

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[18] Jussi Hanska, 'Reconstructing the Mental Calendar of Medieval Preaching: A Method and Its Limits. An Analysis of Sunday Sermons', in Carolyn Muessig (ed.), *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2002), 293–315.

[19] Quoted as *drip-drop method of inculcating beliefs* (Hanska) or *drip-drop method* (this written by Muessig in the preface to *Preacher, Sermon*, 8). Considering the fact that Schneyer (Johann Baptist Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350*, 11 vols. [Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 43/1–11, Münster i.W., 1969–90]) gathered for the period of only 200 years some 140 thousand confirmed manuscripts, these drops were numerous. This method was presented by David L. D'Avray in 'Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons', in Nicole Bériou and David L. D'Avray (eds.), *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons: Essays on Marriage, Death, History and Sanctity* (Spoleto, 1994), 3–29.

critically edited,[20] uses the hypotheses of 'mental calendar of medieval preaching', which aims to reconstruct a thematic order in which sermons were put in the liturgical calendar. The hypothesis, so far tested on a few examples,[21] claims that the subject of sermons for a given Sunday is common for the whole corpus of the sermons delivered everywhere by parish priests, even if they are not simple homilies designated for readings common to all the missals. Thus, for example, the second Sunday after the Epiphany has the readings from the Gospel of St John, the chapter on the wedding in Galilean Cana, and most sermons for this Sunday concern the ethics of marriage.[22] This means that, having examined the preaching corpus according the division into respective Sundays, we would find it easier to embrace its vast expanse and gain an insight into the 'preaching academic year', if this relevant school analogy can be used in this place.

As much as we cannot ignore preaching in our discussion on liturgy, by the same token we cannot forget sacramentals while discussing sacraments – they were distinguished canonically when the number of sacraments was finally established at the close of the 12th century.

It would be more comfortable to extend the term 'forms of piety' to the whole area of practices when the participation in liturgy was implemented, also in sacraments and sacramentals, as well as in following preaching directives, such as for example the acts of mercy. The behaviour and actions related to them – precisely the forms of piety – were the school of a gradual, versatile enculturation, which happened when the opportunity arouse, through participation. We never say: 'and now we shall enculturate' but we do this during

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[20] Jussi Hanska quotes the edition of sermons by Peregrinus of Opole as one of few exceptions (*Peregrini de Opole Sermones de tempore et de sanctis, e codicibus manu scriptis primum edidit Richardus Tatarzyński* [Warsaw, 1997]), cf. Hanska, 'Reconstructing the Mental Calendar', 300.

[21] Hanska states that the sermons for four Sundays have been examined relatively systematically and in a big corpus, and their thematic profile has been established, the others are yet to be examined, which causes the fact that the method of the 'mental calendar' is not, as a matter of fact, confirmed, 'Reconstructing the Mental Calendar', 305.

[22] This was established by David L. D'Avray, 'The Gospel of the Marriage Feast of Cana and Marriage Preaching in France', in Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (eds.), *The Bible in the Medieval World* (Oxford, 1985), 207–24, quoted after: Hanska, 'Reconstructing the Mental Calendar', 300.

socialisation and the participation in social life – 'by osmosis'[23]: nobody learns hard, neither writing or reading skills are needed, there are neither teachers nor exams, nor a method for the verification of this specific education.

The social dimension of this Church, parish education should be encapsulated as follows: the level of being accustomed to religion, or the scope and accessibility or range of the application of forms of piety proved themselves in a practical exam: in the effectiveness of the functioning of an individual in a society, as religious enculturation within homogeneity of that time served as a benchmark of accomplished socialisation. One has to define the Catholic orthopractice, produced by a community, through participation and behavioural practices,[24] as a foundation for the social order, memory, and a family, local, and national tradition. A child got the introduction to religious life from his or her parents, and next community members mutually preserve and confirm their faith and knowledge of the religious system. Showing faith was an active aspect of devotional practices: *confessio*; this important component of the sacramentalistic view of the Church is embraced by the Sacrament of Confirmation,[25] which according to sociology is a commitment of the members of a group for the active extension of their religious community – the fabric of social relations.

The same is said by Eberhard in the poem being the homily to Paul's Epistle to the Romans: 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Rom 10:10). Saying the poem, the figure of the Poetry, supposedly only demonstrates rhetoric figures of thought, yet it recommends, which is theologically and educationally important, that 'faith should be supported by deeds',[26] or education should be supported by examples in order to be able to get back on the straight and narrow: education

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[23] Vitz, 'Liturgy', 21.

[24] This term has been established on the analogy of orthodoxy – *orthopractice* or *orthopraxis* to the compliance of behaviour with the rule, firstly the monastic one, and next with what is accepted in the Church; *orthopraxis* – the concept by Paul Gehl, '*Competens Silentium*: Varieties of Monastic Silence in the Medieval West', *Viator*, 18 (1987), 125–60, quoted after: Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 1.

[25] It is ignored in Vitz's discussion (after all a marginal one) on the sacraments, 'Liturgy', 32.

[26] William M. Purcell, 'Eberhard the German and the Labyrinth of Learning: Grammar, Poesy, Rhetoric, and Pedagogy in *Laborintus*', *Rhetorica*, xi, 2 (1993), 95–118, esp. 110.

teaches, an example exerts an influence.[27] This is addressed to both the present and future teacher, priest, and 'shepherd'. He should watch himself so that his charge's complaints could not reach him:

> Acclamans aliis, pastori dicit aperte:
> 'Cum tu nos doceas plurima, pauca facis.
> Quod tua lingua sonat, manus hoc operetur'; at ille:
> 'Non pensare manum, sed mea verba velis.' [28]

This is not only the paraphrase of the sentence on justification and belief but it is one step further: there are also, in addition to thought and speech, deeds, and they, as a matter of fact, shape moral education. Does the pre-scholastic tradition of the teacher's charismatic nature (Stephen Jaeger) still sound in such a theory of education, or is it an already fully implemented ideology of imitating Christ? They both are in conformity with the behavioural dimension of Catholicism: a religious life goes also with the course of individual behaviour, which has its own topography and dynamics, and so a history. There is some ostentation or even spectacular quality in some forms of such behaviour, which should be kept in mind while thinking of medieval public rituals and theatrical traditions. This phenomenon can be found in the non-liturgical context, as the aim of practices in the handbook on *meditation* by Ludolph of Saxony.[29]

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II

THEOLOGICAL CONTENT IN *ARTES POETRIAE*

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Before I present the outcome of my observations of medieval *poetriae*, I shall put the problem into some educational context, so as to place the matter in the scheme of *artes liberales*.

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[27] 'Exemplum, dogma, duo sunt: hoc instruit, illud // Allicit. Errantem sic revocare potes'; *Laborintus*, lines 533–4, *ibidem*, 111.

[28] *Laborintus*, lines 553–7, *ibidem*, 111.

[29] Speaking of a non-verbal level of emotional participation, which is the aim of Passion meditation, he mentions, among others, tears and gestures, which constitute the so called *actus conformationis*. Franz O. Schuppisser, 'Schauen mit den Augen des Herzens. Zur Methodik der spätmittelalterlichen Passionsmeditation besonders in der *Devotio Moderna* und bei den Augustinern', in Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger (eds.), *Die Passion Christi in Literatur und Kunst des Spätmittelalters* (Tübingen, 1993), 169–210, esp. 190.

We can note quotations from the Bible[30] and liturgical poetry[31] even in the commentaries on grammatical works. The timetable of a certain school (after 1500) suggests that teaching there took place in five classes, the first three were mostly devoted to grammar (the *Ars minor* by Donatus and the *Doctrinale* by Alexander of Villedieu). The two older classes practised inflection on mainly religious texts (hymns,[32] sequences, prayers, and the Gospels) and syntax on the second part of the *Doctrinale*. This timetable is typical.[33]

New poetics can be considered to be the manifestation of a para-digmatic transformation within the system of education at the close of the 12th century, consisting in the introduction of a generation of new handbooks and readers, written in those times, during the heyday of cathedral schools, before the first universities. Most of them were written in the first quarter of the 13th century. Among the authors it was only John of Garland who was a renowned and long serving professor at the University of Paris. James Murphy in his survey of *poetriae* of this generation writes that the fame of the *Poetria nova* overshadowed the other five.[34]

The above mentioned *poetriae* were later in use at universi-ties but they stemmed from the tradition of cathedral schools in France, England, and Germany. It is not a coincidence that they were written approximately during the Fourth Lateran Council, which was

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[30] Gillian R. Evans, 'The Use of Biblical Examples in Ralph of Beauvais' Com-mentary on *Donatus*', *Studi medievali*, 24 (1983).

[31] Susanne Baumgarte, 'Der Kommentar zum *Speculum grammaticae*. Ein Beispiel für Schulkommentierung im 14. Jahrhundert', in Klaus Grubmüller (ed.), *Schul-literatur im späten Mittelalter* (Munich, 2000), 165–241, esp. 205 – hymns and sequences quoted in the commentary on *Speculum grammaticae*.

[32] On the educational function of hymns see Susan Boynton, 'The Didactic Function and Context of Eleventh-Century Glossed Hymnaries', in Andreas Haug, Christoph März and Lorenz Welker (eds.), *Der lateinische Hymnus im Mittelalter. Überlieferung – Ästhetik – Ausstrahlung* (Kassel, 2004).

[33] Ulrike Bodemann and Christoph Dabrowski, 'Handschriften der Ulmer Lateinschule', in Grubmüller (ed.), *Schulliteratur*, 38.

[34] The six Latin works are: Matthew of Vendôme's *Ars versificatoria* (ca. 1175), Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria nova* (ca. 1200–15) and *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi* (after 1213); Gervase of Melkley's *Ars versificaria* (ca. 1215); John of Garland's *Parisiana poetria de arte prosayca, metrica et rithmica* (ca. 1220, revised ca. 1231–5); and Eberhard the German's *Laborintus* (after 1213, before 1280). James J. Murphy, 'The Arts of Poetry and Prose', chap. 2 in *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* (Cambridge and New York, 2005), 42–67, esp. 43–4.

groundbreaking for educational matters, such as the declaration of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, who stated that he had written the *Poetria nova* 'for the Pope' (Innocent III, who presided over the Council), which is not accidental either.

It is easier to understand not only the origins of these compendia but also surprising abundance of theological considerations in the art of poetry, when the recapitulative character of medieval aesthetics is accepted.[35] Speaking of handbooks on poetry, we consider their ideological part but we do not regard it as a sign of the times which produced such handbooks, or a burden which should be abandoned in order to get to the 'pure' literary tradition – quite the contrary, as an intrinsic source of ideas, topics, and motifs for poets at the stage of *inventio*. In this respect these are contributions not only to poetics but also to aesthetics.

Astonishingly much, strictly theological content can be found even in late works, such as Provençal poetics, which was edited by Guilhem Molinier. The manuscript, completed in 1356, was entitled by him *Las Leys d'Amors*.[36] Theoretically, some secularising tendencies should be noticeable already here. Meanwhile we find there the following chapters: 'On God's Great Power', 'On the Essence of Divinity', 'On Divine Justice', 'On the Last Judgement after the General Resurrection'.[37]

This does not prove any religious bigotry of the authors or the main editor of this influential poetics. The matter may be explained by local circumstances: the region of Toulouse was in the 12th–13th centuries the area of fights against the Albigensian heresy, so the concern of vernacular literary milieus about the theological correctness is understandable; this is how Veronica Faser[38] explains why this poetics was based on the work by Bede,[39] which was above suspicion as taking examples from the Bible. It is more difficult to explain the popularity

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[35] I devoted to the aesthetic of recapitulation the sixth, central chapter of the above mentioned dissertation *Teatr i sacrum*, 249–383.

[36] One of the two extant prose versions ed. Joseph Anglade (Bibliothèque Meridionale, 17–20, Toulouse, 1919–20).

[37] Warner F. Patterson, *Three Centuries of French Poetic Theory: A Critical History of the Chief Arts of Poetry in France (1328–1650)*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor, 1935), i, 38.

[38] Veronica Faser, 'The Influence of the Venerable Bede on the Fourteenth Century Occitan Treatise *Las Leys d'Amors*', *Rhetorica*, xi, 1 (1993), 51–61.

[39] Beda Venerabilis, *De arte metrica*, in Patrologia Latina, 90, col. 156–76.

of the poetics by Molinier. Its influence on the whole of Romance Europe and the then English Normandy has been proven, and it also[40] stretched as far as Germany.

Let us now take a closer look at a few medieval poetics, in which we can find some Church motifs used to exemplify poetological concepts.

Matthew of Vendôme, *Ars Versificatoria* (ca. 1175). As it is typical for the first art of poetry of the new generation, it begins with a literary portrait of the pope (I, 50; 52 verses), the first in a series. The preface teaches how to differentiate descriptions of characters (I, 30), and to avoid frequent mistakes, which were the subject of Horace's warnings in his *Art of Poetry*. The author gathered in his description of the pope the plethora of features of a just but determined ruler, teacher, shepherd, and head of a family. He personifies the four virtues, and even stages their rivalry, which is quite exceptional for the author who put description above narration. Justice wants to outstrip Moderation, Piety wants to dominate the father, and Wisdom wants to control the other three.[41] Saying that 'the virtues carry on the dispute in front of their father', the author refers to the motif of the Four Daughters of God, the dialogue parable known from the 12th century as a dramatised homily to Psalm 84 (85). One of the versions of this homily, which I consider as a teacher's synopsis, belongs to codex 102 at the library of Gniezno Cathedral.[42] Besides, many dramatic versions of the 15th–18th centuries have been preserved.

Geoffrey of Vinsauf (de Vino Salvo), *Poetria nova*.[43] This most renowned poetics of a new generation, by an Englishman Geoffrey,

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[40] Patterson, *Three Centuries*, i, 36.

[41] Names of the virtues from the English translation, Matthew of Vendôme's *Ars versificatoria (The Art oft the Versemaker)*, transl. by Rorger P. Parr (Milwaukee, 1981), 30.

[42] I concisely presented this matter in my work *Średniowiecze. Korzenie,* chap. 9, and slightly more extensively – in my presentation 'Medieval Theatre of Schools: Educational Beginnings of Early Drama' (the conference 'School and theatre', Miskolc, Hungary, 5–7 September 2002).

[43] The edition of the corrected Latin text from the edition by Faral and the Polish translation: Godfryd de Vinsauf, *Nowa poetyka*, ed. Dorota Gacka (Warsaw, 2008). For Cracow its position in the university curriculum is confirmed by the oldest statutes of the faculty of the arts from 1404–6; the seminar on the *Poetry* by Geoffrey belonged to the 11 assignments required for the bachelor's degree; see Krzysztof Ożóg, 'Zakres i metody nauczania *septem artes* na Wydziale Sztuk

a teacher at Northampton educated in Paris,[44] begins with the dedication to Pope Innocent III (lines 1–42) which skilfully puts him in a prefigurative line behind the apostles and doctors of the Church. His virtues link him – each separately – with the apostles: Bartholomew (noble breed), Andrew (goodness), John the Evangelist (youth), Peter (faith), and Paul (wisdom); he surpasses the others in terms of one virtue: the art of eloquence, which closes the mouth of Augustine, Pope Leo, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great. This puts us in the centre of the typological method, whose development and sophistication belong to the greatest achievements of scholastic poetics.[45]

The presentation of the idea of Redemption appears first among the points of the poetics under discussion regarding the Passion, which is followed by the passage being a ready made Passion play with the trial of Jesus presented in brief (lines 1391–1402). This subject is next presented narratively, with no participation of speaking characters. This is closely linked to the lament of the Holy Cross, 'said with his voice' (469–507), presented as the example of the figure of prosopopeia.

> Crux ego rapta queror, vi rapta manuque canina
> (470) Et tactu polluta canum. Sum rapta pudenter
> A veteri, nec adhuc extorta, nec ense redempta.
> Dic, homo, nonne tibi crevi? tibi fructificavi?

Geoffrey explains the idea of Redemption by paraphrasing the motif of the Trial in Heaven (*Consilium Trinitatis*), which was in fact held in

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Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego w XV wieku', in Teresa Michałowska (ed.), *Septem artes w kształtowaniu kultury umysłowej w Polsce średniowiecznej (wybrane zagadnienia)* (Wrocław, 2007), pp. 105–24. Mikołaj of Staw lectured in 1457 on *Nova Poetria*; a credit for this subject was on the list of prerequisite requirements for taking an exam for the bachelor's degree, cf. Ulrike Bodemann, '*Cellulae actuum*. Zum Quellenwert studentischer Belegzettel des Spätmittelalters', in Grubmüller (ed.), *Schulliteratur*, 435–99, esp. 455, with the referral to the preserved examination card (*cedula artium*) in the codex 1711 at Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cracow. We are not sure, however, whether it is the handbook under discussion or any other compendium.

[44] A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066–1422* (Cambridge, 2004), 108–11; other forms: Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Vinesauf, Galfridus Anglicus, Gualterus, Galfredus/Gaufridus de Vino Salvo.

[45] The term by Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson, 'Introduction', in *iidem* (eds.), *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ii: *The Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2005).

order to answer the question presented in the treaty *Cur Deus homo* by Anselm of Canterbury: can a man – and more precisely why can a man not – be his own Redeemer and why Jesus had to become the One (1186–9):

> Sed debuit esse
> Talis homo purus aut angelus, aut Deus. Esse
> Purus non potuit, quia purum vinceret hostis
> Impurus possetque leves incurrere lapsus.

Eberhard the German, *Laborintus*.[46] He discusses briefly but to the point the issue of Redemption, dividing it into a number of questions, thus holding a kind of trial:

> (453–456) Quem posset miseris genitor nato meliorem
> Aut quem majorem mittere, quemve parem?
> Cur misit? quia tempus erat. Quare? quia laesit
> Hostis. Cur? homini perniciosus erat.[47]

These issues constitute the ideological heart of mystery plays, while the scene of the heavenly meeting, when a salutary decision is taken (*Consilium Trinitatis*), is a vital element in the structure of a later form of the eschatological mystery play ('drama of recapitulation'). Unlike a traditional mystery of Christ's Passion, which focuses on Passion and the human nature of Christ, the plays that I have described as 'drama of recapitulation' focus on the Resurrection and bring the action right to the Last Judgement, when Christ does not appear as Agnus Dei but in his whole majesty as the Judge. This group includes mystery plays that stage the action with the main human character (usually called Sinner) the same as in a morality play. They make him a witness and beneficiary of Redemption, so they clearly show that it was the establishing of the Church with Christ as its head, which served as the *aim* or the *essence* of Incarnation. The fact that the presentation of these theological principles can be found in the most influential poems, also vernacular ones, confirms my thesis that the commitment for the establishing of the Church was the chief general imperative of the aesthetics of recapitulation.

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[46] On the author see Purcell, 'Eberhard the German', 107–13.

[47] Edmond Faral (ed.), *Les arts poétiques du XIIᵉ et du XIIIᵉ siècle* (Paris, 1924), 352; Purcell, 'Eberhard the German', 107.

The above mentioned episode joins a practical demonstration of rhetorical figures which make up the whole homily by Eberhard on the essence of faith, the Divine grace, and sin – starting with the demonstration of repetition (*repetitio*: 'Sit laus, sit virtus, sit honor, sit gloria Christo!'; l. 443), and finishing (*conclusio*) with the appeal in the meaning of memento mori ('Non est certa dies mortis: re certior omni // Mors est. Erroris ergo relinque viam'; l. 519–20).

John of Garland, *Parisiana poetria*.[48] The author places in the metrical part (*Ars Rithmica*, chapter 7, lines 467–1912), among the examples of rhymed strophic verses, the legend of St Catherine (lines 782–856). According to the editor,[49] it would perfectly suit as a sequence in the office to celebrate the day of this saint. For the Polish *Dialog na uroczystość świętej Katarzyny panny i męczenniczki* [The Dialogue for the Feast of St Catherine, maiden and martyr][50] Julian Lewański has demonstrated the conformity of its content to the liturgical tradition.

Gervasius of Melkley, *Ars poetica*.[51] A few-page appendix in the fashion of *ars dictaminis,* includes the model of a letter and the model of a rhythmic poem on Virgin Mary, with a preface in prose.[52] Two verses (4 and 7) are quoted by the author in the main presentation of his poetics:

> Sempinternum temporalem
> moriturum immortalem
> virgo parit filium.[53]

Hunterian anthology.[54] A school codex, written in England before 1230, supplements with its rhetorical treatises the purely literary

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[48] *The Parisiana poetria of John of Garland*, ed., preface, transl. and footnotes Traugott Lawler (New Haven, 1974).

[49] *Ibidem*, 269.

[50] Edited in *Dramaty staropolskie. Antologia*, vi: *Dramaty religijne sceny masowej*, ed. Julian Lewański, footnotes Maria Bokszczanin (Warsaw, 1963), 137–73, the remark by Lewański on p. 676.

[51] Gervais von Melkley, *Ars poetica. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Gräbener (Münster, 1965).

[52] *Ibidem*, 230.

[53] *Ibidem*, 165, 177.

[54] Glasgow Hunterian V.8.14; in Rigg's *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature* (p. 111) as the *Hunterian Anthology*; edition (without treatises) in Bruce Harbert (ed.), *A Thirteenth-Century Anthology of Rhetorical Poems* (Toronto, 1975).

contemporary continental codex of Benediktbeuern (*Codex Buranus*, ca. 1225). The English codex includes, in addition to six important treatises (by Mathew, three by Geoffrey, and two by Gervase), a selection of 50 poems which exemplify the rules presented in treatises, among others:

5. The Fall and Salvation of a Man (*Error, humo dominas*…; 22 lines; p. 13);

7. The Praise of Ascetic Life (*Alta licet necdum penetrans*…; pp. 16–17);

8. The Murder of Thomas Becket (*Mars Cereri*…, pp. 17–18);

40. The Praise of John Grey, the bishop of Lincoln; the poem written before 1205. This matter testifies to the involvement of the writer in the contemporary developments.

The poem number 15 on the murder of Becket (1170) beats the records of schoolish conciseness – it shows 'floridly' in 16 lines the figure of the bishop and the circumstances of the incident, and it can squeeze, in conclusion, the whole martyrdom into the two lines of memorative construction:

> Quis moritur? presul. cur? pro grege. qualiter? ense.
> quando? natali. quis locus? ara Dei.

This sample lets us assess different kinds of presence of religious contents in the most important rhetorical compendia of the new type, the medieval *poetriae*. Their effect was long-lasting. Around 1475 the allegorical romance *The Court of Sapience* presents Rhetoric as the queen,[55] the seven virtues and seven liberal arts as the ladies of the court of Sapience. The praise, or definition of rhetoric,[56] included in lines 1891–1932, presents a reading list: Ovid, Homer, Vergil, Lucan, Horace, Alan, Bernard, Prudentius, and Statius, but also primary handbooks – we recognise Geoffrey: 'Who wants to learn colours,[57] let him go to: *Tria Sunt*' (inc. of the *Documentum*).

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[55] See Margaret Schlauch, 'Retoryka i studia retoryczne w średniowiecznej Anglii', *Pamiętnik Literacki*, li, 3 (1960), 11–67, esp. 61 ff., thus my discussion on this work. The Rhetoric as queen is shown in the painting by Joos van Wassenhove from the 15th c., National Gallery, London; *ibidem*, 62.

[56] 'Incipit brevis tractatus de rethorica, Dame Rethoryke, Modyr of Eloquence, Most elegaunt, most pure and gloryous'; *ibidem*.

[57] The term *colores rhetorici* applies in Latin to rhetoric figures.

Later the education in rhetoric became subordinate to the art of letter writing, thus also the *ars dictandi* belongs to our corpus.[58] The examination of a bigger corpus of handbooks, even of rhetoric and the *dictamen* alone, would require a separate study, and at the same time it would not be fruitless to go beyond the chronological framework of the Middle Ages.[59]

Let us also mention those handbooks for the novitiate which did not concern the liberal arts or strictly theology but the monastic tradition. The phenomenon of *The Imitation of Christ,* the most famous guide on spiritual life by Thomas a Kempis, lies in the fact that its effect dies out more than five centuries later,[60] and the work itself recapitulated the achievements of different schools and authors of over 200 years.

This refers us to the beginning of the post-Gregorian reforms in the Church. A Benedictine monk, Conrad of Hirsau (1070?–1150?), the author of the *Dialogue on Authors,*[61] played a role, perhaps even bigger than an *auctorista,*[62] as the author of the introduction of the *Mirror of Virgins* (*Speculum virginum*) to spiritual life – he cast a consecrated virgin Theodora as a pupil with whom the author himself, having become a teacher under the assumed name of Peregrinus, has a conversation.[63] The aspect of providing women with more subjectivity can be noticed in the *Eclogue* by Theodulus, where a girl (Aletheia) is cast in the victorious role of a poetic contest between two shepherds, but

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[58] The relations between rhetoric, poetry and *dictamen* have been examined by Teresa Michałowska, 'Ars dictaminis w Polsce średniowiecznej. (Literackie treści doktryny)', in *eadem* (ed.), *Septem artes,* pp. 41–74.

[59] The presence of religious motifs in the first printed handbook on rhetoric by Fichet (1471) is emphasised by George A. Kennedy, 'The Rhetorica of Guillaume Fichet', *Rhetorica*, v (1987), 411–18.

[60] It is not mentioned in the cited work *Medieval Monastic Education*, despite the fact that, as *Verfasserlexikon* (vol. 9, col. 868) assures us, the theology of Thomas in *Imitatio Christi* still does not have its monograph.

[61] *Dialogus super auctores* (edited in Robert B.C. Huygens, *Accessus ad Auctores* [Brussels, 1955; Leiden, 1970]) most likely exists as the *Didascalon libros 2* in the list of works housed by the library of Hirsau; Constant J. Mews, 'Monastic Educational Culture Revisited: The Witness of Zwiefalten and the Hirsau Reform', in Ferzoco and Muessig (eds.), *Medieval Monastic Education,* 182–97, esp. 193.

[62] This word appears in the 12th c. to name an expert in literature or its lecturer, which testifies to the fact that 'teaching literature became independent'; Günter Bernt, 'Auctores', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 9 vols. (Stuttgart, 1977–99), i, col. 1189 ff.

[63] Two citations from this work have been identified as graffiti on the wall in the dormitory of Hirsau Abbey; Mews, 'Monastic Educational Culture', 193.

what is more important, she is entrusted with the task of representing the Iudeo-Christian religion, striving to combat Hellenist paganism and mythology.

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III

RELIGIOUS CONTENT IN THE
COLLECTIONS OF SCHOOL READERS

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The compendia of poetics lose the exclusive character in the context of literary and moralistic works as regards their religious content. Although they were not exactly part of the system of the seven arts, some texts, usually named *auctores*,[64] were studied and recommended in teaching rhetoric and poetics. This trend in writing constitutes another field which I studied with the view of examining its religious content; I limit myself to the most important sets of required reading from the 11th–15th centuries. The canon of six authors (*sex auctores*) is typical of the earlier period, whereas of the later – the eight ones (*auctores octo*). They developed continuously from the Carolingian times[65] and were neither exclusive nor commonly known.

Sex auctores. This is the canon which characterises the epoch when the tradition of antiquity was cultivated in the Middle Ages. Until the 12th–13th centuries, and even until the 14th century[66] 'the canon of school readers' consisted of a set of six works or authors of whom one came from antiquity, three – from late antiquity, and two were early-medieval.

1. Statius (45? – 96?), *Thebais*, *Achilleis*;
2. *Disticha Catonis* (4th c.);

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[64] In Geoffrey's these are: Cato (*Distichs*), *Ecloga* by Theodulus, Avianus, Maximianus, Claudian, Statius, Aesop, *Pamphilus*, Vitalis of Blois – *Aulularia*, *Geta*, Jean de Hanville – *Architrenius* (1184), Ovid, Juvenal, Vergil, Persius.

[65] Günter Glauche, *Schullektüre im Mittelalter. Entstehung und Wandlungen des Lektürekanons bis 1200 nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Munich, 1970).

[66] Michael Baldzuhn tends to date the heyday of the production of manuscripts belonging to this canon (or the series) to the times after the second half of the 13th century, while their production continued in the 14th century, cf. *idem*, 'Textreihen in der Mitüberlieferung von Schultexten als Verschriftlichungsphänomen. Formen ihrer Herausbildung im Lateinischen (*Liber Catonianus*, *Auctores octo*) und in der Volkssprache (*Cato/Facetus*)', in Rudolf Suntrup, Jan R. Veenstra and Anne Bollmann (eds.), *Erziehung, Bildung, Bildungsinstitutionen. Education, Training and Their Institutions* (Frankfurt a. M., 2006), 19–54, esp. 35.

3. Avianus[67] (ca. 400), *Fabulae Aviani*;
4. Claudian (ca. 400), the poem *De raptu Proserpinae*;
5. *Ecloga Theodoli* (9th c.), a.k.a. *Theodulus*;
6. Maximianus (6th c.), *Elegiae,* love poems.

Doubts sometimes emerge and even opinions are expressed that 'there was no such a thing as the canon of *sex auctores*'.[68] Another popular term, *Liber catonianus,* or *libri catoniani*,[69] to name this set of six 'books containing Distichs', was put into circulation by Marcus Boas,[70] whose term is perhaps even more frequently used.[71] Vincent Gillespie writes in his history of the medieval study of literature about the 'standard collection', and uses the title *Sex auctores*, even though he does not regard it as definitely the same set.[72]

The conclusion of Rino Avesani that the corpus of six authors is nothing but fiction has not been consolidated enough to draw a line through the model by Boas. One should accept the results produced by Michael Baldzuhn, who carried out an analysis of the corpus examined by Boas.[73] Having singled out the four codices including

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[67] Almut Suerbaum, '"Litterae et mores". Zur Textgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Avian-Kommentare', in Grubmüller (ed.), *Schulliteratur,* 383–434.

[68] Krzysztof Stopka, reffering to Rino Avesani, 'Il primo ritmo per la morte del grammatico Ambrogio e il cosiddetto *Liber Catonianus*', *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser., 6 (1965), 455–88; cf. Krzysztof Stopka, 'Zakres i metody nauczania *septem artes* w szkołach katedralnych', in Michałowska (ed.), *Septem artes*, 125–36.

[69] It appears as the entry *Libri Catoniani* in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, iv, col. 203. Moreover, among others, in Martin Camargo, 'Beyond the *Libri Catoniani*: Models of Latin Prose Style at Oxford University ca. 1400', *Mediaeval Studies*, 56 (1994), 165–88; Nicholas Orme, 'Children and Literature in Medieval England', *Medium Aevum*, 68 (1999), 218–44.

[70] Marcus Boas, 'De librorum Catonianorum historia atque compositione', *Mnemosyne*, n.s., 42 (1914), 17–46.

[71] Cf. recently Winthrop Wetherbee, 'The Study of Classical Authors: From Late Antiquity to the Twelfth Century', chap. 5 in Minnis and Johnson (eds.), *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism,* ii, 99–144 (citation on 126). Tony Hunt, *Les Paraboles Maistre Alain En Francoys* (London, 2005).

[72] The most common grouping of texts in the 13th century is now often known as the *Liber Catonianus* or the *Sex auctores*, Vincent Gillespie, 'The Study of Classical Authors: From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450', chap. 6 in Minnis and Johnson (eds.), *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ii, 145–235, esp. 153–6.

[73] Baldzuhn, 'Textreihen', 19–54; four completely original codices with the whole six: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 41, Palat. lat. 1573, Reg. lat. 1556, Vat. lat. 1663.

the whole six, he noticed that they are typical of course books serving to be copied, while they were not the course books in real use. The traces of their continuous corrections and wear and tear of parchment indicate their proximity to real didactic practice. Baldzuhn managed to distinguish a significant permanence of co-occurrence of half out of the six authors, the triad: Distichs, Theodulus, and Avianus, which is accompanied by three classics Maximianus, Claudian, and Statius – which gives a typical composition of Boas's *Liber catonianus*, or another triad, for example *Remedia amoris* by Ovid, Anonymus Neveleti (Aesop's *Fables* in the adaptation by an Englishman, Gualterus Anglicus), and *Tobias* by Mathew of Vendôme. These two latter titles belong to the canon of *auctores octo*.[74]

Another conclusion of Avesani that the canon of six reflects a local teaching tradition is confirmed by Baldzuhn,[75] with this alteration that such a model of six did not occur on the territories of Italy and Germany, and northern France with Flanders were the main areas of its dissemination. The distinction between *sex* and *octo* was also applied in the *Lexikon des Mittelalters*.[76]

In our conclusion of the matter of *sex auctores* it should be noted that this was neither the only nor uniform nor stable canon in common use, but it was the name of a set of most commonly read, recommended and commented on, required reading – indeed, not the course books for the *trivium* but recommended reading in literature. Even the fact that Baldzuhn distinguished the very heart, called the *triad,*[77] in this collection, does not change the exceptional character of this serial form of presentation.[78]

Similarly, the canon of 'seven liberal arts' constituted a certain model, and it is difficult to find in real schools and university colleges a geometrically precise timetable which would reflect the canonical seven – both as regards the division into the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* and in the names of disciplines or in subjects: for example, logic

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[74] Baldzuhn, 'Textreihen', 32 f.

[75] *Ibidem*, 29.

[76] 'Das tatsächlich Gelehrte dürfte im 13. Jh. eher durch die verbreiteten Textzusammenstellungen der auctores sex … und im 14. und 15. Jh. der auctores octo … repräsentiert sein', Bernt, 'Auctores', col. 1189–90.

[77] 'Trias, ein "halber" *Liber*', Baldzuhn, 'Textreihen', 32 ff. In compliance with the Latin convention one could call it the canon *auctores tres* (*plus ultra?*).

[78] *Ibidem*, 33–4.

replaces dialectic. The seven is treated contractually, with some other disciplines added to it, such as monastics, politics, and economics (as in the Latin speech of Stanislas of Skarbimierz for the opening ceremony at the University of Cracow).[79] But, after all, we do not give up the *trivium – quadrivium* model for these reasons.

The preserved library of the Latin school at Ulm (mainly of the 15th century),[80] divided according to the *trivium – quadrivium* scheme, gives us the following picture: 40 codices include fifteen works devoted to grammar, five – logic, and two – rhetoric (including a couple of versions of the *ars dictandi*). In the area of rhetoric, scholars have listed eleven codices with theological content and five manuscripts on literature (*auctores*). The *quadrivium* is under-represented: four texts on astronomy (and computistic studies), two on arithmetic, two on music, and seven on natural history and medicine, which already exceeds the framework of the *quadrivium*. A significant number of theological and literary works (11+5) outnumbers the collection of handbooks on grammar.

During the period of the later Middle Ages (14th–15th c.),[81] the canon of school readers consists of eight authors: **auctores octo**:[82]

1. Theodolus, *Ecloga*;
2. Cato, *Libri IV Catonis*;
3. *Facetus*;
4. Mathew of Vendôme, *Tobias*;
5. Aesop;

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[79] Stanisław ze Skarbimierza, *Pochwała Uniwersytetu na nowo ufundowanego*, transl. Michał Wiszniewski, in Mirosław Korolko (ed.), *Mowy wybrane o mądrości* (Cracow, 1997), 235–55, here 245.

[80] Bodemann and Dabrowski, 'Handschriften', 11–47, esp. 34–7. The total number of the works exceeds 40, as there are works in some codices that represent different disciplines.

[81] There is no manuscript tradition for the whole collection during the 14th century, while the 15th century does not end the career of the eight.

[82] *Auctores octo cum commentario*, including: Cato, *Disticha*; Theodolus, *Ecloga*; Reinerius, *Fagifacetus*; Bernardus, *De contemptu mundi*; *Floretus*; Matthaeus Vindocinensis, *Tobias*; Alanus de Insulis, *Doctrinale*; Aesopus, *Fabulae* (Lyon, 1494). *Auctores octo cum commentario* (Lyon, 1538) were edited in English translation by Ronald E. Pepin, *An English Translation of Auctores Octo. A Medieval Reader* (Lewiston, 1999). Other printed editions of the *Auctores octo*: Cologne, 1490; Lyon, 1509. Another title: *Octo auctores morales*, or *Auctores octo, cum commento* (Lyon, 1514).

6. *De contemptu mundi* (*Cartula nostra…*);
7. *Floretus*;
8. Alain de Lille, *Parabolae*.

Baldzuhn has indicated that the canon of eight did not remain stable until the times of incunabula, no complete manuscripts have been found, but as many as 60 prints (including 37 incunabula) covering the period between 1485 and 1544.[83] Most of the 'newer' texts belonging to this canon were written in the 12th–13th centuries, so they were based on a long manuscript writing tradition. The pair of the *Distichs* and the *Facetus*, confirmed for the Netherlands, Italy, France, England, Germany and Austria, and also for Poland,[84] is the oldest (the 13th c.) element of the canon of eight. France (Lyon) is the place where most printed works come from, but the frequency of publishing subsequent editions and the commercial nature of them, being compiled by printers not teachers, suggest a bigger market there.[85]

Among the characteristic innovations of the canon of eight is the inclusion – and in the preponderance (5 : 3) – of 'contemporary' authors and works from the second half of the 12th and the turn of the 13th century, significant participation of moralising compendia and the increase of religious content. While it was only the *Ecloga* by Theodulus, whose aim was to show the preponderance of the Judeo-Christian monotheism over the religion and mythology of the antiquity, which belonged here in the first set, the second canon was supplemented by: one work entirely devoted to the presentation of the catechism (the *Floretus*), one presentation of the Catholic ethic (the *De contemptu mundi*), and one – of the etiquette based on religious principles: the *Facetus*.[86]

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[83] Baldzuhn, 'Textreihen', 36 f.

[84] Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, MS 2035 (from the 14th c.); three titles of the canon of eight: *Distichs* [?–12], *Facetus* [12–30], as *Moralis* ('Cum nihil utilius humane credo saluti X Sepe nocet qui multa docet qui vix retinentur /Excoquitur quidquid capitur dum pauca docentur'), [55–78], *Bernhardus de contemptu mundi minor* ('Cartula nostra tibi mandat dilecte salutem X Hoc tibi dat munus qui regnat trinus et unus').

[85] Baldzuhn, 'Textreihen', 39.

[86] Thomas Haye, *Das lateinische Lehrgedicht im Mittelalter. Analyse einer Gattung* (Leiden, 1997), 146.

The principles of *Facetus* are only superficially grouped: at first religious matters are discussed, later the subject of table manners prevails, which is interwoven with others – family and social relations, and finally some advice of wisdom. This includes a number of suggestions which are used these days:

'Rarely or never be a surety or a creditor'
'Take care not to point with your finger at a thing about which you are speaking'
'When you are eating, never let the table prop up your elbow'
'Do not dry your dripping hands on the clothing which covers you'

whereas others can be easily adjusted to present conditions:

'If anyone dismounts from a horse or mounts a horse with difficulty while you are present, let your hand offer him help'.

There is also some eternal wisdom, such as the golden rule:

'Do not do to others what you would not want done to you'
'Take care not to step on another's bed'
'Remove yourself from smoke, a dripping house, a wicked woman'
'Be mindful of what you are, what you were, what you will be'

or practical and always useful advice on everyday life:

'If you want to know the course of things hidden, the drunkard, the fool and children will tell you the truth'
'Flee from rumours'
'Do not find fault with meals which you expect to take; if anyone sets food before you, ask nothing of him'
'Do not provoke a dog that wants to sleep, and do not stir up anger lying hidden for a long time'
'Do not laugh alone, since the laughter of a single mouth is considered perverse or foolish at all times'.

Probably, a number of these suggestions have lost their practical appeal ('As soon as you dismount from a horse, your spur should be removed from your heel') but there are still quite a few such pieces of advice that deserve consideration:

'Let speech that is short and true proceed from your mouth'
'If anyone speaks to you, look at the speaker's face'

'To pay your debts quickly brings you the highest honour; pay them willingly'

'Do not wish to have the name of *master* without cause'.[87]

The motifs of social conventions – which were systematically presented in the *Floretus* and the *Facetus* – saturate the fourth innovation of the canon of eight – a literary paraphrase of the Bible (the *Tobias*), parenetic, filled with the content of moral and religious education.

The *Parabolae* is the fifth innovation, which was modelled by Cistercian scholar, Alan de Lille[88], on Biblical parables, though without religious overtones. He remained Christian in this work in the subtle and artistic mould – he showed a general nature of meanings hidden under the surface of visible uncomplicated events,[89] yet he did not avoid typical moral instruction, such as this:

'You cannot give water to horses while you are beating them,
Nor does the rod force ignorant children to study'.[90]

With this, he joined the current of rich literature of fables, putting himself, as it were, next to the rhyming version of *Aesop* by Walter of England,[91] which in the canon of *auctores octo* replaced the fables by Avian, present in the former canon of *sex auctores*.

The current of sacramental piety had in the canon of eight authors its handbook in the form of the *Floretus*.[92] The rhyming catechism presented the fundamental articles of faith (quite briefly) and explained the sacraments. The educational programme takes almost half of the content (514 verses): here belongs chapter five devoted to virtues –

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[87] Quotes from: Pepin, *An English Translation*, 43–54.

[88] Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature*, 155, discusses this in the chapter 'Continental writers outside England'.

[89] Teresa Michałowska, 'Klucz semiotyczny. Teoria i twórczość literacka w średniowieczu', *Pamiętnik Literacki*, xcvii, 3 (2006), 29–54.

[90] Alain de Lille, *Parabolae cum commento* (Paris,1498?), III, 15; f. LI: 'Quadrupedes adaquare nequis dum percutis illos // Nec cogit pueros virga studere rudes', English transl. by Pepin, *An English Translation*, 163.

[91] *Aesopi Fabellae*, *The Fables of 'Walter of England'*, ed. Aaron E. Wright (Toronto, 1997).

[92] The text is 'the least known among the *auctores octo*', there is no critical edition, perhaps because of the opinion expressed by Jean-Barthélemy Haureau that this is 'one of the worst poems written in the Middle Ages': *Des poèmes Latins attrribués à Saint Bernard* (Paris, 1890), 44; quoted after: Pepin, *An English Translation*, 267.

the seven 'group' ones (three theological and four cardinal ones) – as well as individual ones, as required personality traits, next eight blessings, and seven deeds of mercy, and also ways of prayers, fasts and controlling sensuality.

The *Floretus* considers the functions of a teacher and a preacher as one, and defines the addressee of his instruction as a *doctor*. In the part of the *Floretus* entitled in incunabula 'On knowledge and ignorance' the following advice is shown in the 'catechism':

> 'De scientia & ignorantia'
> Multi multa sciunt: & se bene scire relinquunt.
> Temet cognosce. dominum cognoscere posce.
> Tu melior fieres: prorsus si te bene scires:
> Quam si negligeres te: cetera corde teneres.
> Discere ne cesses: si doctor maximus esses:
> Nam per doctrinam poteris vitare ruinam.
> Non curans scire / merito quod scire tenetur.
> Si super hoc erret: non excusatus habetur.
> Precipue regere qui debet / sive docere.
> Et quasi vile pecus ignorans / & quasi cecus.
> Cecus agens cecum facit ipsum sternere secum.

Similarly, the *Tobias* is not a romance which limits itself to the biblical storyline but it takes on the motifs of work and education, such as in the paragraph 'De doctrine nutrimento':

> Fit sterilis/ spinis obsita / messis inops.
> Doctrine pater est usus. doctrina scholaris
> Intercisa perit. continuata viget.
> Pullulat in flores natura labore ministro
> Virtutis: requies continuata nocet.
> Est anime cultura labor. caro nuda labore.[93]

The whole central part of the *Tobias* (a non-narrative digression which is a fifth part of the whole content) constitutes abridged moral teaching, put in the framework of a novel, as one of the characters addresses it to the other (father to son). The *Tobias* by Matthew paraphrases a literary and biblical biography and teaches not so much

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[93] The *Tobias*, before the end of the moralising digression (in the edition of 1491, 225).

how to write such a story as how to understand what is paraphrased. It can be considered as the proof which confirms that Piaget's cognitive motto 'to understand means to invent' is right: the author shows how one makes up a story which one wants to understand. In places it adopts a form of a literary commentary which interprets the presented plot. All the time this author is accompanied by the teacher and commentator who interrupts the narration. 'After this digression let us return to the story of Sarah the virgin' – the Author continues, and he keeps revealing the method of his work and the applied stylistic means. The work is a model romantic drama written as an instruction for future writers.

The whole final part of the *Tobias,* entitled 'Laus auctoris ad deum', precedes a truly hymnic doxology with the description of the theology of the Holy Trinity, which is followed by a single-paged presentation of the essence of the Incarnation, but filled with ornate stylistic figures (lines 275–282):

> Nasceris ex ramo radix / sol sydere. totum
> Particula. figulus vase. colonus agro.
> Condescendis apex convalli. purpura sacco.
> Rex famule. cinere lampas. oliva rubo.
> Ne dispergat oves lupus hostis: cardine clauso
> Intrat / et exit ovis pastor / & agnus ove.

What is striking here is the memorative grouping of the content which is no longer doctrinal (often sequenced into certain canons) but simply consists of any components of narration or a description, which is typical of handbooks and encyclopaedias and which can surely be associated with mnemonics. The instructions were ordered in sets of numbers and they are built in the plot narration: a long scene (470 verses) when old Tobias departs this life and gives his son (young Tobias) the whole arsenal of pieces of good advice. The rules become narrative and thus prepared for the presentation.

IV
AESTHETIC AND LITERARY CONCLUSION

The importance of the subject matter of the *Tobias,* together with the way it was presented within an attractive and exemplary fictional framework, let us interpret the work as a specific 'educational story'

in the sense of 'inventory narrations' of Mary Carruthers,[94] who distinguished the genre of 'the stories written in aid of collecting rudiments of knowledge'. The Christianised *Tobias* was a story written in order not to facilitate remembering and retrieving the plot but a certain cultural knowledge, the experience not only expressed and communicated but actively constructed as a tradition. The condition for such a construction is – as in the case of every efficient transportation – the wrapping up of the content and providing it with the instruction for the user. In the example under discussion it is elements of the Catholic religious instruction which are the content of the 'cultural dispatch', not only encrypted artistically ('wrapped' in the novel narration) but provided with poetological instructions which explain the encoding method.

Let us return to the rhetoric Codex from Glasgow in order to have a more detailed insight into the method of encrypting, applied there in the poem on the fall and salvation of a man (*Error, humo dominas*…[95]). The poems there illustrate the application of certain stylistic means. In a 22-verse poem there is a preponderance of etymological figures, which are built around a couple of sequences (*humo – humus – humanus; orbo – orbis; virgo – vir – virus – virtus*) and a few meaningful words such as *lignum, mors,* inflected for all the cases (even with vocatives in a big concentration), yet always in meaningful sets:

[8] mors vexavit humum: morte revixit humus

The result is masterful and theologically adequate. The focusing on rhetorical imaging separated the poem from historical (literal) narration and produced a highly expressive, if not to say expressionist, result: here distinctive details speak, and words establish links on account of their phonetic affinity. The poem introduces typological constructions, such as the one between Paradise's tree of knowledge with the ill-fated fruit and the tree of the Cross and the persons participating in these events (nos. of verses in the superscript):

[11] Ergo virgo, Deus, lignum scelus abluit orbis,
virgo partu, crux pondere, morte Deus.

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[94] Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought,* 27.
[95] Verse no. 5, p. 13, cf. above footnote no. 54.

The poem does not 'tell' the story but it shows its elements in ordered groups, firstly gathering them, and next distributing: three factors were harmful to the world – which is followed by the explication: which one of them and how it acted. Three factors released the world from the sin – and again the explication: which one and how. This method is rooted in typological thinking: it distracts our attention from the continuous narration but, thanks to this, extracts the essence of the story of salvation and conveys it in distinct phrases with the clarity of proverbs:

[15] Ligno mors iniit, ligno mors exiit orbem

The poem not only contrasts in a masterful contrapposto the picture of the defeat and victory but shows what is the most important – not only the told events but the difference between the original and final condition.

We read in the final part of the *Tobias*: 'He enters and leaves: the shepherd of sheep and the lamb among the sheep'. The essence of the stylistic operation lies in the tearing out the attributes of the subject and his actions related to time, and in grouping them into separate series, here: 'he enters and leaves' – 'the shepherd and the lamb'. The point is that 'the shepherd enters' and 'the lamb leaves'.

We can notice the same procedure in the work by Geoffrey. In his dedication for Innocent he first lists the merits of the addressee, and next he exemplifies them:

> Dare grandia solus
> Et potes, et debes, et vis, et scis: quia prudens,
> Scis; quia clemens, vis; quia magnus origine, debes;
> Et quia Papa, potes.

Earlier I have described this method as oratorical, as opposed to the narrative one.[96] This nomenclature can be combined with the term, which I suggest now, the 'cumulative – distributive method', as they do not contradict one another. This other name refers us more legibly to the rule of memorative compositions, which do not have the same programmes as narrative rules of probability: even though they accumulate the motifs adequate to the real storyline, they distribute them

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[96] Dąbrówka, *Średniowiecze. Korzenie*, 121 ff.

for transmission in series of labels or pictures (*imagines agentes*), isolated from time and space, which refer to semantic associations and topic. This has, after all, its analogy in respective types of composition, determined in the history of art as trans-narrative.[97] We can discover in regular art of memory the mechanism of accumulation and distribution at the level of memorising.

The oldest handbook on the *ars memorativa* written in Poland by a Franciscan Observant friar, Jan Szklarek,[98] showed this for practising purposes, using the material of the sermon on St Stanislas. Having collected the five labels which entailed the whole biography of the saint (perpetrator, victim, causes, fruit, loss), the preacher then distributes each of these labels with five details; as the personality traits of King Boleslav – the murderous subject – five epithets are listed: 'haughty, militant, austere, mad, and spreading moral corruption', etc. The quinary scheme writes *expressis verbis* only the structure, whereas the details are to be retrieved from the store of knowledge on the subject, and poetics, rhetoric, and topic which reconstructed the content of plots and narration.

Mnemonics let us recognise in the work its involvement in carrying out the tasks of cultural transmission, or consider it as an intentional historical source. A similar criterion was set by the theoreticians of oral tradition: in order that the oral tradition should be different from ordinary oral communication, it has to be the process of an intentional transfer of spoken messages designated for the next generation.[99]

Examining the forms of presence of the religious content in medieval school readers, we have noticed a strong presence of instructions which go beyond the didactic goal (in terms of religious instruction and moralising practice), and aim to form an active cultural competence: not only to instil the content but to learn it thoroughly – the grammatical, semantic, artistic, and historical analysis, which facilitated understanding and interpretation, and, first

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[97] Peter Parshall, 'The Art of Memory and the Passion', *The Art Bulletin*, lxxxi, 3 (1999), 456–72, esp. 464.

[98] Rafał Wójcik, *Opusculum de arte memorativa Jana Szklarka. Bernardyński traktat mnemotechniczny z 1504 roku* (Poznań, 2006), 122.

[99] Rudi Künzel, 'Mondelinge overlevering in verhalende bronnen uit de Middeleeuwen. Enige historische en antropologische benaderingen', in Marco Mostert (ed.), *Communicatie in de middeleeuwen: Studies over de verschriftelijking van de middeleeuwse cultuur* (Hilversum, 1995), 21–38, esp. 24.

of all, writing new works, that is to say they provided the skill of creative participation in self-reconstruction and the transmission of culture.

Noticing such a high degree of theoretical awareness which organised the literary education of these times as an institution of cultural competence, one cannot continue to think of a medieval school as the mechanism of merely repeating of the doctrines, for this was 'the cultivation of a soul'.[100]

transl. Robert Bubczyk

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[100] The *Tobias* by Mathew of Vendôme: 'animae cultura', cf. above footnote no. 93.