

CHASING THE *CAPUT*.
HEAD IMAGES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IN A POLITICAL CONFLICT

Mateusz Kapustka

One of the difficulties with using iconographical methods in the history of medieval art is their ineffectiveness in dealing with individual cases of the reuse of images and the decontextualizing effects of quotation. Medievalists often stand at a confusing hermeneutical crossroads between, on the one hand, ‘reading’ images as a descriptive process of systematic assignment of meanings to forms and, on the other, ‘understanding’ objects, and alterations in their materiality, as a way of comprehending the unpredictable dynamics of cultural change.¹ The relevance of such divergent and flexible approaches as art patronage and politics, images and shifts of power, and resonances between public iconography and individual intention, have suffered a long period of neglect in art history due to the domination of iconographical, logo-centric research on images. We cannot quote all of the discipline’s breakthrough moments in this respect, such as George Kubler’s elaborations on the different time modes of the objects over the course of history, or David Freedberg’s studies in the theory of response, both of which saved images from the burden of semiotics and paved the way for the anthropological studies of images and their changing meanings that is now current.² But let us mention in this respect the prominent statement by Horst Bredekamp from his brilliant short analysis of Donatello’s *Judith with Holofernes*, a Florentine masterpiece that will appear several times in our study. Bredekamp investigated the changing levels of its political efficacy as an ambivalent image of decapitation and thus surgically demystified the assumption of its inherent “image magic” by pointing to ethnographical origins of the previous research. The conclusion was that it was ‘precisely the *forms* of images that determined

¹ I am referring here to the titles of two introductory essays by Elisabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas in: Sears E. – Thomas T.T. (eds.), *Reading Medieval Images. The Art Historian and the Object* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: 2003) 1–7, 9–15. I would like to express my thanks to Warren Th. Woodfin for the revision of my text.

² Kubler G., *The Shape of Time. Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: 1962); Freedberg D., *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: 1989).

whether these worked in a representational or in a magical way'.³ Two polarities of interpretation are relevant to our investigation: one the so-called "magic of the image", and the other the use of established modes of pictorial representation as a tool for the public appropriation of power. The present study accordingly raises the question of reuse of a certain visual potential that had long been part of the public visual culture, and examines ways in which beholders' existing visual experience could be reshaped in accordance with political premises. The depictions analysed show the head of John the Baptist, which gives an additional charge to the process of argumentative quotation studied, since representations of a severed head necessarily share in the ambivalent status of any images of fragmentation. Such partial images appear as sovereign substitutes for the body, but at the same time they work intensively as relative references exactly because of their unsettling visual incompleteness. It is in terms of such visual fluctuations that we shall trace the reception history of the head of John the Baptist and those depictions of it that functioned as political emblems of power in the Silesian capital of Wrocław (Breslau) in the Late Middle Ages.⁴

The public display of images of John's head by the municipal authorities of this city, which was also the see of the local bishopric, can be regarded as a source of tension between the secular and the ecclesiastical powers. In Wrocław's cathedral of St. John some fragments of bone said to be from the saint's skull had been preserved 'in disco', that is to say within a reliquary in the common shape of the so-called *Johannessschüssel*, since at least 1428.⁵ Permanent possession of these head relics was an argument in support of episcopal authority. The same relics were to a certain degree decontextualized as depictions in the public space of the city multiplied for purpose of legitimization of the secular political power, and in this

³ Bredekamp H., *Repräsentation und Bildmagie der Renaissance als Formproblem. Erweiterte Fassung eines Vortrags gehalten in der Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung am 29. Juni 1993* (Munich: 1995) 7–29 (here: 8). Cf. Bredekamp's recent modification of his view on images' agency in favor of images that are able to live and act by themselves: Bredekamp H., *Theorie des Bildakts. Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen 2007* (Berlin: 2010).

⁴ This article is meant as a pilot study of a broader project on this subject to be further conducted by the author.

⁵ For the iconographical type of *Johannessschüssel* see Barbara Baert's contribution in this volume. For its various contexts: Arndt H. – Kroos R., "Zur Ikonographie der Johannessschüssel", *Aachener Kunstblätter* 38 (1969) 243–328; Combs Stuebe I., "The 'Johannessschüssel': from Narrative to Reliquary to 'Andachtsbild'", *Marsyas* 14 (1968/69) 1–16; Baert B., "A Head on a Platter. The 'Johannessschüssel' or the Image of the Mediator and Precursor", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* 43 (2006) 8–41.

way the secular authorities were in a sense able to annex them. This very special political case seems, therefore, to include a metamorphosis of particles of the saint's body into an image of the full head, which in turn became a corporeal argument within a struggle of two corporate bodies.

The city of Wrocław, together with almost the whole of Silesia, had since 1335 been subject to the crown of Bohemia, due to the expansionist politics of the House of Luxembourg.⁶ Soon after the middle of the fifteenth century, the city was given the opportunity to assume the role of last fortress of the Catholic faith in the whole region. The capital of the Silesian crown province of Bohemia strongly opposed George of Podiebrady, the Hussite king elected in 1457, and even proclaimed an anti-Hussite crusade. At the same time, Pope Pius II was facing the enormous crisis brought on by the Turkish capture of Constantinople four years earlier, and proclaimed his own plans for an anti-Turkish *cruciata* at the Congress of Mantua in 1459. Wrocław, a city strongly opposed to the Hussites, became the pope's only acceptable ally in Central Europe able to guarantee the political stability and permanence of the old faith in a region that had been successfully seized by the Hussite revolutionaries. This political situation naturally had a strong influence on the municipal administration of Wrocław, which did not scruple to present itself before the Holy See under the name of the Advocate of the Roman Faith, and consistently projected this image over several decades.⁷ This stance was not to be without consequences for our history of 'disembodied heads'.

⁶ For more information on the political history of this land as well as the local manifestations of Luxembourg rule in fourteenth and fifteenth century art see recently: Kapustka M. – Klipa J. – Kozieł A. – Oszczanowski P. – Vlnas V. (eds.), *Silesia – a Pearl in the Crown of Bohemia. History – Culture – Art* (Prague: 2006) 23–79, 97–113 (essays by Lenka Bobková and Radek Fukala, and by Milena Bartlová); Kaczmarek R., "Schlesien: die luxemburgische Erwerbung", in Fajt J. (ed.), *Karl IV. Kaiser von Gottes Gnaden. Kunst und Repräsentation des Hauses Luxemburg 1310–1437* (Munich: 2006) 308–317.

⁷ On the political turbulence of this particular period and its effect on local art used as a tool of political argumentation see: Czechowicz B., "Wratislavia, caput coronae regni Bohemiae? Praga i Wrocław w artystycznym dialogu w XV wieku", in Kapustka M. – Kozieł M. – Oszczanowski P. (eds.), *Śląsk i Czechy. Wspólne drogi sztuki*, Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis 2953 (Wrocław: 2007) 151–161; idem, *Między katedrą a ratuszem. Polityczne uwarunkowania sztuki Wrocławia u schyłku średniowiecza* (Warszawa: 2008) passim. For the situation directly following the city's conflict with Podiebrad see: Czechowicz B., "Matthias Korvin und das Breslauer Rathaus. Ausgewählte Probleme", in Sachs R. (ed.), *Amator scientiae. Festschrift für Dr. Peter Ohr* (Wrocław: 2004) 39–51; Czechowicz B. – Kapustka M., "Hope and Pragmatism. The Rule and Visual Representation of Matthias Corvinus in Silesia and Lusatia", in Farbaky P. – Végh A. (eds.), *Matthias Corvinus the King. Tradition and Renewal in the Hungarian Royal Court, 1458–1490*, exhibition catalogue, Medieval Department of the Budapest History Museum (Budapest: 2008) 77–87.



Fig. 1. The coats-of-arms of the city of Wrocław in the form from 1530. Coloured graphics. Photo after: Karl Adolph Menzel, *Topographische Chronik von Breslau*, 1805.

The image of the head of John the Baptist on a platter was among the most important forms of emblematic representation of Silesia's capital across the whole High and Late Middle Ages and was eventually set as the central charge on the city's coat of arms as approved by the Emperor Ferdinand I in 1530. In this grant of arms, it was accompanied by the Bohemian lion, the Silesian eagle, the letter 'W', and the bust of John the Evangelist in four marshalled sections [Fig. 1].⁸ But even earlier, at the end of the thirteenth century, the motif of John's figure and especially of his

⁸ Łagiewski M., *Herb Wrocławia w architekturze miasta* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: 1992) 15–63; cf. Wrześcińska J., "Problematyka heraldyczna w gotyckiej architekturze Wrocławia", in Świechowski Z. (ed.), *Z dziejów sztuki śląskiej* (Warszawa: 1978) 203–246.

severed head was used on its own on the city council's official seal, long before the municipal heraldry had been definitively established. Moreover, the multiple displays of this head image within the visually layered structure of the decoration of Wrocław Town Hall (built well before the 1530 grant of arms) seems to testify that this public 'head policy' did not result directly from the gradually emerging shape of the city's coat of arms, as the historical and art-historical literature has assumed for almost a century. I would argue instead that, due to their continual and growing multiplication, the sculpted heads of John the Baptist in the late-medieval city of Wrocław show an interesting precedent of derivative embedding of a relic's image into the new context of municipal power.

Head Images as Visual Topoi of Punishment

The Late Gothic decoration of the Town Hall was the result of several building phases [Fig. 2].⁹ Some parts of the building are of particular interest of our study. We will look first at the eastern part that included the council's chapel and the municipal court (the so-called *praetorium*), built around the middle of the fourteenth century, which incorporates a politically composed tympanum decoration with the Bohemian lion as a bearer of the city's emblems [Fig. 3].¹⁰ Then we will examine the later architectonic and sculptural elements of the period roughly from 1470 to 1510, such as the whole southern wing comprising three oriels, added to

⁹ Burgemeister L., *Das Breslauer Rathaus* (Breslau: 1913); Stein R., *Das Rathaus und der Grosse Ring zu Breslau* (Breslau: 1937); Bimler K., *Das Breslauer Rathaus: seine Gestaltung, Ausstattung und Baugeschichte* (Breslau: 1941); Bukowski M. – Zlat M., *Ratusz wrocławski* (Wrocław: 1958); Zlat M., *Das Rathaus zu Wrocław* (Wrocław: 1977); cf. Walter E., "Zur sakralen Ikonographie des Breslauer Rathauses und zur Umwandlung der beiden kleineren gotischen Ostgiebel dieses Bauwerkes in Renaissancegiebel", *Archiv für schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 23 (1965) 49–84; Bartetzky A., "Die Beziehungen zwischen Stadt und Krone im Spiegel der Rathausdekorationen des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit (Prag, Breslau, Krakau, Posen)", in Dmitrieva M. – Lambrecht K. (eds.), *Krakau, Prag und Wien. Funktionen von Metropolen im frühmodernen Staat*, Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Mitteleuropa 10 (Stuttgart: 2000) 45–58 (here: 48–52).

¹⁰ Jurkowlanec T., "Ostportal des Rathauses in Breslau (Wrocław)", in Benešová K. (ed.), *King John of Luxembourg and the Art of his Era (1296–1346)* (Prague: 1998) 178–180; Kaczmarek R., "Portal z tympanonem w fasadzie wschodniej ratusza we Wrocławiu. Przyczynek do ikonografii lwa w hełmie", in Kalinowski L. – Mossakowski S. (eds.), *Nobile claret opus. Studia z dziejów sztuki dedykowane Mieczysławowi Zlatowi*, Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis 2016 (Wrocław: 1998) 95–105. Cf. Jurkowlanec T., "Wystrój rzeźbiarski praetorium we Wrocławiu. Ze studiów nad rzeźbą architektoniczną 2. tercji XIV wieku na Śląsku", *Rocznik Historii Sztuki XXI* (1995) 181–222.



Fig. 2. Wrocław Town Hall, view from the south-eastern corner (decoration from the mid-14th century and ca. 1470–1510). Image © M. Wislocki.

the building's earlier structure in the 1480s and 1490s [Fig. 4], together with the separate figures of the city beadle, the Roland, and the pillory at the eastern front of the Town Hall.

To begin with, let us outline how John's head was depicted on the Town Hall in its earliest version: in the *praetorium*, under the eastern chapel oriel [Fig. 5; 6]. From 1345 onwards the interior of the oriel contained an altar consecrated to both John the Evangelist and John the Baptist. This housed two of the most important reliquaries of the municipal administration, both made around 1400: the magnificent bust of Saint Dorothea and the small statue of John the Baptist.¹¹ Exactly below this oriel, a relief of the

¹¹ Hintze E. – Masner K., *Goldschmiedearbeiten Schlesiens: eine Auswahl von Goldschmiedearbeiten schlesischer Herkunft oder aus schlesischem Besitze* (Breslau: 1911) 3–5; Pechstein K. – Effmert V., *Schlesische Goldschmiedearbeiten im Germanischen Nationalmuseum*



Fig. 3. The so-called *praetorium* of Wrocław Town Hall (mid-14th century). Image © M. Wiśłocki.

platter with John's head is held by the angels in the distinctive liturgical gesture of ostension of relics by means of cloths or veils. When the central oriel window is opened, the vault ribs can be seen, with the keystone in the form of an image of John's head which faces outwards, guaranteeing a frontal view of the saint's face for the beholders remaining outside, thus demonstrating the saint's perpetual presence in the altar space. It would be simplistic to view the pictorial presence of John's head in the Town Hall only in terms of piety. We need to bear in mind that only the head images of the local patron – none of the other images – were repeated in the Town Hall in this way over the course of some 150 years [Fig. 7]. This situation is of special relevance if we factor in that the real owner of John's

(Nürnberg: 1990) cat. no. 1; Regulska G., *Gotyckie złotnictwo na Śląsku*, Studia Instytutu Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk 7 (Warszawa: 2001) 169–170.

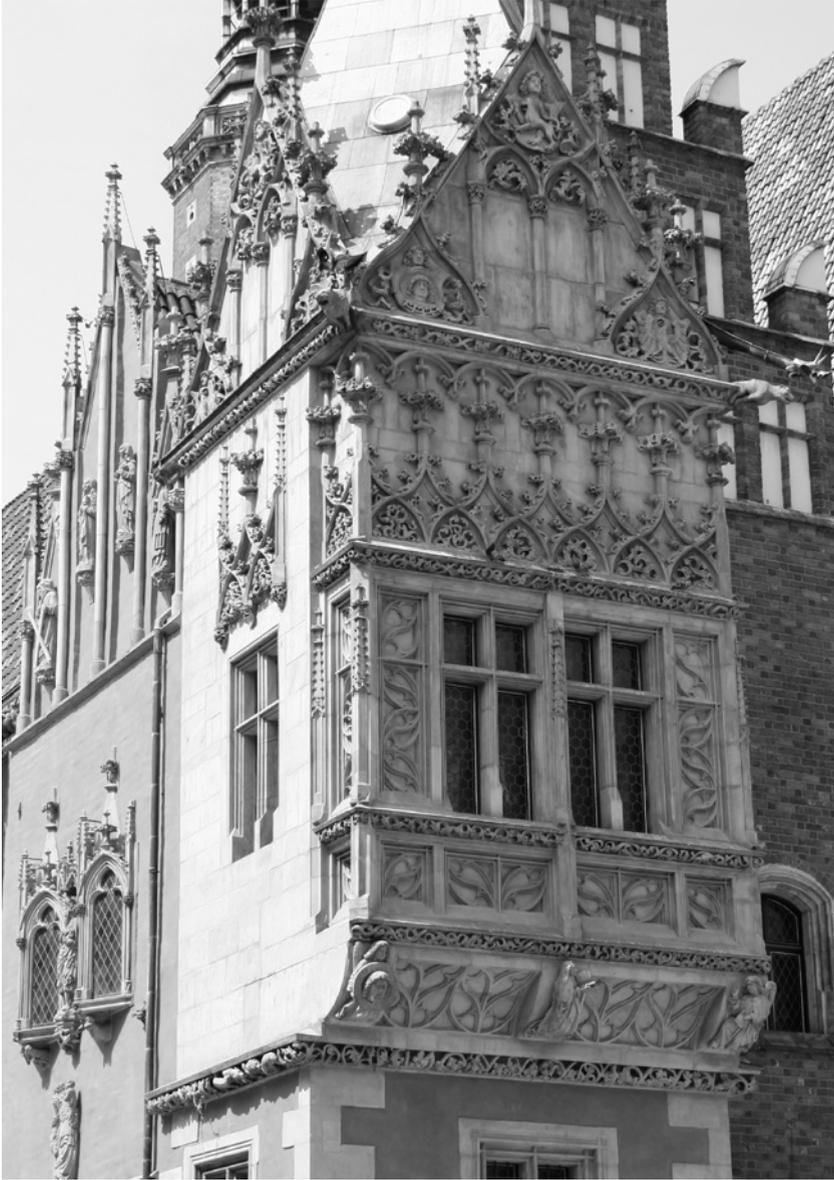


Fig. 4. The oriel at the south-eastern corner of Wrocław Town Hall (1480/90).
Photograph by the author.



Fig. 5. The oriel on the eastern façade of Wrocław Town Hall (ca. 1345). Photograph by the author.

head relics, the cathedral chapter of Wrocław, remained in a permanent struggle with the municipal council. Let us then consider this unusual case of the use of visual representation to transfer the authority vested in relics from the possessors of the relics themselves to their rivals within local power structures.

John the Baptist, due to his clear role as a precursor of Christ, was a perfect saint for representational frames of medieval municipal order.



Fig. 6a. Unknown artist, *Head of John the Baptist held by the angels on a cloth* (ca. 1345). Relief plaque under the oriel on the eastern façade of Wrocław Town Hall. Photograph by the author.

In the Middle Ages, the social reception of judicial and executive power was often conditioned by the appropriate means of its visualisation. According to the *Legenda aurea*, John functioned as a ‘Lantern of God’ and ‘Herald of the Judge’.¹² These connotations were not without significance for the symbolic sacralisation of the city’s judicial domain, which was often expressed by means of depictions of the Last Judgement (as may also have been the case in Wrocław Town Hall in the form of a wall painting).¹³ Both John’s actions and his death became the last announcements of the new order, the culmination of which will be a forensic assessment of spiritual gains and losses. In this context, it is particularly remarkable that it is not the full-length figure of John as a patron that is designed to play the crucial visual role in Wrocław Town Hall, but it is rather his head image, relating to a specific fragment of his body. Although this alluded to the

¹² Marrow J.H., “John the Baptist, Lantern for the Lord. A Supplement”, *Oud Holland* 85 (1970) 188–193.

¹³ Bukowski – Zlat, *Ratusz wrocławski* 228.



Fig. 6b. Unknown artist, *Head of John the Baptist* (ca. 1345). Vault keystone relief inside the oriel on the eastern façade of Wrocław Town Hall. Image © J. Buława.



Fig. 7. Unknown artist, *Head of John the Baptist on a platter held by the angels* (1481). Tympanum of one of the windows of the southern façade of Wrocław Town Hall. Photograph by the author.

most important Silesian relic of the patron, its importance in the new context has also been connected directly with the meaning of the saint's biblical execution. Like Christ's cross, the severed head of John serves in this context as a sign of final victory of the divine power over an act of arbitrary injustice, as it was precisely through his martyrdom that John defeated the unjust king Herod.¹⁴ By making this the symbol of municipal power, the original signification of the actual relic as an ecclesiastic carrier of identity was deprived of its exclusive individuality and became an emblem of the higher justice. The multiplied image of the head of John the Baptist, the patron of those under sentence of death, builds within its new framework an embodiment of the beheading and visually indicates the *praetorium* as a place of the official reading of the city law, the pronouncements of the city court and their enforcement. Those awaiting the

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. the Saint's monumental victory over Herodes as depicted in the central panel of Giovanni del Biondo's John the Baptist altarpiece of 1360–65, now in the Uffizi, Florence.

honourable punishment of execution by decapitation, whose patron was John, were in some cases accompanied by a priest and given a glass of wine – ‘vino pro amoris s. joanni’ – immediately before their execution.¹⁵ John the Baptist here seems to have played a similar role to that of the famous Florentine Compagnia dei Neri, whose members accompanied prisoners sentenced to death, equipped with portable plates often depicting their patron and the scene of his beheading.¹⁶

Against this background, the head image becomes in Wrocław not merely an archetypal visualisation or simple symbol of decapitation. In this case it is worth considering to what extent it is linked to the problem of attestation of judgment and justification of punishment. John the Baptist’s role as predecessor has been remarkably modified in Wrocław in the course of developing this image propaganda. On the south-eastern oriel, directly adjoining the area of the *praetorium*, the sculpted head of the saint held by an angel was ostentatiously installed in 1480/90 as a counterpart for the Annunciation scene made at the same time [Fig. 8]. This might, therefore, be read as a physical attestation to the earthly condemnation of the saint being a symbolic complement and a secondary confirmation of Christ’s mission, initiated at the very first moment of Incarnation, giving the legislative and executive power in general a key place in the history of Salvation. It might have assumed a role of visual certification of a court sentence, aimed at the preservation of the common law as warranted by the higher order, a sentence or even a seal of attestation that was permanently discernible from a distance. In these terms, this adaptation of the biblical head image might have implied an idea of a divine seal of authentication of the act of punishment. This idea must have gained in importance after the political life of the city was thoroughly shaken up

¹⁵ *Scriptores Rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. 12: Wächter F. (ed.), *Geschichtschreiber Schlesiens des XV. Jahrhunderts* (Breslau: 1883) 137 (the case of decapitation of Prince Nicolaus of Opole in Nysa in 1497).

¹⁶ Apart from the well documented history of the Roman confraternity I Neri in S. Maria della Croce in Tempio itself, cf. on the meaning of its *tavolette* as images of comfort for the condemned to death: Edgerton S.Y., “A little known ‘Purpose of Art’ in the Italian Renaissance”, *Art History* 2 (1979) 45–61; Falvey K.C., “Early Italian Dramatic Traditions and Comforting Rituals: Some Initial Considerations”, in Eisenbichler K. (ed.), *Crossing the Boundaries. Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, Early Drama, Art and Music Monograph Series 15 (Kalamazoo–Michigan: 1991) 33–55; resp. in the context of Bernardo Daddi’s magnificent cross depicting three simultaneous decapitations: of John, Paul and Jacob the Elder that also functioned as an image of consolation: Ciatti M., (ed.), *La croce di Bernardo Daddi del Museo Poldi Pezzoli. Ricerche e conservazione*, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Opificio delle Pietre Dure e Laboratori di Restauro di Firenze (Florence: 2005) esp. 11–51.



Fig. 8. Unknown artist, *Head of John the Baptist held by an angel and the Annunciation* (1480/1490). Relief underneath the oriel on the south-eastern corner of Wrocław Town Hall. Photograph by the author.

in 1491, with the startling decision of the magistracy of Wrocław to behead its own leader, Heinz Dompnig, accused of treason and fraud during the city's bitter conflict with Matthias Corvinus. The dispute revolved around questions of the legislative competencies of the parties involved, the court's majestic dignity, as well as the constitution of fiefs.¹⁷

Enhancing an Aura: The Head Relic and the Bilateral Claims to Power

The issue of the Wrocław head images of John the Baptist as media of power can, despite all the obvious differences, to some extent be analysed in comparison to the contemporary or even later depictions of beheading in the municipal domain of Renaissance Florence, a city that happened also to be under the patronage of John the Baptist. The Florentine example is a comparatively well-investigated case study of ambiguous connotations of *poenitentia* in the domain of the agency of the image. We now take almost as an archetype of the late-medieval and early-modern visual culture of punishment such works as Donatello's *Judith with Holofernes* of 1453–57 (already mentioned above). It was placed as a gaze-focusing *spolium* in front of the Palazzo della Signoria and equipped with a republican

¹⁷ Markgraf H., "Heinz Dompnig, der Breslauer Hauptmann (†1491)", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Altertum Schlesiens* XX (1886) 157–196. Cf. recently on its political context: Czechowicz – Kapustka "Hope and pragmatism" 77.

inscription by the citizens of Florence after the expulsion of the Medici from the city in 1495.¹⁸

In contrast to the Florentine case, where, generally speaking, the dominant tension shaping the city's public life was the rivalry between the civic administration and princely ambition, the dynamic role of depictions of the Baptist's head as images of justice in medieval Wrocław raises the question of the reception of politically inflected visual quotations in the public space. It also points to the open competition between the city and the ecclesiastical authority of the bishop and the cathedral chapter. In Wrocław, unlike Florence, the dynamics of political tension coalesced around a particular sacred object, a part of the saint's body, which was subject to contention and was reinterpreted accordingly. The cathedral of Wrocław identified itself first and foremost as the possessor of relics of John the Baptist. The political history of the local bishopric had been shaped by this fact. Even before the head relic was acquired, a physical remnant of John the Baptist was present in the form of the little forefinger reliquary of the saint, which had been donated to the cathedral possibly already in 1351 by the Emperor Charles IV, of the House of Luxembourg, in the capacity of king of Bohemia, thus symbolically binding the local Church hierarchy to his imperial plans.¹⁹ The sculpted figures and multiple head images of John the Baptist in the Gothic cathedral of the mid-fourteenth to fifteenth century also reference the tradition of the previous Romanesque cathedral of St. John in the same location. In the fifteenth century, these images legitimized by long tradition already stood in radical contrast to the newly reinterpreted head image of the saint adopted within the municipal milieu as the secular magistracy's visual device, a device that was beginning to function as an emblem of the city as a whole. The early-modern reliquaries later commissioned for the cathedral should be interpreted as a restatement of the cathedral's possession of the relics, and also demonstrate the undiminished power of

¹⁸ For the detailed history of this group, Donatello's most discussed, see: Caglioti F., *Donatello e i Medici: storia del David e della Giuditta*, Studi della Fondazione Carlo Marchi per la Diffusione della Cultura e del Civismo in Italia 14 (Firenze: 2000); cf. i.a. McHam S.B., "Donatello's Bronze David and Judith as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence", *The Art Bulletin* 83 (2001) 32–47; Terry A., "Donatello's Decapitations and the Rhetoric of Beheading in Medicean Florence", *Renaissance Studies* 23,5 (2009) 609–638.

¹⁹ Regulska, Gotyckie złotnictwo 155–156; Kapustka M., "Reliquary for the Forefinger of St. John the Baptist", in Niedzielenko A. – Vlnas V. (eds.), *Silesia – a Pearl in the Crown of Bohemia, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery in Prague and Copper Museum in Legnica* (Prague: 2006) 115.



Fig. 9. Caspar Pfister, *Head of John the Baptist on a platter* (1611). Reliquiary. Treasury of the Wrocław Cathedral. Photo after Ch. Gündel.

the ecclesiastical claim to tradition. One of them, the precious reliquary in the form of John's head on a platter, made by Caspar Pfister in 1611, possibly repeats the then already archaic form of a lost Gothic reliquary of 1428 [Fig. 9].²⁰

²⁰ The relics contained in a *Johannesschüssel* came to Wrocław possibly in the time of the Hussite wars, as noted by Kundmann in: *Promptuarium Rerum Naturalium et Artificialium Vratislaviense Præcipue / Quas Collegit D. Io. Christianus Kundmann Medicus Vratislaviensis* (Vratislaviæ, Hubertus: 1726) 5. For two early modern replicas or emulations of the original *Johannesschüssel* in the cathedral, meant as repositories for the relics of the saint's head and arm and dating to 1571 and 1611 respectively, cf. Hintze E. – Masner K., *Goldschmiedearbeiten Schlesiens* 16, 22; Gündel Ch., *Die Goldschmiedekunst in Breslau* (Berlin: 1942) 22; Starzewska M. (ed.), *Ornamenta Silesiae. Tysiąc lat rzemiosła artystycznego na Śląsku*, collections catalogue, Muzeum Narodowe we Wrocławiu (Wrocław: 2000) cat. no. 92.

This archaism highlights the continuity of the head relic as a locus of the cathedral church's identity. The way in which the images of John the Baptist's head were displayed in the cathedral gave the fragments of bone meaningful visual features and also demonstrated to the outside viewer the power of the custodian of the relics. One of these images was interestingly combined with a motif of the Holy Face of Christ in form of a *Vera Icon*. These two holy faces are represented on two external window keystones sculpted in 1340–50 and placed opposite to each other across the cathedral's pseudo-transept, defined by a broader arcade [Fig. 10]. This reciprocal conditioning of images of relics is not accidental: the transept, as a visually and topographically distinct part of the church building, has since the origins of Christian architecture functioned as a place of veneration of martyrs' graves and of the ostension of relics and votive offerings, as Richard Krautheimer has pointed out in his research on the Early Christian basilica.²¹ This context gains additional relevance in our case. The two images, that of the sacred cloth with the imprint of Christ's face and that of the saint's severed head, seem to be dialectically related to each other with respect to their functioning as visual media. Moreover, they constitute in this case a visual combination of material objects, which integrate the aura of the sacred traces together with the completed history of salvation. The separated head of John is the last historical indication of Christ's precursor's bodily sacrifice, and the *sudarium* is a significant answer to the question of the Saviour's corporeal resurrection as announced by John's baptismal mission. The textile trace of the body depicted here could be venerated in Rome, while the physical remnant depicted could be venerated *in situ*, so both focused the gaze on material evidence for sacred power. In this way, both the cathedral of Wrocław and later (as we will see) the city's Town Hall draw a visual correspondence between the two relics on the basis of strictly political purposes.²² It should also not be surprising

²¹ Krautheimer R., "The Transept in the Early Christian Basilica", in Krautheimer R. (ed.), *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval, and Renaissance Art* (London–New York: 1969) 59–68 (esp. 59–60, 61, 62–64). For the building history of the Wrocław cathedral: Bukowski M., *Katedra wrocławska. Architektura, rozwój, zniszczenie, odbudowa* (Wrocław: 1962); idem, *Katedra wrocławska* (Wrocław: 1974). On its sculptural decoration with figures of John the Baptist and relief depictions of his head cf. Kaczmarek R., *Rzeźba architektoniczna XIV wieku we Wrocławiu*, Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis 2015 (Wrocław: 1999) Historia sztuki, 12. 1999) passim.

²² The connection between John's head and Abgar's Mandyllion shown as a textile relic resembling the *Vera Icon* in its ostentatious presentation appears in form of a direct juxtaposition in the early modern period in the monument in the church of San Silvestro in Capite in Rome commemorating the restoration of the church in 1596 as well as in the graphical depiction of this local alliance, in which the Mandyllion was literally transformed



Fig. 10a. Unknown artist, *Vera ikon held by the angels* (ca. 1340–50). Keystone relief of the northern window of the pseudo-transept of Wrocław Cathedral. Photograph by the author.



Fig. 10b. Unknown artist, *Head of John the Baptist on a platter* (ca. 1340–50). Keystone relief of the southern window of the pseudo-transept of Wrocław Cathedral. Photograph by the author.

that within such a topographically defined space of tension between the two bilaterally placed keystone-images of the *caput* in the cathedral, on its north side, almost below the *Vera Icon*, there is a portico that served as a place of the Episcopal court's pronouncements.²³ The unquestionable authority of holy countenances emanating from the images gave this jurisdictional locale an aura of sacred presence.

The Wrocław city council that adorned its Town Hall with various representations of John's head clearly did not intend to secularize this image entirely as a profane municipal antithesis of the sacred. On the one hand, laying claim to the most precious relic of the city's patron in spite of its secure ecclesiastical exclusiveness was a highly effective and thus understandable strategy.²⁴ On the other hand, the general phenomenon of the sacralisation of the office of the town council through the medium of suitable attributes of governance played a decisive role here. A comparison with the well known and well documented example of the Florentine Signoria provides a broader context for understanding both the means used to give expression to municipal rule and their reception, and hence throw an interesting light on the 'speaking' features of medieval Town Hall decorations in general. The Signoria, though equipped with the highest power, remained invisible to the citizens. Even when it communicated with the public, its resolutions were mediated, being delivered by the city's notary or the Captain, or alternatively through the voice of the heralds. It was precisely this combination of permanent presence with simultaneous invisibility or inaudibility – except on feast days – that

into Veronica, in the frontispiece engraving of: Giachetti G., *Iconologia Salvatoris et Karillogia Praecursoris, sive De Imagine Salvatoris ad Regem Abgarum missa, et de Capite S. Joannis Baptistae* (Rome: 1628) – see: Arndt – Kroos, "Zur Ikonographie der Johannesschüssel" 302; Ragusa I., "The Edessan Image in S. Silvestro in Capite in the Seventeenth Century", in Cadei A. (ed.), *Arte d'Occidente: temi e metodi* (Rome: 1999) 939–946; Baert B., "Head on a Platter" 26. Cf. recently eadem, "'He must increase, but I must decrease'. On the Spiritual and Pictorial Intertwining between the 'Johannesschüssel' and the 'Vera icon' (1200–1500)", in Enenkel K. – Melion W. (eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self. Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, Intersections. Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 17 (Leiden: 2011) 323–366.

²³ Cf. Walter E., "Zum Kaiserchor des Breslauer Domes", *Archiv für Schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 25 (1967) 128–166. Cf. idem, "Zur Baugeschichte des Langhauses und des Kleinchores sowie zum *fons sacer* des Breslauer Domes", *Archiv für Schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 30 (1972) 70–92.

²⁴ Cf. the case of jurisdictional conflict between ecclesiastical authorities about the exclusive possession of the skull relics of St. Denis in the beginning of the fifteenth century as well as its possible visual repercussions: Tammen S., "Gewalt in der Kunst des Mittelalters. Ikonographien, Wahrnehmungen, Ästhetisierungen", in: Herberichs C. – Braun M. (eds.), *Gewalt im Mittelalter* (Munich: 2005) 307–339.

created and conserved an aura that has clear parallels in the dignity of ecclesiastical power.²⁵ Thus the Signoria generated a sacred aura around itself almost as though it were a relic. In 1429 the Florentine Priori were propagandistically compared directly to the person of Christ.²⁶ The Florentine *Podestà* as an executive office of the highest council's body, together with the city judge, were described as 'Gods for people' by John of Viterbo as early as the thirteenth century. The notion of 'sacramentum' was also used in this context.²⁷ These aspects might be adapted in building our own model for the analysis of the less well documented history of Wrocław city council's self-representation.²⁸ But while the Florentine Palazzo della Signoria functioned only as an administrative quarter of the city council, the Town Hall of Wrocław, on the contrary, was a seat of the whole municipal power of jurisdiction and execution of the law; moreover, it also housed the treasury and armoury. Therefore, we have good reason to assume that the late Gothic decoration of Wrocław Town Hall, a building which symbolically incorporated the perfection and completion of secular power and in which the city's financial treasure was stored, was designed to hierarchically generate a sacral aura around civic authority by means of demonstrating the sanctity of material objects.²⁹

Before the southern wing of the building was rebuilt in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, one particular architectonic fragment may have played a crucial role within this demonstration. A tympanum from about 1380 with a relief of the *Vera Icon* accompanied by two separate sculptures of Mary and the Archangel Gabriel fits this context and was later,

²⁵ Meier U., "Die Sicht- und Hörbarkeit der Macht: der Florentiner Palazzo Vecchio im Spätmittelalter", in: Rau S. – Schwerhoff G. (eds.), *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne. Öffentliche Räume in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Norm und Struktur 21 (Cologne: 2004) 229–271 (esp. 255).

²⁶ 'stetit Dominus in medio discipulorum suorum et dixit "pax vobis"', 'ita vos, Domini Priores . . .'; 'ut unus Deus est adorandus, sic vos Domini Priores venerandi estis ab omnibus civibus, et qui alios respiciunt, idola inducunt et sunt damnandi.' Meier, "Die Sicht- und Hörbarkeit" 258–259.

²⁷ Meier U., "Vom Mythos der Republik. Formen und Funktionen spätmittelalterlicher Rathausikonographie in Deutschland und Italien", in Löther A. – Meier U. (eds.), *Mundus in imagine. Bildersprache und Lebenswelten im Mittelalter* (Munich: 1996) 345–387 (here: 351–352).

²⁸ Unfortunately, most of the sources concerning the building history of Wrocław Town Hall as well as its original functioning in the Middle Ages were lost in the Second World War.

²⁹ Up to now, the sacred motifs in the Town Hall's decoration were treated most of all as an addition to its thoroughly 'humanistic', i.e. secular program interpreted as an expression of the late-medieval burghers' growing self-confidence: Bukowski – Zlat, *Ratusz wrocławski*, passim; Zlat, *Rathaus zu Breslau*, i.a. 118–119.



Fig. 11. Unknown artist, *Vera ikon held by the angels and Annunciation* (ca. 1380). Tympanum, partly destroyed, state before 1945. Wrocław, Museum of Architecture. Image © Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warsaw.

possibly in the sixteenth century, placed in the wall of one of the houses near the Town Hall (of which no detailed history is known) [Fig. 11].³⁰ This tympanum corresponds in scale and architectonic framing with the political tympanum, already mentioned, over the main entrance to the Town Hall's *praetorium*. This demonstration of the House of Luxembourg's political domination over the whole territory is still preserved *in situ* today. For that reason, as a working hypothesis, we may suppose that the tympanum with the *Vera Icon* and the adjoining Annunciation was originally located directly in the wall of the Town Hall. The motif of the Annunciation sculpted in 1480/90 on the newly built south-eastern corner of the building, discussed above, indicates that the adjoining earlier part of the municipal edifice was possibly the original place for the display of its fourteenth-century precedents together with the *Vera Icon* tympanum placed in a doorway. In this way, we can reconstruct the whole original ensemble as meant to connect the aspects of sacred allusion and political *esprit de corps*. The aura of municipal power could therefore have been ultimately demonstrated by the *vera effigies* of Christ, a motif of a gazing countenance of God, associated, as we know from the Church practices,

³⁰ Kaczmarek, *Rzeźba architektoniczna* 237–239.

with a huge potential of administrative control and spiritual government, expressed most of all in the management of indulgences.³¹ But the intriguing question we have to face is the following: why did the city's authorities, while rebuilding this part of the Town Hall, replace the powerful image of Christ's face on the cloth with the head of John the Baptist on a platter and thus combine another holy *caput* with the Annunciation of God's embodiment? Such a prominent exchange was surely not accompanied by any diminution in the value of the *Vera Icon* as an image of the most precious relic of that time. Was it just about the increasing value of the city's jurisdictional power? The political history of the city immediately prior to this change shed some light on these questions, as it includes an unparalleled and still underestimated municipal success on the stage of European power struggles.

Visualizing Political Success

The most significant moment in the secular career of the depictions of John's head in Wrocław came with the case of the conflict around the indulgence connected with the relic of this saint in the 1460s, a conflict that was accompanied by hidden intrigues and elaborate strategies of propaganda. This may well have been an initial stimulus for the gradual appropriation and reinterpretation of images that was to have long-lasting effects, as well as being a milestone in the growing self-confidence of the city's authorities. In 1460, for the feast day of the beheading of John the Baptist (29 August) and, in subsequent years, also for the main feast day of his nativity (24 June), the local authorities, by the help of papal legates, obtained a declaration of indulgence for those contributing to the city's own expenses.³² Such an arrangement was only made possible by the geopolitical circumstances, because the pope was anxious to conserve grants

³¹ On the meaning of the *Vera Icon* for the ecclesiastical politics and its function as a 'magnet for the audience': Egger Ch., "Papst Innocenz III. und die Veronica: Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Seelsorge", in Kessler H.L. – Wolf G. (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Vila Spelman Colloquia 6 (Bologna: 1998) 181–203.

³² Lasłowski E., "Der Breslauer St. Johannes-Ablaß 1460–1471", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* 60 (1926) 18–51; cf. idem, "Die Breslauer und der Kreuzablaß gegen Georg Podiebrad von Böhmen, 1467–1470", *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* 55 (1921) 93–109. Cf. Dola K., *Wrocławska kapituła katedralna w XV wieku. Ustrój – skład osobowy – działalność* (Lublin: 1983) 220–221. Cf. Paulus N., *Der Ablass im Mittelalter als Kulturfaktor* (Cologne: 1920) esp. 37–70 on secular purposes of indulgences; idem, *Geschichte des Ablasses im Mittelalter* (Paderborn: 1922–1923), vols. 1–3, passim.

of plenary indulgence for the purpose of raising funds for the anticipated anti-Ottoman crusade. But Wrocław city council sent several requests and endorsements to Rome in which it presented itself in this *causa* as the sole remaining faithful enemy of heresy still standing against the Bohemian revolutionaries, buttressing its claims with arguments for specific needs, such as the fortification of the cathedral isle against the Hussites. The pope agreed at first under the condition that the indulgence would be issued in the Wrocław cathedral and that the bulk of the money raised would serve to assemble the anti-Turkish crusaders' armada as well as to help in building the new Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. This is not the place to develop the whole course of this story and quote the efforts of the Wrocław city council at length. The accounts of corruption, secret ambassadors, and violent constraints amount to a virtual political thriller. Here it is sufficient to say that as a result of the city's patient diplomacy the papacy sanctioned the magistracy to retain for its own use the greatest share of the money donated on the feast day of John the Baptist for the full ten-year term of the indulgence. In 1471 the city even ventured an almost inconceivable request to the pope: a similar indulgence, but this time for a term of 50 years. Since the political circumstances in Eastern Europe had meanwhile altered in the pope's favour, this attempt remained fruitless. Nevertheless, it should be no surprise that it was just this long-drawn-out procedure of acquiring the indulgence that consequently provoked the stormy financial-political struggle in the local milieu between the municipal and episcopal administrations.

The indulgence proved wildly successful, and its fame soon transcended local borders. In 1471, soon after the period of the indulgence had ended, the city's new treasure chamber was built on the first floor of the south-eastern corner of Wrocław Town Hall.³³ Its exterior decoration may be treated as a visualisation of success [Fig. 12]. The figures on the façade show a certain iconographical gradation. St. Christopher, who seems to take the role of the city council itself, functions here as a first intermediary, since his figure was placed between the 'old time' of the basement with the notary's chamber inside and the 'new era' of the treasury situated on the first floor. The former is distinguished with two roughly decorated round arch windows à la Romanesque, while the two highly decorated Gothic windows of the latter distinctly recall the micro-architecture of precious reliquaries. They are separated by the full-length figure of the

³³ Zlat, *Rathaus zu Breslau* 23, 133, with references to the earlier literature.



Fig. 12. Façade of the treasury of the Wrocław Town Hall, detail (1471).
Image © M. Wislocki.

second intermediary and city patron, John the Baptist. In the highest pediment there were also figures of the four patrons of the main parish churches of Wrocław, administered by patricians and burghers who had been granted the indulgence mentioned.³⁴ Hence, this composition visualizes the transition from the archaic era *sub lege* into the time of prosperity *sub gratia*, to quote the biblical terms. At the same time, it structurally shows the measurable profits for the city's sacred topography. In this way, the material state of the town's treasury was signalled with the help of the depiction of the saintly 'profit bringer' in just the place where the increasing wealth was stored, neighbouring the traditional courtroom. The path was now open for a large-scale appropriation of images: from now on, the image of John the Baptist's head was surely not only a depiction of a relic the city claimed, or of an adopted image of the only true justice. Above all, it was now the image of success. Therefore, it was most probably the defeat of the bishopric's authority in this long-lasting struggle that made it possible for the city council to exchange the pontifical rank of the *Vera Icon* in the Town Hall's oriel for the readily available agency of the local head relic, once the meaning of the latter had been remodelled according to the current political needs and benefits. Its display in the form of multiple publicly accessible images could be seen as an essential and constant guarantee of the expression of power. Let us again recall the Florentine case in this context: Richard Trexler has shown, drawing on Macchiavelli, that changes to the precedence and position of the Standard Bearer of Justice in the procession for the Florentine *mostra* on the feast day of St John the Baptist indicated changes in the power of the family whose representative had been entrusted with that role.³⁵ Similarly, the wholesale appropriation of the Wrocław episcopal relic's image by the municipal authorities, which could even be described as both a *translatio* (a transfer of relics to another place) and a *delatio* (taking them on tour for financial or political reasons),³⁶ was an act of visual violence on a radical scale.

³⁴ The original statues are lost, they were replaced with copies in 2006.

³⁵ Cf. Trexler R.C., *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca–London: 1991) 259–260, 274. For the characteristics of the Florentine feast of John the Baptist: Chrétien H.L., *The Festival of San Giovanni. Imagery and Political Power in Renaissance Florence* (New York: 1994).

³⁶ For *translatio*, *inventio*, *furta*, *adventus* and *delatio* as usual medieval procedures with relics see, among others: Geary P.O., *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: 1991); Ugé K., "Relics as Tools of Power: The Eleventh-Century Invention of St Bertin's Relics and the Assertion of Abbot Bovo's Authority", in Bijsterveld A.J.A. – Teunis H.B. – Wareham A. (eds.), *Negotiating Secular and Ecclesiastical Power. Western*

Excursus: The Coat of Arms and the Head Image as a Trophy

The municipal use in Wrocław of the saint's severed head, a visual synecdoche for the body, produced an emblem of the authority of the corporate body. While in Florence the allegorized biblical figure of Judith was introduced into the political struggle, in Wrocław it was the visual multiplication of a physical relic that took its place on the stage of public representation. The fact that the city council continuously used the same severed saintly head as the depiction on its official seal throughout the sixteenth century proves the administration's intention to present the veracity and authenticity of the fragment of the 'stolen body' as a means of attestation before the community. In Florence, the statue of Judith was taken from the expelled Medicis and raised before the Palazzo della Signoria as a monument of victory. The creation of a new significance for the sacred through its deprivation took place in a different way in Wrocław, as no change of rule took place. Instead of this, while the highest insignia of rule – the 'severed head' of the patron – still remained securely in the bishop's care, its authority was appropriated by images that had the power of public equivalents. It was, so to speak, an absolutely legalized *furta sacra* in broad daylight. The overpowering visual presence of the head image that was beneficently donated to the community in the Town Hall created a rival for the secret aura of the original relic that was exposed to the gaze of the people only on the feast day of the Nativity of John the Baptist on 24 June, when it was carried out of the cathedral treasury and shown to the faithful. Thus, although the relic itself was still distinguished by its alleged uniqueness, its authority was narrowed in the sense that it had been substituted by the perpetual and successful agency of the sculpted copies.

Having traced the political motivations underlying this intense image production, we can examine the obscure history of the city's coat of arms more carefully. The head of John on a platter, functioning in Wrocław as an emblem of the good justice of the court, can be characterized as a 'reversal image' that is able to invert the negative meaning of the beheading. The reference to John's death, interpreted typologically in the Middle

Europe in the Central Middle Ages. Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds (Turnhout: 1999) 51–71 (here: 51). On the origins and meaning of *translatio* as a ceremony: Kühne H., *Ostensio reliquiarum. Untersuchungen über Entstehung, Ausbreitung, Gestalt und Funktion der Heiltumsweisungen im römisch-deutschen Regnum* (Berlin: 2000) 520–534.

Ages as his victory over the wicked King Herod, made it possible to transpose the image of the former's severed head to the allegory of *Justitia*, the attributes of which, as for example in Lorenzetti's frescoes in the Sienese Town Hall, could be limited to a disembodied head and the crown. Such a propagandistic inversion of the saint's biblical martyrdom as a sacrifice that brought victory over unethical injustice was further strengthened in Wrocław precisely through the medium of the coat of arms. The heraldry creates a 'jurisdictional body', especially where the real body in the sense of the living bearer of the heraldic genealogy is physically absent. In this way, the coat of arms confirms and authenticates the presence *in loco*. Walter Seitter has claimed that there was a strong interdependence between the coat of arms and the portrait as two media of the body; this thesis, on which Hans Belting has commented, opens up the prospect of an interesting theoretical argument.³⁷ The power of the significant presence was emblazoned in the centre of Wrocław's municipal corporate body's coat of arms, where the severed head of John the Baptist plays the role of the inescutcheon – regarded in heraldry as a point of honour dominating and elucidating the subordinated fields with ordinaries relating to territories placed underneath, also as a sign of assumption, a signal of claim in 'pretence'. So, divided by the political emblems of the territory, the city's coat of arms gains its rank with the help of a true portrait, a *vera effigies* simultaneously referring to the significant fragment of the real body – the *caput*. Therefore, in this way, the coat of arms gain additional significance from the head, while the head itself is modulated by its context on the coat of arms. Just like the *arma Christi* that sometimes

³⁷ Seitter W., "Das Wappen als Zweitkörper und Körperzeichen", in Kamper D. – Wulf Ch. (eds.), *Die Wiederkehr des Körpers* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1982) 299–312; Belting H., "Wappen und Porträt: zwei Medien des Körpers", in Büchsel M. – Schmidt P. (eds.), *Das Porträt vor der Erfindung des Porträts* (Mainz: 2003) 89–100, the latter also published in: Belting H., *Bild-Anthropologie. Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: 2001) 115–142 (Belting's considerations, incidentally, concern the case of individual, personal coats of arms). Cf. Heinrich W., "Das Wappen als öffentliches Zeichen", in Blaschitz G. – Hundsichler H. (eds.), *Symbole des Alltags – Alltag der Symbole. Festschrift für Harry Kühnel zum 65. Geburtstag* (Graz: 1992) 295–307; Biewer L., "Wappen als Träger von Kommunikation im Mittelalter: einige ausgewählte Beispiele", in Spieß K.-H. (ed.), *Medien der Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, Beiträge zur Kommunikationsgeschichte 15 (Wiesbaden: 2003) 139–154. For comparison, with regard to the strict regulations of Florentine heraldic imagery: Seiler P., "Kommunale Heraldik und die Visibilität politischer Ordnung: Beobachtungen zu einem wenig beachteten Phänomen der Stadtästhetik von Florenz, 1250–1400", in Stolleis M. – Wolff R. (eds.), *La bellezza della città. Stadtrecht und Stadtgestaltung im Italien des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, Reihe der Villa Vigoni 16 (Tübingen: 2004) 205–240.

constitute Christ's fictive coat of arms as a sign of his victory,³⁸ in its new argumentative context it does not show agony, pain or defeat of the dead, but, instead, becomes a piece of identity, a successful trophy and a powerful sign of a greater triumph beyond temporal circumstances. The Wrocław shield of arms has been as a whole transformed into an image of recognition due to the bodily evidence of political success in this period of conflict. The images of the saint's severed head evolved into the officially acknowledged patents of political success and shaped the city's official face anew.

³⁸ Augustyn W., "Fingierte Wappen in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit. Bemerkungen zur Heraldik in den Bildkünsten", *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 3.F. 56 (2005) 41–82.

Selective Bibliography

- ARNDT H. – KROOS R., “Zur Ikonographie der Johannesschüssel”, *Aachener Kunstblätter* 38 (1969) 243–328.
- BAERT B., “A Head on a Platter. The ‘Johannesschüssel’ or the Image of the Mediator and Precursor”, *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* 43 (2006) 8–41.
- , “‘He must increase, but I must decrease’. On the Spiritual and Pictorial Intertwining between the ‘Johannesschüssel’ and the ‘Vera icon’ (1200–1500)”, in Enenkel K. – Melion W. (eds.), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self. Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern intellectual Culture*, Intersections. Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 17 (Leiden: 2011) 323–366.
- BELTING H., *Bild-Anthropologie. Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: 2001).
- BIMLER K., *Das Breslauer Rathaus: seine Gestaltung, Ausstattung und Baugeschichte* (Breslau: 1941).
- BUKOWSKI M. – ZLAT M., *Ratusz wrocławski* (Wrocław: 1958).
- COMBS STUEBE I., “The ‘Johannesschüssel’: from Narrative to Reliquary to ‘Andachtsbild’”, *Marsyas* 14 (1968/69) 1–16.
- CZECHOWICZ B., *Między katedrą a ratuszem. Polityczne uwarunkowania sztuki Wrocławia u schyłku średniowiecza* (Warszawa: 2008).
- CZECHOWICZ B. – KAPUSTKA M., “Hope and pragmatism. The Rule and visual Representation of Matthias Corvinus in Silesia and Lusatia”, in Farbaky P. – Végh A. (eds.), *Matthias Corvinus the King. Tradition and Renewal in the Hungarian Royal Court, 1458–1490*, exhibition catalogue, Medieval Department of the Budapest History Museum (Budapest: 2008) 77–87.
- LASLOWSKI E., “Der Breslauer St. Johannes-Ablaß 1460–1471”, *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* 60 (1926) 18–51.
- , “Die Breslauer und der Kreuzablaß gegen Georg Podiebrad von Böhmen, 1467–1470”, *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte Schlesiens* 55 (1921) 93–109.
- MARROW J.H., “John the Baptist, Lantern for the Lord. A Supplement”, *Oud Holland* 85 (1970) 188–193.
- MCHAM S.B., “Donatello’s bronze David and Judith as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence”, *The Art Bulletin* 83 (2001) 32–47.
- MEIER U., “Vom Mythos der Republik. Formen und Funktionen spätmittelalterlicher Rathausikonographie in Deutschland und Italien”, in Löther A. – Meier U. (eds.), *Mundus in imagine. Bildersprache und Lebenswelten im Mittelalter* (Munich: 1996) 345–387.
- , “Die Sicht- und Hörbarkeit der Macht: der Florentiner Palazzo Vecchio im Spätmittelalter”, in Rau S. – Schwerhoff G. (eds.), *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne. Öffentliche Räume in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Norm und Struktur 21 (Cologne: 2004) 229–271.
- TERRY A., “Donatello’s Decapitations and the Rhetoric of Beheading in Medicean Florence”, *Renaissance Studies* 23,5 (2009) 609–638.
- TREXLER R. C., *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca–London: 1991).
- ZLAT M., *Das Rathaus zu Wroclaw* (Wrocław: 1977).

