

SIGN – SYMBOL – DECORATION: THE RELATIONSHIP OF IMAGE AND TEXT IN 16TH –17TH CENTURY HUNGARIAN CALENDARS

ÁGNES DUKKON

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest
dukkonagnes@gmail.com

This study tries to give an overview of the varied connections between word and image in the calendars and other popular works (penny books, manuscript song collections) of the late Renaissance and Baroque. The author investigates the associations and influences from different fields of culture, considers ancient topoi and archetypes which underwent a great many transformations over space and time. In the first part of this paper are examined some non-traditional figures in the calendar for 1578 (Kolozsvár-Cluj, Heltai's office) like mermaids/sirens in the role of Aquarius and Virgo, and the appearance of these figures on the painted furniture and ceiling panels of 18th-century Calvinist churches in Hungary.

The second part of this article deals with some typical title pages of calendars, edited in different printing houses of Upper Hungary (by Lorentz Brewer in Lőcse/Levoča, the serie *Calendarium Tyrnaviense*, Nagyszombat/Trnava) from the second half of the 17th century, and with the calendars of David Frölich, published in Breslau (Wrocław, PL) between 1623 and 1646.

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Popular prints from the 16th to the 18th century, from the Renaissance to the late Baroque, offer interesting examples of the connection between word and image, sign and symbol, the transformation of forms and meanings. Sometimes it is very difficult to decide whether the given picture is a sign, a symbol, an emblem or a decoration. The appearance of *mermaids/sirens* among the Zodiac signs in the woodcuts of a 16th-century Hungarian *Cisio*¹ (as Virgo and Aquarius), and on the ceiling panels of 17th–18th century Calvinist churches, prompts a particularly rich array of cultural historical associations. Similarly, over space and time, *representations of Saturn* underwent a constant transformation in the various literary, graphic and folklore versions of calendars. Personifications of the planet Saturn proved to be an extremely versatile field of study: Aby Warburg and Ervin Panofsky wrote detailed studies on these figures. Warburg's analysis² is based on an old German calendar from Lübeck (1519), Italian engravings and German mural paintings (in Lüneburg, Hildesheim, Goslar, Göttingen): he

investigates the astronomical predictions in pictures and words, as the title of his book suggests.

The *labours of the month* (Monatsbilder) are likewise the concentrations of a remarkably complex world. The *themes of the title page illustrations* (towns, castles, portraits of famous astrologers, other compositions) also offer rich sources for investigation: they seem to be mere decoration, but sometimes we can discover an organic connection with the content of the given calendar, or recognize in them allegories of current events (e.g. the triumph over the Turks at the end of the 17th century).

In this paper I try to give an overview of the varied connections between word and image in the calendars and other popular works (penny books, manuscript song collections) of the late Renaissance and Baroque. I look at the associations and influences from different fields of culture, consider ancient topoi and archetypes which underwent a great many transformations over space and time. Two large groups of illustrations offer interesting examples from the rich choice of the material: the Zodiac signs and the decorations of the calendars' title pages. In the first case I examine some non-traditional figures, like mermaids/sirens in the role of Aquarius and Virgo. How did they find their way into the *Cisio*? Do these images have a meaning or are they neutral? How did the images develop? How does the calendar, a vehicle mixing elements of high and popular culture, function? In the calendars we often meet an inorganic, occasional connection between the illustrations (like the mermaid/siren) and the text. The calendar itself is a quarry of very diverse – scholarly and popular – knowledge, and the application of pictures can be irregular, even inaccurate. For example, in the abovementioned *Cisio*, the illustration for May – a man and a woman taking a bath in a tub, under the trees – reappears as a symbol of autumn, because the tub resembles one used for wine making. This was a widespread motif for the vignettes of September and October in calendars all over Europe, but the compiler of the *Cisio* seems to have mixed up the illustration for May with the autumn pictures. He may have been unfamiliar with the conventions of the old calendar symbols, and chosen the illustration at random. We know similar defects in the coupling of the planets and the Zodiac signs (errors in the composition of woodcuts), and several calendars give the labours of the months in the wrong order.³

In the other group of illustrations, on the decorative front pages of calendars, we can observe an opposing logic: the difficult, extravagant compositions often build on a given idea, in connection with the (supplementary) text of calendars. Sometimes they are compact, enigmatic summaries of the content. They are meant to decorate, but if we can read the pictures, they will reveal hidden messages, bring the sign-meaning function into relief. What are individual designs usually include familiar details, emblems (personification of Astrology) and other old topoi, like instruments of geometrics and astronomy (globe, compasses etc.), landscapes and

portraits of great mathematicians and astronomers. One important example is a calendar printed in Norimberg in 1616, and now kept in Sopron, Hungary: in coloured medallions on the quarto page, there appear Euclid, Albategni, Masshalah, Pythagoras, Hipparchus and Ptolemy.⁴ (Fig. 1)



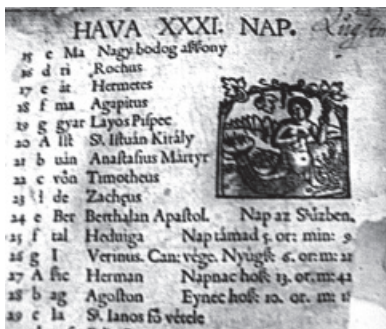
In the second part of this paper I will take a look at some typical title pages of calendars, edited in different printing houses of Upper Hungary (as in Lőcse/Levoča, Nagyszombat/Trnava) and Breslau (Wrocław, PL) from the last quarter of the 17th century.⁵

I. The siren as a Zodiac sign, and its other roles and associations

We can register the appearance of the mermaid/siren in different contexts and forms: as the illustration of calendars and other kinds of popular books, in Hungarian coats of arms during the Renaissance period, on seals, glazed tiles and tombstones from the 13th and 14th centuries on, and on the ceiling panels of protestant churches ever since the 17th and 18th centuries. Derived from Greek mythology, it metamorphosed into a great many forms, with different meanings.⁶ It appears in sacred and profane spaces, in stone, in mosaics, in medieval sculpture, Renaissance furniture, in the woodcuts of popular prints. Multifarious as the subject is, I cannot hope to discuss it in a single study, but allow me to point out a few characteristic appearances in popular culture.

In Heltai's *Cisio*, printed in Kolozsvár (Clausenburg/Cluj) in 1592, we encounter the mermaid figure as a Zodiac sign twice, in two variants. One of the pictures is the sign of the Virgo, the well-known female figure, with a beautiful face and a single-fin fish tail (Fig.2), the other is the sign of Aquarius (Fig. 3), a man's trunk with a forked fish tail.⁷ Founded in 1550 by Georg Hoffgreff and Gáspár Heltai, the workshop became very prosperous by the end of the 16th century. Both found-

ers were of Transylvanian German origin and studied in Wittenberg in the 1540s. In 1547 Hoffgreff went to Norinberg to study the art of book printing, and spent a year in the printing house of Johann von Berg and Ulrich Neuber. After his death in 1559, Gáspár Heltai managed the office in Kolozsvár. In some respects, his life reflects the typical Transylvanian fate of the 16th century, though his talent was far superior to most of his peers': born as a Catholic, he later adopted Lutheranism, only to take up Calvinism in 1551, and then Unitarianism in 1668. He was already an adult when he learned Hungarian, yet he was to become one of the greatest prose stylists of the language in the 16th century. In 1546 he settled as a preacher in Kolozsvár, and lived there for the rest of his life.⁸ After his death in 1574, the printing office was directed by his widow, and then by his son, Gáspár Jr. Throughout this half a century, the shop issued more than two hundred publications, most of them in Hungarian. They include Heltai's own translation of the Bible, Bonfini's history of Hungary, also translated from the Latin into Hungarian by Heltai, religious and secular literature, calendars, a free translation of Aesop's *Fables*, a collection of short stories on the life of Pontianus (based on Georg Rabe and Weygand Han's edition, "Die sieben weisen Meister", 1565), etc.



Beside the publications, the illustrations made at the print shop – animal, floral and grotesque initials, calendar pictures and other book decorations – also represent an important chapter of Hungarian culture. Certain parts of these woodcuts (e.g. initials) were made by Jacobus Lucius, of whose activity in Transylvania there is documentary evidence.⁹ Other series (headings, vignettes, printer emblems) show a variety of influences from contemporary woodcutting. The German connections of Heltai's printing office help us to understand how the literary and visual topoi and genres wandered in 16th-century European culture: their irradiation was boundless, they appeared wherever a receptive audience could be found.

This is why it is important to look into the appearance and meaning of the two siren figures of Heltai's *Cisio*. In no other calendar or cisio have I seen such

figures function in the role of Zodiac signs in a similar manner. Nor does Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*¹⁰ make mention of it, though the author describes all traditional calendar illustrations, the planets and the labours of the months. The customary representations of Aquarius make one recall ancient stellar mythology, as they resemble the cupbearers of Zeus: Ganymedes, or rarely, Hebe. The question is when these non-typical Zodiac signs arrived in Heltai's printing house, or who cut them, and whether these signs have a second, hidden meaning (whether they symbolise something) or if they denote only the given subject/phenomenon?

The old calendars and *cisios* were compilations in the overwhelming majority of cases, therefore the woodcuts used by the publishers travelled from one office to the other. Meanwhile, they underwent various changes: elements of the Zodiac cycle could be lost or damaged, whereupon the publisher replaced them with some other picture from another series. In her book, Teresa Higuera¹¹ quotes several interesting examples of the combination of disparate elements: traditions mingle in the Zodiac illustrations, like representations of Gemini in several medieval prayer books. There the original myth of Castor and Pollux was ignored and either two women or a man and a woman appear in the pictures. In these cases the tradition – the “original” mythological sign – is altered, the new combinations suggest different shades of meaning. The woodcuts in Heltai's *cisio* can be traced back to Norinberg workshops. These connections were discovered and analysed by two Hungarian scholar-librarians, Gedeon Borsa and Elizabeth Soltész, who studied the set of letter types and woodcuts (among them Gospel illustrations, Zodiac signs, planets and month illustrations) used in Heltai's printing house. Borsa has identified the Gospel illustrations as copies of a series by Hans Sebald Beham, a master from the school of Albrecht Dürer.¹² Yet, Borsa did not deal with each picture separately, and I think the non-typical mermaid/siren figures as Zodiac illustrations require further explanation.

We do not have much documentary evidence of the last decade of Heltai's printing house, and we do not know who exactly compiled the *Cisio*, but the errors in the use of the signs suggest that this person was not very well-versed in the iconography of calendars (cf. the abovementioned mistakes in the illustrations for May and autumn). Nonetheless, these two sirens as Aquarius and Virgo indicate that the choice was not entirely arbitrary: the associations with water and virginity are supported by mythology – if their role is not prominent in the iconography of astrology. The workshop may have had access only to these woodcuts, but since no other *cisios* of the office have survived from previous or later years, we can only register the appearance of these non-typical Zodiac characters.

Two notes on the Norinberg contact mentioned above. A fragment of a richly decorated wooden wall panel from the house of Leonhard Hirschvogel is exhibited in the Stadtmuseum. This masterpiece by Peter Flötner (1534) shows the mermaid figure with a forked fish tail and a crown on her head. The other link

to Norinberg is Anton Coeberger's illustrated Bible from 1483¹³: the illustrator depicts Noah's Ark between two mermaid/siren figures: one is a maiden, the other is a man, both with a single-fin fish tail. Noah and those in his company – his family and the animals – are looking at these tempters like Ulysses at his sirens. These occurrences support Borsa's opinion that the woodcuts of Heltai's workshop came from this environment.

These late-16th-century woodcuts – the two sirens, Gemini and Libra – play a very important role in the history of Hungarian book publishing: their reappearance a hundred years later evince that the old woodcuts (i.e. blocks) were still being used, while the ancient mythological and astrological archetypes themselves had become distant, neutralized by then. The “user” (book editor, typographer etc.) could assign to them the optional meaning or decorative function he wanted, and he could illustrate a variety of publications with them, not only calendars or cisios. The Zodiac signs of Heltai's *Cisio* reappeared in three Hungarian publications at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries: the Libra on the title page of a legal-economic tome,¹⁴ the Aquarius – the male trunk with the forked fish tail – on the front page of a Latin grammar book,¹⁵ both printed by the famous Hungarian punch cutter and printer, Miklós Tótfalusi Kis (1652-1702). The other mermaid figure, Virgo can be found in a penny book, containing a long verse about physiognomy¹⁶ (Fig.4). This book was published without date and place of origin, but I think it is an 18th-century reprint of an earlier edition, one from the press of Tótfalusi, like the other two books mentioned above. The little mermaid figure also helps us to establish the date of publication. For a proof, consider the following. The 16th-century printing stock of Heltai's office was preserved and used by the printing house of the Reformed Church in Kolozsvár during the whole of the 17th century. In 1694, Miklós Tótfalusi Kis¹⁷ – coming back from Amsterdam to Transylvania with the aim of promoting Hungarian book printing – took over the office. He “agreed with the Reformed Church authorities on establishing a well-equipped printing office, using and recasting for this purpose the type material of the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese and that of the press owned jointly by



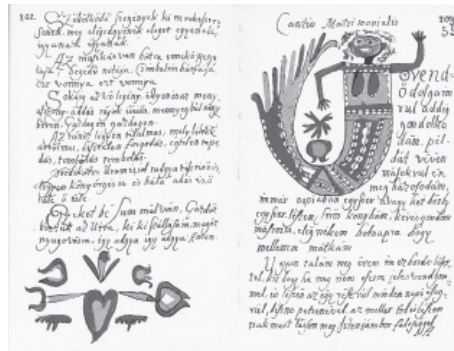
the Kolozsvár Reformed Parish Church and college.”¹⁸ In this way he inherited not only the letter types but also the old printing blocks of cisio/calendar illustrations, which material was already incomplete by that time. The Zodiac signs, among them the mermaid figures, were consequently used to decorate books with contents entirely remote from the world of calendars and cisios. Although Tótfalusi also put out calendars of a relatively high quality, they were not illustrated. At the end of the 17th century we find the typical calendar pictures (labours of the months, planets and Zodiac signs) rarely in Hungarian calendars. Only the decorative front pages remained and some astronomical illustrations in the editions of the university press of Tyrnava (the *Calendarium Tyrnaviensis* series, on which more presently), and in a few Hungarian calendars edited in Bártfa (Bardejov) and Lőcse (Levoča).



The next station in the wanderings of the mermaid/siren figure is the painted furniture and ceiling panels of 18th-century Protestant churches in Hungary. We can find very nice and original interiors – pews, choirs, pulpits – in these little churches which were made by village carpenters and joiners (Fig. 5, Szenna). One can be found in Szenna, a village in South-West Hungary, about 50 km from Lake Balaton. The North-East of Hungary and territories now belonging to Romania also have churches like this, with vegetable, floral and astral ornaments, and fantastic hybrid beings like the siren. These figures were discussed in a study by the excellent Hungarian art historian, Lajos Kelemen.¹⁹ He points out one possible meaning of the mermaid figure: it may be a reference to the harlot Babel as mentioned in John’s Revelation 17:1. The seventh angel tells John: “Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.”²⁰ The hybrid figure – upper part a woman, lower a fish – reminds Kelemen of the harlot of Babylon sitting “on many waters” and riding a beast. Kelemen’s argument is based on medieval art, namely the mermaid’s appearance in the Romanesque and gothic cathedrals and cloisters. The French scholar, George Duby also deals with this question in his book *Le temp de cathédrales* (Paris,

Gallimard, 1976). He interprets the siren figure as a symbol of sin; this hybrid of a woman and a reptile can be seen in many cloisters and cathedrals, and Duby includes a photo of the siren relief from the cloister of San Pedro de Galligans. (There are interesting variations on the siren, as in the Grossmünster Kloster in Zurich: here the fish tail is transformed into two serpents. Similar figures have survived in medieval Transylvanian churches as well.²¹)

Medieval iconography knows many hybrid beings, in a variety of roles, like the triton or centaur on coats of arms, in calendar illustrations, on furniture and wall decorations. Decoding their meaning is a multi-route investigation, the transformation from sign to symbol and to decoration is such a complex issue that here I can only indicate the shift of meanings and functions through a few examples. The question gets even more complicated when we consider the *Physiologus*, a book from the early Christian period in which different animals and fantastic beings are described, among them the siren and the centaur. The original text was Greek, originated in the Byzantine Empire, and later saw various translations. One Latin version²² appeared in Hungary at the end of the 15th century; one of the owners of the illustrated codex during the 16th century was Johannes Sambucus (János Zsámboky, 1531-1584), a Hungarian humanist known all over Europe.²³ In this codex there is a picture of a siren, a woman-bird hybrid, and a negative commentary, in which she appears as a symbol of temptation. In the course of centuries, this ancient figure seems to have undergone quite a few metamorphoses through the profane and sacred spaces of Hungarian culture, from codices to penny books.



An interesting derivative of the mermaid (Virgo) in Heltai’s *Cisio* can be found in the 1704 *Cantionale* of György Szentsei (Fig. 6).²⁴ This handwritten songbook contains the best of Hungarian popular poetry from the 16th and 17th centuries. It preserves many love and wedding songs, with the regular topoi of Renaissance love poetry, with ancient mythological figures like Venus, Diana, Helene, Cupid and the sirens. The illustrations are also derived from late Renaissance book decorations: the coloured flowers, vines, arabesques and stylized figures

recall the illuminated codices, breviaries and calendars of the earlier centuries. It is in this vein that the mermaid/siren appears in an initial “J,” at the beginning of the *Cantio matrimonialis*, showing once again the *meaningful* siren figure of medieval and Renaissance art as being transformed from symbol into decoration. The copier of the *Cantionale*, György Szentsei was an educated man, he probably knew mythology, which was why he drew a mermaid for the initial of a poem about a false wife. Ever since antiquity, the siren has been connected with the idea of deceit, constituting one of the oldest topoi of European literature. In his *Iconologia*, Cesare Ripa also ascribes this meaning to the siren, under the title *Falsita d’amore, overo inganno*. Just as Tótfalusi “resurrected” and reinterpreted the *Cisio* illustrations of Heltai’s office, Szentsei – also working at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries – too salvaged the mermaid topos in his *Cantionale*, and turned the symbol into an allegory and decoration for the *Cantio matrimonialis*, a popular late variation on the *Adhortatio mulieris* type of songs.

The image is similar to the siren on the ceilings of the abovementioned Protestant churches: the conventional form, the naïve, coloured drawing comes from the same world; the medieval and Renaissance forms and meanings had become folklorized by the early 18th century. By this time the figure was no longer identified with the great prostitute of Revelations, though still preserved negative connotations like unfaithfulness, temptation or weakness of character, as alluded to in Szentsei’s *Cantionale*.

Here I must mention the other siren figure, the one with a male or female trunk and a forked fish tail, often wearing a crown. It underwent folklorization just as the former, “single-fin” mermaid. In the 18th century, it appeared in a Hungarian fortune book as a complex emblem of erratic fortune (Fig. 7). Popular publications transmitted this figure from the medieval period through the Renaissance to the later centuries, with its meanings changing along the way.



The Aquarius figure in Heltai's *Cisio* – the “fish-man” with a forked tail that resembles the Greek letter ω – also has a very interesting prehistory and associations. Let me refer to the findings of another Hungarian scholar, Zsuzsa Pekár.²⁵ She found interesting connections of this figure with Benedictine and Cistercian buildings and the heraldry of Italian families like the Colonnas of Rome, the Avogadros of Verona and the Monaldeschis of Orvieto; it occurs on seals, in Italian and French watermarks, on a majolica vessel (Museo di Capodimonte, Naples) and the tombstones of prelates – all in the 12th–14th centuries. Zsuzsa Pekár thinks the ω -tailed siren – a female being – is connected to medieval theology, more particularly the visions of Hildegard von Bingen.²⁶ The ancient form referred to the Christian meaning of omega and became *Imago Ecclesiae*, the symbol of the soul, waiting for admission to the Kingdom of Heaven. This is why the shape repeatedly appears on the tombstones of bishops and other members of high clergy. The figure had widespread use in medieval Hungary: wall fragments, glazed tiles and seals featuring the siren have survived from the age of the Angevins and Sigismund of Luxembourg (13th–14th century), several of which are exhibited in the National Museum, Budapest.

If some of the woodcuts used in Heltai's workshop came from Norinberg, the figure of the mermaid/siren was sufficiently well-known in medieval and Renaissance Hungary to make it difficult to determine which meaning from the rich strata was alive at the end of the 16th century. The possible functions – sign, symbol and decoration – were probably mixed, and influenced one another. In any case, this theme offers still many interesting meanings for the semiotics, too.

II. The decorative title pages of calendars

As for the image-text relationship, the title pages of calendars constitute an important and large group. I want to quote three series and several examples from the abundance of available material: 1. the calendars of David Frölich (1595–1648), published in Breslau (Wrocław) between 1623 and 1641; 2. Hungarian calendars appearing in the printing house of Lorentz Brewer and his heirs in Lőcse (Levoča) from 1639 up to the end of the 17th century; 3. the serie *Calendarium Tyrnaviense* edited in Nagyszombat (Trnava) in the second half of the 17th century.

Among the title-pages of quarto-sized, German language calendars of David Frölich we can discern two types: in the calendar of 1623 one can see the illustrations of the planets, well known from the calendars of Renaissance period, but in the following years appears a new type of decoration: it is a specific composition of the landscape of Breslau and the allegorical figures of Mathematics and Astronomy, depicted as two women. This type of title-pages decoration was widely believed in the 17th and 18th century in Europe. The typography of Baumann in

Breslau, where the Frölich-calendars have been printed, used this type of title-pages also. The contacts of the Hungarian calendar edition with Breslau are traceable in the following decades, too. The cultural transfer came across well on the field of popular press: the woodcuts for illustrations, the general knowledge of astrology and astronomy and other supplementary materials for calendars seemed to be a common treasury in Europe. In the second half of the 17th century two astrologer from Breslau, Christoph Neubarth and his son, Johann have made the calculations for the Hungarian calendars, their work constituted for a long time the continuity of the above mentioned contacts between Breslau and Upper Hungary.

We know of other title-page decorations of the Frölich-calendars, as well, for example the quarto-sized Latin calendar, published in printing office of Jacob Klöss jr. (Bártfa/ Bardejov, 1640)²⁷: the title text placed in an oval field, which is bordered with grotesque figures and ornaments. Due to the two volumes about the old Hungarian book decoration, mentioned in footnote 5, the different calendar illustrations now can be easily studiable and comparable.



In the quarto-sized calendars of the Brewer's office in Lőcse one can observe a similar solution, like in the Frölich'printings. For example, the calendar for 1676 Lőcse²⁸ has a symmetrically arranged title page (Fig. 8): attributes of astrology on the upper part, allegorical women figures on the left and right, and a view of Lőcse below. This is a typical composition, and one can find a lot of examples from German, Polish and Hungarian presses from the 17th and 18th centuries, all showing the influence of Ripa's *Iconologia*.²⁹ The connection or similarity of the allegorical figures, the personifications of Astronomy in the European graphic art of the 17th and 18th centuries can be traced back to Ripa's collection, though as we know his emblem lexicon was a register of already existing symbols and allegories. By the description of "Mathematics" and "Astrology" we find the well

known-attributes: a woman in diaphanous clothes, with wings on her head, compasses in her right hand, and a globe with Zodiac signs in her left. Such representations already appeared in calendars from the early 16th century, as in the one printed in Cracow in 1512.³⁰ In the Lőcse calendar, the wings are missing from the female figures, but the other attributes – compasses, globe, the book with numerals – are present. The “message” of the picture is not complicated, all the elements refer to the function of the calendar and the place of publication. The decorative title-pages of this kind, with landscapes, allegorical figures and planets appear only in the quarto-sized calendars; in the small, 16^o printings there are more simple decorations: for example, an astrological sign related to the given year’s celestial phenomena (lunar eclipse, conjunctions of planets etc.) or the arm of the town, where the printing house is working.

In the examples of *Calendarium Tyrnaviense* there are more special and varied title pages. The first Hungarian university was founded in the town of Trnava/Nagyszombat in 1635, later moved to Buda, and then to Pest at the end of the 18th century, where it still exists. The printing house of this university published calendars in Latin and Hungarian – the former with a more educational content, while the latter tended to borrow material from folklore, oral and written genres (showing the influence of medical manuscripts, mixing magic and natural phenomena, verses on the labours of the months, proverbs and anecdotes, etc.). The Latin versions were made by the Jesuit Martin Szentiványi, a professor of the university between 1675 and 1705. In each calendar, he published some kind of scholarly material – on botany, physics, history, astronomy etc. His knowledge in most fields was rather rudimentary, while his philosophy represented what was a conservative approach in cosmography, common among the Jesuits.³¹ The images and texts of the 1678 calendar bear an interesting testimony to this. On the front page we can recognize several elements of Dürer’s *Melancholia I*: astronomical instruments, a globe and the figure of Saturn in the bottom left corner. The figure has the typical attributes of Saturn/Kronos: wings, a scythe, an hour glass, a bald crown and a beard (it is a combination with the emblem of Fortune-Kairos). There are interesting differences between the two illustrations: Dürer’s Saturn figure represents the metamorphosis of the cruel, gloomy demon of the planet into a humanised, creative, contemplative being; the artist spiritualizes the threatening symbol, the “memento mori,” and makes it the personification of human work³² – in accordance with the mentality of the Renaissance. In the late Baroque Jesuit calendar of Nagyszombat/Trnava the traditional demon of the planet returns. The content of the calendar underpins the picture: in the appendix (on pages D_{3a}-D_{6b}) there is a long text, *Dissertatio Physico-mathematica Cosmographica, seu de Mundi Systemate*, in which the good Jesuit pater rejects Copernican astronomy from the perspective of medieval cosmography and puts forth the “true” system of the world – which is a syncretic system of the “hybrid” cosmography of Tycho

de Brache fitting together with the spirit of the Council of Trent (*De situ et ordine praecipuarum mundi partium*): the planets move around the Sun, but the Sun, the Moon and the fixed stars revolve round the unmoving Earth, the centre of the universe. (“In medio totius Universi est Terra. Circa terraquam Globum est expansus aër, circa aërem putatur esse ignis, quem tamen alii melius defoecatam aërem, seu aetherem appellant. Circa putatum ignem est coelum sydereum, sic dictum, tam errantia seu Planetae, quam inerrantia seu stellae fixae, huic teste scriptura supereminent aquae coelestes. Aquis vero coelestibus, coelum Empyreum, quod est sedes Beatorum. Ultra hoc sunt imaginaria spatia, nullo sine terminata. Ut ostendit figura hic apposita.”³³). This ideology was still obligatory for Jesuits in the 18th century, and so their calendars teach this old cosmography. The other illustrations were also reflecting pre-Copernican cosmographies, one, for instance, references Dante’s celestial zones as described in Cantos 27-28 of *Paradise*, in which he refers to Dionysos Areopagites’ *De coelesti hierarchia*.³⁴

This Jesuit calendar is a fitting illustration of its age, the 17th century. It represents the great argument with the spirit of the Renaissance and Reformation. Astronomers, artists and philosophers of Humanism tried to emancipate man’s thought from the fear of demons (see the interpretation of Dürer’s *Melencolia* by Warburg), while Baroque returned to the medieval doctrine of the world system and summoned the old, well proved fatalistic powers and symbols (like Saturn) from the subconscious. Both the Renaissance and the Baroque show signs of a syncretism between Christian and classical beliefs but the first tries to understand the Creator’s mystery and to harmonize belief and reason. The second has recourse to respect for old authorities and operates with the fear of death, and the unforeseeable character of Fortune. The popular press, the calendars served this aim very well.



The next interesting title page I want to present is in the *Calendarium Tyrnaviense* for the year 1683 (Fig. 9). On the top of the picture we can see Patrona Hungariae, i.e. the Holy Virgin with the Child, with Hungarian saints on her left and

right, viz. Stephanus I, Emericus, Ladislaus and Adalbertus Pragensis. The latter spent a few years in the court of St. Stephen, took part in the conversion of Hungarian people to the Christian belief. At the bottom of the picture is a view of Trnava, and the central part is occupied by a wreath with the coats of arms of the lands of the Habsburg Empire. The picture corresponds to the content of the calendar, as in its appendix there is a chronology focusing on Hungarian history. Also, in the 17th and 18th centuries one can observe a great popularity of the different representations of the Holy Virgin and the Child (Gottesmutter) all over Europe: after the triumph over the Turks in Lepanto (7 October 1571), a whole class of images emerged, the “Immaculata Triumphans,”³⁵ and not only as altar-pieces and paintings, but also in books as woodcuts and engravings, on goldsmith’s works and reliquaries.³⁶ No wonder then that among the calendar illustrations of the Catholic printing houses (like that in Nagyszombat/Trnava) we often find this representation. Another historical theme in Hungarian Baroque religious painting was St. Stephen, the first Hungarian king, offering his crown to the Holy Virgin. This idea of Hungary as Regnum Marianum was encouraged by the troubled situation of Hungary during the Turkish occupation: belief in the heavenly protection of the Holy Virgin gave strength and persistence during the ongoing fight. From the 1640s till the 1770s, Nagyszombat/Trnava was one of the most important centres of Catholic book publishing in Hungary, with skilled engravers working in the university press, so the examples of *Calendarium Tyrnaviense* could reflect the main tendencies – both in image and text – of the epoch. In 1690 the same press published a book by Prince Pál Esterházy, palatine of Hungary,³⁷ listing various representations of the Holy Virgin. There is an obvious relationship between these images and the calendar illustrations of Patrona Hungariae or Immaculata Triumphans.

The calendar published in Trnava in 1688 shows another important connection of text and image (Fig.10). On the front page we see twelve representations of castles in medallions. Buda is on the top of the page, and the others are, counter-clockwise: Quinque Ecclesia (= Pécs, Hung.), Siklós (Hung.), Czanad (= Csanád, Hung.), Simontornya (Hung.), Novarinum (= Pilos, Greece), Napoli di Romania (= Nafplion, Greece), Argos (Greece), Modon (= Methoni, Greece), Hatvan (Hung.), Kaposvar (Hung.) and Segedinum (=Szeged, Hung.). The reader of the calendar will appreciate this composition when he comes to Appendix I and II at the end of the booklet: *Munitio in Hungaria, armis caesareis anno 1686 reoccupatorum descriptio*, and *Moreae seu Peloponnesi Peninsulae, rerumque memorabilium in ea descriptio*. The author of the Appendix, Martin Szentiványi describes the Hungarian and Greek towns that had been recaptured from the Turks. This example, as many others, shows that the calendars always reflected on the current events of the time, both with their images and text. It is important in the serie *Calendarium Tyrnaviense*, that the title-pages for each year are different: we see a consciously planned print, in which the decorative elements have

been harmonized with the texts. The calendar decorations of Brewer office in Lőcse show more accidental character, probably because this typography had not have such a definitely setted aim for religious conviction and teaching, as the university printing house in Trnava.



Summarizing this short survey on the connections of calendar illustrations and contents, we can state that by the middle of the 17th century the former astrological illustrations slowly gave way to current political or ideological themes, like those mentioned above. The great age of astronomy and astrology in calendars was coming to its end. Its heydays coincided with Humanism and the Renaissance, it appeared in popular culture during the age of the Baroque, and it went out of vogue with the rise of the Enlightenment.



By way of closure, we present/mention two fragments of a calendar published in Zurich in 1587 (Fig.11). They are now held in the Library of the Protestant College in Csurgó, a small town in the south-west of Hungary, the same area where Szenna and its church with the decorated ceiling panels can be found. As

for the provenance of these fragments, all we know is that in 1889 they were presented to the College by Professor Endre Kalocsay, who was known as a collector of antiques. We do not know where he bought them or how he obtained them. They are, in any case, a concrete proof of the wandering of calendars and, *mutatis mutandis*, of the proverb “libelli, i.e. calendars habent sua fata.”

Euclid, fig. 1

Virgo, fig. 2

Aquarius, fig. 3

Virgo, penny book, fig. 4

Mermaid, Szenna, fig. 5

Cantionale of György Szentsei, fig. 6

Hungarian fortune book, fig. 7

Calendar of Lócse, 1676, fig. 8

Calendarium Tyrnaviense 1683, fig. 9

Calendarium Tyrnaviense, 1688, fig. 10

Zurich, 1587 (front), fig. 11

Notes

- 1 Perpetual almanacs were called “cisios” in Hungarian, the word being derived from “circumcisio Christi,” the first day of the year. Bibliographical data of this particular publication: “CISIO magyar nyeluen. [...]Colosvarat 1592.” [typ.Heltai] RMNy 684, Library of the Academy of Sciences, Budapest, RM 4° 224. This Cisio was based on a German edition of the perpetual calendar of Johannes Regiomontanus, renowned astronomer of his time, who worked in Buda in 1468-71, at the court of King Matthias Hunyadi.
- 2 Warburg, Aby, 1920. *Heidnisch-antike Weissagung im Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten*. Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung. I used the Hungarian edition: Warburg, Aby, 1986. *Pogány-antik jóslás Luther korából*. Budapest: Helikon, 85. I also discussed this subject in Dukkon, Ágnes, 2003a. *Régi magyarországi kalendáriumok európai háttérben* [Old Hungarian Calendars in a European Context]. Budapest: Eötvös Kiadó, 26–38.
- 3 In the “Flemish Calendar” (ca. 1470), kept in Budapest, in the National Széchényi Library (Cod. Lat. 396), some of the Zodiac signs – Virgo, Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius – are coupled with the months incorrectly, as Libra with August, Virgo with September, Sagittarius with October etc.; in a Hungarian calendar from 1611, the labours of the months are mixed, or the same picture is used twice, as that of harvest in March and August. In the Hungarian Cisio edited in Lócse (Levoča,) 1650, the Zodiac signs dominated by Mars, Jove and Saturn are confused. For more details see: Dukkon 2003a, 66–72, 105, 141.
- 4 Neuer und Alter Schreibealender sampt der Planeten Lauff und Aspecten Tag und Nachtleng Auff und Niedergang der Sonnen nach Christi Geburt MDCXVI. Geschrieben durch Georgium Albanum-Marium oder Halbmayern, Astrophilum zu Marckt Burckbernheim in Francken. Gedruckt und verlegt zu Nürnberg durch Abraham Wagenmann. A copy is kept in the Library of the Evangelical Secondary School, Sopron, A 521.

- 5 In the last years there have been published two large volumes about the letters and decorations of the old Hungarian typographies: V. Ecsedy, Judit, 2010. *A régi magyarországi nyomdák betűi és díszei. XVII. század. I. Nyugat- és észak-magyarországi nyomdák*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó; Bánfi, Szilvia, Pavercsik, Ilona, Perger, Péter and V. Ecsedy, Judit, 2014. *A régi magyarországi nyomdák betűi és díszei. XVII. század. II. Kelet-magyarországi és erdélyi nyomdák, Lőcse, Kassa*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó. The calendar illustrations, treated in this study are registered in these volumes.
- 6 To name only a few studies on this theme: Kerényi, Karl, 1951. *Die Mythologie der Griechen. I. Die Götter- und Menschengeschichten*. Zürich: Rhein-Verlag; Jung, Carl G., 1955. *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. Zürich: Rascher; Jung, Carl G., 1964. *Man and his symbols*. New York: Ferguson; Marót, Károly, 1958. The Sirens. *Acta Ethnographica*, 7 (1–2), 1–60. The relationship of Christian theology to the sirens was discussed recently by Heidl, György, 2005. *A keresztény és a szírének. Patrisztikus tanulmányok*. [Christian Man and the Sirens. Patristic studies.] Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó, 9–32.
- 7 Dukkón 2003a, 73–74.
- 8 Klaniczay, Tibor, ed. 1985. *Old Hungarian Literary Reader. 11th –18th centuries*. Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 139.
- 9 Fitz, József, 1959. Jacob Lucius der Ältere in Siebenbürgen. *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, 171.
- 10 Ripa, Cesare, 1603. *Iconologia*. Roma, Lepidus Facius inventione. I used the Hungarian translation: Ripa, Cesare, 1997. *Iconologia*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó. Transl., notes and afterword by Tamás Sajó.
- 11 Pérez-Higuera, Teresa, 1997. *Chronos. Die Zeit in der Kunst des Mittelalters*. Würzburg: Echter, 263–270.
- 12 Borsa, Gedeon, 1979. Die Illustrationen der ältesten ungarischen Perikopenbücher. Teil I. *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, 238–290.
- 13 A copy of this Bible can be found in the National Széchényi Library, Budapest. Inc 22b I–II. vol.
- 14 Vectigal Transylvanicum. Claudiopoli, Ex officina Nicolai Kis de M.Tótfalu, 1700. OSzK, RMK I, 1560a.
- 15 Aelii Donati Viri Clarissimi de octo partibus Orationis methodus...Claudiopoli Anno 1701. OSzK RMK I 1623a
- 16 Természet próbája. melyet sok jeles Irásokból öszve szedett, És Magyar versekre fejezett Vintzi György 1701-ben. Nyomtatattott ujjonnan. Anno 0000. The penny book is now kept in the Library of the Academy of Science, Romania, Cluj/Kolozsvár (shelfmark: 64619), mikrofilm: MTAK 2567/II, Budapest.
- 17 His family name appears in the contemporary documents, among them the title pages of his own publications, in different variants, as Misztótfalusi Kis, Tótfalusi Kis, M. Tótfalusi Kis or only Kis.
- 18 Haiman, György, 1983. *Nicholas Kis: A Hungarian Punch-Cutter and Printer, 1650–1702*. Budapest: J. W. Stauffacher/Greenwood Press in association with J. Howell-Books, 31.
- 19 Kelemen Lajos, 1945. Mennyezet- és karzatfestmények a XVII. századból [17th-century ceiling and choir decoration]. In: *Művészettörténeti tanulmányok* [Studies in art history]. Bucharest, 1977, 41–81.
- 20 The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments.[...] Oxford. Printed at the University Press, M.DCCC.LXIII.
- 21 Jung, Károly, 1992. Folkloradatok egy középkori pillérfő értelmezéséhez [Folklore data towards the interpretation of a medieval pillar head]. In: *Köznapok és legendák* [Workaday reality and legends]. Újvidék/Novi Sad, 104–121.
- 22 Kádár, Zoltán, ed. 1986. *Physiologus. A Zsámboki kódex állatábrázolásaival* [Physiologus. With animal representations from the Zsámboki codex]. Trans. by Mohay, András. Budapest: Helikon, 109.

- 23 “He studied in Vienna, at German universities, then in Paris and Padua. From 1564 he lived in Vienna and from 1569 acted as the court historiographer.” In: *Myth and Reality. Latin Historiography in Hungary 15th–8th centuries*. Exhibition in the National Széchényi Library , 7 July – 3 September 2006. Catalogue. Budapest, 2006, p. 39.
- 24 Varga, Imre, ed. 1977. *Szentszei György Daloskönyve*. Facsimile. Budapest: Magyar Helikon. The original manuscript is kept in National Széchényi Library, Oct. Hung. 70.
- 25 Pekár, Zsuzsa, 1996. A román kori sellő megjelenése a középkori heraldikában és ikonográfiában. [The appearance of the Romanesque mermaid in medieval heraldry and iconography]. *Turul*, 69 (3–4), 78–102.
- 26 Pekár quotes extensive literature on Hildegard, e.g. Liebesschütz, H., 1930. *Das allegorische Weltbild der hl. Hildegard von Bingen*. Studien der Bibliothek Wartburg. Leipzig: Teubner; Riethel, F. ed., 1963. *Hildegard von Bingen. Naturkunde*. Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag; Pernoud, R., 1994. *Hildegard de Bingen*. Paris: Édition du Rocher etc.
- 27 FASTI, vulgo CALENDARIUM ...Davidis Froelichii. RMNy 1757.
- 28 *Neubarth Christoph Uj és O Kalendarioma*. Lócse, 1676. Brewer Samuel nyomdája. 4^o RMK I. 1200, National Széchényi Library.
- 29 The translator and editor of the Hungarian version, Tamás Sajó writes in the introduction: “During the two centuries of its golden age, the Iconology was translated into seven languages, appearing in almost forty editions throughout Europe and overseas, thus having direct and indirect influence on thousands of statues, frescoes and paintings from Mexico to Poland and from the Netherlands to Saint Petersburg.” Ripa, 1997, 8. We can add its influence on woodcuts for calendars and other prints.
- 30 Jacobus de Iszlza: *Vaticinium Syderale*, 1512. Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cim. 6009.
- 31 Horváthy, Péter–Németh, Gábor, 2007. A jezsuita kozmográfia emlékei a zirci könyvtárban. [Documents of the Jesuit cosmography in the Library of Zirc]. *Magyar Tudomány*, 168 (8), 1034–1044. The authors give a detailed survey about the cosmography of Jesuits, among others about the conception of Gábor Szerdahelyi and Martin Szentiványi, the professors at the university of Nagyszombat/Trnava in the last decades of the 17th century.
- 32 Warburg 1920.
- 33 Széchényi National Library, RMK II. 1223 “B”, F4b
- 34 A more detailed analyse about this calendar see: Dukkón, Ágnes, 2003b. Old calendars: an iconographical approach. In: Kadulska, Irena, ed. *Europejskie związki dawnego teatru szkolnego i europejska wspólnota dawnych kalendarzy*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 105–117.
- 35 For example: Unknown painter (1646): The Immaculata Triumphans over the battle by Lepanto, Győr, Church of Ignatius; Unknown painter (1670): The Immaculata Triumphans as Patrona Hungariae, Protector of the Hungarians against the Turks and heretics, Bozók, Hungary, Parish church. See a short analyse about this question in the following study: Dukkón Ágnes, 2011. A barokk szellemiség megjelenési formái a Calendarium Tyrnaviense sorozat példányaiban. [The Appearance of the Spirit of Baroque in the Examples of the Sserie Calendarium Tyrnaviense] In: Imre, Mihály, Oláh, Szabolcs, Fazakas, Gergely Tamás, Száraz, Orsolya, ed. *Eruditio, Virtus et Constantia. Tanulmányok a 70 éves Bitskey István tiszteletére*, I–II. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, II., 497–503.
- 36 A very profoundly work about this theme is the book of Szilárdfy, Zoltán, 2003. *Ikonográfia, kultusztörténet*. [Iconography, history of cult]. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó. It contains 102 coloured and 408 black and white pictures, with Hungarian and German language annotations.
- 37 Esterházy, Pál, [1690] 1994. *Az egész világon lévő csudálatos Boldogságos Szűz képeinek rövideden föl tet eredeti...*, Nagy-Szombat, facsimile. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.