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# Writing for the Eyes: Preaching and Visual Imagery in Seventeenth-Century Kyiv

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**Summary:** The article explores how two early modern Ukrainian preachers, Stefan Javors’kyj and Antonij Radyvylovs’kyj, adapt and combine Neoplatonic philosophy, Aristotelian epistemology, the antique, and the Renaissance idea of poetry and painting as sister arts to create pictorial texts that translate some material manifestations of contemporary visual culture such as the emblem into written form; how these images – both visual and verbal – help structure and organize thought, and what effects they might have on cognition. I will argue that in their sermons, the traditional concept of *ut pictura poesis* often intersects with what we may call *ut pictura creatio divina* (as is painting so is divine creation) – with an emphasis on the analogies that tie painting to God’s creation of man. Just like God “painted” man into existence so the preacher should make use of verbal pictures to visualize the moral and spiritual truths he is propounding to his audience. Accordingly, in the second part of the article, I discuss the preachers’ engagement with verbal-visual forms such as emblems and impresas, showing how verbal representations of physical images could function as cognitive devices that could be stored in the audience’s memory to stimulate virtuous behavior.

**Keywords:** Early Modern Preaching, Early Modern Ukraine, Emblems, Visual Culture

## 1 Introduction

In the manuscript sermon on Saint Theodosius of Kyiv (1696), Stefan Javors’kyj, one of the most influential preachers and intellectuals of seventeenth-century Ukraine, observes that God presents the heavenly kingdom under different “similitudes” (“под рожными подобенствами”), which provide the “hook” (“повабъ”) that attracts the faithful to his moral lessons. He then lists some of these “simili-

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tudes” (a mustard seed, a pearl, a hidden treasure, ten virgins), inviting his audience to visualize them and their essential qualities (Javors’kyj 1696: 1029v).<sup>1</sup> I begin with this citation because it foregrounds the privileged status of sight and images – both physical and mental – in early modern Ukrainian preaching. Sermons are precious indicators of attitudes that were widely shared, and many of the sermons delivered by Kyiv Orthodox preachers during the second half of the seventeenth century seem to be preoccupied by the functioning of human vision: their *exempla* are rich with the language of eyesight and pictorial artifice; graphic and pictorial objects are often reported to the visual imagination of the audience; references to visual illusion and artistic mimesis expand and complicate the preachers’ theological arguments; printed sermon collections often featured lavish illustrations. The proliferation of illustrations, the use of *ekphrasis*<sup>2</sup>, and the allusions to existing visual artifacts such as emblems, impresas, and coins speaks of what Hans Belting (1990: 80) calls “a need to see” – of a “sign-system” in which knowledge and religious truth can be transmitted through images—but also of a need to “make others see”, to translate the visible into words that offer in some sense a “visual” experience.

While we access these texts as readers, we must not forget that their original audiences were made of listeners as well as readers. Despite the importance of the written word, and the appearance of many sermon collections in print, their reception remained an essentially aural experience. The urge to appeal to the cognitive needs of this original audience of listeners – to “make them see” – profoundly shapes these sermons, their rhetorical strategies, and – more specifically – what might be called their epistemological project.

In this article, I will examine this “need to make others see” – to turn listeners into spectators – through the sermons of two preachers whose use of the visual arts and of the emblem tradition is more extensive and profound than that of their contemporaries: Stefan Javors’kyj and Antonij Radyvylovs’kyj. Both authors developed their views on visual imagery in close connection with an extensive practical experience as preachers and schoolteachers. Stefan Javors’kyj (1656–1722) was a monk, a preacher, and a theologian. A scholar well versed in neo-Latin and Polish literature and culture and a churchman of distinguished service in the Hetmanate and in Petrine Russia, he studied as a Uniate Catholic at the Jesuit Colleges of Lublin and Poznań before returning to the Orthodox fold in 1689. He wrote homiletic, dogmatic, polemical, and panegyric works. Radyvylovs’kyj

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Here, I use the term *ekphrasis* in the sense conceived by Heffernan (1993: 3), as “the verbal representation of visual representation”.

(d. 1688) was an alumnus of Kyiv College, the leading center of higher education established by Metropolitan Peter Mohyla in 1632, and official preacher of the Kyiv Caves Monastery, where he started preaching in 1656. While Javors'kyj's sermons of the Ukrainian period exist mainly in manuscript form, Radyvylovs'kyj's two sermon collections – *Ohorodok Marii Bohorodycy* (1676) and *Vinec Xrystov* (1688) – were preserved in printed form. Written in vernacular Ukrainian, a language that was easier to grasp by a wider and mixed audience, these sermons open an important window onto the visual culture that was disseminated to the laity. Another influential preacher and churchman of that time, Lazar Baranovyč (1620–1693), must also concern us here, although I shall do little more than consider the emblematic illustrations preceding his sermons.<sup>3</sup>

In what follows, I will explore how these preachers adapt and combine Neoplatonic philosophy, Aristotelian epistemology, the antique, and the Renaissance idea of poetry and painting as sister arts to create pictorial texts that translate some material manifestations of contemporary visual culture such as the emblem into written form; how these images – both visual and verbal – help structure and organize thought, and what effects they might have on cognition.<sup>4</sup> To understand how sermons were intended to engage mental vision, devotional imagination, and the memory of their audience, I first turn to those passages that provide the lineaments of these preachers' conception of vision and of sacred images, determining their place within the cultural and philosophical milieu of early modern Orthodox Ukrainian culture. I will argue that in these sermons, the traditional concept of *ut pictura poesis* often intersects with what we may call *ut pictura creatio divina* (as is painting so is divine creation) – with an emphasis on the analogies that tie painting to God's creation of man. As we shall see, the creation of man as an act of image-making by God the Painter licenses and legitimizes the correspondence between written and visual representations of the divine that is central to these sermons. Just like God “painted” man into existence so the preacher should make use of verbal pictures to visualize the moral and spiritual truths he is propounding to his audience. Accordingly, in the second part of the article, I will discuss the preachers' engagement with verbal-visual forms such as

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3 On Stefan Javors'kyj's and Antonij Radyvylovs'kyj's lives and works, see Ternovskij 1864; Samar-in 1880; Markovskij 1894. Like other Orthodox writers of his time, Lazar Baranovyč attended Kyiv College, of which he became rector in 1650, and completed his education at the Jesuit colleges of Vilnius and Kalisz. On his life, see Sumcov 1885.

4 For a stimulating approach to the connection between physical and verbal images in late medieval sermons, see Bolzoni 2004. On the cognitive potential of images, both physical and verbal, see the important studies of Mary J. Carruthers (Carruthers 1990, 1998) to which I am indebted for my own reading of early modern Ukrainian visual culture.

emblems and impresas, showing how verbal representations of physical images could function as cognitive devices that could be stored in the audience's memory to stimulate virtuous behavior. I hope that the texts discussed here will shed more light on the roles of vision, imagination, and visual objects in early modern Ukrainian culture.

## 2 “We are all paintings in God’s mind”. Theories of vision and imagination in seventeenth-century Kyiv

A brief inquiry into contemporary conceptions of vision, imagination, and the role of mental images can provide useful insights into the visual orientation of early modern Ukrainian sermons. Our preachers' attitudes towards vision and images took shape at the intersection of different traditions. On the one hand, they were rooted in the Byzantine and Neoplatonic view, shaped by the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, that visible things are important instruments for elevating the soul to God; on the other, in an education that exposed these writers to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition that states that “one cannot think without an image” (“nihil potest homo intelligere sine phantasmate” [Aristotle 1907: 431a, 16–17]).<sup>5</sup> As will become evident in the second part of this article, ancient rhetoric, and especially Quintilian's theory that the ideal orator is able to create a “verbal vision”, was another important influence (Quintilian 1922: VI, 2).

In mid-seventeenth-century Kyiv Orthodox circles, the widespread conception of how vision and cognition functioned was predicated on the neo-Thomist reading of Aristotle's *On the Soul*. The five external senses, which had the power to receive the sensible forms of things, conveyed sense data to the imagination (*phantasia*) in the form of corporeal images (*phantasmata*). This occurred the way “a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold” (Aristotle 1972: 450a, 25–32). In the case of vision, objects were said to produce species, which, travelling through the air, would carry the “similitudes” of visible forms from object to eye. What was perceived by the external senses was transferred to the imagination – the “eye of the mind” – which was the major mediator between the human body and the soul. The mental images it produced were then

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<sup>5</sup> On the philosophical curriculum of Kyiv College, in which Aristotle was the dominant authority up until the second half of the eighteenth century, see Symčyč 2016.

subject to the workings of the three faculties of the rational soul – memory, the intellect, and the will (Clark 2007: 15). Schoolbooks of the period, such as Inokentij Gizel’s manuscript treatise *De anima*, taught at Kyiv College in the academic years 1645–46 and 1646–47, repeat this overwhelmingly Aristotelian cognitive theory: objects produce species (“an ut percipiuntur objecta sensibilia necesse sit dicta objecta emitter propriam sui speciem”) which, by entering the eye, make sight possible (“ad videndum [...] necessarium est maxime quia in organo recipere debent species”). Species are transferred to the imagination, which produces a “transmutation” in the soul of the recipient, literally “stamping” a material trace there (“tum phantasia, tum ipsius phantasmata concurrant [...] ad eliciendas et imprimendas species intelligibiles in patiente”). Closely allied to imagination is memory (“nulla memoria possit esse sine phantasia perfecta”), which has the power to recall these mental images, making them available to the intellect. Memory – Gizel’ observes, mentioning Aristotle’s *De memoria* (“ait Philosophus libro De Memoria, cap 2-do”) – is the “knowledge of absent things” (“memoria nihil aliud non est quam cognitio rei absentis”) by virtue of mental images (“per speciem in cerebro retentam repraesentationem”) (Gizel’ 2011: 308, 328, 388, 348).

The power of vision to affect the soul, “impressing” on viewers and moving them into contemplating physical images as abstract signs within the “eyes of the mind”, which would then place them in front of the memory, intellect, and will, is clear to all our preachers. Following arguments that had become commonplaces by the seventeenth century, they assign precedence to sight as the most spiritual and least material of the senses. For Javors’kyj (1693: 854), the eye is a beautiful organ (“блголъпный составъ”) embellishing (“украшающий”) human nature. Christ calls it “the light of the body” (Matthew 6: 22). Radyvylovs’kyj (1676: 192) describes the eye as the most beautiful (“пієнкнейшого”) and dearest (“дорожшого”) organ in the human body, quoting the ancient and medieval commonplace that as the sun was in the world, so the eyes were in the human body (“что солнце на свѣтъ то очи в тѣль”).

The preeminence accorded to sight leads to a corresponding stress on the image to help the mind move from sensory perception to spiritual truths. Images both carry the mind to God and manifest him to the senses, helping develop the faculties of memory and imagination. This point is clearly articulated in Radyvylovs’kyj’s Sermon on the Cross (Radyvylovs’kyj 1676: 473), in an *exemplum* that draws on John of Damascus’s description of the role of images as commemorative (“to arouse the memory of past events” [John of Damascus 2003: 99–100]). There, he recounts the story of Philip IV of Spain, who, on his deathbed, bequeathed his heirs different “images and reminders” (“образы и упоминки”). In particular, he gave them a cross, recommending that, as Christian kings, they should look at it (“гладачи на него”) and be reminded about their own mortality (“в смертел-

ности своей памататимеш”). This *exemplum* encapsulates both an apologetics and a theory of Christian images, the function of which is to establish a mnemonic continuity (hence the use of the term “упоминки”) between Christ’s life and the faithful. The physical image – the painted cross – and the Aristotelian phantasm – the image of the crucified Christ fashioned in the mind as a memento of one’s mortality – are all closely connected, stimulating resemblance and imitation in an endeavor that is at once cognitive and affective.

Accordingly, sermons and other devotional works from this period repeatedly urge their audiences to “see with the eyes of the mind” (“возри умнымъ окомъ”), engaging in the *visio spiritualis* that, according to Augustine, consisted of images seen imaginatively even when the actual objects are absent (Augustine 1894: 386–387). In the Sermon on the Dormition of the Theotokos, Javors’kyj invites his listeners to raise their heads (“воздвигните главы ваша”) and look at Mary as a rainbow in the sky (“Видѣте дугу”) – a spiritual image solely visible to the eyes of the mind. At the end of the sermon, he writes that on that day he “showed” to his listeners’ “eyes” Mary shining in the sky in her beautiful colors (“тую свѣтозарную дугу [...] пієнкным коліорам днес на нб сіяющую на очи показавши”), offering further interesting comment on the preacher’s ability to create a “verbal vision” that would solidify as mental objects (the Aristotelian phantasm) in the audience’s imagination (Javors’kyj 1691: 449, 455). The moving power of the mental image is articulated even more strikingly in his Sermon on the Sunday before Lent, a homily pronounced in Baturyn on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1697, possibly in the presence of Hetman Ivan Mazepa and his court: drawing on the Baroque predilection for the incongruous and for mixing elements of high and low cultures, he recommends the audience to put a “mental onion” before their eyes (“Положѣмо жь СС: пред очи тую прегоркую грѣховъ нашихъ цебулю”) to stimulate tears of contrition (Javors’kyj 1697: 1067).

Paradoxically, the status of sight as the noblest of all senses made it also the most vulnerable to the poison of profane and evil things. In the Sermon on the Dormition, which, as we have seen, shows a specific concern with the process of spiritual vision, Javors’kyj moralizes at length on the dangers of non-disciplined, unfocused vision, warning against the perils of turning the eyes to the deceiving web of earthly colors (“не уклоняйте лакомых очей ваших въ сътъ здрадли-вую коліоровъ”), in a possible hint to the “beautiful and varied forms, and glowing and pleasant colors” that, according to Augustine in the *Confessions*, distracted the soul from its inner vision (Javors’kyj 1691: 449; Augustine 1991: 209–211). Underlining this description is the intromission theory of vision that was dominant in the seventeenth century and that implied the power of objects to project their own likeness (*species*) into the eye and to the sense faculties (Clark 2007: 17). In his philosophy course, Gizel’ attributes this doctrine of species (“vis-

io fieret [...] receptis ab objecto imaginibus seu speciebus intentionalibus”) to Aristotle (“Peripatetici amplexi sunt”), observing that it is the most suitable (“et nos ut pote longe probabiliorem sequimur”) for explaining the workings of eyesight (Gizel’ 2011: 320). If, according to Aristotle, sense perception implied a material alteration of the viewer through the transmission of a “picture” of the objects in the field of vision to the brain, then bodily sight had to be regulated for the benefit of inner, spiritual sight.

The entrapments of the eyes are also the theme of Radyvylovs’kyj’s account of the tale told by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* of the competition between the two ancient painters, Zeuxis and Parrhasius (Pliny the Elder 1938-63: IX, 309–311). In the Sermon on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, he recounts how Zeuxis (“Зевѣзисъ онѣ славный маларѣ”) painted grapes (“ѡмаліоваль на таблицѣ отучне на древѣ ягѡды”) that appeared so real that birds flew down to peck at them (“птаство яко до ягѡды прилѣтивало”). He then compares the illusory luxuries of this world (“свет сей прелестный”) to the painted grapes (Radyvylovs’kyj 1688: 392). Here, the traditional topos of the fallacies of physical sight as being symbolic of the inconstancy of the world is coupled with an interest for pictorial artifice that, as we shall see shortly, represents a central component of these writers’ “grammar of the visual”. Similarly, in the Sermon on the Intercession of the Theotokos, Javors’kyj reminds his audience of the importance of being able to discern between true and false visual experiences by stating that you do not feed someone with a loaf of bread that is “either painted or seen in a dream” (“маліованный албо въ снѣ видѣнный”). The comparison of dreams to pictures was frequent during the early modern period: many Christian writers believed that both dreams and pictures divorced the figures of things from matter, producing *species* that had nothing behind the aspect they presented.<sup>6</sup> As Javors’kyj says explicitly further along, one needs “matter” (“причина матеріална” – Aristotle’s *causa materialis*) to make “real bread”, that is, to create an entity whose appearance as *species* points to something beyond itself (Javors’kyj 1698: 624v). The epistemological implications of dreamlike visions – and the importance to have access to a paradigm of visual certitude – are clear also to Radyvylovs’kyj, who, in the Sermon on the Passion, writes that the Jews mistook Christ for a “ghost” (“за одну мару, за привѣденіе албо фантазму”), using two terms – “привѣденіе албо фантазма” – that point to the illusory *visum* or *phantasma* in the fivefold classification of dreams found in Macrobius’ highly influential *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (Radyvylovs’kyj 1688: 488; Macrobius 1952: 87–92). Arising from the confused reverie that precedes sleep, the *phantasma* or

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6 On the comparison between dreams and pictures, see Browne 1981.



*visum* provides an empty and meaningless vision, one that is opposed to the reality and depth of Christian visual experience.

It is important, I think, to stress the epistemological underpinnings of this emphasis on visual terminology: the dependency of mental functions on the physical senses, of which sight is the noblest, bears on the importance of training – and regulating – vision as well as of creating texts that address and actively engage the audience’s “eye of the mind”. Significantly, even the traditional topos of the Jews’ inability to recognize Christ for what he was is couched in the language of visual cognition: as an “object of this world”, the incarnated Christ was also supposed to give off resemblances of himself (*species*), which, travelling to the eyes, would then pass to the brain to be evaluated and processed by the higher powers of intellect and will. This suggests that for those who were not led astray by their own spiritual blindness, mistaking perceived objects for dreamlike visions, the doctrine of species was supposed to guarantee representational accuracy, providing access to accurate pictures of the world.<sup>7</sup>

There is, however, a further point to be made: in these sermons, the broader theological context for the construction of texts meant to be “seen” while being heard is a doctrine of Incarnation construed as an act of divine image-making, in which God fashioned Christ as *imago Dei*, translating his person in images discernable to the human senses.<sup>8</sup> Drawing on the topos of “God as painter” which was incorporated into Christian thought by the early Church Fathers, our preachers make extensive use of pictorial analogies to reflect upon the theological mysteries of God’s creation, with important implications for their larger understanding of the analogies between verbal and visual representation.<sup>9</sup>

In the Sermon on the Dormition of the Theotokos, Javors’kyj elaborates extensively on the tradition of the *Deus pictor* as the painter of man, providing an implicit theory of what an image is and what processes of moral and spiritual transformation it can produce. Among the many names the Bible attributes to man, he observes, there is “image” (“образ”). God made his earthly self-portrait by creating Adam, as in Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man in our image”<sup>10</sup>. However, Lucifer retouched the image that God had placed in the center of his Creation and disfigured it “with infernal colors” (“адскими своими фарбами сквернит

7 On the epistemological implications of the doctrine of species, see Clark 2007: 2.

8 The well-known argument that the Incarnation authorized the use of images as mnemonic representations of the divine was first formulated by St. John of Damascus in his apology of images (“I am emboldened to depict the invisible God, not as invisible, but as he became visible for our sake, by participation in flesh and blood”). See St. John of Damascus 2003: 22 and Melion 2016: 4.

9 On the *Deus pictor*, see Panofsky 1968: 39–43; Curtius 1953: 544–545, 562.

10 All Biblical quotations are taken from the King James Version.



начертаніє красоти”) (Javors’kyj 1691: 488). Javors’kyj’s notion of “image” has an ontological connotation: it does not refer to an artistic representation but to the being of man and its relation to the prototype – the Old Testament *eikon* as the true image of God reflected in the man he created, which is at the heart of the Byzantine theory of images. If God is the first painter, who created mankind in his image and likeness, Lucifer is the anti-painter (“дшєврєднѣй малар”), painting a deceitful image on our soul, which Javors’kyj interprets as the “mark” (“начертаніє” – a graphic/visual sign) of the beast in Revelation 13:15 (Javors’kyj 1691: 488).

The theme of the discoloring of God’s image because of sinful thoughts is an old one: Andrew of Crete reflects upon the loss of “the first beauty of the image” (“погребохъ перваго образа доброту”) in his Great Canon (*Triod’ postnaia* 1648: 149v; Migne 97: 1337c). However, the use of a strictly pictorial paradigm – Lucifer acts on the soul by means of brushes and colors – seems to reflect an acute awareness of the Baroque celebration of painting both as a mode of knowing and as a source of theological metaphors.<sup>11</sup> The trope of the devil as a painter, in exact counterpoint to the notion of God as the perfect painter, was in wide circulation in early modern Europe: religious writers construed demonic art as the formation of bodies from color, thus amplifying the commonplace that the devil, as the “ape of God”, remixed the things of nature but created nothing itself (Cole 2002: 623). In the *Artifex Evangelicus* (1640), the Jesuit Maximilianus Sandaeus, one of the major theorists of the seventeenth-century *imago figurata* and an author that was featured in Javors’kyj’s library, writes that God’s elegant painting of the world (“Deus cum mundi tabulam a principio elegantissime pinxit”) has been disfigured (“haec deformata”) by the devil (Sandaeus 1640: 565).<sup>12</sup>

To restore this image to its pure state, Javors’kyj continues (1691: 448rv), God sent his son down to earth where he took on human form. As a wise icon painter (“іконописецъ”), he enriched that portrait not with gold or silver (“не сребрным ниже златым”), but with his own blood (“неошацованною крови своей фарбою, той образ ѡтмаліовал, выконтєрфєтовал украсил”). In keeping with his rendering of the history of salvation as a drama taking place in the atelier of the *Deus pictor*, the late medieval trope that interprets Christ’s flesh and blood as vellum and ink is given a pictorial treatment by using terms that pertain to the

<sup>11</sup> On the humanist debate on the dignity of painting, which used among its arguments the idea of God as the painter of man, see Lee 1940: 213.

<sup>12</sup> While there is no evidence of Javors’kyj owning the *Artifex Evangelicus*, his library was stocked by other works by Sandaeus (*Conciones de morte, Maria sol mysticus*) and, as the alumnus of a Jesuit college, he was certainly well acquainted with the symbolic theology of which Sandaeus was one of the major representatives (Maslov 1914: 139, 541).

semantic sphere of painting as a *techne*: “farba” (color), “otmaljuvaty” (paint), “vykontrefetovaty” (from Polish *konterfetować* – to paint a portrait), and “ukrasyty” (decorate).<sup>13</sup> Javors’kyj then moves on to apply the *Deus pictor* metaphor to Mary, the vessel of the Incarnation, whose dormition and subsequent assumption to Heaven represent the culminating point of her contribution to the salvation of humanity. Beautiful in her colors (“коліоры и фарбы”), Mary is untouched by Lucifer’s brush (“пензла адскаго”), another remark that finds a parallel in Sandaeus’ *Artifex Evangelicus* (“per eundem pictorem in Maria pristina est illustrata coloribus” [Sandaeus 1640: 565]). God the painter painted (“отмаліовав”) his son’s image (“образ сѣна своего”) on her womb with virginal blood. God’s artistic abilities are then compared with Apelles’ (“нѣбы Апеллесовым пензлем”), whose masterpieces, in Pliny’s well-known account of the evolution of painting, were so lifelike that “they challenged nature itself” (Javors’kyj 1691: 449).

The use of artistic experience to understand the divine creative process also appears in Radyvylovs’kyj’s second Sermon on the Nativity of Mary: God had a “portrait” (“контерфет албо визерунокъ”) of Mary in his mind since the beginning of time (“в мысли ѿт вѣковъ”). Similarly, in the Sermon on her Conception, he writes that God “drew” (“ѡрысовал”), which literally means to trace out, to represent through a graphic sign) Mary in his mind (Radyvylovs’kyj 1676: 428, 721). This is an old topos: in one of the homilies on the Dormition, Andrew of Crete calls Mary “the perfectly-drawn portrait of the divine model” (Migne 97: 1092d; Daley 1998: 139). Radyvylovs’kyj, however, uses this long-standing Christian tradition of interweaving pictorial images and theology as an opportunity to discuss the power of the mind to form images and to convert these mental images into material (artistic) forms in the outside world. He likens God forming Mary in his mind to the rich man in Luke 12, who, wanting to build a greater barn, first formed an image of it in his mind (“наперед ю в мысли своей уформовалъ”). In Scholastic faculty psychology, which Radyvylovs’kyj would have known from his studies at Kyiv College, the power of the mind to form images is the basis of all higher reasoning: underpinning this idea is Aristotle’s famous dictum that all thoughts depend on “phantasms”, which in turn represent the raw material for abstract thought. For Thomas Aquinas, God conceived the world as an architect designs the project of a house in his mind (“sicut domus praexistit in mente aedificatoris”), a motif that goes back to Aristotle and Philo of Alexandria.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> On the use of the metaphor of Christ’s blood as ink, especially in relation to the hymns of Romanos the Melodist, see Krueger 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Aquinas takes over Augustine’s notion that the ideas inside God’s mind are the model for “all that can be born and perish, and all that is born and that perishes” (“omne quod oriri et interire potest et omne quod oritur et interit”). See Augustine 1975: XLVI, 70–73. On this Christian version of

Both theories – that ideas are images immanent in the mind of God and that art is the realization of a design directly engendered by the mind – were widespread in early modern Europe. The Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), the *Doctor eximius* of Scholasticism whose works formed part of Kyiv College’s philosophical curriculum, specifies that “God has the idea of each single thing (“rerum singularium”); while making explicit the connection between God’s ideas and artistic creation: “an idea is nothing else than the model in imitation of which an artist works (“exemplar ad cuius imitationes artifex operatur”); and it has been shown that God works like a very good artist (“ut supremum artificem”), so he must have his own ideas (“oportet ergo ut suas ideas habeat”) [Suárez 1865–1878: I, 210–212].<sup>15</sup> Many neo-Aristotelian works on poetics read at Kyiv College, such as Scaliger’s *Poetices Libri Septem* and Sarbiewski’s *De perfecta poesi*, adopted the view, first articulated by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* (VII, 7), that a work of art comes into being when the form – the invisible concept in the artist’s mind – enters matter (Panofsky 1968: 17). In the treatise *L’idea de’ pittori, scultori ed architetti* (1606), Italian art theorist Federico Zuccari further elaborates on this Aristotelian theory and designates as “disegno interno” (“inner design”) the concept formed in the artist’s mind before execution; the “disegno” is only a small replica of the internal design from which God, in Aristotelian-Thomistic fashion, creates all things (Panofsky 1968: 85–88). This connection between thought and artistic creation is central to Renaissance and Baroque aesthetics. By relating artistic signs with the inner essences of things, it makes art a direct “superintendency of knowledge” (Williams 1997: 20) – an intuition that profoundly informs also Radyvylovs’kyj’s account of God’s painterly efforts.

After presenting his audience with a theory of ideas that incorporates philosophical elements of Scholasticism and echoes of late Cinquecento art theory, Radyvylovs’kyj goes on to discuss the idea of Mary as an “inner design” formed in God’s mind by recounting the example of a painter’s workshop (“коморка маларска”) where different paintings are on display, each showing an ascending degree of beauty (“едень образ піенкный, другій піенкнѣйший, третій еще піенкнѣйший”). Indeed, human beings are like paintings in a painter’s workshop (“образки в коморце маларской”), painted by a painter’s hand (“яко рукою маларскою в̄маліованыи”). Of all these paintings, Mary is the most beautiful (“далеко кшталтнѣйшаа и піенкнѣйшаа”), a remark that can be read as a reference to the Neoplatonic idea of beauty as a spiritual quality that descends

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the Platonic theory of ideas, which transfers the idea inside the mind of God, see Panofsky 1968: 35–43 and Smeesters 2016: 406–412.

<sup>15</sup> English translation quoted in Smeesters 2016: 407–8. Gizel’s philosophical course is largely based on Suárez’s *Disputationes* (Gizel’ 2011: 225, 231, 251, 295, 321, 379).

from God through the hierarchy of being: the soul is the image of God and Mary was shaped in this image more fully than any other human being (Radyvylovs'kyj 1676: 442–443). Central here is, again, the discussion of God's ideational abilities and the transferal of the spiritual forms of all things from God's imagination – the inventive capacity possessed by both artists and writers – to matter, the works of art exposed in his atelier. Not incidentally, the very terms Radyvylovs'kyj uses to define Mary, “кштальт” (form) and “визерунокъ” (image), point to the *idea*, which Augustine and Scholastic philosophers translate as either “forma” (form) or “species” (image). Mary is the mental image God the artist forms before he embarks on his work. In a play of mirrors that is typically Baroque, Mary, who made Christ human, enabling humankind to see him, is herself represented as a visible object that the audience is supposed to reproduce in their imagination. As a pictorial image, Mary is knowable by visual experience, a notion that strengthens the appeal to the eyes as instruments of cognition and justifies the efficacy of visual devotion.

While the description of Mary as “portrait of God” has its roots both in the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of ideas and the large repertoire of Byzantine Marian imagery (Andrew of Crete's “perfectly-drawn portrait”), the image of the painter's workshop shares significant affinities with the French Jesuit Claude-François Ménéstrier's idea that “all nature is a painter's workshop (“boutique de peinture”), where one sees paintings of all kinds” (Ménéstrier 1662: 2).<sup>16</sup> One of the most eminent writers on emblematics and symbolic imagery, Ménéstrier (1631–1705) undertook an extensive taxonomy of the *imago figurata*. His statement can be taken as mirror of a model of Aristotelian sense-based epistemology that was widespread in early modern Europe, and especially among Counter-Reformation writers: objects become visible when they emit species that pass to the eye, where they impress their essential qualities as pictures – the “paintings of all kinds” exposed in the divine painter's atelier.

An awareness of early modern debates on the epistemology of images emerges also in Radyvylovs'kyj's first Sermon on the Conception of Mary. There he compares God to a “славный малар” who uses the most beautiful (“пiенкнейший”) among his old paintings (“давныи визерунки”) to paint a new one that is even more beautiful (“напiенкнейший ѿмалювати образ”). Similarly, God first created the angels and the patriarchs and using them as a model painted Mary. All creatures are indeed painted in God's mind (“всѣ створенѧ суть в мысли божої ѿмалюваныи”) (Radyvylovs'kyj 1676: 722). In reproposing the theme

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<sup>16</sup> On Ménéstrier and the idea of the world as a painting, which was widespread among Jesuit writers, see Dekoninck 2005: 63–99.

of God's ideational abilities, Radyvylovs'kyj subtly reconfigures Plato's theory of imitation, while elaborating on the belief, central for Renaissance aesthetics, of the painter achieving higher beauty by selecting the best from his models.<sup>17</sup> In particular, he adopts the Platonic notion of the interrelation between image (*eikon*) and prototype (*prototypon*) but translates it into a pictorial metaphor that challenges the very Platonic assumption that there is an ontological degradation between the prototype and its sensible copy: Mary is indeed more beautiful than the portraits used to paint her. However, in a reinstatement of the Platonic ideal, real beauty has its source in God rather than in nature. Unlike the artistic imitation exemplified by Zeuxian illusionism (the painted grapes that, in Radyvylovs'kyj's moral system, represent the entrapments of this world), Mary's portrait does not stem from the observation of external nature but from the contemplation of the *disegno interno* painted in God's mind.

A highly interesting example of the pervasiveness of this graphic/pictorial topos in the preaching of the time is found in the illustration opening Lazar Baranovyč's Sermon on the Conception of the Theotokos, which further emphasizes the complex intertextual referencing between the aural, the visual, and the verbal that is enacted by these sermons (fig. 1). In the upper register, a disembodied hand coming out of a cloud – one of the many *membra disjecta* of emblematic compositions – is shown writing the word “слово” (“word”) on a blank page; on the lower register, a mirror and another blank page, accompanied by a verse from Song 4:7 “there is no spot in thee”, elegantly convey the notion of Mary's immaculacy that is expounded in the sermon (“в грѣха первородна бысть волна”) (Baranovyč 1674: 102). Mary – and, by extension, the human soul – is a *tabula rasa*, a spotless writing/painting surface ready to be impressed by God's signs, a point on which I shall have more to say. As I will argue in the next section, just like the *Deus pictor* gives us access to abstract and universal qualities – the ideas in His mind – by converting them into visible signs, so the *orator pictor* should make use of verbal pictures to stimulate the imprinting of virtuous images on the “blank page” of his audience's minds.

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<sup>17</sup> See Lee 1940: 205 on the ubiquitous use of the story, first found in Cicero's *De inventione* (II, 1, 1), of Zeuxis collecting in his mind the most beautiful aspects of his five models before painting Helen of Troy. In Radyvylovs'kyj's fourth Sermon on the Nativity of Mary, the *exemplum* of the three persons of the Trinity discussing on how to portray Mary (“мѣли спор в ѿмаліованій того образа”) and deciding to collect different excellences (beauty, richness, and so forth) into one composite example of them all probably echoes this widespread topos (Radyvylovs'kyj 1676: 442).

### 3 “Which brush painted such beautiful colors?” Verbal emblems, literary pictorialism, and rhetorical *enargeia*

By now it should be clear that our preachers follow the Christian theory of ideas as images enclosed in God, conceiving painting as a means of making visible the otherwise invisible mental forms that exist in the mind. The concern of these sermons with the visible and the visual arts cannot be properly assessed, I believe, without placing it against the backdrop of a cultural episteme that values art as the representation of ideas and considers the formation of a mental image, or “inner design”, the starting point for higher speculative thought. In this respect, the construction of reality as a product of divine pictorial artifice foregrounds and legitimizes the role of the sermon as a work addressed to – and seeking a response from – the audience’s eyes, both physical and mental. This point can be discerned more fully in the preachers’ use of the emblem and its many variations (impresas, hieroglyphs, devises) as a means of making abstract and universal qualities visible to their audience’s “eye of the mind”.<sup>18</sup> The major baroque visual-verbal genre, the emblem makes available to Javors’kyj and Radyvylovs’kyj a visual symbolic mode that can make the moral and spiritual truths they are propounding really “seen”. As will become evident, in their sermons, the combination of word and image is that of conventional emblems, the only difference being that the images are replaced by verbal descriptions rather than being painted or engraved. The idea is to create “fictive images” – what Peter Daly (1998: 93) calls “word-emblem[s]” – verbal compositions that invite the picturing of symbolic images in the mind, where they would supply the audience’s imagination with the “phantasms” necessary for the cognitive processes that are responsible for ethical and intellectual responses.

Emblematics were an essential part of the early modern manner of thinking, and emblems, alongside other genres of symbolic imagery (hieroglyphs, impresas, enigmas, and so forth), were included in the *ratio studiorum* of Kyiv College as part of the course on poetics (Masljuk 1983: 177–180). The use of emblematic images as tools for incarnating otherwise abstract meanings, combining the aesthetic pleasure to be derived from wonder with the teaching of Christian truths, was recommended by contemporary rhetorical treatises. Iosif Kononovyč-Hor-

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<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the emblem and its history in European literature, see Praz 1964. On the emblem in the Slavic world, see Čyževs’kyj 2003: 189–225; Pelc 1973; Hippisley 1971: 167–183; Kroll 1986; Rolland 1992.

bac'kyj's *Orator mohyleanus* (1636), the first rhetorical handbook compiled by a teacher from Kyiv College, lists emblems and hieroglyphs among the sources of *exempla* the good orator should use to make his speech both persuasive and pleasing, inviting students to draw their own hieroglyphs (Kononovych-Horbac'kyj 2014: 41–44). In the “Nauka albo sposob složenija kazanja”, the first East Slavic *ars praedicandi* (1659), Ioanykij Galjatovs'kyj suggests that during a funeral sermon, the preacher can show the audience “something new” (“можеш людемъ показати якую речъ новую”), for instance different weapons (“можеш показати зброю”), and attach moral meanings to each of them: in an ideal materialization of Ephesians 6:11 (“Put on the whole armour of God”), the armour should represent justice (“панцырь справедливости”), the helm, salvation (“шышак збавленїа”), the shield, faith (“гарчу вѣру”), and the sword (“мечъ”), the word of God. He then specifies that the preacher can take the weapons – an emblematic prop of sorts – from the coat of arms (“герб”) of the deceased (Galjatovs'kyj 1659: 248).<sup>19</sup> Central here is, again, the idea that visual signs can reveal the essence of things, stimulating the mind to form the mental images that stand at the basis of all higher reasoning.

A remarkable manifestation of this religious semiotics, in which visual perceptions could refer to something in the invisible world, is Javors'kyj's description of “emblematic” beasts in the Sermon on the Dormition of the Theotokos. After outlining his theory of man as God's painting, he invites the audience's “eye of the mind” to be more receptive to the allegorical plenitude of the created world, whose moralization, following Paul's remark that “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen” (Romans 1:20), had long been sanctioned by medieval bestiaries and patristic writings. If God would give us “sharp eyes” (“гды бы нам Бгъ прозорливые даровал очи”), he argues, we would see fury (“гнѣвъ”) as a lion, fornication (“блудодѣіе”) as a boar (“под образомъ вепра”), acedia (“лѣновство”) as a donkey (“под образомъ осла”), and gluttony as a horse (Javors'kyj 1691: 48v). For Javors'kyj, to have a “sharp” gaze means to have an emblemating gaze, one that can make spiritual and moral concepts accessible to the senses and the intellect by establishing an association between a concrete image (a lion) and a logical abstraction (fury). In fact, the sources of his similarities are, quite predictably, all emblematic: the lion is a symbol of fury (“ira”) in Andrea Alciato (1551: 71), who draws on Pliny's description of how the lion's tail lashes with increasing fury and spurs him on (“furias excitat indomitas”). Venus riding a boar was a common medieval image and the fatal

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<sup>19</sup> Heraldry was the genre of symbolic imagery most frequently taught in Jesuit-run colleges (Loach 1999: 163), and one that was often practiced by Kyiv Orthodox intellectuals.



wounding of Adonis by a wild boar was commonly interpreted as a symbol of the destructive powers of lust (Alciato 1551: 85). The donkey is a symbol of moral inertia in Filippo Picinelli's *Mundus Symbolicus* ("huic imagini conformis peccator, in Dei ac virtutum negotio supine torpet"), which was used in Jesuit colleges to teach the theory and practice of emblematics, and in Otto Vaenius's *Emblemata Horatiana*, where sloth ("inertia") is represented as a sleepy male figure with a donkey's head (Picinelli 1687: 343; van Veen 1612: 51).<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, in the Sermon on the Intercession of the Theotokos, Javors'kyj's audience is required to visualize Mary as a laurel tree, an analogy that is grounded as most emblematic reading in the commonplaces that derive from ancient and medieval models. Naturalists ("пишут натуралиствове"), he explains, believed laurel trees to be immune to lightning strikes ("на его нигды не бiют перуны"): accordingly, a laurel is an apt symbol ("символ и знаменiе") for representing the Virgin Mary, who was never subject to the "lightning strikes" of God's anger (Javors'kyj 1694a: 635r). Lying at the heart of this simile are the metaphorical structure and semiotic conventions of the emblem, in which, as noted by Michael Bath, the rhetorical point often consists in finding a moral application for the properties of things as they have been handed down in bestiaries or natural histories: that lightning never strikes the laurel is one of the "received ideas" that populated the rhetorical florilegia of Renaissance Europe, one that goes back to Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (XV, 35) and that, not incidentally, was handed down to Kononovyč-Horbac'kyj's *Orator mohyleanus*, which teaches how to devise an emblem out of this very topic (Kononovyč-Horbac'kyj 2014: 43–44).<sup>21</sup> In Javors'kyj's verbal version of this emblem, the symbol (the laurel tree) corresponds to the engraved picture, while its moral explanation stands for the *subscriptio*.

Other passages from his sermons describe the objects in the analytic manner characteristic of the emblem. For instance, in the Sermon on the Dormition of the Theotokos, the rainbow is interpreted as a type of Mary – an image that is recurrent also in Radyvylovs'kyj's work – while its colors are explained as exemplifying the persons of the Trinity: red represents God, for "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29); green is Christ, who is "the lily of the valley" (Song 2:1); blue stands for the Holy Ghost, whose ineffable nature is compared to the cloud that "overshadows" Mary (Luke 1:35) (Javors'kyj 1691: 452v).<sup>22</sup> These chromatic simili-

<sup>20</sup> Javors'kyj owned a copy of Vaenius's *Amorum emblemata* (Maslov 1914: 525).

<sup>21</sup> On the emblem as a "bricolage of received ideas", see Bath 1994: 47, 108; Russell 1985: 175.

<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, the correspondence between the colors of the rainbow and the three persons of the Trinity also finds a parallel in Sandaeus's *Artifex Evangelicus*: "ut enim tres colores faciunt circulo caelesti iridem: ita tres personae in Deitate faciunt Triadem" (Sandaeus 1640: 562).

tudes appeal to the sense of sight to engage the faithful in an apprehension of the mystery of the Trinity that is rooted as much in Scriptural quotations as in a perceptive attitude to vision and materiality, one that reduces complex intellectual conceits to sensible images that are easy to store in one's memory, where they could open up a chain of emotional associations (red as the color of fire and love, green as the symbol of organic life, and so forth). In a further instantiation of the idea that "all nature is made of paintings in a painter's workshop", and that objects become visible when they emit species that impress themselves as pictures on the eye, he then asks which "brush" painted such nice colors ("який пензел тые такъ пієнкныє помаліовав фарбы?") and who embroidered such "beautiful form" on the "matter of the clouds" ("Кто такъ выдатную и позорную на облачистой матеріи выгафтовавъ форму?") (Javors'kyj 1698: 628v). The emblematic and iconographic potential of this image becomes clearer if we consider that he uses a verb, "vygaftovaty" ("embroider"), that points to the traditional definition of emblems as inlaid work – *emblema* derives from the Greek verb "em-ballo", which means "insert" – as something inserted for ornamental purposes.<sup>23</sup> Equally "inserted" in the fabric of the sermon, these verbal emblems function as their visual counterparts, conveying important conceptual meanings by creating a similitude (Mary and the laurel tree; Mary and the rainbow) that is rarely seen from the outset. However, while in a traditional emblem the recognition of the significant relationship between text and image rests on the reader/viewer's deciphering abilities, here, the solution of the enigma posited by the combination of motto and picture – How does a laurel tree or a rainbow relate to Mary? – is performed by the preacher, whose explanation occupies the place that has been assigned by Alciato to the epigram in the *subscriptio*. By closing the semantic distance between motto and picture, he makes available to a wide and sometimes partially illiterate audience the rhetorical and cognitive processes behind the solution of the emblematic puzzle – what Michael Bath (1994: 73) calls the "brief jouissance of recognition" – as well as a corpus of knowledge grounded in a system of rhetorical and iconographical commonplaces that were originally meant for the elites.

The connection between the sermons and the emblem is most clearly seen in Radyvylovs'kyj, who often resorts to the ekphrasis of existing symbolic images, challenging the approach that maintains a unidirectional transmission of ideas

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23 In his surviving notes on poetics, the *Commendatio brevis poeticae. Anno 1646*, the Kyiv-educated Simeon Polotskii defines the emblem as "an inscription intermingled with or with some inscription inserted into the epigram and thus it shines beautifully" ("quasi interiectio, vel interpositio alicuius ornamenti in epigrammate, et ita pulchre relucet"). I slightly modified the English translation in Rolland 1992: 69.

from the textual to the visual realm. One example will suffice here. In the Sermon on John Chrysostom, he explains that generosity (“великодушiе”) was one of Chrysostom’s qualities. In order to make his audience “see” the essential qualities of this virtue (“что бы была за власность великодушiа”), he describes the image (“старожытность малiовала”) of an eagle flying towards the sun in the middle of a storm, which he interprets as the symbol (“символюмъ албо знаменiе”) of those souls who, like Chrysostom, do not fear anything because of their unflinching love for God (Radyvylov’s’kyj 1676: 590). The motto of this visual-verbal construction, “ани мене забити ани устрашити можеть”, makes clear that its source is the impresa “ni matarme ni spantarme” (“neither kill me nor frighten me”) in Giacomo Ruscelli’s *Le imprese illustri con espositioni et discorsi* (Ruscelli 1566: 472), where it appears as the personal badge of Italian nobleman Galeazzo Fregoso (fig. 2). While in a traditional impresa, an icon is accompanied by a text that conveys a political or ideological message as part of the self-fashioning of an aristocratic personage (the pride and courage of the Fregoso’s family, which no one can neither kill nor frighten), here, the combination of text and (verbalized) image has been reencoded to make a spiritual statement, one that concurs to the self-fashioning of the true Christian soul.<sup>24</sup>

As is the case with many other early modernist theorists and practitioners of the symbolic image, Radyvylov’s’kyj’s figurative mode of thought included seeing an embodiment of Christian truths – a visible translation of the otherwise invisible forms in God’s mind – also in Graeco-Roman monuments and traditions, and especially coins and medals. In his treatise on rhetoric, the Jesuit image-theorist Claude François Ménestrier lists coins (“numismatibus impressa”) as one of the six categories of learned images (“imagines eruditae”), the others being hieroglyphs, impresas, emblems, enigmas, and coats of arms (Ménestrier 1663: 16), which serve as ornaments for eloquence. Equally embracing the view that coins are repositories of symbolic meanings and a source of effective rhetorical *exempla*, in the Sermon on Peter and Paul, Radyvylov’s’kyj writes that the coins minted under Octavian Augustus (“на миндзи Августа Цезара”) portray (“малiованый был”) the goddess Peace with a cornucopia in her left hand (“в лъвой рудъ держачи обфытостьъ полную овоцwвъ, цwтъwвъ”) and an olive branch in the right (“з рожкою оливною”), an interpretation that might be influenced by Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* (1593) or by other works compiled from Ripa.<sup>25</sup> If the audi-

<sup>24</sup> This process of adaptation is common to other Kyiv Orthodox writers of the time who drew on the emblem for their symbolic imagery. See Rolland 1992 and Hippisley 1971.

<sup>25</sup> See Ripa’s description of peace on Trajan’s medal (Ripa 1603: 378) as a woman with an olive branch in her right hand and a cornucopia in the left (“donna che con la destra tiene un ramo d’ulivo e con la sinistra un corno di divitia”).

ence would turn their spiritual eyes (“душевныи очи”) to the sky, he enjoins them, they will see the same symbol portrayed there (“вбачим і там тоєж значеніє в̄маліованое”): the woman representing Peace is the eternal bliss awaiting the faithful (“вѣчноє блаженство”); the coin is Christ, who gave his own life as a ransom to the devil (“нас выкупил з неволѣ дїаволскої”); and the olive tree, the apostles Peter and Paul (Radyvylovs’kyj 1676: 206). Within this mix of heterogeneous elements – what Uspenskij and Zhivov (2009: 59) call “the multilayered semantics that characterizes Baroque culture” – pagan symbolism is reconciled with Christian teaching (the doctrine of Christ as ransom for humanity’s sins) through the witty conceit that equates Christ with a coin. Moreover, just as one can depict the concept of peace through certain “signs” (a cornucopia, an olive tree), so the audience should depict those signs in their spiritual sight: not incidentally, Radyvylovs’kyj employs the same pictorial verb (“malіuvaty/otmalіuvaty”) to designate both the content of his ekphrasis and the spiritual vision that is expected from the audience. The boundary between visually represented object and mental picture is blurred: Radyvylovs’kyj’s ekphrasis of the Roman coin is, indeed, a representation of a mental impression. Similarly, in his Sermon on the Dormition of the Theotokos, the Woman of the Apocalypse, interpreted as a figure of Mary ascending to Heaven after her death, is described as “a coat of arms” (“гербъ”) appearing in the sky – another visual object that both complicates and challenges the distinction between physical, verbal, and mental image (Radyvylovs’kyj 1676: 363).

Here and elsewhere, the description of moral and theological notions as images “stamped” on a surface – be they paintings, emblems, coins, or coats of arms – clearly draws on Aristotelian cognitive theory, and, in particular, on the idea that the act of perception “stamps in, as it were, a sort of impression of the percept, just as persons do who make an impression with a seal”, leaving a mental image that is similar to “a picture painted on a panel [which] is at once a picture and a likeness” (Aristotle 1972: 450a, 10–30). As seen above, this theory of cognition based on the doctrine of species dominated the overwhelmingly Aristotelian Kyiv college curriculum, which finds a reflection in these preachers’ conception of the workings of human vision as an imprinting of the images of things on the mind. Not incidentally, the tropes of sealing and engraving – of the material production of images by impressing a surface – occupy an important place in Radyvylovs’kyj’s preaching. In the Sermon on John the Baptist (Radyvylovs’kyj 1676: 620), he writes that while noblemen love to surround themselves with coat of arms celebrating their glory (“гербы”) and to engrave (“печатует”) on them different symbols, the body of the saints is the coat of arms on which God prints different sorrows (“коханкове Ха печатуютсѧ бѣдами, скорбами”). In this powerful metaphor, the *imitatio Christi* involves the transcription of Christ’s pain

onto one's own body, and this corporeal process intersects with the technical and visual realm of printmaking, which turns the body of the saint into a visible sign – an *imago* that establishes a pictorial likeness between the creature and Christ. In another Sermon on John, he combines Song 8:6 (“Set me as a seal upon thy heart”) and the Aristotelian notion of the mind as a “piece of wax” to establish a parallel between Christ and a seal that leaves in wax the images engraved on it (“печать тые фѣгуры на воску выражает, которые на себе мает”). Christ, he continues, “drew” (“ѡрысовал”) his name on the wax of John's body, for which Radyvylov's'kyj uses the verb “otrysovaty”, which further points to the graphic/pictorial embodiment of God's ideational abilities (Radyvylov's'kyj 1676: 514).

This metaphor of pressing or stamping, Michael Camille observes, was “fundamental to medieval visibility” and was used by many commentators of Aristotle, including Aquinas (Camille 2000: 208–209). Again, the emblem opening Baranovyc's Sermon on the Conception of the Theotokos (fig. 1) is of particular interest as it offers a memorable visual embodiment of this idea that the soul is a painting/writing surface on which the *imago Christi* – the word “слово” written by God's hand is clearly an allusion to the Logos-Christ – must be indelibly impressed as a visual sign. One may also think of the emblem *Fingitque premo* (“it moulds by pressing”) in the *Imago Primi Saeculi* (1640: 571), the book that celebrates the first century of the existence of the Society of Jesus. Engraved by Cornelius Galle, the emblem appears in the fourth chapter dedicated to suffering and martyrdom (*Societas Iesu Persecutionibus formatur* – “the Society is formed in persecution”) and shows a man working at the printing press (fig. 3). In the *subscriptio* the making of impressions is equally compared to the traces left by Christ on the body and soul of those who imitate him in accepting the pressure of adversity.

If God is the divine artist, painting a portrait of all things in his mind, or fashioning the image of Christ and “printing” it into existence on the saint's body, then the emblems, coats of arms, and coins contained in these sermons represent an “imaginotheca” (Manning 2002: 110) of sorts – a gallery of verbal portraits created by the *orator pictor* in an effort to stimulate the release of a mental image (the Aristotelian phantasm) that would “impress” on his audience's mind not merely the likeness of what is represented but also its moral character. Just as God painted man, so man should imitate God's first act of image making by painting – or imprinting – divine realities in his imagination. In this respect, Radyvylov's'kyj's exhortation to look at the goddess Peace “painted” in the sky (“обачим і там тоеж знаменіе ѡмаліованое”) clearly points to a parallel between painting and the workings of human cogitation, providing an important example of what we might call the “pictorialization” of the audience's expected response to these verbal descriptions. The preacher's ability to produce vivid mental images should guide and shape the audience's own pictorial imitation of virtuous prototypes.

In rhetorical theory, the evocation of a mental image through discourse is defined as *enargeia* or *evidentia*, which, in Quintilian's definition, is when "things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes" (Quintilian 1922: 433). According to Karl Enenkel, one can speak of "a kind of an early modern obsession with *enargeia*" (Enenkel 2016: 148). This is true for various early modern rhetorical treatises that have been influenced by Quintilian's *institutio Oratoria*, such as Erasmus's *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum* (Paris, 1512), *De arte rhetorica libri tres* (1560) by the Portuguese Jesuit Cyprian Soarez, and Julius Caesar Scaliger's *De arte rhetorica libri septem* (1561), the latter two being officially prescribed in the *ratio studiorum* of Kyiv College and forming the core of its rhetorical curriculum. In Quintilian and in early modern rhetorical writings the creation of *enargeia* is called "to paint" (*depingere*) and to "express things as it were with colors" ("ceū coloribus expressam") [Enenkel 2016: 160]. For Erasmus, who writes extensively on *evidentia* in his *De duplici copia*, *enargeia* is the name for the figure when "we do not explain a thing simply but display it to be looked at as if it were expressed in color in a picture, so that it may seem that we have painted, not narrated, and that the reader has seen, not read" (Erasmus 1540: I, 160).<sup>26</sup>

There is, throughout the writings we have been looking at, an interest in the vivid representation of experience that testifies to a similar urge to display immaterial concepts as if they "were expressed in color" or as if they existed on the surface on which a picture is painted. Hence the frequent use of terms such as "pokazaty" ("to show"), "maljuvaty" ("to paint"), "otrysovaty" ("to draw"), "konterfetovaty" ("to make a portrait"), "farba" ("color"), and "penzel" ("brush"), or the resort to images that call attention to their status as *images*, as graphic/pictorial artifacts (Mary as a "coat of arms" in the sky; the rainbow as an "embroidery"). Pictures become words, and words give life to pictures as the distinction between the preacher's pen and the painter's brush becomes blurred.

Nowhere is the awareness of this convergence between oratorical and artistic invention – where both have the power to make events present through a process of visualization – more explicitly articulated than in Radyvylovs'kyj's second Sermon on Saint Barbara. There the preacher compares himself to a carver ("одежь з славныхъ снѣцеровъ") who had to represent eleven thousand girls on a small gemstone ("на барзѣ маломъ перстена каменю"). To fit them all in such a small space, he pictured ("ѡрысовал") a city with high walls and towers ("місто оздобленое мурами, вежами") and just two of the girls entering the building, while the rest of them were hidden behind the walls. In an illuminating admission of the

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26 The English translation can be read in Cave 1976: 7.

illusory power of both artistic *techne* and verbal artifice, Radyvylovs'kyj acknowledges he must resort to the same “visual trick” to fit all of Barbara’s virtues (“цноты”) into the sermon (Radyvylovs'kyj 1676: 679–680). Underpinning this passage is a central axiom of Renaissance and Baroque aesthetic theory: that the motif of visibility – the ability to invest ideas with sensuous forms so that it seems that the audience has seen but neither read, nor listened – is common to artists and writers alike. Like the artist who represents bodily what rhetorical invention conveys by verbal means, the preacher must choose his materials (*inventio*), organize them (*dispositio*) and present them (*elocutio*) in such a way that they attract and hold the attention of the audience. Here, the ekphrastic description of the carved gemstone would plant a visual seed in the audience’s mind, helping them interiorize Barbara’s virtues.

The close connection between rhetorical *enargeia*, artistic invention, and visual cognition betrays the influence of the tradition of seventeenth-century Jesuit rhetoric that Marc Fumaroli calls “rhétorique des peintures” – a mannerist, “Asian” style firmly grounded in the comparison between the orator and the painter and in the use of metaphor, ekphrasis, and *enargeia* (Fumaroli 1980: 281). The trajectory by which this “rhetoric of pictures” found its way to Ukraine is not difficult to reconstruct. Javors'kyj and Radyvylovs'kyj would become acquainted with this method of representation during their studies at Kyiv College, whose Western-influenced syllabus encouraged the use of verbal-visual constructions, or at the different Jesuit-run institutions in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Both trained to use knowledge ingeniously and to invent spiritual similitudes and conceits drawn from their readings, in their sermons, they actively apply this method of putting across important moral points through vivid images intended to stimulate the listeners’ imagination, memory, and intellect.

Sermons cut across the boundary between low and high culture, and there is reason to believe that the cultural practices and ideas described in this study were not exclusive to an educated elite. In fact, the oral dimension of the sermon shows that illiteracy is not an obstacle to gaining access to complex symbolic forms. The insertion of fictional visual objects in the text creates a “gallery of ideas” (from the Greek *idein*, “to see”) for those who could not have been privy to these often-sophisticated manifestations of material and intellectual culture. Faced with verbal images that collaborated with words to produce meaning, the audiences of these sermons were taught to train their aural and visual literacy, engaging in a mental trajectory that proceeds from text to mental image, and from memory to action – the reformation of one’s behavior through the “pictorial” imitation of these verbal portraits. While no clear theoretical framework exists for reception studies in the field of early modern East Slavic preaching, it is not too far-fetched to suppose that pictorial and emblematic *exempla* would alert the audiences to their capacity



to function as “mental markers” – Javors’kyj’s “hooks” – that would help listeners memorize the moral message of the sermon. Complex theological notions such as the Trinity, or the doctrine of Christ as ransom would be easier to recollect if one would visualize a rainbow or a coin. Underlying all this is the traditional Byzantine *iconophilia* but also the Aristotelian and neo-Thomist beliefs about perception and mental processes. If, in Javors’kyj’s definition, the five senses are the “first channels” (“первые каналы”) by which God enters our souls, then images affecting our senses are an essential element for rhetorical persuasion (Javors’kyj 1694b: 140v–141r).

Before we reach our conclusion, I would like to stress one last point: in producing pictorial images that would engender image-making processes in the audience, the preachers examined in this study provide their listeners with a *mundus symbolicus* that is deeply informed by the notion that the access we have to the transcendental values lying beyond the visible world is mediated by a play of signifiers. When Javors’kyj observes that we would be able to see his emblematic animals if only God would give us “sharp eyes”, he points to the medieval belief that nature is the book of God, but he also makes clear that this internal vision is the result of a well-structured education of the mental gaze, which has to carry out the intellectual operation of solving the enigma embodied by the symbolic image. This operation is grounded in thought, in the awareness that the relation of signs to things (Mary and a laurel tree; a donkey and sloth, and so forth) is not natural or uncomplicated. His remark that painted bread, while depending on the existing world for its being, only exists as the likeness of the thing it represents equally points to this Aristotelian distinction between thing and representation. Similarly, in the sermon on the Presentation of the Lord, Radyvylovs’kyj (1676: 919) distinguishes between *imago*, which signifies, and *res*, which is signified (“образъ” and “речь, образомъ предназначена”).

## 4 Conclusion

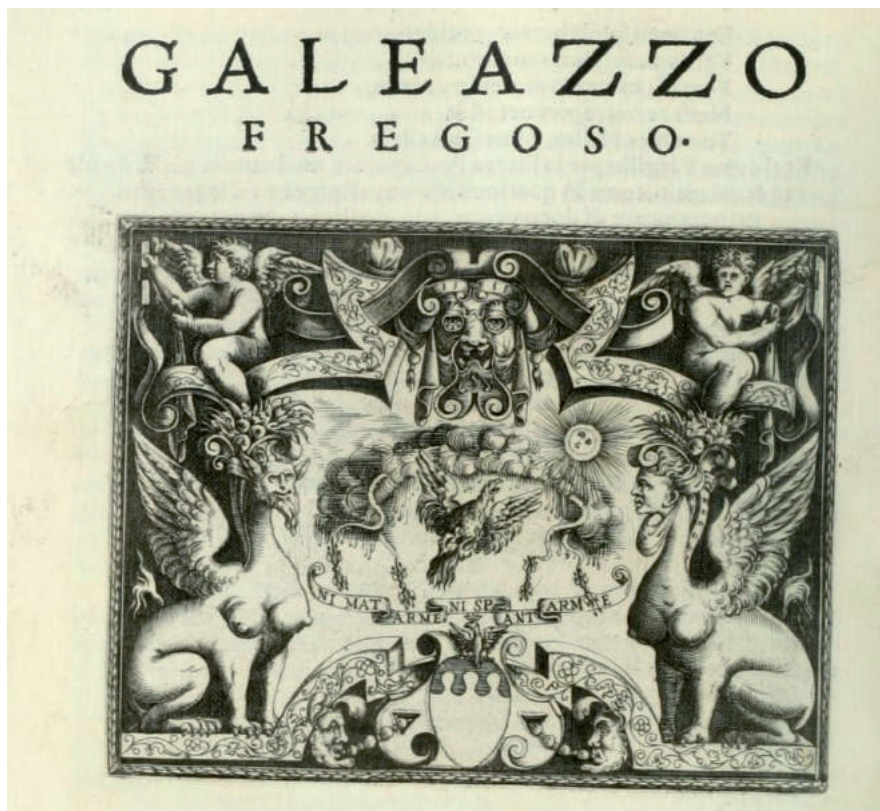
In this respect, these texts also speak of the transitional nature of the semiotic system of early modern Ukraine, in which the Neoplatonic conception that the language of symbols is divinely authored (here one might think of Radyvylovs’kyj’s description of the Woman of the Apocalypse as a peculiar “impresa of God”) coexists with the idea that knowledge is constructed within a system of representation: one that signifies by convention rather than by nature. On the one hand, the belief that the creation is “God’s painting”, and that spiritual things are manifest in the visible world, means that there is, in Ernst Gombrich’s words, “an inherent and essential symbolism pervading the whole order of things” (Gombrich

1948: 168). On the other hand, I believe what we are witnessing here is the process of “rhetoricization” experienced by Christian allegory during the early modern period. Symbolic images – emblems, impresas, hieroglyphs, and coins – are fully integrated in the field of rhetorical persuasion. More than a “transparent window” (Brubaker 1998: 216) through which one can look at the divine mysteries, they are an ornament – an “insert”, in the etymological definition of the emblem – that makes speech more persuasive; a fanciful invention that requires the audience to grasp the unexpected connections between sign (“образ”) and referent (“речь, образомъ предназначена”).<sup>27</sup> At the intersection between medieval and Baroque episteme, these sermons offer a compendium of the ambiguous status of vision and signs in early modern Ukrainian Orthodox culture. Their history is still far from being written or settled.

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<sup>27</sup> On the “rhetoricization” of Christian allegory during the seventeenth century, see Dekoninck 2005: 63–99.





**Fig. 2:** Girolamo Ruscelli, *Le imprese illustri con espositioni, et discorsi* (Venice: Franciscus Rampazetto, 1566), f. 472. Courtesy of Emblem Collection of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign <https://archive.org/details/leimpreseillustr00rusc>.



Fig. 3: *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Jesu* (Antwerp: ex Officina Plantiniana, 1640), “Fingitque premento”, f. 571. Courtesy of Getty Research Institute <https://archive.org/details/imagoprimsaecul00boll>.



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