

**Report on the 8th International Symposium titled
*The Language of Biblical Transmission in West
Slavic Communication Spaces / Język przekazu
biblijnego w zachodniosłowiańskich przestrzeniach
komunikacyjnych / Jazyk biblického poselství
v západoslovanském komunikačním prostoru*,
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań,
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This international symposium, held from 29 May to 1 June 2025 at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, was jointly organized by the Department of Anthropological Linguistics (Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań) and the Department of Biblical Sciences and Ancient Languages (Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University, Prague).

The Poznań symposium marked the 8th edition in a series of scholarly discussions bringing together linguists, translators, and biblical theologians whose research focuses on translations of the Bible into West Slavic languages.¹ The initiator of this annual symposium series is Associate Professor PhDr. Josef Bartoň, Th.D., of Charles University in Prague, who hosted the previous seven meetings. The Poznań symposium, the first to be held outside Prague, brought together nine scholars – five from the Czech Republic and four from Poland – representing six academic institutions.

The symposium was formally opened by Professor Konrad Dominas, who also serves as Deputy Dean for International Cooperation at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology. In his opening remarks, he emphasized the significance of this international forum as a platform for the exchange of scholarly insights among researchers engaged in closely related fields. He expressed his conviction that the symposium, by encouraging perspectives beyond narrow national or institutional frameworks, would help outline new research objectives – goals that can be effectively pursued only through international collaboration.

¹ Articles based on the papers presented at the five most recent conferences (held in Prague between 2020 and 2024) have been published in the journal *Clavibus Unitis* (issues 2/2020, 2/2021, 2/2022, 2/2023, and 2/2024) and are freely accessible at the following address: https://www.acecs.cz/?f_idx=4.

Subsequently, scholars from academic institutions in the Czech Republic and Poland took the floor to present the results of their research. Their papers addressed both historical and contemporary translations of the Bible into Czech, Polish, and Kashubian, with occasional references to Sorbian and Slovak. These translations were analyzed within a broad framework encompassing historical, cultural, and confessional contexts, exegetical approaches, translation strategies, and the linguistic competence of both translators and recipients of the texts. These factors were examined as elements shaping and modulating the translations as texts that (co-)constitute West Slavic communication spaces.

Kateřina Voleková² (Department of Language Development, Czech Language Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague) drew attention to the text of the *Psalter of St. Bernard* – a devotional prayer composed of a compilation of eight psalm verses traditionally linked to St. Bernard of Clairvaux. This prayer text enjoyed considerable popularity in medieval institutional and private devotion, as evidenced by its numerous (variant) attestations in Latin manuscripts and vernacular translations. Voleková conducted a comparative analysis of Czech translations known from seven manuscripts dating from the second half of the 15th century to the early 16th century, compared them with two Polish translations found in early 16th-century prayer books – the *Szczyt duszny* (a 1528 manuscript) and *Tarcza duchowna* (a Kraków print from 1533). These Czech and Polish versions differ to some extent linguistically. Of particular cognitive interest is the fact that, in these texts, the Latin lexeme *spiritus* could be rendered in Czech and Polish both as *duch* (Czech, Polish) and as *duše* (Czech) / *dusza* (Polish), i.e. with concepts already being semantically distinct in both Slavic languages at that time.

Tadeusz Rubik³ (Faculty of ‘Artes Liberales’, University of Warsaw) focused on the authorship of the sixteenth-century *Biblia Leopolda*, the earliest known complete translation of the Bible into Polish. Its first printed edition appeared in 1561, followed by a revised version published in 1575. Rubik argued, through textual criticism of the *Apostolic Letters*, that linguistic features in the translation can be attributed both to the anonymous translator and to Jan Nicz of Lwów (Leopolda), the editor of the printed edition.

Robert Dittmann⁴ (Institute of Czech Language and Theory of Communication, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague) examined the translation of Latin and Greek reflexive possessive pronouns into Czech in sixteenth-century biblical pericopes produced by the Unity of the Brethren. His philologically meticulous research revealed that these translations, which prioritized

² Mgr. Kateřina Voleková, Ph.D., *Staročeský a polský Žaltář svatého Bernarda*.

³ Dr Tadeusz Rubik, *Biblia Leopolda*. Próba rozróżnienia pracy anonimowego tłumacza oraz redaktora Jana Nicza ze Lwowa.

⁴ PhDr. Robert Dittmann, Ph.D., *Reflexivní posesivum v biblických perikopách jednoty bratrské v 16. století*.

semantic fidelity, deviated from literal, word-for-word correspondence with the source texts. Reflexive possessive pronouns of the first and second person in the source text (e.g. Latin *meus, mea, meum; tuus, tua, tuum*) are rendered more frequently than in older Czech biblical translations as *svůj, svá, své*, in accordance with the Czech language system. This marks a shift away from literalism and offers compelling evidence of the gradual vernacularization of Czech biblical translations.

Tomasz Lisowski⁵ (Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań) presented the results of qualitative and quantitative research on the lexicon of the 1632 *Gdańsk Bible* New Testament by Daniel Mikołajewski. Linguistically, this lexicon reflects the state of the Polish language at the close of a transformative period shaped by Renaissance intellectual currents. Lisowski highlighted that the variability in lexical equivalents – identified through comparison with earlier translations within the Protestant continuum, as well as with Jakub Wujek's Catholic Bible – testifies to an ongoing effort to modernize the language of the Mikołajewski's translation. This process contributed to the development of contextual synonymy and increased the functional range of Polish of the time. Furthermore, analysis of the extent to which the language of the 1632 New Testament was adapted to its recipients'/ readers' perceptual capacity suggests that roughly three-quarters of the lexicon was neutral, with a slight tendency toward vocabulary outside the average range of Renaissance Polish.

Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska⁶ (Center for Kitab Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) discussed the critical apparatus found in the Tatar tafsir – a sixteenth-century Polish translation of the Qur'an accompanied by commentary (the oldest extant manuscript dates to 1723). She also pointed to analogies between this tradition and Renaissance-era translations of the Bible into vernacular languages. In preparing the Polish version of the Qur'an, Tatar translators drew not only on Muslim exegetical texts in Arabic and Turkish – which is entirely justified from a religious standpoint – but also drew from contemporary Polish Bible translations. Of particular interest to them was Szymon Budny's 1572 translation, marked by an anti-Trinitarian doctrinal stance. Kulwicka-Kamińska showed that the Muslim authors of the Polish-language tafsir were well acquainted with the translation techniques for sacred texts that had developed during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

Adam Ryszard Sikora⁷ (Faculty of Theology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), translator of the Holy Scriptures into Kashubian from the original languages, recalled that earliest biblical texts addressed to the Kashubian

⁵ Prof. dr hab. Tomasz Lisowski, *Leksykon Nowego Testamentu Biblii gdańskiej* (1632) w świetle renesansowego ewangelickiego kontinuum przekładowego.

⁶ Prof. dr hab. Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska, *Metatekst w tefsirze Tatarów polskich jako wspólne dziedzictwo przekładów ksiąg objawionych*.

⁷ Ks. prof. dr hab. Adam Ryszard Sikora, *Współczesne przekłady na kaszubski i ich recepcja w kaszubskim kręgu kulturowym*.

community emerged from the Lutheran Protestant milieu as early as the late 16th and 17th centuries (e.g., the handwritten *Perykopy smoldzińskie* [*Smoldzino Pericopes*] for Sundays and feast days). Catholic-oriented Kashubian texts appeared only in the twentieth century, including translations by Alojzy Nagel and Rev. Franciszek Gruca, based on Latin (*Vulgate* or *Neo-Vulgate*) texts. Also noteworthy are the Kashubian *New Testament* and the *Book of Psalms* rendered by Eugeniusz Gołabek, based on the Polish *Biblia Tysiąclecia* [*Millennium Bible*], which serves as the current liturgical translation of the Catholic Church in Poland. The most recent translations into Kashubian – stemming from exegetical and semantic studies by Rev. Professor Adam Ryszard Sikora – constitute the first translations in history made directly from the original languages. His translations of the *Four Gospels* and the *Pentateuch* have garnered considerable interest and acclaim within the Kashubian community.

Josef Bartoň⁸ (Department of Biblical Sciences and Ancient Languages, Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University, Prague) analysed the linguistic features of a little-known Czech *Psalter* published in Dresden in 1781, authored by the Protestant clergyman Jiří Petrmann. Although originally from Slovakia, Petrmann spent the majority of his life in Saxony and Brandenburg, serving Czech Protestant exile communities. Bartoň's in-depth philological analyses presented by the speaker – on grammatical, lexical, stylistic, and semantic levels – revealed that the text exhibits not only elements of Slovak linguistic influence but also specific linguistic and textual inspirations from the Sorbian milieu, likely due to Petrmann's early work among the Sorbs in both Upper and Lower Lusatia.

Tomáš Matějec⁹ (Department of Biblical Sciences and Ancient Languages, Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University, Prague) examined the intriguing lexical and semantic development of the translation equivalents of the Hebrew nouns *tebah* and *aron*, which are rendered in the Latin *Vulgate* by the lexeme *arca*. These terms appear in Czech biblical expressions such as *Noemova archa* ('Noah's Ark'), *archa úmluvy* ('Ark of the Covenant'), and *Mojžíšův košík* ('Moses' basket') – the latter referring to the papyrus container, sealed with resin and pitch, in which the infant Moses was placed to be hidden among the reeds on the bank of the Nile (Exodus 2:3). Matějec traced the evolution of these expressions throughout the long history of Czech Bible translations from the 14th century to the present.

Karel Komárek¹⁰ (Department of Czech Studies, Faculty of Arts, Palacký University Olomouc) noted that Václav Bogner was involved as the translator of the Old Testament in the preparation of the Czech Bible currently used in

⁸ Doc. PhDr. Josef Bartoň, Th.D., *K jazykovým zvláštnostem drážďanského žaltáře Jiřího Petrmanna (1781)*.

⁹ ThLic. Tomáš Matějec, Ph.D. et Ph.D., *Noemova archa, Hospodinova archa a Mojžíšův košík v českých biblických překladech*.

¹⁰ Doc. PhDr. Karel Komárek, Ph.D., *Starý zákon Josefa Hegera (1958) – další textový zdroj českého liturgického překladu Bible*.

the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church in the Czech Republic. Komárek shared the results of his intertextual comparative analyses, which demonstrate that one of the sources used by Bogner was Josef Heger's translation of the Old Testament, published between 1955 and 1958 – the first Catholic translation into Czech made directly from the original languages. The influence of Heger's translation on Bogner's version is particularly evident at the lexical level, especially in the domain of abstract and intellectual vocabulary. Komárek also identified traces of dependence on an even earlier translation of the Old Testament – Jan Hejčl's version, produced between 1917 and 1925 from the Latin *Vulgate* (with reference to the original languages). Lexical equivalents found in Hejčl's version entered Bogner's liturgical translation indirectly through Heger's rendering.

The symposium sessions, attended not only by the presenters but also by numerous students and faculty members as listeners, were open to the public. The presented papers sparked lively discussions and served as a forum for the exchange of in-depth research findings. By exploring the nuanced details of biblical translation into Czech, Polish, and Kashubian within the broader context of West Slavic communicative spaces, the symposium helped to define new research directions while emphasizing the importance of considering extralinguistic factors in translation studies.

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