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SOME COMMENTS ON THE CZECH TERTULLIAN SCHOLARSHIP

In 2000 I. L. S. Balfour published in the *Journal of Early Christian Studies* a brief paper "Tertullian On and Off the Internet"[1] which informs us of the results of Balfour's inquiry concerning the quantity of "classical" printed materials about/ by Tertullian, compared with similar documents available on the Internet. The very first of Balfour's statements is of great interest: I. Balfour records in his personal bibliography[2] more than 2000 book-works carrying the name Tertullian in its title dating from 1483 when was for the first time published one of Tertullian's writings in book form (*Apologeticum* in particular) onwards.[3] This number is rather the bottom line, as one can see for example from my own bibliography, containing far more than 1000 entries, although its core consists mainly of works published during the 20th century (even more, in spite of some exceptions, the works written in less common languages are not listed).

According to Balfour's statistics, 694 out of these 2000 book-works are monographs, 874 articles in scholarly journals, 136 dissertations and 296 tributes to occasional festschrifts. The leading language of these documents is naturally Latin (until 1820), which is later replaced mainly by Italian, French and English.[4]

The situation in Czech lands sharply contrasts with the trend just outlined. From the historical point of view, the earliest personality coming from the Czech territory whose fate was somehow connected with Tertullian and who gained deserved acknowledgement on an European-wide scale, was Zikmund Hrubý z Jelení (Sigismundus Gelenius, 1497–1554),[5] a classical philologist, who

1 In: JECS 8 (4), 2000, pp. 579–585.

2 Dr. BALFOUR, to whom I'm deeply indebted, was kind enough to let me see and study his extensive collection of bibliographical reference, which helped me a lot in my own work.

3 Balfour, I. L. S., *Tertullian On and Off the Internet.* In: JECS 8 (4), 2000, p. 579. Tertullian is after St. Augustine and St. Ambrose the third most often written about church author of the West. The web pages containing Tertullian's name are, so Balfour l. c., at least 921 in number, and probably more.

4 BALFOUR, I. L. S., *Tertullian*, p. 581 and 581 sq.

5 The most comprehensive study focusing on Gelenius' life and scholarly work is probably

reached worldwide reputation as a worker in the famous Frobenius' print shop in Basel and as an editor of ancient and church others ("Frobenianae officinae corrector"; "castigator")[6] – among authors also of Tertullian. In 1550 he revised editio princeps of Beatus Rhenanus from the year 1521 (which contained 20 out of 31 extant Tertullian's writings and which was decorated by woodcuttings of Hans Holbein Jr. and other artists)[7] and from the new, now lost, manuscript (*Codex Masburensis*, i. e. "from Malmesbury"), which according to Gelenius' own words was loaned to him by the Englishman John Leland,[8] Gelenius newly published three Tertullian's writings – *De monogamia, De praescriptione haereticorum* and *De resurrectione mortuorum*.[9] The value and importance of Gelenius' work is today beyond dispute – considering the manuscript which he had used, his edition is even in these days a very valuable source.[10]

To proceed chronologically we must skip the following 300 years. As late as in 1851 there appears the first short article with the title *Tertullian*, introducing

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still the aged paper of Josef TRUHLÁŘ, *Sigismundus Gelenius, jeho život a působení vědecké*. In: Časopis musea království českého 60 (1), 1886, pp. 27–47; 60 (2–3), 1886, pp. 210–224. Truhlář uses the quotations from Gelenius' correspondence to reconstruct his biography; in addition, Truhlář reproduces also two Gelenius' letters addressed to Melanchthon. The mention of Gelenius' edition of Tertullian's works is unfortunately too brief. In connection with Gelenius another Czech article deserves to be mentioned, though its concern is not with Tertullian – the critical and most careful examination of Gelenius' use of conjecture in his editions Arnobe and Minucius Felix was presented by B. RYBA in his paper *Sigismundus Gelenius a jeho vydání Arnobia a Minucia.* In: Listy filologické 52, 1925, pp. 13–23, 91–108, 222–236, 337–341.

6 TRUHLÁŘ, J., *Sigismundus Gelenius*, p. 36.

7 To editio princeps cf. e.g. PETITMENGIN, P., *Comment on imprimait à Bâle au début du seizième siècle: A propos du "Tertullien" de Beatus Rhenanus (1521).* In: Annuaire de la Société des Amis de la Bibliothèque de Sélestat, 1980, pp. 93–106; other details can be found on http://www.tertullian.org/editions/editions.htm ("The Tertullian Project" – www.tertullian.org – which was created and which is continuously being updated by Roger Pearse, offers the most wide-ranging collection of Tertullian-documents and information on the Internet; its usefulness for all interested in Tertullian is immense.)

8 "Tandem ex ultima Britannia Ioannes Lelandus, vir antiquarius et feliciori dignus valetudine, communicavit exemplar in Masburensi coenobio gentis eius vetustissimo repertum." Quoted from THOMSON, R., *Identifiable Books from the Pre-Conquest Library of Malmesbury Abbey.* In: Anglo-Saxon England 10, 1982, pp. 1–19, here p. 11. As P. PETITMENGIN in his article *John Leland, Beatus Rhenanus et le Terulliem de Malmésbury* (in: Studia Patristica 18 [2], 1989, pp. 53–60) has shown, John Leland had sent his manuscript to Beatus Rhenanus first and after his death it passed on Gelenius.

9 The source used by Gelenius for publishing other Tertullian's writings was among others the edition of Martin Mesnartius (Jean de Gagny – Gagnaeus), Paris 1545; Mesnartius added to Rhenanus' edition another 11 writings, but only 9 of them were works of Terullian. The last 2, *De trinitate* and *Decibis iudaicis*, were in fact written by Novatian.

10 The Gelenius' edition was twice reprinted – in 1562 and 1566. For other details see http://www.tertullian.org/editions/editions.htm. The value of Gelenius' edition for establishing the most accurate text is appreciated for example by M. TURCAN in her edition of *De spectaculis* (Paris 1986, Sources Chrétiennes 332; passim, cf. mainly pp.12–28) or by R. UGLIONE, *A proposito dell'edizione geleniana del "De monogamia" di Tertulliano.* In: Giornale italiano di filologia 11, 1980, pp. 83–94.

the personality of our author (biography based on mentions of church fathers and classification of Tertullian's works).[11] In 1866 there follows an article entitled *Tertulliánovo "Testimonium animae"* which briefly describes the content of Tertullian's apologetic writing.[12]

1877 was the year when the first Czech translation of Tertullian's writing was published – the translation of *Apologeticum* was made by Václav Vojáček, explanatory notes added by František Bauer.[13] The book was furnished with thorough introduction covering the whole range of Tertullian's writings (including the brief description of each of them), a list of manuscripts and editions of *Apologeticum* and indexes of names and subjects were included as well. Vojáček's work must be considered pioneering. With regard to the difficulty of the text, which the translator had to fight with, he did his best and no one can deny that he without any doubt understood the Latin original. Nevertheless, his translation bears the typical signs of the period of its origin – Vojáček sometimes almost verbatim imitates the diction and vocabulary of the Latin original and ignores the fact that resulting constructions can't function in Czech. All in all, from the contemporary point of view, his translation is very old-fashioned and sometimes even impenetrable.

Before the first serious scholarly Tertullian-studies in Czech appeared, another 60 years had passed. In 1937 the versatile classical philologist Zdeněk K. Vysoký published his *Příspěvky k poznání pramenů spisů Tertullianových a vzájemných vztahů nejstarší apologetické literatury křesťanské* ("Remarks on the Knowledge of Sources of Tertullian's Writings and of Mutual Relations between the Oldest Apologetic Christian Literature"),[14] dealing with the problem of sources of Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, *Ad nationes* and *De anima*. Vysoký comes to the conclusion that the basic sources of Tertullian, as for his apologetic writings, are Justin' s Apologies; of some influence was also Flavius' treatise *Contra Apionem*. As far as Latin authors are concerned, Vysoký says, Tertullian was affected (regarding the content of his works) by Varro's *Antiquitates rerum divinarum*. The traces of direct use of Cicero and Seneca are on the contrary not obvious. Because of Minucius' known indebtedness to Cicero and Seneca, Vysoký supposes that it was Minucius Felix who used Tertullian's treatises – the primacy in Latin apologetic literature thus belongs to Tertullian.[15] In his chapter dedicated to *De anima*, Vysoký examines and criticizes radical opinions of both Waszink and Karpp, the first suggesting that Tertullian drew on many various pagan and Christian writings, the second overestimating the influence of Sora-

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11 OUSOBSKY, (?), *Tertullian*. In: Časopis pro katolické duchovenstvo 24 (4), 1851, pp. 1–11.

12 LENZ, A., *Tertulliánovo „Testimonium animae"*. In: Časopis pro katolické duchovenstvo 7 (1), 1886, pp. 1–7.

13 *Q. Sept. Fl. Tertulliana Apologetikum*. Transl. Václav Vojáček. Praha 1877.

14 VYSOKÝ, Z. K., *Příspěvky k poznání pramenů spisů Tertullianových a vzájemných vztahů nejstarší apologetické literatury křesťanské*. Praha 1937. 133 pages.

15 See VYSOKÝ, Z. K., *Příspěvky*, pp. 72–76.

nus' treatise Περὶ ψυχῆς.[16] Although Vysoký's book seems somewhat aged today, it is still a very valuable book displaying a high degree of author's erudition and philological carefulness. Because it was supplied with resume in French, the foreign scholars could make themselves familiar with its conclusions. For example, the study is quoted by T. D. Barnes,[17] who mentions another Vysoký's work as well[18] – the article published in Czech with the title *Předlohy Tertullianova útěšného traktátu Ad martyras* ("The Patterns of Tertullian's Consoling Treatise *Ad martyras*").[19] About this paper we can make the same judgement as about Vysoký's book: it is still worth reading although some points which Vysoký takes for granted – in particular Tertullian's direct dependence upon Seneca in *Ad martyras* – is not so much emphasized by contemporary scholars.

The last of Vysoký's articles (chronologically belonging to the time of "Remarks") is *Stav nynějšího bádání o časovém pořadí Tertullianových spisů apologetických a Minuciova Oktavia* ("The State of Today's Research on Chronological Order of Tertullian's Apologetic Writings and *Octavius* by Minucius").[20] In this article Vysoký collected useful information about older research on the problem of Minucius–Tertullian priority, correcting, with healthy scepticism, some excesses of other scholars. For completeness' sake modern scholars consider this puzzle solved: the priority of Tertullian's *Apologeticum* – written about 197 – over Minucius' *Octavius* – written between 210–245 – is in the main accepted.[21] In later years Vysoký changed his field of interest – he published numerous papers on Attic tragedy, Greek and Latin lyrical poetry and he also dedicated himself to translation (e.g. Plutarch). These three texts of Vysoký (together with some reviews of foreign studies, which are listed below)[22] create,

16 See VYSOKÝ, Z. K., *Příspěvky*, pp. 118–120.

17 BARNES, T. D., *Tertullian. A Historical and Literary Study*. Oxford 1985², p. 203, note 2.

18 BARNES, T. D., *Tertullian*, p. 226, note 5.

19 VYSOKÝ, Z. K., *Předlohy Tertullianova útěšného traktátu Ad martyras*. In: Listy filolgické 72 (2–4), 1948, pp. 156–166.

20 VYSOKÝ, Z. K., *Stav nynějšího bádání o časovém pořadí Tertullianových spisů apologetických a Minuciova Oktavia*. In: Listy filologické 65 (2–3), 1938, pp. 110–123.

21 HECK, E., *M. Minucius Felix*. In: HLL (Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike) 4, München 1997, § 485, p. 512. (A survey of newer scholarship, see ibidem, p. 513.)

22 The list of Czech reviews of foreign Tertullian-studies is as follows: NOVÁK, R. (rev.), *Hoppe, H., Syntax and Stil des Tertullian, Leipzig 1903*. In: Časopis pro moderní filogii 9, 1903, pp. 286–287, SAMSOUR, J. (rev.), *D'Alès, A., La Theologie de Tertullien, Paris 1905*. In: Časopis pro katolické duchovenstvo 48, 1907, pp. 526–528; HUBÍK, K. (rev.), *Harnack, A., Křesťanská bibliotéka Tertulliánova*. In: Časopis pro katolické duchovenstvo 56, 1915, pp. 357–358; KRÁLÍK, O. (rev.), *Teeuwen, St. W. J., Sprachlicher Bedeutungswandel bei Tertullian, Paderborn 1926*. In: Listy filologické 54, 1927, p.277; VYSOKÝ, Z. K. (rev.), *Schmidt, Joh. Minucius Felix oder Tertullian? Leipzig 1932*. In: Listy filologické 64, 1937, pp. 68–71; VYSOKÝ, Z. K. (rev.), *Tertullian, De anima. Übersetzung und Kommentar, ed. J. H. Waszink, Amsterdam 1933*. In: Listy filologické 64, 1937, pp. 461–463; BURIAN, J. (rev.), *Klein, R., Tertullian und das römische Reich, Heidelberg 1968*. In: Československý časopis historický 17, 1969, p. 803.

as far as I know, the only Czech scientific contributions to the Tertullian scholarship.

In 1987, 110 years after the first Czech translation of *Apologeticum*, we find this treatise translated for the second time. It was Josef Novák who set about this task, but his attempt failed completely.[23] Not only didn't Novák respect the brilliant and refined language and style of Tertullian and resigned absolutely on any solicitude to try to translate it into Czech, but also from objective point of view, his translation is inaccurate, oversimplified, violent to the modern Czech language – in one word bad. The same can be said about the notes, which are littered with errors and "elucidate" mostly notoriously known realia. Josef Novák also translated some extracts from Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum*, his translation is prefaced with a brief information about Tertullian's life.[24]

It's clear enough that the Czech scholars have much to do. As the first swallow signalizing the beginning of a renascent interest in Tertullian can be seen the Czech translation of D. Rankin's study *Tertullian and the Church*,[25] the first Tertullian title that is accessible to the Czech reader. One can hope that the newly established institution, *Centrum pro práci s patristickými, středověkými a renesančními texty* ("Centre for Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Texts"),[26] which is financially supported by the Czech government and whose aim is to produce modern translations of and commentaries on writers such as Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Abelard and many others as well as also original studies,[27] will fulfill its role and will help to open the world of (early) Christian literature, most of which is for Czech public even still closed and unknown.

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23 *Tertullianus – Apologeticum.* In: Čtvrtá patristická čítanka. Transl. J. Novák. Praha 1987.

24 *Uplatnění preskripce vůči heretikům.* In: *Patristická čítanka.* Transl. J. Novák. Praha 1983, pp. 16–20.

25 RANKIN, D., *Tertullianus a církev.* Transl. T. Suchomel. Brno 2001.

26 See the web page http://www.centrum-texty.upol.cz/english/index_en.htm.

27 In collaboration with this institution the author of this paper is preparing a Czech translation of Tertullian's treatise *De spectaculis*, furnished with an introductory study and commentary. The same author has also translated into Czech portions of *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (in particular, chapters 3–10 prefaced with brief introduction concerning the content of the work, problems connected with the authorship, original language of the text etc.), which work has also its connections to Tertullian (KITZLER, P., *Umučení svaté Perpetuy a Felicity. Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis.* In: Teologický sborník 8 [2], 2002, pp. 75–83). Finally, the Czech translation of Tertullian's *Ad martyras* (with explanatory notes and brief introduction) is now also available (KITZLER, P., *Q. S. F. Tertullianus – Povzbuzení mučedníkům [Ad martyras].* In: Teologický sborník 8 [4], 2002, pp. 55–62).