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## THE FOUR SEASONS AT THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY. THE MOTIF OF THE FOUR SEASONS IN SEVENTEENTH- -CENTURY PANEGYRIC POEMS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS AT THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Poland was one of the main centres of neo-Latin literature in Europe. Latin was not only the official language of the Church, but also that of the courts, administration, schools and universities. All academic dissertations and scientific treatises were written in Latin (including, of course, Copernicus' *De revolutionibus*), as also were a considerable number of poems.

Names such as Kochanowski and Sarbiewski are widely known to neo-Latin scholars. However, apart from these great names there were also minor authors, some of whose works deserve more recognition than they have hitherto received. Most of these obscure works are seventeenth-century Latin panegyrics written by students at the Jagiellonian University for their newly graduated friends and, less frequently, for their teachers and patrons on the occasion of their own graduation.<sup>1</sup>

Although the panegyric was one of the most popular literary forms in seventeenth-century Poland,<sup>2</sup> there are very few studies of the panegyrics that were written in Polish<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They are also considered worthless and monotonous because of certain constant elements which the modern reader may find quite tiresome. Cf. E. Głębińska, *Akademia Krakowska a twórczość panegiryczna w XVII w.*, [in:] *Literatura i instytucje w dawnej Polsce*, ed. H. Dziechcińska, Warszawa 1994, p. 51. Głębińska, however, defends these poems and explains why they are now so difficult to read. Cf. E. Głębińska, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. T. Bieńkowski, *Panegiryk a życie literackie w Polsce XVI i XVII wieku*, [in:] *Z dziejów życia literackiego w Polsce XVI i XVII wieku*, Wrocław 1980, p. 185; H. Dziechcińska, *Kultura literacka w Polsce w XVI i XVII wieku. Zagadnienia zebrane*, Warszawa 1994, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. W. Bruchnański, *Panegiryk*, [in:] *Dzieje literatury pięknej w Polsce*, Kraków 1918, II, pp. 198–208; R. Krzywy, *Panegiryczne obrachunki. Nowe prace o barokowym piśmiennictwie pochwalnym*, [in:] "Barok" X/2 (20) 2003, pp. 222–235; R. Krzywy, *O panegiryku staropolskim. Tradycja i przemiany*, <http://staropolska.pl/barok/opracowania/panegiryk.html>; J.W. Zawisza, *O społecznych funkcjach panegirycznych druków ulot-*

and hardly any at all of the neo-Latin variety,<sup>4</sup> the reason being that over the past two centuries this kind of poetry has been somewhat depreciated by scholars, who have tended to see it more as a symptom of the degeneration of Polish literature than an interesting object of academic investigation.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars who hold to this opinion about the Polish panegyric seem to be unaware of the fact that most of the Latin panegyrics written at the Jagiellonian University were not the product of a client-patron relationship,<sup>6</sup> but – on the contrary – of an unstinting generosity of spirit among students. Many of these poems were written by members of the nobility for their commoner colleagues,<sup>7</sup> usually on the occasion of their graduation.<sup>8</sup>

Another significant reason for the lack of interest in these seventeenth-century neo-Latin panegyrics may have been the fact that Polish classicists have tended to see them more as belonging to the field of Polish literature, while specialists in Polish have been only too willing to classify them as examples of Latin literature.<sup>9</sup>

The Latin used by the seventeenth-century Cracow panegyrists is not the clear and elegant language of Horace (from whom they often borrowed)<sup>10</sup> but certainly meets all the requirements of baroque aesthetics.<sup>11</sup> The syntax is often quite complex and at times even convoluted, while the abundance of bold metaphors and high-flown laudatory phrases may appear somewhat daunting.<sup>12</sup>

This way of writing can only be fully understood within its historical context, i.e. the literary aesthetics of the baroque period. The panegyrists of the Jagiellonian University liked

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*nych*, [in:] "Roczniki Biblioteczne" 1977, 3–4, pp. 879–907; B. Otwinowska, *Elogium – flos floris, anima et essentia poetyki siedemnastowiecznego panegiryzmu*, [in:] *Studia z teorii i historii poezji*, Wrocław 1967, pp. 148–184; J. Starnawski, *Pliniusz Polski, czyli kilka uwag dotyczących poetyki panegiryzmu w świetle siedmiu panegiryków jezuickich wydanych jako zbiór w 1639 r.*, [in:] *Barok – sarmatyzm – psalmodia. Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej przez Zakład Historii Nowożytnej Toruń 22–23 września 1993*, ed. K. Maliszewski, K. Obremski, Toruń 1995, pp. 7–18; T. Bieńkowski, op. cit.; J. Niedźwiedź, *Nieśmiertelne teatralawy. Teoria i praktyka twórczości panegirycznej na Litwie w XVII–XVIII w.*, Kraków 2003; Z. Libin, *Pochwała akademicka*, [in:] "Życie Literackie" 1939, 1, pp. 4–11.

<sup>4</sup> The only study which examines the phenomenon of Latin panegyric poetry at the Jagiellonian University in any depth is a very interesting article by Ewa Głębińska. (E. Głębińska, op. cit.) There is also a study of the Polish baroque elogium (a short form coming within the panegyric genre) by Barbara Otwinowska. (B. Otwinowska, op. cit.)

<sup>5</sup> Cf. T. Bieńkowski, op. cit., pp. 183–184; E. Głębińska, op. cit., p. 48; R. Krzywy, *Panegiryczne obrachunki*, pp. 223; J. Niedźwiedź, op. cit., pp. 11–18.

<sup>6</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the panegyric genre was depreciated by scholars as being a source of falsehood and sheer adulation. Cf. S. Dąbrowski, *O panegiryzmu*, [in:] "Przegląd Humanistyczny" 1965, 3, p. 108; J. Niedźwiedź, op. cit., pp. 14–15.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. E. Głębińska, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> In this article I investigate not only poems written by students for students, but panegyrics written in Jagiellonian University circles in general.

<sup>9</sup> Głębińska has also pointed out that whereas in the seventeenth century Latin was widely used in Poland, it is now a completely foreign language, which means that there is not only a cultural barrier, but also a language barrier between these panegyrics and the modern reader. Cf. E. Głębińska, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. E. Głębińska, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Helikon sarmacki, wątki i tematy polskiej poezji barokowej*, introd. A. Vincenz, ed. M. Malicki, ill. J. Chróścicki, Wrocław 1989, pp. XX–XXIII.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Helikon sarmacki*..., p. XXVII ff.

to use many motifs which had been very popular and fashionable since the Renaissance and which they simply transferred to their own poetry.

Often they gave popular motifs a particular meaning. One of the most interesting of these is that of the four seasons,<sup>13</sup> which appears to have been particularly fashionable in Jagiellonian University circles in the second half of the seventeenth century.

The motif of the four seasons usually appears in the titles of those works<sup>14</sup> which are either longer, single poems or – more frequently – collections of epigrams which as often as not were addressed to various people (usually fellow students of the authors). Such titles are usually a sign that this motif also appears in the contents of the book. Shorter poems are often grouped together under a title containing the name of a particular season.

A good example of such a book is a collection of epigrams written by Stanisław Żelechowski and published under the title *Botri autumnales*.<sup>15</sup> It consists of various epigrams called *botri* (clusters of grapes), each of which is dedicated to a different student in recognition of his intellectual merits. The season of the year is mentioned in the title (*autumnalis*) and the epigrams are grouped together by the motif of ripe grapes.

Autumn seems to have been the most popular season as far as the Cracow panegyrists were concerned and this is probably because of its rich metaphorical meaning associated with academic life. Above all, the autumn harvest was a metaphor for the intellectual harvest, i.e. graduation day:

*Assiduo studio dulces celebrare Camaenas,  
Non neglexisti: nunc cape poma libens.*

<sup>13</sup> The topos of the four seasons has been present in European literature since antiquity. Cf.:

*O magna parens, Natura, deum  
tuque igniferi rector Olympi,  
qui sparsa cito sidera mundo  
cursusque vagos rapis astrorum  
celerique polos cardine versas,  
cur tanta tibi cura perennes  
agitare vices aetheris alti,  
ut nunc canae frigora brumae  
nudent silvas,  
nunc arbustis redeant umbrae,  
nunc aestivi colla leonis  
Cererem magno fervore coquant  
viresque suas temperet annus?*  
(Sen. *Phae.* 959–971)

It was also one of the favourite motifs of Polish baroque poets such as Szymon Zimorowic, Zbigniew Morsztyn and Jan Andrzej Morsztyn. Cf. N. Kornilowicz, *Natura w poezji polskiej XVII wieku (M.I. Kuligowski i inni poeci)*, [in:] “Barok” III/1 (5) 1996, pp. 167, 170–171.

<sup>14</sup> Whereas in the 16th century and in the first decades of the 17th century the titles of panegyrics were short and insignificant, from the second half of the 17th century onwards they became very long and contained a great deal of information. This meant that the title began to be an essential part of the whole work. Cf. J. N i e d ź w i e d ź, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>15</sup> S. Żelechowski, *Botri autumnales in variis partibus orbis nati et nobilibus adolescentibus dum in fertilissimo divi Jagellonis vineto Alma Academia Cracoviensi prima in artibus laurea [...] redimirentur, a Stanisławo Zelechowski [...] oblatai, Cracoviae 1646.*

*Maiores tibi Parnassus vult reddere fructus,  
Si bene legeris hic, laurea serta feres.  
Sunt aliis flores: ast fert Academia odores  
Vernantisque rosae: tum violarum odor est.*<sup>16</sup>

Autumn is always a pleasant time of harvest and fruit picking:

*Autumnus, gravidus versi coloribus  
Pomis, nunc vigil uvas  
Carpit, nunc cerealia.*<sup>17</sup>

The ripe fruits (*poma*) are a metaphor for the addressee's intellectual achievements. They are his reward for the *assiduum studium* at the university. The moment of graduation is often depicted as an abundant harvest and the Jagiellonian University is called *Hortus Academicus*,<sup>18</sup> *Viridarium Sarmaticum* – sometimes also *Helicon Sarmaticum*.<sup>19</sup>

The most popular metaphor for the Jagiellonian University is that of a vineyard and a wine harvest. This metaphor appears in the Old Testament: *Vinea enim Domini exercituum domus Israel est, et vir Iudae germen eius delectabile*; (Isa. 5, 7), and in Jesus's parable of the vineyard (Matth. 20, 1–16).<sup>20</sup> However, another equally powerful source of this motif may have been the ancient Roman poetry which formed part of the panegyrists' classical syllabus:<sup>21</sup>

*Tempus ut extensis tumeat facit uva racemis,  
vixque merum capiant grana, quod intus habent;  
tempus et in canas semen producit aristas,  
et ne sint tristi poma sapore, cavet.*  
(Ovid. *Trist.* 4, 6, 9–12)

<sup>16</sup> M.M. Wolicki, *Viridarium Heliconis Sarmatici botris autumnalibus efflorescens ingenuis adolescentibus primam in philosophia lauream capessentibus [...] demonstratum et per Matthiam Michaellem Wolicki [...] publicatum [...]*, Cracoviae [1645], ff. B2v–B3r.

<sup>17</sup> M.M. Wolicki, op. cit., f. B2r. The topos of autumn as the season of the harvest had already appeared in Roman poetry.

<sup>18</sup> For example: *Hortus est Alma haec Cracoviensis, Academia, cuius ea est praestantia, ut Sarmaticam hanc regionem, olim barbaram, odore suo non tantum illustraverit, sed etiam caeteris reddiderit laudabilem.* (M.M. Wolicki, op. cit., f. A2r.); *Fructui selectissimo de Horto Academico decerpto, et iam ad caelestas delicias translato, d. Ioanni Cantio autumnum praesentem consecrando author varia fructuum genera in unum collecta offert.* (F.J. Piątkowski, *Autumnus academicus maturis et opimis VV. DD. XIII. primae laureae candidatorum fructibus decoratus iisdemque [...] a Francisco Ioanne Piątkowski [...] oblatus [...]*, Cracoviae [1684], f. Br.).

<sup>19</sup> For example: M.M. Wolicki, op. cit.; J.S. Jakszan, *Helicon florentis Sarmatiae flosculis fragrantissimis primam in artibus honestissimis et philosophia lauream prensantibus in Iagelloniano Almae Universitatis Cracoviensis Lycaeo refertus, cuius nitorem Apollo per alumnum suum Ioannem Stanislaum Jakszan [...] effingere curavit [...]*, Cracoviae 1643.

<sup>20</sup> The title of Joachim Speronius' theological work (written in the same decade) may be reminiscent of these places. Cf. J. Speronius, *Botrus Cypri coelestis de diviniore gratiae dei vineis longe quam Eggadicis feliciore decerptus et illustrissimo [...] Petro Gembicki [...] a M. Ioachimo Speronio [...] oblatus et praesentatus [...]*, Cracoviae [1652], f. Ar. Cf. F.R. Webber, R. Adams Cram, *Church Symbolism*, Cleveland 1938, p. 386.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. K. Preston, *Aspects of Autumn in Roman Poetry*, [in: "Classical Philology", Vol. 13, No. 3 (Jul. 1918), p. 273.

*Huc, pater o Linaee: tuis hic omnia plena  
muneribus, tibi pampineo gravidus autumnno  
flore ager, spumat plenis vindemia labris,  
Huc, pater o Linaee, veni, nudataque musto  
tinge novo mecum dereptis crura coturnis.*  
(Verg. Georg. 2, 4–8)

*Prima mihi variat liventibus uva racemis,  
et coma lactenti spicea fruge tumet;  
hic dulcis cerasos, hic autumnalia pruna  
cernis et aestivo mora rubere die;  
insitor hic solvit pomosa vota corona,  
cum pirus invito stipite mala tulit.*  
(Prop. El. 4, 2, 13–18)

*lilia, ut autumnno candida mala rubent.*  
(Tib. El. 3, 4, 34)

*Saepe per autumnnum iam pubescente Lyaeo  
conscendit scopulos noctisque occulta sub umbra  
palmite maturo rorantia lumina tersit  
Nereis et dulces rapuit de collibus uvas.  
Saepe et vicino sparsa est vindemia fluctu,  
et Satyri cecidere vadis, nudamque per undas  
Dorida montani cupierunt prendere Panes.*  
(Stat. Sil. 2, 2, 100–106)

*qualiter aequaevo sociatam palmite vitem  
ulmus amat miscetque nemus ditemque precatur  
autumnnum et caris gaudet redimita racemis.*  
(Stat. Sil. 5, 1, 48–50)

The panegyrists depict the Jagiellonian University as a fertile vineyard<sup>22</sup> and graduation as a wine harvest.<sup>23</sup> The best example of the use of this metaphor is the following passage from Stanisław Żelechowski's *Botri autumnales*:

*Quotquot hic cernis celebres magistros,  
Tot Phalerneas Academus uvas  
Fert, quibus, fiunt, Iuvenes resecti,  
Ore Marones.*<sup>24</sup>

Here ripe grapes which have grown in a fertile vineyard are a metaphor for the excellent students (including St. John Cantius) who “grew” (i.e. were educated) and took their degrees at the Jagiellonian University.

<sup>22</sup> The Cracow panegyrists may have simply fashioned the scenery they described on the Italian landscapes described by the Roman poets they imitated, or perhaps even emulated. Cf. K. Preston, op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>23</sup> This metaphor may also have been borrowed from the Bible: [...] *et devoret fructum iumentorum tuorum ac fruges terrae tuae donec intereas et non relinquat tibi triticum vinum et oleum armenta boum et greges ovium donec te disperdat* (Deut. 28, 51). Cf. M. Krenz, *Sredniowieczna symbolika wirydarzy klasztornych*, Kraków 2005, p. 61. Cf. K. Preston, op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>24</sup> *Beato Ioanni Cantio patriarchae et illustri botro fertilissimae vineae Almae Academiae Cracovi[ensis]* (S. Żelechowski, op. cit., f. B4r.)

Adam Sienkowicz also compares newly graduated students to ripe grapes in the title of his *Autumnus vindemians*, calling them *uberrimi XI adolescentium primam lauream prensantium botri*.<sup>25</sup> Franciszek Jan Piątkowski uses the same metaphor in the title of his *Autumnus academicus*, where he calls them *maturi et opimi primae laureae candidatorum fructus*<sup>26</sup> and – like Żelechowski, who calls John Cantius *illustris botrus fertilissimae vineae*<sup>27</sup> – addresses the saint as *fructus selectissimus de horto academico decerptus*.<sup>28</sup>

Just as Autumn was a time of general happiness and prosperity,<sup>29</sup> the next season – winter – was very unpopular with the Cracow panegyrists. It does not appear in the complex titles of their works, neither is it the main subject of even minor poems. It is depicted as *hyems aspera* or *tristis bruma* and in most cases is mentioned only in passing as something frightful and immensely disagreeable:

*Ut minae tristis tacuere brumae,  
Imminent veris comites secundi  
Thraciae ventosa procul vigentes  
Lintea pellunt.*<sup>30</sup>

It is often contrasted with other seasons – especially with spring:

*Libanota ramos floridis tectos comis  
Spargit virentes undique  
Ornare vividis vigoribus facit  
Vireta per quam suavia:  
Haud pertimescit hyemis asperae minas,  
Vel flabra Boreae turbida.  
Privantur ornatu decoris omnia  
Cum saevit arctorum gelu.  
Extra virorem promit in quovis loco  
Libanota plane gemmeum.*<sup>31</sup>

Andrzej Rudolf Margowski bluntly terms winter *bruma nefanda*, which means *sinister winter*:

*Hactenus immani tellurem carcere pressit  
Extorris geticis bruma nefanda iugis.  
Hyblaeamque, ferox, ausa est calcare iuventam,  
Hausitque hiberno florea sarta gelu.*<sup>32</sup>

<sup>25</sup> A. Sienkowicz, *Autumnus vindemians in florentissimae Academiae Cracoviensis vinea e qua uberrimos XI Adolescentium primam lauream prensantium colligens botros [...]*, Cracoviae 1644, f. Ar.

<sup>26</sup> F.J. Piątkowski, op. cit., f. Ar.

<sup>27</sup> S. Żelechowski, op. cit., f. B3r.

<sup>28</sup> F.J. Piątkowski, op. cit., f. Br.

<sup>29</sup> Roman poets distinguished between early autumn and late autumn, which they merged with winter. Cf. K. Preston, op. cit., pp. 272–273. The Cracow panegyrists, on the contrary, seem not to have made this distinction and depict the whole season in the same way.

<sup>30</sup> J.S. Jakszan, op. cit., f. Bv.

<sup>31</sup> J.S. Jakszan, op. cit., ff. C2v–C3r.

<sup>32</sup> A.R. Margowski, *Floralia veris laureati, symbolicis vernantis naturae primitiis decorata, virtuti et honori VII. VV. DD. primae laureae candidatorum, dum in Alma Universitate Cracoviensi [...] artium et philo-*

The arrival of this harsh season is often accompanied by a strong wind, which is usually personified by Aquilo,<sup>33</sup> or – yet more often – by Boreas,<sup>34</sup> the north wind which can make life really unpleasant. The following passages from Stanisław Józef Słowakowicz's *Autumnales laureati honoris fructus* and Franciszek Jan Piątkowski's *Autumnus academicus* are excellent examples of this attitude to winter:

*Porticus. Laudum radians nitore  
Quas nec emissis Boreas quadrigis  
Conteret, stridens hyemis nec unquam  
Squamma movebit.*<sup>35</sup>

*Autumnus ortus sydere prospero,  
Spargendo fructus Horto Academico,  
Quod nulla vincet bruma iniqua,  
Aut Aquilonis acris potestas.*<sup>36</sup>

Not only is winter disagreeable and ugly, but it is also terrifying. In his *Apollo vindemiarum autumnalium* Gabriel Lewicki depicts it as a horrible event which can strike terror into the heart of the Earth itself:

*Tunc minis brumae, Borealibusque  
Ima Telluris stupefacta Diris,  
Ad suas suada rediere leges  
Luce rigentem.*<sup>37</sup>

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*sophiae baccalaurei ritu solenni renuntiarentur, amoris et gratulationis ergo ab Andrea Rudolpho Margowski [...] dedicata, Cracoviae [1683], f. Br.*

<sup>33</sup> Cf.:

*Qualis Hyperboreis Aquilo cum densus ab oris  
incubuit, Scythiaeque hiemes atque arida differt  
nubila; tum segetes altae campique natantes  
lenibus horrescunt flabris, summaeque sonorem  
dant silvae, longique urgent ad litora fluctus:*  
(Verg. *Georg.* 3, 196–200)

<sup>34</sup> Cf.:

*At cum tristis hiems squalentia protulit ora,  
terraque marmoreo est candida facta gelu,  
dum prohibet Boreas et nix iniecta sub Arcto,  
tum patet has gentes axe tremente premi.*  
(Ovid. *Trist.* 3, 10, 9–12)

<sup>35</sup> S.J. Słowakowicz, *Autumnales laureati honoris fructus ob virtutis et eruditionis meritum in X. VV. DD. primae laureae candidatis representati [...] in vim fraterni amoris et gratulationis ergo a Stanislao Iosepho Słowakowicz [...] oblati [...], Cracoviae [1693], f. Ar.*

<sup>36</sup> F.J. Piątkowski, op. cit., f. Br.

<sup>37</sup> G. Lewicki, *Apollo vindemiarum autumnalium ex lauro Philosophicae Facultatis in horto Almae Academiae Cracoviensis petitarum illustrissimo et reverendissimo domino, d. Petro Gembicki [...] votivus per Gabrielem Lewicki [...] expeditus, Cracoviae [1643], f. A3v.*

The motif of a severe winter has been quite frequent in Latin poetry since antiquity.<sup>38</sup> The very severe Dacian winter is a constant subject of complaint in Ovid's *Tristia*. His description of winter in the following passage illustrates the despair of a Roman who is accustomed to a Mediterranean climate and who is now confronted with a *hiems horrida*.<sup>39</sup>

*Improba pugnat hiems indignaturque, quod ausim  
scribere se rigidas incutiente minas.  
Vincat hiems hominem! Sed eodem tempore, quaeso,  
ipse modum statuam carminis, illa sui.  
(Ovid. *Trist.* 1, 11, 41–44)*

The most famous description of a Central European winter is probably to be found in Ovid's *Trist.* 3, 10, where the poet describes the frozen landscape of wintry Dacia:

*At cum tristis hiems squalentia protulit ora,  
terraque marmoreo est candida facta gelu,  
dum prohibet Boreas et nix iniecta sub Arcto,  
tum patet has gentes axe tremente premi.  
Nix iacet, et iactam ne sol pluviaeque resolvant,  
indurat Boreas perpetuamque facit.  
[...]*

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<sup>38</sup> Cf.

*discolor unde auri per ramos aura refulsit.  
Quale solet silvis brumali frigore viscum  
fronde virere nova, quod non sua seminat arbos,  
et croceo fetu teretis circumdare truncos,  
talis erat species auri frondentis opaca  
illice, sic leni crepitabat brattea vento.  
(Verg. *Aen.* 6, 204–209)*

Statius has given a lively description of *hiems Sarmatica*:

*Parva loquor. Tecum gelidas comes illa per arctos  
Sarmaticasque hiemes Histrumque et pallida Rheni  
frigora, tecum omnes animo durata per aestus  
et, si castra darent, vellet gestare pharetras,  
vellet Amazonia latus intercludere pelta;  
(Stat. *Sil.* 5, 1, 127–131)*

<sup>39</sup> Cf.

*Crede tamen, nec te causas nescire sinemus,  
horrida Sarmaticum cur mare duret hiems.  
(Ovid. *Ex Pon.* 4, 10, 38)*

Even before his exile Ovid used the commonplace of a terrible, Central European winter:

*Est locus extremis Scythiae glacialis in oris,  
triste solum, sterilis, sine fruge, sine arbore, tellus;  
Frigus iners illic habitant, Pallorque Tremorque,  
et ieiuna Fames: [...]  
(Ovid. *Met.* 8, 788–91)*

Cf. K. Preston, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

*Saepe sonant moti glacie pendente capilli,  
et nitet inducto candida barba gelu;*

[...]

*Vidimus ingentem glacie consistere pontum,  
lubricaque inmotas testa premebat aquas.  
Nec vidisse sat est; durum calcauimus aequor,  
undaque non udo sub pede summa fuit.*

(Ovid. *Trist.* 3, 10, 9–14, 21–22, 37–40)

The motif of the violent winds, Boreas and Aquilo, which is so characteristic of the Cracow panegyrics, frequently recurs in the poetry which Ovid wrote during his exile. It seems that the panegyrists may have fashioned the landscape of their *Sarmatia* (as they called Poland) with its harsh, continental climate, on ancient Dacia, which was called *Sarmatia*<sup>40</sup> by the Roman poets and which was the scenery of Ovid's *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

As we have seen, in these poems winter is often closely connected with spring. The motif of a struggle between these two seasons has been a popular topos in European literature since antiquity. One of the most famous ancient poems about spring is Horace's *Carm.* 1, 4 and, of course, the *Pervigilium Veneris*. The Middle Ages have left us an interesting poem entitled *Cuculus sive veris et hiemis conflictus*, of uncertain authorship (attributed to Alcuin and to the Venerable Bede).

Let us look at the very beginning of Horace's ode:

*Solvitur acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni  
trahuntque siccas machinae carinas  
ac neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus aut arator igni  
nec prata canis albicant pruinis.*

(Hor. *Carm.* 1, 4, 1–4)

Here Horace contrasts the blossoms of spring with the frosts of winter, which he describes as *acris*, meaning "severe". The same motif appears in the first book of Virgil's *Georgics*:

*Vere novo, gelidus canis cum montibus umor  
liquitur et Zephyro putris se glaeba resolvit,  
depresso incipiat iam tum mihi taurus aratro  
ingemere et sulco attritus splendescere vomer.*

(Verg. *Georg.* 1, 43–46)

Apart from the pleasant change of temperature and scenery, the beginning of spring and the end of winter also has another meaning:

*Sauromatae cingunt, fera gens, Bessique Getaeque,  
quam non ingenio nomina digna meo!  
Dum tamen aura tepet, medio defendimur Histro:  
ille suis liquidis bella repellit aquis.*

(Ovid. *Trist.* 3, 10, 5–8)

<sup>40</sup> To which Statius may have alluded in *Sil.* 5, 1, 129.

Ovid mentions the aggressive tribes of the Bessi, Getae, and Sauromatae (i.e. the Sarmatians),<sup>41</sup> who invade Dacia during the winter, when the Danube freezes over and ceases to be a natural barrier. In this passage, therefore, winter is associated with external enemies and danger. Let us now look at the following passage from one of Jakszan's odes in the *Helicon florentis Sarmatiae*:

*Suscita Gryphas, clypeos superbos  
Tela et hastas, Odrysium furorem  
Os sui regni Ausonia severe  
Tollet ab urbe.*<sup>42</sup>

*Odrysium furor* refers to the external enemies who attacked Poland from the east. As Jakszan refers to them as "Thracians", it is impossible to ascertain which particular invasion he had in mind.<sup>43</sup> For our purposes, the important thing in this passage is that both poets associate the arrival of spring with the awakening of the patriotic spirit from a deadly lethargy and the mobilization of national forces against the barbarians, who always attacked in winter.

In most cases, however, the Cracow panegyrists depict spring in quite a conventional manner as a time of general rebirth and flowering:<sup>44</sup>

*V. d. Simoni Campiano.  
Flora suos voluit per campos spargere flores:  
Pro calathis inquit, quis mihi Campus erit?  
[...]*

<sup>41</sup> *Hoc casu prospero regia virgine periculo miserae servitutis exempta, cuius ni potuisset impetrari redemptio captae, magnas inuississet rei publicae clades, latius se cum Sarmatis Quadi pendentes, ad raptus et latrocinia gentes aptissimae, praedas hominum virile et muliebre secus agebant et pecorum villarum cineribus exustarum caesorumque incolentium exultantes aerumnis, quos necopinantes sine ulla parsimonia deleverunt. [...] Quo intellecto Sarmatae sagacissimi, non expectato certandi signo sollempni, Moesiacam primam incessunt, dumque milites arma tardius per tumultum expediunt, interfectis plurimis aucti fiducia, aciem perrupere Pannonicam, disiectaque agminis mole, geminatis ictibus omnem paene delessent, ni periculo mortis aliquos citum extraxisset effugium.* (Amm. 29, 6, 8–14)

<sup>42</sup> S. J a k s z a n, op. cit., f. B2r.

<sup>43</sup> The name *Odrysium* means "Thracian" and it would have been a little odd if it was used to refer to the Tartars (more probably it referred to the Turks). Although the only external enemy who attacked Poland in 1643 from the east were the Tartars, it may refer to the previous Turkish-Tartar invasion of Poland in 1632–1634.

<sup>44</sup> Cf.:

*nunc cuncta veris frondibus annuis  
crinitur arbos, nunc volucrum novi  
questus inexpertumque carmen,  
quod tacita statuere bruma.*  
(Stat. Sil. 4, 5, 9–12).

*Without any very exhaustive examination of the evidence, I venture the opinion that in spring poetry classical canons have most largely prevailed, because, no doubt, the Roman poets treated this season with a high degree of sentiment, and realized to the full most of the inevitable thrills and associations. Then too such striking phenomena as the revival of life in growing things and the awakening of love are very little influenced by local climatic conditions.* (K. Preston, op. cit., p. 272).

*Dissiluit: florumque tulit iam Flora medullas:  
Vultque novo flores spargere vere suos.*<sup>45</sup>

This was partly due to the influence of Roman poetry, which depicted spring in such colours. The most famous ancient poem about spring – the *Pervigilium Veneris* – offers an idyllic vision of spring as the season of the reign of Venus, who adorns the reviving world with flowers:

*Ipsa gemmis purpurantem pingit annum floridis,  
ipsa surgentes papillas de Favoni spiritu  
urget in toros tepentes, ipsa roris lucidi,  
noctis aura quem relinquit, spargit umentis aquas.*  
(*Perv. Ven.* 33–36)

Roman poets also imagined the Golden Age as an era of eternal spring.<sup>46</sup>

*Ipsa ingens arbos faciemque simillima lauro,  
et, si non alium late iactaret odorem,  
laurus erat: folia haud ullis labentia ventis,  
flos ad prima tenax; animas et olentia Medi  
ora fivent illo et senibus medicantur anhelis.*  
(*Verg. Georg.* 2, 131–135)

*Ver erat aeternum, placidique tepentibus auris  
mulcebant zephyri natos sine semine flores*  
(*Ovid. Met.* 1, 107–108)

Being a time of physical rebirth, spring is also a time of the rebirth of the human genius. Spring flowers are gifts for newly graduated students.<sup>47</sup> While those students who graduate in autumn are presented with ripe grapes from the Jagiellonian vineyard,<sup>48</sup> those who graduate in spring are offered the most fragrant flowers from the Jagiellonian garden (*Viridarium Jagellonianum, Hortus Academicus*).<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, while in the “autumn” poems John Cantius is compared to a magnificent, ripe cluster of grapes, in the “spring” poems he is compared to the most fragrant flower in the Jagiellonian garden:

<sup>45</sup> A. Niedziałkovic, *Decas epigrammatum quam integerrimis decem viris secundae laureae licentiatis, dum artium magistri et philosophiae doctores [...] ritu solenni in frequentissimo illustrium hospitem confluxu renuntiarentur, honoris et amoris ergo Andreas Niedziałkovic [...] concinnavit [...]*, Cracoviae [1666], f. Br. There is a witty play on words which is typical of Baroque epigrammatical poetry: the surname of the addressee — Campianus — is associated with the word “campus” which means “field.”

<sup>46</sup> Cf. K. Preston, op. cit., p. 275.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. P.S. Orłowski, *Fasciculus floridus, ex odoratissimis Jagelloniani Viridarii flosculis, affulgente vernantis Aprilis exordio, collectus et VV. DD. primae laureae candidatis, dum [...] in frequentissima hospitem lectissimorum corona, ritu solenni, primam in aa. et philosophia lauream prensarent a Petro Stanislao Orłowski [...] cum officioso gratulantis lyrae applausu oblatus [...]*, Cracoviae [1662].

<sup>48</sup> Cf. S. Żelechowski, op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. P.S. Orłowski, op. cit.

[...] *Fragrantior omni*  
*Flore tuus toto sese nunc pectore nobis*  
*Pandat honos, recreetque omnes Divina voluptas*  
*Ambrosiis large fundens opobalsama rivis.*<sup>50</sup>

Gardens were very popular with baroque poets.<sup>51</sup> The metaphor of the Jagiellonian University as an idyllic garden may also have had its origins in the Bible<sup>52</sup> and in mediaeval literature<sup>53</sup> – and, of course, in ancient Roman poetry.

Michał Kuczankowicz's collection of poems entitled *Honor erudito vere floescens* is an excellent example of the use of the spring metaphor by the Cracow panegyrists.<sup>54</sup>

*Gemma terrarum, faciem nivoso*  
*Dum suam pratis revehit, cubili*  
*Flora; iam vernans Zephyri quadrigis*  
*Regna pererrat.*  
*Fertilis tellus subito virenti*  
*Fluctuat culmo, spatiosa laudis*  
*Crescit ubertas: decorisque pingunt*  
*Arva colores,*  
*Gemmat ex culto Peripatus horto*  
*Hinc virent docti revirentque flores,*  
*Et tument celsae studio Sophorum*  
*Nectare lauri.*<sup>55</sup>

Kuczankowicz depicts the *Hortus Academicus* as a paradise of eternal spring. Its scenery is very similar to that of the Golden Age in Virgil's *Georg.* 2, 131–135. Just as winter has its violent winds, Boreas and Aquilo, spring also has its very own "special" wind — the gentle Zephyrus.<sup>56</sup> The *docti flores* which grow in the garden are the newly graduated students as well as their teachers.

<sup>50</sup> A.R. Margowski, op. cit., f. Br.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. M. Eustachiewicz, *Poeta w ogrodzie. Ogród jako motyw ramy renesansowych i barokowych zbiorów poetyckich*, [in:] "Pamiętnik Literacki" LXVI, 1975, 3; J. Pelc, *Ogrody jako miejsca szczęśliwe*, [in:] "Barok" IV/1 (7) 1997, pp. 26–27; J.K. Goliński, *Flora w barokowych ogrodach zmysłów. Rzecz o Adonie i jego związkach z ikonografią*, [in:] "Barok" IV/1 (7) 1997, p. 47; *Helikon sarmacki...*, p. LXV; J. Pelc, *Barok, epoka przeciwieństw*, Kraków 2004, pp. 143–147.

<sup>52</sup> *Et plantavit Dominus Deus paradisum in Eden ad orientem, in quo posuit hominem, quem formaverat.* (*Gen.* 2, 8). *Paradisus est locus in orientis partibus constitutus, cuius vocabularum ex Graeco in Latinum vertitur hortus: porro Hebraice Eden dicitur, quod in nostra lingua deliciae interpretatur. Quod utrumque iunctum facit hortum deliciarum; est enim omni genere ligni et pomiferarum arborum consitus, habens etiam et lignum vitae: non ibi frigus, non aestus, sed perpetua aeris temperies. E cuius medio fons prorumpens totum nemus inrigat, dividiturque in quattuor nascentia flumina.* (Isid. *Ethym.* 14, 3, 2–3)

<sup>53</sup> In the middle ages a garden (*hortus*) was a symbol of paradise. Cf. M. Krenz, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> M. Kuczankowicz, *Honor erudito vere floescens novis florum primitiis adornatus, laureatae virtuti hospitem et Academicis Senatui corona artium et philosophiae baccalaurei, ritu solenni renuntiantur, amoris et gratulationis ergo a Michaele Kuczankowicz [...] panegyrico applausu dedicatus [...]*, Cracoviae [1693].

<sup>55</sup> M. Kuczankowicz, op. cit., f. Ar.

<sup>56</sup> Cf.:

*It Ver et Venus et Veneris praenuntius ante*  
*pennatus graditur, Zephyri vestigia propter*

As for the Golden Age, it is mentioned in the following passage from a short poem which Marcin Gajecki dedicated to Stanisław Jurkiewicz and published in the latter's volume entitled *Violetum Academicum*:

*Lucunda quantum floribus aureae  
Aetatis in te, vernat adorea,  
Iurkiewicz, haec donis meretur  
Ingenii, studiique tantum.*<sup>57</sup>

Some compositional motifs used in the "autumnal" collections also return in the "spring" collections. For example, in Stanisław Orłowski's collection of panegyrics entitled *Fasciculus floridus* single poems are also called "flores",<sup>58</sup> while in the autumnal collections they are called "botri".<sup>59</sup> Each of these "flowers" is dedicated to a different student. The season of the year is mentioned in the complex title (... *vernantis Aprilis* ...).

The motif of the goddess Flora bringing flowers to the world was also very popular:

*Imus! Et sacris nova dona Florae  
Ponimus aris.*<sup>60</sup>

*Ad violas dulces, ad florida munera Veris,  
Imus, ubi Florae carpere dona licet.*<sup>61</sup>

*Telluris inter delicias novo  
Quas vere fundis Flora virentibus  
Hinc inde donis gratiarum  
Luxurians per amoena prata.*<sup>62</sup>

The arrival of this goddess on Earth marked the beginning of spring, while her departure signalled its end and the beginning of summer:

*Fulitque tecum florida, mellea,  
Laeti infantia veris;  
Tempus, quo pretiosius  
Nil mensium anulus gerit.  
Mellita tecum fugit ab hortulis  
Flora, nascentis genuina nutrix*

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*Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai  
cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.*

(Lucretius, 5, 737–740)

<sup>57</sup> M. Gajecki, *Eidem auctori operis v. d. Martinus Gajeccki in signum fraterni affectus, hanc parodiam, gratulabundus offert*, [in:] M.S. Jurkiewicz, *Violetum academicum, ad initium verna aemaenitatis novo laureati honoris decore, in VV. DD. XVIII. primae laureae candidatis, dum in Alma Universitate Cracoviensi [...] artium baccalaurei ritu solenni renuntiantur, pulcherrime efflorescens et in argumentum gratulatorii applausus a Stanislao Iurkiewicz [...] productum [...]*, Cracoviae [1673], f. Er.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. S. Orłowski, op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. S. Żelechowski, op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> S. Jurkiewicz, op. cit., f. Br.

<sup>61</sup> S. Jurkiewicz, op. cit., f. B2r.

<sup>62</sup> S. Orłowski, op. cit., f. A3v.

*Orbis, decusque et corculum  
Pulcherrimi scitissimique temporis;*<sup>63</sup>

In the passage quoted above, which comes from *Lilium aestatis delictum*, Stanisław Bieżanowski compares spring to a happy childhood and laments its departure. He calls it “a time which no month of the year exceeds in value” (*tempus, quo pretiosius nil mensium anulus gerit*). A few lines further, he introduces summer as the season of thirst and drought:

*Et crystallina sacrae  
Stagna disslovens Heliconis undae,  
Sitire vates iussit, atque  
Multo Sole rubentia,  
Irritare labella.*<sup>64</sup>

*Iam quicquid placidum protulit aethere  
Ortis Ver reserans Favoniis.  
Quicquid spicea tostis  
Aestas frugibus attulit.*<sup>65</sup>

Summer was not a very popular season with the Cracow panegyrists. Like winter, it appears relatively rarely in their poetry – mostly in passing, when the author enumerates the seasons of the year. This may have been due to the fact that the summer months were a period of stagnation in academic life. It could also have been a reflection of the fact that summer – as we can see in Bieżanowski’s poem – was considered to be a rather unpleasant season, probably because summer weather was often very sultry in this part of Europe. The Cracow panegyrists’ generally negative attitude towards summer might also have been the result of their familiarity with the poetry of the Romans, who disliked it for reasons of their own.<sup>66</sup>

*hic in reducta valle Caniculae  
vitabis aestus et fide Teia  
dices laborantis in uno  
Penelopen vitreamque Circen;  
(Hor. Carm. 1, 17, 17–20)*

After the sufferings caused by the merciless Sirius,<sup>67</sup> the Cracow panegyrists greeted the beginning of autumn with an almost audible sigh of relief:<sup>68</sup>

<sup>63</sup> S. Bieżanowski, *Lilium aestatis delictum, e cultissimo Parnassi viridario decerptum, atque clarissimo [...] M. Joanni Cynerski Rachtamovio [...] a Stanislao Bieżanowski [...] honoris et submissae observantiae nomine donatum [...]*, [Cracoviae 1650], f. A3v.

<sup>64</sup> S. Bieżanowski, op. cit., f. A3v.

<sup>65</sup> M.M. Wolicki, op. cit., f. B2r.

<sup>66</sup> *Summer, on the contrary, was, generally speaking, an uncongenial season to the Roman poets; the torrid summers of Italy made their impression on poetry, and the “glorious summer” of English literature is a distinct change from Roman references to the scorching dog days.* (K. Preston, op. cit., p. 272)

<sup>67</sup> The most famous Polish baroque poem which depicts a sultry summer as the reign of the ruthless Sirius (*Canicula*) is without any doubt Jan Andrzej Morsztyn’s *Do kanikuly*.

<sup>68</sup> Like the Roman poets. Cf. K. Preston, op. cit., p. 273.

*Igneas postquam furibundus iras  
 Vexit e terris Syrius, feraci  
 Mox nitens fructu speciosa cunctis.  
 Saecula large  
 Fudit autumnus. Natat in beatas  
 Frugibus tellus [...].<sup>69</sup>*

As we have seen, the Cracow panegyrists repeated certain commonplaces which were partly a result of their classical studies, partly a reflection of the cycle of the academic year and partly a reflection of the climatic conditions in that part of Europe. They also made use of a particular set of motifs which was very characteristic of their poetry.

Spring and autumn were their favourite seasons and both were depicted as periods of general happiness and prosperity. This probably reflected the fact that these two seasons were the most intensive periods in the life of the University. Students graduated in spring and autumn, so it is not surprising that they frequently used the metaphor of a flower garden or that of a vineyard in panegyrics written for their friends.

By contrast, winter and summer were periods when nothing that could inspire young poets ever happened. They rarely mention these two seasons and when they do, they portray them in the worst colours. Winter is shown as a cruel season of frost and barrenness, while summer is a time of unbearable heat and general lassitude.

This negative portrayal of winter and summer may be also a reminiscence of Roman poetry, where the two seasons fare much worse than autumn and spring. It may also mirror the harsh, continental climate of Central Europe, with its hot, muggy summers and extremely cold winters.

A good concept was the foundation of a good panegyric and this rigid set of motifs connected with the seasons provided the Cracow panegyrists with ready-made concepts for their poems.<sup>70</sup> For example: when the occasion required that they write about autumn, they could use the motif of a fertile vineyard; when writing about spring, they could use that of a floral garden (or some other similar Leitmotif).

The young poets also had at their disposal some useful permanent (or, rather, semi-permanent) metaphors such as that of St. John Cantius as a ripe cluster of grapes (in autumn) or a fragrant flower (in spring). However, this did not mean that their poetry was entirely reproductive and lacking in originality. Indeed, the main requirement of baroque aesthetics was to invent things that nobody had ever invented before,<sup>71</sup> which is why some poets took exaggeration and eccentricity to great lengths.<sup>72</sup> Others were more moderate in their pursuit of originality and their labours gave much better results.

<sup>69</sup> S.J. Słowakowicz, op. cit., f. Ar.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. S. Dąbrowski, *Z problematyki panegiryku*, [in:] "Przegląd Humanistyczny" 1968, 3, p. 55.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *Helikon sarmacki*..., p. XXVI.

<sup>72</sup> For example, in one passage Bieźanowski compares flowers to tombs:

*Dux Phaebe caeli, quidquid in aureis  
 Natum floruit hortis;  
 Quamvis funera siderum  
 (Flores venustos sic voco)*

The use of the motif of the four seasons amply illustrates the nature of the panegyrics written in the circles of the Jagiellonian University. The panegyrists perpetually oscillated between conventional templates, the imitation of Roman poets and their own fertile imaginations. Their poetry is such a rare cross between commonplace and originality, sheer imitation and individual genius, that it would require much time and effort to give the best of them the full critical attention they deserve.

THE FOUR SEASONS AT THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY.  
THE MOTIF OF THE FOUR SEASONS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PANEGYRIC  
POEMS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS AT THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY

SUMMARY

This article analyses the function of the motif of the four seasons in panegyrics written by seventeenth-century students at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. An analysis of some of these works shows that the authors shared and repeated certain commonplaces concerning the four seasons. While they glorified spring and autumn, they hardly ever mentioned summer or winter. This may have mirrored the cycle of the academic year and, perhaps, Poland's "continental" climate. The authors may also have been influenced by their knowledge of ancient Roman poetry.

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*Per arva passim culta iacentium*

*Ense tam igniti dederis calor.*

(S. Bieżanowski, op. cit., f. A4r)

Many Baroque poets pursued originality at all costs — which, of course, not always gave good results. Cf. C. Backviś, *Panorama poezji polskiej okresu baroku*, ed. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, R. Krzywy, Warszawa 2003, 2, p. 231.