

Designing a special book: With both pleasure and . . . fear

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Abstract

I will present the various conditions and limitations which should be taken into account when designing and producing an album-like book: contents, typography, materials. The work was for a company which never before had anything to do with publishing: the Municipal Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment Company — master of the life arteries of greater Warsaw. The publication is a jubilee edition, not for sale, although it may later appear in second-hand bookshops.

Warsaw's *Filtry*, that is, “Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Wodociągów i Kanalizacji” (Municipal Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment Company) is celebrating its 120th anniversary. The company's history started during the presidency of the highly esteemed Sokrat Starynkiewicz, an artillery general of the Russian tsar, with a time of activity of an excellent team of designers and builders which was assembled and directed by William Lindley, an English engineer.

A paradox of history! We are now looking from a different perspective at the occupying forces which built in Warsaw a powerful fortress for the Russian garrison, in whose dungeons Polish patriots suffered and whose walls were covered by gallows. The tsar's commissioner, Starynkiewicz, simply fell in love with

the occupied city! Even today he is regarded as its best president, a president who had a vision of a modern city agglomeration and implemented this vision unceasingly. The jubilee was an occasion to produce a publication of over 200 pages: “Dla dobra publicznego. 120 lat Wodociągów Warszawskich” (For the public welfare. 120 years of the Warsaw Waterworks), an album with a complicated structure, edited by Piotr Stankiewicz, and designed and typeset by myself. The work contains — except for text materials — mainly archival illustrations, often unique, coming from the company's collection, Warsaw museums and libraries, and in the contemporary era — mostly — photographs by Krzysztof Kobus. The publisher received high-quality Post-

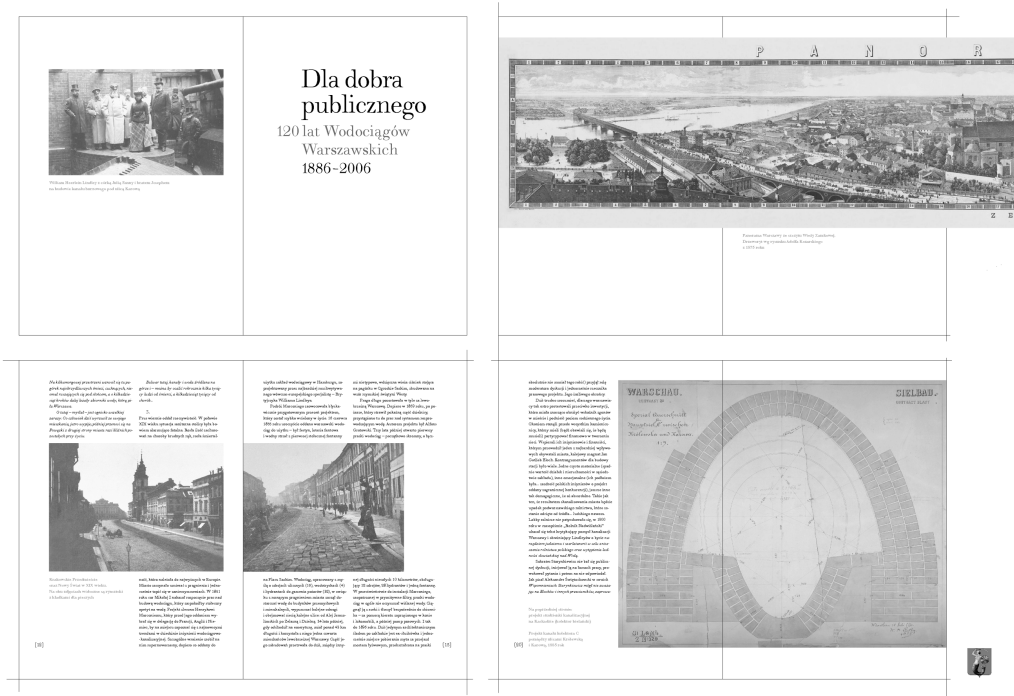


Figure 1: One of the book's design sketches showing the title page and the fly-leaf glued into the spine with a reproduction of a wood-engraved panorama of XIX century Warsaw. The trim size dimensions are 226 by 320 mm.

Script files for the printing process from Katarzyna Ciemny.

The typesetting was done in the Walbaum typeface (from the Linotype Library font collection). The font, popular in the XIX century, was designed by a German type founder from Weimar. It perfectly corresponds to the spirit of the epoch during which the Warsaw waterworks and sewage system were built. The breaking-up of pages and illustrations follows a quite simple modular setup which was not followed very strictly — in a few places aesthetic reasons called for modifications.

The archival illustration materials caused considerable difficulties. I had to reproduce lithographs, chromolithographs, guaches, wood engravings, original and printed photographs (all of different resolutions). The easiest were — of course — the contemporary digital photographs made by a professional photographer. Each of these types of images required a different scanning procedure and adherence to a different color regime. By the way, every printer knows that the qualities and “warmth” of traditional graphic techniques cannot be mimicked absolutely by a CMYK reproduction.

This impressive, and very difficult to produce, publication was printed and bound by the Olsztyńskie Zakłady Graficzne — in a very short time and while retaining the highest quality. It was made possible only by an exceptional devotion of the printers from Olsztyn.

Several kinds of paper were used for the book. For the historical section, where the resolution was 175 lpi, Lessebo Design Ivory 120 g was applied. To accommodate a set of archival photographic materials from the Warsaw Uprising, a sheet of composition enclosed in a cover of Owl Grey (Card) from the Kaskad catalog was inserted between the historical and contemporary parts. The chapter on the sewers’ role in the Warsaw Uprising was printed in duotone with Pantone Black 2C and 409C Gray. The contemporary part was printed — also with 175 lpi resolution — on chloride free Media Print Matt 150 g paper.

The historical part opens with a fly-leaf of the Warsaw panorama printed on Century Free Life Velum White 100 g. In two places — between printing sheets — glued inserts on quasi-parchment Golden Extra White 110 g tracing paper with XIX century design drawings were placed.

The album, printed with a Speedmaster CD102 printing machine, is bound in a natural brick-red cloth, Brillant, made by Van Heek Schoco. Endpapers were printed on Fabrizia Brizatto 120 g from Cartiere Fabriano. The front cover has an insert glued precisely into an inset rectangle. The title on the spine is stamped with a golden foil.

One arrives at the full picture of the difficulty of the binding task if one realizes that such an already-rarely encountered binding was additionally complicated by two parchment paper glued inserts, two

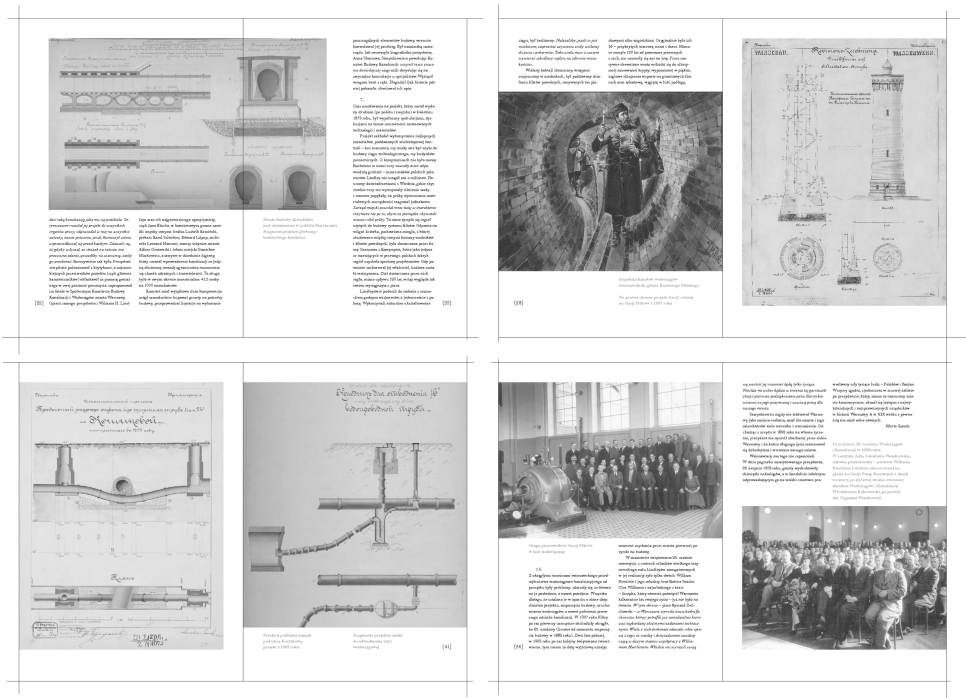


Figure 2: Design sketch showing how illustrations are to be placed in the historical part of the book.



Figure 3: The design of the part devoted to the role of the sewers in the Warsaw Uprising. The insurgents and civilians used them as emergency routes between streets and even between different quarters of the city.

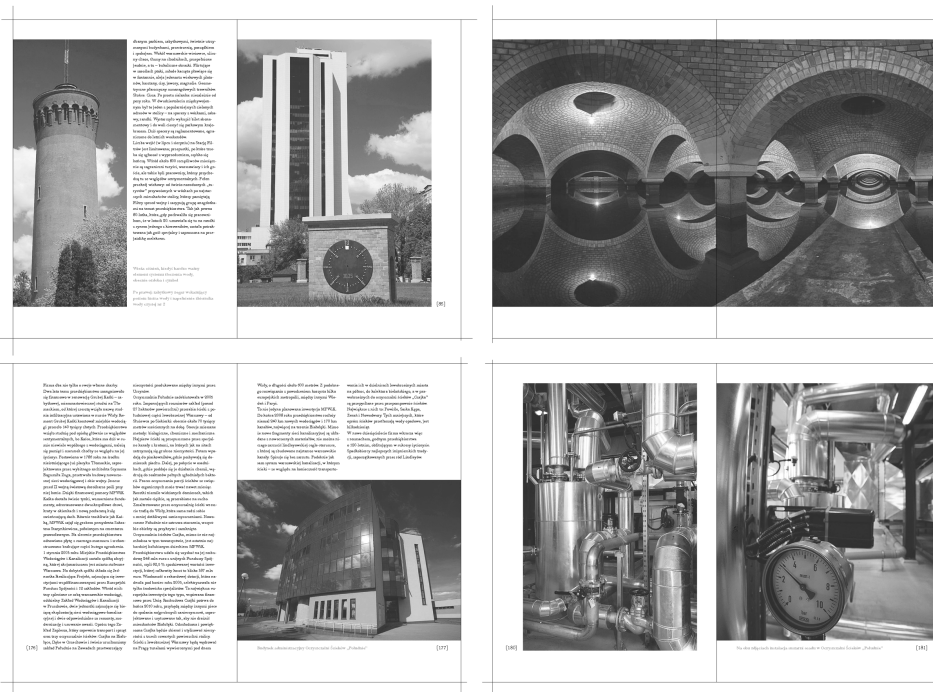


Figure 4: A fragment of the design of the contemporary part. The inner city of Warsaw is the only place in Europe where modern water and sewage installations work next to XIX century engineers' installations deployed full-scale.

fly-leaves (one of which is in an atypical format) as well as an internal cover of one of the chapters.

And the additional complication was . . . time — from the technological point of view — not enough of it. The jubilee celebrations could not be delayed. Descendants of William Lindley came from all over the world. The floors of the Royal Castle in Warsaw had been polished, Kayah¹ was all geared up for a concert at the Wisła bank. And what . . . no album? Happily, the book binding team valiantly managed to complete this complicated operation in time.

To those present at Bachotek, I showed two

copies of this bibliophile piece. Not many people are going to have a chance to get to know the precision accomplished by the editors, graphic artists, photographer and typesetters from Olsztyn — the print run was a little over one thousand copies and the book was not for sale. Perhaps in the future it might show up in the secondary circulation but no doubt already as a rare and valuable item.

(During the presentation, PDF versions of the objects comprising the book were also shown and technical aspects of the realization were discussed. The slides are available from the “presentations” folder at <http://www.gust.org.pl/BachoTeX/EuroBachoTeX2007>.)

¹ Kayah (Katarzyna Rooijens) — a Polish pop singer.