

Between Words and Images. Disseminating Knowledge in Illustrated Student Notebooks

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From the late fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, note-taking during lessons at university gave rise to the practice of illustrating handwritten volumes, or *dictata*. Our contribution suggests a typology of images frequently added in lecture notebooks, and sheds new light on the various roles fulfilled by such visual materials. We argue that not only “scientific” images (directly resonating with the text) performed a clear didactic function, but that this was the case for other kinds of images as well, such as emblems, allegories, humorous or satirical sketches, and title pages. We also emphasize the importance of copying and drawing after prints, and the materiality of prints experienced by students, in particular through the recuperation of existing emblematic compositions. Through such a handiwork activity, students would play with various meanings, customize their own manuscripts, and absorb knowledge in a sustainable way.

Plan

Introduction

Visual elements in notebooks

- a. Heterogeneous visual languages
- b. Diagrams
- c. The materiality of the image

Typology of images in student notebooks

- a. Traditional university iconography
- b. Scientific drawings and engravings
- c. Symbolic language

Emblems as didactic and mnemonic devices

- a. Scientific *emblemata*
- b. Recuperation of emblematic devices
- c. Emblems as memory aids

Conclusion

Abbreviations:

BN - Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie (National Library of Poland)

BWMS - Biblioteka Wyższego Metropolitalnego Seminarium Duchownego św. Jana Chrzyciela w Warszawie (Poland)

KBR - Koninklijke Bibliotheek royale (Royal Library of Belgium)

UCLouvain - Archives de l'Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium)

Useful databases:

Magister dixit collection: <http://heron-net.be/lectio/solr-search?q=>

Emblematica online: <http://emblematica.grainger.illinois.edu/>

Medieval Diagrams: <http://repository.edition-topoi.org/collection/MAPD>

The Art of Reasoning in Medieval Manuscripts: <https://art-of-reasoning.huylens.knaw.nl/theme3.html>

Corpus academicum Cracoviense: <https://cac.historia.uj.edu.pl/>

The Sphere: <https://sphaera.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/database/>

The Leuven Ontology for Aristotelian Diagrams Database: <https://logicalgeometry.org/leonardi/>

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