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Copied or influenced? Image circulation between German and Polish ‘Gardens of Health’ in the early 16th century.

My research concentrates on the animal portrayals in the early modern zoological compendia. Main questions of my query are problems of image circulation and changing understanding of trustworthiness and reliability of animal depictions. Proposed expose exemplifies the issue of early modern natural historians’ attitude to the information collected by their predecessors: knowledge and lore of ancient, medieval and contemporary authorities.

While the compendia and images published in western Europe are well analysed and described, central and eastern European natural history is usually dismissed as secondary to its western counterpart. Even local art historians study scientific illustration and notice its relations with admittedly more advanced western natural history.

The expose presents the problem of the image circulation between German and Polish medical treatises in the early 16th century. It concentrates on the woodcuts from the first Polish health manual *About the herbs and their powers* compiled from various Latin texts by Stefan Falimirz and printed in Cracow by Florian Ungler in 1534.

Although the treatise was discussed by Polish historians of science, they mostly concentrated on its botanical part. I wish to present the chapter on zoology and its illustrations that has not been thoroughly analysed by either art, or book historians.

Falimirz’s manual was adapted from several so called ‘Gardens of nature’. The genre was most popular in the 2nd half of the 15th century in Germany where they were one of the earliest examples of illustrated incunabula. Slightly later Polish treatise shows the nature history in the transition period between medieval medical and symbolic lore and the early modern science.

The information about the treatise’s author is scant. All we know about Stephan Falimirz comes from his text and his contemporaries’ opinions. He probably came to Cracow from Ruthenia and was Jan Tęczyński’s, Podolian voivode, courtier. As his adversaries pointed

out, Falimirz had little to none medical education or experience. It seems he was approached by the printer Florian Ungler and/or town's councilman Hieronymus Spiczyński and commissioned to translate various medical information in order to compile the first health manual in Polish as it was considered 'inappropriate' to have none.

The text, usually called in Polish literature 'herbal' is in fact so called 'garden of health' – treatise presenting information on plants, minerals, animals and natural substances that are pertinent to human health. Falimirz's manual was based on several Latin *Gardens...*, primarily the editions of 1485 and 1490. Despite the fact that the fond of information on medical properties of plants and animals rapidly grown since early 16th century, it seems he used older treatises. Polish text is divided into 13 chapters concerning plants, animals, minerals, basic medical practices, astrology, medicaments and remedies. They are illustrated by over 500 woodcuts. In chapter 4, which deals with animals' properties, there are 120 of them showing quadrupeds, birds, fish, and invertebrate. The chapter is shorter than Latin versions as it omits legendary creatures of which Falimirz was uncertain, and he found had no use for Polish physicians. Unlike earlier versions it includes only two fantastic animals: marine dragon and estinus. The rest of species – even if the descriptions are bizarre and portrayals imaginary – exist and are easily identifiable.

While most of botanical illustrations were more or less directly copied from Latin *Hortus sanitatis* published in 1490, the sources of zoological woodcuts are less obvious. Animals depictions seem to be made anew. While some of them are influenced by the *Horti's* illustrations, they mostly have no easily identifiable prototypes. In some cases it even seems possible that the illustrator had prepared the woodcut based on living animal. Naturally, the domestic animals are recognizable and local sweet-water fish are treated with similar care. However, also several exotic animals, mainly species from the royal menagerie in Cracow, are more realistically depicted than their counterparts in the earlier treatises. Yet at the same time, others – which the illustrator could not have seen live – are quite fantastical.

In this presentation I wish to prove that while Falimirz's treatise is usually dismissed as a direct copy of the German iconography of the 'Gardens of health', the fond of sources used to create a set of zoological woodcuts was far greater than that and presents an engaging resource of images that were created by an average guild woodcutter who both attempted to create reliable, realistic illustrations and easily copied already existing images available to him.