

Słoboda, Agnieszka

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Agnieszka Słoboda

# THE SYNTAX OF KAZANIA GNIEŹNIEŃSKIE IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR GENETIC MULTILAYERING

## ABSTRACT

*This paper presents a new proposal for the syntactic analysis of one of the most important medieval Polish manuscripts, Kazania Gnieźnieńskie (Gniezno sermons). The author believes that the study of the medieval texts syntax should take into account their genetic multilayering, that is, the ratio of the final issues available to the source, whether based on Latin or later modifications containing various amendments, annotations, and insertions. The comparison of the two versions of the first sermon, i.e., without amendments, and the last version, which contains glosses, shows significant differences in the syntactic structure of these two issues resulting from the consistent adaptation of the syntactic structure to the requirements of a particular audience.*

## KEYWORDS

*Middle Ages; syntax; genetic multilayering; Gniezno sermons*

The paper presents a new proposal for the syntactic analysis of *Kazania gnieźnieńskie* (*Gniezno sermons*), one of the most important medieval Polish manuscripts of the early 15th century.<sup>1</sup> I would like to justify the thesis that in the case of these sermons, two different versions of the text should be subject to a syntax analysis – before and after the amendments.<sup>2</sup> The comparison of the version of the sermon without glosses with the version that contains glosses reveals significant modifications of the syntactic structure of the text, starting from the segmentation of the text,

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1 Despite the importance of this manuscript, surprisingly, it is underresearched, as noted by Krysztyna Pisarkowa (PISARKOWA 1976, 7). Since her article devoted primarily to the syntactic function of the particle *ć, ci*, only a few papers on the language of *Gniezno sermons* were published (WALCZAK 1998, KIDA 2010, JĘDRZEJCZAK-OZORKIEWICZ 2015).

2 Yet another issue is how the Polish version without glosses relates to the translation base.

through the extension of nominal phrases, to changes in the coordinate and subordinate relations between sentences.<sup>3</sup>

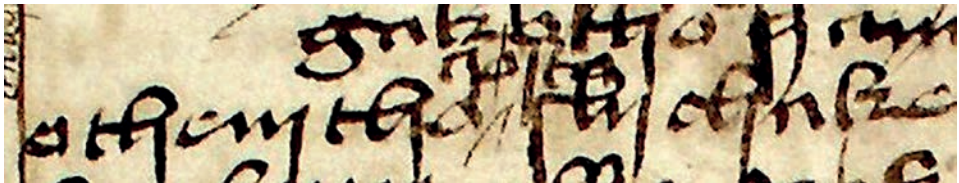
PISARKOWA (1976) and WALCZAK (1998) in their articles present a thesis that constitutes a starting point for further deliberations; at the same time, to some extent, they argue with previous – strict and negative – opinions on the syntax of *Kazania gnieźnieńskie*.<sup>4</sup> While Klemensiewicz's assessment is clearly negative (KLEMENSIEWICZ 1974), Zdzisław Stieber links the stylistic features he indicated with the goal that guided a medieval preacher, namely, to bring the sermons closer to the 'language of the people' (STIEBER 1952).<sup>5</sup> Pisarkowa and Walczak also emphasise the oral nature of the syntax of sermons. Walczak writes: "na wyliczone przez Stiebera zabiegi trzeba chyba spojrzeć nie tyle jako na środki wydłużające tekst, ile jako na środki retardacyjne, rozgęszczające tekst i tym samym ułatwiające jego recepcję przez słuchaczy" ('the treatments enumerated by Stieber should probably be viewed not so much as measures that extend the text, but as retardation measures that make the text more diffused, and thus render it easier to receive for the listeners'; WALCZAK 1998, 135). The author of *The History of Polish Syntax* has proved that the particles *ć/ci* (very numerous in the glosses of *Kazania gnieźnieńskie*) have a much more important phatic function than their expressive function. The phatic function determines the syntax in which the following characteristics prevail: 1. poverty of a simple sentence with a broad gesture in

3 I agree with Pisarkowa, who claims, "Today, given the absence of any punctuation grounds and other criteria, the delimitation of such an item in an Old Polish text is doomed to fail or be freely interpreted" (PISARKOWA 1976, 9). Very often, it is extremely difficult to determine whether we are dealing with a compound utterance or a series of single sentences, even if there is a functional word that links them in some way. They cannot be interpreted unequivocally either as an index of fusion or a reference (more on this topic in MIKA – SŁOBODA 2015, 67–91).

4 Zenon Klemensiewicz wrote: "Budowa zdań jest przeważnie ociężała, niedołączna. Najczęściej są to wypowiedzenia wieloczłonowe, z niewyraźnie wskazanym stosunkiem wewnętrznym; nieraz wskaźniki zespolenia równorzędne zamazują stosunek w istocie nadrzędno-podrzędny. Wielofunkcyjność niektórych spójników zaciera wyrazistość wypowiedzi. Panuje chwiejność w wyborze środków wyznaczających stosunek zależności relatywno-anaforycznej. Niepotrzebnie gromadzi się kilka wskaźników zespolenia, spójników, zapowiedników, odpowiedników. Nadużywa się takich wyrazów jak *ci/ć*, *to*, że w charakterze partykuł deiktycznych i emfaticznych. Wszystko to obciąża wypowiedź, czyni ją niezgrabną, niejasną, zagmatwaną" ('The structure of sentences is usually sluggish and infirm. Most often, these are multi-segment utterances with unclear internal relations. Sometimes, coordinating conjunctions obliterate essentially superior-subordinate relations. The multifunctionality of some conjunctions blurs the clarity of the sentence. There is an unsteadiness in the choice of exponents that determine the relative-anaphorical dependence. There is also an unnecessary practise of accumulating several cohesive devices, conjunctions, predictors, and equivalents. Words such as *ci/ć* are misused as deictic and emphatic particles. All this weighs down on the utterance, making it clumsy, unclear, and confusing'; KLEMENSIEWICZ 1974, 141).

5 Stieber enumerated eight stylistic features that, in his opinion, the author of the sermons used to extend the text. They are: 1. overuse of the particles *ć*, *ci*; 2. overuse of personal pronouns; 3. overuse of demonstrative pronouns; 4. overuse of the conjunction *więc* after *gdy*, *kiedy*; 5. expanding the pronoun *ten* with particle *to* or the pronoun *isty*; 6. using phrases *i także*, *i teże* instead of the conjunction *i*; 7. overuse of the conjunction *iż*, *iżec*; 8. constant use of the pluperfect tense (STIEBER 1952, 350).

constructing complex and related utterances, 2. lots of words outside the main line, empty architectural supports, signals of segmentation replacing punctuation and allowing the sender to fill in the pauses necessary to select the next words from memory, and the recipients to reflect on the text just received, 3. using anaphora, repeating subjects and noun complements in the form of pronouns (and vice versa) to strengthen syntactic bonds that ensure consistency but break the purity of the structure (PISARKOWA 1976, 29). In light of these findings, *Kazania gnieźnieńskie* should be analysed as a spoken text, and therefore a different approach should be adopted to investigate their syntax. Actually, this applies to all works representing this genre of religious style because the sermon cannot be prepared and delivered without the presence of the audience (WIELGOSZ 2014, 172). The analysis should also take into account the genetic multilayering of the text, predefined by Tomasz Mika as the relation of the text preserved in the source until our time and is the object of direct philological research, to the original, 'pre-source' text (MIKA 2013, 131). In the monograph on functional expressions (MIKA – SŁOBODA 2015), we noted that this concept can also be applied to manuscripts in which modifications of various kinds occur, including those that creatively interfere with the syntactic structure of the text; a more detailed example was *Kazania gnieźnieńskie*, in which one may find many glosses (550) made with the same hand as the basic text. These annotations are most often written in the space between lines (above another word or over the area between words). The writer often uses graphical signs (in the shape of an arrow pointing upward), which indicate the place to which the note refers or in which he wants to enter it.

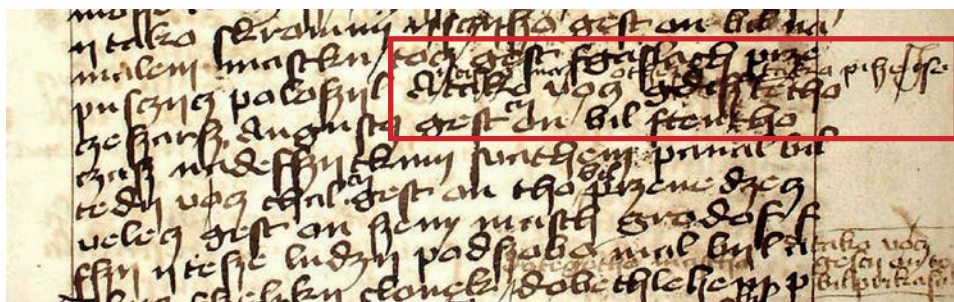


In addition, the notes are sometimes located in the margins and can also be inserted into the main text. These glosses can be single words, most frequently functional and/or grammatical ones, and less often autosemantic words or phrases. The interference with the basic version also includes corrections, e.g., a change from a lowercase letter to a capital letter, and deletions (erasures). Former studies did not take this issue into account, treating glosses as an integral part of the manuscript, which was favoured by editorial customs when creating transcriptions of works. However, placing the glosses in curly brackets did not answer the question of which of them were supplemented and which were an alternative version of the text. Introducing annotations to the edition and determining their place in the sentence structure could also be an arbitrary decision of the publishers, e.g., the gloss above

the text was treated by the publishers of *Biblioteka zabytków polskiego piśmiennictwa średniowiecznego* (*The collection of monuments of Polish medieval literature*; TWARDZIK 2006) as an annotation to the preceding content, and the conjunction *ize* as a redundant element:<sup>6</sup>

{iżci się nam o tem tako pisze} [iże] A tako więc gdyż ten to cesarz Augustus jest{ci} on był w ten to czas nade wszystkim światem panał był, tedy więc chciał{ci} jest on to {był} przewidzieć, wieleć jest on ziem, miast, grodow, wsi i teże ludzi pod sobą miał był. (*Kgn* II 3r, 20-22).

‘{That we are written about it} [that] So, when this emperor Augustus at that time over the whole world had ruled, then he {had} wanted to know how many lands, cities, towns, villages, and people he had had under him.’



In my opinion, it may be assumed that we are dealing here with an alternative version of the text, so:

1) In the version without glosses:

A tako więc gdyż ten to cesarz Augustus jestci on był w ten to czas nade wszystkim światem panał był, tedy więc chciał jest on to przewidzieć, wieleć jest on ziem, miast, grodow, wsi i teże ludzi pod sobą miał był...

‘So, when this emperor Augustus ruled over the whole world at that time, then he wanted to know how many lands, cities, towns, villages, and people he had under him...’

2) In the corrected version with the gloss instead the text below:

Iżci się nam o tem tako pisze, iże cesarz Augustus jestci on był w ten to czas nade wszystkim światem panał był. Tedy więc chciałci jest on to był przewidzieć, wieleć jest on ziem, miast, grodow, wsi i teże ludzi pod sobą miał był...

<sup>6</sup> This edition follows the transcription rules established for manuscripts in GÓRSKI (1955). All photos in the article come from TWARDZIK (2006).

‘That we are written about it that this emperor Augustus ruled over the whole world at that time. Then he wanted to know how many lands, cities, towns, villages, and people he had under him...’

Such examples make us ask once again how to study medieval works characterised by genetic multilayering. The previous findings related to, for example, the syntax analysis of *Rozmyślanie przemyskie* (MIKA 2013, ROJSZCZAK-ROBIŃSKA 2012), *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* (ZIÓŁKOWSKA 2016), and legal texts such as court oaths (KUŹMICKI 2015), lead to the conclusion that various redactions of the text, representing the subsequent stages of its shaping, should be taken into account. It will significantly influence the reinterpretation of the syntax of individual works, but also the syntax of the medieval Polish language as a whole. In the case of *Kazania gnieźnieńskie*, this multi-stage approach is particularly important because, as Jarosław Wielgosz writes: “jeśli ze względu na audytorium kaznodzieja wybierał język narodowy odbiorców, dokonywał najpierw tłumaczenia z łaciny na język narodowy, a następnie z języka pisanego na język mówiony” (‘if due to an audience, the preacher chose its national language, he would first translate from Latin into the national language, and then from the written language into the spoken language’; WIELGOSZ 2014, 177). All changes made in the text result from the adaptation of the content and the form of the sermon to the particular audience “na każdym etapie przygotowania tekstu: inwencyjnym, dyspozycyjnym i elokucyjnym, jak też przy pamięciowym opanowaniu (memoria) i wygłoszeniu kazania (actio, pronuntiatio)” (‘at every stage of preparing the text: the inventive, the dispositional, and the elocutive one, as well as during memorizing (memoria) and delivering a sermon (actio, pronuntiatio)’; WIELGOSZ 2014, 172).

*Kazania gnieźnieńskie* are not homogeneous in terms of discrete exponents of multilayering – the collection includes some that contain no glosses or almost none (Sermons III, IV, and V), as well as those that contain many of them, such as Sermon II for Christmas (257). While Sermon V is syntactically similar to the structure of the non-glossed versions of other sermons, Sermon III has the structure of the text into which the glosses have already been incorporated.

While discussing individual examples (here I am limited to the First Sermon for Christmas), I first present the relevant fragment without notes, and then the version with glosses in the transcription available in *The collection of monuments of Polish medieval literature*. In both versions, I omit the punctuation introduced by the publishers, but leave the delimitation marks that appear in the manuscript. The changes introduced by the author of the sermons also include corrections aimed at improving text organisation, subordinated to the rhythm of the proclaimed text. This applies, i.a., to the introduction of the capital letter.

Sermon I is not long; as Jakub Wolny writes, “przypomina obszerne prothema bez podziałów, rozwinięte do rozmiarów przedkazania z końcowym exhortatio ad

orationem” (‘it resembles an extensive *prothema* without divisions, developed to the size of a precept with a final *exhortatio ad orationem*’; WOLNY 1961, 204). It does not contain as many amendments as, for example, Sermon II (cf. SŁOBODA 2018). Nevertheless, some significant modifications can be indicated in it. I do not discuss the whole sermon in this paper, as it shall be the subject of a book in the future. Currently, I would like to address solely the situations where the introduced change affects the segmentation of the text and its syntactic interpretation.

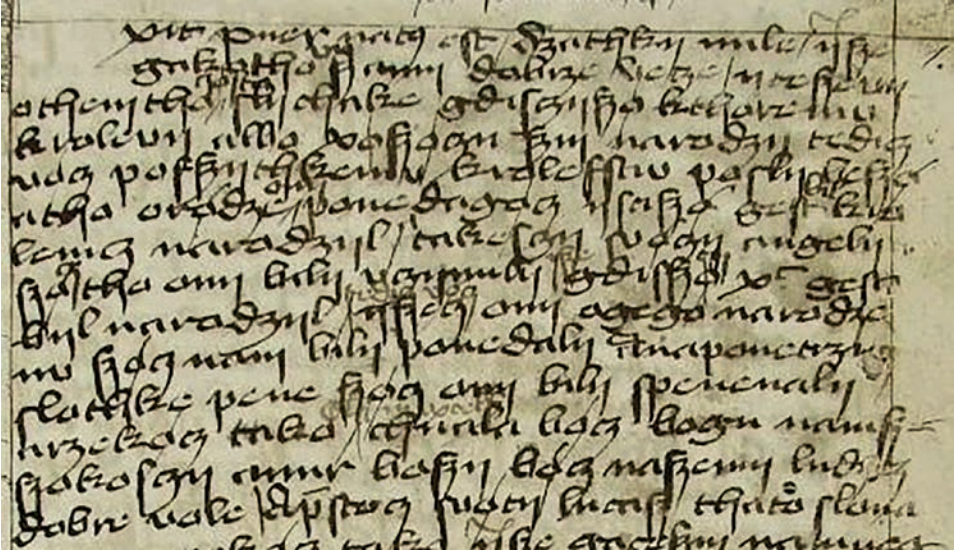
## 1. Entering a capital letter

Tomasz Mika draws attention to the use of a capital letter to define the boundaries of rhetorical and syntactic structures in *Kazania świętokrzyskie* (MIKA 2012, 185–187). We are dealing with a similar use of capital letters in *Kazania gnieźnieńskie*, albeit their distribution in the text before and after the correction looks different. In the non-amended text (which I denote with the letter A for convenience), the capital letter was used only 8 times; however, when preparing the text for delivery (version B), the author of the sermon doubled that number. It seems that in version A, the capital letter is related rather to setting larger content boundaries, within which pauses are marked with so-called ‘virgules’ (marked in transcriptions as slashes).<sup>7</sup> The opening lines of the sermon are read as follows:

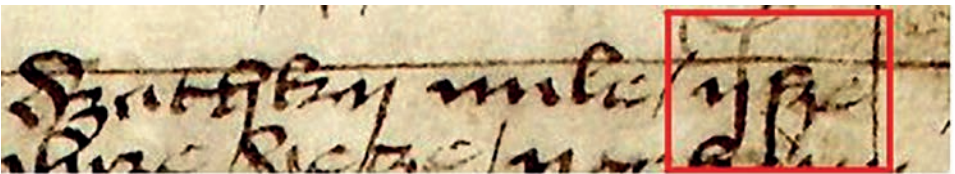
Dziatki miłe / iże jako to sami dobrze wiecie / i teże wy o tem słyhacie gdyżci się ktoremu krolewi albo książęciu syn narodzi tedyć więc po wszytkiemu krolewstwu pošli bieżą a to orędzie powiedając iżci się jest krolewic narodził / takżeżci święci anjeli są to oni byli uczynili gdyż się Kryst jest był narodził / iżeć oni o jego narodzeniu sąć nam byli powiedali a na powietrzu słodkie pienie sąć oni byli śpie[we]wali a rzekąc tako chwała bądź bogu na wysokości a mir boży bądź na ziemi ludzi<e>m dobre wole /

<sup>7</sup> In the case of virgules, however, it is difficult to say which of them were included in the basic text and which were added later.

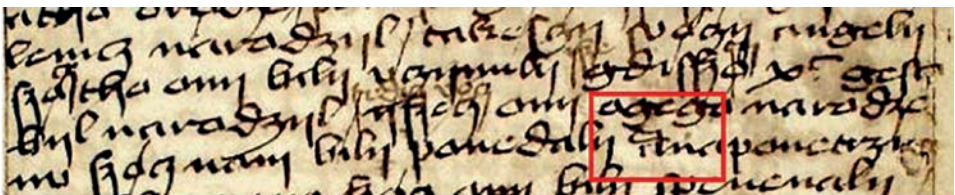
'Dear children / that as you well know it yourself / and you also hear about it when to any king or prince the son is born then all around the kingdom envoys ride and say this message that the prince is born / so the angels had done when Christ had been born / that they about his birth had been telling us and in the air a sweet song had been singing saying like this "Glory to God in the highest and God peace on earth to people of good will" /



The next capital letter begins the continuation of the sermon in which the words of St. Luke are summoned. In version B (with glosses and corrections), the capital letter is introduced after the apostrophe...



...and in verse 10, as shown below.





The second change is important because it visibly affects the boundaries of the sentence, which initially is a long compound sentence where the complementizer *ize* introduces two coordinates connected by the conjunction *a*:

takieźci święci anjeli są to oni byli uczynili gdyż się Kryst jest był narodził / *izec* oni o jego narodzeniu sąc nam byli powiedali **a** na powietrzu słodkie pienie sąc oni byli śpie[we]wali a rzekąc tako

'so the angels had done when Christ had been born / that they about his birth had been telling us **and** in the air a sweet song had been singing, and saying like this'

The introduction of a capital letter indicates a pause after the first of these sentences:

takieźci święci anjeli są to oni byli uczynili gdyż się Kryst jest był narodził / *izec* oni o jego narodzeniu sąc nam byli powiedali **A** na powietrzu słodkie pienie sąc oni byli śpie[we]wali a rzekąc tako

'so the angels had done when Christ had been born / that they about his birth had been telling us. **And** in the air a sweet song had been singing, and saying like this'

Together with the rest of the fixes that reorganise the text, this change causes the function of the expression *a* to be interpreted as a particle rather than as a conjunction.

## 2. Glosses changing the syntactic structure of the text

Let us return to the mentioned opening lines of the sermon that I will present by distinguishing the component sentences (version A):

Dziatki miłe /

'Dear children'

*ize* jako to sami dobrze wiecie /

that as (you) well know it yourself

*i* teże wy o tem to słyhacie

and you also hear about it

*gdyzci* się któremu krolewi albo książęciu syn narodzi

'when to any king or prince the son is born'

*tedyć* więc po wszystkimu krolewstwu pošli bieżą

'then all around the kingdom envoys ride'

*a* to orędzie powiedająć

'and this message saying'

*izci* się jest krolewic narodził /

'that the prince was born'  
 także ci święci anjeli są to oni byli uczynili  
 'so the angels had done'  
 gdyż się Kryst jest był narodził /  
 'when Christ had been born'  
 i że ci oni o jego narodzeniu sąć nam byli powiedali  
 'that they about his birth had been telling us'  
 a na powietrzu słodkie pienie sąć oni byli śpie[we]wali  
 'and in the air a sweet song had been singing'  
 a rzekąc tako  
 'and saying like this'  
 chwała bądź Bogu na wysokości  
 'Glory to God in the highest'  
 a mir boży bądź na ziemi ludzi <e>m dobre wole /  
 'and God peace on earth to people of good will'

This passage is divided into two parts, the first of which presents a specific secular custom of informing about the birth of a royal descendant, while the second part shows the analogous behaviour of angels after the birth of Christ. The structure of this fragment is highly rhythmic and rich in parallelisms reinforced with rhymes (as well as at the end of sentences, e.g., *wiecie – słychacie, narodzi – narodził – narodził, byli powiedali – byli śpie[we]wali*, as in the beginning, e.g., *i że – i te że, i że ci – także ci*). Repetitions of pronouns, so criticised by Klemensiewicz, serve a specific function that strengthens the parallelism of the syntactic structures, and so do the repetitions of conjunctions and particles that initiate individual parts of utterances. Importantly, these elements define the boundaries of individual component sentences, building the frame of each of them on the one hand, and maintaining the basic structure of the sentence with the subject and the predicate on the other.

The arrangement of statements changes when the text is modified to comply with the requirements of being presentable to the audience. Let us then take a look at this passage with glosses already incorporated in it (version B).

Działki miłe /  
 'Dear children'  
 I że jako to **wy** sami **dobrze** wiecie /  
 that as **you well** know it yourself  
 i te że **wy** o tem to **często** słychacie  
 'and also **you** about it **often** hear'  
 gdyż ci się któremu krolewi albo książęciu syn narodzi  
 'when to any king or prince the son is born'  
 tedyć więc po wszytkiemu krolewstwu pošli bieżą

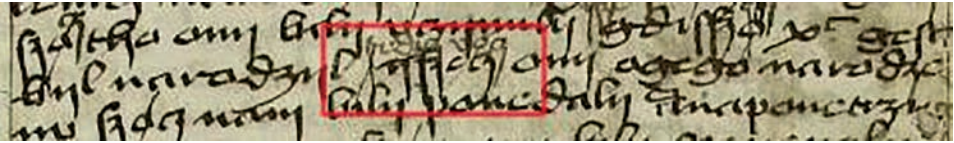
‘then all around the kingdom envoys ride’  
 a to orędzie **oni** **powiedając**  
 ‘and this message **they** say’  
 iżci się jest **był** krolewic narodził /  
 ‘that the prince **had been** born’  
**a** takieżci święci anjeli sąć to oni byli uczynili  
 ‘**and** so the angels had done’  
**iże** gdyżci się Kryst jest był narodził /  
 ‘**that** when Christ had been born’  
**tedyć** więc oni o jego narodzeniu sąć nam byli powiedali  
 ‘**so then** they about his birth had been telling us’  
**A** na powietrzuć słodkie pienie sąć oni byli śpie[we]wali  
 ‘And in the air a sweet song had been singing’  
 a rzekąc tako  
 ‘and saying like this’  
**Gloria in excelsis,**  
 chwwała bądź Bogu na wysokości  
 ‘Glory to God in the highest’  
 a mir boży bądź na ziemi ludzi<e>m dobre wole /  
 ‘and God peace on earth to people of good will’

The comparison of the two versions immediately shows that the structure of the sentence has been refined in such a way that each predicative unit is even more clearly distinguished, and the entire statement gains a slightly simpler structure. The smaller content episodes are linked more strongly with each other. The text becomes more rhythmic due to the added pronouns (*wy, oni*), an adverb (*często*), past tense form (*had been born*), particles (*a*), conjunction (*więc*), and a complementiser (*iże*). The syntax differences resulting from the added glosses are as follows:

- a) the question arises of how to interpret the form in the manuscript written as *pouedagøcz* (‘to say’ or ‘saying’) – in the version without glosses, it can be considered an active participle (he will send the current participle while speaking the message). The introduction of the pronoun causes the authors of the transcription to recognize this form as a verb in third person plural with the participle *ć* (*powiedając > powiedając*);
- b) The introduction of the complementizer *iże* and the correlated with *gdy* pronoun *tedy* (‘when-then’) changes the subordinate-superior system of subsequent sentences: the temporal sentence is subordinate to the following sentence that becomes subordinate to the sentence with predicate *uczynili*:  
 version A: so the angels had done when Christ had been born / [how?] that they about his birth had been telling us **and** in the air a sweet song had been singing, and saying like this

version B: **and** so the angels had done [what?] **that when** Christ had been born **so then** they about his birth had been telling us. And in the air a sweet song had been singing, and saying like this

- c) According to the analysis above, the complementizer *izeć* present in the version A (*izeć oni o jego narodzeniu sąc nam byli powiedali*) was replaced by the expression *tedyć więc* present in the text as a gloss. In my opinion, the sign of deletion is marked at the beginning of *izeć*.



- d) The content of this fragment is divided now into three, not two parts. The first talks about the secular custom, the second about the analogous act of angels but limited to the act of saying announcing news ('they say' - 'they said'). The third part introduces the hymn both in Latin and in Polish. Thus, the prayer (singing) content is separated (capital letter), and supported by the introduction of its Latin beginning (and perhaps during the preaching, the entire prayer in Latin).

The rhythm of the text is obtained by introducing parallel pronouns and the particle *ć / c*, and forcing the addition of the adverb *często*, owing to which an equal number of syllables in parallel sentences is maintained.

### 3. Conclusion

The purpose of the examples presented in this overview was to justify the need to consider the multilayered nature of the medieval texts in the syntactic analysis. *Kazania gnieźnieńskie* represent a type of text in which these layers can be determined, which I hope to prove in a future monograph. The new edition should contain the diplomatic transcription of the manuscript and two separate normalised transcriptions of version A and version B. Of course, the question remains as to how to distinguish these layers from a text without glosses and whether it is legitimate to establish an earlier version only based on a comparison with the glossed text. However, the subsequent layers are a testimony to the gradual creative work on the text, starting with the translation of the Latin text, a kind of scaffolding on which the preacher built the final version with a particular audience in his mind.

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### *Agnieszka Słoboda*

Zakład Historii Języka Polskiego  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań  
ul. Fredry 10, 61-701 Poznań  
Poland  
asloboda@amu.edu.pl



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