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Carmen de bisonte in English and for an International Audience – a Critical Review of and Supplement to Frederick J. Booth's Bilingual Edition*

Booth, Frederick J. (ed., transl.). *Song of the Bison. Text and Translation of Nicolaus Hussovianus's „Carmen de statura, feritate ac venatione bisontis".* Leeds-Amsterdam: Arc Humanities Press; Amsterdam University Press, 2019, 87 p.

The imbalance in the circulation of ideas, when a few „centres" are favoured and many „peripheries" downgraded, is a well-known problem that has a decisive impact on literary studies. The structural imbalance affects not only texts written in „small" European languages; there is also a steep gradient in respect to the common Latin heritage. The „dead language" as such is no obstacle for professional readers, but most research on Latin-writing authors from northern or eastern Europe is published in languages that do not belong to the standard portfolio of disciplines such as Classical Philology, Neo-Latin, or Renaissance Studies. Though many contemporary encyclopaedias, companions, and anthologies from these fields of research follow a supranational ideal and strive for a more balanced picture[1], hardly any contribution on neo-Latin authors from Sweden, Poland, Hungary, etc. has *not* been written by a scholar biographically connected to these regions. In this respect, Frederick J. Booth's translation of Nicolaus Hussovianus' *Carmen de bisonte* (*CdB*) breaks a vicious

* I thank Elsbeth van der Wilt for proof-reading and my colleagues at Giessen for help with the Polish and Belarusian abstracts.

[1] IJsewijn's ground-breaking companion represents this scope (IJsewijn, 1977; 2nd ed., 2 vols., 1990–1998). Recent examples are Martin Korenjak's history of Neo-Latin literature (Korenjak, 2016) and his anthology (Korenjak, 2019; 672 lines from *CdB*: p. 342–349).

circle and demonstrates that one does not have to be a Belarusian, Lithuanian, Pole, Ukrainian – nor a Slavist – to work on Latin-language texts from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is a noteworthy sign that a „normal" classical philologist from the US became interested in the *Song of the Bison*, studied the text with his reading group at Seton Hall University (New Jersey), and finally tackled a bilingual edition (see „Author's note and acknowledgements").

This article began as a short review and with the intention to spread this good news in the field of old Belarusian studies in which „non leguntur" very often refers to Anglophone research. However, it quickly became obvious that something more than a brief note on merits and deficits is needed, namely a kind of interface processing information between scientific communities that lack connection. Although I describe shortcomings and mistakes in detail, I do not want to pillory a book that will be of utmost benefit to many students and scholars. My intention is to close knowledge gaps and to translate between disciplines. Such a transfer of ideas should work in all directions and I wrote this "review-cum-supplement" both for Booth's prototypical readers „in the West" and for researchers from Eastern Europe. Large parts of this article is, in fact, addressed to experts for whom *CdB* is no „new" finding but a canonical text.

Booth's *Song of the Bison* was issued in 2019 by two small academic publishers in the series *Foundations*, specializing in the publication of „new primary texts on the premodern world" that introduce fresh and innovative topics. Hussovianus' masterpiece is an excellent choice. The translation into the *lingua franca* of our days makes *CdB* accessible to a global academic readership and therefore it is a milestone in the history of reception. This international come-back certainly would have pleased Nicolaus Hussovianus, who wrote his elegy in Rome with the intention to interest the intellectual centre of his days in the Lithuanian periphery and to correct stereotypes and negative propaganda. If the addressee (Pope Leo X) and the two politicians who encouraged the poet or even commissioned the text (the Lithuanian magnate Mikołaj Radziwiłł and Erazm Ciołek, Bishop of Płock) had not died suddenly, the book probably would have been released in 1522 in Rome, and not in 1523 in Krakow. Bishop Erazm Ciołek (Erasmus Vitellius) had proceeded in this way with the speeches he held as emissary of the Polish King and Lithuanian Grand Duke[2].

In contrast to scholars from Eastern Europe, Booth's fascination does not stem from the patriotic spirit and love for the homeland expressed in *CdB*, but rather from the recognition that „Hussovianus offers a glimpse into the broad international exchange of ideas in sixteenth century Europe" (p. 30). For him, it was a revolutionary discovery that Latin-language Europe had included regions which had been behind the Iron Curtain during the twentieth century. The American slavist Harold Segel reported the very same assessment in his monograph on Latin-language Renaissance literature from Poland (Segel, 1989, p. 1–2; on *CdB*: p. 138–160, 272–273). Booth became aware of

[2] For example, two speeches given in front of Pope Leo X and in front of Emperor Maximilian I (Vitellius, 1519); for similar publications, see Brzozowska (Brzozowska, 2012, p. 28–29).

this lacuna in Western (or at least American) research thanks to the librarian at his home university (see „Author's note and acknowledgements"). *Song of the Bison* invites the reader to follow the scholar to Eastern Europe and provides the necessary resources for this expedition: a detailed introduction, footnote commentaries, and a bibliography. The core of the book is the philological translation of *CdB*. Professional readers struggling with difficult paragraphs or the rendering of quotes into elegant English will welcome this decision[3]. Despite limited poetic ambition, the prose translation reads extremely well and is an exciting piece of literature.

However, *Song of the Bison* is not the first complete translation into English – Booth errs in this respect (p. 11). That honour belongs to Michael Mikoś, who after graduating from the Catholic University at Lublin migrated into Anglophone academia in the late 1960s and has done much for Polish Studies in the US. Mikoś translated not only fragments of *CdB*[4], but also the complete elegy. On must add that his full *Song on Bison* was only published online and that this e-samizdat is quite difficult to find[5], whereas the accessibility and durability of Booth's book is guaranteed by the archive routines of scientific libraries. Currently, scholars still can and should take advantage of the possibility to compare two English-language interpretations.

Mikoś's *A Poem on Bison* consists of the English text and a slender footnote commentary that deals with realia, but disregards intertextuality and topics connected to the original language. Booth's edition complements these lacunae. His focus as a classical philologist manifests itself in two figures that precede the introduction. A mosaic from Sicily (fourth century AD, cf. p. 13) connects *CdB* with Graeco-Roman antiquity and Italy. The second photograph shows a European bison in a wildlife park in Germany. Both pictures differ from the usual figures in publications from Eastern Europe and this effect of defamiliarization (*остранение*) is stimulating. It serves as a strong reminder that during the last decades researchers have shown little interest in the intertextual relations to antiquity and to Neo-Latin contemporary literature beyond the Polish-Lithuanian region. However, this choice of visual material also has its disadvantages. Any – visual or textual – mention of the traditional habitat of the bison on the contemporary Belarusian-Polish border is lacking. (It was, by the way, the Białowieża National Park that published a translation in Polish for the first time in 1994; it had been prepared, unfortunately, on the eve of WWI and was forgotten in the archives for decades.) Two well-known sixteenth century engravings of the *zubrus* would also have been valuable pictorial

[3] Nekrashevich-Karotkaja provides an overview of translations into Slavic languages (Niekraševič-Karotkaja, 2009, p. 175–184, chart: p. 177); *CdB* has also been translated into Lithuanian (Hussovianus, 2007a).

[4] Booth (p. 11 and fn. 46) knew the 54 verses in the anthology of Renaissance literature by Mikoś (Mikoś, 1995, p. 60–61) and the bigger block that is included in the multilingual edition of *CdB* (Hussovianus, 2007b, p. 317–330).

[5] In 2017, I needed a hint by Mikoś to find it at *Staropolska on-line* (Hussovianus n.d.). The layout indicates that the text went online some years earlier; the *terminus post quem* is the publication of Hussovianus (2007b).

material. They are part of an illustrated print, based on Conrad Gesner's systematic description of the animal world (*Icones animalium*, 2nd. ed.: Gesnerus, 1560, p. 30, 31). This Swiss scholar is interesting, as he possessed a copy of *CdB*, mentions Hussovianus as source of information and praises his erudition (cf. Choptiany, 2013). This seems to be the only explicit trace of reception of *CdB* by sixteenth-century contemporaries. One of these engravings shows a hunting strategy like those described in *CdB* – a man hides behind a tree and attacks the bison from this safe position – and it would have suited Booth's stated interest in the international exchange of ideas. Gessner's second figure is a picture of a bison copied from Sigmund von Herberstein's famous report about his travel to Muscovy, written in Latin (Herberstein, 1556, p. 112; cf. Bohn; Dalhouski; Krzoska, 2017, p. 23).

Booth's motto-like pictures are followed by an informative introduction (p. 1–30). Pages 1–15 provide facts about life and works, existing copies, genre traditions and intertextuality, symbolic meaning, style. There are short subchapters on realia (Pope Leo X, the bison) and longer ones on the historical background that might be unfamiliar to the intended reader: the marriage of Jagiełło and Jadwiga, the foundation of the Jagiellonian University, and an overview over important intellectuals and authors (the latter sums up Segel 1989). P. 26–30 add information on metre, intertextuality, and the quality of Latin.

In between, there is a subchapter *A Guide to Carmen de Bisonte* (p. 15–26). It contains a very detailed summary of the elegy, which is divided into thematic paragraphs (covering 20–200 lines) and contains quite large quotes (Latin and English)[6]. Twelve pages are quite exhaustive, but this extended summary may serve well as homework reading. One paradox is eye-catching: one of the longest paragraphs (l. 659–824) is covered by an extremely short summary (eight lines, p. 23). This imbalance reveals that the translator lacked information about the topic, namely the significance of Witold/Vytautas for the collective Lithuanian identity in the past and the present.

Booth had to rely on research that was accessible to him and it would be foolish to criticize a classical philologist for not reading Lithuanian, Belarusian, Polish, and Russian. His main sources are Pelczar's edition from 1894, supplemented with an introduction and *apparatus* in Latin, and more recent articles in English. With the limitation of languages that „are read" (*leguntur*) in mind, there is not much to add. Apart from anglophone studies on special topics like Witold/Vytautas (Mickūnaitė, 2006), one might recommend an article on Hussovianus by Claude Backvis (1968) in French – highly esteemed by Polish researchers – and two German-language articles by the reviewer (Rutz, 2017a, 2017b).

Booth's point of view was shaped by scholars who consider Hussovianus to be a Polish author (Pelczar, Segel, Axer, Nowicka-Jeżowa); his personal contacts from the Jagiellonian University (p. 12) very likely shared this perspective. The bibliography

[6] The translation of the last paragraph of quote no. 1 is formatted incorrectly; it looks like standard text (p. 16).

lists syntheses of Polish literature and history, but no comparable reading about Belarus and Lithuania. However, Booth paid attention to the short comment by Jerzy Axer (Axer, 2008, p. 3–4) that Lithuanians and Belarusians consider *CdB* a part of their literature. It is obvious that the classical philologist looked for information – in English – about the outstanding position of *Песня пра Зубра*, but without much success. He found some confirmation on the internet portal of the President of Belarus (p. 2)[7]. Additionally, he came across some Belarusian and Lithuanian research on neo-Latin authors from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but the two English-language articles by Zhanna Nekrashevich-Karotkaja and Rasa Jurgelėnaitė touch Hussovianus only superficially. Booth's bibliography bears witness of the scarce connections of Belarusian and Lithuanian research with international academic networks.

Which pieces of information published in languages „that are not read" would be important for the intended reader of *Song of the Bison* and should be mentioned in this review-cum-appendix?

1. The information in Pelczar (Pelczar, 1894, p. II–III) and Axer (Axer, 2008, p. 3) about copies of *CdB* is not up to date. The exemplar from the former „Imperial Library" in St. Petersburg was returned to Poland in the inter-war period (cf. Niekraševič-Karotkaja, 2009, p. 117; Zvereva, 2015, p. 63). Details of this transaction and the fate of the book are unknown; it was probably destroyed during WWII. Currently, we know about four copies: in addition to the well-known Polish ones deposited at the Czartoryjski Library in Krakow and at the Ossolineum in Wrocław (before 1945: in Lwów), there is Gessner's exemplar in Zürich and Choptiany identified a fourth one in the British Library in London (Choptiany, 2013, 113, 122). Thus, it is not necessary any more to travel to Poland to have a look at the original – additionally three of the four copies have now been digitalized (see below; the signatures are listed in my bibliography).
2. Krókowski's monograph from the 1950s continued Pelczar's search for sources and influences and paved the way for further research on generic traditions that intersect in *CdB* (Krókowski, 1959, p. 17–32, 33–36). One group of such architexts (to use Genette's term) are lengthy poems on hunting, which became very popular in the Renaissance; Booth knows the authors' names, but no details. A second model are versified descriptions of regions or places, such as Ausonius' *Mosella*, Filippo „Callimachus" Buonaccorsi's poem on Krakow, Conrad Celtis' descent into the Weliczka salt mines, or *Roxolania* by Sebastian Fabian Acernus. Productive is a hermeneutic interpretation of intertextual references that goes beyond the mere stating that a certain phrase

[7] Better examples are the fifty-page chapter on Hussovianus in the most recent overview over Belarusian literature, published by the Institute of Belarusian Literature of the Academy of Sciences (Žlutka, 2007) or the information that *CdB* is part of the university and even school curriculum in Belarus (Niekraševič-Karotkaja, 2009, p. 101; Kavalioŭ, 2010, p. 92).

or motif can be detected in Virgil, Ovid, or Horace (Brzozowska, 2010, p. 23; Rutz, 2017a, p. 90–94; Rutz, 2017b).

3. Erasmus Vitellius-Ciołek deserves more attention. He is mentioned several times in *CdB* and seems to have supported Hussovianus while the poet was in Rome. His political speeches contain information and arguments that appear in *CdB*. Brzozowska (Brzozowska, 2010, p. 30–35; Brzozowska, 2012, p. 33–35) demonstrates that Vitellius countered the negative image of Lithuania that was created by the Teutonic Order and disseminated, among others, in the ethno-geographic descriptions of Eneas Silvio Piccolomini (e.g., *De Europa*, 1458). *CdB* applies the same strategy (cf. Rutz, 2017a, p. 90–94).
4. Monographs about neo-Latin authors from the Lithuanian and Belarusian canon are fascinating reading, as well as recent overviews over the history of these multilingual (!) national literatures. Kavalëŭ's critical analysis of the reception of Hussovianus explains many peculiarities of Belarusian research (Kavalioŭ, 2010, p. 74–100). Articles about the „multilingualization" of the canon and the „naturalization" of authors transmit an idea of the role of Latin-language literature in countries that still lay behind the Iron Curtain in the 1980s[8].

Surprisingly, the information given in *Song of the Bison* needs not to be completed in one point. Booth refers to a recently discovered archive document that dramatically changes the knowledge about Hussovianus' life. The scholar took his information from two Lithuanian sources (p. 4, fn. 17): an announcement from the homepage of the Wróblewski Library in Vilnius (expired) and an article by Čižauskas (2018) with a summary in English. The archive document sheds new light on the most controversial topic of research on Hussovianus, namely his „nationality". The discussion about his place of birth and thus his ethnic origin has centred on his surname and the location of toponyms: does the name refer to a Polish or Belarusian *Hussow* or *Ussow*? *Hussow* near Łańcuch (Przemyśl region, today southern Poland) has been considered a possibility since the nineteenth century. Step by step, archive evidence for this option has increased. For more than a century, we have known about a letter of „Nicolaus Hussowski" to the bishop of Przemyśl in 1531. Since 1985, there is information about the last will of Zofia Holszańska, notarized in 1518 by „Nicolao Nicolai Hussowsky clerico *premisliensis diocesis* publico apostalica auctoritate notario et scriba prefati testementii" (Ochmański, 1985, p. 315) – i.e., he was a notary and cleric of the Przemyśl church district. In 1515, probably the same N.N. Hussowski had drafted another last will for Andrzej Kościelecki, treasurer of the Polish Crown (cf. Wróbel, 2018, p. 691). Finally in 2018, the crucial piece of evidence was discovered in Vilnius: a privilege composed and authenticated by Hussowski on 9th June 1519 in the service of Mikołaj Radziwiłł („Per manus Nicolai Hussouusky, *notary nostrij*"; transcript in Čižauskas, 2018, p. 164–168; quote p. 168). Simultaneously with the publication by

[8] With a broad horizon: Niekraševič-Karotkaja, 2009, p. 3–8. In respect to Belarus: Kawalou (Kawalou, 2009, esp. 84–85); Rutz (Rutz, 2020b, p. 138–140).

Čižauskas, a second article appeared that explains in detail what the archival discovery means for research on Hussovianus (Wróbel, 2018, in particular p. 691–693). We know that the poet left for Rome quite late, as further archival documents in the same handwriting date from 1519 and 1520 and a new scribe of Radziwiłł appears only in July 1521. Therefore, the common opinion – that the poet travelled to Italy with Erazm Ciołek – is wrong. He had been attached for some time not to the bishop, but to Mikołaj Radziwiłł. Wróbel suggest that Hussovianus entered Radziwiłł's service after the death of the aforementioned Kościelecki in 1515. His thesis that Hussovianus was sent to Rome by the Lithuanian magnate and that he accompanied the stuffed bison hide intended as a gift for the pope (cf. the introductory letter in *CdB*), is convincing. Due to this evidence, discussions about possible places of origin or the existence of two namesakes – a (Polish) notary and a (Belarusian) poet – should come to an end. The notarial documents favour a descendance from the Przemyśl region, i.e., a Polish background. This affects the position of Hussovianus in the Lithuanian and particularly in the Belarusian pantheon and might initiate a general discussion about the relevance of the category „ethnicity" in the history of literature and the terms of its application to pre-national societies.

The question as to whether scholars will revise the position of the most important Renaissance poet within old Belarusian literature may be of limited interest to neo-Latinists. However, the revised biography also questions our understanding of the text, namely the supposed closeness of speaker and author. Is the biography of the ego just a mask, corresponding to the text intention? What does this mean for the proclaimed credibility of the narrated „facts".

The Translation under the Slavist's Microscope

Booth's information about author and text is in general sound and instructive, but there are some gaps of which the classical philologist was unaware. The bilingual edition would have profited from more information about early modern ethnonyms and a comparison of the political maps of the sixteenth and the twenty-first centuries. The intended reader may have trouble understanding the meanings of „Polish", „Lithuanian" etc. in the sixteenth century, which is different from their contemporary semantics. Is it clear to an American student that the self-attribution of the speaker as *Polonus* in line 120 is controversial and, if yes, in which respect (cf. p. 3)?

The shortcoming in this field results in a serious mistake. Booth translates the official titles of Bona Sforza in Hussovianus' dedicatory letter as follows: „To the Most Serene Princess and Lady, Lady Bona / By God's grace Queen of Poland and Grand Duchess of Lithuania, Russia and / Prussia etc. Lady" (p. 32). English „Russia" is for him the correct translation of Latin *Russia*. As there is no comment, this designation suggests the historical predecessor state of the Russian Federation, but Bona and her husband Sigmund I neither reigned in Moscow nor raised claims on the throne. Experts

call this sixteenth-century Russia the „Grand Duchy of Muscovy", or „Muscovy"; the same is true for early modern Polish-Lithuanian sources. By calling Bona the legitimate ruler of *Russia*, *CdB* means something different, namely a territory that had been part of medieval Rus′, but in 1522 belonged to the Lithuanian grand duchy and/or the Polish crown. Thus, Hussovianus' *Russia* constitutes, generally speaking, parts of contemporary Ukraine (or Ukraine and Belarus).

We find the same „false friend" of the translator in the famous paragraph about the books in Cyrillic script which the speaker claims to have read (all italics: M.R.):

Multa ego *Roxanis* legi antiquissima libris, Quorum sermonem graeca elementa notant, Quae sibi gens quondam proprios adscivit in usus Et patrios apte miscuit ipsa sonos (lines 74–77, p. 57).	I have read much ancient lore in *Russian* books written in Greek letters which the *Russians* long ago adopted for their own use and which they aptly fit to the sounds of their own language (transl.: Booth, p. 35)[9].

Booth's footnote in the Latin text, stating „*Roxanis* = Russian" (p. 57), is not correct either. This curious adjective needs a detailed comment, as *Roxan** is an ethnonym from Graeco-Roman geographic-ethnographic descriptions that were being re-published and studied intensively around 1500. Ancient *nomina* were correlated with modern names and *Roxan** was identified with the „modern" designations for the Eastern Slavs[10]. What *CdB* meant and where his speaker might have read these „Roxanian" books is a difficult question. It may have been chronicles, dating back to the time of the Kyiv Rus′ – in this case possible translations would be: „Rus, Rusian, Rus′ian, Eastern Slavonic". As the adaption of Greek letters, i.e., the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet, took place in tenth-century Bulgaria, one may translate „books in Church Slavonic/Slavonic books" (like Niekraševič-Karotkaja, 2009, p. 104). The poet may also have thought about more recent manuscripts compiled and/or stored in churches or cloisters in Kyiv, Polatsk, or Vilnius. The Cyrillic script was omnipresent in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL): the main language of the ducal chancery applied in state documents, chronicles and law codifications was an Eastern Slavic vernacular and the majority of the population of the GDL were orthodox Christians. Therefore, a third possible translation is „Ruthenian", in the narrow meaning "referring to the Eastern Slavs in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth". Booth did not know Mikoś's full translation, but „Ruthenian" appears also in Segel's paraphrasis of these verses („many ancient things in the books of the Ruthenians", Segel, 1989, p. 143). „Ruthenian" is also the

[9] Booth's translation even adds a second wrong „Russian". As the paragraph is quoted also in the introduction (p.17, cf. also p.18), the mistake becomes quite visible.

[10] The elegy *Roxoloania* by Sebastian Fabian Acernus (a.k.a. Klonowicz) makes this process explicit, using this designation as a synonym of *Russia*, *Rutheni* etc. Cf. the Latin-language edition by Kolbus (1998).

correct replacement in Booth's sentences about the situation in "Poland, Russia, and Lithuania" (p. 5) or „Poland, Lithuania, Russia, and Scandinavia" (p. 6).

It does not come as a surprise that a classical philologist is not familiar with the polysemic meaning of *Russia* and terms that are still being discussed by experts (cf. Plokhy, 2006, p. 6; Frost, 2015, p. xx–xxi). However, *Ruthenian* pops up in Booth's introduction and one may ask why he did not realize the discrepancy. We have „Ruthenian" in a quote from an English-language article by Axer (Axer, 2008, p. 7; Booth, p. 14) and in two further places (p. 19): Booth calls the mysterious books, in contrast to his translation, „Greco-Ruthenian" and he explains that „Hussovianus straddled the civilizations of the Latin West and the Ruthenian-Byzantine East". Here, „Ruthenian" has the broad meaning „Eastern Slavic" or „Orthodox-Slavic".

A similar mistake results from a lack of knowledge about Witold/Vytautas (†1430) and medieval and early modern diplomatic terminology. The mistranslation of Witold's title looms large in the aforementioned summary, in which a paragraph heading promotes the Grand Duke to „King Witold" (p. 23, repeated on p. 45). Vytautas struggled for power and strived for a separate crown for Lithuania, but without success. Hussovianus never calls him *rex*, in contrast to Alexander, who ruled over the GDL (1492–1506) *and* the Kingdom of Poland (1501–1506); Alexander's wife also is addressed as "queen" (lines 887 and 893; p. 75/ 49). Booth translates „king" in further places in which this term is not appropriate. In several cases the original has *princeps*, a polysemous term with a complex semantic evolution. The *de facto* monarch Octavianus–Augustus used this invented title – „the first" among equals – to avoid reminiscence of the tyrannic rule of the Roman kings. The negative connotation of *rex* disappeared in the Middle Ages; *princeps* became a honorary title or a general denomination for different kinds of rulers and the highest aristocracy[11]. Its semantic equivalent in German is the loan translation „Fürst"; the English „prince" is also not limited to the meaning „royal offspring". Consequently, it is not necessary to assume that „principis edictum" (line 237) must be an „edict of the king [= of Poland]", (p. 38), in particular as the setting of *CdB* is the Lithuanian forest (*Litphanis silvis*). Booth seems to follow the assumption of Pelczar that this paragraph is about royal laws (Hussovianus, 1894, p. 18, FN 1)[12], but one should remember that this is the perspective of a nineteenth-century Polish scholar who wrote before World War I. For the same reason, Booth's title of the paragraph „The Abundance of the Forest and the Kingdom" (lines 237–284) was not well-chosen (p. 20, 38). The translation of „Litphanae princeps dum regionis erat" (line 666 p.71) as „When he [Witold/Vytautas] was king of Lithuania" (p. 45) and similar attributions on p. 46–48 are simply wrong.

[11] Cf. Du Cange (1710, III, columns 466–471); based on sources from Poland (resp. the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth): eLexicon MILP, https://elexicon.scriptores.pl/pl/lemma/PRINCEPS#haslo_pelny.

[12] The same critique may be addressed to Mikoś's translation: „royal laws" (Hussovianus n.d., #3).

In addition, Booth's rendering of the title *dux* in two verses of the Witold paragraph needs some adaptation to post-Roman Europe. Since antiquity, the meaning „lead-er", „rul-er" (< Lat. *ducere*) evolved and the word became a very frequent denomination of a certain rank within nobility. In English, it is usually rendered as „duke", in German: „Herzog". Booth chose an incorrect interpretative translation as "king" in line 707 (p. 46) and the etymologically transparent, but imprecise "ruler" in line 825 (p. 48).

CdB is not easy reading and the translator quite often needs a flash of inspiration to grasp what the poet had in mind. Booth's interpretative reconstructions are usually excellent, but as these examples have shown, the lack of background knowledge may impede understanding. I would like to draw attention to five further paragraphs which require a closer look.

The first case in point are the historical examples of Alexander the Great and the Romans whom Hussovianus connects in a rather untransparent way to Turks and Poles-Lithuanians. The introductory letter explains in which respect the state may profit from „book knowledge" and what the military leaders in times of war with the Ottoman Empire may learn from historiography (I highlighted the relevant expressions by italics and gave them numbers):

> Apud nos quoque, si illi, qui bellis praesunt, ad antiquorum instituta, quae in libris maxime continentur, rem militarem traduxerint ac removerint alia quaedam, quae actionibus publicis obstant, (1) *quantum nobis et a Turco esset timendum*, hi opinentur, qui ex historiarum lectione non ignorant, (2a) *quid* vel Graeci vel Romani in summa ipsorum potentia adversus (3a) *has orbis partes* bello quondam profecere, dum non dubitetur Romanis armis Germaniam, Graecis Danubium (2b) *perpetuos paene limites ac terminos* (3b) *in hoc tractu* fuisse, ut et magnus Alexander, qui dominium totius orbis terrarum mente conceperat, (3c) *gentis* fortitudine deterritus non ausus fuerit Danubium transgredi, in cuius ripa eum substitisse, et exercitum in imbelles Asiae populous reduxisse satis constat (p. 54).

Booth interprets this complex paragraph as follows:

> If our military leaders conduct warfare according to the precepts of the ancients, which are contained primarily in books, and if they avoid other impediments to common action, these men, who are knowledgeable from reading of history, would know (1) *how much the Turks should fear us*, and (2a) *how little* the Greeks and the Romans, at the height of their power, accomplished in war against (1a) *these regions* of the world. There would be no doubt that, in (3b) *this part of the world*, Germany and the Danube were (3b) *almost perpetual boundaries and limits* for the Roman and Greek armies respectively. It is an established fact that even Alexander the Great, whose mind envisioned the conquest of the entire world, was terrified by the bravery of (3c) *these people* and did not dare to cross the Danube but halted at its banks. He redirected his army against the unwarlike people of Asia instead (transl. Bototh, p. 32–33).

My critique of Booth's as well as Mikoś's translation begins with the proposition that one should make it more explicit that „these people/regions/parts of the world" refers to the forefathers of Poles (maybe, also to those of Lithuanians-Ruthenians). Therefore, one should add „our" at least once to prevent a false identification with the Ottomans. In Mikoś's version, this basic fact is even more difficult to grasp, as it stresses that one has to fear the *Turks* (1). It would be possible to assume that the Greeks and Romans had to face a similar danger and that their *big military successes* (2a, 2b) should arouse optimism in sixteenth-century Poles-Lithuanians, if the last sentence did not mention that the Macedon had to surrender.

> Similarly with us: those who are in command during wars, if they combine knowledge of military art with knowledge of ancient traditions contained in books, and remove everything that stands in the way of public duties, (1) *as long as the fears against the Turk are justified*, then they should be aware, knowing well the lesson of history, of (2a) *what* the Greeks and Romans were once able to achieve at the peak of their power against (3a) *these parts of the world*. Because there is no doubt that (3b) *in these territories* the Romans reached with their arms to Germania and the Greeks to the Danube, (2b) *almost constantly extending* their rule as far as these boundaries. And so the great Alexander, who intended to gain control over the entire world, deterred by the courage of (3c) *local people*, did not dare to cross the Danube, stopped at its banks, and led his army against the nonbelligerent people of Asia, as is well known (transl.: Mikoś, Hussovianus n.d., #1).

Booth's translations for (2a) and (2b) is closer to what the original has in mind: the Graeco-Roman expansion was *not* successful and halted at „almost perpetual boundaries", i.e., did not touch „our" soil. However, one should change the perspective and translate „quantum nobis et a Turco esset timendum" not as "how much *the Turks* should fear us" but „how much [=little] *we* would have to fear from the Turks". The Greek and Romans precede the Ottomans in the role of aggressors.

This interpretation suits the textual and historical context. First, Hussovianus' elegy argues that a return to the customs of the forefathers will fix the military problems of the present. Second, the topic of „invincibility" is part of sixteenth-century Polish historico-political discourse. The most influential theory of descendance was that the Poles stemmed from the ancient Sarmatians and that this bellicose tribe had fought back the Greeks and Romans, who were not able to expand further that to the aforementioned border[13]. Even Alexander could not conquer the lands of „our" ancestors! A student reader will hardly grasp this argument on the basis of Booth's or Mikoś's uncommented translations.

[13] Bömelburg mentions a speech by Jan Ostroróg in front of Pope Paul II in 1467, a quite early example (Bömelburg, 2006, p. 35; the full Latin quote: Chrzanowski; Kot, 1927, p. 56–58, quote p. 57).

Two further paragraphs that are important for the imagined biography of the speaker need careful consideration. In the first case, one must decide whether the ego regrets either that the current intellectual work eats up his „leisure" or that he lacks "time for studies and writing". The decision depends on the understanding of *otium*[14] and the syntactic role of *studiis meis* (italics in both quotes: M.R.). In Booth's translation, the poet starts to speak about his youth, about things

> on which I have spent time never to be recovered, when I avoided *leisure* as something hateful, *leisure* which I now seek with all my mental energy and pursue with great effort, and try to bring into my nets by any means possible. I am not preparing hiding places for laziness, but I am hunting for the hours stolen *by my studies*; but there is no method or invention that can catch time and keep once it has passed (transl.: Booth, p. 35).

> In quibus absumpsi nunquam revocabile tempus,
> *Otia* devitans tunc odiosa quidem,
> Quae tota nunc mente peto magnoque labore
> Insequor et variis retia tendo modis.
> Nec paro desidie latebras, sed tempora venor,
> Quae *studiis* quondam rapta fuere *meis*; […] (lines 95–99, p. 58).

Or, and this is my proposition, does the speaker regret that his younger ego had little interest in literature and learning and is now hunting for the hours that were stolen *from his studies* by bison hunting etc.? This would suit the leitmotiv that he was born far from civilization and feels inferior.

Some lines below, the ego explains why he took part in such dangerous activities:

> Non ut acerba libens vitare pericula nolim,
> Sed sociis et in hoc cedere turpe fuit (lines 139–140, p. 59).

Mikoś and Booth offer contradicting interpretations of the first verse (italics M.R):

> *Not because I didn't wish to avoid* danger, / But for fear of shame to yield to my friends (trans.: Mikoś, Hussovianus n.d., #2).

> *Not that I did not welcome* facing harsh dangers, but I was ashamed to show myself inferior to my comrades in this (trans.: Booth, p. 36).

Booth made an error in his translation. After replacing the verb *vitare* („avoid") by its antonym („welcome"), he forgot to change the negations accordingly. The

[14] Lewis; Short, 1962, p. 1285: II: "*ease*, *inactivity*, *idle life*" or III „*Leisure*, *time* for any thing; esp. for literary occupation".

ego *would have preferred to avoid* swimming in icy rivers but surrendered to group pressure. This may suggest a certain biographic crack when the speaker broke with the Lithuanian way of life and became a scholar and outsider.

The fourth paragraph to be discussed deals with the relation of the Lithuanians to their woods. Booth gives more agency to the ruler.

> The strict edict (1) *of the king* [prince; M.R.] protects the mothers, and his care preserves the rural wealth. (2) *The nation prefers* its woodland riches to gleaming gold, and (3) *the king* rightly *considers* the woods his most valuable possession, even though numberless ships come to the nearby shores, which often teem with all sorts of merchandise (transl.: Booth, p. 38).

> (1) *Principis* edictum matres immite tuetur
> Et sua sylvestres cura perennat opes.
> Hac [has – M.R.] sibi divitias rutilo (2) *gens praetulit* auro
> (3) Se *putat* is [!] merito maius habere nihil,
> Innumerae quamvis veniant ad proxima naves
> Litora, quae varia fervere merce solent (lines 237–242, p. 62).

As the *prince* cares for the woods (№1), Booth's translation makes him, not „the people" the implied semantic subject in line 240 (№3). However, there is no necessity to consider that the grammatical agent „the people" (*gens*), figuring in line 239 (№2), must be replaced. Line 251–252 repeats a similar idea with *gens* as explicit agent: „And although the nation is by far the richest in materials wealth, nevertheless, the people value nothing more than their forest" (p. 38). The reason for Booth's choice is the pronoun „is" (MascNomSing), which seems to be the agent („*he* believed to have"). However, the 1523-original reads „iis" (DatPl or AblPl) which together with the comparative „maius" could mean „more than", though in prose one would expect *maior quam*. In a sentence without *is*, i.e. without an explicit agent, the logical agent is „the people".

One may also consider the interpunctuation and syntactic structure, which looks different in the original old print:

> Has sibi divitias rutilo gens praetulit auro.
> Se putat iis [!] merito maius habere nihil.
> Innumere quamvis veniant ad proxima naves
> / littora, quae varia fervere merce solent
> (Hussovianus, 1523, Ossol. #19).

Is the wood „a more profitable resource than" those named in the next lines, or „the most valuable possession"?

The fifth and last example is similar: the question of the agent is completely open due to the specifics of the ACI construction. Who will abandon the forests, if the hunt does not take place in the prescribed form – men or bisons?

> Semper in excelso vis est versata virorum;
> Hoc fieri quadam religione f e r u n t [agent: men, the people].
> A f f i r m a n t [agent: the people] solitum totis *excedere* [agent ?] sylvis,
> Dum non *v i n c u n t u r* [subject: bisons] congrediente manu[15]
> (lines 393–396, p. 65).

Booth's translation takes up the idea of the locals' quasi-religious reverence of courage and understands the bison hunt as a kind of *rite de passage*, which takes place in a sacred space:

> Manly strength h a s always b e e n highly v a l u e d, and their belief in this is almost religious. They s a y that it is customary *for men* to *withdraw* entirely from the woods, when the beasts a r e not b e i n g c o n q u e r e d in close combat (transl.: Booth, p. 41).

Mikoś assumes that the agent is the same as in *vincuntur*, i.e, wrong hunting will dispel the bisons: „Reportedly *the animal leaves* his woods, / When man doesn't fight in an open manner" (transl.: Mikoś, Hussovianus n.d., #5; italics M.R.). This interpretation agrees with an idea expressed in lines 283–290 (natural resources will decay when not exploited properly) and with the Laurinus episode (lines 559–564) that mentions a ban on hunting with firearms.

Shortcomings

These examples underscore the necessity of a parallel reading. Unfortunately, anyone who attempts to compare original and translation will realize the book's inconvenient composition, as the two versions do not face each other but follow one after the other. Comparison is also impeded by formatting the translation as continuous text and abstaining from numeration of verses (5, 10, 15 etc. could have been added in square brackets). The additional headings within the translation cannot compensate for this deficit. The separation of the two language versions also leads to a division in the footnote comments. Anyone who only reads the Latin original will miss explanations of realia, historical context, and information on Hussovianus' sources that deal with knowledge about the bison. Those readers who concentrate on the translation will miss not only information on language and metre, but also on the intertextual references to Virgil, Ovid, Horace etc.

[15] Highlights and comments: M.R.

These comments on intertextuality are, from the point of view of literary studies, the most important information provided in the *apparatus* as they prompt further analysis. Most of them were already discovered by Pelczar in 1894. He rendered the mere localization of the sources in his introduction (in the subchapter on style, grammar, and metrics: Hussovianus, 1894, p. XXXIX–XLI). Booth transferred this information to his footnote *apparatus* and added the very quotes, which is a valuable service. Among these sources and influences, there are little new intertextual connections, i.e., authors and texts *not* mentioned by Pelczar that mirror Booth's individual reading experience[16]. A reference to the Polish Neo-Latin author Paulus Crosnensis was dropped (Pelczar, 1894, p. XLII).

The most profound critique in this review, however, affects Booth's genuine sphere of competency: the bilingual edition is based on a deficient foundation. Booth unconsciously refers to the very problem in the introduction: „For this translation, I have relied almost exclusively on Pelczar's 1894 text, which comes with notes and a Latin introduction. For CdB 97 [=the correction of a (presumed) mistake, see below; M.R.], I have used the 1980 Minsk edition" (p. 11/12). The blind reliance of editions is highly problematic, in particular as the editor-cum-translator reports that „during a 2009 trip to Poland I was able to see, hold, and leaf through the original 1523 Kraków edition […] at the Czartoryski Library"(p. 12). Why did he not take a xerox, photograph or handwritten copy? Why did he not ask the library for a scan in 2018, when he was in fact preparing a book? Apart from one reference to a typographic curiosity (p. 49, fn. 27: „Parentheses are in the original edition, which I saw *meis oculis* in Kraków"), nothing bears witness of a consultation of the original.

Before naming in detail some of the mistakes that result from this methodological fault, a word on its general dimension. Pelczar's normalizing interferences in the original were accepted blindly and the general correctness of his transcription taken for granted[17]. Where something seemed strange, Booth consulted not the original, but a second edition: Doroshkevich's transcript in the Latin-Belarusian-Russian edition (Hussovianus 1980). This was the case in respect to line 97, where a word seemed to be missing. Booth's footnote 22 (p. 58) explains: „*Tota* is not in the Pelczar text. Rather, it comes from the 1980 trilingual edition. […] Without *tota*, the meter does not work". However – why is there a „rather"? The problem is in fact easy to solve – the Minsk edition reads *tota* (Hussovianus, 1980, p. 14). Doubts occur only if one does not consult the original printed book but an unreliable copy. If we open or scroll through the multilingual edition of *CdB*, which was familiar to Booth (see above), the problematic line 97 has the word „tola" (Hussovianus, 2007b, p. 137). This popular edition took the Latin text from an internet source (see Hussovianus, 2007b, p. 172), in

16 I could not find the following references in Pelczar's edition: fn. 2 and 3 in the poem addressed at Alphio (p. 55); fn. 7, 12, 13, 32, 62 in the elegy (Latin text). The allusion to Homer, *Iliad* 1.4-5 (fn. 22, p. 41; fn. 46, p. 66) also seems to be new.

17 Doroshkevich speaks of altogether 56 changes by Pelczar (Doroškevič, 1979, p. 79).

which OCR mixed up *t* with *l*[18]. Booth may have worked with the referred-to homepage or a related source, as the multilingual edition contains, in addition to the doubtful transcript, facsimile copies of the old print that would solved this problem.

In 2019, ten years after Booth's trip to Krakow, large-scope digitalization projects made a huge number of old prints accessible online. This was also the case with *CdB*, which aggravates this methodological shortcoming. One has to consider *pro reo* that he would have needed some help by colleagues or librarians. (Neither the meta-catalogue *Fundacja Bibliotek Cyfrowych* (FBC) nor the *Dolnośląska Biblioteka Cyfrowa* (DBC), in which the Ossolineum stores digital copies, give any results for #*Hussovianus*; one should use the Polish #*Hussowski*.) The catalogues inform us that *Ossol XVI.O.761* was added on 19 June 2009[19].The copy stored at the Czartoryjski Library seems to have been digitalized quite recently („In our library since: Sep 24, 2021"[20]). However, as the collection of the *Biblioteka Książat Czartoryjskich* was sold in 2016 to the National Museum at Krakow, it is possible that this digital copy was stored at a different place earlier. The exemplar of the *Zentralbibliothek Zürich* has been accessible as part of the database *Brill Online Primary Sources* for some time and was accessible in December 2021 in open access (for signatures, see my bibliography).

Obtaining a copy of *CdB* and consulting the original asks for some effort, but this is justified by the result. Quite randomly I came across half a dozen mistakes in Booth's edition. Checking his corrections of *CdB*, marked by footnotes, I realized that they in fact deal with Pelczar's slips of the pen. One further example stems from my work on an article in 2017 and several mistakes have been corrected by an anonymous hand in the exemplar of Pelczar's edition I scanned in 2014 (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek P.o.lat. 353 m-4). A systematic comparison certainly will extend this list:

- In footnote 38 (p. 62), Booth comments „The Minsk text corrects Pelczar's *illina* to *illinc*". This is what we read in the original line 257.
- Footnote 39 (p. 62) criticizes an „extra syllable" that ruins the pentameter scheme in line 258. This is Pelczar's mistake: he wrote *erruptor* instead of *emptor*.
- Footnote 43 (p. 65) states a metrical irregularity of line 375. It seems to be caused by a syllable which is long by position – in the original there is a short one. Pelczar read „dulc*es*que"; Doroshkevich „dulc*e*que" (Hussovianus, 1980, p. 22) and this can be deciphered in the original.
- Mikhail Pozdnev (St. Petersburg) solved my problem with a seemingly difficult verse by reminding me that the original line 237 reads „ha*s*" instead Pelczar's senseless „ha*c*".
- Additionally, my exemplar of Pelczar's edition corrects Pelczar's "hic nil" into the original „nihil hic" in line 105.

[18] https://knihi.com/Mikola_Husouski/Carmen_de_Bisontis-lat.html (accessed 29.09.2021).
[19] https://www.dbc.wroc.pl/publication/3167.
[20] https://cyfrowe.mnk.pl/publication/27275.

The methodological sin to pass over the original affects not only the micro level but influenced the whole conception of the bilingual edition. An unfortunate choice is the title that was put at the very beginning of the translation respectively the Latin-language version. Instead of *Song of the Bison / Carmen de bisonte*, there is „Nicolai Hussoviani Carmina / Edidit, praefatione instruxit, adnotationibus illustravit Ioannes Pelczar. / Cracoviae / Typis universitatis Jagellonicae / provisiore A.M. Kosterkiewicz / 1894" (p. 53) and the same in English (p. 31). This strengthens the impression that the editor-cum-translator did not study the original. This title is also misleading, as Booth did not translate Pelczar's edition of the complete works of Hussovianus, but only the first section. Nor is *Song of the Bison* a translation of the complete sixteenth-century print – following Pelczar, Booth omitted eight shorter poems.

Hussovianus' book is no chaotic manuscript nor some random choice of poems, but a carefully composed ensemble, in which the accompanying texts (in Belarusist terminology: the foreword-afterword complex) play a significant role. Booth did not question Pelczar's method, who pasted the omitted *carmina minora* into the fourth section of his edition. However, if one reads the information on provenience carefully (or leafs through Hussovianus, 2007a), one realizes that Hussovianus' poetic oeuvre consists basically of three book publications. There are only three single poems[21]. Among the eight poems missing in Booth's edition, two address Hussovianus' patron Vitellius, whose ideas appear in *CdB*, one criticizes a neo-pagan sacrifice of a black bull in plague-stricken Rome. Booth mentions them in the introduction, and they certainly would add interesting aspects.

Finally, it is a real pity that the bilingual edition does not include the two intriguing pictures in the very beginning and on the last page of the original book. An edition addressing twenty-first-century readers used to abundant visual material should include them, in particular as they illustrate the truly pan-European dimension of Renaissance. The second page of CdB shows the Milanese coat of arms of Queen Bona – no Polish eagle or Lithuanian cavalryman – that is accompanied by two heraldic poems. Hussovianus indeed hoped for support by the Queen. The illustration at the very end of *CdB* is the point of departure for a philological quest one should not withhold from readers. It shows a bust of the Roman god Terminus, surrounded by quotes in the three classical languages of learning, and connects not only Hussovianus' book but a whole book series to the star humanist Erasmus Desiderius of Rotterdam. The analysis of this second emblem underscores how much research on *CdB* can profit from a broad approach based on the pan-European or even global perspective that is expressed in the very concept of Neo Latin Studies[22]. Many attempts to localize the elegy, book,

[21] In Pelczar's edition: section IV, no. 9–11 (Hussovianus, 1894, p. 109–110). The Lithuanian bilingual edition follows the book scheme; the isolated poems and the letter to the bishop of Przemyśl constitute the last chapter (Hussovianus, 2007a, p. 105–110).

[22] Scholars who read Belarusian will find valuable background information (Niekraševič-Karotkaja, 2009, 126–130). Due to the restrictions of the genre „review", I had to cut from my contribution a summary of her results followed by my own analysis and interpretation, which

or author in national contexts become dead ends whereas following up the different connections to sixteenth century pan-European culture opens up new vistas on *Carmen de bisonte*.

Despite the many critical remarks on Booth's bilingual edition, I am convinced of its significance for research. It has the potential to attract new readers who will connect *CdB* to their horizon of experience and who will give the exchange of ideas new impulses.

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in several respects took a different turn. I hope to publish this omitted investigation as an article in future.

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