MULTILINGUALISM AND THE GENESIS OF A NEW WRITTEN TRADITION

Prague · Vila Lanna · 8–9 October 2026

Institute of Slavonic Studies of the CAS

Czech Academy of Sciences

STRATEGY AV21

Conference programme:

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Conference Programme

Thursday 8 October 2026

MORNING

09:00	**Welcome Remarks**

SECTION I chaired by Tomáš Mikulka

09:10	**Ekaterina Dikova, Jürgen Fuchsbauer (Innsbruck)** REGEST: A Digital Tool for Studying Multiple Translations and the Formation of Written Traditions
09:30	**Nora White (Maynooth)** Writing on the Edge in Early Medieval Ireland
09:50	**Vladimir Agrigoroaei (Poitiers)** Not Yet English: The Kentish Sermons as an Inbred Textual Strain and the Weight of French Tradition

10:10	**Discussion**	**10:40**	**Lunch Coffee break**

SECTION II chaired by Markéta Kulhánková

11:10	**Alberto Ravani (Princeton)** Translating Myself. The Chambre de Beautés in Medieval Greek
11:30	**Peter Toth (Oxford)** An Unknown Latin Translation of the Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary
11:50	**Constanța Burlacu (Prague)** The Legend of Barlaam and Josaphat: A Phenomenon of Multilingualism and Linguistic Contact

12:10	**Discussion**	**12:40**	**Lunch**

Thursday 8 October 2026

AFTERNOON

SECTION III chaired by Pavla Drápelová

14:00	**David Torollo (Madrid)** Thirteenth-Century Multilingual Iberia: Arabic, Translation, and the Emergence of Hebrew and Castilian Narratives
14:20	**Nilab Saeedi (Vienna)** Choosing the Language of Empire: The Office of şehnāmecilik
14:40	**Ugo Mondini (Cologne)** Early Modern Mathēmataria and the Making of Greek Language and Literature in the Multilingual Ottoman Empire

15:00	**Discussion**	**15:30**	**Coffee break**

SECTION IV chaired by Vladislav Knoll			
16:00	**Miriam Cabré, Barbara Francioni, Camila Talfani (Girona)** Occitan in the Catalan Courtly Written Tradition: Origins and Historiographic Problems		
16:20	**Catherine Léglu (Luxembourg)** «Vers mortal»: Two Poems of the Toulouse Consistory and the Multilingual Theme of Death in the Later Fifteenth Century		
16:40	**Discussion**	**17:10**	**End of the first day**

Friday 9 October 2026

MORNING

09:00	**Opening of the Second Day**		
SECTION V chaired by Jiří Dynda			
09:10	**Tomáš Mikulka (Prague)** Constituting Liturgy in the Pannonian Area: The Example of the Great Blessing of Waters at Epiphany		
09:30	**Antoaneta Granberg (Gothenburg)** Multilingualism and the Emergence of a New Written Tradition: The Murfatlar Inscriptions		
09:50	**Simeon Dekker (Gießen)** The Formation of Literary Ruthenian in Interaction with Polish and Church Slavonic: The Intersection of Grammatical and Lexical Influences		
10:10	**Discussion**	**10:40**	**Lunch Coffee break**
SECTION VI chaired by Katarína Džunková			
11:10	**Dariusz Piwowarczyk (Kraków)** Relatinization and Multilingualism in the Genesis of Old Polish Christian Terminology		
11:30	**Dorota Masłej (Poznań)** The Process of Vernacularisation of Written Culture in the Light of Latin-Polish Bilingualism		
11:50	**Katarzyna Jasińska-Różycka, Magdalena Klapper (Kraków)** Foreign Reflexes in Medieval Polish Glosses: Two Case Studies		
12:10	**Discussion**	**12:40**	**Lunch**

Friday 9 October 2026

AFTERNOON

SECTION VII chaired by Constanţa Burlacu			
14:00	**Katarína Džunková (Prague)** The Hungarian "Hussite Bible" and Its Relationship to Medieval Czech and German Bible Translations: Translation Aids and the Latin Original		
14:20	**Gábor Bradács (Budapest)** Abridging, Glossing, Localizing: Translation Strategies and the Making of Vernacular Historiography (c. 1400–1600)		
14:40	**Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar (Vienna)** How God Started Speaking (Old) Romanian: Religious Vernacularization, Diaglossic Change, and Symbolic Regraphization among the Romanians of Banat (ca. 1560–ca. 1660)		
15:00	**Discussion**	**15:30**	**Coffee break**
SECTION VIII chaired by Constanţa Burlacu			
16:00	**Vratislav Karpíšek (Prague)** From Oral Variety to Written Practice: Initial Steps toward the Codification of Podlachian		
16:20	**Vladislav Knoll (Prague)** Why Do New Written Traditions Emerge?		
16:40	**Final Discussion**	**17:10**	**End of the conference**

Vladimir Agrigoroaei

CESCM Poitiers / CNRS

Not Yet English: The Kentish Sermons as an Inbred Textual Strain and the Weight of French Tradition

The so-called Kentish Sermons (c. 1250), five Middle English translations from the vernacular sermons of Maurice of Sully, constitute one of the earliest instances of translation from French into early Middle English. Preserved in a single manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 471), they are not an isolated insertion but form part of a larger Old French sermon collection. The manuscript begins with a French sermon, followed by Middle English versions of Sermons 2–6, before shifting to Latin material (a Lenten sermon and exempla), and then returning to the French Sully cycle, which continues—with interruptions—up to Sermon 36. The codex reveals a complex and unstable compilation process, marked by shifts in layout and script that suggest hesitation or changing aims, whether on the part of the scribe or a patron such as a local priest. In this context, the inclusion of only five English sermons appears to represent an abandoned attempt at vernacular translation. Surrounded predominantly by Latin and French texts, these Middle English sermons remain fully embedded within the Old French tradition, emerging not as an independent corpus but as a derivative, closely integrated textual offshoot.

Gábor Bradács

Independent scholar (Budapest, Hungary)

Abridging, Glossing, Localizing: Translation Strategies and the Making of Vernacular Historiography (c. 1400–1600)

The paper argues that translating Latin universal histories into Central European vernaculars was a decisive historiographical innovation and a key mechanism in the emergence of new written traditions. Adopting a comparative perspective across Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, and Southern Germany, it treats translation as a multilingual contact zone in which Latin chronicle authority, narrative templates, and epistemic norms were recalibrated for non-Latinate publics. The corpus bridges manuscript and early print: Beneš of Hořovice's *Czech Universal Chronicle*, built by translating Martinus Polonus and mediating German *Weltchronik* material; the parallel Latin and German editions of Schedel's *Nuremberg Chronicle*, where Georg Alt abridges esoteric matter while adding explanatory glosses for burgher readers; Marcin Bielski's *Polish Chronicle of the Whole World* as a vernacular synthesis of learned sources; and the first world history written in Hungarian by István Székely, which blends the translation and compilation of various humanist narratives with medieval and contemporary Hungarian history. Methodologically, paratextual analysis (prefaces, dedications, audience claims) is combined with close comparison of translated passages to map recurrent transformations: selective omission, added clarification, localization through exempla, confessional and moral recalibration, and lexical experimentation that stabilizes vernacular historical vocabulary and chronology. It is concluded that vernacularizing universal history functioned as a cultural technology of audience expansion and identity work, producing hybrid genres that bridge Latin universality with local political and confessional imaginaries, and thereby

clarifying how multilingualism catalyzes new written traditions. The analysis links textual micro-variants to shifts in readership, print, and confessional politics.

Constanța Burlacu

Institute of Slavonic Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences

The Legend of Barlaam and Josaphat: A Phenomenon of Multilingualism and Linguistic Contact

This paper examines the figure of Udrişte Năsturel through his translation of the *Legend of Barlaam and Josaphat*, as preserved in ms. slav. 588 of the Library of the Romanian Academy (BAR). This bilingual Church Slavonic–Romanian manuscript represents the closest surviving witness to Năsturel's original translation and offers a unique perspective on his intellectual and linguistic practices. To contextualise the manuscript, the paper first considers Năsturel's education and intellectual profile, paying particular attention to the linguistic and cultural environment that shaped his scholarly activity. It then investigates the Church Slavonic section of the manuscript, whose text displays several idiosyncratic features. By comparing it with the broader Church Slavonic tradition of the *Legend*, the study seeks to identify the nature and purpose of Năsturel's editorial interventions. The final part of the paper focuses on the Romanian translation itself, presenting a comparative analysis of the Romanian and Church Slavonic texts. Through this examination, the paper sheds light on Năsturel's translation strategies, his command of languages, and his engagement with the textual traditions available to him. More broadly, the presentation aims to illuminate the intellectual culture of seventeenth-century Romania through the case of Udrişte Năsturel, highlighting how linguistic knowledge was acquired, cultivated, and ultimately deployed in the translation, revision, and adaptation of texts.

Miriam Cabré, Barbara Francioni, Camila Talfani

Universitat de Girona

Occitan in the Catalan Courtly Written Tradition: Origins and Historiographic Problems

In the earliest extant lyrics produced in medieval Catalonia, Occitan was the poetic language, and the troubadour tradition was adopted as the framework for poetic creation. Unlike other areas where troubadour culture was embraced and promoted, this early adoption had a lasting impact on the language of Catalan medieval poetry, in both lyrics and the closely connected tradition of verse narrative. It is also worth highlighting that a body of medieval Catalan prose had developed in the multilingual Crown of Aragon while Occitan persisted as the language of poetic reference.

This is a well-known situation that presents, however, a number of unresolved questions. Building on recent studies, we will attempt to reconsider it, focusing on the questionable premises that have marred research on this topic, and the new data that can be obtained by rethinking the earlier stages of this linguistic adoption, the role of manuscript transmission in the evolution of the poetic language, and the comparison between the linguistic features of lyric and verse narrative. In

particular, we will reassess the transmission of these textual typologies and their contextual reception to understand their composite linguistic character and their intended audience. Two of our guiding questions will be: Do the major Catalan collections exhibit uniform linguistic features, or can differences in the scribal practices of their compilers be discerned? What can manuscripts reveal about verse narrative transmission in Catalan-speaking areas?

Simeon Dekker

Universität Gießen

The Formation of Literary Ruthenian in Interaction with Polish and Church Slavonic: The Intersection of Grammatical and Lexical Influences

This contribution investigates the formation of the Ruthenian literary language (prosta mova) in the 16th and 17th centuries. The language emerged in a multilingual environment on the basis of a medieval chancery language. The extension of the chancery language's functional realm involved reliance on and interaction with other languages, especially Polish and Church Slavonic. The thesis that the Ruthenian literary language emerged in close interaction with these languages will be demonstrated by two case studies concerning (1) past tense forms in Biblical versions (at the grammatical level) and (2) theological terms in polemical texts (at the lexical level). More specifically, the spread and integration of Polish and Church Slavonic past tense verb forms will be exemplified in Meletij Smotryc'kyj's *Ruthenian Homiliary Gospel* (1616) and its reedition by Petro Mohyla (1637). The integration of Polish lexical elements will be demonstrated by an analysis of Ruthenian and Church Slavonic lexical pairs (doublets) in Szymon Budny's *Ruthenian Catechism* (1562). A second line of research that can be addressed only cursorily in this contribution is the eastward influence of literary Ruthenian into Muscovy. It is well known that grammatical norms of Church Slavonic developed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were passed on to the wider East Slavic realm mainly through Meletij Smotryc'kyj's *Grammar*. However, the fact that parts of the Ruthenian lexical tradition were taken up in Muscovy in the 17th century has remained understudied. This lexical transfer will be demonstrated by investigating a manuscript translation into Church Slavonic of the aforementioned *Catechism*, made in Moscow in the 1640s. It will be shown that a number of Ruthenian-Church Slavonic pairs of synonyms were retained in the translation, even in cases where the Ruthenian lexeme was not widely used in Muscovy.

Ekaterina Dikova, Jürgen Fuchsbauer

University of Innsbruck

REGEST: A Digital Tool for Studying Multiple Translations and the Formation of Written Traditions

The emergence of new written traditions in medieval Europe relied on ongoing processes of translation, adaptation, and textual transmission. In the Byzantine-Slavonic world, Greek texts were transformed into Slavonic, producing new textual versions shaped by target contexts, practices, and expectations. REGEST – the Reference Tool for Greek-Slavonic Translations – documents these

multitranslational networks, presenting all Slavonic translations up to the 14th century, including diverse redactions within Church Slavonic that reveal layers of linguistic variation and adaptation. This online tool also has the potential to extend to later transmissions and other language traditions. This paper introduces REGEST, an online platform that integrates data on authors, works, translations, and text collections in a structured, interconnected framework. The tool enables researchers to trace textual relationships, identifying transmission patterns, and studying how translations were recontextualised, offering a deeper understanding of multitranslational dynamics. Crucially, REGEST is designed to expand beyond the Byzantine-Slavonic sphere, encompassing other textual traditions and thus supporting comparative research on translation, adaptation, and the evolution of written cultures across medieval Europe. The presentation will outline the database's conceptual design, methodological principles, and current development at the University of Innsbruck, highlighting the challenges of representing complex textual histories digitally and the opportunities of collaborative scholarly curation. A key aim is to invite specialists in Byzantine, Slavonic, and related fields to contribute content and expertise, helping REGEST grow into a shared, dynamic research infrastructure for studying both multitranslational texts and the formation of medieval written traditions.

Katarína Džunková

Institute of Slavonic Studies,Czech Academy of Sciences

The First Hungarian Translation of the Gospel and Psalter ("Hussite Bible") in the context of medieval Czech and German Bible translations. The so-called Hussite Bible, dating from the 1420s–1430s, is the first Hungarian Bible translation. It is preserved in three codices: the Apor Codex (Psalter), the Vienna Codex (Ruth, Judith, Esther, 2 Maccabees, Baruch, Daniel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets), and the Munich Codex (the Four Gospels), which was transcribed in 1466 in Târgu Trotuș, probably within a Hussite community that had emigrated from Hungary. Its presumed translators have been identified with two Hungarian students at Charles University in the early 15th century, Thomas de Quinque Ecclesiis and Valentinus de Vylak, whose association with the Hussite movement gave rise to the designation "Hussite Bible" for this translation.

Its possible relationship to the Old Czech and German translations was noted by the Slavist L. Hadrovics in *A magyar Huszita Biblia német és cseh rokonsága* (1994). Since then, research on the Old Czech Bible translation has advanced considerably, providing new perspectives on its relationship to the Old Hungarian Bible. Building on Hadrovics's work, our research compares selected translation approaches in the Four Gospels and the Psalter with those found in the German and Czech translations. Our textual analysis suggests that, rather than direct influence from the Czech or German texts, the similarities are better explained by the use of common translation aids and a similar Latin original. On the basis of identical translation solutions, including scribal errors, it was possible to establish that the Hungarian text of the Four Gospels used a similar type of Latin Vulgate to that used by the second redaction of the Old Czech translation. Both the Gospel and the Psalter demonstrate the use of the same translation aids in the Hungarian, Czech, and German texts, including Latin commentaries such as *Mammotrectus*, Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*, and the *Glossa ordinaria*, as well as dictionaries such as the *Vocabularius Ex quo* or *Interpretationes nominum*

hebraicorum, often appended to the Parisian-type Vulgate. Common variant readings and borrowings of unknown lexemes from Latin are likewise attested across the translations.

Finally, a comparison with the specific lexical features of Jan Hus's Czech writings reveals no significant direct correspondence in the Hungarian Gospel text. These findings contribute to the ongoing debate over the alleged Hussite origins of the earliest surviving Hungarian Bible translation.

Cristian-Nicolae Gașpar

Central European University, Vienna

How God Started Speaking (Old) Romanian: Religious Vernacularization, Diaglossic Change, and Symbolic Regraphization among the Romanians of Banat (ca. 1560–ca. 1660)

From the perspective and with the tools of modern historical sociolinguistics, the present paper investigates the processes that, from ca. 1560 to ca. 1660, under the impact of the Reformation, led to the restructuring of the sociolinguistic regime in the southwestern areas of the Principality of Transylvania. This sociolinguistic upheaval led to the unprecedented emergence of regional varieties of Old Romanian as privileged vehicles of written and oral religious discourse for communities beyond the Romanian-speaking Calvinist congregations living in the area. I intend to look at the discernible motivations (both pragmatic and symbolic) as well as the actants involved in the processes of vernacularization that resulted in the move from exoglossic diaglossia to (endoglossic) medial diaglossia in the religious domain in this period. I will also examine the diverging vernacularization strategies behind the remarkable compartmentalisation of such sociolinguistic restructuring, which granted (Old) Romanian prestige status in the religious domain while keeping Middle Hungarian as the administrative language of power for the bilingual elite speakers responsible for these changes. The shift described here would eventually culminate in the first systematic attempt at regraphization of (Old) Romanian, i.e., the abandonment of its native Cyrillic script in favour of a Hungarian-inspired Latin script. Although initially confined to the religious domain, where it functioned, as I will argue, as a marker of both confessional and regional identities, the new graphic system later expanded into the administrative and private domains, where it remained in use until the early 19th century.

Antoaneta Granberg

Göteborgs Universitet

Multilingualism and the Emergence of a New Written Tradition: The Murfatlar Inscriptions

This paper examines the epigraphic material from the rock-cut monastery complex in Murfatlar as a case study of the emergence of a new written tradition within a multilingual Christian environment. The site contains over 100 inscriptions and hundreds of single letters in a still undeciphered script that exhibits graphic and structural affinities with Greek, Cyrillic, and Glagolitic writing systems. Crucially, this corpus coexists spatially with inscriptions in Greek, Cyrillic, and Glagolitic, providing direct material evidence of a multilingual and multiscriptual environment. Rather than approaching

these similarities solely from a graphematic or palaeographic perspective, the study adopts the theoretical framework of discourse traditions understood as historically situated, conventionalized forms of textual production that transcend individual languages and operate alongside them (Koch 2023). In multilingual contexts, new written traditions do not arise ex nihilo but emerge through transformation, blending, and adaptation of pre-existing traditions. This perspective allows us to interpret the Murfatlar inscriptions not merely as an undeciphered written system but as the material trace of discursive practices shaped by intense contact between Byzantine (Greek), Slavic (Cyrillic/Glagolitic), and possibly local vernacular traditions. The analysis focuses on three interrelated dimensions: (1) graphematic correspondences across writing systems, (2) textual structuring devices such as punctuation, segmentation, and titlo-like abbreviations, and (3) the functional embedding of the inscriptions within a Christian ritual environment. The coexistence of multiple scripts in the same physical space is interpreted as a key indicator of overlapping discourse traditions and shared communicative functions, rather than merely parallel literacy practices. The Murfatlar corpus thus provides evidence of a process in which multilingual competence and cultural contact generate a hybrid discourse tradition. This emerging tradition reflects both conservatism (retention of established Christian textual conventions) and innovation (reconfiguration into a new script form), illustrating how new written practices develop through the transformation and blending of existing discourse traditions.

Reference: Koch, Peter. “Discourse traditions: on their status in language theory and on their dynamics”. Manual of Discourse Traditions in Romance, edited by Esme Winter-Froemel and Álvaro S. Octavio de Toledo y Huerta, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023, pp. 783–820. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110668636-040

Katarzyna Jasińska-Różycka, Magdalena Klapper

Institute of Polish Language, Polish Academy of Sciences

Foreign Reflexes in Medieval Polish Glosses: Two Case Studies

The formation of the Polish written tradition at the turn of the High and Late Middle Ages was shaped by the adaptation of the Latin alphabet to a Slavic language with phonemes absent from Latin, resulting in considerable orthographic instability. While certain patterns can be identified, deviations from them may reflect various factors, including the linguistic background of the scribe. The first case study examines Polish glosses in the *Vocabularius Petropolitanus I*, whose orthographic features suggest that the scribe was most likely a native speaker of German. These features include non-standard graphemic choices that diverge from otherwise attested patterns of medieval Polish writing. The analysis therefore asks whether the influence of the scribe’s linguistic background is confined to orthography, or whether it also extends to lexical selection and the morphology of the recorded forms. The second case study focuses on the Latin-Polish dictionary *Mammotrectus Lubinensis*. In this case, the source of interference appears to lie not in the scribe, but in the manuscript from which a given text was transcribed, namely, a Latin-Czech copy of the *Mammotrectus*. In the Polish manuscript, vernacular equivalents are frequently affected by Bohemisms, which raises questions about the mechanisms of their transmission: whether they result from scribal haste, interlingual similarity, or the close graphic alignment of the copied texts.

The paper approaches these issues within the framework of multilingualism, considering in the first case the linguistic identity of the scribe, and in the second the role of textual transmission.

References: 2022, Jasińska K., Rzepiela M., Latin Scripts in West Slavic, History of, [w:] M.L. Greenberg (ed.), Encyclopedia of Slavic Languages and Linguistics Online, Brill: online: 2022. 2020, Klapper M., Wokabularze petersburskie, [in:] E. Deptuchowa (ed.), Rozariusze z polskimi glosami, Instytut Języka Polskiego PAN: Kraków, 203–230. 1977-1980, Żurowska-Górecka W., Kyas V., Mammotrekty staropolskie, vol. 1-3, Ossolineum: Wrocław.

Vratislav Karpíšek

Institute of Slavonic Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences

From Oral Variety to Written Practice: Initial Steps toward the Codification of Podlachian

The present contribution approaches Podlachian as a microlanguage that is increasingly being recognised within the Slavic scholarly and cultural space, as evidenced by the steady growth of its written corpus, rising interest among speakers, and expanding attempts to use it beyond the private and domestic sphere for a broader range of communicative purposes. The analysis focuses on the initial steps that enabled this process and reconstructs the sequence through which Podlachian started to function as a consciously utilised written medium. Central attention is devoted to structural and linguistic challenges that shaped early codification efforts, most notably the absence of a shared written koiné. This was closely connected with unresolved issues of morphological variation, the selection of a dialect base for the emerging standard, and questions of phonological and graphemic representation, including the choice of a unified orthography and script. Furthermore, the process also had to grapple with ongoing language shift and language loss, which introduced a strong sense of urgency into early initiatives. Written practices therefore had to address not only problems of standardisation, but also questions of legitimacy and acceptance, including how a newly emerging written form could reach its users and demonstrate its practical and symbolic value. Crucially, the contribution emphasises that the written tradition of Podlachian did not arise ex nihilo. In this sense, the language (dialect) planning process was both continuous and innovative. By reconstructing its initial steps, the contribution sheds light on mechanisms through which new written traditions and microlanguages emerge within multilingual settings.

Vladislav Knoll

Institute of Slavonic Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences

Why Do New Written Traditions Emerge?

The closing paper of the conference aims to initiate a discussion on the conditions under which a new written tradition emerges. We will summarise different scenarios by comparing different cases from the Latin, Church Slavonic and Greek cultural areas, focusing on the Middle Ages. In such considerations, the first step is to define what we mean by a new written variety. This question is related to our understanding of autonomy and the relationship of this written variety to others in

contact, as well as the manner in which such a written variety manifests itself. This relates to the question of how to distinguish the occasional use of a written form of a variety for certain purposes or text types of an otherwise oral language (Verschriftung) from regular use (Verschriftlichung), given the limits of the surviving evidence. How can we also distinguish a variety defined by regular code-switching, hybridisation, or the specifics of the local use of a transplanted language? Within these considerations, we must take into account the target variety and the method of language education, the distance between the varieties in contact, the type of written records (pragmatic or cultural, immediate or elaborated) and the definability of the discourse societies involved. Can we ascertain how the people of that time perceived this process? Are there any parallels to these processes in the contemporary world?

Catherine Léglu

Université du Luxembourg

« Vers mortal »: Two Poems of the Toulouse Consistory and the Multilingual Theme of Death in the Later Fifteenth Century

Two prize poems of the Toulouse Consistory's *Jocs florals* reflect the fifteenth-century fashion for the theme of death. A vers was awarded the eglantine in 1451. In 1471, the eglantine was awarded to a poem called a vers mortal by a merchant, Anthoni Racaud. Both poems claim to offer consolation to the common people in a time of death and conflict but articulate unease about the nature and purpose of such words. It is well known that the declared purpose of the Toulouse Consistory was to revive or to perpetuate pre-1300 troubadour lyric poetry. However, the *Leys d'Amors* (c. 1324–1356) include poems that are directly connected with the developments of devotional song and practice of their time. This paper will address the reception of Alain Chartier both north and south of the Pyrenees, as well as the presence in the region of the macabre in the visual arts and possibly in music.

Dorota Masłej

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

The Process of Vernacularisation of Written Culture in the Light of Latin-Polish Bilingualism

In the early phases of the development of written culture in Poland, the dominant language of the written word was Latin (as was also the case in most of Europe). The growth of written Polish took place in close proximity to Latin texts and the written Latin language. Furthermore, undoubtedly writing in Latin and writing in Polish were for a long time difficult to separate. This is clearly evident in bilingual manuscripts and texts: Latin manuscripts containing Polish glosses, as well as texts in which both languages play a fundamental and often identical role in the grammatical, semantic and textual structure. According to Armando Petrucci's concept1, the social role played by vernacular languages grew in two stages: (1) the language becomes recognised as being 'writable'; (2) the language gains the right to be 'canonised in books' (as a result, complex texts in vernacular languages are produced and form independent units within books). What really interests me is the

transitional stage between the two phases identified by Petrucci, when bilingual texts emerge as a manifestation of the vernacularisation process. In this paper, I would like to focus on medieval Latin-Polish texts as evidence of the process of vernacularisation and the emergence of a new written vernacular tradition under the influence of the Latin model. In particular, I will focus on those texts in which Polish and Latin elements form a coherent text. The material analysed will comprise texts that are functionally and generically diverse: religious and practical texts (covering medieval theoretical and practical knowledge, such as medicine). The selection of diverse material will enable us to identify similarities and differences regarding the influence and role of Latin in the creation of various texts that shaped the vernacular written culture of the Middle Ages.

Reference: A. Petrucci, “Reading and writing volgare in medieval Italy”, in: ID., Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture, ed. and trans. Ch.M. Radding, (New Haven and London, 1995), pp. 169-235.

Tomáš Mikulka

Institute of Slavonic Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences

Constituting Liturgy in the Pannonian Area: The Example of the Great Blessing of Waters at Epiphany

Early Christianity in medieval Hungary developed at the crossroads of three or four major traditions: Latin, Frankish, Greek-Byzantine, and Slavonic. In my contribution, I will focus on the rite of the Blessing of Waters at Epiphany preserved in the Latin *Chartvirgus Pontifical* (Zagreb, B. Metropolitana MR 165), dated to the end of the eleventh century and probably associated with Esztergom. This Latin adaptation, studied by M. I. Földváry, represents a version already accommodated to Western liturgical conventions, as is particularly evident in its preface-like structure. Nevertheless, its Greek antecedents and sources can still be identified. The principal redactions of the Greek rite will be presented and compared with the extant Slavonic translations. On the basis of linguistic, liturgical, and manuscript evidence, I will explore the possible coexistence of different Christian traditions in the Pannonian region of the early Hungarian Kingdom and propose a reconstruction of the channels and directions of influence between them.

Ugo Mondini

University of Cologne

Early Modern Mathēmataria and the Making of Greek Language and Literature in the Multilingual Ottoman Empire

This paper explores early modern Greek mathēmataria (schoolbooks) as key sites for tracing the transmission, transformation, and reinterpretation of late medieval Greek linguistic thought in the post-Byzantine world. In Byzantium, mastery of learned Greek functioned as a central marker of elite identity, enabling participation in administration, ecclesiastical hierarchies, and intellectual life. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, however, the institutional foundations sustaining this

system were fundamentally reshaped. Greek language education did not decline; rather, it adapted to the sociolinguistic conditions of the Ottoman Empire, where Greek operated across shifting cultural and communicative domains within the multilingual space of the Eastern Mediterranean. Through the analysis of glosses, paraphrases, marginalia in various languages, and anthologised texts, the paper argues that mathēmataria functioned not only as pedagogical tools but also as dynamic spaces of negotiation between inherited tradition and evolving linguistic realities. These materials reveal how medieval discourse traditions were selectively preserved, adapted, and reconfigured in response to new audiences and contexts of use. By foregrounding these processes, the paper contributes to broader discussions on multilingualism and the emergence of new written traditions. In particular, it sheds light on the historical formation of what is now termed "Modern Greek" language and literature, demonstrating how educational texts actively mediated cultural continuity and linguistic and literary change.

Dariusz Piwowarczyk

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie

Relatinization and Multilingualism in the Genesis of Old Polish Christian Terminology

This paper examines the formation of Old Polish Christian terminology within the multilingual context of early medieval Poland, focusing on the phenomenon of relatinization as a mechanism shaping an emerging written tradition. The spread of Christianity introduced a complex contact situation involving Latin as the dominant liturgical and written language, alongside the developing vernacular Polish. Early borrowings from Latin and Greek, adapted during the initial phase of Christianization, were subsequently reshaped under the increasing influence of Latin written culture and ecclesiastical norms. We argue that relatinization—understood as the partial renewal of earlier loanwords in order to restore their similarity to the Latin source—constitutes an important indicator of sustained multilingual competence within the medieval discourse community. This process reflects not only linguistic adaptation but also the growing prestige of Latin and its role as a model for the emerging Polish written tradition. A representative example is the development of the consonant cluster corresponding to Latin <chr->: originally adapted as /kř/ (e.g., krzcić 'to baptize'), it was later relatinized to /xr/ (chrzcić), bringing the form closer to its Latin etymon (chrismō). By situating these developments within broader patterns of language contact and prestige asymmetry, the paper highlights how multilingualism facilitated the transfer, reinterpretation, and stabilization of religious vocabulary. This, in turn, sheds light on the processes through which Polish began to function as a vehicle of Christian discourse and contributed to the gradual emergence of a new written tradition.

References: Elexicon = Elektroniczny Słownik Łaciny Średniowiecznej w Polsce, [on-line]. Grandgent C.H., 1934, An Introduction to Vulgar Latin, New York. Herman J., Wright R., 2000, Vulgar Latin, University Park PA. Hock H.H., 1986, Principles of Historical Linguistics, Berlin – New York. Jasińska K., Piwowarczyk D. R., 2018, „On the Relatinization of the Latin Term 'magister'", Classica Cracoviensia, 21, 95-106.

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Translating Myself. The Chambre de Beautés in Medieval Greek

One of the most remarkable passages in Benoît de Sainte Maure's *Roman de Troie* is the three-hundred-line description of the room that Priam gives to his son Hector, the so-called "chamber of beauties." This room has marvellous interiors, yet "no one, no matter how intently they looked, could see in from the outside." What makes it truly extraordinary is the presence of several automata that move and interact with the people inside the chamber. For this description, Benoît drew inspiration from legendary accounts of the royal palace of Constantinople, especially its throne room filled with automata. When Benoît's *Roman de Troie* was translated into Greek in the second half of the thirteenth century, the translator faced a particularly delicate challenge: translating a Western depiction of Byzantium back into a Byzantine cultural setting. This act of translation, and the choices made by the translator, form the focus of my paper. The difficulty of translating the description of the *Chambre de Beautés* into Greek lay in the fact that this was neither a travel account nor an outsider's description of a real place. It was a fictional passage within a larger narrative, yet one that evoked a certain Western idea of Byzantium. How difficult is it to translate such a nuanced, external view of one's own culture back into that culture's language? And how might a Greek audience of the time have perceived it? By comparing the source text with its translation, my paper examines the linguistic and discursive changes that the translator introduced in order to reshape, for a Greek readership, a foreign imagination of Byzantium.

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Choosing the Language of Empire: The Office of şehnāmecilik

The Ottoman Empire was a profoundly multilingual polity, in which Ottoman Turkish functioned as the primary administrative and court language, while Arabic and Persian coexisted as languages of religion, scholarship, and high culture. Historical writing within this environment was shaped by hierarchies of language and authority rather than by linguistic uniformity. Against this backdrop, the establishment of the institution of şehnāmecilik[1] in the sixteenth century represents a striking exception. Although Persian was not the first language of the Ottoman ruling elite, the court deliberately commissioned its earliest official dynastic histories in Persian, drawing on the prestige of Persian epic and historiographical models rooted in the Shāhnāma tradition. This paper posits that the initial predilection for Persian in Ottoman şehnāme writing should be understood as a deliberate strategy of legitimation within a multilingual discourse community, in which Persian functioned not merely as a literary medium but as a language of imperial authority and historical credibility. By situating Ottoman şehnāmecilik within the broader Persianate world, it becomes evident that Persian functioned as a trans-imperial historiographical language capable of mediating models of kingship, memory, and sovereignty. Concurrently, the subsequent transition toward composing şehnāmes in Ottoman Turkish signifies a substantial transformation of this discourse tradition. Rather than indicating a rejection of Persian models, this shift reflects the growing self-confidence of Ottoman Turkish as a language of historiography and the emergence of a new written tradition

adapted to the empire's political and cultural priorities. By tracing this linguistic and discursive shift, the paper contributes to broader discussions on how multilingualism fosters the genesis of new written traditions through the selective adaptation and transformation of prestigious cultural languages in premodern societies.

1 şehnāmecilik refers to the Ottoman court institution dedicated to the composition of dynastic and imperial histories modeled on the Persian Shāhnāma tradition. Established in the sixteenth century, it involved court-appointed historians and poets (şehnāmecis) who produced richly literary narratives celebrating the deeds, genealogy, and legitimacy of Ottoman sultans, often drawing on Persian epic and historiographical conventions.

David Torollo

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Thirteenth-Century Multilingual Iberia: Arabic, Translation, and the Emergence of Hebrew and Castilian Narratives

Medieval Iberia witnessed an intense, complex, and dynamic process of cultural exchange among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. At a moment of transition from Muslim Iberia to Christian Spain, a new genre of literary works emerged. In Hebrew, Jewish intellectuals pioneered the composition of secular narratives, beginning with *The Words of Asher Ben Yehudah*. A parallel development occurred within the coexisting Castilian tradition: the epic poem *Cantar de Mio Cid* represents the first secular narrative in Castilian. Numerous Hebrew and Castilian narrative works would follow throughout the thirteenth century in Iberia. In this paper, I examine several Hebrew and Castilian narratives written in the multilingual milieu of thirteenth-century Iberia. Drawing on theories of secularization and translation, close readings of these texts illuminate the emergence of 'secular' literature as a product of complex inter- and intra-religious interactions among the literary and linguistic traditions that converged in the medieval Iberian world. Central to this process was the extensive translation movement from Arabic into Castilian and Hebrew within a multilingual and translingual context, which significantly expanded the expressive capacities of both languages. As a result, Hebrew and Castilian authors came to perceive their vernaculars as sufficiently rich not only to translate Arabic works effectively but also to function as autonomous literary languages. This paper thus sheds light on the process of genre formation as a consequence of translation practices among coexisting traditions.

Peter Tóth

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An Unknown Latin Translation of the Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary

The Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary is one of the most popular apocryphal texts in Orthodox Christian tradition. It describes the journey of the Virgin Mary in the netherworld as the Archangel Michael guides her through the torments of hell. Deeply saddened by seeing the punishment of Christian

sinners there, the Virgin presents a long supplication to Christ for their forgiveness, to which he responds by declaring that the suffering of Christians in the afterlife will be suspended for the fifty-day period between Easter and Pentecost. Composed around the 8th century, the Greek original of the Apocalypse came down to us in a very large number of manuscripts and reworkings. As a sign of its popularity even beyond Greek-speaking Orthodoxy, the text was translated into almost all languages of the Orthodox world from Slavonic and Romanian to Georgian and Armenian. In contrast to its spread in the East, the Apocalypse of the Virgin is usually said to have remained unknown in the West. This paper will present a hitherto unrecorded Latin text, identified in four manuscripts from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, which seems to be a translation of this Apocalypse. A comparative analysis of the language and style of the Latin text to the Greek original and other versions will provide evidence to show that the Latin text was not translated from Greek but, in a rather unique and surprising way, from a Church Slavonic original. Where, how and why this could actually happen are questions to be discussed and debated during the workshop.

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Writing on the Edge in Early Medieval Ireland

This paper will examine the early writing tradition on the island of Ireland and how this tradition was born in the multilingual interaction with a neighbouring writing tradition, namely that of Latin in Roman Britain. Although Ireland (along with Northern Britain) was never part of the Roman Empire, there was much interaction between the two islands before, during, and after the Roman presence in Britain. The first appearance of writing in Ireland was in Irish in the ogham script, the invention of which presupposes a knowledge of Latin. As Christianity took hold, however, writing in the Latin alphabet took over, in manuscripts and in the epigraphic tradition. Although initially in Latin, Irish soon became the dominant written language and ogham, rather than falling completely out of use, adapted to the new media and became a key symbol of Irish linguistic and cultural identity.

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