

**Święci Konstantyn-Cyryl i Metody. Patroni Wschodu i Zachodu [Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodius. Patrons of the East and the West], vol. I (pp. 254), vol. II (pp. 334), ed. ALEKSANDER NAUMOW, Collegium Columbinum, Kraków 2013<sup>1</sup> [= Biblioteka Duchowości Europejskiej, 5]**

The release of this comprehensive two-volume anthology of Polish translations and editions of texts devoted to Constantine-Cyril and Methodius is an important event for at least two reasons. Firstly, the publication came out on the 1150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Moravian Mission and can be considered as a commemoration of the brave expedition of the Salonika Brothers, which was a breakthrough in the history of the Slavs and Europe. Secondly, it is a result of the joint effort of scholars specializing in paleo-Slavic studies and other disciplines of the humanities. Once again, the world-renowned researcher, Professor Alexander Naumow is the initiator and patron of the team project, which always creates interest and, as a result, the publication enjoys a high readership. It is worth recalling that as many as four comprehensive anthologies of texts have been already published as part of the series entitled *Biblioteka Duchowości Europejskiej* [*Library of European Spirituality*], launched in Gniezno and currently in Cracow. These are mostly Church Slavonic texts, but they also contain works composed in Latin. The Polish reader is offered themed collections of translations, such as *Kult świętego Mikołaja w tradycji prawosławnej* [*The Cult of St Nicholas in the Orthodox Tradition*], ed. A. Dejniewicz, Gniezno 2004; *Święty Benedykt w tradycji chrześcijaństwa Zachodu i Wschodu* [*St Benedict in the Christian tradition of the West and the East*], eds. A. W. Mikołajczak, A. Naumow, Gniezno 2006; *Franciszek Skoryna z Połocka. Życie i pisma* [*Francysk Skoryna of*

*Polotsk. Life and writings*], ed. M. Walczak-Mikołajczakowa, A. Naumow, Gniezno 2007; *Uczniowie Apostołów Słowian. Siedmiu Świętych Mężów* [*Disciples of the Apostles of the Slavs. The Seven Saints*], ed. M. Skowronek, G. Minczew, Kraków 2010.

The latest publication of this series, a collection of translations and editions of works about Constantine-Cyril and Methodius is the fifth publication addressed to the Polish reader, which not only presents the two saints, but also reminds us of the importance of their work, exposing the role of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in Eastern and Western cultures, with particular emphasis on the Slavic language area. The book is a collection of literary texts from both cultures, including *Slavia Orthodoxa* and *Slavia Latina*, a selection enriched by descriptions, scientific studies and comments on the sources and editions. Due to the number of works, the long time span in which they were created and the scope of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition itself, the edition consists of two volumes composed in chronological order.

The first part contains the oldest works, whose origins and themes are associated with different cultural circles, spaces and traditions developed therein – Old Slavic (Bulgarian, Serbian, Ruthenian), Latin, and Old Polish (the period of the First Polish Republic). Thus, the collection includes works diverse in terms of narratives, themes and ideologies, both those already translated into Polish (by A. Naumow, T. Lehr-Splawiński, F. Korwin-Szymanowski et al.), as well as those less or completely unknown to the Polish reader. All the translations in this section are excellent in terms of technique and knowledge of the language and literary matter or cultural context, and have tremendous educational and philological value. The translations and reprints of Latin texts, especially those from the area of the former Republic of Poland, deserve special attention, as they are hardly known to Polish readers, and are usually associated with the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, seen in terms of the common culture and faith of the European nations. The work begins with a preface *Święci Konstantyn-Cyryl i Metody*

<sup>1</sup> The publication came out as part of the project “Reception of writings and folk literature of the *Slavia Orthodoxa* circle in Poland – the history and bibliography of translations” (“Recepcja piśmiennictwa oraz literatury ludowej kręgu *Slaviae Orthodoxae* w Polsce – historia i bibliografia twórczości przekładowej”) carried out at the Ceraneum Centre, University of Łódź. The project, financed by the National Science Centre, is based on the decision number DEC-2012/05/E/HS2/03827.

– „*dwa mosty Wschód i Zachód łączące*” [*Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodius – “two bridges connecting the East and the West”*] (p. 11–20) by Alexander Naumow, the eminent connoisseur of the history of Church Slavonic literature and Orthodox culture. He presents a synthetic and multi-faceted approach to the subject. Additionally, blocks of works contained in the volume are preceded by extensive introductions to the specifics of literary and cultural space, compiled by recognized experts in paleo-Slavic studies: Krassimir Stantchev (*Konstantyn-Cyryl i Metody w tradycji starosłowiańskiej i prawosławnośłowiańskiej* [*Constantine-Cyril and Methodius in the Old Church Slavonic and Orthodox Slavonic tradition*], p. 23–32), Slavia Barlieva (*Cyryl i Metody w dawnej tradycji katolickiej Europy* [*Cyril and Methodius in the old Catholic tradition of Europe*], p. 113–130) and Jan Stradomski (*Cyryl i Metody w piśmiennictwie staropolskim* [*Cyril and Methodius in Old Polish literature*], p. 179–184).

The second volume of this edition is devoted to Cyrillo-Methodian issues in modern Europe, and contains a collection of texts that make up the nineteenth-century Slavonic tradition and works created in the twentieth century and modern times. The examples are particularly clear in view of the patronage of the Salonika Brothers, and representative of a broad reflection on coexistence and conflict in the space of the European (including Slavic) East and West. Two groups of works forming this part of the anthology are preceded by introductions by experts on Slavic and Cyrillo-Methodian issues: Elżbieta Solak (*Między slawistyką a panslawizmem – problematyka cyrylometodejska w XIX wieku* [*Between Slavic studies and Pan-Slavism – Cyrillo-Methodian issues in the nineteenth century*], p. 13–25) and Leonard Górka (*Tradycja cyrylometodejska przesłaniem na dziś i jutro* [*The Cyrillo-Methodian tradition as a message for today and tomorrow*], p. 217–223). They all help better understand the complicated and still current context of the functioning, reception and impact of the legacy symbolized by the Apostles of the Slavs. Examples collected in this volume are mostly reprints of texts previously issued or translated into Polish, but many of them have been translated into Polish for the first time, which is all the more valuable. The whole collection appears not only as the fruit of the work of many generations of translators of old works and scholars of issues crucial to European,

and especially Slavic, culture, but also and perhaps above all as a collection commemorating a unique phenomenon – “the miracle of the gift of the word” allowing a better understanding of its fundamental meaning and an extraordinary vitality, the legitimacy of the mere Cyrillo-Methodian tradition.

Having a scientific nature and, at the same time, meeting the criteria of popular science, this comprehensive, two-volume publication significantly complements the field of study and is an attractive offer for both experts and amateur readers as it can broaden the horizon of perception, interpretation and reinterpretation of the importance and role of the title issues. The value of the anthology is huge, as indicated by the mere subject and its implementation. The proposed collection of older and newer translations and editions of texts, directly or indirectly relating to the fundamental topic, is not merely a selection of appropriate examples, but primarily a well prepared edition. Its scientific soundness and reliability is demonstrated by the way the works have been compiled, which meets all the criteria for the presentation of source materials. The translations and reprints, as the authors have indicated, have been prepared on the basis of the first editions of texts or their manuscripts, as well as the first printings, while the reprints of the already existing Polish translations come from the best publications. Moreover, all the old texts bear specialist comments and are preceded by considerable descriptions which make it much easier to work on them, read their message and role. The only drawback resulting from abandoning the good practice settled in previous editions of the same series is the lack of a glossary of concepts and terms specific to the cultural and literary space of *Slavia Orthodoxa*, which are not known to the average reader. This may hinder the full understanding of the meaning and function of individual works and their contexts. This deficiency, however, must be considered as secondary, because in its entirety, the reviewed collection of texts is precious and inspiring. It is already a success on the Polish book market and will certainly enter the cognitive and receptive canon as well as the reception horizon of old traditions that make up the European and Slavic identity.

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