

Summary

A portrait of a magician

Teofil Lenartowicz in the face of Renaissance culture

The book is devoted to the reception of Polish and Italian Renaissance culture in the work of Teofil Lenartowicz (1822–1893). This poet and sculptor lived in Warsaw in his youth and, after being forced into exile, settled permanently in Florence. The focus of my interest is the entire diverse legacy of this Mazovian lyricist, his literary works, plastic arts, published lectures and epistolography. The background for the thoughts and observations contained in Lenartowicz's cultural texts is provided by the works of the late Romantics – from Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki to Felicjan Faleński. This generation of writers comprised poets that Lenartowicz valued, a view that he often expressed in his correspondence and poems.

In the introduction, I look at the question of undertaking a more thorough study of the reception of the Renaissance in Lenartowicz's work, which stems from reflections on the editions of his poems and the monographs devoted to him to date. Recognising and emphasising the importance of the subject matter, it is possible to describe how the terms “Renaissance” and “rebirth” were understood from the modern age to the 19th century. Changes in the meaning of these key words contribute to a broader analysis of the phenomenon of Romantic “Renaissance-ism”. Polish and European literature at the time was dominated by two competing conceptions of the Renaissance: as pagan, dark and full of crime, or as an era of humanism, the development of art, the times of the great Republic. Separating these two modes of reception of the Renaissance stemmed largely from the fascination with the biographies of great people. This idea was extremely popular in the 19th century, which I describe with references to the writings of Thomas Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson and also Adam Mickiewicz.

The individual chapters of this monograph aim to reflect Lenartowicz's views on the topics indicated here, as revealed by the selection of several Renaissance figures whose lives and work were related to specific problems exposed by the Romantics and the state of knowledge about the Renaissance at the time. In doing so, I also sought to presenting Lenartowicz as an artist. Hence I begin with poetry, then focus on sculpture and drawing, as well as lectures, private correspondence and that published in the press, and in the final chapter, return symbolically to poetry, thus emphasising the fact that Lenartowicz is first and foremost a poet. The comparative profile of this work, focusing on literature and art, not only makes it possible to present Lenartowicz as a man and his achievements in a new way, but also to emphasise the European character of his legacy by stressing the activity of the artist in exile. In attempting to create a coherent and authoritative portrait, I have kept in mind two important areas of Lenartowicz's activity: the balance between literature and art, and between faithfulness to the memories of his childhood homeland and the consciousness of an emigre to Italy. The attempt to describe Lenartowicz's oeuvre using a certain key – the analysis of his fascination with the Renaissance and its great representatives – made it possible to observe the poet's returns to several biographies, which were, at the same time, subject to constant discussion and updating.

The first chapter is therefore devoted to references to the legacy and life of Jan Kochanowski. I am interested in the Czarnolas motifs, which appear both in his private correspondence, in epigraphs to volumes or individual poems, and in the works themselves. The order of interpretation is determined by specific motifs connected with the poet's family, his literary work, the motif of the linden tree and the Czarnolas manor house. I contrast the literary ideas appearing in his work with the artistic concepts expressed by Seweryna Duchńska, Stefan Giller, Cyprian Norwid, Lucjan Siemieński and Wincenty Pol.

After writing, sculpting was the second most important branch of Lenartowicz's interests. Therefore, in the second chapter, I focus on his artistic work, starting from comments on the sculptural motifs in his poems and tracing the circumstances connected with his interest in this art. The critical discourse related to Lenartowicz's sculptural works and his reflections on his own works clearly indicate one of the main traditions to which the Romantic was attached, the tradition of the Renaissance. Nineteenth-century newspaper reviews and the poet's epistolography mention the names of Lorenzo Ghiberti, the della Robbia family and Jacopo Sansovino. On the other hand, Lenartowicz's lyric poetry, and some of his drawings and sculptures, betray clear connotations with the works of the great Italian masters, such as Matteo Civitali or Giambologna. A special predilection for the artistic form of relief allows us to associate Lenartowicz's works with the works of such sculptors as Bartolomeo Bellano, Vincenzo Danti, Guglielmo della Porta, Andrea Riccio.

The third chapter is devoted to Lenartowicz's reception of the Renaissance in *Letters on Italian Art* published in "Tygodnik Ilustrowany". Short comments formulated in the press were connected with the life and works of Rafael Santi, Michelangelo, Fra Angelico, Luca and Andrea della Robbia, and Domenichino. Analysing these articles allowed several categories characteristic of Lenartowicz's reflection on great people to be identified, among which we can mention the category of the Christian ethos of life, related to such fundamental concepts for the poet as the creator, genius, God, or inspiration. I set Lenartowicz's observations against the background of remarks by Cyprian Godebski, Julian Klaczka and Józef Ignacy Kraszewski.

Attempts at Polish-Italian dialogue visible in Lenartowicz's public correspondence concerning Renaissance artists are also discernible in his Bologna lectures. In Chapter Four, which is based on the poet's published lectures, I focus on outlining the personages of Nicolaus Copernicus and Jan Kochanowski. Lenartowicz devoted his attention to their writing legacy, assessed their contribution to the development of Renaissance science and literature, and analysed the state of Renaissance research to date. His observations appearing in this chapter are contrasted with ideas formulated by Faleński, Lucjan Siemieński and Wójcicki. The resulting image makes it possible to show Lenartowicz's vision of the Renaissance during the reigns of two monarchs: Zygmunt August and Stefan Batory.

The poet returned to Copernicus in his literary works. In Chapter Five, I present Lenartowicz's poetic reflections on Copernicus, the author of the heliocentric theory, on two levels. On the first, I present the Lenartowicz's remarks related to the phenomenon of human greatness – the figure of Copernicus made Lenartowicz reflect on the issue of creative inspiration, the use of acquired knowledge and the sacrifices that accompany scientific work. On the second level, the Lenartowicz's poetic imagery can be treated as yet another gloss on the mythical biography of Copernicus, in this case, one emphasising the most important events in the astronomer's life. Similar motifs and a similar way of exploring them can be seen in poems by Agaton Giller, Jadwiga Łuszczewska, Duchńska and Siemieński.

The work of the great masters appears once again in several of Lenartowicz's late poems, which I deal with in the last analytical chapter. In these works, the poet accentuates the individualism of

his favourite Renaissance artists: Fra Angelico, Raphael and Michelangelo. In line with Lenartowicz's literary observations, I outline how the creative and character diversity of the leading artists of the Renaissance is expressed. I contrast Lenartowicz's remarks about the old masters with literary images of these artists presented by Luszczewska, Norwid, Siemieński and Leonard Sowiński.

In the conclusion to the thesis, the question of the place of reflections on the Renaissance in Lenartowicz's entire work arises, which allows us to formulate some broader conclusions about the written discussions on Renaissance culture that he might have had with other poets of his epoch. I place particular emphasis on comparing the image of the Renaissance and Kochanowski's literary legacy presented by Mickiewicz in his Paris lectures and referred to by Lenartowicz in his Bologna lectures. I confront Lenartowicz's views about artistic tastes and the meaning of art with various notes by Norwid. Through his writings, Lenartowicz engaged in a discussion with other writers of his generation not only about the Renaissance, but also about the shape of Romanticism. Thus, I devote the last part of this chapter to an attempt to read Romantic Renaissance-ism as one of the key traditions characteristic of the works of the late Romantics.

Writing this dissertation would not have been possible without research into archives, sources and editorial work. As a result of this research, it was possible to present material on Lenartowicz that is little known and analysed, for example, *Letters on Italian Art* from the years 1868–1869 (appendix). The thesis also makes use of two poems read from manuscripts, entitled *Copernicus at an open window folding a telescope* and *Nicolaus Copernicus. Ode* (appendix). I also discuss works dedicated to artists that were last published in the 19th century (appendix). This thesis also includes some of the pages of Lenartowicz's little-known album *Umarli żywi* [The Dead Alive], which he created from the 1840s until his death in 1893, and also mentions an unknown sculpture by the artist.

Translated by Rob Pagett