

Wiktor Szymborski

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1827-2616>

*Jagiellonian University*

**Book Review:**  
**Tomasz Graff, *Najstarsze bractwo różańcowe w Wadowicach 1616–1822***  
**[The oldest Fraternity of the Rosary in Wadowice 1616–1822], "Historia-Hereditas-Ecclesia," a series edited by Andrzej Bruździński and Tomasz Graff, vol. 8, Krakow 2020, pp. 241, Wydawnictwo Księgarnia Akademicka, ISBN 978-83-8138-306-6**

The author of the reviewed study has investigated the history of his home town Wadowice for many years and he has recently published in print the results of his painstaking archival and library queries on Marcin Campius Wadowita, one of prominent professors of the University of Krakow. Very well-acquainted with sources referring to Wadowice's past as well as well-versed in the history of the Church in the region, the author decided to publish the book of the Wadowice confraternity together with a lengthy, erudite commentary.

The publication consists of seven chapters, introduction, conclusions, and (importantly) appendices which contain both an edition of the book itself and the tables with data on the confraternity members' social structure. Before outlining the content of the study, I should emphasize that the author included numerous photographs of the confraternal book. Iconographic

material was supplemented by images of the rosary painting displayed in the church in Wadowice and further photographs related to the confraternity's history. The choice of the photographs is not arbitrary since in a way they supplement the content of the study.

One important remark before I go on to discuss the study: the book is addressed not only to a narrow circle of specialists such as historians, theologians or regionalists. In spite of its academic character, it can be of interest to lovers of Wadowice and its surroundings; for the sake of ease of reading, Latin documents were translated into Polish (e.g. see translation of an excerpt from *Decretum Reformationis* of 1708 on page 41 and 52–53, acknowledgement of the allocation of land to the chaplain of the confraternity of the rosary on page 49, visitation of 1748 on page 55 and 63–64). This solution will certainly broaden the potential audience of the book.

In the introduction, the author described the current state of research on the Wadowice confraternity. Moreover, it is worth noting that he presented the history of the manuscript which is intended to be the subject of further research. Critical source editions of currently missing treatises are rarely encountered in literature. In this case, the 18<sup>th</sup> century confraternal book was kept in the Parish Archive of the Basilica of the Presentation of Blessed Virgin Mary in Wadowice until 2005; at present its whereabouts are unknown. Fortunately, the author is in possession of photographs of the manuscript, which together with scans made available by Mr Artur Oboza became the basis of this edition. In this way, the reader has a unique opportunity to become acquainted with currently lost albeit, as proved by Tomasz Graff's research, highly valuable source of historical data not only on Wadowice. Since the book was misplaced, there is no extensive codicological description of the item itself. The author describes the structure of the book, the way in which it was kept, and its entries in chapter 7. In order to provide the reader with a more comprehensive introduction to the history of the archive material created by confraternities, the structure of the book was presented against a wider backdrop of Krakow's early-modern confraternal books. The sources of the monograph submitted for review have been supplemented by archive material kept in the Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow, the National Archive in Krakow, Archive of the Polish Dominican Province in Krakow, collections of the Jagiellonian Library and the Library of the Catholic University of Lublin.

Aware that the publication will be read not only by experts on the confraternal movement in the Republic of Poland, the author outlined key

historical facts concerning the phenomenon of religious confraternities, with special emphasis on fraternities of the rosary. Using both classical studies, e.g. by Rev. Kumor or Rev. Bruździński, Western literature (note the author's familiarity with publications on the Dominicans' contribution to the confraternal movement), the publication discusses processes whereby confraternities were established, the role of fraternal meetings as well as selected treatises on the subject. Some themes, e.g. those related to Father Abraham Bzowski and his role in the popularization of confraternities of the rosary, could have been discussed more extensively, although this would exceed the scope of the author's interest, i.e. the Wadowice confraternity.

Consistently performing his goal of combining scientific research with reaching the widest audience possible, the author continues by discussing the history of the town of Wadowice. In addition to a matter-of-fact outline of the town's history, the reader will find valuable and interesting descriptions of scenes from everyday life of its inhabitants, inclusive even of information on witchcraft trials or common offences. When introducing the history of the church, the author used data from ecclesiastical visitations to provide a more accurate picture of the condition of the church in the period.

From the third chapter onwards, Tomasz Graff presents multiple aspects of the activity of the Wadowice confraternity of the rosary, starting with the explanation of the intricacies of its establishment in early 17<sup>th</sup> century. At this point the reader learns, e.g., about the confraternity's connections with the altar benefice of St. Anne or the financial basis of the confraternity's functioning. We also find a complete list of promoters and prebendaries (together with the description of their activities) who played an important role in its history. Conveniently, the author arranged the results of his research in numerous tables, which facilitates finding specific data and brings order to the narration.

With the intention to provide a more accurate history of the confraternity, Tomasz Graff used information contained in records of ecclesiastical visitations, thanks to which we obtain a valuable image of the confraternity's property and finances. The information is not only of value to researchers studying the history of Wadowice and its region but also to historians interested in the broadly-defined material culture. The last chapter is not so much a description of the book itself as an accurate presentation of the confraternity's enrolment statistics in each year of its functioning. The results were presented in the form of diagrams, which is a great help in

following the author's discourse. Information about the origin of the members of the confraternity or their social background undoubtedly enriches the image of Wadowice's past and the entire region. Onomastic analyses within the book will be of use to linguists; the book will also prove valuable to regionalists or genealogists, as well as historians of education since it contains entries on school teachers, e.g. in Klecza or Uśc (chapter 7, page 85). Considering the research Tomasz Graff has been carrying out for years on Marcin Campius Wadowita, a University of Krakow professor, it comes as no surprise that he included a passage on the relatives of this academic and theologian who made their entries to the confraternal book (see also comments on page 103 on the explanations and identifications of persons recorded in the book).

The reviewed monograph deserves attention not only due to its erudite introduction on confraternities in the history of the Republic of Poland, an in-depth study on the functioning of the confraternity in Wadowice, but primarily due to the edition of the source. Bearing in mind that the book will be read by people who wish to trace the genealogy of their families, the author took care to include translations of Latin passages. For this purpose, daily dates of entries in the confraternal book were provided in square brackets in the appendix that contains the edition of the source. However, the publication does not feature a glossary of Latin terms (e.g. pertaining to the functions performed by the members of the confraternity such as almoners, treasurers, or offices which they held) which appear in the appendix only in Latin. Such a glossary would make the appendix more accessible to readers who are not professionally involved in the study of history and do not know Latin, all the more so since the names of the offices referred to in the main text of the monograph may be overlooked among the multitude of other details, and the author included a glossary of Latin abbreviations which appear only in the confraternal book.

The effort involved in identifying confraternal entries deserves recognition; please note that the book contains as many as 2231 entries from 1616–1821. An attempt at encompassing such a long timeline is not an easy task, and the author fulfilled it successfully. Regrettably, the quality of photographs and scans of pages from the years 1802–1821 (as noted on page 99), which the author was in possession of when preparing the edition, did not allow so meticulous an analysis as was performed for the earlier period. It is important to note that structure of the index does not include the appendices, and as a result omits the content of the confraternal book. Researchers

studying genealogy will therefore be forced to read through the entire 100-page book.

Summing up, the study submitted for review is a multifaceted monograph on the activity of the confraternity of the rosary, complete with an edition of the confraternal register. Thanks to the multiplicity of themes and details of the town's history and everyday life of its inhabitants, the publication deserves notice of historians studying the past of Wadowice and its region or the confraternal movement, art historians, theologians, linguists, as well as general audience.