

# Gratitudo

## A justice-related virtue of antique origin

Alicja Saar-Kozłowska

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

In the modern times, what can be observed in works of art and texts commenting on these, as well as in literary pieces dedicated to glorifying prominent figures, is applying various categories of abstract concepts in order to define qualities of the people they described and thus commemorated. Regarding the form and content of such works, references to Greek and Roman antiquity prove quite common.

Honouring particular virtues was supposed to ensure success in both temporal and otherworld dimensions. By means of ideas used for representing personifications of human activity in terms of active and contemplative life, various representations of these two rules of conduct were created, constituting the reason for transition and a somewhat pass to eternity. Ideological programs of typical character were constructed on the basis of the theological (Faith, Hope, Love) and cardinal (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance) virtues, formed with reference to traditional imagery and new propositions, most of which dated back to the 16th century. There were also programs of an individual character to be found, dedicated to important figures due to their birth or personal merits, or ones created for special occasions, such as *Icones Bibliothecae Alessandrini* by



Cristoforo Giarda, published in 1626. An exceptionally popular collection of personifications for abstract concepts, used by artists as kind of a pattern, was formulated at the end of the 16th c. by Cesare Ripa in his *Iconologia*<sup>1</sup>, published for the first time in 1593, illustrated version in 1603, reprinted many times in various languages, extended with regard to terminology catalogues and illustrations. In many cases, echoes of old imagery traditions could be found in Ripa's work, together with more contemporary references to ancient authors.

One of the categories present in (still not fully recognized) modern European art, including Polish, is the virtue of Gratitude<sup>2</sup>. It can be observed in painting and sculpture, commemorative decoration projects, as well as philosophical, theological, and literary texts discussing the desired characteristics of a righteous, fair, good man, and inscriptions reflecting sets of exceptionally positive virtues which described a given figure, especially rulers.

Gratitude is inseparably connected with charity. Forms of gratitude include feeling, repayment, and virtue<sup>3</sup>. The categories of gratitude and charity are to be found in holy texts of great religions. In each form, gratitude has a typically relational nature. It expresses

1. *Gratiam referendam (An obligation must be repaid)*, [in:] A. Alciatus, *Emblematum liber*, Augsburg 1531. Photo from: <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/picturae.php?id=A31a005> (access date: 20.04.2022)



1 C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Romae 1603; Polish edition: C. Ripa, *Ikonomia*, Transl. I. Kania, Kraków 1998.

2 See *Gratitudo*, [in:] *Lexicon latinitatis Nederlandicae Medii Aevi*, Ed. J. W. Fuchs, New Ed. O. Weijers, M. Gumbert-Hepp, Fasc. 29, Leiden 1988, G 141-141.

3 The concept of gratitude is raising an increasing interest with regard to philosophy and empirical psychology. See e.g. L. Kusak, *O wdzięczności z punktu widzenia filozofii i nauk społecznych*, Kraków 2020, pp. 7-15.



<sup>4</sup> See *ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> See *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, Ed. C. Peterson, M. E. P. Seligman, New York 2004, pp. 28–43, 48–52; Polish reference: C. Peterson, N. Park, *Klasyfikacja i pomiar sił charakteru: implikacje dla praktyki*, [in:] *Psychologia pozytywna w praktyce*, Sci. Ed. P. A. Linley, S. Joseph, Sci. Ed. of Polish ed. J. Czapieński, Transl. A. Jaworska-Surma, Warszawa 2007.

<sup>6</sup> *Character...*, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> On animal symbolism see e.g. A. Saar-Kozłowska, *Potrzeba fikcji i fantazji. Uwagi o symbolice zwierzęcej*, [in:] *Kolekcja fikcji. O mistyfikacji w sztuce*, Ed. M. Warczak, Toruń 2016; *eadem*, *Uwagi o fikcji i fantazji w nowożytnej symbolice zwierząt*, “Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Zabytkoznawstwo i Konserwatorstwo” Vol. 47 (2016).

<sup>8</sup> See A. Alciatus, *Emblematum libellus. Książeczka emblematów*, Ed. M. Mejer, Transl. A. Dawidziuk, B. Dziadkiewicz, E. Kustroń-Zaniewska, Introd. R. Krzywy, Warszawa 2002, Emblem V, pp. 12–13.

<sup>9</sup> In the *Gratiam referendam* emblem, Alciati imitated Filippo Fasanini – the first translator of Horapollo’s *Hieroglyphica* into Latin. See K. Giehlow, *The Humanist Interpretation of Hieroglyphs in the Allegorical Studies of the Renaissance. With a Focus on the Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I*, Transl., Introd., Notes R. Raybould, Leiden–Boston 2015, p. 266.

<sup>10</sup> See Horapollo, *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo Nilous*, Ed. A. Turner-Cory, London 1840, Book II, No. LVIII (*How one who is fond of his father*), p. 122: “When they would denote a man fond of his father, they depict a stork; for after he has been brought up by his parents he departs not from them, but remains with them to the end of their life, taking upon himself the care of them”.

<sup>11</sup> A. Alciatus, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

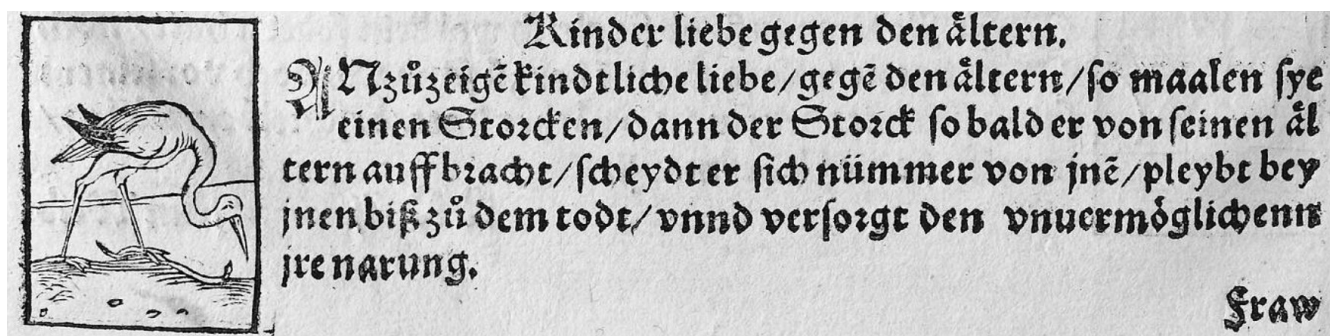
<sup>12</sup> J. KroczeK, *Komentarz*, [in:] Horapollon, *Hieroglify*, Transl., Comment. J. KroczeK, Introd. J. Sokolski, Wrocław 2003, p. 79, n. 59; Anonymous, *Fizjolog*, Transl., Introd., Footnotes K. Jażdżewska, Warszawa 2003, p. 31 (I, 8); *Fizjologi i Aviarium. Średniowieczne traktaty o symbolice zwierząt*, Transl., Comp. S. Kobielius, Kraków 2005, p. 28, 141–142.

positive relation between people, human and the world, or human and the higher power (God, fate, nature, cosmos). Its special role is played in the teaching of Jesus. The feeling of gratitude appears as a complex one, of a moral character; according to psychologists, it belongs to the same group of feelings as empathy, mercy and compassion<sup>4</sup>. Gratitude is understood as a kind feeling towards its well-doer. It could refer to God, as well as to one’s neighbour. The following discussion shall address the virtue of Gratitude and its origins.

It should be noted that positive psychology, a discipline formed in the 20th c. that deals not with negative aspects of human life, but determinants for well-being of people and their feeling of happiness, also pays attention to bravery and virtues<sup>5</sup>. As part of this research, *Catalogue of Virtues and Character Strengths* was developed. Character strengths refer to mental components that define virtues, including various processes or mechanisms. Thus, they provide distinguishable ways of presenting virtues. They contribute to various forms of fulfilling what is good in life regarding both man and their fellow human beings. As a result of the research, 24 positive traits have been described and categorized into six virtues. Gratitude was assigned to virtues of transcendence, making connections with a larger universe and giving meaning to life. They also include: appreciation of beauty and excellence, hope, humour and playfulness, and spirituality. Gratitude means “being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks”<sup>6</sup>. All these classifications might be significant in the following reflections regarding the characteristics of a good ruler, who honours the Gratitude virtue and shall be happy. In the aforementioned catalogue Justice includes such strengths as impartiality, ability to cooperate, and leadership.

### The history of Gratitude imagery in modern times

What played a significant role in developing the concept of Gratitude was reaching back to the ancient and medieval sources, which found their reflection in the modern imagery conceptions. The main determinant of this category regarding human conduct was a stork and its symbolism<sup>7</sup>. At the time, it already had an over 1000-year-long imagery tradition, dating back to Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquity, which the authors discussing positive habits of this bird were well aware of, making frequent references to earlier sources. We can trace it back in the history of culture in order to reach the ancient origins of that motif, as well as traditions of its symbolic interpretation. What constituted the main point of interest regarding the animal’s characteristics was, as it was believed, highly praised care for the parents – referring to individual traits of a figure to be given the category of Gratitude, whereas in the case of rulers – care for their subjects.

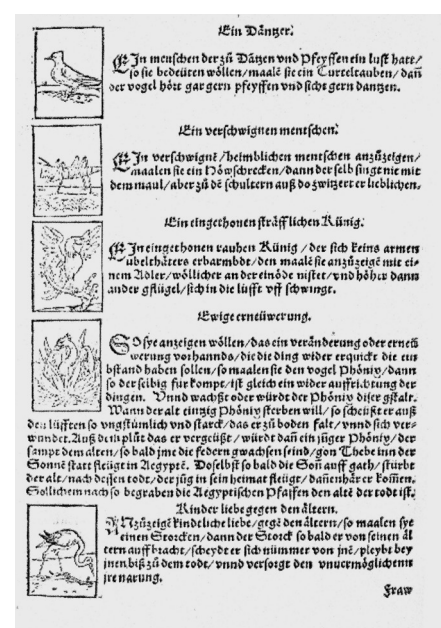


2. Kinder liebe gegen den ältern (Children's love for parents), [in:] Horapollon, *Bildschrift*, acc. to: J. Herold, *Heydenweltdt und ihrer Götter anfängcklicher Ursprung* [...], Basel 1552; one of the pages with hieroglyphs (fragment). Full page on the right. Photo from: <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/herold1554/0698/image,info,thumbs> (access date: 22.07.2022)

In modern texts, the question of Gratitude was mentioned for the first time in the *Gratiam referendam* emblem (*An obligation must be repaid*) in *Emblematum liber* by Andrea Alciato, published in 1531 in Augsburg [Fig. 1], with several following editions in the 16th c. and later<sup>8</sup>. It was a stork that represented the idea of Gratitude<sup>9</sup>. The author referred to Horapollon's *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollon Nilous*, commonly referred to as *Hieroglyphica* (5th c. AD), where the bird symbolizes children's love for their parents<sup>10</sup> [Fig. 2]. Alciato says: “*insignis pietate ciconia* [...]”<sup>11</sup>. Horapollon – in a similar way to *Physiologus* (2nd/3rd c. AD)<sup>12</sup> – stated that gratitude was depicted as a hoopoe (*Cucupha*), which, in a manner similar to storks, demonstrated great care towards its parents.

The message conveyed by the motif was discussed extensively in Pierio Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica*<sup>13</sup>, published in 1556 and reprinted several times [Fig. 3]. The book proved particularly important for popularization of various texts of a symbolic character, which finds reflection, for example, in the number of references to this author in the well-known *Iconologia* by Cesario Ripa. By referring to Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica*, Valeriano stated that the Egyptians used to decorate royal scepters with images of a stork<sup>14</sup>. Discussing devotion (*pietas*), symbolized by that bird, the author referred to Lycurgus (9th/8th c. BC), the Decalogue (8th–6th [?] c. BC), Menander (342–291 BC), works of Horace (65–8 BC), a coin with the image of Hadrian (76–138 AD), the Roman storks' law (*lex Pelargica*)<sup>15</sup> which obliged children to take care of parents, the Greek proverb to “repay for upbringing”, Claudius Aelianus (175–235), Anicius Manlius Boethius (480–524), Sextus Pompeius Festus (ca. 2nd c. AD), and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/1467–1536).

In *Iconologia*, this abstract concept named *Gratitudine*<sup>16</sup> in its Italian edition, is personified by “a woman holding in her hand a stork or a stalk of lupin or broad bean”. In order to explain the presence of stork, Ripa refers to Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica*, claiming



<sup>13</sup> J. P. Valerianus, *Hieroglyphica, sive de Sacris Aegyptiorum aliarumque gentium literis commentarii*, Basileae 1556. Following editions: 1565, 1567, 1579, 1602, 1610, 1614, 1626, 1631, 1678. Cf. J. Pelc, *Słowo i obraz. Na pograniczu literatury i sztuki plastycznych*, Kraków 2002, p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> J. P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* [...], Coloniae Agrippinae 1631, pp. 203–204.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 203.

<sup>16</sup> C. Ripa, *Iconologia*..., p. 196; *idem*, *Iconologia*..., p. 197. All translations from Ripa's *Iconologia* Polish edition by M. K. unless otherwise indicated.



## VOLVPTATVM ET MALORVM AFFECTVVM DISSIPATIO. CAP. XV.

*Ciconia bellum cum Serpentibus, quid.*

**H**ABET & hoc Ciconia cōmune cum superis, quod uti dicebamus, bellum illi assidue cum Serpentibus est: quod quidem animantium genus ita prorsus terrestre est, ut humi repat, humi semper vel adhærescat, vel in abditissimas se terræ latebras occultet. Ita animus qui mortalium delicias auerfetur, terrenosq; affectus humi propemodum obuolutos longe summoueat, & penitus amolitur, per hieroglyphicum huius alitis, quæ Serpentē dilaceret, apte significabitur. Serpentem vero inter alia significata petulcorum voluptatum, molliumq; illecebrarum symbolum esse, plerisque locis toto hoc opere declaratum est, suo vero Commentario plenissime.



that “this animal, more than any other, cares about its old parents: in the very same place where they once fed him, builds them nests, removes broken feathers and brings them food until they are able to find it themselves. That is why the Egyptians used that image to decorate their specters and paid them such great respect”<sup>17</sup>. Ripa also adds information taken from *Natural History* written by Pliny the Elder in the 1st c. AD, who says that “as lupin and broad bean enrich the ground which they have grown from, so should we, paying the debt of gratitude, always repay double to those who helped us make fate better”<sup>18</sup>.

In Ripa’s proposition, the way of presenting the personification was fully developed already in 1593, yet its illustrated edition appeared only in 1643, when the image of an elephant was added – in the author’s opinion, it constituted a symbol of gentleness<sup>19</sup> [Fig. 4].

The stork motif, on the basis of observing the animal’s habits (feeding on snakes, loyal care about younger and older birds) and symbolism traditions reaching antiquity, became associated with man’s best qualities regarding their relations with others.

A stork with a serpent at its feet included in *Iconology* constitutes a personification of Contempt and despising pleasure or evil affects<sup>20</sup> [Fig. 5]. According to Ripa, it should present an armed man with a laurel wreath on his head, who is fighting with a serpent. Next to him, there is a stork “with many serpents attacking at his feet, yet the stork” – which can be clearly seen in the illustration – “fights back with its beak and claws”<sup>21</sup>. In his recommendation to include the figure of an armed man, Ripa explains that it is necessary to have strong spirit and virtue for the one who despises pleasures and evil affects, and destroys them. A stork should be painted on his side as it “constantly fights the serpents, beasts so earthly that they always crawl

3. A stork fighting serpents in the chapter named *Voluptatum et malorum affectuum dissipatio*, [in:] P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica*, Francofurti ad Moenum MDC LXXIIX, Lib. XVII, Cap. XV, p. 208 (its fragment on the p. 84 and above). Photo from: <http://www.uni-mannheim.de/mateo/camenaref/valeriano/valeriano1/jpg/bs208.html> (access date: 20.04.2022).

 <sup>17</sup> *Idem*, *Ikonomia*..., p. 197.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> Information about another attribute – an elephant – to be found e.g. in *Ikonomia* 1603 edition (Rome), 1669 (Venice), 1698 (Amsterdam), 1704 (Augsburg). C. Ripa (*Ikonomia*..., p. 262) refers to Valeriani (Book 2): Despite its delicate nature, an elephant is likely to fight with not only weaker, but also strongest opponents, yet “only once deeply angered – among ancient Egyptian letters, it functions as an extraordinary symbol of gentleness also because, while walking through a herd of sheep getting in its way, it moves to the side only not to hurt them as a result of their own carelessness”. Transl. by M. K.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 137–138.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 137.

4. *Gratitude*, [in:] C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Paris 1643. Photo from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ripa\\_-\\_Iconologie\\_-\\_1643\\_-\\_p.\\_85\\_-\\_gratitude.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ripa_-_Iconologie_-_1643_-_p._85_-_gratitude.jpg) (access date: 20.04.2022)



<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 138.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 115–116. (The name translation from *Iconologia* 1709 English edition. See C. Ripa, *Iconologia, or Moral emblems*, Ed. I. Fuller, P. Tempest, London 1709, p. 14).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

their bodies on the ground and thus make one, or hide in its most various corners”<sup>22</sup>. Following, Ripa explains the meaning of placing a stork accompanying the fighting man. He mentions that “by the image of a bird devouring serpents, we show the spirit of a man who despises the pleasures of the world and abandons them, completely rejecting the untamed desires and pleasurable affects symbolized by poisonous serpents”<sup>23</sup>.

It is also worth mentioning that in the discussed proposition and its accompanying illustration, Ripa made a reference to the first edition of Valeriano’s *Hieroglyphica* (Basileae 1556), presenting a stork standing in an analogous opposition to serpents.

Another personification involving a stork as an attribute to be found in Ripa’s *Iconologia* is titled *Commerce of Human Life*<sup>24</sup> [Fig. 6]. The author suggests that it should be represented by a man pointing with his right-hand finger at quern-stones placed on the ground, and holding a stork in his other hand, which is visibly shown in the accompanying woodcut illustration. Ripa explains that the abstract concept “is to be presented this way since quern-stones symbolize human actions and relations with other people. Indeed – he continues – there must always be two stones, as one needs the other, otherwise they cannot function”<sup>25</sup>. Then, he provides an analogy to human



fate, stating that “likewise, a man can do nothing without company, which is why we shall see friendly relationships as essential, as each person must have a friend to discuss their plans and exchange kind deeds to help each other and bring relief in a similar way as Storks do when, having long necks, they become tired during distant flights and cannot keep their heads up; at that time, one leans its neck on the other’s tail, whereas the guide, once it’s tired, goes to the back and rests on the last one”<sup>26</sup>. When discussing storks’ habits regarding their cooperation, Ripa referred to Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* (Book 10, Chapter 22). The same personification can also be found in a Protestant version of Ripa’s *Iconology* translated by Dirck Pietersz Pers, published in Amsterdam in 1644 (the part titled *Gemeenschap van’s Menschen leven*)<sup>27</sup>. In Protestant ethics, the problem of community life and the necessity to cooperate must have been particularly important, noting that the description was largely extended, an additional attribute – a deer – was also introduced, and apart from Pliny, it also includes references to Isidore of Seville and Aristotle. The illustration attached there presents a man holding a stork in his hand, with quern-stones on his side and a deer lying in the background.

The *Iconologia* editions from 1625, 1698 and 1705 (Auito), as well as 1643 (Ayde), include a stork figure in the personification of Assistance,

5. (On the left) *Pogarda i zniszczenie przyjemności tudzież złych afektów* (Contempt and despising pleasure or evil affects), [in:] C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Transl. I. Kania, Kraków 1998, p. 137

6. (On the right) *Commercio della vita umana* (Commerce of Human Life), [in:] C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Transl. I. Kania, Kraków 1998, p. 115

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 116.

<sup>27</sup> *Idem*, *Iconologia*, Transl. D. P. Pers, Amsterdam 1644, pp. 152-153, Fig. on p. 153.





7. C. Nebbia, *Gratitudo*, 1589, Villa Montalto-Peretti, Rome. Photo from: [http://www.papasistov.it/images/villa\\_montalto/008\\_Gratitudo.jpg](http://www.papasistov.it/images/villa_montalto/008_Gratitudo.jpg) (access date: 20.04.2022)

where it accompanies a man wearing white and holding a vine twig. In his formula to picture filial affection towards the father, Ripa reminds that a stork constitutes “a hieroglyph of fatherly love”<sup>28</sup>, whereas this time he uses the image of a crow as a symbol of love for parents<sup>29</sup>.

A stork with a serpent wrapped around its beak can also be found in Conrad Gesner’s *Historiae Animalium*<sup>30</sup>. What seems worth noting is that the stork was similarly presented in Jacobus Typotius’ *Symbola Varia Diversorum Principium* (1603) and in *Vladislaus Rex* by Cramerus (1635).

Typically, the stork symbolism concerned caring about other people and giving it back. Any associations and messages introduced by the motif of a stork as an attribute for presented personifications – such as the principles for cooperating with others, providing help, being grateful for the obtained blessings, and despise for earthly pleasures – all create a symbolic testimony of deeds and a tale about human fate, a way of life chosen by thus described figure, which led them to “the other side” – to eternity. It led among people, involved active life far away from worldly desires, bringing sacrifice for the good of others, as the way for the soul to come back to God – *Vita activa* – acknowledged by Florentine Neoplatonians.

### The virtue of Gratitude imagery in the modern times

It has been currently established that the stork as a symbol of *pietas* and personification of Gratitude was to be observed among iconographic programs concerning such distinguished historic figures as: Frederick V of the Palatinate, Elizabeth Stuart, Peretti di Montalto – the future Pope Sixtus V, King Sigismund III Vasa, Anna Vasa of Sweden – the daughter of King John III of Sweden and Catherine Jagiellon, King of Poland Władysław IV Vasa, or Christina, Queen of Sweden. We might therefore ask whether applying the motif of a stork as the personification of a good ruler could have been supposed to express also their care over subjects?

In his Book III dedicated to birds (1551), the already mentioned Gesner presented images of storks together with a broad commentary on their life and habits. He says: “*In ciconiam admiramur ingenium & prudentiam, iustitiam, gratitudine, temperantiam [...]*”<sup>31</sup>. Thus, the bird used to be associated with the best qualities of one’s nature, which could decorate any person, especially one predestined to take care over other people by their birth, position, or exercised power, which included: intelligence, prudence, justice, gratitude, and moderation. Elsewhere, we read about a stork in the margin: “*De earundem gratitudine & pietate erga parentes*”<sup>32</sup>.

In the first Renaissance dictionary of symbols written by Valeriano, a stork is mentioned in various contexts. First, it describes



<sup>28</sup> *Idem*, *Ikonologia...*, p. 225. Discussing the filial affect regarding the father figure, Ripa mentions Virgil singing about Aeneas’ love, who carried his father on his back away from Troy in *Aeneid* (Book 2); Alciato also expresses it in Emblem 194.

<sup>29</sup> See *ibidem*, pp. 225–226: “For when, resulting from old age, the father or the mother lack feathers, their children cover them with their own, bring them food and carry on their own wings during a flight”.

<sup>30</sup> C. Gesner, *Tigurini, medicinae et philosophiae professoris in schola tigurina HISTORIAE ANIMALIUM [...]*, Francofurti 1617, Book 3: *De ciconia*, p. 233.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*.

a general concept of *pietas*, that is love towards God, divine worship, devotion, righteousness, child's love, respect, patriotism, as well as goodness, kindness and justice<sup>33</sup>.

Among the graphic works praising members of royal families, representing allegories created in their honour, describing personal qualities and attributes of a good ruler, we can find images of a stork depicted as belonging to the attributes of Gratitude. Considering the ideological programs of the artworks involving the use of Gratitude personification, we could ask about particular qualities which were emphasized as those making one deserve recognition and honour (in the earthly categories), and salvation (in a timeless dimension), as well as the models which they promoted through personification. Moreover, it allows one to discover the axiological system functioning in the 16th and 17th c., and to determine its sources. In the case of the virtue of Gratitude – these prove ancient Christian. Gratitude is a virtue connected with worshipping higher moral values. Desired and attributed to the representatives of royal bloodlines.

Personification of Gratitude with a swan (and not a stork) was discovered among the decorations of Library and Galleria delle Carte Geografiche of the Vatican Palace, dating back to 1582<sup>34</sup>. It also belongs to a series of frescoes from Felice Peretti's Palazzo alle Terme di Villa Peretti Montalto, the future Pope Sixtus V (1585–1590), created in 1589<sup>35</sup> [Fig. 7].

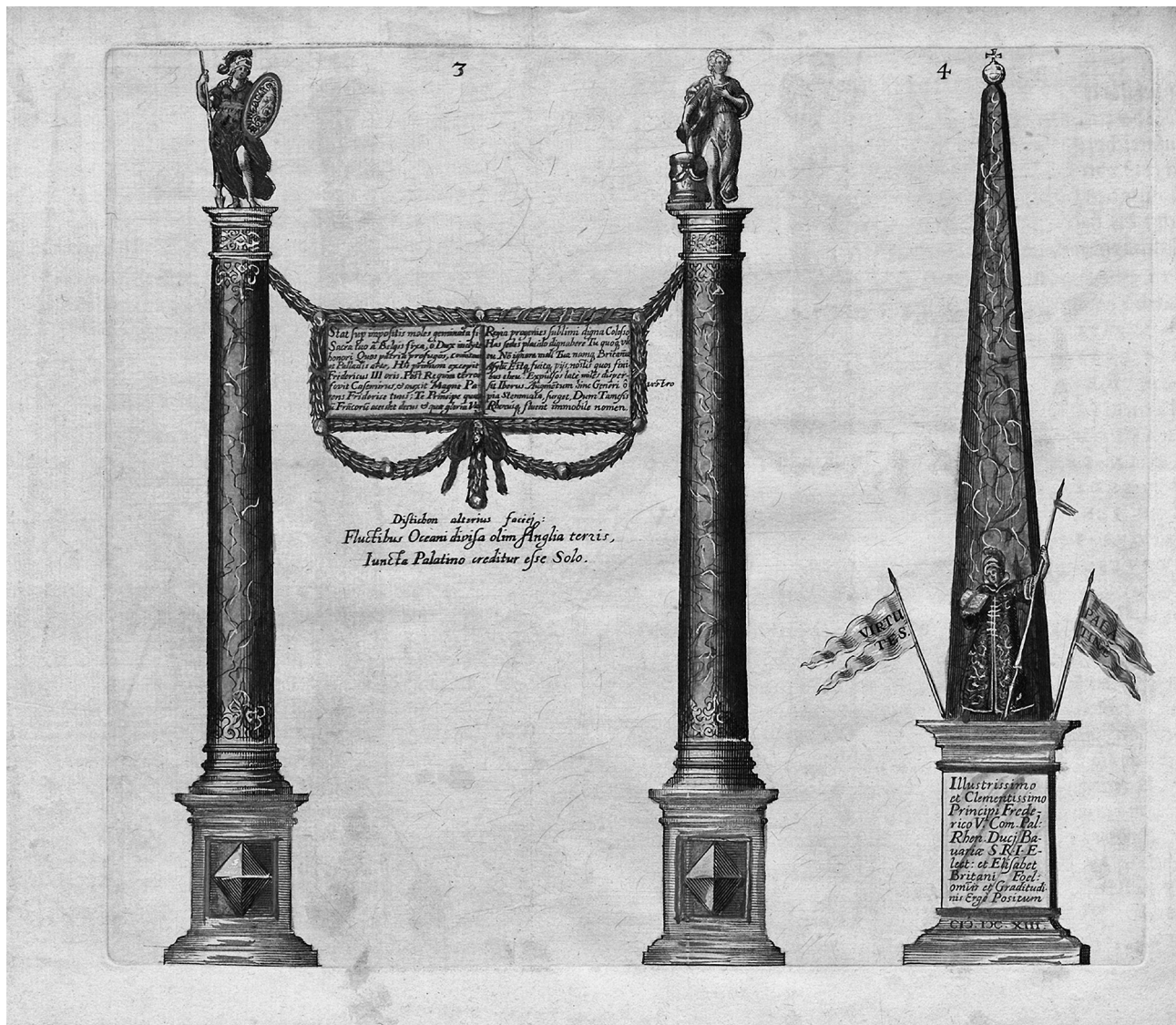
The dating of both pieces seems to suggest the earlier presence of another source than Ripa's *Iconologia* used for presenting the virtue of Gratitude, or an already existing tradition connected with the gratitude imagery, which might have gained its recognition through illustrations or descriptions included in other texts, providing the basis or only an inspiration for the iconographic programs developed at that time. It would not have been Ripa's first reference to the already existing works of art, as, for instance, in the case of the formula for representing two ancient ways of life – *Vita activa* and *Vita contemplativa*<sup>36</sup>. Regarding the problem in question, worth noting is the imagery of ancient gods offered by Vincenzo Cartari (1531–1590) in *Le imagini de gli dei delli Antichi*, first published in 1566<sup>37</sup>, reprinted several times and extended with regard to illustrations, many of which include mythological representations of gods with, among others, Proserpina with a long-neck goose in her hands<sup>38</sup>, and Concordia with a stork (as confirmed in a commentary for the illustration) standing next to her<sup>39</sup>. It is therefore possible to state that thanks to those representations, so important in Ripa's work, the image of a woman with a big bird in her hand, grew into artists' imagination, which might have influenced the images to be observed in the Vatican Palace – likewise presenting Gratitude with a swan, as well as in Palazzo alle Terme di Villa Peretti Montalto. Additionally, it must be noted that the images of birds – to be found not only in printed books – were often morphologically incorrect, and particular species



<sup>33</sup> P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica, seu De sacris Egyptiorum aliarumque gentium literis commentarii*, Coloniae Agrippinae 1631, Book 17: *De iis quae per ciconia, meropem, cucupham, ibin et gruem significantur. Ex sacris Aegyptiorum Literis*, p. 203 n. Stork is discussed in the following chapters of Book 17, significant regarding our reflection: *Pietas* (Piety, goodness); *Impietati praelata pietas* (Piety made superior to impiety), *Gratus animus* (Grateful mind), *Deus* (God), *Animus Divinis intentus* (Vigilant spirit full of divine inspiration), *Voluptatum et malorum affectuum dissipatio* (Defeating pleasures and bad affects). Chapter names transl. by A. S.-K., M. K.

<sup>34</sup> See S. Pierguidi, *Giovanni Guerra and the Illustrations to Ripa's Iconologia*, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes" Vol. 61 (1998), esp. pp. 160–161, n. 13. The author wrote that the frescoes in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche of the Vatican Palace had been painted by Cesare Nebbia, together with Girolamo Muziano, during the pontificate of Gregorius XIII. The decoration was completed in 1580. Guerra invented the subjects of the stories.

<sup>35</sup> P. Tosini, *Due affreschi riscoperti dal Palazzo alle Terme di Villa Peretti Montalto e una ricostruzione del Salone Sistino*, "Nuovi Studi Rivista di Arte Antica e Moderna" Vol. 18 (2012), Fig. 238, n. 27, p. 192. The frescoes presented 20 personifications of virtues, accompanied by inscriptions, and 14 town representations. The villa was demolished in the 19th c., and the paintings, described by Camillo Vittorio Massimo (*Notizie storiche della villa Massimo alle Terme di Dileziano*, Roma 1836), were removed from walls. Town landscapes were relocated to Collegio Massimiliano Massimo; personifications were declared lost. In 1992 M. Bevilacqua (*La decorazione della sala grande Palazzo alle Terme di Villa Montalto*, [in:] *Sisto V*, a cura di M. Fagiolo, M. L. Madonna, Roma 1992) identified 13 of them at Palazzo Ricci-Paracciani in Rome, and two others in the Milton Gendel collection. The frescoes' provenance was confirmed by discovering a 19th c. drawing presenting the frieze before its destruction. The authors of the paintings worked under the supervision of Giovanni Guerra (1544–1618) and Cesare Nebbia (ca. 1536–1622). The following personifications were presented: *Operatio*, *Electio*, *Gratia*, *Auctoritas*, **Gratitudo**, *Fidelitas*, *Modestia*, *Iustificatio*, *Voluntias Dei*, *Innocentia*, *Felicitas*, *Subsidium*, *Recognitio Virtutis*, *Tentatio* (?), *Intrepiditas*, *Corroboratio* (?), *Stanimitas*, *Distintio*, *Iustitia*, *Mansuetudo*. See P. Tosini, *Una nuova ricostruzione iconografica del Salone del Palazzo Peretti Montalto alle Terme e un possibile binomio "oratoriano" come*



sue ideatore, [in:] *Frises peintes. Les décors des villas et palais au Cinquecento*, dir. A. Fenech Kroke, A. Lemoine, Paris 2016, pp. 193–211, Fig. 10–11.

<sup>36</sup> C. Ripa, *Iconologia...*, pp. 438–439.

<sup>37</sup> V. Cartari, *Imagini delli dei de gl'antichi*, Venice 1647.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 173 (*Imagine della Dea prosperina*).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 216 (*Imagine della Concordia*). It is worth mentioning that there were also some representations referring to ancient sculptures discovered in the modern times, such as an image of the Nile personification, discovered in 1583. See V. Cartari, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

turned out to be mistaken<sup>40</sup>. The connection established between the image of a Gratitude personification and a stork might have also been influenced by Alciato and his *Gratiam referendam*, included in the fifth word/figural composition *Emblematum liber*, whose representation of Gratitude was largely popularized by Ripa's *Iconologia*. Not without significance could also be the influence of Giovanni Guerra, engaged in work on a cycle of personifications from Palazzo alle Terme di Villa Peretti Montalto in Rome, as well as preparing illustrations for another edition of Ripa's masterpiece in 1603<sup>41</sup>.

The stork presented at the side of Clio, the mythical Muse of history, in a mnemosynon created to commemorate the 10th birthday anniversary of prince Władysław Sigismund Vasa (the future king Władysław IV of Poland) in a 1605 engraving by Matthaeus Greuter<sup>42</sup>, “with high probability”, as Jakub Pokora says, shall express hope that



8. (On the p. 90) Theodore de Bry, *Gratitudo* personification, one of the decoration project boards prepared for the wedding of Frederick V Wittelsbach – the Winter King (1596–1632) and Elizabeth Stuart, the daughter of James I Stuart, the King of England, Scotland and Ireland, 14 February 1613, London; on the left its fragment. Photo: BTEU / Gerfototek / Alamy Stock Photo / Focus / Forum, from: Deutsche Fotothek – Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, *Hist. rhen. inf.* 161

the boy would care about his parents as well as storks do. In that case, the stork serves as a symbol of *pietas*<sup>43</sup>. It can be concluded that the animal might express all the aforementioned connotations, as well as – as Gesner stated – such desirable qualities of a prince, the future king, as intelligence, fairness, prudence, gratitude, and moderation.

Another example of *Gratitudo* personification could be observed in one of the decoration project boards of old knight's game prepared for the wedding of Frederick V Wittelsbach, referred to as the Winter King (1596–1632) and Elizabeth Stuart, the daughter of James I Stuart, the King of England, Scotland and Ireland, which took place on 14 February 1613 in London<sup>45</sup> [Fig. 8]. Gratitude is personified by a woman with a stork standing next to her on a vessel decorated with garlands, accompanied by Minerva in armour, goddess of wisdom. Both of them are placed on slender columns (symbols of Bravery and

<sup>40</sup> See e.g. a stork fighting serpents in chapter *Voluptatum et malorum affectuum dissipatio*, [in:] P. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* [...], Francofurti ad Moenum 1678, Book 17, Cap. 15, p. 208.

<sup>41</sup> See S. Pierguidi, *Giovanni Guerra and the Illustrations to Ripa's Iconologia*, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes" Vol. 61 (1998).

<sup>42</sup> A copperplate engraving from the National Museum in Kraków collection.

<sup>43</sup> J. Pokora, *Mnemosynon dla królowicza Władysława Zygmunta Wazy. Rycina Matthaëusa Greutera z 1605 r.*, „Kronika Zamkowa – Roczniki” Vol. 72 (2019), esp. p. 106, Fig. 1–2, pp. 102–103. According to J. A. Chrościcki (*Rzymski prognostyk dla królowicza Zygmunta Władysława Wazy. Rysunek i rycina Mattheusa Greutera z 1605 roku*, "Ikonotheka" Vol. 13 [1988]), the stork accompanies Terpsichore. See also *idem*, *Sztuka i polityka. Funkcje propagandowe sztuki w epoce Wazów, 1587–1668*, Warszawa 1983, p. 237, Fig. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Deutsche Fotothek Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden.

<sup>45</sup> See: *The Palatine Wedding of 1613: Protestant Alliance and Court Festival*, ed. S. Smart, M. R. Wade *Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung*, Bd. 29.

9. Otto van Vaenius in *Q. Horatii Flacci Emblemata* (first published in 1607), in the illustration *Virtus Inconcuſsa* (No. 1). Photo from: Horacy (Quintus Horatius Flaccus), *Dzieła wszystkie. Pieśni (Ody); Jamby (Epody); Pieśń wieku; Gawędy (Satyry); Listy; Sztuka poetycka*, Transl., Notes, Annex A. Lam, Pułtusk-Warszawa 2010, p. 351



<sup>46</sup> The following inscription can be found at the slender pyramid pedestal referring to the Palatine's virtues: „*Illustrissimo / et Clementissimo / Principi Frede- / rico V. Com. Pal. / Rhen. Duc. Ba- / variae S.R.I. E / lect. et Elisabet Britani Foel. / omnis et Gratiudi / nis Ergo Possitum M.DC.XIII.*”.

<sup>47</sup> *Beschreibung Der Reiß: Empfangung deß Ritterlichen Ordens: Volbringung des Heyraths: vnd glücklicher Heimführung: Wie auch der ansehnlichen Einführung: gehaltener Ritterspiel vnd Frewdenfests: Des [...] Herrn [...] Friederichen deß Fünften/ Pfaltzgraven bey Rhein [...] Mit der [...] Princessin/ Elisabethen [...] / Mit schönen Kupfferstücken gezieret/ Beschreibung Der Reiß: Empfangung deß Ritterlichen Ordens: Volbringung des Heyraths: und glücklicher Heimführung: Wie auch der ansehnlichen Einführung: gehaltener Ritterspiel und Frewdenfests: Des [...] Herr [...] Friederichen deß Fünften/ Pfaltzgraven bey Rhein [...] Mit der [...] Princessin/ Elisabethen [...], Vögelin 1613, p. 117 (wersja czarno-biała). See Dresden: SLUB Hist.Rhen.inf.161. Internet: <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb11208714?page=125; s. 117, scan 125, ilustracje scan 231, 460-461>.*

<sup>48</sup> See Horacy (Quintus Horatius Flaccus), *Dzieła wszystkie. Pieśni (Ody); Jamby (Epody); Pieśń wieku; Gawędy (Satyry); Listy; Sztuka poetycka*, Transl., Notes, Annex by A. Lam, Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztor, Warszawa 2010, p. 351.

<sup>49</sup> O. Vaenius, *Q. Horatii Flacci Emblemata* (1612), no 1. The Emblem Project Utrecht, <https://emblems.hum.uu.nl/va1612001.html> (access date: 1.07.2022). Vaenius' work was widely distributed in 17th and 18th c., copied and published in France, Spain, England and Italy.

Persistence). Connected by garlands and tables with inscriptions, they seem to resemble a triumphal arch<sup>46</sup>. Feminine character with stork and vessel was specified as Gratiudo in the book printed in 1613, titled *Beschreibung Der Reiß: Volbringung des Heyraths: vnd glücklicher Heimführung: Wie auch der ansehnlichen Einführung: gehaltener Ritterspiel vnd Frewdenfests: Des [...] Herr [...] Friederichen deß Fünften/ Pfaltzgraven bey Rhein [...] Mit der [...] Princessin/ Elisabethen [...]*<sup>47</sup>. It was written there: *Demnach waren zwei schöne seulen oder Columnen (auf der eine Minerva / auf der andern Gratiudo gestelt) die hatten zwischen inn / ein angehengte Tafel / gleich einem Triumphbogen / mit dieser schrift [...]*

What can be observed regarding the shape and decoration of the vessel where the stork is standing, is their clear reference to the attribute of Pietas personification – Piety<sup>48</sup>, presented by Otto van Vaenius in *Q. Horatii Flacci Emblemata* (first published in 1607) in the illustration *Virtus Inconcuſsa* (No. 1). The vessel filled with fire of God's love is being held by one of the putti surrounding the centrally located personification of the Virtue Unshaken [Fig. 9]<sup>49</sup>.

Placing Gratitude in the aforescribed configuration proves high value of the virtue presented. It is known that what was imag-



10. A propaganda graphic art in honour of Christina, Queen of Sweden (1649); its fragment on the right

ined on columns were, for instance, Minerva and Virgin Mary as *Optima connexio* at the ceiling of the bishop's secondary school auditorium hall in Freising, Bavaria, in 1709.

An example of using the motif of stork and a vessel filled with godly love as a symbol of *Pietas*, is a propaganda graphic art (1649) in honour of Christina, Queen of Sweden (1626–1689) [Fig. 10]<sup>50</sup>. In that case, the personification has been signed. It is additionally enriched with the image of a church visible in the background.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned information, we can state that in the case of decoration project boards prepared for the wedding of Frederick V Wittelsbach and Elizabeth Stuart, we can state that Gratitude is here equivalent of widely understanding of virtue *Pietas*.

The virtue of *Gratitudo* representation is also depicted at the tomb portal of princess Anna Vasa (1568–1625) at the Church of St. Mary in Toruń, created in ca. 1636 at the request of her nephew, Władysław IV Vasa [Fig. 11]. The personification is holding a flowery twig in the right hand (after reconstruction on the basis of a drawing

<sup>50</sup> See A. Saar-Kozłowska, *Minerwa Północy i Szwedzki Herkules. Wizerunek królowej Krystyny w grafice propagandowej z 1649 roku*, "Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Zabytkoznawstwo i Konserwatorstwo" Vol. 41 (2011), pp. 64, 66, Fig. 1, 3.



<sup>51</sup> See A. Saar-Kozłowska, *Justitia i Religio – „Dwa skrzydła” wiodące duszę w sfery wyższe. Dzieło sztuki jako wzór moralno-filozoficzny na przykładzie pomnika grobowego Anny Wazówny*, [in:] *Filozofia i sztuka*, Sci. Ed. E. Starzyńska-Kościszko, A. Kucner, P. Wasyluk, Olsztyn 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Examples of protective behaviour typical of storks towards their relatives can also be found in Polish literature of the time, e.g. in the text by S. Familirz *O ziołach i mocy ich*, published in Kraków in 1534. It says: “Stork is a merciful bird because once the old storks lose their feathers, then the younger feed them and keep them warm as long as the old ones become strong again [...]” (Transl. by M. K.). Stork young ones, according to Familirz, give the received care back to their parents.

<sup>53</sup> As quoted in: I. Mikołajczyk, *Martin Opitz w hołdzie Annie Wazównie*, “Folia Thoruniensia” Vol. 1 (2001), pp. 88-89 (Transl. by M. K.).

<sup>54</sup> C. Gesner, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

<sup>55</sup> B. Zielińska-Szymanowska, *Kolumna Zygmunta III w Warszawie*, Warszawa 1957, p. 13, Fig. 35 (Transl. from Polish by M. K.; original text in Latin).

<sup>56</sup> S. Starowolski, *Monumenta Sarmatarum*, Cracoviae 1655, p. 328 (Transl. from Latin I. Mikołajczyk, Transl. from Polish by M. K.).

from the mid-18th c. and a graphic from the end of the 18th c.), whereas in the left hand – a stork with a serpent at its feet. On the other side, it is accompanied by a personification of the Christian Faith. Both figures reflect the princess’ active life and kindness (confirmed by historical sources)<sup>51</sup>, as well as her commitment to religious life<sup>52</sup>.

Gratitudo presented in the monument could function in one more semantic context – referring to the actions of Władysław IV Vasa (1595–1648) himself, who – as Martin Opitz, a German poet, says in his funeral panegyric dedicated to Anna Vasa – treated her remains with great care and dignity. The poet emphasized that:

caring about his own devotion in equal measure, as he remembers the dedication of your love towards him, he proves a friend of the dead. [...] Let this be the evidence of his worship and the feeling he had for you especially with all his soul, the aunt by the ties of kinship, and a **parent** on account of love<sup>53</sup>.

As the storks’ law requires, he appeared to repay princess Anna’s caring soul with a tomb worthy of her royal birth, organizing appropriate funeral ceremonies. For the stork shall symbolise “*gratitudine & pietate erga parentes*” and four cardinal virtues because “*In ciconiam admiramur ingenium & prudentiam, iustitiam, gratitudine, temperantiam* [...]”<sup>54</sup>.

Among the artworks of foundation by Władysław IV, the virtue personification can also be seen in the inscription placed at the column dedicated to Sigismund III Vasa, dating back to 1643 [Fig. 12]. The table, currently situated on its southern side, says:

To commemorate the glory and devotion, the column for Sigismund III was to be created by order of Władysław IV, Anno Domini 1643, the loving son, successor due to election, ordering and fortune, full of gratitude in his desires, feelings and worship, to the father of his country, the parent best distinguished, whose glory has already brought him triumphs, and the posterity – gratitude – has brought him a monument, or shall do so<sup>55</sup>.

It seems that in the case of Anna Vasa tomb monument, the virtue of Gratitude was to visually evoke analogous associations with regard to the late princess’ biography and achievements, who – as the inscription in Brodnica says:

was a finest mind, kind, benevolent, of a remarkable courtesy towards everyone, and unusual firmness stronger than femininity, an extraordinary virgin, a generous princess, the renowned Heroin. Whose hands and richness were always wide open for orphans and those in need, her kindness for the troubled, medicine for the ill, generosity for the well-deserved, garnished in other virtues to such an extent that she lacked nothing for the fullest glory and true adornment [...]”<sup>56</sup>.



11. *Gratitudo* personification, Anna Vasa tomb portal at the Church of St. Mary in Toruń, ca. 1636. Photo: P. Koźurno

Regarding the question of understanding the personification of *Gratitudine*, apart from *Iconologia* and other old prints that allow us to make an attempt at establishing the symbolic message of included personifications, it is worth recalling the word's function in the *Holy Bible* [Fig. 13].

In the *Old Testament*, words concerning the chosen people's ingratitude<sup>57</sup> can be found more often as compared to its gratitude<sup>58</sup>. Regarding the New Testament, in the Gospel of Luca the word *gratitude* is used for a number of times in the chapter dedicated to Love for Enemies (Lk. 6, 27–36). It says:

[...] Love your enemies [...].

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what



<sup>57</sup> See Deut. 29 (*God's help and the people's ingratitude*), Ps 106(105) (*The chosen nation's ingratitude*); Isa. 43, 22–28 (*Israel's ingratitude*); Hos. 7, 13–16 (*Punishment for ingratitude*); Hos. 13, 4–8 (*Ingratitude punished*), [in:] *Biblia Tysiąclecia. Pismo Świętego Starego i Nowego Testamentu*, Ed. by a team of Polish biblical scholars on the initiative of the Benedictines of Tyniec, Poznań 2003 (Polish subtitle names transl. by M. K.).

<sup>58</sup> See Est 8, 12b (*A decree in favour of the Jews*); 2 Macc 2, 27 (*Author's introduction*); Sir 30, 6 (*Upbringing*), [in:] *Biblia Tysiąclecia...* (Polish subtitle names transl. by M. K.).





12. The southern side table of the Sigismund III Vasa column base, a fragment of engraving by Wilhelm Hondius, 1646. Photo from: B. Zielińska-Szymanowska, *Kolumna Zygmunta III w Warszawie*, Warszawa 1957, p. 35

credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?

What seems particularly significant in the context discussed are the words that follow:

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful<sup>59</sup>.

### Ancient sources of knowledge about the habits of storks as the basis of the special status of *Gratitudo* virtue

Numerous ancient texts express the belief that storks take particular care of their offspring, and those return their parents favour, caring about them in later years.

In Sophocles' (496–406 BC) tragedy titled *Electra* (416 BC), telling about murders among the closest family members, the chorus sings: "When we see the birds of the air, with sure instinct, careful to nourish those who give them life and nurture, why do not we pay these debts in like measure?"<sup>60</sup>.

Aristophanes (446–385 B.C.), describing in his comedy *The Birds* (414 BC) an ideal place suspended between the sky and the Earth, established by two Athenians together with birds, included the following words:

But we have also an ancient law written in the code of the storks, which runs thus, "When the stork father has reared his young and has taught them to fly, the young must in their turn support the father"<sup>61</sup>.

In *Historia Animalium*, Aristotle (384–322 BC) states:

It is a common story of the stork that the old birds are fed by their grateful progeny. [...] the parents are fed by their young not only when growing old, but at an early period, as soon as the young are capable of feeding them; and the parent-birds stay inside the nest<sup>62</sup>.

Artemidorus (2nd c. AD) in his *Oneirokritika* (*The Interpretation of Dreams*) expressed a similar opinion on younger individuals taking care of the older. The conviction was so well-grounded that it became a separate dream subject matter, having its unique interpretation<sup>63</sup>.

A Roman author and teacher of rhetoric Claudius Aelianus (175–235 AD), in his work *De Natura Animalium*, states that storks love



<sup>59</sup> Another reference to *gratefulness* is to be found in a *Letter to Romans* (Rom 16, 3–4): "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them" (*The Holy Bible. New International Version*, <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible> (access date: 13.04.2022).

<sup>60</sup> Sophocles, *Electra*, [in:] *The Complete Greek Drama*, Ed. W. J. Oates, E. O'Neill, Jr., New York 1938, p. 532.

<sup>61</sup> Aristophanes, *The Birds*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3013/3013-h/3013-h.htm> (access date: 13.04.2022).

<sup>62</sup> Aristotle, *History of Animals*, [in:] *Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Transl., Ed. J. Barnes, Princeton 1985, Vol. 1, Book 9, Chapter 13, p. 959.

<sup>63</sup> See Artemidor z Daldis, *Rozważania o snach, czyli Onejrokrityka*, Transl. I. Żółtowska, Warszawa 1995, Book 2, p. 125. E.g.: "If one sees in their dreams storks



13. *Gratitudo*, [in:] Thoma Treteto (Tomasz Treter), *Symbolica vitae Christi meditatio*, Brunsbergae 1612, p. 41. On the margin, a reference to *Psalms* 51 (9-10), which reads: "Hide my face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (*The Holy Bible, New International Version*). Photo from: <https://polona.pl/item/7852924/29> (access date: 20.04.2022)

justice<sup>64</sup>. In his view, storks represent as an unequalled example of treating one's offspring and parents "voluntarily and with studied care; yet there is no law of man that bids them do so"<sup>65</sup>. By referring to Alexander of Myndus, he writes that "when they reach old age they pass to the islands of Ocean and are transformed into human shape, and that this is a reward for their filial piety towards their parents, since, if I am not mistaken, the gods especially desire to hold up there if nowhere else a human model of piety and uprightness, for in no other country under the sun could such a race continue to exist"<sup>66</sup>.

In the early Christian times, Saint Ambrosius (339–397) in his work *Hexameron*<sup>67</sup>, in which he described God's work on the six days of creation of the world, concluded many pieces of information concerning stork's habits as the model for the people behaviour. He says:

We should dwell on the fact while the gentleness of human beings is equal to the loyalty and wisdom of this bird [the stork], none of us have effectively imitated the virtues of irrational creatures, not even when an example has been set before our eyes. In fact, the offspring, gathering around the body of their "father sick unto death"<sup>68</sup>, cherish with the movement of their wings the limbs of their parent, now, because of his advanced age, bereft of his plumage and deprived "of the oarage of his pinions". Furthermore – need I add – the offspring offer a contribution of food, wherewith loss of natural strength is repaired [...]. [...]

[...] Birds, on the other hand, are bound by a natural and not by a written code of laws. By no ordinances, but rather by the prescriptions of natural



and cranes individually, it is a favourable dream for entering into marriage or having children, as cranes and storks mate and tenderly take care of their young. Storks are a particularly good sign for those wishing to have children because their young, when necessary, tenderly care about their parents" (Transl. from Polish by M. K.).

<sup>64</sup> Claudius Aelianus, *On the Characteristics of Animals*, Transl. A. F. Scholfield, Cambridge [Massachusetts] 1958, Book 8, parts 20 (*Stork punishes adulteress*), 22 (*Animals are also good at remembering to be grateful*).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, Book 3, part 23.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.395.

<sup>68</sup> In Polish translation S. Kobielski (*Bestiarium chrześcijańskie. Zwierzęta w symbolice i interpretacji. Starożytność i średniowiecze*, Warszawa 2002, p. 69) used the word *gratitudo*.



<sup>69</sup> **Sant Ambrose**, *Hexameron, Paradise and Cain and Abel*, Transl. J. J. Savage, Washington 1961, reprinted 1977, p. 204–205. <http://www.strobertbellarmine.net/books/CUAPS--042.pdf> (access date: 22.07.2022). Similar informations we can find in work of **Saint Basil the Great** (*Patrologia Graeca*, 29, 176) and of **Philo of Alexandria** (*Pisma*, Vol. 1, Warszawa 1986, p. 218). See also **S. Kobielus**, *op. cit.*, p. 67–70.

<sup>70</sup> **Tomasz z Akwinu** (St. Thomas Aquinas), *Cnoty społeczne pokrewne sprawiedliwości*, [in:] **idem**, *Suma teologiczna*, Transl., Comment. F. W. Bednarski, Introd. S. Wyszynski, Vol. 20, London 1972, II-II, Q. 101–122 (all translations from *Summa Theologiae* Polish edition by M. K.).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 13 n. (*O pietyzmie, czyli o czci rodziców i patriotyzmie*), 55 n. (*O wdzięczności*), 179 n. (*O darze pietyzmu, czyli dziecięctwa bożego*), Comment. p. 209, 212 n.

<sup>72</sup> **Idem**, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Q. 106: *Of Thankfulness or Gratitude*, <https://aquinas101.thomisticinstitute.org/st-ii-aiiae-q-106#SSQ106OUTP1> (access date: 13.04.2022).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, Art. 1, Obj. 1.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, Reply to Obj. 1.

<sup>75</sup> **Idem**, *Cnoty społeczne...*, p. 15 n.

<sup>76</sup> **F. W. Bednarski**, *Objaśnienia tłumacza*, [in:] **Tomasz z Akwinu**, *Cnoty społeczne*–

grace, they carry unashamedly the body of a revered and aged parent. This act of carrying one's parent is, in fact, an expression of piety. [...] A repayment for kindness is associated with the name of the stork<sup>69</sup>.

## Ancient and medieval sources of the virtue of Gratitude

In order to understand which values were assigned to the Gratitude virtue, it is essential to refer to written sources discussing this concept.

In a religious sense, justice is related to spreading the laws of God and living in accordance with those, regardless of the situation – that is, with the principles resulting from the ethical system of a given religion. It especially concerns the cases when such behaviour requires one's individual heroism, which makes it therefore connected with the possibility of losing freedom, property, or even life. In this respect, the word can be found in such expressions as “a just man”. Justice means giving back everything to those it should belong to.

In his *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274), one of the greatest philosophers in the history of Christianity, discussing social virtues related to justice<sup>70</sup>, was also reflecting on such issues of our interest as reverence, gratitude and the gift of piety, that is “Godly sonship”<sup>71</sup>, also referring to ancient sources.

St. Thomas wondered “Whether thankfulness is a special virtue distinct from other virtues?”<sup>72</sup> and answered that it does not seem to because:

we have received the greatest benefits from God, and from our parents. Now the honour which we pay to God in return belongs to the virtue of religion, and the honour with which we repay our parents belongs to the virtue of piety. Therefore thankfulness or gratitude is not distinct from the other virtues<sup>73</sup>.

Just as religion is superexcelling piety, so is it excelling thankfulness or gratitude [...] <sup>74</sup>.

In the translator's commentaries to the Polish edition of *Summa Theologica* on “Whether piety provides support for our parents?”<sup>75</sup>, the obligation of piety is emphasized not only with regard to parents, but also other relatives and fellow citizens, which could find importance in terms of ideological programs concerning rulers – their subjects' caregivers. It says:

We owe life and upbringing to our parents [...] [the obligation of worship] This obligation of helping in order to provide our parents with anything necessary once they have nothing to live on, is also extended upon oth-

er relatives, and even co-citizens depending on a) our possibilities and b) their rights to our help, which we shall provide the greater, the closer those co-citizens are due to kinship, friendship, neighbourhood, held position etc., relatively the larger misery they are in, e.g. due to some natural disaster, earthquake, flood, fire, etc.<sup>76</sup>

The introduction to that edition of St. Thomas Aquinas's work emphasizes that upbringing someone in terms of making them improve, improving their mind, will, emotions and body, relies on constant acquisition of competences called virtues<sup>77</sup>. What the Saint sees as a virtue is namely a competence in good behaviour. He claimed that some virtues improve humans with regard to the ultimate goal itself (that is, to God), whereas others – to means which are essential in order to achieve it. “Proper co-existence with other people constitute one of the basic means in order to achieve that goal”<sup>78</sup>. The role of the cardinal virtue of Justice is to improve that co-existence. It also applies to a set of related cardinal virtues, such as piety towards parents (*pietas erga parentes*) and homeland (*pietas erga patriam*),

that is patriotism, respect expressed by discipline, worship and obedience to superiors, gratitude, ability to keep moderation vengeance, truthfulness together with honesty, generosity together with saving, politeness etc.<sup>79</sup>

In the second part of *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas Aquinas describes the way to the ultimate goal of human life. “Based on the assumption that every being on Earth aims to satisfy its needs, [...] to improve its nature”<sup>80</sup>, St. Thomas concluded that the man's ultimate goal is full perfection, satisfying all the bodily and spiritual needs.

Thereby, it constitutes full realization of any possibilities to self-improve in union with the source of all perfection – with God, through watching Him directly as the Eternal Truth, loving Him as the infinite Goodness, and joyful constant admiration of Him as the infinite Beauty<sup>81</sup>.

The sense of life on Earth, the way to that goal, leads by following God through improving one's mind, will, feelings, and therefore also one's body.

In his commentaries to St. Thomas Aquinas' text, Feliks W. Bednarski emphasized that currently there are very few moralists who deal with the virtue of Gratitude, which requires a great preciousness of feelings. In antiquity, the topic was examined by Aristotle, Cicero, and Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger (4 BC – 65 AD) whose work *On Benefits (De beneficiis)* is quoted by St. Thomas in his reflections. From ancient Christian authors, the one who discussed the virtue of Gratitude in particular, was St. Augustine, emphasizing that “its concept involves memory of the benefactor's services, friendship and the willingness to reciprocate”<sup>82</sup>. Only St. Thomas dedicated his re-



ne..., Q. 101,2, p. 213.

<sup>77</sup> *Idem*, *Przedmowa*, [in:] **Tomasz z Akwinu**, *Cnoty społeczne...*, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>82</sup> *Idem*, *Objaśnienia...*, p. 232.



<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 233.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>85</sup> **Tomasz z Akwinu**, *Cnoty społeczne...*, p. 56, n. 67, p. 202; see also Eth V (*Etyka nikomachejska / Nicomachean Ethics* – A. S.–K.), c. 5 (1132b, 31); **Arystoteles**, *Etyka nikomachejska*, Transl., Ed., Introd. D. Gromska, Kraków 1956, pp. 176–177: “(1132b, 5) [For repay and justice often differ from each other...] There appears a great difference between what is dependent from the will, and what is not [...] (1133a) since whoever has done us a favour, they should be repaid with some and thus we should do them another one, out of the impulse” (Transl. by M. K.). In the translation, the word *gratitude* is expressed with words *repay*, *paying back*. See also **M. A. Wesoły**, *Księga Arystotelesa „O sprawiedliwości” (Eth. Nic. V)*, “Filo-Sofia” 2017, No. 1. The introduction reads: “It should be noted that Aristotle generally comprehends the concept of justice in a completely different way as compared to its Platonic vision as harmony of the soul, as it constitutes a set of virtues with regard to other people. His understanding of justice was much broader from our modern one because it also involved righteousness, correctness and honesty, as well as any other virtues, for he described justice in general as a perfect *aretē* regarding someone else and as ‘someone else’s good’” (Transl. by M. K.). See **Arystoteles**, *Etyka...*, p. 104 (*Sprawiedliwość ogólna*), p. 115, Q. 9 (*Od wzajemnienie / Odpłata / Podług proporcji diametrycznej*).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56, n. 68 on p. 202; Eth VIII, c. 13 (162b 2).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56, n. 69 on p. 202; Rhet II, p. 53 (*Rhetorica ad Herennium* – A. S.–K.; Cicero was considered to be its author); see **Cicero**, *AD C. Herennium de ratione dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)*, Transl. H. Caplan, Cambridge [Massachusetts] 1964, <https://archive.org/details/ad-herenniumdera00capluoft> (access date 2.04.2022); cf. **M. T. Cyncero**, *O państwie; O prawach; O powinnościach; O cnotach*, Transl. W. Kornatowski, Comment. K. Leśniak, Warszawa 1960, p. 543: “The head of state must strain all their mental skills in order to remain always faithful to justice. For only this virtue is the queen of all virtues” (Transl. from Polish by M. K.).

<sup>88</sup> **M. T. Cyncero**, *op. cit.*, p. 549.

<sup>89</sup> **L. A. Seneca**, *On Benefits*, Transl. A. Stewart, Los Angeles 2016, Book I, p. 10. The translation between Greek *Charites* and Roman *Gratiae* implies the connecting idea of the discussed manifestations of human kindness. It is explained that the myth based on the two variants of mean-

fections to this virtue in ten articles, “including the most beautiful considerations of ancient thinkers”<sup>83</sup>.

In the opinion of the Saint, our gratitude should be addressed first to God, then to parents and homeland, and following – to various superiors and individual benefactors<sup>84</sup>. He reminds that, according to Aristotle, “proportional remuneration is the task of justice”<sup>85</sup> [...] “reciprocation, which is an expression of gratitude, is the task of justice [...] its task is to compensate for the received benefits”<sup>86</sup>, whereas “Cicero recognizes gratitude as a separate component of Justice”<sup>87</sup>, but Justice “is the basis of all virtues”<sup>88</sup>.

Seneca’s work *On Benefits* is fully dedicated to nature, a significant quality of the benefit in question, its various types and situations when it can be observed, as well as gratitude for them. The philosopher’s reflections have linked the categories of benefit and gratitude to such an extent that the two have become inseparable. In order to illustrate that concept, he referred to Three Graces – sisters holding their hands, smiling, young, virginal, wearing loose transparent dresses, which he explains by stating that:

there is one who bestows a benefit, one who receives it, and a third who returns it; others say that they represent the three sorts of benefactors, those who bestow, those who repay, and those who both receive and repay them. [...] the course of a benefit is from hand to hand, back to the giver [...] it is fairest when it proceeds in unbroken regular order<sup>89</sup>.

The first words of Seneca’s work *On Benefits* read:

Among the numerous faults of those who pass their lives recklessly and without due reflexion [...] there is hardly any one so hurtful to society as this, that we neither know how to bestow or how to receive a benefit. It follows from this that benefits are badly invested, and become bad debts: in these cases it is too late to complain of their not being returned, for they were thrown away when we bestowed them. Nor need we wonder that while the greatest vices are common, none is more common than ingratitude<sup>90</sup>.

for a benefit is a loan, the repayment of which depends merely upon the good feeling of the debtor<sup>91</sup>.

He states already at the beginning that what matters particularly is the way of offering benefits to our neighbours, which influences the gratitude received in return<sup>92</sup>. Moreover, the philosopher emphasizes that:

It is the property of a great and good mind to covet, not the fruit of good deeds, but good deeds themselves<sup>93</sup>.

virtue consists in bestowing benefits for which we are not certain of meeting with any return, but whose fruit is at once enjoyed by noble minds<sup>94</sup>.

Gratitude also does possess its religious dimension; the Aquinas asks: “Who owes more thanks to God, the innocent or the penitent?”, concluding that one who received a greater gift from God is obliged to show greater gratitude. However, innocence is a greater gift as compared to the justice to be brought<sup>95</sup>. “[...] a man owes love to his benefactor just as he owes him gratitude”, says St. Thomas and refers to St. Augustine’s words<sup>96</sup>.

In the part named “Whether piety extends to particular human individuals?”, St. Thomas refers, among others, to St. Augustine’s *The City of God*<sup>97</sup>, where he claims that “piety denotes, properly speaking, the worship of God<sup>98</sup> and does not refer to any particular persons. “Further, Gregory says (Moral. i): ‘Piety, on her day, provides a banquet, because she fills the inmost recesses of the heart with works of mercy.’ Now the works of mercy are to be done to all, according to Augustine<sup>99</sup>. Finally, St. Thomas also recalls the words by Cicero<sup>100</sup>, who stated that “it is by piety that we do our duty towards our kindred and well-wishers of our country and render them faithful service”<sup>101</sup>.

By analysing examples of both verbal and pictorial representations of the virtue of Gratitude, including various thinkers’ reflections on that topic, we find it closely related to justice. It means a noble attitude towards helping others without expecting any prize, as well as remembrance about the received blessings. It also constitutes an expression of gratitude and the will to repay them. Finally, it is a voluntary inner obligation.

*Translated by Martyna Kowalska*

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#### Słowa kluczowe

Gratitudo, personifikacje cnót, symbolika bociana, cnoty pokrewne sprawiedliwości, personifikacje ikonologiczne

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#### Keywords

Gratitudo, personifications of virtues, stork symbolism, virtues related to justice, iconological personifications

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ings related to Charis - Gratia - grace, gratefulness, has actually no relation with its mythological version in a strict sense, as in mythology they personify youth, feminine charm, happiness and the beauty of life. See L. A. Seneca, *O łagodności; O dobrodziejstwach; Satyra na śmierć Klaudiusza Cezara*, Transl., Introd., Comment., Composition, Index, Selection of Ill. L. Joachimowicz, Warszawa 1965, pp. 77-78.

<sup>90</sup> L. A. Seneca, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>92</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 8: “Who, when he suspected that he was going to be asked for any thing, has not frowned, turned away his face, pretended to be busy, or purposely talked without ceasing, in order not to give his suitor a chance of preferring his request, and avoided by various tricks having to help his friend in his pressing need? [...] Yet no one is glad to owe what he has not so much received from his benefactor, as wrung out of him. Who can be grateful for what has been disdainfully flung to him, or angrily cast at him, or been given him out of weariness, to avoid further trouble? No one need expect any return from those whom he has tired out with delays, or sickened with expectation. A benefit is received in the same temper in which it is given, and ought not, therefore, to be given carelessly, for a man thanks himself for that which he receives without the knowledge of the giver”.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9. In Book III, p. 49, the author states: “but the man from whom all recollection of the benefit has passed away can never become grateful. [...] It is filial impiety not to love one’s parents, but not to recognise them is madness”.

<sup>95</sup> **Thomas Aquinas**, *Summa Theologiae*..., II-II, Q. 106.

<sup>96</sup> **Idem**, *Cnoty społeczne*..., n. 72, p. 203, **Augustyn**, *Wyznania* II, c. 7 (PL 32, 681).

<sup>97</sup> **Thomas Aquinas**, *Summa Theologiae*..., p. 13, n. 1, p. 202; **Augustyn**, *Civ. (De Civitate Dei)*, 1 (PL 41, 279).

<sup>98</sup> **Thomas Aquinas**, *Summa Theologiae*..., p. 13, n. 3, p. 202; **Augustyn**, *De doctrina Christiana*, I, 30 (PL 34, 41).

<sup>99</sup> **Thomas Aquinas**, *Summa Theologiae*..., II-II, Q. 101.

<sup>100</sup> **Tomasz z Akwinu**, *Cnoty społeczne*..., n. 5, p. 202; *Rhet. (Marcii Tullii Ciceronis Rhetoricum libri) II*, c. 53.

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**Alicja Saar-Kozłowska, PhD, e-mail: [alasaar@umk.pl](mailto:alasaar@umk.pl), ORCID: 0000-0022-5506-7574**

She graduated from the program in art heritage conservation and museology at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. Assistant professor (adjunct) at the Department of Monument Studies and Museology of the Institute of Monument Studies and Conservation Science, NCU. Her research interests centre on early modern art (particularly from Poland, Sweden and Italy), as well as issues related to the contemporary art of arranging exhibitions. Her main research areas include studies of the biography, burial, and tombstone of Anna Vasa of Swe-

den; the tomb of John III King of Sweden at the Uppsala Cathedral; Polish sculpture in the 17th c.; Italian sculpture in the 15th c.; archival research on the Vasa family in Poland and Sweden; issues within the early modern iconography, e.g. the pearl symbolism.

### Summary

**ALICJA SAAR-KOZŁOWSKA (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun) / Gratitude. A justice-related virtue of antique origin**

The article is dedicated to presenting the ancient Greek and Roman, as well as Christian sources regarding the virtue of Gratitude, to be observed in modern times among monuments of various categories – in painting and sculpture, commemorative decoration projects, as well as philosophical, theological, and literary texts discussing the desired characteristics of a righteous, fair, good man, and inscriptions reflecting sets of exceptionally positive virtues which described a given figure, especially rulers.

Gratitude is inseparably connected with charity. It is manifested by feeling, repayment, and virtue. The idea of Gratitude has often been manifested by a stork, known for its extraordinary care towards parents already since antiquity. A proposition for representing the virtue of Gratitude was offered by Cesare Ripa in *Iconologia* (1593, illustrated edition 1603), commonly used by artists. It is personified by a woman holding a stork and a twig of lupine. However, the origins of its painting imagery with regard to Italian art prove to go beyond the publication of *Iconologia*. Stork as a symbol of Gratitude appeared already in Andrea Alciati's *Emblematum liber* (1531) in the *Gratiam referendam* emblem (*An obligation must be repaid*). Its message was widely discussed in Pierio Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica* (1556).

The stork motif, on the basis of observing the animal's habits and symbolism traditions reaching antiquity, became associated with man's best qualities regarding their relations with others – helping other people and cooperating with them. What constituted the basis of such special status of Gratitude virtue were ancient sources of knowledge about storks' habits, reaching Sophocles' tragedy *Electra*, Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds*, Aristotle's *Historia animalium*, Artemidorus' *Oneirokritika*, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, and Claudius Aelianus' *De natura animalium*. A significant role in strengthening the beliefs about a stork and its habits was also played by *Physiologus* and Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica*.

In antiquity, the topic of Gratitude was examined by Aristotle, Cicero, and Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger. Among Christian authors, it was particularly discussed by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

By analysing examples of both verbal and pictorial representations of the virtue of Gratitude, including various thinkers' reflections on that topic, we find it closely related to justice, meaning a noble attitude towards helping others without expecting any prize, as well as remembrance about the received blessings.