

POLISH CATHOLIC BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP: DEVELOPMENT AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The article analyses the recent history and development of Catholic biblical scholarship in Poland. It points to the role of the pastoral situation and activity of the Catholic Church in this development. It presents the current situation of Catholic biblical scholarship in Poland. It describes notable recent achievements of Polish Catholic biblical scholars, especially those published in English. It also presents some innovative hypotheses, put forward by Polish Catholic biblical scholars.

Keywords: Biblical scholarship; Bible; Old Testament; New Testament; Poland; Catholic theology; Church history

Both the development and the perspectives of Polish Catholic biblical scholarship are inherently related to the modern history of Poland. The key issues are reflected in the dates of the most important events: the year 1918, in which Poland regained its independence after 123 years of partitions made by Russia, Prussia, and Austria, leading to the wiping out of the Poland from the political map of Europe; the years 1939–1945, during which occurred the Second World War, which led to enormous losses in human lives (6 million Polish citizens perished, among them 3 million Polish Jews) and great material losses, as well as the loss of one third of the territory and a displacement of Polish borders to the west; the years 1962–1965, the period of the Second Vatican Council; the year 1966, festive celebrations of the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland; the year 1978, the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła to papacy; and the year 1989, the beginning of the radical political-social transformation, which has been going on until now.¹

Some aspects of the historical development

Before the Second World War, there were five faculties of Catholic theology on the academic level in Poland (the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, John Casimir University in Lvov, University of Warsaw, and the Catholic University of Lublin), in which biblical studies were developed, as well as a dozen of major priestly seminaries, in which candidates to priesthood were acquainted

¹ For an earlier, short, English-language presentation of the state of biblical studies in Poland, see Wojciechowski (2008).

with the Bible and the basics of biblical studies, especially the languages, history, archaeology, geography, exegesis, and theology.

The professors, most of whom were clergymen, received solid theological and biblical education at renowned foreign universities, mainly in Rome. From the creation of the *Biblicum* (1909) until the outbreak of the Second World War, twenty-two Poles completed their studies with the degree of Licentiate in Sacred Scripture, and one, Eugeniusz Dąbrowski, with the degree of Doctorate in Sacred Scripture. They usually worked alone, and multi-author volumes were rather rare. Their publications referred mainly to the history of Israel, archaeology and history of the biblical lands, exegesis of selected texts from the OT and the NT, as well as discussion of recent achievements of historical-critical exegesis. Józef Archutowski (1879–1944) lectured in Cracow; Paweł Nowicki (1888–1980), the most eminent Polish biblical philologist of the interwar period, lectured in Vilnius; Piotr Stach (1886–1961) and Aleksy Klawek (1890–1969) lectured in Lvov; Władysław Szczepański (1877–1927) lectured in Warsaw; and Józef Archutowski (1879–1944) and Józef Kruszyński (1877–1953) lectured at the Catholic University of Lublin. A special place is held by Tadeusz Zieliński, a classical philologist, professor in Saint Petersburg (1887–1916) and in Warsaw (1921–1939), the author of studies on the connections between early Christianity and the Greek world. In 1937 r. in Lvov, the initiative to translate the whole Bible from the original languages into Polish was launched, but the outbreak of war made these plans impossible to bring about.

During the German and Soviet occupation of Poland (1939–1945), the universities were either closed or entirely changed as concerned their authorities and character. Many professors, among them professors of biblical scholarship and clergymen, were either murdered or killed during military actions. After the year 1945, the universities in Vilnius and Lvov remained outside Poland, on the territory of the Soviet Union, in the Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic and the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. The professors from Vilnius and Lvov, who survived the destructive German (Nazi) and Soviet (communist) occupation, moved to various cities of Poland in its post-war borders. In the year 1954, the communist authorities closed two of the remaining three theological faculties: those in the Jagiellonian University and University of Warsaw, creating in Warsaw two new academic schools, namely, the Academy of Catholic Theology and the Christian Theological Academy (for confessions other than Catholic). Despite strong ideological pressures, especially in the first years after their creation, biblical studies were thriving in them. This is a significant merit of the pre-war generation of Catholic biblical scholars, who returned to promoting scholarship and unremittingly prepared new personnel. The Theological Faculty of the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw established close ties with the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Lublin in order to grant academic titles and degrees. Both these universities have great merits in the development of biblical studies and the preparation of lecturers for priestly seminaries.

What also needs to be emphasised is the far-sightedness of Polish Catholic bishops since the year 1949, in which they were led by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the primate of Poland. Soon after the end of the war, which can be seen in the life of Fr. Karol Wojtyła, who in November 1946 was sent to study in Rome, many priests were sent to study abroad, especially in Rome. Biblical studies were very important in this endeavour, as confirmed by the examples of outstanding persons, like Józef T. Milik. The Stalinist

period (1953–1956) stopped this process, but later the number of Poles studying biblical studies abroad, especially in the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, steadily increased. This was possible thanks to the systematic financial aid of the Congress of American Poles and German charity institutions, especially *Kirche in Not*. Protestant biblical scholars studied mainly in Germany; some Orthodox theologians also studied in the West. During the post-Stalinist political thaw, three non-university Catholic theological faculties were created: in Cracow (1959), Wrocław (1964), and Poznań (1968), all of which in 1974 took the names of Pontifical Theological Faculties, as well as the Academic School of Catholic Theology in Warsaw (1962). All these institutions were linked to local priestly seminaries, fostering the academic status of theological courses, and biblical scholarship constituted their pillar. Since 1959, meetings of Polish biblical scholars, begun in Cracow, Warsaw, Gniezno, and Poznań, have become important places of thought exchange. These beginnings led to the tradition, cultivated until now, of annual symposia of Catholic biblical scholars taking place in various cities of Poland.

Shortly before the Second Vatican Council, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Poland created the Section of Biblical Scholars. During the Council and in the following years, the conciliar documents were successfully propagated in the Catholic Church in Poland. The instruction *On the Historical Truth of the Gospels* (21st April 1964) and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* (8th November 1965) had a significant impact. The implementation of the conciliar teaching was carried out in a way which was less dramatic than in Western Europe. This phenomenon mainly resulted from the fact that Catholic theological and biblical studies undertaken in Poland had a strong pastoral orientation. This was a consequence of the fact that in 1966, when the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland was celebrated by the Catholic Church in an extraordinarily festive way, there was also the conclusion of the great pastoral initiative known as the Great Novena. Catholic biblical scholars also took part in it by preparing a new translation of the whole Bible, in line with the suggestions of the Second Vatican Council from the original languages, into Polish, as the so-called *Millennium Bible* (1965). Since the time of Jacob Wujek (1598), who translated the whole Bible from the Latin Vulgate, it has been the first Catholic translation of all sacred books, provided with introductions and commentaries. It soon became the Bible of the Catholic Church in Poland and in Polish milieus around the world. In the wake of the conciliar renewal, somewhat later, in the years 1973–1975, another complete, also multi-author translation of the Bible from the original languages appeared, known as the *Poznań Bible*. This three-volume work contains much longer introductions to the biblical parts and books, as well as elaborated commentaries on more difficult places and pericopae in the Bible.

The post-conciliar period has been called the “biblical spring” in the Catholic Church. It is significant that Polish theologians and biblical scholars had to engage in confrontation with secularist scholars and popularisers of biblical scholarship (Z. Kosidowski, Z. Poniatowski), who represented and propagated the Marxist vision of the world, humans, and religion. On the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, this confrontation became stronger. Its core consisted in polemics around vital issues in the interpretation of the Bible, for example, the creation narratives in Genesis and evolution, original sin and the origin of humankind, the phenomenon of miracles, the historicity of Jesus Christ, the beginnings of the Church, etc. The atmosphere of controversy was not without influence upon the reception of the historical-critical method, as well as the postulate of

Rudolf Bultmann and his followers concerning the demythologisation of the Bible and its message; reinterpretation of the basic truths of the Christian faith, like the virginal conception of Jesus and his resurrection; or the interpretation of findings at Qumran and in other places at the Dead Sea. Many publications concerning these issues appeared, both on the academic and a more popularising level. Catholic biblical scholars suggested reservation in accepting such “novelties,” which were used by Marxist scholars on religion as a tool in their fight against religion and the Church. On the Catholic side, Janusz Frankowski and Józef Kudasiewicz were particularly engaged in these debates. In the context of increasing polemics and controversies, which were hostile to religion and Christian interpretation of the Bible, initiatives of “dialogue” of some theologians with Marxism appeared. On the other hand, biblical pastoral work developed successfully. Biblical issues were introduced to catechesis of children and youth, which was undertaken in parishes and churches, and this constituted a counterbalance to ideologically oriented education at schools, thus hindering the process of laicisation and atheisation of the younger generation. At this stage, Catholic biblical scholars undertook ecumenical collaboration with biblical scholars of other Christian denominations, although this was rather sporadic due to the lack of mutual contacts and due to mistrust, which could be perceived in social, ecclesiastical, and academic relations.

The election of Pope John Paul II (16th October 1978) gave a new impulse to invigorating Church life and theology, including biblical studies. But the martial law (1981–1983) and the immediately-following period did not favour the development of research. Censorship, which still existed, significantly prolonged the process of publication of texts; political infiltration of the academic milieu, including the theological one, still remained; and economic hardships increased. Polish Catholic biblical scholars, like all of Polish society, concentrated on the things that in those conditions were vital: overcoming difficulties and surviving. However, the pilgrimages of John Paul II to his homeland (1979, 1983, 1987) led to the strengthening of the need for freedom and the growth of spiritual moods which contrasted with the imposed ideology and political system. Its decline was more and more visible, and the restrictions on travelling abroad were also relaxed. Priests were sent to undertake biblical studies in Rome and in Jerusalem, as well as at German and French universities. Moreover, as a new phenomenon, step by step such studies were also undertaken by lay people. The weakening and finally the end of the strong ideological confrontation favoured quiet and balanced reception of the newest trends and tendencies in the development of Catholic theological and biblical studies. This was favoured by the increasing number of scholarly and popularising publications of Polish biblical scholars, as well as numerous translations of theological and biblical literature from foreign languages, which was fostered by the Publishing Institute Pax. As concerns the popularisation of biblical scholarship, the publications of Anna Świderkówna had considerable importance. The publishing activity of the Catholic University of Lublin and of the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw also need to be emphasised. Whereas earlier the knowledge of German was prevalent among Polish biblical scholars, by the end of the twentieth century the use of English took its place. In Poland, in contrast to other countries of the communist bloc, even those who did not speak foreign languages and did not have the ability to travel abroad had access to translations of high-quality publications of foreign scholars.

The period that followed the political-social transformation, which began in 1989, brought other important changes. The development of theological and biblical studies was greatly favoured by the regulation of the legal status of the Pontifical Theological Academy in Cracow and the Pontifical Theological Faculties in Wrocław, Poznań, and Warsaw. In 1999, from the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University was created. The creation of new theological faculties at state universities was also important. At present, there are seven Catholic theological faculties at state universities in Poland: Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, the University of Opole (1994), Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (1998), the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (1999), the University of Silesia in Katowice (2000), Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (2001), and the University of Szczecin (2003). The remaining four Catholic theological faculties exist at non-state public schools, namely, the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow, the Pontifical Theological Faculty in Wrocław, and the Catholic Academy in Warsaw. Moreover, a non-Catholic theological faculty exists at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw. Besides, there are several smaller-scale institutions of higher theological education run by various Catholic and non-Catholic ecclesiastical units and organisations.

The creation of the Association of Polish Biblical Scholars in 2003 was a groundbreaking event for the integration and development of the biblical milieu. It continues the activity of the Biblical Section at the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Poland, and it is the most important forum for annual meetings and thought exchange. The texts of papers and discussions, as well as personal data, addresses and the most important elements of scholarly achievements of more than 300 members of this association are published in the annual *Scholarly Fascicles of the Association of Polish Biblical Scholars*. Its statute and activity functioned as an example for the similar integration of representatives of other theological disciplines in Poland (see Chrostowski 2019:773–777).

Some aspects of the current situation

In a survey of the present state and future of Polish Catholic biblical scholarship, both opportunities and various challenges, which need to be faced, can be observed. They all come out against the background of what has already been achieved and what shapes the contours and tasks that need to be undertaken.

The achievements which reveal various strands of development in contemporary Polish biblical scholarship are really impressive. The first element consists in the publication of new, both complete and fragmentary, translations of the Bible into Polish, as well as biblical dictionaries and commentaries of both academic and pastoral profiles. Two single-volume commentaries, which have been available in Poland since the turn of the millennium (the *Catholic Biblical Commentary* and the *International Commentary on the Sacred Scripture*), have been translated from English. The remaining ones were written by Polish authors (see Rosik 2019). A very interesting project involves translating the Hebrew Bible into Polish anew on the basis of the most recent *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* critical edition. The first part of this translation, prepared by Waldemar Chrostowski (2021), contains the Book of the Twelve.

The studies on the Old Testament, of both exegetical and theological as well as historical and religion-study profiles, developed and became popular. Interesting hypotheses, for example, that of the existence of a vigorous diaspora of the Israelites in Assyria (see Szamocki 2019; Chrostowski 2020:166–170), can greatly influence our knowledge of the history of Israel before the Babylonian exile and the origin of many biblical books. The same can be said about the studies on the New Testament, especially on the so-called synoptic problem (see Adamczewski 2010; Malina 2019). Hermeneutical problems concerning both parts of the Christian Bible, the Old and the New Testament, are also important (see for example Twardziłowski 2020). Discussions on these problems were stimulated by the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), and they were led during annual meetings and in publications of Polish biblical scholars. Conferences and lectures for the broader public also arouse great interest. This concerns mass-scale pilgrimage of the faithful to the Holy Land and other biblical lands, in which many biblical scholars participate as organisers and guides.

International exchange and new ways of communication, especially the Internet, by enabling free access to source texts and library resources worldwide, favour the development of specialisations in biblical research. For example, fruitful research on the phenomenon of intertextuality and its significance for a deeper study and understanding of the message of the Bible is carried out (see for example Adamczewski 2013). It is accompanied by the growth of interest in a synchronic approach and new literary methods, which supplement the hitherto dominating diachronic-profile studies. Recent decades in Poland have brought about a dynamic increase of interest in targumic literature (the Aramaic Bible) (see for example Wróbel 2019; Kuśmirek 2020) and the Septuagint (the Greek Bible) (see Mielcarek 2019:825–829; Krawczyk 2020). In both cases, quality monographs and minor-scale studies, as well as translations of selected Targums and the whole Septuagint into Polish, were published. The achievements of Polish Qumranology (e.g., Zdzisław J. Kapera, Henryk Drawnel, Piotr Muchowski, Marek Parchem) and the growing number of studies on the manifold influence of the Bible on Polish and European culture complete this retrospection.

In the last decade, numerous Polish scholars made various considerable contributions to the development of Catholic biblical scholarship. Traditionally, most of them have been clergymen (e.g., Krzysztof Bardski, Dariusz Dziadosz, Andrzej Gieniusz, Dariusz Kotecki, Marcin Kowalski, Janusz Kręcidło, Adam Kubiś, Janusz Lemański, Artur Malina, Krzysztof Napora, Rajmund Pietkiewicz, Łukasz Popko, Mariusz Rosik, Henryk Witczyk, Mirosław Wróbel, Marcin Zieliński).² However, Catholic laymen made significant impact in this field as well (e.g., Marcin Majewski, Krzysztof Mielcarek, Michał Wojciechowski).³ The cooperation of biblical scholars with representatives of other scholarly disciplines is also more and more visible.

A new phenomenon in Polish biblical scholarship is the growing presence of lay and consecrated women who are active in this area of study, for example, Dominika Kurek-Chomycz, Anna Kuśmirek, Dorota Muszytowska, Aleksandra Nalewaj, Sr. Joanna Nowińska SM, Sr. Jolanta Judyta Pudełko PDDM, Anna Rambiert-Kwaśniewska,

² See, e.g., Dziadosz, (2019); Gieniusz, (2013); Kowalski (2018); Kręcidło (2021); Kubiś (2012); Lemański (2020); Malina (2020); Pietkiewicz (2020); Popko (2015); Rosik (2020); Witczyk (2020); Wróbel (2020).

³ See, e.g., Majewski (2020); Mielcarek (2020); Wojciechowski (2020).

Teresa Stanek, Barbara Strzałkowska, and Beata Urbanek, to name but a few. This is possible not least thanks to the growing number of Polish theological institutions which are funded by the state, so that women can fully engage in theological research without holding any particular ecclesiastical offices which rely on Church funds. This fact does not mean that female scholars in Poland, in contrast to some female scholars in Western Europe, are somehow distanced from Church hierarchy or particularly critical of established Church institutions. Moreover, in contrast to their colleagues in the West, Polish female biblical scholars generally do not concentrate their research on particularly “feminine” topics or interpretative approaches. They enrich Polish biblical exegesis and theology on a par with their male colleagues.⁴

In the new situation, ecumenical contacts between scholars of various Christian denominations are intensified. They develop not only because of particular needs (participation in doctoral and post-doc-grade procedures, as well as proceedings for the academic title of professor) but also spontaneously, as an expression of openness and a new mutual attitude.⁵ In a less significant way, it concerns interreligious contacts. It is true that in the 1990s, there were some signs of religious and theological dialogue with believers of Judaism, which were promoted on the Jewish side by the Rabbi Byron L. Sherwin, but it soon turned out that various past problems and conditions, as well as rigors of political correctness, still make themselves felt. In reciprocal contacts, even those held under the aegis of the Church, political and social problematics are preferred over religious and theological ones.

An important achievement of Polish biblical scholarship is the multi-volume work done by Piotr Ostański. It is not matched by other biblical milieus in Europe, although they have a much longer and unrestricted tradition of documenting the achievements of biblical studies. In 2002, the two-volume *Bibliography of Polish Biblical Scholarship 1945–1999* was published. In 2010, the likewise two-volume *Bibliography of Polish Biblical Scholarship 2000–2009* was published. In 2015, the volume *Bibliography of Polish Biblical Scholarship 2010–2013/2014*, and in the next five years three new volumes appeared, documenting the status quo until 2020. This monumental work has been a full “inventory” of the publishing activity of the whole Polish biblical milieu since the end of the Second World War. It registers all published texts, maps, audio cassettes, video cassettes, compact discs, computer programs, and sets of slides. It lists the works of Polish biblical scholars working not only in Poland but also abroad (e.g., Andrzej Gieniusz, Dominika Kurek-Chomycz, Edward Lipiński, Łukasz Popko), as well as the works of foreign authors translated into Polish or reviewed by Polish authors. It gathers not only publications which refer directly to the Bible but also materials concerning general issues, especially antiquity in the Middle East, which enables placing the sacred books of Israel and of the Church in the context of their origin, and it reflects the results of meticulous comparative research. It should be noted that Piotr Ostański incessantly continues his work, still supplementing it and actualising it.

Editorial series and journals also constitute an important forum for cooperation and the promotion of biblical studies. Among the scholarly series, there are such achievements as *Wprowadzenie w Myśl i Wezwanie Ksiąg Biblijnych*, Prymasowska

⁴ See, e.g., Kurek-Chomycz (2006; 2007; 2010; 2017); Pudelko (2016); Rambiert-Kwaśniewska (2020); Strzałkowska (2020).

⁵ For an example of a non-Catholic biblical scholar publishing in a Catholic journal see, e.g., Ślawik (2020).

Seria Biblijna, Rozprawy i Studia Biblijne, Analecta Biblica Lublinsia, and Lingua Sacra – Monografie. Among the distinguished and renowned journals, there are *The Biblical Annals*, *Verbum Vitae*, *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia*, *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny*, *Scriptura Sacra*, and *Scripta Biblica et Orientalia*. More and more often, publications in foreign languages appear in them. As concerns the contents of these publications, there is a parity of exegetical-theological and historical issues, but in texts and papers of individual biblical scholars, these accents are variously spread. As concerns the reception of new ways of literary analysis, they are rarely isolated from the achievements of the historical-critical method. There are significant symptoms of broader consideration of cultural anthropology and sociology, as well as psychology, psychoanalysis, and feminist reading in the exegesis of biblical texts. Influences of fundamentalist exegesis of biblical books are few, and more and more weak. To the traditional ways of transmitting and spreading information and audiovisual aids, unprecedented possibilities of the application of informatics and computer techniques were added.

The survey of the present state and future of Polish biblical scholarship should not pass over some ballasting conditions and difficulties. The first of them is the danger of the decrease in the quality of biblical studies which are carried out at both state and non-state university theological faculties. This is a paradox which results from the incorporation of all diocesan and religious seminaries into the structures of university studies. Every major seminary, which prepares candidates for priesthood, is linked to a certain – usually local, but there are also exceptions – theological faculty. This fact should result in the rise of the level of theological and biblical studies. However, an opposite phenomenon can be observed: the programme of seminary studies and the reality of the lives of the seminarians leave their marks on the structure and programmes of university theological faculties. Many biblical scholars, working in two or more institutions, take the theological curricula and habits of the priestly seminaries into universities' theological faculties, and there is no significant influence in the reverse direction. The opinion that the level of biblical studies, not to mention academic research, in fact decreases is more and more often voiced. It concerns, except for the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, especially languages: the standard of teaching Hebrew and Greek (not to mention Latin!) was much higher some decades ago than it is today. One of the negative results of this phenomenon is a weakening interest in the exegesis of the Church Fathers and increasing ignorance in patrology and patristics.

The presence of theology and biblical scholarship at universities should result in the development of interdisciplinary cooperation. In Poland, similar to other countries of the former communist bloc, there is no good and deeply rooted tradition in this respect. Theologians, once expelled from state universities and pushed to the margins of academic and cultural life, generally did not establish official contacts with representatives of other scholarly disciplines, and moreover, they were generally treated by them with disdain. It is worth noting that it was not earlier than in 2003 that, not without difficulties and opposition, the Committee of Theological Studies was created by the Polish Academy of Sciences. The problems of biblical scholarship have an important place in its activity. With some minor exceptions, for example Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, theological and biblical problems generally do not spread to other university faculties. There are few inspiring interdisciplinary debates and

discussions at Polish universities in which biblical scholars take a significant part. Too rarely, lasting cooperation with linguistic scholars, historians, archaeologists, geographers, and sociologists is established. This is not a fault of biblical scholars only, because in many academic milieus old ideological prejudices and a hostile attitude to religion and theology can still be seen. Nevertheless, contacts with representatives of other scholarly disciplines, which are present in the Polish Orientalist Society, the Orientalist Commission of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Polish Society of Jewish Studies, are being established. The increasing presence of lay people, a part of whom have outstanding scholarly, organisational, and educative achievements, is a new and important phenomenon.

The asymmetry between didactic and research load in Polish biblical scholarship is another important factor. The number of courses, often undertaken in various places, which requires constant travelling, as well as their level conditioned by the needs of the seminarians who prepare themselves to priesthood, results in insufficient time for rigid scholarly research. It is postulated that some members of the academic staff at university theological faculties should be enabled in a systematic way to undertake intensive research, which could be achieved by the decrease of the didactic load. The policy of the Ministry of Education and Science, which promotes grants and scholarships for selected scholarly projects and undertakings, begins to cause beneficial changes. The future of Polish biblical scholarship is also connected to the decreasing number of candidates for studying theology and for the priesthood. Theological faculties deal with this problem in various ways, for example, by introducing studies which do not have a theological profile (journalism, Italian studies, tourism, etc.), or in which biblical scholarship (if it is taught) does not go beyond introductory issues.

The situation and the achievements of biblical scholarship in Poland should not simply be compared with situations and achievements in other countries of Western and Eastern Europe. For over half a century, in contrast to the West, there was no possibility of free exchange of thought, publication of the results of research, travelling, free pursuit of academic careers, and appropriate funding of theology. Nevertheless, many biblical scholars actively and passively participated in the conferences of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature, and colloquia of biblical scholars of German-speaking countries which were organised in Vienna. The important Qumranological colloquia, which took place in Mogilany and Cracow, should also be highlighted. An important element consists in research scholarships and guest lectures offered within international scholarly exchange. As concerns the comparison with other countries of Eastern Europe, the ideological pressure in them was much stronger, and the Catholic Church never played a role as important as it did in Poland. A great achievement of Polish biblical scholars consists in the continuous and manifold aid offered to theological institutions in Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and the Baltic countries. Relatively widespread knowledge of Polish led to the use of Polish translations of Sacred Scripture and of biblical publications, which were partly translated into local languages. It also led to profiting from the work of Polish biblical scholars, who offered courses in local priestly seminaries and theological institutions. Even if in the West *Slavica non leguntur*, in the East the publications in Polish came to be a pass to undertaking theological research and developing biblical studies.

Selected examples of notable achievements and innovative hypotheses in Polish Catholic biblical scholarship published in English

Because, as was mentioned above, in the West *Slavica non leguntur*, Polish biblical scholars more and more often publish the results of their investigations in English and in other congress languages, which are more widely understood in the world. In the first decade of the 21st century, such endeavours were still rather sporadic, but in the past ten years the situation in this respect has radically changed.

The first sign of this change is the presence of Polish biblical scholarly journals, which began to publish articles not only in Polish but also, or even predominantly, in English and in other congress languages.

The first of them is *The Biblical Annals*, which in 2011 changed its name from the previous Polish name *Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne fascicle 1: Pismo Świąte* (ISSN 0035-7723), then *Roczniki Teologiczne fascicle 1: Pismo Świąte* (ISSN 1233-1457), and then *Roczniki Biblijne* (ISSN 2080-8518) to its present, widely understood English name, *The Biblical Annals* (ISSN 2083-2222; e-ISSN 2451-2168). In the years 2013–2015, the journal was issued twice a year, and since 2016 it has turned into a quarterly publication.⁶ In the years 2011–2018, congress-language articles constituted less than one-half of the articles published in *The Biblical Annals*. Since 2019, articles written in English or in other congress languages have evidently been the majority of the articles which appear in the journal. Besides, more and more non-Polish scholars publish their texts therein.

The second Polish journal of this kind, also published by the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, is *Verbum Vitae* (ISSN 1644-8561; e-ISSN 2451-280X). The name of the journal reflects its theological profile, which tries to highlight the Christocentric character of Sacred Scripture. From 2002 until 2019, the journal was published twice a year, and since 2020 it has become a quarterly. Its first and third yearly issues include scholarly articles dedicated to specific biblical themes, and its second and fourth fascicles contain various theological articles (*Varia*).⁷ In 2019, articles written in English and in other congress languages began to appear in the journal. Since 2020, they have constituted around one-half of the texts published in the thematic biblical issues, and the non-thematic issues (*Varia*) contain articles exclusively written in English, among them some related to various biblical topics.

The third Polish scholarly journal devoted to biblical scholarship is *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* (ISSN 1689-5150; e-ISSN 2450-7059). Initially, in the years 2008–2013, it was published once a year. Since 2014, it has been published as a quarterly publication. Each year, the first issue is devoted to various problems in the field of biblical scholarship and patrology. The second issue concentrates on some current social problems viewed from the biblical and patristic perspective. The third issue is dedicated to biblical Thomism. The last issue is devoted to a given book of the Old or New Testament, studied from the perspective of current problems concerning its exegesis, theology, hermeneutics, and patristic interpretation.⁸ Articles written in English and in other congress languages have appeared in the journal since 2011, initially sporadically but recently more and more often, especially in the issues devoted to biblical Thomism

⁶ See the website of *The Biblical Annals*: <https://czasopisma.kul.pl/ba/about>.

⁷ See the website of *Verbum Vitae*: <https://czasopisma.kul.pl/vv/about>.

⁸ See the website of *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia*: <https://apcz.umk.pl/czasopisma/index.php/BPTh/about>.

and in other issues, especially in the years 2018–2019. In particular, texts of scholars from outside Poland also appear in the journal quite often.

Another theological journal in which texts of Polish biblical scholars can be accessed in English is *Collectanea Theologica* (ISSN 0137-6985; e-ISSN 2720-1481). It is the oldest existing Polish theological journal, founded in 1920. Since 1931, it has been published under the widely understandable Latin name *Collectanea Theologica*. It is widely regarded as one of the leading scholarly general-theological journals in Poland. The journal appears as a quarterly, and its main language of Publication until 2020 was Polish. In 2020, so in the jubilee year of a hundred years of the existence of the journal, a special issue (5/2020) was published, with English translations of selected articles which appeared in the journal in the last several years. Among them, eighteen articles refer to biblical exegesis and theology.⁹ Since 2021, articles written in English have begun to be published in regular issues of the journal.

All of the above-mentioned Polish journals are indexed in the Elsevier Scopus database, which additionally guarantees the high scholarly level of their contents and high ethical standards of their publication. Full texts of the articles published in *The Biblical Annals*, *Collectanea Theologica*, and partly *Verbum Vitae* are also widely accessible in the EBSCO database. Besides, the articles published in the last several years in *Collectanea Theologica* can also be found on the Academia.edu and Researchgate.net scholarly platforms.

Another initiative devoted to promoting the results of Polish theological research in English is the monograph series *European Studies in Theology, Philosophy and History of Religions* (ISSN 2192-1857). It is published by the international academic publishing group Peter Lang. Since 2012, twenty-nine volumes of Polish and Czech scholars appeared in the series. Among them, fourteen monographs concern biblical exegesis, theology, and interpretation.¹⁰

One of the most widely known recent achievements of Polish biblical scholarship is the work of Henryk Drawnel. His research interests concentrate on the Aramaic Levi Document and the Aramaic Books of Enoch. He has published several important monographs on these and related subjects, including a complete critical edition of the manuscripts of the Aramaic Book of Enoch (Drawnel 2004; 2011; 2019b). He has edited one of the volumes of the well-known series “Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah” (Drawnel ed.: 2020). Moreover, he has published numerous articles in top-level international journals like *Revue de Qumran*, *Revue Biblique*, *Journal of Ancient Judaism*, and *Dead Sea Discoveries* (Drawnel 2006; 2007; 2010a; 2010b; 2010c; 2012a; 2012b; 2013; 2014; 2021). In addition to these, he has published numerous articles in multi-author edited works and in scholarly encyclopedias (for example, Drawnel 2019a). Therefore, he is without a doubt the most widely known contemporary Polish biblical scholar.

Among the various interesting ideas and hypotheses which were formulated and described in English by Polish biblical scholars, several merit particular attention. The first of them is promoted by Waldemar Chrostowski. In his numerous publications, he argues that in the 7th century BC, a strong and fruitful Israelite diaspora existed and

⁹ See the website of the special English-language issue of *Collectanea Theologica*: <https://czasopisma.uksw.edu.pl/index.php/ct/issue/view/683>.

¹⁰ See the website of the EST monograph series: <https://www.peterlang.com/view/serial/EST>.

thrived in Assyria. Chrostowski (2018) argues that the information on its existence, influence, and outcome is scanty in the Bible because of the practice of condemning the Israelites to oblivion (*damnatio memoriae*) by their southern, Judahite neighbours, who authored the so-called Deuteronomistic History. However, in his opinion, this “lost” diaspora had a great impact on the history and religion of Israel. It brought numerous ancient traditions to the written materials which, after their actualisation and reinterpretation, were included into the Hebrew Bible (Chrostowski 2018).

A somewhat similar idea is put forward by Bartosz Adamczewski. He agrees with Waldemar Chrostowski that the (northern) Israelites had a great impact on the process of the formation of the Hebrew Bible. However, in his opinion, their voice was not silenced in the Hebrew Bible at all. He argues that the whole sacred Heptateuch (Genesis–Judges) is in fact an Israelite work, not a Jewish work or the result of Israelite–Judaeen collaboration, compromise, etc. The importance of the character and tribe of Joseph (especially Ephraim), as well as numerous positive allusions to Shechem and Gerizim, together with the absence or negative allusions to Jerusalem, as well as a more or less negative characterisation of the character and tribe of Judah, evidently point in this direction. Accordingly, the understanding of the Torah (and Joshua–Judges) as a Jewish work, together with its various implications, should be reconsidered (Adamczewski 2020b; 2020d; 2020e; 2021a; 2021b).

Another innovative Polish biblical hypothesis consists in the negation of the existence of the widely postulated hypothetical sources (documents, traditions, materials, layers, etc.) in the Pentateuch. In the opinion of Bartosz Adamczewski, such hypotheses should be substituted with the theory of a detailed, sequential, hypertextual (that is, highly creative) reworking of earlier biblical works in later ones: Ezekiel in Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy in Joshua–Judges, Deuteronomy in Genesis, and Deuteronomy in Exodus–Numbers. The same refers to the synoptic problem. Instead of postulating the existence of the hypothetical Q source, Adamczewski (2020c) opts for the Matthean Posteriority Hypothesis without the Q source, but in his particular version. He postulates a detailed, sequential, hypertextual reworking of the Lucan Acts of the Apostles in the Gospel of Matthew, a phenomenon which explains the relocations of the Lucan material in the Matthean Gospel.

Yet another innovative Polish scholarly hypothesis concerns the Pharisaic, and not Essene or Sadducean, origin of at least some of the documents among the Dead Sea Scrolls. In a Polish post-conference volume celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Adamczewski (2020a) has argued that the distinctive use of the phrase “works of the law” in both 4QMMT and the letters of the Pharisee Paul, the attribution of the halakic ideas contained in the Damascus Document to the Pharisees in the Gospel of Mark and in the Gospel of Luke, as well as the use of the key verb *prš* in the Damascus Document and 4QMMT as possible linguistic backgrounds to the coining of the name of the Pharisees, point to a connection of at least 4QMMT and the Damascus Document to the ideas and terminology of the Pharisees.

Accordingly, although Polish biblical scholarship after the communist period was initially certainly much weaker than its counterparts in the Western countries, it has developed and protected its distinctive profile, especially its close link to the theological task of strengthening the Church in faith. Moreover, it has begun to promote a fruitful

exegetical, methodological, hermeneutical, and theological dialogue with biblical scholars from other countries of the world.

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