

The Other Side of the Matrix. The Printing Plate as a Painting Support Based on Examples from the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses printing plates repurposed as painting supports based on two examples from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw. The first copper plate, engraved by the Monogrammist T.V.B. in the mid-sixteenth century, shows the coat of arms of the Petershausen Abbey in Konstanz. The second was originally engraved in France by the Lviv-born Polish painter and engraver Jan Ziarnko. Initially used to produce heraldic prints with the coat of arms of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, after later re-working, it shows the Pilawa coat of arms and a Latin inscription. This plate is the second surviving printing plate attributable to the celebrated Polish engraver. The reverse sides of both plates feature painted religious scenes – the *Madonna and Child* and the *Lamentation of Christ by Angels*. What the two plates have in common, therefore, is not only a shared subject (as heraldic engravings) but a similar fate in their reuse as substrates for religious scenes, perhaps used in private devotion on account of their small size. Prints made from the plates may have served as bookplates, the use of which became widespread among the clergy and aristocracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

KEYWORDS

sixteenth-century prints, seventeenth-century prints, printing plates, bookplates, heraldry, painting on copper, sacral art, early modern art

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Printing plates that were repurposed on account of the material they were made from to serve as painting supports are certainly intriguing artefacts, lying within the scope of interest of both painting and printmaking scholars. It should be emphasized, however, that matrices used by artists as supports are very seldom found in museum collections.¹

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a small group of artists experimented with painting on rather thin copper plates. In their search for a support as smooth and hard as marble, they tested various materials on which images painted with pigments could be durably fixed. The use of copper sheet was intended to ensure durability in a painting's structure and colour, as well as a smooth surface free of cracks and canvas-like texture. Copper allowed for relatively easy application of paint and comfortable use of a brush.² It also had the advantage of being lighter in weight, easier to transport, and less susceptible to mechanical damage than stone. Though the paint-on-copper technique was already known in the eighth century, the oldest surviving paintings of this kind are from the early modern period.³ Copper was also commonly used as a support for enamel. In the first half of the fifteenth century, copper plates began to be used by Rhenish engravers who produced early graphic prints by rubbing ink onto images cut with a burin and pressing them onto paper to reproduce

patterns achieved with the niello technique, a method for decorating metal surfaces.

Whereas copperplate engraving – and later etching and other kindred intaglio techniques – evolved and grew in popularity in the early modern period, the practice of painting on copper appears to have been a rather exceptional and elitist creative pursuit;⁴ a field that only a scant few artists specialized in.⁵ It developed in the sixteenth century within the territory of modern-day Italy. Interestingly, copper plates were also used by painter-printmakers such as Parmigianino, for whom they served as both matrices for original etchings and as painting supports. Painting of this kind quickly found favour with connoisseurs and became an object of desire at European courts as well as among collectors, with interest in it culminating in the seventeenth century.⁶

Painting on copper is not abundantly represented in museum collections, which makes painted compositions on copper printing plates highly unique objects.⁷ In the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, two examples of this kind of reuse of a former printing plate have been identified.⁸

A copper printing plate had a limited lifespan. Having been used for a print run, matrices were often deliberately or unintentionally damaged. A print run achievable with a copper plate ranged from about 1,500 to 4,000 copies.⁹ Plates were occasionally destroyed by the printmakers themselves in an effort to prevent

inferior-grade prints from being made, thereby preserving overall quality. More often, however, and especially in earlier times, they were kept intact, being a valuable carrier of a composition to aid in potential future editions even after the death of the printmaker or publisher, when the matrices became the property of their heirs.¹⁰ Although they continued to hold value due to their function as a means of replicating an image, many such plates ended up being destroyed, melted down or beaten into objects of different forms or uses, especially at times when, or in regions where, copper was scarce or particularly valuable. In light of all of the things that could happen with a printing plate after its utility in the printmaking process had been exhausted, its reuse as a painting support was a rather lucky chance for continued existence. Such a pragmatic approach of material repurposing is exemplified by two paintings residing in the museum's collection, both likely created in the seventeenth century. The two works share a religious subject and their small format suggests they may have been intended for private worship. What they also have in common is that both feature engraved heraldic compositions and that, as printing plates, they were presumably used to make bookplates, though the latter has yet to be substantiated.¹¹

The first plate, kept in the printing plate collection of the Department of Prints and Drawings, was created around the mid-sixteenth century. It features an engraving of the coat of arms of the Petershausen Abbey in Konstanz (figs 1, 2). The composition was made by the Monogrammist T.V.B., a printmaker active in about 1560–1580. He was identified by Georg



fig. 1 Monogrammist T.V.B., *Coat of arms of the Benedictine Abbey in Petershausen* (plate obverse), c.1550, copperplate engraving, The National Museum in Warsaw
photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

fig. 2 Monogrammist T.V.B., *Coat of arms of the Benedictine Abbey in Petershausen* (plate obverse, infrared photograph reproduced in mirror image), c.1550, copperplate engraving, The National Museum in Warsaw
photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie



fig. 3 Unknown artist, *Rectangular panel with the coat of arms of Gebhard II Dornspenger*, abbot of the Benedictine Abbey in Petershausen, 1540, stained-glass window, glass, lead, Musée du Louvre © 2011 Musée du Louvre, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Philippe Fuzeau

Kaspar Nagler as the creator of portrait prints of Baron George Khevenhüller (1533–1587), Daniel Brendel von Homburg, Archbishop-Elector of Mainz in 1555–1582, Sultan Selim II, reigning in 1566–1574, and Albert V, Duke of Bavaria in 1550–1579, as well as two heraldic prints. A third heraldic engraving potentially attributable to the artist would be the Petershausen Abbey coat of arms, which goes unmentioned by the German lexicographer and art historian.¹² An interlocking monogram – the letters ‘TVB’ linked by a central horizontal line – appears at the bottom of the plate (measuring 28.1 × 22.1 cm).

In the intricate engraved composition inspired by Renaissance architecture, a central niche holds a heraldic escutcheon over a bishop’s crozier, crowned with a mitre with lappets. Flanking the escutcheon are figures standing

on pedestals in front of columns supporting a segmental arch. Shown on the left (which would appear on the right in a print) is a bishop with a crozier and a model of the monastery. This is a likeness of Gebhard von Konstanz (949–995), bishop of Konstanz and the founder and benefactor of the Benedictine abbey in Petershausen. On the right (left in a print) is the figure of Pope Gregory I (c.540–604), whose relics were brought to the abbey from Rome by Gebhard II and enshrined in the north aisle of the main church. Sitting on the pope’s shoulder is a dove which, as legend has it, whispered in his ear to offer divine inspiration to his writings and teachings. There is a sentence in mirror script on the arch above the escutcheon, reading: *NOS PVLVIS ET VMBRA SVM[US]* (Lat. ‘we are but dust and shadow’), a phrase taken from Horace’s *Odes*.

Below the escutcheon is an empty decorative cartouche serving as the base of the composition. The arrangement of the saintly patrons and their placement against a background of columns below an arcade may be a direct allusion to the abbey's Romanesque portal, where statues of Saint Gregory I and Saint Gebhard flanked the church's main entrance.¹³

Going by the form and the type of ornamentation employed, the date of the piece's creation can be narrowed down to the middle or third quarter of the sixteenth century. A similar compositional scheme with the motif of an arched niche can be found in graphic frontispieces and bookplates from the period.¹⁴

The figures of the abbey patrons are arranged here just as they are in a 1540 stained glass window, installed during Gebhart II Dornspurger's tenure as the head of the Petershausen Abbey between 1526 and 1556. The window panel, today residing in the Louvre in Paris,¹⁵ was funded by the then abbot, who in 1529 was exiled to Überlingen during the abbey's temporary dissolution amid the Protestant movement.¹⁶ Like on the printing plate, shown on either side of the Dornspurger coat of arms are the abbey's patrons: Gregory the Great and its founder, the abbot's eponym. Here, their placement is reversed compared to the printing plate, but therefore consistent with how they would appear on the prints it produced. Instead of columns, the panel has 'compartments' filled with putti. Above the escutcheon is a garland that separates it from an Annunciation scene. An inscription reading *Gebhart. Abbe. Des. Gotzhus. | Petershausen. 1540* appears in the framework at the bottom.

At a later time, the printing plate underwent a degree of alteration. An engraving (most likely an inscription) was removed from the cartouche beneath the coat of arms.¹⁷ The coat of arms was also modified. Two alternating sections of the quartered escutcheon, which presumably originally held the abbot's coat of arms, were replaced with a likeness of Saint George. This change may have been made in or after 1597, when the abbey was merged with Saint George's Abbey in Stein am Rhein as compensation for damages incurred during the Reformation.¹⁸ From that point onwards, the engraved joint coat of arms that appears on the



fig. 4 Circle of Hendrick van Balen (?), *Virgin and Child* (plate reverse), c.1600, oil on copper plate, The National Museum in Warsaw photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

plate was used. The alterations were made by a less skilled engraver and the result was likely unsatisfactory, which may explain why the plate was stripped of its original function. It cannot be excluded, however, that some number of prints were produced from the altered plate, especially considering that the space in the cartouche was intentionally left blank for an inscription. We know that features of this kind (such as blank scrolls) were relatively common in early German prints, to be later filled in by hand or added typographically on the resulting prints.¹⁹

Assuming the escutcheon originally engraved by the Monogrammist T.V.B. showed Abbot Dornspurger's coat of arms, we can surmise that the printing plate was created before 1557, when Gebhard II was in charge of



fig. 5 Jan Ziarnko (?), *Lamentation of Christ by Angels* (plate reverse), after 1619, oil on copper plate, The National Museum in Warsaw photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

the abbey, having returned there near the end of his life in 1556. The abbey was reconstructed, renovated and redeccorated at that time, and this may have been the occasion for commissioning an engraving depicting the Petershausen Abbey's coat of arms.

There are no known prints from the plate, nor is its function fully understood. Considering the period of its creation and the similarities to the aforementioned stained glass window, we can speculate that the original engraving was made on commission for or in honour of Abbot Gebhard II Dornspenger. It also cannot be ruled out that the print may have served as the abbot's or abbey's bookplate.²⁰ Many heraldic prints having such a function can be found in the multi-volume collection *Kloster-Exlibris der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*.²¹ Figures of angels or patron saints sometimes appear alongside coats of arms of abbeys or abbots, with insignia of church

dignitaries shown adjacent.²² Such a function is not ruled out by its size, unusually large for an ex-libris, as we do know of sixteenth-century bookplates of comparable size that were used to mark large folio-volumes of imposing dimensions.²³ After the inscription was removed and the coat of arms changed, the prints made from the plate could have served a broader range of purposes depending on the handwritten inscription added in the blank cartouche.

The reverse of the printing plate was used as a support for an oil painting of the Virgin and Child (fig. 4). The plate's small size may suggest that the composition was made for private devotion or for one of the monks at the abbey. The painter did not leave a signature, but a comparison with the rendering of translucent textiles and faces in the oil-on-copper paintings of Hendrick van Balen suggests that the painting was made by someone in the circle of this artist,

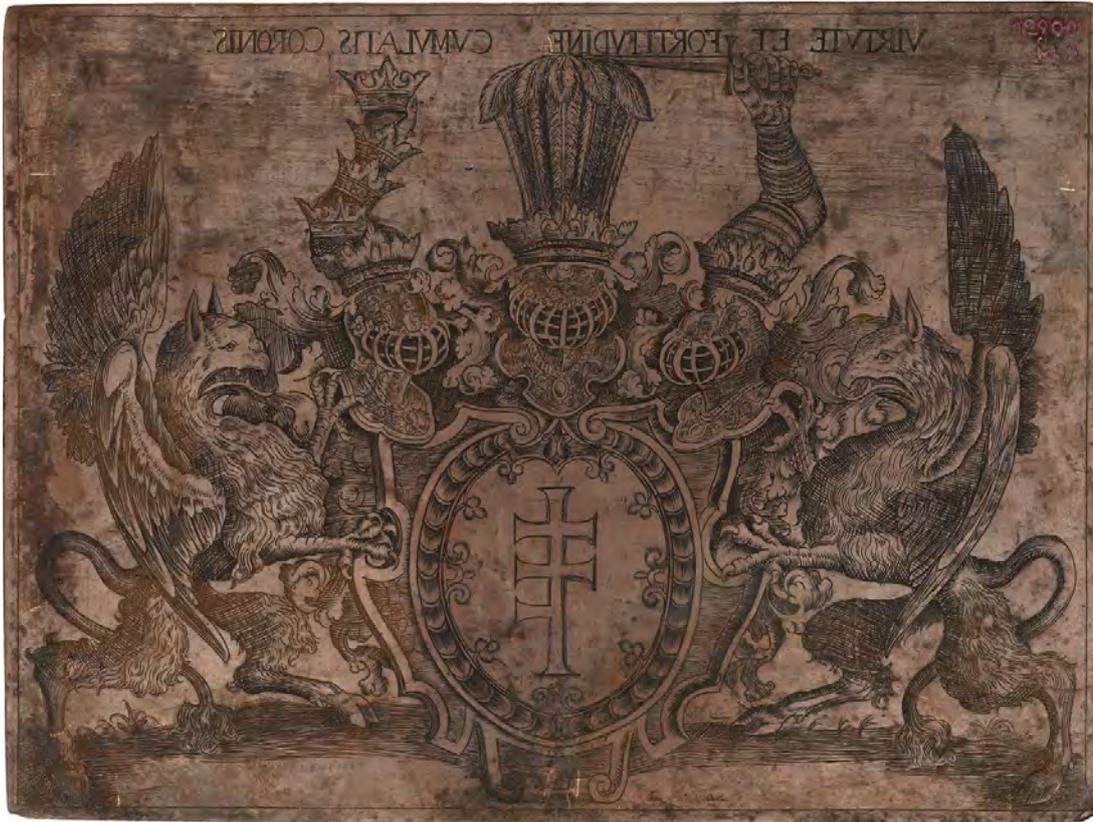


fig. 6 Unknown artist on plate engraved by Jan Ziarnko, *Pilawa coat of arms of the Potocki Family* (originally the coat of arms of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, plate obverse), c.1619, 17th/18th c., copperplate engraving, The National Museum in Warsaw photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

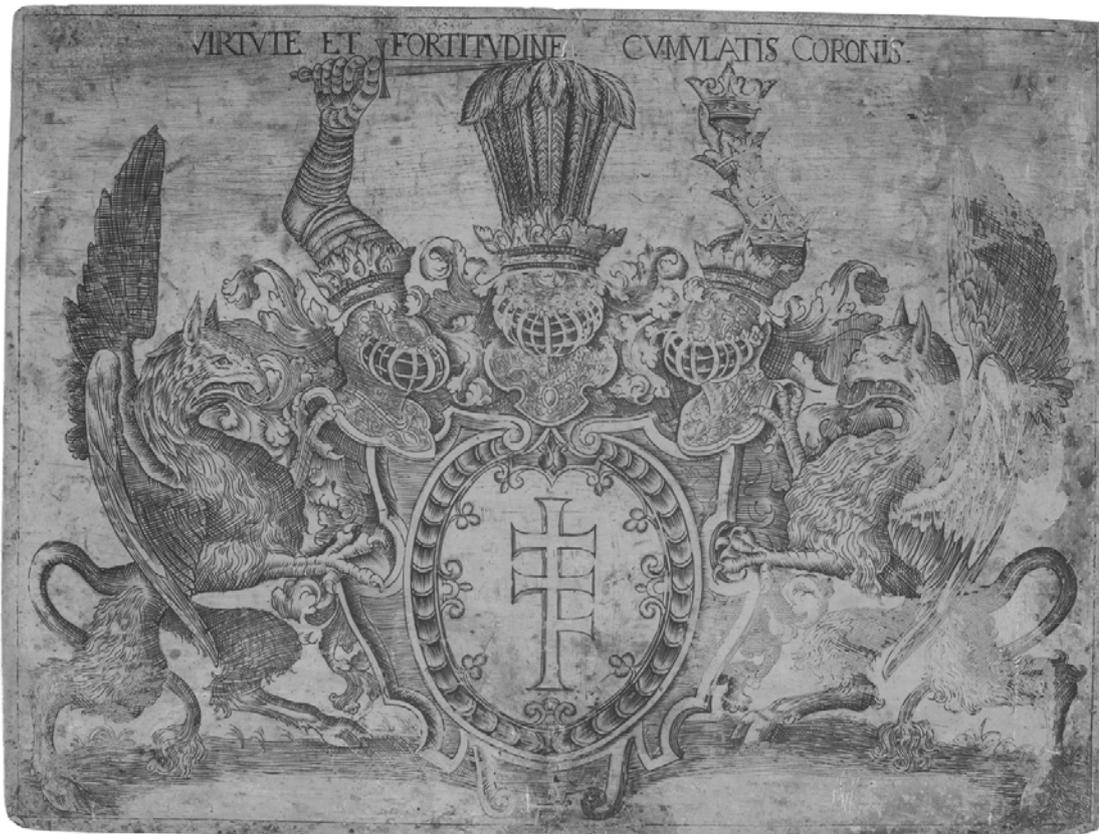


fig. 7 Unknown artist on plate engraved by Jan Ziarnko, *Pilawa coat of arms of the Potocki Family* (originally the coat of arms of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, plate obverse, infrared photograph reproduced in mirror image), c.1619, 17th/18th c., copperplate engraving, The National Museum in Warsaw photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

who, returning to his native Antwerp from Rome via Venice and German lands in 1600, was already adept at painting on copper. We do not know the later fate of the plate, nor how it reached Poland. It was purchased for the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw from Maria Piaszczyńska in February 1931.²⁴

The second printing plate of this kind in the museum's collection serves as a support for a composition showing the entombed Christ, provisionally dated to the eighteenth century. The painting covers a relatively small copper plate measuring 17.3 × 23.1 cm (fig. 5).²⁵ It comes from the collection of the Potocki family in Krzeszowice and has been in the museum's collection since 1946.²⁶ This rather atypical composition shows the body of Christ deposited in the tomb and mourned by angels and putti.²⁷ Two of them are playing string instruments. The motif of

angels playing music goes back to the Middle Ages. However, the form of the instruments here and the way they are being played correspond to music iconography from the seventeenth century. Similar scenes of the lamentation and adoration of Christ's body appear in Italian, French and Spanish art from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁸ In this instance, the adoration is combined with the playing of instruments: a violin and a viola da gamba, the latter being an instrument that came into prominence in the seventeenth century.²⁹

Equally important to the composition itself, however, are the reverse and the substrate on which the scene is painted. On the back, we find a composition showing the Pilawa coat of arms in a strapwork cartouche held by two griffins (figs 6, 7). Above the cartouche are three helms topped with open crowns and



fig. 8 Jan Ziarnko, *Heraldic engraving with the coat of arms of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz*, c.1619, copperplate engraving on paper, The British Museum
© The Trustees of the British Museum



fig. 9 A comparison of the lower section of the printing plate in mirror-reversed image and the print from the British Museum

crests, over which is an inscription engraved in mirror-script reading *VIRTUTE ET FORTITVDINE CVMVLATIS CORONIS*. (Lat. 'virtue and courage crowned with glory').

Upon deeper analysis of the heraldic composition, it becomes apparent that it was engraved on a printing plate that was originally used to print the coat of arms of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, engraved in about 1619 by the Lviv-born Jan Ziarnko (active 1598–1629). There is only one known print of the composition with the engraver's signature, reading *I. Ziarnko Leopol: Pol. f.*, now in the British Museum (fig. 8).³⁰ Ziarnko's graphic composition shows the Chodkiewicz family coat of arms in a cartouche supported at the sides by griffins. Above the cartouche are three helms with crests: peacock feathers, a griffin and a swan. Because the print lacks an inscription or even a place where one could be added, it is difficult to ascertain the engraving's purpose, though some believe it to be a bookplate.³¹

Ziarnko's original matrix was heavily altered, most likely by a different engraver. What remains is solely the original compositional layout (the cartouche, the two griffins being the heraldic supporters, and the helms). An inscription was added near the upper edge and the Lviv artist's signature was removed, with the entire printing plate being extensively re-engraved. The unknown engraver made significant changes, treating Ziarnko's work as little more than a compositional template. The most substantial modifications were made to the escutcheon with cartouche and the crests over the helms. On Ziarnko's print we find a five-field variation of the Chodkiewicz noble coat of arms (Gryf with Sword). On the printing plate, however,

the decorative cartouche, having a practically identical shape but slightly different decoration, holds a Pilawa coat of arms additionally bordered by rather crude ornamentation.

To introduce these changes, it was necessary to remove Ziarnko's engravings. While the shape of the helms remains unchanged, the crests appearing above them are different. The supporters retain their original shape but they are considerably re-engraved. A closer inspection of the plate reveals that nearly all parts of the composition underwent alteration. The quality of this re-engraving fails to match the finesse of the Lviv-born artist's burin. The later engraver did not attempt to deepen the lines cut by his predecessor but simply 'retraced' them, reproducing the composition with varying degrees of precision. Thanks to the London print, we can locate a small number of unchanged parts. The minor traces of the first engraver's burin at the bottom of the composition – in the tufts of grass – attest that this is the plate Ziarnko used to produce Chodkiewicz's heraldic print (fig. 9).

This copper plate would consequently be the second known surviving plate engraved by Ziarnko, albeit, as shown, one that had since been significantly altered by a different engraver. The first was identified by Mieczysław Radojewski and purchased for the collection of the Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków.³² Interestingly, the reverse of that printing plate features a painted composition of the Crucified Christ with the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist. The scholar has put forth a thesis that both the engraved composition (coat of arms of Jakub Sobieski, father of King John III Sobieski) and the oil painting on the reverse

were executed by Ziarnko. Kazimierz Kuczman, the author of the Wawel Royal Castle painting collection catalogue, supports Radojewski's premise that the creator of both the front and reverse of the printing plate is the Polish painter-engraver.³³ If true, it would make the composition on the reverse the only known painting by the artist.

Despite its diminutive size (14.7 × 9.6 cm), the Kraków painting with the Crucifixion group attests to its creator's technical mastery. The painting on the reverse of the Warsaw plate engraved by Ziarnko is not executed as expertly or confidently.³⁴ Nevertheless, it is worthwhile

to note certain characteristics that might guide further study of the work toward artists active in France in the seventeenth century. As mentioned above, the lamentation, or the adoration of Christ's body by the angels, is a scene not uncommon to Italian and French art. Here, it is imbued with a particularly deep intimacy by the artist, who must have been familiar with Caravaggionism. The interior is illuminated by a single candle, which pulls the figures of the two angels and two putti next to the dead Christ out from the darkness. The light seems similar to that in the paintings of Georges de La Tour, which also exhibit a kindred atmosphere

fig. 10 Jan van Halbeeck, after Jan Ziarnko, *Title page 'Figurae libri Apocalypsis beati Ioannis Apostoli'*, before 1619, copperplate engraving on paper, The National Museum in Warsaw
photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie



of concentration and intimacy. Meanwhile, the angels, particularly the one sitting at the head of Christ's resting place, brings to mind the illustrations that Ziarnko co-created for the Apocalypse (fig. 10).³⁵ The composition itself is likely to be the work of an experienced illustrator as it demonstrates an undeniable level of quality. If earlier suppositions that the Polish artist stayed in Italy in the early seventeenth century are true, then it was perhaps there that he learned to paint on copper, as many of his northern European contemporaries are known to have done. If Ziarnko practiced painting after leaving Lviv, we can assume that some of the easiest painting supports for him to get his hands on would have been his own old matrices. Quite intriguing is that fact that the two Ziarnko printing plates known today, both coincidentally bearing heralding engravings, were later used as supports for religious scenes.³⁶

There also arise the questions of when the oil painting was created and when the printing plate was re-engraved. The painting was likely made after an edition of the Chodkiewicz coat of arms had been printed, meaning no earlier than the 1620s.³⁷ The plate was probably altered much later, though the coat of arms and the inscription have yet to offer any insight as to the engraver responsible for the changes. On the basis of the printing plate's origin and the coat of arms shown on it, it is possible to conclude that it was made for a member of the Potocki family or as a glorification of the clan as a whole. However, the modification of the coat of arms and the crests, as well as the addition of the inscription, altered the purely heraldic purpose of Ziarnko's original engraving. The re-engraver had to tackle difficulties resulting from there being not one but three helms above the cartouche and from the presence of supporters in the form of griffins. He left the latter unchanged, since supporters are not strictly assigned to the Pilawa coat of arms, which meant that the ones already there could remain in place. To remove two of the helms above the cartouche would have been too major an intervention in the overall composition and would have required mantling to be put in their place. Perhaps the engraver chose to include an inscription in praise of the Potocki family, whom he depicted with pseudo-crests: an

arm wielding a sword below a motto relating to bravery and courage and an arm adorned with crowns ending in a hand holding a crown below an inscription about winning accolades. Unfortunately, no one has been able to link the engraving with any epigram that would lend it an emblematic character. Also, because no prints of the composition have been discovered, we can surmise that the re-engraving was executed even as late as the eighteenth century.³⁸

One other question that needs to be answered is whether the painting made on the printing plate could have survived the printing process and the strong pressure of the printing press. The case of a different seventeenth-century plate seems to confirm such a possibility. The matrix for the lower section of *Teza filozoficzna Gabriela Kiliana Ligęzy* [The philosophical thesis of Gabriel Kilian Ligęza], an allegory in honour of King Sigismund III, from the collection of the National Museum in Poznań (engraved by Schelte à Bolswert, printed from two plates), features a depiction of the Virgin and Child painted in 1770 on the reverse. There exist prints of the lower section of the Thesis made in the nineteenth century, that is, after the addition of the painting, which survives in good condition to this day.³⁹ We can thus conclude that the act of re-cutting the plate did not necessarily have a destructive impact on the painted composition,⁴⁰ and we may assume that it was indeed possible to make print impressions from the plate even after the scene of Christ and the angels had been painted. Therefore, the alteration to the composition on the printing plate and the plate's use in the printing process could have occurred after the painting of the *Lamentation* scene. This would not rule out the possibility that the painting was made even during the lifetime of the engraver responsible for the Chodkiewicz coat of arms.

Printing plates used as a painting support represent an interesting area of study, one that raises many questions. They are a rarity in museum collections, and, owing to their dualistic nature, they may be assigned to either painting or print collections.⁴¹ Making a new work of art from an old printing plate would have contributed to its longevity being extended. In the process, these objects became works of art in their own right, existing independently of their original role in printing and of the outcome of

that role, that is, the prints produced. Such an ambivalent attitude to the printing plate, which is very closely connected with the engraver but remains just one piece of the process leading to the final product, puts it on the borderline between art object and historical artefact. Many printing plates were discarded, damaged or recycled. With time, their original function

could even become obscured.⁴² Fortunately, a considerable number have survived to this day to become an object of interest for print scholars. Among them, the real rarities are those that were given a second life as paintings.

Translated by Szymon Włoch

NOTES

- ¹ The largest collections specializing in printing plates, like the Chalcographie du Louvre (Paris), Istituto nazionale per la grafica (Rome) or Museum Plantin-Moretus (Antwerp) grew out of historical collections assembled and grown over time. In the case of the king of France or the Pope, the basis for creating a collection was a need to control the production of prints, as well as an awareness of printmaking's potential in state or Church propaganda. Meanwhile, collections based on the legacies of old publishing and printing houses amassed printing plates used by those institutions. As a rule, those collections do not contain printing plates that were later used as painting supports since these plates were kept and catalogued as objects connected exclusively with printing work.
- ² There is a number of publications presenting a broader context in relation to paintings on copper, the ways in which copper plates were acquired, the market for paintings on copper and conservatorial aspects connected with the specific nature of the substrate: *Copper as Canvas. Two Centuries of Masterpiece Paintings on Copper 1575–1775*, ed. Michael K. Komanecky, exh. cat., Phoenix Art Museum; The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; The Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague (New York, 1999); *Malarstwo na miedzi / Paintings on Copper*, ed. Stanisław Drewniak, exh. cat., Copper Museum, Legnica (Legnica, 2003); *Painting on Copper and Other Metal Plates. Production, Degradation and Conservation Issues / La pintura sobre cobre y otras planchas metálicas. Producción, degradación y conservación*, ed. Laura Fuster López et al. (Valencia, 2017).
- ³ Hana Seifertova, 'Malarstwo na miedzi w sztuce europejskiej XVI–XVIII w.', in *Malarstwo na miedzi...*, p. 7.
- ⁴ Sheet metal was used extensively as a support for signboards. Armour was also sometimes painted. See Ludvík Losos, *Techniki malarskie* (Warsaw, 1991), p. 90.
- ⁵ Copper sheet production was highly advanced in the 16th century, as the product had a broad range of applications in arts and crafts. Pots and vessels were made of copper and the metal was used to cover tower roofs and ship hulls. One place that became famous for its production was Antwerp, where the process of producing copper sheet by rolling was perfected. The city produced many of the copper plates used by European artists as a painting support.
- ⁶ It is worth noting that painting on sheet metal, as well as metal plates themselves, were popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries among Spaniards, and made their way to South America thanks to them. See Jørgen Wadum, 'The Spanish Connection. The Making and Trade of Antwerp Paintings on Copper in the 17th Century', in *Malarstwo na miedzi...*, pp. 27–42. On the subject of printing plates repurposed into paintings, see also *Sztuka Wicekrólestwa Peru*, ed. Justyna Guze, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 46, 47, cat. no. 4, fig.
- ⁷ The sporadic use of printing plates as a painting support was noted, i.a., in Seifertova, 'Malarstwo na miedzi...', p. 8, and Łucja Wojtasik-Seredyszyn, 'Europa

Środkowa – Śląsk, Polska’, in *Malarstwo na miedzi...*, p. 26. An example of a Polish printing plate with both a painting and an engraving is the title page plate for *Hippika, to jest księgi o koniach* [Hippica, or a book about horses] by Krzysztof Mikołaj Dorohostajski (2nd edn from 1647), which became a support for a composition showing the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. See Jan Samek, ‘Nieznane płyty miedziorytnicze’, *Rocznik Krakowski*, vol. 45 (1974), pp. 1, 123–126. Another example is the lower section of Gabriel Kilian Ligęza’s philosophical treatise, which has a depiction of the Madonna and Child, painted in 1770, on its reverse. See Anna Grochala, ‘Treści ideowe ryciny Schelte à Bolswerta „Alegoria na cześć Zygmunta III”’, *Ikonotheka. Prace Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*, vol. 5 (1993), pp. 194–227. Objects of this kind occasionally appear on the art market. See *Dom Aukcyjny Ostoya. Malarstwo. Rzemiosło. Aukcja nr 28. 5 lipca 2003 r.* (Warsaw, 2003), cat. no. 86. A New Testament scene was painted in the 17th century on the reverse of the unfinished sixteenth-century plate.

⁸ In the group of over 300 early modern printing plates in the NMW Department of Prints and Drawings only one has a painting on the reverse; the other plate resides in the Collection of Polish Painting Pre-1914. It is much more common to encounter a double-sided printing plate with graphic compositions on both sides, in some cases by different engravers. Because artists who set out to paint on metal sought flat, durable and stable substrates, it is unlikely that they would attempt to paint on a surface engraved with a composition. For this reason, the presence of an engraving below the layer of paint on a printing plate seems unlikely.

⁹ In this, the number of superior quality prints ranges from one-and-a-half to two thousand copies. In the case of etchings the possible print run decreased significantly, as little more than five hundred quality prints could be expected. See Anthony Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography. An Introduction to European Printmaking (1550–1820)* (London, 2016), pp. 50–61.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 270, 271.

¹¹ Today it is believed that in the early modern period an ex libris could be any print that identified the owner (pasted to the book’s endpaper) whether it included a proper, typical inscription or not. See Claudia Valter, *Kunstwerke im Kleinformat. Deutsche Exlibris vom Ende des 15. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Christine Kupper, exh. cat., Germanischen Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (Nuremberg, 2014), p. 11.

¹² See Georg Kaspar Nagler, *Die Monogrammisten und diejenigen bekannten und unbekanntenen Künstler aller Schulen*, vol. 5, S. J.–Z. (München, 1879), p. 146. The plate was initially linked with the printmaking work of Johann Theodor de Bry (1561–1623).

¹³ The church’s no-longer existing main portal is known from 19th-century drawings and its stone elements are housed at the Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe.

¹⁴ One example is a woodcut for the title page of a Bohemian land law overview by Wolff von Wresowicz, published in 1564, where the author’s coat of arms was placed under an arch flanked by two Corinthian columns on pedestals and a cartouche for an inscription at the bottom. Coming into use in the 16th century were also heraldic bookplates shown in an architectural border within a niche below an arch. See Valter, *Kunstwerke im Kleinformat...*, pp. 22–27. Cf. with the ex libris of Paul Pfinzing von Henfenfeld created by Virgil Solis, woodcut, 1555/1556.

¹⁵ Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. MR 2694.

¹⁶ The stained-glass window was one of several heraldic panels created at the time that were likely intended to adorn the window in a hall of a secular public building. See Volker Himmelein, ‘De ornamentis ecclesiae – Zur Ausstattung von Kirche und Kloster’, in *1000 Jahre Petershausen. Beiträge zu Kunst und Geschichte der Benediktinerabtei Petershausen in Konstanz*, eds Sibylle Appuhn-Radtke, Annelis Schwarzmann, exh. cat., Rosengartenmuseum Konstanz; Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe (Konstanz, 1983), pp. 116, 117.

- ¹⁷ Perhaps the inscription was similar to the one on the stained-glass window and contained the name of the abbot.
- ¹⁸ In 1599 an overdoor relief was executed for the entrance from the cloister to the choir of the abbey church, on which the already modified coat of arms with Saint George was shown next to the abbey's patrons (Saint Gregory and Saint Gebhard).
- ¹⁹ Joanna Sikorska, 'Miedzioryt XV wieku i jego odrębność w sztuce późnego średniowiecza', *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, vol. 70, nos 1–2 (2008), pp. 125–132. On empty cartouches in heraldic engravings, see Małgorzata Biłozór-Salwa, 'Karta wizytowa, znak własnościowy, ekslibris. Różnorodne funkcje rycin heraldycznych Jana Ziarnki', in *Ekslibris – znak własnościowy, dzieło sztuki. Studia i szkice*, ed. Agnieszka Fluda-Krokos (Kraków, 2018), pp. 269–288. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, spaces for inscriptions were sometimes left on heraldic engravings, which allowed them to also be used as bookplates. See Anneliese Schmitt, *Deutsche exlibris. Eine kleine Geschichte von den Ursprüngen bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1986), p. 127.
- ²⁰ Similar assumptions as to function have been made with respect to an impressive 1574 heraldic woodcut showing two benefactors of the abbey in Tegernsee and its patrons, Saint Benedict and Saint Quirinus. See *Zeitschrift für Bucherzeichen-Bibliothekunde und Gelehrten-geschichte*, vol. 7 (1897), p. 24, fig. after p. 24. On the old tradition of placing heraldic compositions on endpapers and book pages, see Arkadiusz Wagner, 'Ekslibris jako dziedzina grafiki w sferze zainteresowań historii sztuki i bibliologii', in *Metodologia, metoda i terminologia grafiki i rysunku. Teoria praktyka*, ed. Joanna Talbierska (Warsaw, 2014), pp. 95–105; id., 'Rola drukarzy w procesie kształtowania się tradycji ekslibrisu europejskiego XV–XVI wieku', in *Ekslibris – znak własnościowy...*, pp. 19–39. If the prints made from the plate were used as bookplates, it could have been produced during Dornspenger's exile, its use to mark the book collection being strictly utilitarian in nature, intended to prevent the abbey book collection from being dispersed, as had likely taken place earlier, during the abbacy of Martin Brülin in the early 16th century.
- ²¹ A digital version of the collection is available at: www.bavarikon.de.
- ²² Examples of such compositions in the collection include: a 1616 bookplate of the canons of Saint James the Apostle and Saint Tiburtius Collegiate Church in Straubing with figures of the patrons, and a 1670 bookplate by G.A. Wolfgang for the Saint George monastery in Augsburg with figures of Saint George and Saint Bernard. Highly similar in compositional layout to the plate from the NMW collection is a monastic bookplate created by J.C. Smischeck in 1634 with Saint Lambert and Saint Benedict. See n. 16. It is worth noting that the first dated printed bookplate, belonging to Bishop of Konstanz Hugo von Hohenlandenberg, showed the patron saints and the Virgin and Child below an arcade next to a coat of arms. The matrix that produced the bookplates was originally used to print the title page of a breviary published on commission of the bishop. See Wagner, 'Rola drukarzy...', pp. 20, 21, fig. 1.
- ²³ The typical size of fifteenth- to seventeenth-century volumes, several times bigger than books today, called for the use of bookplates measuring up to 40 cm in height. See Germaine Meyer-Noirel, *L'Ex-libris. Histoire, art, technique* (Paris, 1989), pp. 14, 15.
- ²⁴ The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 97900 MNW.
- ²⁵ It is worth noting that, unlike in the printing process, which had certain limitations, printing plates could be used to make paintings exceeding even three meters per side. Meanwhile, printmaking technology did not allow for the use of metal sheets of such dimensions.
- ²⁶ This small composition (inv. no. 129009 MNW) was likely an old keepsake and should probably not be directly linked with Artur Potocki's and his wife Zofia's, née Branicka, passion for collecting or with their extensive travels in Europe. See Ewa Manikowska, 'Zbiór obrazów i rzeźb Artura i Zofii Potockich z Krzeszowic. Ze studiów nad dziewiętnastowiecznym kolekcjonerstwem w Polsce', *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, vol. 25 (2000), p. 145–193; Bożena Steinborn,

- 'Paintings from the Potocki Family Collection in Kraków and Krzeszowice', *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie. Nowa Seria / Journal of the National Museum in Warsaw. New Series*, 9 (45) (2020), pp. 49–82. I kindly thank the Old Polish painting scholar Monika Ochnio for taking note of the reverse of the painting and its original function as a printing plate.
- ²⁷ Nocturnal Lamentation scenes in which the source of light is a burning candle are known from the turn of the 17th century, painted by artists like Francesco Bassano the Younger and Trophime Bigot.
- ²⁸ E.g., paintings of angels mourning the dead Christ. Cf. Paris Bordone, mid-16th c. (Moravská Galerie, Brno); Guercino, c.1617 (The National Gallery, London) or Pietro Testa, c.1645 (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). An interesting example of a painting on a copper plate is *La Déploration sur le corps du Christ*, a Florentine School painting from c.1600. See <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/La-Deploration-sur-le-corps-du-Christ/E1E0C72FA619BE06C0311D43D2CA8063>. Shown in the centre of this small composition is a candle held by an angel. I thank Dr Małgorzata Biłozór-Salwa for bringing this painting to my attention.
- ²⁹ Depictions of angels playing the viola da gamba are known in early modern art. Cf. Johannes Sadeler I after Maarten De Vos, *The Virgin (kneeling in prayer with four angels at her feet playing musical instruments)*, before 1600 (Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel); Laurent de La Hyre, *A Putto Playing the Viol*, c.1650 (Musée national Magnin, Dijon); school of Laurent de La Hyre, *Saint Francis Consoled by Angelic Music* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen); Nicolas Colombel, *Saint Cecilia Playing the Viol*, 1694 (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen), Italian school, *Concert of Angels* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg).
- ³⁰ The British Museum, London, inv. no. 2004,U.73. See Małgorzata Biłozór-Salwa, *Jan Ziarnko czy Jean le Grain? Twórczość lwowskiego artysty w XVII-wiecznym Paryżu* (Warsaw, 2021), cat. no. 25, pp. 89, 90, 209, fig. 38. Earlier bibliography therein.
- ³¹ It is presumed that the engraving might have been used as a bookplate, though we do not know of any early printed books marked with it. See Vitolis E. Vengris, *Lithuanian Bookplates / Lietuvių ekslibriai* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 20, 22, fig. 9; Vincas Kisaraukas, *Lietuvos Knygos Ženkla 1518–1918* (Vilnius, 1984), p. 37, cat. no. 60; Biłozór-Salwa, 'Karta wizytowa...', p. 269.
- ³² Wawel Royal Castle, inv. no. 8330. See Mieczysław Radojewski, 'Jana Ziarnki nieznana płytka miedziorytnicza z nie dokończonym ekslibrisem dla Jakuba Sobieskiego wykonana w Paryżu w 1610 r.', *Czasopismo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich*, 1 (1992), pp. 211–216.
- ³³ See Kazimierz Kuczman, 'Ukrzyżowanie', in *Malarstwo na miedzi...*, p. 120, cat. no. 98; id., *Malarstwo polskie XV–XVIII wieku w zbiorach Zamku Królewskiego na Wawelu* (Kraków, 2021), p. 460, cat. no. 211, fig.
- ³⁴ I thank the conservator Anna Lewandowska for sharing her valuable observations resulting from a comparison of the two paintings.
- ³⁵ Cf. *Figurae Libri Apocalypsi beati Ioannis Apostoli*, engraved by Jan Haelbeck after Jan Ziarnko, published by Jean Le Clerc IV in Paris, before 1619. Ziarnko followed the example of the series *Thesaurus Novi Testamenti* engraved by Adriaen Collaert after Gerard de Jode I. The title page is said to have been Ziarnko's addition (fig. 8). See Biłozór-Salwa, *Jan Ziarnko...*, pp. 98–101, 250–257, cat. no. 47, figs 44–46.
- ³⁶ I thank Dr Małgorzata Biłozór-Salwa, the author of a monograph on the artist, for pointing out this fact to me.
- ³⁷ Jan Ziarnko's date of death is unknown. We find works by the artist until the end of the 1620s. We do not know where he spent the final years of his life or what caused him to stop engraving in the second half of the 1620s. Artists often put aside their discipline to pursue a different one. It is not out of the realm of possibility that the artist was no longer able to practice engraving in later life and, assuming he could still paint, returned to his former profession. There is insufficient evidence, however, to ultimately link the

- creation of the Warsaw painting with the creator of the Kraków *Crucifixion*.
- ³⁸ One engraver very well versed in the symbolism of power and heraldry was the Lviv-based Jakub Labinger, creator of the illustrations in Aleksander Józef Jabłonowski's *Heraldyka, to jest osada klejnotów rycerskich i wiadomości znaków herbowych, dotąd w Polsce nie objaśniona* [Heraldry, or the placement of chivalric crests and information in heraldic emblems hitherto not studied in Poland] (Lviv, 1742) (2nd edn, 1748) and the richly illustrated *Drzewa genealogicznego Potockich* [Potocki Family Tree] published in Lviv in 1745. Perhaps it would be justified to look for the engraver who altered Ziarnko's plate in the circle of this artist. A small number of Labinger's printing plates survive to this day. See Andrzej Betlej, Anna Fertsch, 'Jakub Labinger – wstępne uwagi na temat jego oeuvre', *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 69 (2021), issue 4, pp. 199–228.
- ³⁹ Grochala, 'Treści ideowe...', p. 178, n. 14. The printing plate with an oil painting resides in the collection of the National Museum in Poznań, inv. no. Mp 206.
- ⁴⁰ Assuming that the engraver intended to preserve the painted composition and handled the plate in such a way that the painting would not be harmed.
- ⁴¹ The printing plate collection also contains an example of a coloured matrix, in which the artist tried to achieve a multicoloured composition engraved on copper. This brings to mind the practice of colouring monochrome prints. Such a treatment of a printing plate could not, however, yield a satisfactory effect. See Richard Collin, *Portrait of Johann Adam de Garnier with a background view of the Carmelites church and monastery in Głębowice* (Brussels, 1681). The composition was likely coloured still in the early modern period (inv. no. 145127 MNW).
- ⁴² Wiktor Gomulicki purchased a Jan Aleksander Gorczyn printing plate with a depiction of the triumphant Christ from a street vendor, who sold it to him as a 'sacral picture with Hebrew inscriptions'. See Kamilla Pijanowska, 'Chrystus triumfujący', in *Miłośnicy grafiki i ich kolekcje w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, ed. Anna Grochala, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw (Warsaw, 2006), p. 102, cat. no. III.31, fig.

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