



Classical Antiquity in Cartoons and Comics in Periodicals for Children and Teenagers in People's Poland

Marta Pszczolińska*

In the context of communist Poland, magazines, journals, and periodicals for children and teenagers emerged as the most accessible form of popular culture, with circulation of up to 1 million copies per issue.¹ Access to other media was either limited or more expensive in comparison to the average salary.² Children and their parents often chose colorful periodicals at newspaper kiosks across the country or subscribed to them. Furthermore, school libraries frequently subscribed to magazines so they could be widely read. Weeklies, bi-weeklies, and

* Faculty of “Artes Liberales,” University of Warsaw, Nowy Świat 69, 00-046 Warsaw; m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl. The article presents the result of research conducted within the project “Classical Antiquity in Periodicals for Children and Young Adults in Polish People’s Republic (PRL) – Classical Education, Promotion of Political Ideology, or Expression of Resistance? Changes in the Reception of Classics in the PRL from 1945 to 1989,” funded by the National Science Centre (NCN) Preludium grant no 2022/45/N/HS2/00549. – The first version of the article was presented at the 17th Congress of the *Fédération internationale des associations d’études classiques* which took place from 7 to 11 July 2025 at the University of Wrocław, Poland. I am sincerely grateful to the organizers and to dr Hanna Paulouskaya who inspired the panel. – I use the names “Polish People’s Republic (PRL),” “People’s Poland” and “Communist Poland” interchangeably for the years 1945–1989, according to the common tradition followed by researchers and historians in the region. Cf. Rogoż, *Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 5.

1 Rogoż, *Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 193, 224, 243.

2 Rogoż, *Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 41–42, 66, 94–95, 133–34, 199.

monthlies, intended as an important tool to support school curricula,³ were popular among children due to their graphic design, interesting stories, and light, accessible presentation style. Children waited for each issue, shared it with siblings and colleagues, and discussed it in detail. The availability of this medium led to its utilization in the classroom, especially in the first post-war years.⁴ The readers tended to peruse each page, from the beginning to the end, following the adventures of their favorite protagonists, reading stories about animals and the surrounding world of nature, news, and letters from the everyday lives of their peers from the country and from distant lands. They also engaged with entertaining anecdotes and fun facts, as well as solving riddles, playing charades, crosswords, and rebus puzzles, and taking part in contests. Some collected titles for many years, passing them to their own children when the time came.

What children did not realize at the time was that the content was not neutral and reflected ideas and ways intended by the adults to achieve various agendas, not only the educational ones. The new regime constantly used the press as the primary and most important tool to shape the minds of Polish children to fit the patterns imposed by the communist authorities. Not only did school textbooks contain reading passages featuring political leaders, heroes of the communist movement, *udarniks*, or ordinary people of all ages building the socialist future of People's Poland,⁵ but magazines were also required to use the same pattern. They were subject to the same censorship approval procedures as all publishing activities.⁶ Different from the case of textbooks, to engage readers with their content rather than lecture them, magazines followed the *dulce et utile* principle,

- 3 On using the press and periodicals in supporting education, see, e.g., Gronio-wska, "Jak korzystać z czasopism," Bańkowska, "Pół miliona *Płomyczków*," Aleksandrak, "Czasopismo i książka dziecięca," Aleksandrak, "Niektóre zagadnienia czytelności," Aleksandrak, "Niektóre problemy czasopisma w szkole," Papuzińska, *Wychowawcza rola prasy dziecięcej*, Bandura, "Wykorzystanie prasy w nauczaniu," Frycie, "Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży," Aleksandrak, "O czasopismach dziecięcych," Frycie, "Czasopiśmiennictwo," Rogoż, *Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży*, Niesporek-Szamburska and Rogoż, "Czasopisma dziecięco-młodzieżowe."
- 4 Sokół, "Oblicze współczesnych czasopism," 125; Frycie, "Czasopiśmiennictwo," 178, Niesporek-Szamburska and Rogoż, "Czasopisma dziecięco-młodzieżowe," 221.
- 5 Cf. Pszczolińska, "Not only Parandowski," 197–98.
- 6 See e.g. Ciećwierz, "Kształtowanie się państwowego aparatu nadzoru," 28, Kondek, *Władza i wydawcy*, 29–77, Krawczyk, *Pierwsza próba indoktrynacji*, 12–13,

concealing moralizing, didactic, and educational values. They used layout, illustrations (including full-page), cartoons, and comic strips as incentives, along with light, engaging narration, to provide fun and entertainment. Even when complex matters of war experiences were presented, the manner of presentation was more attractive than in a textbook. The content on Classical antiquity followed the same standards and was presented not only in educational texts as essential knowledge, but also in an entertaining, non-serious way to provide fun and attract young readers, matching their age and the policy of the particular press title.

This article examines which aspects of antiquity could be the subject of humor in People's Poland.⁷ Satirical drawings, comic strips and humor sections from leading periodicals have been selected and analysed in order to explore how Classical antiquity was perceived in caricature or satirical manner, how it was laughed at, laughed about and laughed with in order to mock, to entertain and amuse, to teach and educate, or to use Aesopian language referring to life in People's Poland. Among almost 2000 references to Classical antiquity identified in periodicals for children and young people published during People's Poland,⁸ over 10% are humorous. From this extensive corpus, only the most representative examples were selected for presentation here to demonstrate the long evolution of the content intended as funny, amusing, or satirical. Specific drawings obviously used or abused antiquity, reflecting the times of their publication and the author's views on the regime. However, learning through fun, which is an effective way of acquiring knowledge, was also the purpose of drawing antiquity in a humorous or satirical manner. The example of the cartoon sections shows how, over the years, the "ancient" content evolved, expressing an anti-regime attitude, mocking authorities, and entertaining young readers who, fascinated by the comic heroes, often absorbed, quite unconsciously, the knowledge and values at the roots of European culture.

7 People's Republic of Poland was formally founded in 1952, the name is however widely used for the years 1945–1989. Cf. Bednarek, "Czy będzie zapomniana," 5.

8 A full list of articles, short stories, letters, press releases, poems, etc., as well as graphic elements (illustrations, cartoons, comic strips, photographs) with references to antiquity, published in magazines for children and young people in the People's Republic of Poland between 1945 and 1989, gathered within the project "Classical Antiquity in Periodicals for Children and Young Adults in Polish People's Republic (PRL)" (as of March 2025) is available at Repository for Open Data, <https://doi.org/10.18150/RWREKG>.

1940s: SATIRICAL DRAWINGS DURING THE FIRST POST-WAR YEARS IN POLAND

In the post-war period, communists subtly influenced perceptions of antiquity. It was not explicitly considered to be an unwanted heritage, particularly as references to antiquity appeared in Marxist texts, including the *Manifesto* and Lenin's works. The press editors instead subtly suggested that antiquity might be regarded as representing the *ancien régime*, thus serving to contrast it with the newly established order – people's rule. Examples of this attitude are manifest in *Wola Ludu* [The People's Will] – a daily edited by the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) and *Pokolenie* [The Generation] – a bi-weekly published by the Union of Polish Youth (ZMP).⁹

The first example is a comic strip from *Wola Ludu* dated 10 March 1946, that portrays the merry adventures of the journalist Fujara [Loser],¹⁰ in which the protagonist wakes to nocturnal noises caused by people fleeing in panic. It turns out that they are not running away from an atomic bomb, but from a herd of horses, including a winged one. Once captured, Pegasus spoke: "I am Pegasus of the Opera, I want to go to the state stables." The strip depicts Pegasus as a symbol of the old order, associated with the cultural form available before the war and mainly for elites. By saying these words, however, Pegasus also serves as a metaphor for the will of change and transformation. Even a mythical creature favors a state stable over a posh opera house, which symbolizes the approval of collective ownership of property by the people. The moral of the story is that what is of the state, that is to say, common, or of people, is deemed to be good enough for all.

Another satirical sketch that appeared in *Wola Ludu* dated 23 June 1946,¹¹ a mere week before the national referendum, was strongly politically motivated (fig. 1). The issue comprised two principal themes: first, a report from the ongoing trial of the former Reich Governor of the German-occupied territory of *Wartheland*, with sketches by Wiktor Bryx; and second, the vote in the approaching referendum. The latter was widely commented on in many issues preceding the vote as part of a campaign encouraging readers to vote "Three Times Yes," in accordance with the party's policy. The first question of the three asked in the referendum was: "Are you in favor of abolishing the Senate?"

9 For more on political caricature during this period, see Murawska-Muthesius, "Teraz malujemy prawdziwych ludzi"; Słęzak, "Karykatura polityczna w okresie stalinizmu."

10 Bryx, "Wesołe przygody reportera Fujary," *Wola Ludu* 59 (1946): 6.

11 "Wesoła prasa," *Wola Ludu* 142 (1946): 9.

Wola Ludu suggested that the answer should be in the affirmative, and to that end, it includes a caricature and satirical rhymes designed to assist readers in making their decision. The satirical drawing depicts two senators leaning against the Senate building, representing big landlords of noble lineage and “rich criminals,” i.e., class enemies. The portrayal of these figures as fat and abominable oppressors of the people and remnants of the old order is a deliberate strategy employed for eliciting mockery and, ultimately, their removal.¹² An ironic rhyme under the sketch explicitly proclaimed: “Down with the Senate!” The Senate is depicted as an ancient-looking building, but it also resembles a Polish manor house, thereby creating an impression of a disconnect belonging to the pre-war cultural milieu of nobility. The role of laughter is strictly political, yet it subtly shapes perceptions of antiquity. The reader is supposed to criticize and mock the institution of the Senate as it existed prior to the war, rather than to denigrate the ancient Senate and the legacy it has bequeathed. (fig. 1)

The subsequent use of antiquity in a socio-political caricature can be observed in *Pokolenie* [The Generation], edited by the Union of Polish Youth (ZMP), dated 23 December 1948 (fig. 2).¹³ A satirical drawing accompanies a text full of irony that refers to the Greek Civil War. The sketch depicts an ancient Greek temple with several easily recognizable Doric architectural elements, including a pediment adorned with a sculpture group and triglyphs. However, a notable departure from traditional depictions is the substitution of the columns for figures attired in military uniforms and the distinctive Wolseley pattern pith helmet, a symbol strongly associated with colonialism. In a description characterized by irony and sarcasm, the reader is informed that this is a metaphorical building of Greece ruled by *monarchofasistes*, monarchist-fascists, supported by “caryatides,” i.e., the Anglo-Saxons. According to *Pokolenie*, “Washington sages” plan to defeat the army commanded by General Markos (the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE) led by Markos Vafeiades) and to suppress the national liberation movement of the masses of the Greek people. However, despite the extraordinary efforts of Greek fascists and their imperialist supporters striving to end Greek democracy, the building of monarchist-fascism is collapsing because brave soldiers of Markos fight fiercely and prevail over “Athenian rogues.”

In this instance, antiquity is employed for propaganda; that is to say, it is used to deride an obsolete order that is to be superseded (a

12 On visual tools used to depict the enemy for propaganda purposes, see Tamás, “Caricatures as Propaganda Weapons,” 18–35.

13 *Pokolenie* 16 (1948): 9.

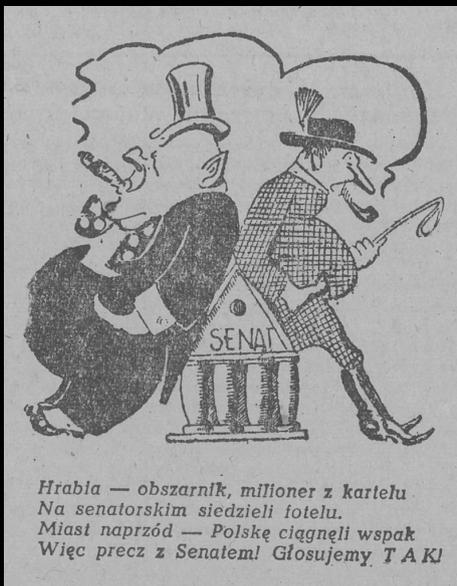


Fig. 1. "Down with the Senate! Vote YES!"
drawing from *Wola Ludu* 142 (1946).

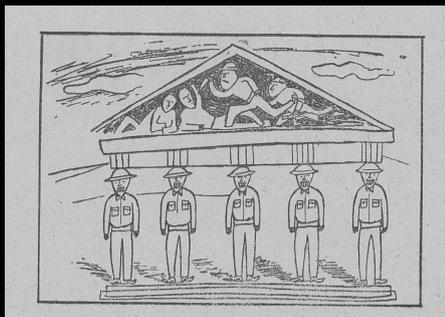


Fig. 2. Satirical drawing from
Pokolenie 16 (1948): 9.

technique that is analogous to the “Down with the Senate!” drawing, fig. 1) and, concomitantly, to evoke Greek democracy as being on the side of the people. The building itself is intended to emulate the Parthenon; however, it bears only a superficial resemblance, as if the illustrator had never seen it or did not care enough to depict the birth of Athena or the dispute between Athena and Poseidon featured in the pediment. In fact, what may initially appear to be negligence is, on closer inspection, not the case. The rationale for utilizing such a rudimentary sketch is that it is highly improbable that anyone in Poland possessed a comprehensive understanding of the architectural characteristics of the Royal Palace in Athens, the Palace of Psychiko, or the royal estate in Tatoi, where King Pavlos established his permanent residence in 1948. Consequently, an exact depiction of these structures would have been futile as mere symbols. In this paradigm, the monarch and the royal forces, supported by the Americans, are symbolized by a Parthenon-like edifice, the most easily identifiable building in Greece. The pediment depicts a violent assassination, rather than Athenian myths. As the assassins’ silhouettes are reminiscent of the renowned statues of the Tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton from the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN 6009, 6010), which have been extensively reproduced in history textbooks, this can be interpreted as a warning to the Greek king and his adherents.

Another attitude towards antiquity can be observed in a comic strip from *Świat Młodych* [The Youth’s World],¹⁴ a magazine for scouts and primary and secondary school students, dated 23 May 1949. It was published anonymously, but the line-drawing style suggests it was likely created by Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski. At that time, he worked for *Świat Młodych* as a novice cartoonist, signing some strips and drawings with his pseudonyms, Chmiel [Hops]¹⁵ and Dziadzio Chmiel [Grandpa Hops]. As illustrated in Figure 3, this comic strip presents an educational scene in which Julius Caesar is depicted as one of the most significant historical figures. A pupil is asked to name an opponent of Julius Caesar. He answers incorrectly, naming Kara Mustafa Pasha. In response to the boy’s ignorance, both historical figures materialize from the pages of the textbook to teach him the facts. The comic strip concludes with the boy’s comment: “This is no joke! Having been threatened, I must learn history properly.”¹⁶ This lesson is intended to instill in the reader the understanding that Julius Caesar is not a figure to be misinterpreted. Antiquity is regarded as a relevant part of cultural

14 *Świat Młodych* 16 (1949): 3.

15 As in the hop plant.

16 “To nie żarty, po takich groźbach muszę wziąć się porządnie do nauki historii.”

heritage that merits attention. In this comic story, it is the boy's lack of knowledge that is condemned, and not particular historical characters or the process of learning history. This approach is consistent with the way Chmielewski subsequently developed in his later comic strips and comic books – the use of humor for educational purposes.

1950s–1980s: DRAWING ANTIQUITY IN QUIZZES, ANECDOTES, AND CARTOONS

This attitude, showing humorously that education about the heritage of antiquity was a must for the Polish child, is confirmed by numerous illustrated quizzes and contests published in various magazines.¹⁷ The quizzes varied in difficulty and were often illustrated with witty drawings. In certain instances, absurd and erroneous answers were provided to facilitate the selection of the correct option whilst also ensuring an element of enjoyment. The identification of some of the answers was relatively straightforward; for instance, in the quiz from *Dookoła Świata* [Around the World],¹⁸ where unusual means of transport were discussed (fig. 4). Curiously, the author, Jantar (Ernest Petrajtis), asked mainly questions referring to antiquity, which contrasts with the tendency observed in other quizzes, where the proportion of antiquity-related questions was typically less significant. A notable example here is the “Wielki konkurs afrykański” [Great African Contest],¹⁹ where, among many contemporary characters shaping politics during the 1950s, such as Abd el-Krim, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Haile Selassie, Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and Ahmed Sékou Touré, there is only one representative of antiquity, Hannibal (fig. 5).

Seldom would a contest focus only on mythological questions,²⁰ and the editors would not intentionally emphasize the ancient past and its heritage. A notable exception was the series of eleven episodes entitled “Konkurs X Muz” [Ten Muses Contest] published in 1987.²¹ Each episode was dedicated to a different Muse, including the Muse of cinema.

Many of the quizzes and contests included simple questions about ancient mythical and historical characters, authors, scientists, and their works; participants could easily find the answers in an encyclopedia or by asking their parents. The accompanying illustrations

17 E.g., *Dookoła Świata*, *Filipinka*, *Magazyn Razem*, *Mówią Wieki*, *Płomyczek*.

18 *Dookoła Świata* 49 (1954): 13.

19 *Dookoła Świata* 276 (1959): 18–19.

20 E.g., “Zagadka mitologiczna” [mythological riddle], *Filipinka* 11 (646), 1982.

21 “Konkurs X Muz,” *Magazyn Razem* 2 (34)–12 (44), 1987.

frequently presented the characters in an amusing way, appealing to young readers and easy to remember. Occasionally, ancient characters were drawn with readily identifiable attributes, for instance, Diogenes with a barrel, Archimedes with a bathtub (fig. 6), and Hannibal with an elephant (cf. fig. 5).

It was rare for a contest to present a significant challenge that could not be easily solved and that would require knowledge and answers not found in an encyclopedia. It was, for instance, the case of “The Contest with Rewards, *Bon Appétit!*” from 1964.²² The objective was to identify and recognize fragments of various literary works and to indicate the protagonist, the author, and the title, matching each with an illustration by Jerzy Flisak. Flisak was a highly distinctive author of characteristic drawings published in many children’s magazines, starting from *Świerszczyk* [Little Cricket], where his comic series about the dog Bobik was extremely popular among children. The recurrent theme in all the fragments of literary works was eating. Alongside passages from contemporary novels, the translation of the *Odyssey* by Jan Parandowski was included as the fragment “A.” In the era before browsers, participants had to be exceptionally well-read to complete the quiz.

The entertaining way classical antiquity was presented to young readers was also evident in ancient anecdotes published in various magazines. Some anecdotes were ridiculous and so unlikely that they had to be fabricated; in some cases, a column from *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was cited as the source.²³ However, some of them were meticulously prepared and included notes on ancient characters and references to ancient sources.²⁴ This approach ensured that having fun was accompanied by reliable information. In the monthly *Mówią Wieki* [The voice of past ages], which specialized in historical content, a segment was dedicated to presenting historical figures in a light-hearted manner. This segment, entitled *Plotki z brodą* [Ancient gossip], featured both famous and lesser-known ancient figures alongside more contemporary anecdotes. The humor of ancient philosophers and political leaders was employed to both attract the attention of young readers and entertain them, with a view to inspiring further reading.

22 “Konkurs z nagrodami pt. ‘Smacznego,’” ill. by Jerzy Flisak, *Filipinka* 7 (174), 1964, 6–7.

23 “Jeszcze o Pitagorasie,” *Dookoła świata* 45 (1968): 13.

24 E.g., “Anegdoty antyczne” in *Mówią Wieki* 3 (75), 1964, used two sources: Diogenes Laertius and Vittorio de Falco, *Demade oratore: Testimonianze et frammenti*, seconda edizione, Libreria Scientifica Editrice, Napoli, 1954.

Using antiquity as an inspiration for jokes could also take a straightforward form. Cartoons depicting the funny side of antiquity made people smile and were meant to provide entertainment rather than to mock specific individuals. Most of them could be easily understood without words (fig. 7). It rarely occurred that a witty text was included, like the one accompanying the Venus of Milo cartoon (fig. 8), where the classical statue is used by a mum to preach to her daughter, as she admonishes: "Look what happens to those who bite their nails."

A considerable number of cartoons were linked to Cupid, who was regarded as the agent "responsible" for people's timeless actions and behaviors. Similarly, sirens-mermaids functioned as protagonists in a significant number of cartoons. The Polish language does not differentiate between "sirens" and "mermaids" and because the coat of arms of the city of Warsaw is Syrena, originally, a dragon-like winged siren which developed into a contemporary maiden with a fishtail, mermaids as sirens were a very popular subject of humor, as they were considered familiar, "our own," or even national. Gwidon Miklaszewski created a series of cartoons called "Nasza Syrenka" [our little mermaid], consisting of over 8,000 drawings published from 1948 until 1981 in *Express Wieczorny* [Evening Express]. It features a tailless contemporary *syrenka*, that is, a regular everyday woman experiencing "our" reality. This series became the most easily recognizable part of Miklaszewski's body of work. A comparable series featuring Syrenka – the protector of waters, water life, and weaker creatures – was illustrated by Włodzimierz Lewiński for *Świat Młodych* (fig. 9).

It was only in the 1980s that classical themes in cartoons began to allude to the current socio-political situation, thereby exposing the communist authorities' abuse of power and expressing an anti-regime attitude. A salient example of this is provided by the satirical drawing by Henryk Cebula in the weekly *Radar* of 1983 (fig. 10),²⁵ which presents an ordinary citizen as the mythical Sisyphus pushing a boulder. What the modern Sisyphus does not see is that he labours against a substantial cohort of officials who compound the difficulty of the task. The message is clear – the People's state does not collaborate with people working together for the future against all odds; instead, it opposes its own citizens, making their lives much harder (fig. 10).

25 *Radar* 3 (1983): 24.

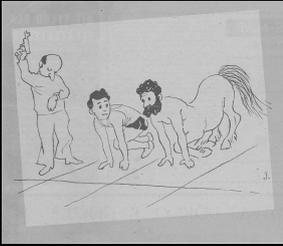


Fig. 7. A drawing by Jantar (Ernest Petraitis), *Dookoła Świata* 31 (1954).

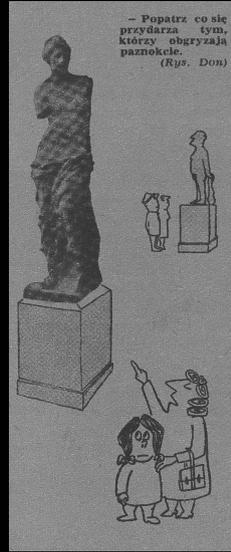


Fig. 8. A moral lesson in a museum by Don (Gwidon Miklaszewski), *Dookoła Świata* 21 (1962).

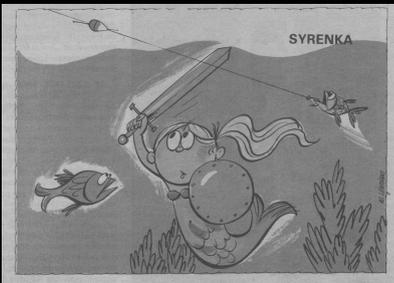


Fig. 9. "Syrenka" by Włodzimierz Lewiński, *Świat Młodych* 28 (1980).

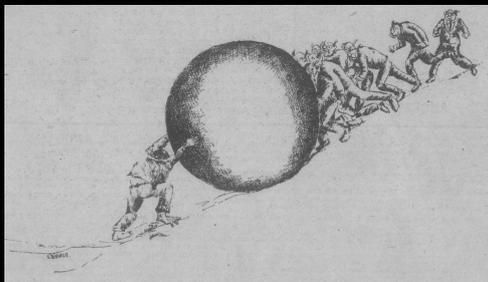


Fig. 10. Satirical drawing by Henryk Cebula, *Radar* 3 (1983).

LEARNING THROUGH FUN – AMUSING ANTIQUITY ACCORDING TO H. J. CHMIELEWSKI

The great contributor to amusingly increasing awareness of antiquity, combining fun and learning, was the already-discussed Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski. Initially known as Dziadzio Chmiel, he later adopted the name Papcio Chmiel [Daddy Hops] and used it for almost 70 years. Chmielewski soon became one of the most popular and influential creators of Polish comics. He worked for *Świat Młodych* from its beginnings, and in 1957, he created the inaugural comic instalment²⁶ featuring Tytus de Zoo, a talking chimpanzee whom two boys, Romek and A'Tomek, set free from a lab on a space rocket, where he was locked and used as a test animal (fig. 11). The series rapidly gained popularity among Polish children, teens, and adults who used to read *Świat Młodych* because of comic strips with Tytus and his human companions and not because of its official policy of promoting communist scouting. The popularity of the strip inspired Wydawnictwo Harcerskie [Scouting Publishing House] in 1966 to publish Tytus' adventures in book form, thus launching the *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* series, which became the longest-published Polish comic book and one of the most popular among many generations²⁷ (fig. 11).

The comic's basic plot revolves around the character of Tytus²⁸ and his friends, the boys Romek²⁹ and A'Tomek,³⁰ who try to humanize Tytus by teaching him the knowledge and social skills necessary for humans. The narrative explores the process by which the chimpanzee is supposed to become more human. The adventures of the three protagonists offer a wealth of learning opportunities as they discover the intricacies of the world and its various aspects, all presented in an incredibly witty and entertaining manner. What Tytus learns to acquire the same knowledge the boys presumably already know from school is what the reader learns while being entertained by his adven-

26 "Romek i A'Tomek" 2, *Świat Młodych* 86 (625), 25 October 1957.

27 For more about Chmielewski and *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* series, see, e.g., Moczko-dan et al., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek*.

28 Naming the animal protagonist after a Roman emperor and adding the seemingly aristocratic name "de Zoo" creates a strong comedic effect, which is only intensified by Tytus' personality traits, as he is definitely not a character with aristocratic qualities.

29 A diminutive from Roman, quite popular in the 1950s.

30 It combines the *alpha privativum* with the name Tomek (Tom), but it also creates a new association – atomic.

tures.³¹ Chmielewski's educational goal is explicitly expressed by his protagonists in Book Five. When A'Tomek mentions detailed data of the Kiel Canal (length 98,7 km, depth 11,3 m, built in 1895) and Romek asks why he provides them, he explains:

Our booklet is meant not only to entertain but also to teach.

Laughter just for laughter's sake is an unnecessary waste of giggles.³²

As a graduate of a pre-war humanistic gymnasium where Latin was compulsory, Papiro Chmiel acquired a general knowledge of classics. Soon after creating the characters, he began to draw on the Greek mythological world in instalments of the comic strip in *Świat Młodych* in 1958.³³ Classical and mythical antiquity is introduced through a dream device. While exploring Africa, the boys and Tytus are bitten by a tsetse fly carrying sleeping sickness, fall into a coma, and begin dreaming. In A'Tomek's dream, he is transferred to the Greek forces at Troy, where he assumes the Greek name A'Tomos. The Greeks are rendered weaker due to the absence of Achilles, wounded in his heel by an arrow. In response, A'Tomek orders to build a wooden horse. When already inside the horse, he reads in a history textbook that Troy was burnt and its citizens slaughtered to the last man. As he does not want to participate in a massacre and bloodshed, he opts for a peaceful resolution, rejecting the option of further conflict (fig. 12). The warriors emerge from the horse playing music for the Trojans and head to the main square where the Greeks and the Trojans are united listening to music.

These mythical alterations outrage History, which sees A'Tomek as reckless for changing the past, leading to a possible rewriting of textbooks. History sentences him to be exiled to the Cyclops' Island (fig. 12). Polyphemus asks the question whether it was he who did not believe in cyclops in the fifth grade, and threatens to eat him for breakfast with some mustard. In order to escape, the boy deceives the cyclops without blinding him and encounters a centaur who is unwilling to be treated as a horse. The centaur's kick lands the boy on a Persian vessel, where he persuades the galley rowers to start a rebellion. They subsequently end up in the Labyrinth of the Minotaur. Having found the exit, the galley men swim to the mainland where the Sphinx (fig. 13)

31 For the educational value of Chmielewski's comics, see Marciniak, "Metakomiks dydaktyczny," for the propaganda value, see Grzegorzewski, "Obraz wartości PRL."

32 Chmielewski, *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga 5*, 10. Transl. M. P.

33 *Świat Młodych* 78 (722) – 83 (727).



Fig. 11. The first comic strip featuring Tytus, *Świat Młodych* 86 (1957).

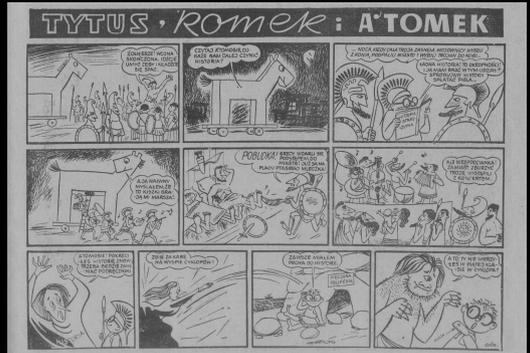


Fig. 12. Greek forces performing a concert for the Trojans, *Świat Młodych* 79 (1958).

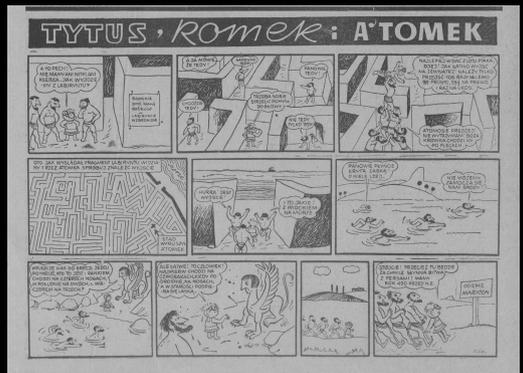


Fig. 13. A'Tomek and his companions face the Labyrinth and the Sphinx, *Świat Młodych* 82 (1958).

poses a riddle that A'Tomek swiftly resolves. Later, the boy moves from the mythical past into historical events. After the battle of Marathon, it is he who is tasked with informing the Athenian wives and elders to bake a victory cake for the soldiers. He runs to Athens, where the laurel is bestowed upon his head. Then the action moves to Romek's dream, featuring a flying carpet and Egyptian antiquity.

Despite the brevity of A'Tomek's dream, which encompasses a mere six instalments of 10–13 panels each (cf. figs. 12–13), and despite the image of the ancient world being simplified in a similar way to that of the contemporary world, what is essential in the strip is that they provide important, well-known references to antiquity which the young mythology fans can easily recognize or, if the characters are not familiar, learn new stories while having fun. The better the reader knows mythological characters, the more fun they will have discovering the changes the author made to the canonical version of the myth and history. Chmielewski chose as many mythical characters and events as possible in just six instalments, each three tiers long. The incorporation of modern elements that lead to absurd situations resonates with the child reader and is easily remembered, as it achieves a comedic contrast between great ancient myths and historical events and the prosaic present. Polyphemus uses mustard to spice human flesh; A'Tomek tricks Polyphemus to lift a heavy rock by betting a decal,³⁴ as a boy of this age would do in real life; he needs a detour during the marathon run, because of the “no entry” traffic sign; on the marathon route, he passes a refreshment station for runners. All these tiny details, interwoven into the ancient plot, are amusing, and the reader is unaware of acquiring “real” knowledge dissimulated beneath comic aspects. When A'Tomek sees a “Marathon Housing Estate” sign, he exclaims to his companions (and to the reader): “Stop! The famous battle with the Persians is about to take place here! The year is 490 BC,” hence young people can assimilate the date of the battle effortlessly in the course of reading as a fact smuggled or snuck in within the content. References to antiquity in the text layer can also be easily understood and retained by children, along with puns that make them laugh.

In 1988, Avner Ziv published a study based on two experiments exploring the role of humor in the learning process.³⁵ Significant differences were observed between the groups studying with humor and the control groups that used a more conventional, traditional method without humor. Humor in the learning process positively influenced

34 Decalcomanias were a type of water stickers, very popular among children at the time, collected, exchanged, glued onto various children's belongings.

35 Ziv, “Teaching and Learning with Humor.”

students, with experimental groups achieving higher examination scores than control groups. Recent studies have indicated that fun in learning is not only an additional value for learners but also an effective strategy for consolidation.³⁶ In school education, fun facts are frequently the elements of the lesson that are most easily remembered, so humor helps retain more information. For Papcio Chmiel, the value of fun in the learning process was obvious and relevant from his early years as a novice graphic artist, decades before the subject of humor as a teaching tool was examined through research confirming its efficacy. His comic strips and later comic books were intended to teach while entertaining, and to entertain while teaching, and were meticulously prepared to achieve this dual objective through positive emotions. Despite the fact that his comic books were controlled by censors and published by state publishers and for that reason not entirely free from propaganda aspects and didactic goal of shaping young readers into socialist citizens and responsible participants in the social order of People's Poland,³⁷ ancient plots from 1958 seem to be intended for the primary purposes of entertainment and pleasant learning about antiquity without double meaning and subtle (or explicit) ideological persuasion.

Another example of references to antiquity in Chmielewski's comic strips is evident in an episode in which the boys encounter Cupid falling from the sky (fig. 14).³⁸ The character is presented with his most recognizable attributes: the bow and the arrows of affection. The boys treat him as if he were a contemporary boy: first, they give Cupid a haircut, then send him to school, and take his bow to try it out. Thanks to its mythical power, they make peace between a couple of fighting boys. Unfortunately, Tytus pricks himself with Cupid's arrow and falls in love with a tailor's dummy. The very same amusing story was reused on two separate occasions. As early comic strips were illustrated in monochrome or with a single additional color, in later years they were entirely redrawn in color and developed according to the new standards adapted to the reality of the 1980s. In 1980, it appeared in *Świat Młodych* 127 and 128 (fig. 15) with some alterations

36 For the educational value of humor and having fun, see e.g. Garner, *Humor in Pedagogy*; Willis, "The Neuroscience of Joyful Education"; Willis and Willis, *Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning*, 141; Okada and Sheehy, "The Value of Fun in Online Learning."

37 Especially Book 4 (1969) and Book 5 (1970), see Grzegorzewski, "Obraz wartości PRL," 165–67.

38 *Świat Młodych* 79–84 (1340–45), 1964.



Fig. 14. Two-tier black-and-white instalment from 1964.



Fig. 15. The matching fragment as a part of a colored four-tier instalment from 1980.



Fig. 16. Geology experimental class, Świat Młodych 111 (1979).

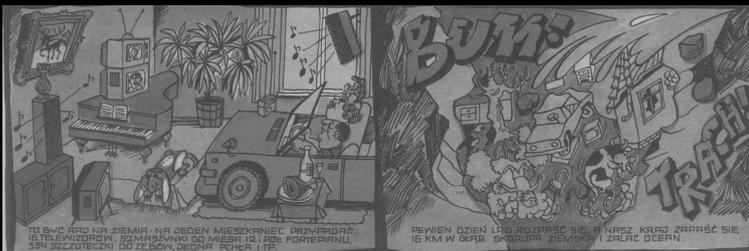


Fig. 17. Wealthy Atlanteans and the catastrophe, Świat Młodych 121 (1979).



Fig. 18. Romek and A'Tomek instruct Tytus before going to the theater, Świat Młodych 147 (1985).



Fig. 19. Laughing Thalia as the representation of comedy, Świat Młodych 148 (1985).

(e.g., A'Tomek uses the bow instead of Tytus), and was subsequently published in Book 16 a year later.

In 1979, Papcio Chmiel published a new series that formed the basis for Book 15, which appeared in 1982.³⁹ The primary theme of these instalments is geology. Initially, the boys are required to learn some theory, and when they do, the reader acquires the same knowledge and realizes that learning need not be a tedious, arduous process. The lesson is not limited to studying the earth's crust diagrams; the second part of learning takes place in the kitchen, where they prepare a layered poppy cake to illustrate the movements of strata during orogenesis (fig. 16). Having eaten the cake, Tytus proceeds to a natural history museum to look at exhibits. Chmielewski introduces children to the idea that learning can involve play, helping readers assimilate scientific facts effortlessly.

During their subterranean expedition in a vehicle called *wkrętacz* – “screwdriver,” the boys arrive at the sunken city of Atlantis. They discover the story of an opulent society, prosperous in Western goods unavailable in People's Poland. The fall of this civilization is attributed to a natural catastrophe (fig. 17), after which the Atlanteans transformed into living crystals. Curiously, although an Ionic column of Greek provenance is depicted in subterranean remains of the sunken city, thereby indicating its association with Atlantis and ancient Greek culture, the mythical Atlanteans from the era preceding the fall are not depicted attired in ancient garments against an ancient background. Papcio Chmiel selected a highly contemporary environment of material goods, which were regarded as luxuries and objects of desire in People's Poland. These include a car, color TV sets, boom boxes, and even a large ham, all of which were generally out of reach for the average person during this period (in 1979, there were severe shortages of meat and meat products, and from 1981 to 1989, many foods and other goods were rationed). In this manner, ancient Atlantis – a civilization characterized by an abundance of material goods – stands in stark opposition to People's Poland, a society marked by scarcity (fig. 17).

Another example of how Chmielewski combined educational and entertaining goals in his comic strip depicting antiquity can be found in 1985⁴⁰ (fig. 18). The author employs child protagonists to present a concise overview of Greek ancient theater and the Muses associated with the theater arts: Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, and Thalia (fig. 19). As Tytus is about to attend a theatrical performance, Romek and

39 For more on Book 15, see Pszczolińska, “Entry on: Tytus, Romek and A'Tomek, Book 15.”

40 *Świat Młodych* 146–48 (1985).

A'Tomek furnish him with the relevant information. Their presentation is illustrated with drawings, and the comic strips are accompanied by "Słowniczek," a mini-vocabulary of difficult words. The two instalments were composed in a strict educational dimension. The knowledge was not veiled by the course of the adventure, but rather presented as a lecture by A'Tomek and Romek aimed at Tytus and the reader. The objective of the lecture was to provide an accessible explanation of the origins of theater and of the appropriate behavior in a theater during a play. While instalment 2 provides important information, Tytus' silly comment detracts from the lecture's gravity, making it funny. In instalment 3, Thalia is depicted laughing loudly, and the letter "E" in many words, including Melpomene and Terpsichore's name, is replaced by a reversed uppercase sigma (fig. 19). The ancient theater theme was developed in Book 19 in 1992, which discussed the history of theater and performances, depicted as the amusing adventures of Tytus during his theater education.⁴¹

1960s: ŚWIAT MŁODYCH AND FUNNY DIDACTICISM

It was not solely Papcio Chmiel who referred to classical antiquity in a not-so-serious manner; other authors in *Świat Młodych* also presented and popularized the ancient world to children, employing humor and entertainment to inspire young readers. In 1965, a play by Wanda Chotomska and Waclaw Bisko was published, accompanied by illustrations by Jerzy Flisak.⁴² The play was titled "Whoever sees the Odyssey will burst with laughter: An opera according to Homer." The play was prepared for presentation at a scouting camp, ready to be staged by the campfire. The performance required six actors: Odysseus, Penelope, Cyclops, Calypso, and two sirens. The setting of the "opera" is a contemporary reality with which the audience is familiar, thereby producing a comedic contrast between the past and the present, similar to the approach taken in the *Tytus Romek and A'Tomek* series. The piece would be most entertaining when performed by colleagues and friends, and not only read; in order to be more attractive to the audience, as in actual opera, the actors would sing their texts in rhymes to the tunes of popular songs, such as *Santa Lucia* or *Τα παιδιά του Πειραιά*⁴³ by Manos Hatzidakis (performed by Melina Mercouri) from the film *Ποτέ*

41 For more on Book 19, see Gąsior and Pszczolińska, "Entry on: Tytus, Romek and A'Tomek. Book 19."

42 Wanda Chotomska and Waclaw Bisko, "Do rozpuku się naśmiejcie kto zobaczy Odyseję: Opera według Homera," *Świat Młodych* 65 (1430), 1965.

43 English title *Never on Sunday*, Polish title *Dzieci Pireusu*.

την Κυριακή,⁴⁴ which was very popular at the time thanks to the Polish interpretation of the song *Dzieci Pireusu* by the girls' band *Filipinki*.⁴⁵ Homer, the final performer in the play, encourages the audience to read Homer whenever they are bored.

This is not the only example of Chotomska and Bisko's attempts to bring classical antiquity closer to children and to encourage them to learn about the ancient heritage. From 1965 to 1966, they published an entertaining graphic cycle.⁴⁶ Concise rhymes followed the characteristic illustrations produced by Flisak. Each instalment contained a reference to one mythical or historical character. A short, dense description of what they were famous for was accompanied by a didactic discourse that emphasized a particular virtue to follow, a vice to be eschewed, or an action to be avoided. For example (fig. 20):

Prometheus gave us fire,
 For which humanity praises him.
 Suffering torment, he gave us a warning:
 Stay away from fire.
 Fire is a wonderful gift,
 But it is wrong
 When a little Prometheus
 Wants to light fires in the forest.⁴⁷

A few other witty messages can be summarized:

- Sisyphus had to push the rock; do not let your mother be Sisyphus, help her carry heavy shopping bags;
- Heracles, the hero, cleaned the Augean stables; you can be like him, clean your room;

44 Jules Dassin, dir., *Ποτέ την Κυριακή*, Melina Film, 1960; translated into English as *Never on Sunday*.

45 Manos Hatzidakis, *Dzieci Pireusu*, Niki Ikonomu and Filipinki, 1963.

46 *Świat Młodych* 85 (1450), 1965 – 9 (1479) 1966.

47 Prometeusz dał nam ogień,
 za co ludzkość go pochwała.
 Cierpiąc męki – dał przestrożę:
 trzymaj się od ognia z dala.
 Ogień jest to dar wspaniały,
 ale bardzo dzieje źle się,
 kiedy Prometeusz mały
 chce ogniska palić w lesie.
 (Trans. M. P.)

- Greek rhetorician Demosthenes strived to speak beautifully; be like Demosthenes, do not use bad words;
- Nero burnt Rome, and it was not fine; do not smoke, it is a bad habit, and you can burn your lungs (fig. 21);
- Seneca was wise and witty; be like this wise man, be witty, but do not make stupid jokes.

The series referenced several notable figures: Prometheus, Achilles, Sisyphus, Helen of Sparta, Orpheus, Heracles, Archimedes, Pythagoras, Demosthenes, Socrates, Romulus and Remus, the Capitoline Geese, Nero, Poppaea, Lucullus, a gladiator, Virgil, Petronius, Seneca, and Cicero. The aim of the series was clearly defined – learning through fun – combining basic knowledge of ancient characters, educational *savoir-vivre* advice presented as erudite counsel of conduct, and amusing line drawings by Flisak. These drawings contained relevant elements associated with the character and antiquity, making the reader smile and relax rather than being treated to a moral lesson with a strong sense of didacticism. Although the idea of small booklets presenting a particular myth or character to children was not new – such mini-myths had been published even before the Second World War⁴⁸ – the combination of short rhymes and simple drawings encapsulating an entire mythical story or a character in a small box was unique.

It is worth noting that Jerzy Flisak was also the author of other drawings related to antiquity. In the 1980s, he illustrated two books by the classicist Anna Maria Komornicka: *Historie nie z tej ziemi* [Stories Not from This World]⁴⁹ (1987) and its sequel *Niż Ariadny, czyli po nitce do kłębka* [The Thread of Ariadne, or Finding Your Way]⁵⁰ (1989). In the first book, the protagonists are Krzyś, Stefanek, and Elżbietka – siblings whose adventures, including encounters with mythical characters, let the reader learn about antiquity pleasantly. In the second book, the author explains phrases rooted in Greek and Roman antiquity interwoven into amusing children's stories. Flisak's drawings add to

48 For instance *The Adventures of Odysseus During his Return from the Siege of Troy* (1910), *The Winged Horse*, *The Mysterious Chest* (1917), *Midas: Złoty król* (1931). For more, see Glinicka and Pszczolińska, "Entry on: The Adventures of Odysseus During his Return from the Siege of Troy," Pszczolińska, "Entry on: Greek Tales: The Winged Horse, The Mysterious Chest," Ciołek and Paulouskaya, "Entry on: Midas: A Golden King."

49 For more on *Historie nie z tej ziemi*, see Grabarek and Pszczolińska, "Entry on: Stories Not from This World."

50 For more on *Niż Ariadny, czyli po nitce do kłębka*, see Grabarek and Pszczolińska, "Entry on: The Thread of Ariadne, or Finding Your Way."

the light, entertaining manner of the books, as his characteristic style, well known to children, evokes their favorite magazines and reinforces the humorous dimension of the stories.

1970s: ANTIQUITY AND LAUGHTER JUST FOR LAUGHTER'S SAKE

Other comic strips in *Świat Młodych* have also referenced Greek myths. However, in contrast to the approach adopted by Papcio Chmiel, it can be argued that some of these references may be considered as “waste of giggles” and “laughter just for laughter’s sake.” For instance, in her comic strip *Jonka, Jonek and Kleks*, Szarlota Pawel delved into the Daedalus and Icarus myth (fig. 22),⁵¹ a well-known subject in the fifth-grade curriculum (ca. 11-year-olds). Szarlota Pawel, called *the grande dame* of Polish comics, created Kleks [ink blob], a creature born from an ink stain. In this instalment, Kleks examines whether the “fairytale” of Daedalus, as he terms it, is based on truth. He prepares technical specifications, obtains feathers from an old plume, and some rooks. In the absence of wax, he pastes the feathers together using flytrap stickers. The experiment is unsuccessful. His conclusion did not indicate that the subject was a mythical tale impossible to replicate, nor that he had committed a methodological error. Instead, he assumed that the flytrap stickers had not functioned as intended. Kleks’ behavior in this setting is consistent with that of a young boy of the same age, as he attributes his failures to external factors.

Pawel employs the myth as a humorous reference rather than as a medium for educational objectives. The narrative does not include the traditional account of the Daedalus and Icarus myth; the reader is not informed of their fate. Instead, Kleks approaches the myth entirely from a technical perspective as an experiment he wants to recreate or bust. In the instalment, mythical antiquity plays only one role – to entertain the reader with a new adventure featuring a popular character. The experiment is merely a single episode, not associated with any prior or subsequent narrative arc (fig. 22).

Drawing antiquity in a not-so-serious manner was also present in *Świerszczyk* [The little cricket], a weekly intended for a younger readership aged 6–8. However, examples of such usage are rare, as this target age group was considerably younger than the age at which children were taught about antiquity in school (10–11). A notable example is the 1978 comic strip “The Sly Fox” (fig. 23),

51 Szarlota Pawel, “Jonka, Jonek i Kleks 25,” *Świat Młodych* 33 (1975).



Fig. 20. and 21. Prometheus, *Świat Młodych* 85 (1450), 1965, and Nero, *Świat Młodych* 1 (1471), 1966.



Fig. 22. Kleks experiments with artificial wings, *Świat Młodych* 33 (1975).



Fig. 23. The Fox and the Crow comic strip, *Świerszczyk* 50 (1721), 1978.

which is based on the Aesopian fable “The Fox and the Crow.”⁵² This is an interesting and quite unusual case. The strip was bilingual, a rare treat for the children in the early stages of learning to read and write in their own language. From 1976 onwards, Świarszczyk began publishing a special Polish-English issue at the end of each year, which was warmly received by audiences in Poland and abroad.⁵³ It probably reflected the idea of learning languages at an early age, which might have been misplaced, because children learn foreign languages predominantly through repetition of words and phrases rather than reading them. As the magazine was aimed at early primary schoolers, the comic represents the letter “r” in both its upper- and lowercase forms. This choice is somewhat curious, given that neither the word “fox” nor “crow” in Polish or English starts with “r.” The educational dimension of the strip refers to the learning of letter writing, rather than the teaching of literary *topoi* and associations with Aesop, Phaedrus, or La Fontaine. The name of the author and illustrator is not mentioned.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding the preservation of pivotal elements of the fable, the comic is deprived of an important element: a moral at the end. The possible reason is not to lecture the child but only to entertain, introducing a short, funny story with the objective of facilitating the acquisition of literacy skills. The entertaining character is highlighted by the familiar presentation style, which includes a smiling fox reminiscent of a childlike sketch, the use of colored crayons, and handwriting that is not perfectly refined, but rather the work of a novice.

The year 1976 marked the launch of the magazine *Relax*, which targeted much older audiences than 6-year-olds. It aimed to make young people relax and to provide the pleasure of reading rather than the pleasure of learning. *Relax* contained comic strips by the best Polish authors of the time, and it became extremely popular among young people from the very first issue. Despite its relatively brief existence, spanning a mere five years, references to Classical Antiquity emerged in comic strips on several occasions.

In the second issue of the magazine, a one-shot referring to antiquity appeared. The title of the work was *Profesor Pechol odkrywa*

52 “Sprytny lis / The sly fox,” Świarszczyk 50 (1721), 1978.

53 “Od Redakcji,” Świarszczyk 49/50 (1981): 594.

54 Świarszczyk and Płomyczek published the fable multiple times, usually according to Lafontaine or – even more often – according to Ignacy Krasicki, whose fables were included in the curriculum. Aesop’s name has never been quoted as the ancient author. See Świarszczyk 42 (1609), 1976; 27–28 (1949–1950), 1983; 24 (2051), 1985; Płomyczek 1 1980; 18, 1981; 6, 1983.

[Professor Jinx discovers], and it was designed by Szymon Kobyliński.⁵⁵ Kobyliński was a Renaissance man: historian, stage designer, writer, graphic artist, illustrator, and a pioneer of Polish comics. He reflected his observations of contemporary Poland in his popular caricatures and satirical drawings. The protagonist of the comic under discussion, an archaeologist, fulfils his life dream when he discovers sensational remnants of a Roman villa near Kraków, that resemble Livia's house in Rome (fig. 24). Unfortunately, the dream turns into a nightmare when the Polish reality meets his discovery. Garbage trucks dump rubbish into the pit, destroying the excavations. It is caused by the lack of a functioning rubbish dump for the city of Kraków. Curiously, the ending, despite its entertaining nature, is imbued with a sense of bitterness, reflecting the systemic maladies afflicting People's Poland, namely shortages, and the dysfunction of communal institutions.

Janusz Christa, who by 1976 had already become well-known for his *Kajko i Kokosz* comic series,⁵⁶ was the second author to draw on antiquity in *Relax* magazine. He employed the Laocoön group humorously in the comic strip *Dżdżownica* [The Earthworm].⁵⁷ The Laocoön group was depicted as a group of fishermen combating earthworms, accompanied in subsequent panels by an egg of Columbus that was substituted by an earthworm (fig. 25). The objective of the comic can be clearly defined as a form of entertainment, as evidenced by the author's incorporation of various references. These references are used with the intention of eliciting humor, thereby achieving the desired comedic effect – to make people laugh for laughter's sake. Furthermore, the artist reinterpreted the historical moment of Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon in the comic strip entitled *Coś z ryb* [Something fishy].⁵⁸ Christa employs a pun – in the famous phrase *alea iacta est*, instead of *alea*, “dice,” in Polish “kości,” there are fish bones, in Polish “ości,” so the drawing shows Caesar being assisted in his decision-making process by fish (fig. 26). In both cases, however, Christa did not use antiquity as a primary theme. Instead, it functioned as an ornament, a decorative embellishment, demonstrating his erudition and creativity.

55 *Relax* 2 (1976).

56 The comedic adventures of *Kajko* and *Kokosz* were published in instalments, mainly in *Świat Młodych*. As a comic book series, it ran from 1972 to 1992. Notably, one of the series' albums, *Szkola Latania* [The School of Flying], which was first published in *Świat Młodych* in 1975, became the first comic book to be included in school curricula as a mandatory reading.

57 *Relax* 4 (1977).

58 *Relax* 2 (1978).



Fig. 24. "Prof. Pechol odkrywa," *Relax* 2 (1978).



Fig. 25. Fisherman Laocoön fighting earthworms, *Relax* 4 (1977).



Fig. 26. Julius Caesar and fish bones, *Relax* 2 (1978).

1980s: *POPULUS ROMANUS IMPERIO MEO CONTENTUS NON EST*: PLAYING WITH CENSORS

During the late 1970s and 1980s, there was a shift in the attitude towards classical themes in cartoons and comics. The use of ancient themes initially seemed merely funny, but later began to allude to the current socio-political situation (cf. fig. 10, fig. 24), uncovering the malfunctions of the communist regime and the maladies of everyday life in Poland. In Book 4 from 1969, Papcio Chmiel is compelled to praise the Polish People's Army, and in Book 5 from 1970, he similarly portrays the Soviet Young Pioneer camp Artek. However, in the instalments from 1979,⁵⁹ published later as Book 15, he vehemently criticizes the totalitarian system, presenting it as a state of dwarfs.⁶⁰ Comics appeared to be an excellent tool for playing with censorship while alluding to seemingly innocent themes from a bygone era.

This is the case with the first and only Polish comic with text written in Latin. The concept was initially formulated by two young classical philologists from the University of Warsaw – Barbara Milewska, now Professor *emerita* Barbara Milewska-Ważbińska, an expert in Neo-Latin studies, and Jerzy Ciechanowicz, known for his efforts in popularizing classical antiquity. They convinced the editors of the Christian socio-cultural magazine *Tygodnik Polski* [The Polish weekly] to publish their comic strip in instalments of three panels each.⁶¹ It was entitled *Impluvius et Compluvius apud Sarmatas* and was followed by a competition in which book prizes were awarded for the best translation of the Latin text (fig. 27).

Having published only nine instalments, the editors decided to discontinue the comic strip “due to the reduced volume of the magazine.”⁶² Indeed, the weekly was reduced from 16 to 12 pages starting with the next issue; however, this justification for withdrawing the strip appears somewhat unconvincing, given the strip's modest extent, comprising a mere three panels (figs. 28–29). Following the political transformation of 1991, the *Impluvius et Compluvius* was published as a standalone comic book of 84 pages, 15 of which previously featured in *Tygodnik Polski*. The book's content seemed to indicate that the weekly's cancellation of the strip may have been caused by factors

59 Papcio Chmiel, “Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek,” 17–30, *Świat Młodych* 125–139 (1979).

60 For more, see Grzegorzewski, “Obraz wartości PRL,” 165–67, 174–75. In fact, instalments depicting an adventure in the state of dwarfs appeared for the first time in *Świat Młodych* 55–69 (1972), but in 1979 were completely redesigned.

61 *Tygodnik Polski* 14–22 (1988).

62 *Tygodnik Polski* 22 (1988), 14.

other than a decrease in the periodical's page count. The comic book not only includes references to Classical antiquity and can be seen as a helpful tool for learning Latin, but it also makes multiple allusions to the regime and everyday life in People's Poland.

The action takes place in Roman antiquity, during the reign of the fictional Tiberius Claudius Maximus. Impluvius and Compluvius, two Roman legionnaires, are summoned to his palace, where they are instructed to embark on a journey to Sarmatia, a region almost entirely unexplored and unknown to the Romans. Before they begin their mission, the protagonists pay a visit to Bolko, the owner of a Sarmatian inn in Rome, because they believe he may be able to offer them valuable counsel. Thereafter, they leave Rome and head north.

The classical antiquity showcased by the authors provides a natural background for the fictional characters, and the narrative is characterized by the conventions typical of the comic book genre. The work is replete with meticulous details that are the hallmark of comic-book illustrations; for instance, a small address plaque above a mouse hole: *Hic mus urbanus habitat* (fig. 30), which entertains and educates at the same time. Despite the genre's typical overemphasis, Antiquity appears realistic in the story, as it relies on the authors' undeniable knowledge, erudition, and awareness of ancient Rome. The reader learns a lot about Rome and its architecture: the Mausoleum of Hadrian in its contemporary shape (fig. 28), Palatium Mons (fig. 28), Trajan's Column (fig. 29), Roman villas, taverns, and roads (fig. 29).

Young readers learning Latin at secondary school (aged 15–18) are the primary target audience, but the text is also accessible to any reader of the weekly. *Tygodnik Polski* was a Christian socio-cultural magazine, and while its readers were not necessarily affiliated with the organized Catholic faith, they most likely did not support the regime. To encourage young people to read, the authors use simple language, aided by the context provided by illustrations; in addition, a concise glossary is included, comprising vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical structures. References are made to Roman culture (in instalment 3 Impluvius and Compluvius greet the emperor: "Ave Caesar, exploraturi te salutant"), to ancient authors (e.g., to *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*, fig. 30); even genuine quotations well known from the classroom are used, but they do not come across as complicated excerpts, a typical source of students' "suffering" during a Latin class at school – instead, they seem to mingle with the plot naturally. For instance, when Impluvius introduces Bolco to Compluvius, he says: "Bolco saepe mecum tempus in ultimum deductus erat; una in Aegyptum ut exploratores missi sumus," which is an apparent



Fig. 27. Impluvius and Compluvius, title box from *Tygodnik Polski*.



Fig. 29. Instalment 9, *Tygodnik Polski* 22 (1988).



Fig. 28. Instalment 2, *Tygodnik Polski* 15 (1988).



Fig. 30. Panel from instalment 6, *Tygodnik Polski* 19 (1988).

reference to Horace when he addresses his former military companion in ode II 7;⁶³ when the friends leave Bolco's *caupona* late at night, the caption contains a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*: "et ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram."⁶⁴ The reader, recognizing the familiar phrases, experiences a sense of accomplishment and pride in identifying their source or reference. Furthermore, the authors' sense of humor helps the reader overcome the language barrier and partake in the pleasure of reading.

In addition to valuable classical references, the comic strips used contemporary allusions, thereby demonstrating various aspects of life in People's Poland. To depict the "ancient" Poles, the authors used a clever anachronism, presenting them as 17th-century-like nobility who identified themselves as descendants of the ancient Sarmatians. In the 17th century, the world of Polish *szlachta* (gentry) was characterized by a wide use of Latin as a second language. Moreover, this period was familiar to Polish readers due to the extraordinary popularity of Henryk Sienkiewicz's historical novels. It is a mere coincidence that Bolco (figs. 30–32) bears a resemblance to Onufry Zagłoba,⁶⁵ a witty nobleman who is one of the best-known and beloved protagonists of Sienkiewicz's prose.

The authors present a positive national trait, namely, traditional hospitality. Bolco cordially invites his former companion and his friend and prepares the finest provisions to welcome his guest. However, it swiftly becomes evident that the Sarmatians are characterized by a distinctive tendency to produce strong spirits, here represented by a potent beverage *żubrówka* – a vodka made of bison grass – that can be harmful even to the most robust Roman, such as Compluvius (fig. 31).

Polish drunkenness as a social phenomenon, the phenomenon of overcoming all obstacles through personal connections, or the phenomenon of craving "Western" fashions in People's Poland (fig. 32) are obvious facts of Polish life in the communist state, reflected in the comic strip in *Tygodnik Polski*. Nevertheless, the content potentially most provocative to the censors is present only in the subsequent narrative of events in Sarmatia, included in the comic book published

63 Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 2.7.1–2:
O saepe mecum tempus in ultimum
deducte Bruto militiae duce.

64 Verg. *Aen.* 6.268.

65 The character was also very popular due to film adaptations where he was played by Mieczysław Pawlikowski (*Pan Wołodyjowski*, dir. Jerzy Hoffman, 1969; *Przygody Pana Michała*, dir. Paweł Komorowski, 1969) and Kazimierz Wichniarz (*Potop*, dir. Jerzy Hoffman, 1974).



Fig. 31. Panel from instalment 7,
Tygodnik Polski 20 (1988).



Fig. 32. Panel from instalment 4,
Tygodnik Polski 21 (1988).

after the political transformation. The book is much more rooted in late-communist reality than the comic strip, in a world of Polish historical and cultural myths; for example, the comic mentions that Ovid's tomb is situated in Poland. The book also reveals a massive gap between people suffering shortages and their leaders living in palaces. The drastically different leader's lifestyle, luxurious and prosperous, is modelled on Roman, i.e., Western, standards. However, at the same time, the authorities fear that if the citizens were aware of what life in the West looks like, they would have fled the country. The Sarmatian leader explicitly states:

Si ille Sarmatis veram vitae Romanae imaginem monstraret, magna pars Sarmatarum illuc migrare vellet, reliqui autem vitam tam commodam agere desiderarent, quam incolae capitis mundi agant. Unusquisque vellet habitare in marmorea villa, uti aquaeductu, qui aquam domum ducat, et habere omnia, quae vitam Romae dulciorem faciant.⁶⁶

Even if the fictional Roman emperor, Tiberius Claudius Maximus, says: "Populus Romanus imperio meo contentus non est,"⁶⁷ he represents the Roman world, allowing the censor to identify a Western leader in his character, rather than grasping an allusion to Polish authorities. For the Sarmatian leader, however, such a statement was daring, and it would have been deemed too audacious to be permitted in People's Poland, even in its late years, and even in a Latin comic strip. The complete *Impluvius et Compluvius* could only be published following the collapse of the regime.

The authors of *Impluvius et Compluvius* achieved two notable accomplishments. First, they popularized Roman antiquity and demonstrated that the Latin language can be both fascinating and more accessible than at school. Second, they demonstrated a strong mutual connection that functions in both directions, showing the present as the past and the past as the present. Their comic instalments were designed to elicit positive reactions from the reader, such as smiles, giggles, and laughter. Nevertheless, their goal was not to mock antiquity; instead, it was to bring it to readers, making them smile, appreciate the finer details, and laugh at the absurdities of life.

The authors' concluding message, placed on the final page of their comic book, highlights the great value of humor and laughter.

66 Milewska, Ciechanowicz, *Impluvius et Compluvius*, 71.

67 Instalment 1, *Tygodnik Polski* 14 (1988).

Valete, amici, et memoria tenete talem hominem solum dignum esse opera antiqua virorum doctorum explorare, qui ludere sciat.⁶⁸

Soon after publication, the authors faced allegations that their comic book was a Polish version of the *Astérix* series and that it relied heavily on its French predecessor. The representation of the demarcation between Rome and the neighboring countries is similar, as is the idea of a pair of main characters – two soldiers, one small, the other large. However, while those are the only similarities between the two works, they demonstrate a conscious inspiration and a tribute to *Astérix*. The originality of the Polish comic is undeniable, mainly because of its central premise: that the protagonists are Romans discovering a non-Roman world beyond the *limes*, quite different from *Astérix & Co.*, who discover that “these Romans are crazy.”

CONCLUSION

People's Poland endured for over four decades. It is evident that the use of humor and of antiquity in periodicals for children and young people fluctuated and depended on numerous factors, such as the date, the press title, the age of the target group, the authors, their backgrounds, their views, and their creativity. The selected representative examples illustrate how the sense of humor was combined with ancient elements and used in various ways and for different purposes – satirical, entertaining, educational – creating subtle (or not so subtle) allusions expressed in Aesopian language, all serving one main goal: to attract readers and reach their minds. Cartoons and comics were important means of shaping images of antiquity, as the benefits of joy, amusement, and pleasure in the process of reading, perception, and knowledge acquisition are obvious. The fact that these periodicals contained references to antiquity in many ways, including humor, demonstrates that Classical antiquity was alive not only in schools as an element of compulsory education. It shows that it was considered something to be shared, cherished, and cultivated, even in the simplest way, with young readers and not just with scholars at universities. Readers immersing in Tytus' and his friends' adventures were so fond of their favorite characters that they not only waited for each new issue of *Świat Młodych*, but also acknowledged information that otherwise could be perceived as tedious and tiring. Attractive graphic design and witty texts were what children liked the most,

68 Milewska and Ciechanowicz, *Impluvius et Compluvius*, 81.

and gladly opened their minds to hidden messages of various nature cleverly “smuggled in” by the authors. Thanks to jokes about centaurs, ancient anecdotes, quizzes on Archimedes, Socrates, and Homer, and comic adventures of Tytus, Impluvius, and Compluvius, young people could casually acquire the foundation for understanding the universal code in which contemporary culture was rooted, the code of antiquity embedded in other references.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources of Examples

- Chmielewski, Henryk Jerzy. *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek. Księga 5*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Harcerskie, 1970.
- Milewska, Barbara, and Jerzy Ciechanowicz. *Impluvius et Compluvius apud Sarmatas*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1991.
- Dookoła Świata* 31 (1954).
- Dookoła Świata* 49 (1954).
- Dookoła Świata* 16 (1957).
- Dookoła Świata* 227 (1958).
- Dookoła Świata* 276 (1959).
- Dookoła świata* 45 (1968).
- Filipinka* 7.174 (1964).
- Filipinka* 11.646 (1982).
- Magazyn Razem* 2.34–12.44 (1987).
- Mówią Wieki* 3.75 (1964).
- Płomyczek* 1 (1980).
- Płomyczek* 18 (1981).
- Płomyczek* 6 (1983).
- Pokolenie* 16 (1948).
- Radar* 3 (1983).
- Relax* 2 (1976).
- Relax* 4 (1977).
- Relax* 2 (1978).
- Świat Młodych* 16 (1949)
- Świat Młodych* 86 (1957).
- Świat Młodych* 78.722–83.727 (1958).
- Świat Młodych* 79.1340–84.1345 (1964).
- Świat Młodych* 65.1430 (1965).
- Świat Młodych* 85.1450–99.1464 (1965).
- Świat Młodych* 1.1470–9.1479 (1966).

- Świat Młodych* 33 (1975).
Świat Młodych 120–22 (1979).
Świat Młodych 125–39 (1979).
Świat Młodych 28 (1980).
Świat Młodych 127–28 (1980).
Świat Młodych 146–48 (1985).
Świerszczyk 42.1609 (1976).
Świerszczyk 50.1721 (1978).
Świerszczyk 49/50 (1981).
Świerszczyk 27.1949–28.1950 (1983).
Świerszczyk 24.2051 (1985).
Tygodnik Polski 14–22 (1988).
Wola Ludu 59 (1946).
Wola Ludu 142 (1946).

Literature

- Aleksandrzak, Stanisław. “Czasopismo i książka dziecięca w pracy dydaktyczno-wychowawczej szkoły.” *Ruch Pedagogiczny* 2 (1964): 102–7.
- . “Niektóre problemy czasopisma w szkole.” *Życie Szkoły* 4 (1965): 20–24.
- . “Niektóre zagadnienia czytelnictwa dzieci w świetle ich własnych wypowiedzi.” *Ruch Pedagogiczny* 2 (1964): 81–97.
- . “O czasopismach dziecięcych.” *Wychowanie w przedszkolu* 4 (1979): 178–81.
- Bandura, Ludwik. “Wykorzystanie prasy w nauczaniu.” *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny* 3 (1974): 13–21.
- Bańkowska, Anna. “Pół miliona *Płomyczków* – rozmowa ze Stanisławem Aleksandrzakiem redaktorem naczelnym dwutygodnika *Płomyczek*.” *Poradnik Bibliotekarza* 4 (1963): 83–86.
- Bednarek, Stefan. “Czy będzie zapomniana?” In idem, ed., *Nim będzie zapomniana: Szkice o kulturze PRL-u*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1997.
- Ciećwierz, Mieczysław. “Problemy przemysłu drukarskiego w latach 1944–1948.” *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Białostockiej: Nauki Społeczno-Polityczne* 12 (1989): 121–36.
- Ciołek, Adam, and Hanna Paulouskaya. “Entry on: Midas; A Golden King [Midas. Złoty król] by Maria Buyno-Arctowa [Jagmin, Cio-cia Mania],” peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Available online.

- Freud, Sigmund. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Transl. J. Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1960 [transl. from *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten*, 1905].
- Frycie, Stanisław. "Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży okresu powojennego (1945–1970)." *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej* 3 (1977): 49–73.
- . "Czasopiśmiennictwo." In idem, *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 1945–1970, t.2.*, 174–211. Warsaw: wsip, 1982.
- Garner, R. L. "Humor in Pedagogy: How Ha-Ha Can Lead to Aha!" *College Teaching* 54, no. 1 (2006): 177–80.
- Gąsior, Agnieszka, and Marta Pszczolińska. "Entry on: Tytus, Romek and A'Tomek. Book 19: Tytus Becomes an Actor [Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek. Księga XIX: Tytus aktorem] by Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski [Papcio Chmiel]," peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Available online.
- Glinicka, Magdalena, and Marta Pszczolińska. "Entry on: The Adventures of Odysseus During his Return from the Siege of Troy [Przygody Odysseusza w powrocie do domu z pod Troi] by Aniela Orzechowska [Oksza]," peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Available online.
- Grabarek, Olga, and Marta Pszczolińska. "Entry on: Stories Not from This World [Historie nie z tej ziemi] by Jerzy Flisak, Anna M. Komornicka," peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Available online.
- , and Marta Pszczolińska. "Entry on: The Thread of Ariadne, or Finding Your Way [Nić Ariadny, czyli po nitce do kłębka] by Jerzy Flisak, Anna M. Komornicka," peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Available online.
- Groniowska, Barbara. "Jak korzystać z czasopism." *Dzieci i wychowawca* 3–4 (1946): 36–38. Available online.
- Grzegorzewski, Krzysztof. "Obraz wartości PRL w komiksie Henryka Jerzego Chmielewskiego *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* (analiza książek z lat 1966–1987)." *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis: Folia Litteraria Polonica* 3 (2017): 159–80. Available online.
- Kondek, Stanisław Adam. *Władza i wydawcy: Polityczne uwarunkowania produkcji książek w Polsce w latach 1944–1949*. Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1993.

- Krawczyk, Andrzej. *Pierwsza próba indoktrynacji: Działalność Ministerstwa Informatyki i Propagandy w latach 1944–1947*. Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 1994.
- Marciniak, Tomasz. “Metakomiks dydaktyczny: Jubileusz H.J. Chmielewskiego i międzypokoleniowy przekaz Tytusa, Romek i A’Tomka.” *Guliwer: Dwumiesięcznik o książce dla dziecka* 2 (2004): 35–42.
- . “O Tytusie polimedialnym.” *Guliwer: Dwumiesięcznik o książce dla dziecka* 3 (2011): 28–33.
- Moczkodan, Rafał, Marcin Hlebionek, Marcin Lisiecki, and Marek Jeziński, eds. *Tytus, Romek i A’ Tomek i twórczość komiksowa Henryka J. Chmielewskiego*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2024.
- Murawska-Muthesius, Katarzyna. “Teraz malujemy prawdziwych ludzi!... Słowo czy obraz? Realizm socjalistyczny w karykaturze około 1950 roku.” In *Ars Longa: Prace dedykowane pamięci profesora Jana Białostockiego; Materiały Sesji Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki*. Edited by Maria Poprzęcka, 258–72. Warsaw: “Arx Regia,” 1999.
- Niesporek-Szamburska, Bernadeta, and Michał Rogoź. “Czasopisma dziecięco-młodzieżowe w latach 1945–1989.” In *Literatura dla dzieci i młodzieży (1945–1989): T. 3*. Edited by Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz and Katarzyna Tałuż, 219–52. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2013.
- Okada, Alexandra, and Kieron Sheehy. “The Value of Fun in Online Learning: A Study Supported by Responsible Research and Innovation and Open Data.” *Revista e-Curriculum* 18.2 (2020): 319–43. Available online.
- Papuzińska, Joanna. *Wychowawcza rola prasy dziecięcej*. Warsaw: PWN, 1972.
- Pszczołińska, Marta. “Entry on: Greek Tales: The Winged Horse, The Mysterious Chest [Baśnie greckie: skrzydlaty koń, tajemnicza skrzynia] by Maria Buyno-Arctowa [Jagmin, Ciocia Mania],” peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Available online.
- . “Entry on: Tytus, Romek and A’ Tomek, Book 15: Tytus Becomes a Geologist [Tytus, Romek i A’ Tomek. Księga 15: Tytus Geologiem] by Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski [Papcio Chmiel],” peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Available online.

- Pszczolińska, Marta. "Not only Parandowski: The Icarus Myth Adapted and Modified for Children in People's Poland." *Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graece et Latinae* 35/1 (2025): 195–224. Available online.
- Rogoż, Michał. *Czasopisma dla dzieci i młodzieży Instytutu Wydawniczego „Nasza Księgarnia” w latach 1945–1989. Studium historycznoprasowe*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, 2009.
- Sokół, Zofia. "Oblicze współczesnych czasopism dziecięco-młodzieżowych." In *Młody czytelnik w świecie książki, biblioteki i informacji*. Edited by Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz and Irena Socha, 122–140. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1996.
- Szwajkowska, Anita. "Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek z perspektywy komunikatywizmu." *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica* 3 (2017): 181–197. Available online.
- Ślęzak, Joanna. "Karykatura polityczna w okresie stalinizmu na przykładzie wybranych rysunków satyrycznych opublikowanych w „Trybunie Ludu” w latach 1949–1955." In *Partia komunistyczna w Polsce. Struktury – ludzie – dokumentacja*. Edited by D. Magier, 481–503. Lublin: Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie, 2012.
- Tamás, Ágnes. "Caricatures as propaganda weapons during the First World War: a comparison of German, Austrian and Hungarian depictions." *European Journal of Humour Research* 12.2 (2024): 18–35.
- Willis, Judy. "The neuroscience of joyful education." *Educational leadership* 64.9 (2007): 1–5.
- , and Malana Willis. *Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning. Insights from Neuroscience and the Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2020.
- Ziv, Avner. "Teaching and Learning with Humor: Experiment and Replication." *The Journal of Experimental Education* 1 (1988): 4–15.

ABSTRACT

In communist Poland, magazines, journals, and periodicals for children and teens were the most easily accessible carriers of popular culture. They provided support to school curricula. Among the various contents were those related to classical antiquity, which was still considered a relevant part of Polish cultural heritage. Antiquity was not only present in compulsory educational texts but also shown in an entertaining, non-serious way, providing amusement and attracting readers. The paper examines those aspects of antiquity that were officially-approved sources of humor in People's Poland. Satirical drawings, comic strips, and humor sections in leading periodicals have been selected for an analysis designed to reflect the evolution over time of these permitted contents. Some of these drawings obviously used antiquity to mirror the times of their publication and the authors' attitudes towards the communist regime. The example of the "cartoon sections" shows how, over the years, antiquity entertained young readers who, fascinated by the comic heroes, often absorbed, quite unconsciously, the knowledge and values at the roots of European culture. Drawing on antiquity in a humorous manner served a didactic purpose, as learning through fun is an effective way to acquire new knowledge.

KEYWORDS: humor, art, history of Poland, classical reception, education, magazines for children

Klasična antika v risbah in stripih v revijah za otroke in najstnike v Ljudski republiki Poljski

IZVLEČEK

V komunistični Poljski so bili revije, časopisi in periodika za otroke in najstnike med najlažje dostopnimi nosilci popularne kulture. Podpirali so šolske učne načrte. Med različnimi vsebinami so bile nekatere povezane s klasično antiko, ki je še vedno veljala za pomemben del poljske kulturne dediščine. Antika ni bila prisotna le v obveznih učnih besedilih, ampak se je pojavljala tudi na kratkočasen, nepretenciozen način, ki je bralce zabaval in privabljal. Članek proučuje tiste vidike antike, ki so v Ljudski republiki Poljski veljali za sprejemljive vire humorja. Analiza zajema satirične risbe, stripovske pasice in humoristične prispevke v vodilnih periodičnih publikacijah, ki odražajo razvoj teh dovoljenih vsebin skozi čas. Nekatere od teh risb so antiko tudi uporabile za zrcalo časa ter so izražale odnos avtorjev do komunističnega režima. Primer »stripovskih rubrik« kaže, kako je antika skozi leta zabavala mlade bralce, ti pa so, očarani nad stripovskimi junaki, pogosto povsem nezavedno vsrkavali znanje in vrednote, ki so temelj evropske kulture. Humoristično prikazovanje antike je imelo tudi didaktičen namen, saj je učenje skozi zabavo učinkovit način pridobivanja novega znanja.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: humor, umetnost, zgodovina Poljske, klasična recepcija, izobraževanje, otroške revije