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Scripta Classica 8, 73-81

2011

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

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Abstract: There are close affinities between the thought of Silesian Mannerist poet Balthasar Exner and renown Spanish poet Luis de Góngora of Córdoba. They both manifest an pan-European crisis of spirit on the threshold of modernity. It does make sense to refer certain mental tropes in Exner's poetry to Spanish culture, since many Silesian intellectuals and poets were residents at the court of Rudolf II in Prague where they met Spanish artists.

The atmosphere and spiritual climate of the "Spanish" Prague under Rudolf II reveals a world of great volatile and eccentric personalities. The presence of Silesians was also noticeable at the Prague court. Among the intellectuals who were then active in Silesia and somehow influenced by the intellectual atmosphere of Mannerist and imperial Prague was Hieronymus Arconatus from Lwówek Śląski (Germ. Loewenberg) to whom this article is mainly devoted.

Key words: Neo-Latin, Renaissance studies, Silesia, regional literature

Silesia is a region in Central Europe. Though the region's turbulent history was not favourable for Silesia in terms of political context, the Silesian Renaissance and Baroque culture is a phenomenon in itself. Protestantism led to the peak development of neo-Latin and German literature in Silesia. Suffice it to mention such names as Martin Optiz, Angelus Silesius or Andreas Gryphius. They formed an interesting cultural group that was German-Slavic in character. Although Silesian intellectuals did travel to Italy and France in the 16th and the 17th century, they never reached the Iberian Peninsula, which is apparent in the texts I have studied. There were times when they served in the Spanish army (as in the case of Hieronymus Arconatus), but Silesian's contacts with, flourishing at that time, Iberian world ends there. Perhaps the reason for it could stem from religion; Protes-

tantism, prevailing in Silesia, strengthened its position on the basis of contacts with other German countries. Yet, one occasion on which Silesia and Spain met can be referred to, namely, the time of emperor Rudolf II's reign in Prague. I would like to describe a singular case of a very specific person whose oeuvre preserves the Iberian inspirations in the Silesian culture in a representative way.

Córdoba in Spain and Jelenia Góra in Silesia are miles away from each other. Córdoba is famous, whereas Jelenia Góra is barely known, i.a. as Hirschberg, a birthplace of Georg Heym, pioneer of the German Modernism. However, the cities are strangely connected because of two poets. In Jelenia Góra ("Hirschberga" in slightly latinized form) Balthasar Exner was born. Exner was a neo-Latin poet, mannerist, and in my opinion — the most eminent mannerist of his generation. Exner had a lot in common with the aesthetic thought of Luis de Góngora, who was born earlier in Córdoba. The Spanish poet wrote in his native language, the Silesian poet — in Latin. They shared a common passion to use particular figures of speech, such as paranomasia. They both artistically transformed the symptoms of Europe's spiritual crisis and questioned rational foundations of the world around them. Subsequently to his death in 1627, Góngora was completely forgotten as a poet. It was not until 300 years later, that, among others thanks to the poet Federico García Lorca, Góngora's works started to be read again. Conversely, Exner, as many other eminent neo-Latin poets, still remains unknown and unread. Among many luminists of the Silesian *respublica poetarum*, he is continuously "silent." Editor of Góngora's *Soledades* John Beverley says:

Para Góngora, como para su contemporáneo en el *Quijote*, el ejercicio de la literatura ha reemplazado una praxis política y militar a la que ya no tienen acceso.¹

One could say that to Exner and his generation of Silesian mannerists literature meant the same that it meant to Góngora. It was the world of politics, the world of war, the world-church, and a world of quasi-worlds. It could substitute for anything.

There are many reasons for Exner's "silence", for instance, Baroque historians' reluctant attitude to mannerism and Polish intellectuals' unwillingness to explore the ancient Silesian culture surely contributed to this fact. When long time ago I read the book by Jan Durr Durski entitled *Daniel Naborowski. A Monograph on the History of Mannerism and Baroque in Poland* (Łódź 1966) I thought I found a key to many spiritual affinities of Baroque poetry in Europe and Silesian poetry by mannerists associated with the court of Rudolf II in Prague.² That key was im-

¹ J. Beverley: "Introducción." In: L. de Góngora: *Soledades*. Ed. J. Beverley. Madrid 2004, p. 56.

² See Z. Kadłubek: "Okolice praskiego dworu cesarskiego i śląscy poeci nowolacińscy." In: *Sborník prací Filozoficko-přírodovědecké Fakulty Slezské Univerzity v Opavě. Řada Literárněvědná. Series Scientiae Litterarum*, A3 2001. Ed. L. Pavera. Opava 2001, pp. 25—46.

portant for me to understand a meaning of tragic consciousness before the advent of modernity to multiethnic and multilingual Silesia, a region in a way independent from Sarmatism (Polish cultural trend in the 16th and the 17th century). All the more so because the neo-Latin Silesian poetry from the beginning of the 17th century could not be subordinated to the Polish nobelmen's paradigm. The figure of Daniel Naborowski, his poetry and theological thought behind it allowed me to perceive the artistic work of many neo-Latin mannerising European poets in a different way. They seemed very familiar through the prism of Naborowski's poetry.

"Sound, shade, smoke, wind, flash, word — that's what life is known for" (trans. M.J. Mikoś). A tone audible in the verse from Naborowski quoted above is not regressive in character if we do not refer it to the medieval spirituality. This particular tone yields new comparative quests in studies on poetry from the end of the 16th and the 17th century. We find ourselves within the orbit of the manneristic spirituality and aesthetics.

Michelangelo says in one of his letters, "[...] coming back to painting I cannot refuse to paint anything for the Pope Paul, but that which I will paint is going to be in bad mood, too." Michelangelo painted for Pope Paul III. He created frescos depicting the Last Judgement (1535—1541) in a chapel that Sixtus IV ordered to raise in 1473. Frescos, as perhaps the whole epoch, were in bad mood. The figures in motion are writhing unnaturally; in the centre, Christ with his hand raised orders to leave those who had not been chosen. He does not take them in. This might be claimed the first masterpiece on which Mannerism left a distinctive impression.

However, Mannerism is not only a notion from the history of art. He can also be regarded as the first poet-mannerist.³ Michelangelo is a virtuoso of that concept. All things taste variously in Michelangelo's art; they are sweet and bitter as life itself, *un dolce amaro* in love sonnet 40 of Frank J. Warnke found Michelangelo a poet-mannerist.

José Ortega y Gasset said that "since 1560 anxiety starts to come up in the European soul, some feeling of dissatisfaction and doubts emerge as to the fact if

³ Note an instructive remark by Walter Pater about the distinctive features of Michelangelo's style and his characteristic and unique power, peculiarity, the power of an idea that seems to transcend all borderlines of any suitable forms: "Krytycy Michała Anioła wypowiadali się w taki sposób, jak gdyby jedyną cechą charakterystyczną dla jego geniuszu była cudowna, graniczająca jak zwykle w dziełach wyobraźni z tym, co dziwne lub wyjątkowe, siła. Pewna niezwykłość, mająca w sobie coś z niezwykłości kwitnącego aloesu, jest obecna, bez wątpienia, we wszystkich prawdziwych dziełach sztuki. Jest konieczna, aby nas one ekscytowały lub dziwiły. Ale jest również niezbędna, jeśli mają być źródłem przyjemności i roztaczać nad nami swój czar. Nie powinna być pozbawiona swojej słodczy. Powinna być niezwykłością pełną uroku. Najważniejsze dla jego prawdziwych miłośników cechy stylu Michała Anioła to lubość i siła, przyjemność łącząca się z zaskoczeniem, **siła idei, która zdaje się niemal przekraczać wszelkie granice stosownej formy**, odzyskująca, krok po kroku, urok odnajdywany tylko w najprostszych, naturalnych przedmiotach — *ex forti dulcedo*" (emph. mine). See W. Pater: *Renesans. Rozważania o sztuce i poezji*. Trans. P. Kopszak. Warszawa 1998, p. 59.

life is really so perfect and so full, as it was believed till that time. People start to see that life they dream about is more perfect than the life they normally live.”⁴ Mannerism is a state of imagination. Anxiety and emotions manifested themselves in a contrapunct. An Italian—English philologist and comparative studies’ scholar Mario Praz (1896—1982) in his *Mnemosine. Parallelo tra letteratura e le arti visive* noted:

Anxiety and contrapunct are the most distinctive features of mannerism, and their most popular formula consists in *figura serpentinata*...⁵

As a trend or style, Mannerism was outrageously contradictory to the harmony that laid the foundations of “naive” aesthetic doctrine of Renaissance humanists. It took place in times when intellectuals and poets inspired by Seneca’s thought (let us not forget Neostoicism) gave much thought to a person’s attitude towards nature and art’s opposition to nature. Mannerists, thought, quickly left the sanctuary *sanctae tranquillitatis*. They entrust themselves to the changeable god Vertumnus, the multi-form seducer. Texts written by mannerists are restless and the dynamics in them is rhetoric. *Figura serpentinata* is at the same time an expression of the fall of anthropocentric vision of man,⁶ and evidence of faith in that which is irrational. *Figura serpentinata*, which is so clear and readable in the frescos of the Last Judgement,⁷ accompanies almost all mannerists’ works.

Overcoming nature in poetry means departing from classical poetics. In 1888 Heinrich Wölfflin wrote:

Der Antike gegenüber ist ein Erhalten der Begeisterung schon seit dem Tode Raffaels bemerkbar.⁸

⁴ J. Ortega y Gasset: “Rozmyślenia o Escorialu.” In: Idem: *Dehumanizacja sztuki i inne eseje*. Trans. P. Niklewicz. Warszawa 1980, p. 87.

⁵ M. Praz: *Mnemozyne. Rzecz o powinowactwie literatury i sztuk plastycznych*. Trans. W. Je-kiel. Warszawa 1981, p. 109.

⁶ At that time nobody believes that man is the master of his own destiny (*faber fortunae suae*), as it was believed by Picco della Mirandola. See E. Panofsky: “Artysta, uczony, geniusz. Uwagi o Renaissance-Dämmerung.” Trans. A. Morawińska. In: *Studia z historii sztuki*. Warszawa 1971, p. 173. It is worth taking note of human figures that, in mannerists’ paintings, express deep anxiety through “serpentine”: diminished heads in a bizarre position to torsos, the whole body placed vaguely in the background.

⁷ See E. Panofsky: “Ruch neoplatoniski i Michał Anioł.” Trans. S. Amsterdamski. In: Idem: *Studia z historii sztuki*. Selected and prefaced by J. Białostocki. Warszawa 1971, p. 225. Panofsky noted that *figura serpentinata* showing rotary motion seems to consist of soft fabric easy to stretch and twist in any direction, which gives an impression of some uncertain and unstable situation that, in fact, could be transformed into the classical balance if only figures’ aimless liveliness could be subordinated to the stabilizing and controlling power.

⁸ H. Wölfflin: *Renaissance und Barock. Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien*. Ed. H. von Faensen. Leipzig 1986, p. 22.

An artist creates different nature as if he were God himself. “A poet acts (*facit*) — *instar Dei*, that is, following God or in God’s manner. The poet is like Him and he reflects that act of creation; however, poetical act (or act of man’s creation) will repeat the creation and become like it, but it will not gain the same power. There will be no created world, but a repeated one,” Antoni Czyż⁹ wrote. It is not about freedom in creation or even willfulness (*die Freiheit des künstlerisches Schaffens*) as Arnold Hauser reports, but it is all about stability in not following any rules (*Regellosigkeit*).¹⁰

Mannerism is then a modern, almost contemporary presentation of ideas about the world and man’s role in that world of intricate cravings. Mannerism is a formation of humbleness. As a form of consolation Naborowski would say that nobody ordered us to “reach the sky with our deeds.” It is therefore an intellectual trend, in which many gloomy things and painful truths are shown afresh; however, it is an optimistic formation in both art and poetry. Anyway, it is the formation closer to the truth of existence.

As a changeable god Vertumnus Giuseppe Arcimboldi depicted emperor Rudolf II. In the bizarre mannerist portrait by Arcomboldo from 1591, the emperor has a nose of a pear, his mouth is of cherry, eyes — of pea pod and hawthorn flowers, Adam’s apple — of a radish. He entirely consists of various magnificent gifts of a garden and of orchard. The portrait well depicts the atmosphere of the court in Prague, renowned at the time of emperor Rudolf II’s reign by its cult of magnificence, mysticism and secret sciences, alchemy, and it characterizes the emperor himself. Rudolf II wanted to turn Prague into another Alexandria,¹¹ the intellectual capital of the world. Likewise, the Roman emperor Hadrian wanted to turn Rome into Alexandria. Tacitus called Hadrian *curiositatum omnium explorator* (“greedy for all news”¹²). Such was Rudolf II Habsburg (1552—1612) who was famous for his love for all kind of curiosities. Prague was to be another Alexandria, or otherwise, a town along the Vltava River was to be the Rome from Hadrian times. Thus, Rudolf II invited to Prague intellectuals from all over Europe. Among them were: an English alchemist John Dee¹³, a famous utopian religious reformer Francesco

⁹ A. Czyż: “Instar Dei — Sarbiewski o człowieku tworzącym.” In: *Jesuitica. Kolokwium naukowe z okazji 400. rocznicy urodzin Macieja Kazimierza Sarbiewskiego*. Ed. J. Malicki. Katowice 1997, p. 14.

¹⁰ A. Hauser: *Sozialgeschichte der Kunst und Literatur*. Bd. 1, München 1993, p. 430.

¹¹ See R.J.W. Evans: *Rudolf II and His World*. Oxford 1973.

¹² K. Morawski, in his essay on Hadrian, said that what strikes most in Hadrian is immense universality of spirit. Hadrian possessed or tried to possess all that civilization offered, and tried to combine spiritual resources of Rome and the East in a single person. Spartinus, Hadrian’s biographer, says that Hadrian was keen on poetry and science, and was fluent in arithmetics, geometry and painting. Apart from that, Hadrian tried to be a good dancer and singer. Moreover, he intended to be a splendid general. See K. Morawski: *Rzym. Portrety i szkice*. Kraków 1924, pp. 147—148. The description suits Rudolf II, who wanted to be another Hadrian.

¹³ He came to Prague with Edward Kelley from Cracow in 1584.

Pucci, a philosopher Giordano Bruno, a mathematician Fabrycjusz Mordent, Melchior Goldast, an astronomer John Kepler, Michael Maier¹⁴ (1568—1622), Dane Tycho de Brahe, a discoverer of the supernova in the constellation Cassiopeia, a neo-Latin poet Joanna Elżbieta Westonia, Jacobus Paleologus (in Prague 1562—1571) and many others.

Silesians¹⁵ played an important role in the intellectual life of the court. It was Silesians who represented Protestantism at the Court in Prague, whereas Spaniards belonged to the Catholic side in the so-called *facción español*,¹⁶ led by the omnipotent legate Wilhelm de San Clemente (died in 1608).

The imperial court in Prague was an asylum of tolerance and humanistic ideals. The Czech scholar Ivo Kořán said:

There is perhaps no such place but Central Europe, where the crash of ideals would have its repercussions. With an increase in the number of battles and development of the Counter-Reformation, at the end of Ferdinand I's reign (and especially Maximilian II's reign) the Court of German emperors is becoming a shelter for the educated, who developed best traditions of the Renaissance tolerance in the spirit of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Melanchton.¹⁷

The Court in Prague did not in any way guard the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. However, far more problematic in this context was a dedication to Wilhelm de San Clemente that Giordano Bruno (1548—1600) staying in Prague since 1588 placed in his book *De specierum scrutinie et lampade combinatoria Lulliana*. Making references to *ars combinatoria* of Raymond Lull,¹⁸ in his treatise, Bruno

¹⁴ Michael Maier (Majer), who used the title of a palace count, was an alchemist at the court in Prague and one of the founders of the Rosicrucian fellowship.

¹⁵ Emperor Rudolf II visited Silesia in 1577 in order to receive tribute from Silesian dukes and states. On May 4th he went to Żary, May 16th — Zgorzelec, May 20th — Lubań on the Kwiza River and Lwówek Śląski, May 21st — on the way to Jawor he also visited Złotoryja, May 23rd — Środa Śląska, May 24th — Wrocław, June 21st — Brzeg, June 22nd — Nysa, June — he set off on a return trip to Prague via Olomouc. For a detailed account of Rudolf II's trip to Silesia see J. Köhler: "Der Besuch Kaiser Rudolfs II. In Breslau 1577 nach den Briefen des Nuntius Giovanni Delfino." *Archiv für Schlesische Kirchengeschichte*, Band 28. Ed. J. von Gottschalk, pp. 29—49. An older monograph is by E. Fink: "Geschichte der landesherrlichen Besuche in Breslau." In: *Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv und der Stadtbibliothek Breslau*. Vol. 3, pp. 68—81. On the occasion of Rudolf II's entry into the city a poet Andreas Calagius wrote a poem *Divo Rudolpho II. Romanorum Imperatori primum Vratislaviam ingresso*. Vratislaviae 1577.

¹⁶ At the head of the Catholic fellowship was Maria of Prestejn *de domo* Marinquez de Lara, daughter of a famous heretic Isabel of Bresegn, follower of Bernardin Occhin.

¹⁷ I. Kořán: "Prasko-wrocławski krąg późnych humanistów." *Annales Silesiae* 1976, Vol. 6, ed. J. Trzynadłowski, p. 56.

¹⁸ Raymond Lull (1235—1315/1316) of Catalan origin. As a philosopher, schoolman and an alchemist Lull was also called *doctor illuminatus*. At the age of 30 Lull left the court of James I, King of Aragon, and joined the Franciscans. Soon after Lull went to Tunis in order to convert Muslims into Christianity. Formed a philosophical system based on the beliefs of St. Bonaventure and St.

arrived at the truth incompatible with the teachings of the Church. He dedicated his work to Wilhelm de San Clemente, and Lull¹⁹ was believed to have been an alleged ancestor of Wilhelm de San Clemente. Hence, the atmosphere at the Court in Prague was distinguished by an acceptable compromise: religious, political and national.²⁰

A poet aware of poetic mood, who established the independence of poetry among other arts, not reducing it to mere expression of erudition or competence in mythology,²¹ which was common at the beginning of the 17th century, was Balthasar Exner.²² Exner²³ was born on 24th of August 1576 in Jelenia Góra (Hirschberg). A son of Wenceslaus (Wenzel) and Anna (née Mencil, Mencia, Mencil). The poet died on 27th of November 1624 or 1625 *peste in suburbio Wratislaviens*²⁴ (during epidemic in the suburbs of Wrocław), Olbina (Elbing, Elding).

Since 1599 Exner stayed at the Court of emperor Rudolf II in Prague. There he found himself in the poetic circle to which belonged i.a., a neo-Latin poet Elżbieta Joanna Westonia,²⁵ for whom Exner wrote a couple of poems, and Paulus Gisbicius (Pavel z Jizbice). It is unknown what post he held in Prague. J.S. Johnius wrote [...] *vidique etiam quaedam carmina, ubi se [Exnerus] aulae Caesareae agentem nominat* — “I saw poems, where Exner calls himself the official at the im-

Augustine. Defeated the followers of Averroes in a public dispute. Stoned to death during his second trip to Tunis. In his *Ars magna et ultima* (The Ultimate General Art) Lull created a system based on the co-central discs that stood for the fundamental ideas of the Christian philosophy. By making discs rotate various statements could be created in a mechanical way. Wrote in Latin, Catalan and Arabic. From the field of theology the following works have survived: *Liber de gentili et tribus sapientibus*, *Disputatio Raymundi Christiani et Hamar Saraceni*, *Liber de quinque sapientibus*. Philosophical works include: *Ars magna, seu Ars compendiosa inveniendi veritatem, Liber contemplationis*. Lull also wrote poetry.

¹⁹ I. Kořán: “Prasko-wrocławski krąg...”, p. 63.

²⁰ See V. Cerný: *Až do predsine nebes*. Praha 1996, pp. 246—248.

²¹ The Middle Ages, Renaissance to some extent, and Baroque did not attribute autonomy to poetry. Eduard Norden wrote: “Eine selbständige Stellung hat die Poesie nach der Theorie des Mittelalters nicht besessen.” See E. Norden: *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*. Vol. 2. Leipzig und Bern 1918, p. 894. Leaving imitation in poetry far behind, mannerists wanted to free poetry from erudition. Exner, for example, entitled one of his collections of poetry *Fragmentum Poeticum — A Poetical Fragment* (Olešnica 1609). The poet is almost modern in his apprehension of a role of poetry and its nature. He seems to be aware of the fact that poetry is “always a fragment.”

²² See *Rukovet*, pp. 112—117. A short biogram, rich bibliography and a commentary on Exner’s Czech works.

²³ S.J. Erhard: *Presbyterologie des Evangelischen Schlesiens*. Liegnitz 1782, pp. 385—386.

²⁴ J.S. Johnius: *Parnassi Silesiaci... centuria I. Wratislaviae* 1728, p. 65.

²⁵ E. Petru: “Alžbeta Jana Westonia a její místo v české literatuře.” *Ceská literatura* 1985, no. 5, pp. 424—437. A selection of paraphrases from the neo-Latin poetry from the 16th century entitled *Med. a horec* (Praha 1942) includes many translations of this interesting poetics from the circle of Rudolf II. See also *Rukovet*, pp. 470—477.

perial court.”²⁶ In Prague he was among poets connected with Wacker von Wackenfelsem, to whom he dedicated a sequence of works, panegyric in character.

J.S. Johnius characterized Exner’s style in such a way: [...] *stylus etiam affectatum sapit tumorem et antiquitatis maximopere verbis delectatur* — “the style is pompous, affected and distinguished by an exaggerated use of archaisms.”²⁷ Another characteristic feature is the use of numerous diminutives. What might have moved him towards the mannerist aesthetics was his stay in Prague.

Our Silesian poet was a master of paronomasia. My analysis confirms that it is the same kind of poetic imagination that is expressed in the Spanish texts by Góngora in an excellent way. Frequent occurrence of paronomasia that consists in a juxtaposition of words that sound alike but mean something different,²⁸ was unbearable to readers of the collection being discussed. In the preface there are for example: *turbisque — turbulentis, Arte — Martem, Doctore — Ductorem, calido et callido, aestu et astu, amisimus — admisimus*.

Balthasar Exner is the author of one of the most interesting neo-Latin early Baroque *epithalamios* entitled *Proxenetice Veneris et Cupidinis (Ad D[iem] IV. Februar[is] A[nno] M.D.CIII)*, written on the occasion of Bartłomiej Brunner von Wildenau’s (a person from the courtly circle in Prague) marriage with Anna Brtlemes (Bartelmesia) von Wratislaw und Rakowitz. Baroque *carmen nuptiale* (wedding song), the popular name for this genre is *epithalamion*. It is usually a short lyric poem in honour of a bride or bridegroom or both. However, Exner’s *epithalamion* is a longer poem which is unnaturally loaded with great erudition and mythological motifs, full of bizarre and defamiliarization effects. The figure of Hymen-Eros is particularly interesting. Two verses where the poet tries to define Hymen-Eros draws particular attention. In lines 11–16 there occurs a chain of metaphors (also known as *ikon*). Let me quote lines 11–12:

Carnificina Amor est, Amor est tortura perennis
Cura Amor est, Amor est error, amor est et amaror.

Here Exner fully displays his ability to use of paronomasia. Later in the poem he calls Eros a demon — *Daemon*. Eros is for Exner a god of marital unfaithfulness.

²⁶ J.S. Johnius: *Parnassi Silesiaci...*, p. 66. J.L. Scherschnek writes that in Prague Exner was known under the title “Hofagent.” J.L. Scherschnek: *Nachrichten...*, p. 79.

²⁷ J.S. Johnius: *Parnassi Silesiaci...*, p. 67.

²⁸ E.R. Curtius in the chapter *Mannerism* in his book *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* gives the notion of paronomasia (Latin *annominatio*). Curtius defines paronomasia from the perspective of the ancient rhetoric. Paronomasia is understood not only as a juxtaposition of various inflected forms of a word (or its derivations), but also of words completely or approximately homophonic. See: *Literatura europejska i łacińskie średniowiecze*. Trans. A. Borowski. Kraków 1997, p. 283.

Among numerous gods in *Proxenetikus* there are the rarely mentioned Napaeae, goddesses of herbs, that always dwell close to water. Chromatic and pied in Exner's *epithalamion*, Napaeae sing in a single choir with sweet Gracias (*dulce canunt Charites, pictaeque Napaeae*). Sharp mythological juxtapositions, created to the surprise and amazement of a reader, concepts hard to understand, are typical of Exner. Multiple examples are included in *Proxenetikus*.

Exner also wrote *epigramas*, full of solemn, metaphysical content, and religious poems.²⁹ Anxiety and quite natural impatience crept into his poem *Ad Christum — To Christ*. In an apostrophe to Christ, Exner calls:

Te praeter nullus vulnera nostra levat.
 Respice fidentem, me consolare timentem,
 Fidentem tu non deseruisse potes.
 [Nobody dresses our wounds but you,
 Take care of me! You could not
 Abandon the one who trusts you and is afraid of you.]

The poet nervously tries to persuade himself that Christ will not abandon him, which he strongly doubts. He only convinces himself that God is near in order to calm himself down, and finally succumbs to the distinctive mannerist *paralysis agitans*, namely, a burst of anxiety writhing intestines. His poem is not a prayer. Instead Christ the poet addresses himself. That self-therapeutic dialogue with himself is a common phenomenon in Exner's poetry.

Exner is a poet of vivid imagination, an amateur of that which is shapeless, a master of paronomasia when it is about words. The characteristics of Exner's poetry are connected with his stay at the court of Rudolf II in Prague in the years 1600—1605. Mannerism as a formation of culture from the turn of the 16th and 17th century is in Silesia eagerly awaited on the threshold of modern times. Silesian literature can undoubtedly take pride in mannerists' works where inspiration came from the Iberian world and through Prague.

²⁹ See Z. Kadłubek: "Śląska poezja metafizyczna." In: *Śląsk literacki. Materiały z V sesji Śląskoznawczej Pracowników Naukowych, Studentów i Gości Wydziału Filologicznego Uniwersytetu Śląskiego*. Eds. M. Kisiel, B. Morcinek-Cudak, T.M. Głogowski. Katowice 2001, pp. 11—22.