

Novi Testament 1562/1563 (Reprint)

Theological Faculty „Matthias Flacius Illyricus“, Zagreb, 2007, 926 pages

Alojz Jembrih

Afterward to the Reprint of the Glagolitic New Testament (1562/1563)

Theological Faculty „Matthias Flacius Illyricus“, Zagreb, 2007, 126 pages

December 2007 saw the reprint of the first printed translation of the New Testament to the Croatian language and in the Glagolitic alphabet published by the Theological Faculty „Matthias Flacius Illyricus“ from Zagreb. The reprint was published on the occasion of the four hundred fiftieth anniversary of the commencement of the translation and editorial work of Stipan Konzul (1557). Using as the master the copy which is kept in the Nacional and University Library in Zagreb, the reprint combines in one volume of 926 pages the *First Part*, printed in 1562, and the *Second Part* of the *New Testament*, printed in 1563. The reprint is supplemented by a separately printed book entitled *Afterward to the Reprint of the Glagolitic New Testament (1562/1563)* written by Alojz Jembrih, the chief editor of the reprint. In addition to chief editor Jembrih, others who took part in the project were Dr. Lidija Matošević, Dr. Marina Miladinov, Dr. Vesna Badurina-Stipčević, Dr. Mario Grčević, Ruben Knežević and Branka Kosanović.

The original print of the *New Testament* did not accidentally come into being in the period of the Reformation. The translation and dissemination of the Bible in history always went hand in hand with the spread of the Christian faith, connected with the missionary endeavour and often intensified through Christian movements which sought the awakening of faith and spiritual renewal. Protestant theological thought has stressed that the Bible, as encased in the canon of the Holy Scripture, is God's authoritative word. The Bible is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, infallible and the final authority for all questions of faith and practice. Therefore all Christian faith and living must be founded in the Bible and judged by it. The Bible, as translated into the language intelligible to the people, is a mighty tool for the evangelisation as well as the proclamation, dissemination and the strengthening of the Christian faith.

The First and the Second Part of the New Testament were printed in the Biblical printing institute in Urach near Tübingen, which was established for the purpose of translating the Bible and works by Reformation authors into Croatian

and their printing and dissemination. Even though many people in Croatia find the designation Biblical institute questionable, and even though some seek to limit its activity only to the work of the printing house in Urach, the printing of the original *New Testament* demonstrates and proves that the premier goals of the Institute were the spreading of the Reformation, the proclamation of the Gospel through the written word and changing the spiritual climate in Croatian lands and beyond. These were complemented with furthering literacy among children and adults, training and education of the common people and the transformation of the Croatian culture. Keeping this in mind we are right to conclude that the Protestant printing house in Urach operated as one of the “branches” of the Biblical institute. The visionaries from the Biblical institute planned to translate and publish the whole Bible, the works of Church Fathers and other dogmatic and instructive literature. In addition to the published works such as the *New Testament*, and the *Old Testament Prophetic books*, *Pentateuch* and *Psalms* were translated too, and possibly also other *Old Testament* books, but were not printed because the premature death of Ivan Ungnad led to the closing of the Biblical institute.

The *New Testament* was translated, as were the mentioned parts of the Old Testament, through the team work of several translators, including Stipan Konzul, Antun Dalmatin, Juraj Juričić and Josip Cvečić.

In the *Afterward to the Reprint of the Glagolitic New Testament (1562/1563)* Dr. Jembrih offers to the readers an extensive historical-linguistic treatise which follows the historical sequence of events related to the process of translation and publication of the New Testament, from the original incentive for the translation through the preparation for printing to its eventual publication. After the introduction the author discusses the development and operation of the printing house in Urach. He makes note of numerous designations, often incorrect, for the Urach operation. Facing the dilemma of choosing between “the Biblical institute in Urach” and “Ungnad’s printing house in Urach,” the author concludes that “one can justifiably speak of Ungnad’s Biblical institute in Urach.” He then points to the significance of Croatian Protestant literature, predominantly consisting of works published in the Biblical institute, within the domain of scholarly research. Jembrih further throws light on the role of Primož Trubar during the translation of the Bible into Croatian, and on the various aspects of the process of the translation of the New Testament: translation, editorial work, printing and proofreading. Details are provided about the editorial and translational work of Stipan Konzul and Juraj Dalmatin and their co-workers Juraj Juričić and Juraj Cvečić. Special attention is drawn to the evidence for the trustworthiness of the translation of the *New Testament* which was scrutinised in Croatia by prominent intellectuals who then confirmed the value of the translation with their signa-

tures. One of them was Nikola Frankopan of Trieste who confirmed that “these books are printed in our true Croatian letters and in true Croatian language, and that every Croatian can easily read and understand them...”

Jembrih provides two supplements to the book. The first contains a *Glagolitic autograph of Stipan Konzul: An Illustrative Translation of the New Testament, Jn 9 and Acts 1 from 1560*, transliterated by Dr. Vesna Badurina-Stipčević. The other is the *Preface of Primož Trubar to the Glagolitic New Testament (1562/1563)*, translated from German by Dr. Marina Miladinov.

The reprint of the first printed translation of the New Testament in Croatian history offers to the public the pearl of the Croatian Protestant literature and Croatian culture. The original print of the *New Testament* has been denied and ignored for centuries, probably because it was produced by Croatian Protestants, although it has been accessible in the Collection of ancient books and manuscripts of the National and University Library in Zagreb. Because of this we extend our congratulations to the editor Dr. Jembrih and all collaborators as well as the publisher, the Theological Faculty „Matthias Flacius Illyricus,“ on this excellent accomplishment and great efforts invested in it. It is a pity, though, that the publication in addition to the extensive historical-linguistic afterward, does not provide a historical-theological supplement which would illuminate the translation from the historical-spiritual and theological perspectives. This task now awaits students of indigenous and foreign Protestant spirituality and theological reflection.

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Translated by Davorin Peterlin

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Literary – Theological Essays

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After completing his studies of the Croatian language and literature at the Pedagogical Faculty (today the Faculty of Philosophy) in Osijek, Krešimir Šimić defended his MA thesis at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek and earned the MA degree in Theology. In March 2006 he enrolled in the Postgraduate doctoral programme at the Faculty of Philosophy [School of Humanities] at the University of Zagreb in the area of Croatian culture. He has published twenty academic articles and the book *Literary – Theological Essays*.

In this study the author presents his views about the objectivity of religious