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## A COLLECTION OF LATIN POEMS TITLED *SEPTEM SIDERA* – SEVERAL REMARKS ON ITS AUTHORSHIP, CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM AND ICONOGRAPHY

**Słowa kluczowe:** Mikołaj Kopernik, Jan Brożek (Ioannes Broscius), parodia chrześcijańska  
**Keywords:** Nicolaus Copernicus, Jan Brożek (Ioannes Broscius), Christian parody

### 1.

The twelve-page collection of Latin poems titled *Septem sidera* was published *in quarto* in Cracow by Franciszek Cezary's well-known printing house<sup>1</sup>. The year of publication was provided at the end of the book in the form of an astronomical riddle in verse:

Annumeravi Anno quo  
Bis septem Phaebus, rerum pulcherrima bis sex  
Roma capit, Lunae quinque ter orbis habet<sup>2</sup>.

The correct result can be obtained by substituting the appropriate data that correspond to the year 1629 in the riddle. In order to calculate the solar cycle, one must add 9 to 1629 and divide the sum by 28, which is the number of years in this cycle. The quotient is 58 and the remainder is 14, which represents the year of the cycle (*bis septem Phaebus capit*). The so-called Roman indiction can be calculated in a similar manner – if one adds 3 to 1629 and divides the sum by 15, one obtains 108 and the remainder is 12. One can calculate the lunar cycle by adding 1 to 1629 and dividing the sum by 19, which gives the remainder 15, i.e. the year of the cycle that is indicated in the distich.

<sup>1</sup> *Septem sidera* (Cracoviae: officina Francisci Caesarii, s.a); cf. K. Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, vol. 20 (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1905), 76.

<sup>2</sup> "I have calculated that in this year Phaebus reaches its fourteenth cycle, and Rome, the most beautiful of all things, reaches its twelfth cycle, which constitutes the fifteenth cycle of the Moon" (trans. Barbara Milewska-Ważbińska).

On the other side of the book's title page is Pope Urban VIII's coat of arms featuring a motif of three bees, which were also depicted in the Barberini coat of arms. From a dedication to the Pope, which was signed by Jan Brożek (Broscius), a professor at the Academy of Cracow, we learn that this scholar went to Prussia and Warmia to find Nicolaus Copernicus' lost works. The search was successful and Brożek could present the small collection of Latin writings that he had recovered to His Holiness. Although the recovery of Copernicus' famous work after years of being missing was a sensation, the cycle of poems, i.e. seven Latin songs – the titular *septem sidera* which was published by Brożek, did not arouse particular interest at that time.

The next edition of *Septem sidera* was only published together with a modern edition of Copernicus' most famous work – *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. This work was published in 1854 in Warsaw along with a biography note for this astronomer and Renaissance polymath, as well as some of his minor works which were, for the first time, compiled in this volume<sup>3</sup>. The version of *Septem sidera* that was included in this edition had been translated from Latin into Polish by Ignacy Badeni. Another edition of this poem cycle appeared in Münster in 1857, and it was consistent with the Warsaw edition<sup>4</sup>. It was issued by Franciszek Hipler, a Warmia canon who published *Septem sidera* again in 1873 in Braniewo (Brunsberg)<sup>5</sup>. The Latin text of this collection of poems also appeared in 1858 in Lviv, together with a translation by Narbrzan Bętowski<sup>6</sup>. *Septem sidera* was published again in the nineteenth century and then in the twentieth century. The last edition, which appeared in 2010 in Toruń, was a luxury edition. It was prepared by Ireneusz Mikołajczyk and Rev. Mirosław Mróz, and contained a facsimile of the first edition as well as translations of the poems into seven languages<sup>7</sup>. It is worth noting that the prominent poet Jan Kaspróicz was one of the translators of the Latin text into Polish.

In 1999 a critical edition of *Septem sidera* was published in Germany as part of the project titled *Nicolaus Copernicus – Gesamtausgabe*<sup>8</sup>. It juxtaposes the

<sup>3</sup> *Nicolai Copernici Torunensis De revolutionibus orbium coelestium, libri sex. Accedit Georgii Ioachimi Rhetici de libris revolutionum Narratio prima cum Copernici nonnullis scriptis minoribus nunc primum collectis, ejusque vita* (Varsaviae: Typis Stanislai Strąbski, 1854), 553–562.

<sup>4</sup> Franz Hipler, *Des ermländischen Bischofs Johannes Dantiscus und seines Freundes Nikolaus Kopernicus geistliche Gedichte* (Münster: Theissing'schen Buchhandlung 1857).

<sup>5</sup> Franz Hipler, *Spicilegium Copernicanum: Festschrift des historischen Vereins für Ermland zum vierhundertsten Geburtstag des ermländischen Domherrn Nikolaus Kopernikus* (Braunsberg: Eduard Peter, 1873), 153–162.

<sup>6</sup> *Mikołaja Kopernika Siedm gwiazd*, trans. Narbrzan Bętowski (Lwów: Zakład Nar. Ossolińskich, 1858).

<sup>7</sup> *Septem sidera. Poemat religijny Mikołajowi Kopernikowi przypisywany*, ed. I. Mikołajczyk, ks. M. Mróz (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Nicolaus Copernicus, *Gesamtausgabe. Opera minora: die humanistischen, ökonomischen und medizinischen Schriften* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999).

first edition of the poems with a handwritten copy of a printed text dating back to the seventeenth century. This copy is kept in the Kórník Library and carries classification number BK 00493. It should be added that this manuscript does not only contain the poems but also a copy of a letter dated 19 January 1630 which was written by Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Pope Urban VIII's nephew, on behalf of the Pope and addressed to Brožek. The Cardinal wrote that the Holy Father had received a letter together with a work whose content testified to its author's piety. He further asserted that there was no greater virtue for a learned man to have than faith and reverence for the Holy See as well as respect for the voice of the Church. Obviously, it is difficult to tell what kind of text Francesco Barberini had in mind, but it can be assumed that he was referring to *Septem sidera*.

## 2.

The note saying that it was Copernicus who was the author of this poem cycle that had been included in the dedication to the Pope in the first edition only provoked a lively discussion at the turn of the twentieth century. Here it is worthwhile to present the basic arguments that were used by scholars who did not believe these poems had been written by Copernicus. First, they found it suspicious that someone would have discovered the great astronomer's poems that nobody else had known about until their publication in 1629. Brožek mentioned in the preface that these poems by Copernicus which he had discovered had already been published before he had gone to Italy, i.e. before the year 1620, but nothing was known about this edition. These scholars also found it odd that *Septem sidera* should be a manifestation of Copernicus' astronomical pursuits, which was what Božek claimed<sup>9</sup>. Thus Copernicus was supposed to have divided the sky anew, i.e. into 49 constellations, contrary to the ancient tradition according to which the sky consisted of 48 constellations *Deiecit antiquas quadraginta octo imagines, novas qudraginta novem induxit*<sup>10</sup>. This is why, as Brožek asserted, Copernicus decided to write seven poems, each consisting of seven stanzas. However, these calculations are not entirely reliable since the last poem is two stanzas longer than the others. It was also considered strange that Copernicus' cycle of poems had not been mentioned by his early biographers<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, scholars pointed out that in the dedication to Pope Urban VIII Brožek mentioned, by using a painting metaphor, that Copernicus had only made a preliminary sketch for the picture

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<sup>9</sup> Stanisław Wałęga, "Czy Kopernik był poetą – spór o *Septem sidera*", *Rocznik Toruński*, no. 8 (1973): 124.

<sup>10</sup> "He rejected the 48 ancient pictures and introduced 49 new ones" (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).

<sup>11</sup> S. Wałęga, *Czy Kopernik był poetą*, 143.

and that shortly before his death he had told an expert artist to add colours to it. Some even wondered which of the Renaissance poets might have been referred to as the expert artist (*artifex bonus*). Finally, the main argument was that the Latin poems had nothing to do with astronomy as they were highly religious in nature.

Nonetheless, there were also scholars who defended Copernicus' authorship of the poems or regarded him as the driving force behind them. Among them were Rev. Franz Hipler<sup>12</sup>, a theologian, historian and editor, as well as Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer<sup>13</sup>, a historian of science, and Jerzy Kowalski<sup>14</sup>, a classical philologist. However, Jan Nepomucen Franke<sup>15</sup> and Jeremi Wasiutyński<sup>16</sup>, who were biographers and historians, doubted that Copernicus was the author of these poems.

It seems that the classical philologist Jerzy Krókowski formulated the most appropriate research question 90 years ago<sup>17</sup>, although he did not ask whether Copernicus might have written the poems. An educated humanist and *uomo universale*, Copernicus had also been able to create poetry in Latin<sup>18</sup>. What Krókowski did ask was whether Copernicus might have created the very poems that had been published in 1629 in Cracow. In his Latin treatise titled *De septem sideribus quae Nicolao Copernico vulgo tribuuntur*, which was published in 1926 in Cracow, Krókowski convincingly argued that the collection *Septem sidera* contained poems that had characteristics typical of *parodia Horatiana*, which was a popular poetic style in the seventeenth century.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the poems that constitute the *Septem sidera* cycle. This collection consists of seven poems written in Asclepiades metre, i.e. in stanzas of the kind that Horace used. However, it should be emphasised that the titular stars are not merely a metaphorical description of the poems, contrary to what Brożek stated when he wrote *Singuli versus stellae sunt*. The title *Septem sidera* also refers to the content of the poems, i.e. to seven events related to Jesus' birth and to the first years of his life. Brożek himself interpreted this cycle of poems in this way in the first sentence

<sup>12</sup> F. Hipler, *Spicilegium Copernicanum*, 152–153.

<sup>13</sup> Ludwik Birkenmajer, *Mikołaj Kopernik jako uczony, twórca i obywatel: w 450-tą rocznicę jego urodzin* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1923), 86–88.

<sup>14</sup> Jerzy Kowalski, "Kopernik jako filolog i pisarz łaciński", in *Mikołaj Kopernik. Księga zbiorowa* (Lwów – Warszawa: Książnica Polska, 1924), 179–186.

<sup>15</sup> Jan Nepomucen Franke, *Jan Brożek (J. Broscius), akademik krakowski 1585–1652* (Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1884), 67.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremi Wasiutyński, *Kopernik – twórca nowego nieba* (Warszawa: J. Przeworski, 1938), 525.

<sup>17</sup> Jerzy Krókowski, *De "Septem sideribus", quae Nicolao Copernico vulgo tribuuntur* (Cracoviae: Sumptibus Academiae Polonae Litterarum, 1926).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Bruchnalski, "Kopernik jako uniwersalista i autor poematu *Septem sidera*", in *Mikołaj Kopernik. Księga zbiorowa* (Lwów – Warszawa: Książnica Polska, 1924), 111–130.

of the dedication *Regis Regum incunabula et pueritiam Beatissime Pater septem tabellis Tuae Sanctitati offero*<sup>19</sup>.

The first and second songs (*Sidus primum* and *Sidus secundum*) present the announcement of the Saviour's birth by prophets and ancestors, whereas *Sidus tertium* speaks of the Nativity, *Sidus quartum* – of the Circumcision of Christ, *Sidus quintum* – of the Adoration of the Magi, *Sidus sextum* – of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, and *Sidus septimum* – of the Finding in the Temple. However, when analysing the title's meaning it is difficult not to refer to the ancient tradition according to which among the seven celestial bodies of the universe (*septem sidera*) were the Sun, the Moon and the five stars, the brightest of which was called Jupiter by the Romans. Pliny the Elder<sup>20</sup>, Manilius<sup>21</sup> and Hyginus<sup>22</sup> spoke of seven planets. Brożek even mentioned Hyginus by name in the dedication. In his *Historiae*, Tacitus referred to the seventh day which had been declared a day of rest by the Judaeans and stated that most of the celestial bodies go along their paths and follow their courses in groups of seven<sup>23</sup>.

It should be emphasised that the above-quoted riddle, which points to the year of *Septem sidera*'s publication, was to indicate that the structure and content of this collection of poems were both imbued with an aura of mysticism and spirituality. Wilhelm Bruchnalski rightly observes that the content of the whole work is based on the symbolism of numbers<sup>24</sup>. The uniqueness of the number 7 was noted by Pythagoras. This number played a particular role in Christian symbolism<sup>25</sup>. To illustrate this, it is enough to mention the seven stars that St. John saw in the hand of God in a vision<sup>26</sup>. It is no wonder then that religious seven-song cycles started to be created in the modern era<sup>27</sup>.

The symbolism of stars, which is associated with the idea of God and with the fulfilment of destiny, is particularly connected with Christ and his birth<sup>28</sup>. Here it should be added that in the above-mentioned seventeenth-century handwritten copy of the work the poems from the *Septem sidera* cycle and Cardinal

<sup>19</sup> "Holy Father, I am presenting seven pictures of the King of Kings' childhood and the early years of His life to Your Holiness" (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).

<sup>20</sup> Plin. Nat. 2.12.3.

<sup>21</sup> Manil. 1.308.

<sup>22</sup> Hyg. Astr. 4.2.3.31.

<sup>23</sup> Tac. Hist. 5.4.15.

<sup>24</sup> W. Bruchnalski, *Kopernik jako uniwersalista*, 127.

<sup>25</sup> Dorothea Forstner OSB, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, trans. W. Zakrzewska, P. Pachciarek, R. Turzyński (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1990), 46–48.

<sup>26</sup> Vulg. Ap 1.16.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ireneusz Mikołajczyk, "Poemat religijny *Septem sidera* Mikołajowi Kopernikowi przypisywany", in *W łacińskiej Polsce i cesarskim Rzymie. Studia classica i Neolatina IV* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2000), 62–63.

<sup>28</sup> D. Forstner, *Świat symboliki*, 102–104.

Barberini's letter are on folios 1–6, while another collection of religious poetry in Latin which is connected with Christ's birth, i.e. Michał Wuda's *Hendecasyllabi Bethlehemici*, is on folios 7–29. It is worth noting that the latter poem cycle was published in 1641 in Cracow in Krzysztof Schedel's (Schedelius') printing house by the academic teacher Jan Czynski Rachtamowicz, who then gave it as a Christmas gift to his pupil Jan Sobieski, the future king of Poland, and to his older brother Marek<sup>29</sup>.

The philologist Krókowski emphasises (which Kowalski noticed earlier) that the poems in the collection *Septem sidera* contain references not only to the Christian hymnal tradition but also to the works of pagan Latin poets, especially to Horace's odes. Some stanzas employ a literary device that involved using Horace's vocabulary and style to convey an entirely different meaning, which was typical of Christian parody. The first two stanzas of song III (*Sidus tertium*) have the following wording:

Quis fulta posuit te puer in casa?  
 Quis laedi tenerum frigoribus vetat?  
 Virgo summa Maria  
 Quae flavam religat comam.  
 Simplex munditiis dotibus aurea,  
 Quam semper nitidam, semper amabilem,  
 Sanctus Spiritus aura  
 Caelesti replet intime<sup>30</sup>.

It can be observed that the above stanzas refer to Horace's erotic poem, which is presented in the first book of his *Odes* as the fifth ode:

Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa  
 perfusus liquidis urget odoribus  
 grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?  
 cui flavam religas comam  
 simplex munditiis? heu quotiens fidem  
 mutatosque deos flebit et aspera  
 nigris aequora ventis  
 emirabitur insolens,  
 qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea,  
 qui semper vacuum, semper amabilem

<sup>29</sup> *Michaelis Wudae Hendecasyllabi Bethlehemici ad cunas Christi in praesepi cubantis fusi* (Cracoviæ: In Officina Typogr. Christophori Schedelii, 1641); cf. Konstanty Maria Górski, *Pisma literackie* (Warszawa – Lublin [etc.]: Nakładem Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1913), 18–20.

<sup>30</sup> "Who put you in an open stable, dear child? Who is protecting your fragile body from the cold? It is the Blessed Virgin Mary, plaiting her golden hair. Guileless, endowed with purity and always bright and worthy of love, She hath been deeply filled with the heavenly breath of the Holy Spirit" (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).

sperat, nescius aurae  
 fallacis, miseri, quibus  
 intemptata nites: me tabula sacer  
 votiva paries indicat uvida  
 suspendisse potenti  
 vestimenta maris deo<sup>31</sup>.

The author of song III, whose full title is *Sidus tertium Christum de virgine natum prae se fert*<sup>32</sup>, uses Horatian vocabulary and phraseology not to express erotic love but religious feelings. This transformation and Christianisation of an ode which had been written by a pagan author was consistent both with the practice of imitation that was common at that time and with the theoretical assumptions that were postulated in seventeenth-century works on poetics. In his treatise titled *Poeticarum institutionum libri tres*, the Jesuit Jacobus Pontanus spoke of giving a new meaning to a good poet's works by comparing this literary device to the grafting of twigs from one tree onto another<sup>33</sup>. Christian parody involved creating a work which would correspond to the model but which would have a completely different meaning. Although a monk from the Tegernsee monastery dedicated to St. Quirinus in Bavaria had already tried to creatively use Horace's lyrics in the Middle Ages<sup>34</sup>, this had been a one-time attempt. No such attempts are known to have been made in Copernicus' time. It was not until the

<sup>31</sup> Hor. Carm. 1.5, in: Quinti Horati Flacci, *Opera*, ed. Fridericus Klingner (Leipzig: Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 1970).

“What slender youth, besprinkled with perfume,  
 Courts you on roses in some grotto's shade?  
 Fai, Pyrrha, say, for whom  
 Your yellow hair you braid,  
 So trim, so simple! Ah! how oft shall he  
 Lament that faith can fail, that gods can change,  
 Viewing the rough black sea  
 With eyes to tempests strange,  
 Who now is basking in your golden smile,  
 And dreams of you still fancy-free, still kind,  
 Poor fool, nor knows the guile  
 Of the deceitful wind!  
 Woe to the eyes you dazzle without cloud  
 Untried! For me, they show in yonder fane  
 My dripping garments, vow'd  
 To Him who curbs the main”  
 (trans. John Conington, in *The Odes and Carmen Saeculare of Horace*, London: Bell and Daldy, 1865, 7).

<sup>32</sup> “The third star shows Christ who was born of the Virgin” (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).

<sup>33</sup> *Iacobi Pontani de Societate Iesu Poeticarum institutionum libri tres. Eiusdem Tyrocinium poeticum* (Ingolstadii: ex typographia Davidis Sartorii, 1594), 28.

<sup>34</sup> J. Krókowski, *De Septem sidera*, 64–65.

end of the sixteenth century that Stephanus introduced the term *parodiae morales*<sup>35</sup> and Paulus Melissus (Schede) published his poems, which he called *parodies*<sup>36</sup>.

Although not all of the songs in the collection *Septem sidera* imitate Horace in a manner that is characteristic of Christian parody, the above example may have been used by Krókowski to argue that this poem cycle was written at a time when this kind of poetry was recommended and practised, i.e. in the post-Tridentine era. Even Kowalski noticed that rhetorical ornaments were used in the texts in this collection, which may indicate that its author was educated in rhetorical theory and practice, and this kind of education was provided, for example, by Jesuit colleges at that time.

At the end of his treatise Krókowski concludes that this collection of poems may have been created in the Jesuit community. The collection of poems *Septem sidera* has clear links to Ignatian spirituality, which is visible both in the organisation of the content and in the imagery employed. Criticism of Krókowski's position and support for Copernicus' authorship, which is based on *Septem sidera*'s similarity to the works of Jacopo Sannazaro, Angelo Poliziano, or Pico della Mirandola, is ungrounded<sup>37</sup>.

Since Braniewo was the first seat of the bishops and chapter of Warmia, where Bishop Stanisław Hozjusz established the first Jesuit college on Polish lands in 1565, this conclusion seems to be well founded. It should also be added that Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, the most prominent Latin poet in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth who was also called the Christian Horace, studied at the Jesuit college in Braniewo in the years 1614–1617. Everything seems to indicate that Sarbiewski learnt how to compose parody-style poems in Latin in Braniewo.

Expressions such as *pulchris nitent arva coloribus*<sup>38</sup> (*Sidus secundum*), *Quod, fulget medio sidus in aëre*<sup>39</sup> or *Nunc vultum pueri cernite blandulum*<sup>40</sup>, which are used in the poem titled *Sidus quintum Christum a tribus magis adoratum exhibet*<sup>41</sup>, show that its author had artistic sensibility. One should remember that the first part of the dedication is also dominated by painting metaphors. Brożek mentions a new kind of work of art which was not made in copper or on canvas but in the firmament. The new artwork exceeded the works of the most famous ancient painter Apelles in terms of artistry. The painting metaphor that

<sup>35</sup> *Parodiae morales H[enrici] Stephani, In poetarum vet[erum] Sententias celebriores* (s.l.: Henricus Stephanus, 1575).

<sup>36</sup> *Melissi Meleमतum Piorum Libri VIII. Paraeneticorum II, Parodiarum II, Psalmi aliquot* (Francofurti ad Maenum: in Hieronymi Commelini Bibliopolo, 1586).

<sup>37</sup> Stanisław Grzybowski, "Mikołaj Kopernik czyli Paradoksy Renesansu", in *Pisarze staropolscy. Sylwetki*, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1991), 407–437.

<sup>38</sup> "Fields shine of beautiful colours" (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).

<sup>39</sup> "A star that shines in the sky" (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).

<sup>40</sup> "Now look at the child's sweet face" (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).

<sup>41</sup> "Star V presents Christ being adored by the Magi" (trans. B. Milewska-Ważbińska).



was used by the author of the dedication encourages one to look at *Septem sidera*'s iconographic context more closely.

### 3.

*Evangelicae Historiae Imagines*, which was written by the Spanish Jesuit Jerónimo Nadal (Natalis) and was first published in Antwerp by the Plantin-Moretus printing house in 1593, was one of the most popular books in the seventeenth century that was aimed at presenting images – selected scenes from the New Testament together with quotations<sup>42</sup>. It contains 153 illustrations which were designed by Gian Battista Fiammeri, Bernardo de Passeri and Maarten de Vos. The copper engravings were made by excellent Flemish craftsmen – Anton, Hieronymus and Jan Wierix as well as by Charles Mallery and Jan Collaert. These illustrations provided inspiration for many artistic projects that were carried out in Catholic countries, including Poland. The images that were presented in this book, accompanied by the *adnotationes*, were to encourage its recipients to contemplate and focus on the subsequent events that were depicted there. A comparison of the poems in *Septem sidera* with the images presented in *Evangelicae Historiae imagines*, which were intended to be used for meditation, shows that there is a similarity between them. This similarity is particularly visible when one juxtaposes the first illustration which depicts the scene of the Annunciation (*Anunciatio*) with the words that appear in the first poem (*Sidus primum*), or the second illustration which presents the Visitation (*In die visitationis*) with a text from *Sidus secundum*. The similarity between the two works becomes even more pronounced when one compares the text from the third poem (*Sidus tertium*) that speaks of the Nativity with the illustration titled *In nocte Natalis Domini*, presenting a hut supported by several beams, which corresponds to the Latin expression *fulta casa*. The poem titled *Sidus quartum* is an exact counterpart of the fifth illustration, *Circuncisio Christi*, in *Evangelicae Historiae imagines*. The seventh illustration shows *Adoratio magorum*, which corresponds to the subject of *Sidus quintum*, and the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple is the subject of *Sidus sextum*. The next illustration presents Christ talking to the learned men, which is also portrayed in *Sidus septimum*. This is the last event connected with Christ's childhood that is presented in *Evangelicae Historiae imagines*. The collection of poems *Septem sidera* may thus have been a lyrical response to popular iconographic motifs that were associated with the Saviour's birth and the first years of his life. This parallelism between poetry and iconography allows one to state with even greater confidence that the cycle of poems *Septem sidera* was borne out of spirituality which was similar to that of the Jesuits and, therefore, that these poems could not have been created in Copernicus' time.

<sup>42</sup> *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (Antverpiae 1593), <https://archive.org/stream/evangelicaehisto00pass#page/n5/mode/2up> (acc. 11.02.2016).

There is still the question of the authorship of the collection. Certain researchers pointed out that dedicating a cycle of religious poems that had come from post-Tridentine spirituality to Pope Urban VIII and attributing it to Nicolaus Copernicus was an intentionally misleading act on the part of Brożek<sup>43</sup>. This is because it is difficult to accept that Brożek actually believed he had found Copernicus' poems and to accept the argument that Brożek regarded this poem cycle as complementary to Copernicus' astronomical work. It is even more difficult to believe that the Pope recognised the poems as such. Brożek, who had previously been involved in a dispute between the Academy of Cracow and the Jesuits and who was the author of a lampoon towards this order titled *Gratis* (1625), was ordained a priest in May 1629, i.e. when *Septem sidera* was published, and started teaching theology. Does the act of dedicating the collection of Latin poems to the Pope mean that Brożek was settling down and that the difficult situation in the area of education in Cracow was stabilising? Did Brożek invoke the name of Copernicus, whose views Pope Urban VIII opposed, in order to attempt to rehabilitate the great scholar? Undoubtedly, it was Brożek, the most renowned Polish mathematician of the seventeenth century, who planned and staged this show and was therefore one of the authors of the so-called Copernican myth. Brożek put his idea into practice – perhaps he used school poems that had been created at the Jesuit college in Braniewo, as Krókowski suggested, or maybe he simply wrote the poems himself<sup>44</sup>.

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Summary

A collection of Latin poems titled *Septem sidera* was first published in Krakow in 1629 in the printing house of Franciscus Cezary. Jan Brożek (Ioannes Broscius), a celebrated scholar and professor at the Academy of Cracow, edited this book. Brożek was also the author of the preface and of the dedication to Pope Urban VIII. He claimed to have found the poems amidst the documents left by Nicolaus Copernicus. Jerzy Krókowski analysed these poems in his book *De septem sideribus quae Nicolao Copernico vulgo tribuuntur* (Cracow 1926). Krókowski argued that the poems contained distinctive features of *parodia sacra* that were practised in the seventeenth century. The scholar concluded that the cycle of *Septem sidera* was probably written within Jesuit circles. The author of this article completes Krókowski's argumentation by paying attention to the presence of Christian symbolism and juxtaposing the Latin text with Jesuit iconography.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. I. Mikołajczyk, *Poemat religijny „Septem sidera”*, 63.

<sup>44</sup> This suggestion was made, e.g. in Jerzy Samuel Bandtke, *Historia Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie* (Kraków: Nakładem Ambrożego Grabowskiego, 1821), 72.

ZBIÓR ŁACIŃSKICH WIERSZY ZATYTUŁOWANY *SEPTEM SIDERA*  
– KILKA UWAG O JEGO AUTORZE, SYMBOLICE CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKIEJ  
ORAZ IKONOGRAFII

Streszczenie

Zbiór łacińskich wierszy zatytułowany *Septem sidera* został opublikowany po raz pierwszy w Krakowie w 1629 roku w drukarni Franciszka Cezarego. Książkę wydał znakomity uczyony, profesor Akademii Krakowskiej Jan Brożek (Ioannes Broscius). Brożek był również autorem przedmowy i dedykacji skierowanej do papieża Urbana VIII. W przedmowie twierdzi, że znalazł wiersze wśród dokumentów pozostawionych przez Mikołaja Kopernika. Jerzy Krókowski poddał te poematy analizie w swej książce *De septem sideribus quae Nicolao Copernico vulgo tribuuntur* (Kraków 1926). Krókowski stwierdził, że wiersze noszą cechy charakterystyczne dla parodii (parodia sacra) praktykowanej w XVII wieku. Uczony wysnuł wniosek, że cykl *Septem sidera* prawdopodobnie powstał w kręgach jezuickich. Autorka artykułu uzupełnia argumentację Krókovskiego, zwracając uwagę na obecność w wierszach symboliki chrześcijańskiej oraz zestawiając łaciński tekst z jezuicką ikonografią.