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Biblical Exegesis in Manuscripts of Muslim Tatars of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania (A Commentary on Psalm 110)

by *Mikhail Tarelka**

Introduction

The distinct ethno-confessional minority known as *Tatars*, Muslim by religion and Belarusian speaking was born in the 16th/17th centuries on the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania flourishing in Eastern Europe since the 13th century, although the first settlements of Turkic language speaking Tatar Muslims in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania date back to the end of the 14th century. Immigrants from different parts of the Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate took part in the ethno-genesis of this minority. To this very day, descendants of the Tatars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania live on the lands that in the past were part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, i.e., in Belarus and in the adjoining territories of Lithuania and Poland.¹

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1 On the history of these Tatars, see *inter alia*: STANISŁAW KRYCZYŃSKI, *Tatarzy Litewscy* (Rocznik Tatarski, vol. 3; Warszawa, 1938) = *Lietuvos totoriai*, transl. by Tamara Bairauskaitė (Vilnius, 1993); KATARZYNA GÓRAK-SOSNOWSKA (ed.), *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe. Widening the European Discourse on Islam* (Warszawa, 2011); PIOTR BORAWSKI, *Tatarzy w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa, 1986); JAN TYSZKIEWICZ, *Z historii Tatarów polskich 1794–1944* (Pułtusk, 1998; 2002); JURGITA ŠIAUČINAITĖ-VERBICKIENĖ, *The Tatars*, in: GRIGORIJUS POTAŠENKO (ed.), *The Peoples of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania* (Vilnius, 2002), pp. 73-82; STANISŁAW DUMIN / IBRAHIM KANAPACKI, *Беларускія татары. Мінулае і сучаснасць* (Мінск, 1993); ARTUR KONOPACKI, *Życie religijne Tatarów na ziemiach Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI–XIX wieku* (Warszawa, 2010); JOANNA KULWICKA-KAMIŃSKA / Czesław ŁAPICZ (eds.), *Tatarzy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w historii, języku i kulturze* (Toruń, 2013). – On the legal status of the Tatar Muslims see, e.g., JACEK SOBCZAK, *Polożenie prawne ludności tatarskiej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim* (Prace Komisji Historycznej – Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, vol. 38; Warszawa / Poznań, 1984); PIOTR BORAWSKI, “Religious tolerance and the Tatar population in the Grand

To the legacy of the Tatars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania belong multilingual manuscripts, which constitute an important part of the East-European Tatar-Muslim culture. Hundreds of manuscripts written or copied from the 17th to 21st centuries are stored in state and / or private collections in Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland. Some manuscripts can be found also in libraries and museums of Russia, Great Britain, Germany, Ukraine, and Latvia. These manuscripts contain texts of different origin (original, translated, borrowed from other literatures) in various languages, in Arabic, some in Turkish, in Belarusian and Polish. All texts, however, including the Belarusian and Polish ones, are written with Arabic script.²

The vast majority of these texts are of religious nature. There are also religious polemical texts among them. Thus, for example, the collection of four religious polemical texts written in Polish and known under the common title “Whence the idols came” (*Skąd poszły bałwany*), is found in a Tatar manuscript that, according to the watermarks of its leaves, goes back to the end of the 18th century. Although the texts themselves were written much earlier, probably in the time of the active inter-confessional argument and polemics, i.e., the 16th/17th centuries.³ The manuscript that contains this collection is part of *The Yakub Kolas Central Scientific Library* of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Its signature is P 97 (П16–18/Нр2).

Duchy of Lithuania: 16th to 18th century,” in: *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 9 (1988), pp. 119-133; WOJCIECH ŚWIEBODA, *Innowiercy w opiniach prawnych uczonych polskich: Poganie, żydzi, muzułmanie* (Kraków, 2013).

2 On this literature in general, see, *inter alia*, JAN STANKEVIČ, Беларускія мусульмане і беларуская літаратура арабскім пісьмом (Vilnius, 1933); ANTON K. ANTONOVIČ, Белорусские тексты писанные арабским письмом и их графико-орфографическая система (Vilnius, 1968); Czesław ŁAPICZ, *Kitab Tatarów litewsko-polskich. Paleografia, grafia, język* (Toruń, 1986); ANDRZEJ DROZD, *Arabskie teksty liturgiczne w przekładzie na język polski XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1999); ANDRZEJ DROZD / MAREK M. DZIEKAN / TADEUSZ MAJDA (eds.), *Katalog zabytków tatarskich*, vol. 3: *Piśmiennictwo i muhury Tatarów polskolitewskich* (Warszawa, 2000); HENRYK JANKOWSKI / Czesław ŁAPICZ, *Klucz do raju. Księga Tatarów litewsko-polskich z XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 2000); Czesław ŁAPICZ, “Piśmiennictwo Tatarów – muzułmanów Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego: fakty i mity (wybrane zagadnienia),” in: *Litteraria Copernicana* 2 (18) (2016), pp. 25-37.

3 The manuscript is described in : MIKHAIL TARELKA / A. I. CITAWEC, Рукапісы татараў Беларусі канца XVII – пачатку XX стагоддзя з дзяржжаўных кніга-збораў краіны. Каталог (Minsk, 2011), pp. 30-34. – The four religious polemical texts were published in: MIKHAIL TARELKA / IRINA SYKOVA, “Адкуль пайшлі ідалы”. Помнік рэлігійна-палемічнай літаратуры з рукапіснай спадчыны татараў Вялікага Княства Літоўскага (Minsk, 2009).

Research on the manuscript has established that this collection of religious polemical texts consists of four treatises composed by different authors: (1) the *First treatise* contains criticisms of the doctrine of the Trinity and commentaries on three Old Testament texts (Is. 7:14; Is. 9:6; Ps. 110). (2) The *Second treatise* discusses the meanings of the Hebrew word אלהים (*elohim*). (3) Beginning with the words “During the life of the prophet Isaiah, in the time of the king Hezekiah [...]”, the *Third treatise* retells the history of the Judean King Josiah (c. 649–609 BCE) and his fighting against idolatry. (4) And the *Fourth treatise* titled “About the birth of Ismail,” contains, in addition to the story of Ismail, a commentary on Ps. 110. In all these texts, numerous quotations from Polish Bible translations can be identified, quotations from Szymon Budny’s Bible translation (*Biblia Nieswieska*) of 1572,⁴ from the Brest Bible (*Biblia Brzeska*) of 1563,⁵ the Bible translation of Jakub Wujek SJ (*Biblia Jakuba Wujka*) of 1599,⁶ and the poetic translation of the Book of Psalms by Jan Kochanowski (*Psalterz Dawidów przekładania Jana Kochanowskiego*) published in 1579.⁷

4 Szymon Budny (Сымон Будны; c. 1533–1593), promotor of radical reformation and adherent of its Unitarian movement, was one of the most learned Christian Hebraists and leading figure of the Polish Brethren. His translation of the Hebrew Bible into Polish (with commentary) is still a masterpiece of Christian Hebraism. On his Bible translation, see: RAJMUND PIETKIEWICZ, *Pismo Święte w języku polskim w latach 1518–1638. Sytuacja wyznanio-wa w Polsce a rozwój edytorstwa biblijnego* (Wrocław, 2002), pp. 251–270. – For a general introduction into his life and works, see: STEFAN FLEISCHMANN, *Szymon Budny. Ein theologisches Portrait des polnisch-weissrussischen Humanisten und Unitariers (ca. 1530–1593)* (Köln / Wien / Weimar, 2006).

5 The Brest Bible – its full title reads: *Biblia święta, Tho iest, Księgi Starego y Nowego Zakonu, właśnie z Żydowskiego, Greckiego, y Łacińskiego, nowo na Polski język, z pilnością y wiernie wyłożone* – was the first complete Protestant translation of all the Bible from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin into Polish made by a group of leading Calvinist theologians. On this translation, see: PIETKIEWICZ, *Pismo Święte w języku polskim* (note 4), pp. 231–250.

6 Jakub Wujek SJ (1541–1597), Polish Jesuit and Vice Chancellor of the Vilnius Academy, was commissioned by his order in 1584 to translate the Latin *Vulgata* into Polish to counteract the aforementioned Protestant Bible translations. On his translation, see: PIETKIEWICZ, *Pismo Święte w języku polskim* (note 4), pp. 279–296.

7 Jan Kochanowski (1530–1584) the most famous poet of the Polish renaissance, usually is regarded as the greatest Slavic poet before the 19th century. On his translation of the Psalms, see: PIETKIEWICZ, *Pismo Święte w języku polskim* (note 4), pp. 159–165.

As mentioned above, two treatises (the *First* and the *Fourth*) contain a commentary on Ps. 110 that does not only give an opportunity, but also invites to their comparative study and analysis.⁸

The commentary on Psalm 110 in the Tatar manuscripts

In the manuscript P 97, the commentary on Ps. 110 can be found in the *First treatise* on folios 14b:4-27b:8, and in the *Fourth* on folios 17a:13-18a:9.

The author of the *First treatise* suggests that this psalm was composed by King David. In the words of David “The Lord said to my lord [...],” he sees an allusion to Abraham.⁹ Evidence for that assumption, he finds in those verses of the Old Testament where Abraham is called “my lord (my master)” (Gen. 23:6; 24:48)¹⁰ and “אָהָבִי “My (God's) friend” (Is. 41:8 and 2 Chron. 20:7).¹¹ David calls Abraham *lord*, because Abraham is God's *friend*, whereas he, David is – the *servant* of God only.¹² Subsequently, the author of the first text explains that it is Abraham, whom God invites to sit at His right hand (Ps. 110:1) etc.¹³

Furthermore, the author compares the words from the psalm, “until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet,”¹⁴ with Gen. 14:20 where similar words are said about the victory of Abraham over his enemies. At the same time, the author consciously adapted the quotation from Gen. 14:20 and combined it with the quotation from Ps. 110:1:

Gen. 14:20

fol. 27a:11-12

“And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand”

“And blessed be God Most High, who delivered the enemies under the feet of your feet”
(*Błogosławią Bóg Najwyższyj, któryj podał nieprzyjacóły pod nogi nóg twoich*)

The words “into your hand” (*w ręce twoie*) are replaced with the strange expression “under the feet of your feet” (*pod nogi nóg twoich*), apparently to

8 The *Fourth treatise* was found in yet another Tatar manuscript (of the 19th century) in one of the private collections in Belarus. However, due to multiple copying the text of the manuscript is so corrupted that it offers almost nothing new.

9 Fol. 14b:7-10 and 27b:3.

10 Unfortunately, the text of these quotations is corrupted. See the transliteration, translation, and notes to fol. 14b:11-13; 26a:1-3.

11 See fol. 26a:10-26b:11 and 27a:1-3.

12 See fol. 27b:4-5. David is called “a servant of God” more than 30 times in the Old Testament (2 Sam. 3:18, 7:5 etc.).

13 Fol. 26a:8-9.

14 See fol. 26b:1-2.

convince the reader that both verses Ps. 110:1 and Gen. 14:20 speak about the same addressee, namely about Abraham.

The author of *the Fourth treatise* comes up with the same commentary on Ps. 110. Although, when comparing it to the commentary in the *First treatise*, his commentary looks – *prima facie* – like its abridged version: In the place of the quotations from the Bible, there are (sometimes peculiar or even enigmatic) references to the corresponding verses only. For example, to the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis, the author refers to as the “first and fourth” chapter (fol. 17b:1, 6, 12). But this (and similar) peculiarity (-ies) in the references to the Bible in the *Fourth treatise* proves that the commentary on Ps. 110 in the *Fourth treatise* certainly is not an abridged version of the commentary contained in the *First treatise*, but was written independently of it, for in the *First treatise* the same chapter is referred to simply as the “fourteenth” (fol. 26b:12).

As already mentioned above, the *Fourth treatise* was found in yet another manuscript (from a private collection) originating in the 19th century. Since in this manuscript the *Fourth treatise* is a separate work (not part of a collection or bundle of texts), it gives additional evidence to its independent origin (independent of the *First treatise*).

The sources of the commentary: Proto-commentary on Ps. 110 and the Bible of Szymon Budny

Proto-commentary on Ps. 110. The almost complete identity of the quotations from Ps. 110:1 and 4, in both the *First* and the *Fourth treatise* of the collection “Whence the idols came”, the likewise identical interpolation of the sentence “and walk Me in [the way of] justice” (fol. 14b:8, 17b:4) –

Comparison of the quotation from Ps. 110:1, 4 in both treatises

First treatise

(1) “The Lord said to my lord: “Sit at My right hand,¹⁵ and walk Me in [the way of] justice,¹⁶ and I will put your enemies and make (them) a footstool for your feet” (fol. 14b:7-9)

“I will make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (fol. 26b:1-2)

Fourth treatise

(1) “The Lord said to my lord [...] Sit at My right hand, and walk Me in [the way of] justice, and be Me righteous, and I will make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (fol. 17b:2-3, 4-6)

15 Literally, “Sit down beside Me to the right” (*siódź Mi po prawicy*).

16 This seems to allude to Proverbs 8:20, or should it be understood as an allusion to Micah 6:8: “[...] and to walk humbly with your God.”?

(4) “You will be an offeror¹⁷ in the place of Melchizedek” (fol. 27a:3-4) (4) “You will be My offeror in the place of Melchizedek” (fol. 17b:10-11)

as well as other facts seem to suggest that these quotations were not directly taken from the Bible, but rather from another source that already contained these quotations including this interpolation and served as an intermediary or link.

One more proof that there must have been, and certainly is, an intermediary source between the Bible and the Tatar commentary on Ps. 110, is the identical list of the kings that Abraham defeated (cf. Gen. 14:13-16). The *First* and *Fourth treatise* have the following sequence of names: “Kedarlaomer, Amraphel, Tid’al, and Arioch” (fol. 26b:8; 17b:9), that differs from the biblical Text. In the Bible, the four kings are listed twice, once in Gen. 14:1: Amraphel, Arioch, Kedarlaomer, and Tid’al, and the second time in Gen. 14:9: Kedarlaomer, Tid’al, Amraphel, and Arioch. Though the names are the same, their sequence differs. For the time being, this intermediary source may be called a “Proto-commentary on Ps. 110”.

The Bible of Szymon Budny (1572). To answer the question what Bible this Proto-commentary referred to and quoted, it is necessary to pay attention to the following observations:

Firstly, in the *Fourth treatise* (fol. 17b:2) the psalm is called “the 110th”. The same number is given to it in the Protestant Bible translations: in the Nieśwież Bible (*Biblia Nieświeska*) of 1572, that is, Szymon Budny’s Bible translation, and in the Brest Bible (*Biblia Brzeska*) of 1563 as well. The Catholic translation, however, that is, Jakub Wujek’s Bible translation (*Biblia Jakuba Wujka*) of 1599, based upon the Vulgate, calls it “the 109th”. Thus, it can be excluded that the author of the Proto-commentary made use of the Catholic Bible translation.

Secondly, it should be noticed, and perhaps can be taken for sure, that at least one proper name from among the list of the four kings in the paraphrase of Gen 14 both in the *First* and in the *Fourth treatise*, undoubtedly is transliterated directly from the Hebrew text. That in turn would suggest that the intermediary source may have been Szymon Budny’s Bible translation who, as we know and mentioned above, translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Polish.

The name in question is תִּדְעָל [Tid’al]. In the Tatar manuscript it is transliterated *Tedyhal* (fol. 17b:9; 26b:8), that clearly resembles Szymon Budny’s

17 That is, *a priest* (see note 18)

transliteration *Thydabal*. Replacing the Hebrew consonant *ו* [v] with [h] is a characteristic feature in Budny's Bible translation. In the Catholic translation of Jakub Wujek, the name reads *Thadal*, following the Vulgate's spelling of the name: *Thadal*.

In addition to that, both treatises use in their rendering of Ps. 110:4 the word "offeror" for the biblical *נַזֵּךְ* "priest". This again refers us to Szymon Budny, because it was him, who introduced the word *ofiarnik* (literally "offeror") in the sense of "priest" as used in both treatises (fol. 27a:4; 17b:10), into the Polish language.¹⁸

Although the author of the *Fourth treatise* explicitly refers to Ps. 110, it seems that in fact in the Proto-commentary not the Hebrew version of the Psalm, but its New Testament rendition was quoted, most likely after Matth. 22:44, as can be inferred, for example, from the use of the word *Pan* "lord" in place of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton YHWH, that Budny in turn transliterated *Iehowa*. For the sake of comparison, Ps. 110:1 according to the Book of Psalms and its quotation in the Gospel of Matthew may be cited here after the Budny's Bible translation:¹⁹

Ps. 110:1

Rzekł *Iehowa* Panu moiemu siądż po prawicy moiej / aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoie podnoszkiem nogam twoiem
Said *Jehovah* to my Lord: "Sit down to My right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

Matth. 22:44

Rzekł *Pan* Panu moiemu / siądż po prawicy moiej / aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoie / podnoszkiem nog twoich
Said the *Lord* to my Lord: "Sit down to my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool of your feet".

Should we, however, assume that all quotations from the Bible in the *First treatise*, but missing in the *Fourth*, were taken from the Proto-commentary? Apparently not. For it is very likely that only the quotation from Ps. 110, the paraphrase of Gen. 14 and the references to the other verses of the Bible, contained in both treatises, may have been part of it. The author of the *First treatise* could have copied himself those quotations from Budny's Bible that were referred to in the Proto-commentary. And, in turn, the author

18 HENRYK MERCZYN, *Szymon Budny jako krytyk tekstów biblijnych* (Kraków, 1913), pp. 50–51.

19 That is, *Biblia, to jest Księgi Starego i Nowego Przymierza*, vol. I: *Księgi Starego Przymierza*; vol. II: *Księgi Nowego Przymierza, kto pospolicie Nowym Te[stament]em żowa* (Nieśwież /Zasław, 1571-1572 = reprint in 2 vols. in: *Biblia Slavica*, Series 2: *Polnische Bibeln*, vol. III, ed. HANS ROTHE and FRIEDRICH SCHOLZ (Paderborn / München / Wien / Zürich, 1994].

of the *Fourth treatise* apparently did not have had access to the Bible, but saw only the references to it (in the form of numbers) as in the Proto-commentary. This, perhaps, would also explain the peculiarities of the references in this work.

The religious affiliation of the author of the Proto-Commentary

Christian interpretation (biblical exegesis) and tradition that associates Ps. 110:1, 4 with Jesus, goes back to the New Testament, where this psalm is quoted many times.²⁰ In addition to that, Christian authors including adherents of radical trends of Protestantism (such as Arianism and Unitarianism with its ideas of “non-adorantism”)²¹ could deny and reject the divinity of Jesus, but not his Messiahship. Thus, for example, Szymon Budny in his book *O przedniejszych wiary chrześcijańskiej artikulech* [...] twice writes about Ps. 110, but he does not only not deny the messianic character of the psalm, but also thinks and explains that the words of God in its first verse are addressed to the Messiah, i.e., to Jesus.²² Likewise another famous Arian, the Unitarian author Marcin Czechowic (c. 1523–1613), also sees in this verse a proof text for his assumption that it was God himself who called Jesus to his mission.²³

Moreover, the Polish researcher Andrzej Drozd put forward the idea that certain influence on Tatar Muslim literature in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania possibly may have been exercised by works like *Sefer Hizziq Emuna* (ספר חזק אמונה) of the famous Karaite polemicist Isaak ben Abraham of Troki (c. 1533–c. 1593).²⁴ However, when it comes to Ps. 110, it should

20 Matth. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:13 etc.

21 These ideas as well as the term *Non-adorantes-faction* goes back to a pamphlet written by the Unitarian theologian Adam Neuser (c. 1530–1576) and titled *De non adorando et invocando Christo* (1562). Cf. CHRISTOPHER J. BURCHILL, *The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians: Johann Sylvan, Adam Neuser, Matthias Vehe, Jacob Suter, Johann Hasler* (Bibliotheca Dissidentium, vol. 11; Baden-Baden, 1989), pp. 107-156,

22 SZYMON BUDNY, *O przedniejszych wiary chrześcijańskiej artikulech, to iest o Bogu iedynem, o Synu iego y o Duchu świętym* (Łosk: J. Karcan, 1576), f. 25b-28b and 58a-63a. On this book see: MERCZYNG, *Szymon Budny* (note 17), pp. 85-88.

23 MARCIN CZECHOWIC, *Rozmowy chrystiańskie, które z greckiego nazwiska dialogami żowią* (Kraków: A. Rodecki, 1575; new edition by LECH SZCZUCKI / ALINA LINDA (eds.), *Marcin Czechowic: Rozmowy chrystiańskie* (Biblioteka pisarzy reformacyjnych, vol. 12; Warszawa / Łódz, 1979), p. 194.

24 ANDRZEJ DROZD, “Wpływ chrześcijański na literaturę Tatarów w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej,” in: *Pamiętnik literacki* 88/3 (1997), pp. 3-34, here p. 11.

not be overlooked that this Karaite author is convinced, and states accordingly, that the addressee of the first words of this psalm is King David.²⁵

Moreover, when we compare the Proto-commentary with Jewish commentaries on Ps. 110, we see that an interpretation of this psalm that identifies Abraham as the addressee, fully corresponds to Jewish exegetical traditions, as can be learned from the explanation given by R. Zechariah on R. Ishmael's authority in the Babylonian Talmud (bNed 32b; cf. bBer 7b).

Likewise, the famous Jewish Bible commentator Rashi (1040–1105) writes in his commentary on Ps. 110:1: **רבותינו דרשנו באברהם אבינו ואני אפרשנו** (“Our masters explained that [the one addressed is] Abraham, our father, and I am commenting in accordance with their words: ‘Said the Eternal to Abraham’, for they always called him **אדוני** [lord]”), and refers to Gen. 23:11, where Abraham is called “lord”, as well as to Gen. 14,²⁶ as the author of the Proto-commentary too did.

On this ground, we may conclude that the author of the Proto-commentary on Ps. 110, which was used by the Tatar polemicists, could have been a Jew only. But in what language this Proto-commentary was written? That the Tatar author could have studied and quoted sources written in Hebrew or Yiddish, is very unlikely. Therefore, we have reason to assume that there must have been a text on Ps. 110 written in a Slavic (Polish?) language. This assumption seems to be plausible and comes closer to the historical truth.

The existence of translations from Hebrew into Church Slavonic and East Slavic languages, both from the time of the Kievan Rus' as well as from the 15th and 16th centuries,²⁷ is well attested, and at least some of these translations were even made by Jews themselves. Unfortunately, we do not have any further information as to the existence of Jewish literature written in Polish at this period. The only exception known to us is the apologetic work of Nahman Jacob of Bełzyce, which, however, does not contain comments on the Bible.²⁸

25 DAVID DEUTSCH, *ספר חזק אמונה – Befestigung im Glauben von Rabbi Jizchak, Sohn Abrahams* (Sohran, 1865, Leipzig 1873), pp. 232-237.

26 [Rashi] *עשרות וערבעה כתובים כולל ההלים עם פירוש רש"י* (Wilno, 1910), p. 168.

27 ANATOLIY ALEKSEYEV, “Песнь песней по русскому списку XVI в. в переводе с древнееврейского оригинала,” in: *Палестинский сборник* 27 (90): История и филология (1981), pp. 63-79.

28 [JACOB NAHMAN OF BEŁZYCE] *Odpis Jacoba Żyda z Bełżyc na Dialogi Marcina Czechowica, na który zaś odpowiada Jakobowi Żydowi tenże Martin Czechowic* (Lublin, 1581); MARCIN CZECHOWIC, *Vindiciae Duorum Dialogorum contra Jacobum Judaeum de Belzyce* (s. l. [1581]); cf. LECH SZCZUCKI, *Marcin Czechowic, 1532–1613. Studium z dziejów antytrynitaryzmu polskiego XVI w.* (Warszawa, 1964); JUDAH

The fact that the use of Polish among Jews as a written language was not a widespread phenomenon at that time, does, however, not exclude that the author of the Proto-commentary may have been a Slav who converted to Judaism or an adherent of the so-called *Judaizer* movement (*judaizantes*, *judai-*
zanci, *жидовствующие* or *иудействующие*) of the post-reformation times, of whose existence in the Rzeczpospolita, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, we have limited information only.²⁹

Another probability is the assumption that the Proto-commentary originates from the same milieu, which the famous *Vilnius Codex* 262 comes from. Containing the translation of some biblical books from Hebrew into Ruthenian (Old Belarussian), this Vilnius Codex has its roots among the remnants of the Pre-Ashkenazic – Slavic or rather “Slavonified” – Jewish population of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.³⁰

Therefore, the presence of the word “Lord” instead of the name of God (Tetragrammaton) in the quotation from Ps. 110:1 can be explained also with reference to the prohibition in Judaism to pronounce the name of God, and must not necessarily be a citation from the New Testament (Matth. 22:44) as we suggested above. The Tatar authors of all four treatises in the collection “Whence the idols came”, using Szymon Budny’s Bible translation, left the name of the God – *Jehovah* unchanged (fol. 27a:1). But the author of the Proto-commentary on Ps. 110, being a Jew, could not do that.

M. ROSENTHAL, “Marcin Czechowic and Jacob of Belzyce: Arian-Jewish encounters in 16th Century Poland,” in: *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 34 (1966), S. 77-97.

29 MATEUSZ MIESES, “Judaizanci we wschodniej Europie,” in: *Miesięcznik żydowski* 3 (1933), pp. 41-62, 169-185; 4 (1934), pp. 147-159, 241-260, 342-358, 566-576 [printed separately: Warszawa, 1934]; JAN JUSZCZYK, “O badaniach nad judaizantyzmem,” in: *Kwartalnik historyczny* 76 (Warszawa, 1969), № 1, pp. 141-151; further: ANDREJ ŠPIRT (Андрей Шпирт), Ф. Сопин, нонадорантизм, иудаизантанизм и иудаизм: о “своем” и “чужом” в польской радикальной реформационной мысли 2-й половины XVI в. (Библиотека Якова Кротова; Москва, 2003); ALEKSANDRA SULIKOWSKA-GĄSKA, “O wpływie judaizantów na sztukę Rusi,” in: ZOFIA ABRAMOWICZ / JAROSŁAW ŁAWSKI (eds.), *Chrześcijańskie dziedzictwo duchowe narodów słowiańskich: Wokół kultur śródziemnomorskich* (Historia, język, kultura, Series II, vol. 2; Białystok 2010), pp. 457-465.

30 On this Vilnius Codex, see: *The Five Biblical Scrolls in a Sixteenth-Century Jewish Translation into Belorussian* (Vilnius Codex 262), with Introduction and Notes by MOSHE ALTBAUER (Concordance compiled by Moshe Taube) (Jerusalem, 1992), esp. pp. 22-24.

The commentary on the Psalm 110 from the manuscript P 97 (Polish original with English translation³¹)

fol. 14b

6. Z psalmów Dawi-
7. dowych. Rzek: *Rzek Pan Panu mojemu: Siodź Mi po prawicy*
8. *a chodź Mi u sprawiedliwości, a Ja położę nieprzyjaciół twoje,*
9. *podłożę podnożkiem nóg twoich.*³² Tedy to jest o tym jasne
10. piśmo mamy, iż Dawid Abrahama panem nazwał. A nie jeden Dawid
11. panem, ale daleko przed Dawidem go panem zwali. [W] tej że mowie odpo-
12. wiedali synowe [Che]to[w]i Abrahamu: *Słuchaj, książę jest*
13. *t[y] Pan[a] Bog[a m]edzy nami, [u] grob[ach naszych]*

fol. 26a

1. *[pogrzeb] tego martwego swego.*³³ W tych że księgach w rozdziale
2. dwudziestym czwartym mówi: *Skłoniwszy się modlit sie Bogu Abraha-*
3. *mowemu, któryj przeprowadził przez droga prawdziwa.*³⁴ Podobniej
4. tej czci był godnyj, ponewasz sam Pan Bóg stworzyciel za-
5. lecił Malachowi. A Malach, *aby mu wrócił żona, mężowi, bo jest*
6. *prorok. Modlić się będzie za ciebie, abyś był żyw na świecie. A jeśli mu*
7. *nie wróciś żony wiedź o tym pewne będziesz umirał (umrzesz).*³⁵
8. Wolnie to Panu Bogu kożdego prawicą częstować? Bo był
9. przyjaciel Boży! Jak świadczy [Iza]jaszów³⁶ rozdział
10. czterdziesty i jeden, u wirsza ósmym w te słowa pisze: *Lecz to Izra*
11. *elu, sługa Mój, Ja to jest obrałem nasienie twoje. Ty jest Abraham,*

31 The text is transliterated from the Arabic script into modern Polish (Latin) with the preservation of some phonetic and grammatical features. We used the extremely simplified variant of the transliteration based on the Polish alphabet without any additional dots or signs. See the table of the transliteration at the end of this article.

32 Budny's Bible, Matth. 22:44 – *Rzekł Pan Panu mojemu / siądż po prawicy moiej / aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoje / podnożkiem nog twoich* (Ps. 110:1: *Rzekł Iehowa Panu mojemu / siądż po prawicy moiej / aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoje podnożkiem nogam twoim*).

33 Budny's Bible, Gen. 23:5-6 – (5) *Y odpowiadzieli synowie Chethowi Abrahowi rzekąc mu. (6) Słuchaj nasz panie / książę Boże ty (jestes) między nami / w nawybrańczych grobiech naszych pogrzeb martwego swego / [...]*

34 Budny's Bible, Gen. 24:48 – *Y skłoniwszy się modliłem się Iehowie / y błogosławitem Iehowę Boga pana moego Abrahama / który mie przeprowadził przez drogę prawą / [...]*

35 Budny's Bible, Gen. 20:7 – *A teraz wroć żonę mężowi: Bo jest propok / y modlić się będzie za cie / abyś żyw: a jeśli niewróciś wiedź iż śmiertą umrzesz / [...]*

36 In the manuscript: Azyjaszów.

fol. 14b – translation:

6. From the Psalms of Da-
7. vid. He said, *Said the Lord to my lord*: “*Sit at My right hand,*
8. *and walk with Me in justice, and I will put your enemies,*
9. *I will put [them] as a footstool of your feet.* Thus, i.e., about that a clear
10. writ we have, that David called Abraham “lord”. And not only David,
11. but long before David they called him “lord”. [In] the same words the
12. children of the Hittites replied to Abraham: *Listen [our lord],³⁷ you ar[e]*
13. *the prince of the Lord, God, among us. [In our] tomb[s]*

fol. 26a – translation:

37 The key phrase, where Abraham is called “a lord”, is missing in the quotation.

38 The slave of Abraham.

39 As in the previous quotation the key phrase, where Abraham is called “a lord”, is missing.

40 The king of Gerar – the Philistine town (s. Gen. 20:2, 3, 4 etc).

41 In the manuscript: “*It is [...]*”. Replacing a proper name with a word similar in pronunciation.

42 In the manuscript: “[...] your descendants. You are Abraham [...]”.

12. *przyjaciel Mój. Nie bój się, ani lękaj, bo Ja jestem Bóg twój.*
13. *Zmocniłem ciebie i ratowałem cie i podpirałem cie prawdziwą u*

fol. 26b

1. *sprawiedliwości Twojej.*⁴³ W tej że psalmie mówi: *Położę nieprzyjaco*
2. *ły twoje podnożkiem nóg tobie.*⁴⁴ Jakoż to Panu Jezusowi
3. przypisywać macie, gdyż mu żaden nieprzyjaciel jego nie był mu podnoż-
4. kiem. Ale i owszem nad nim jeszcze uragali jako u Awaneli⁴⁵ świadczy:
5. *I pastwili się Żydzi nad nim*⁴⁶ {jeszcze uragali jako u}⁴⁷ Ale Abrahamo-
6. wi znacznie byli podnożkami. Kiedy we trzech set i w o-
7. simnastu człowieka tylko swoim dworzem zbił nezli[cz]one wojska czterech
8. królów: Kiedyrlifa, Mamrafala, Tedyhela i Jerucha, do węzienia
9. wzioł. Brata swego oswobodził – Lota proroka. Ktore
10. tam byli po wygraniu bitwe, lubo tam zostali, zebrano ich mająt-
11. ności, a ich nazad u królewstwa przywrocil, co szyrzej rozdział
12. czternasty pierszych księgach Mojżeszowych opisuje, co i po-
13. twierdza tegoż Kroniki z rozdziału dwudziestego, a u

fol. 27a

1. wirsza siodmego mówi: *Aż ty Boże nasz, Iehowa, pędzilesz obywatelej*
2. *tej ziemi przed ludem izraelskim. Podajesz nam, potomstwu Abrahama,*
3. *przyjaciela Twego, na wieki.*⁴⁸ Do tego w tej że psalmie pisze: *Mówi: i będziesz*
4. *ofiarnikiem na miejscu Malachasadychowem.*⁴⁹ Na kapłanstwo błogosławił czy
5. pana Jezusa czy pana Abrahama? Ubaczyć trzeba w Pierszych księgach Mo-
6. jzesowych, gdy pisze w tym że rozdziale czternastym: *Wyszed król So-*

43 Budny's Bible, Isaiah 41:8, 10 – (8) *Lecz ty Izraelu sługa moy / Iahakowie którego obratem / nasienie (ieśś) Abrahama przyjaciela mego. (10) Nie boy(że) się / bo ja stoba / nie lękay się / bo ja Bog twoy zmocniłem cie / y ratowałem cię / y podpartem cię prawicą sprawiedliwości mojej.*

44 Budny's Bible, Matth. 22:44 – [...] aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoje / podnożkiem nog twoich (< Ps. 110:1 [...] aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoje podnożkiem nogam twoim).

45 That is, “*w Ewangelii*”.

46 Pseudoquotation? or allusion to verses like Matth. 26:67; 27:29-31?

47 Erroneous repetition. See the preceding line.

48 Budny's Bible, 2 Chron. 20:7 – *Iżali nie ty Iehowa Boże nasz wypędziłeś obywatele tej ziemie przed ludem twoym Izraelskim / y podajesz ią potomstwu Abrahama przyjaciela twoego na wieki.*

49 Cf. Budny's Bible, Ps. 110:4 – [...] / ty (ieśś) ofiarnik na wieki / wedle sprawy Melkicedeka. Cf. also Budny's Bible, Heb. 5:6 – *Ty ofiarownik do wieku / wedle porządku Melchisedeka and Heb. 7:7 (17), 10 (21) – Ty ofiarownik na wieki / wedle porządku Melchisedeka.*

12. *My friend. Fear you not and be not dismayed; for I am your God,*
13. *I have strengthened you and saved you and upheld you with the ri[ght hand]⁵⁰ in*

fol. 26b – translation:

1. *your righteousness.* In the same psalm, He says: *I will put your*
2. *enemies as a footstool of your feet.* How can you attribute it
3. to the lord Jesus, for none of his enemies was his footstool.
4. To the contrary, they mocked him, as in the Gospel is testified:
5. *“And the Jews derided him.”* But Abraham
6. had numerous footstools. When with three hundred and eighteen
7. people, with his court only, he defeated the innumerable army of the four
8. kings: Kedorlaomer, [A]mraphel, Tid’al and Arioach – and took them
9. prisoners.⁵¹ He freed his brother – the prophet Lot. The property of those
10. who were there after the victorious battle or stayed there was collected.
11. And then, he restored them⁵² the kingdom,⁵³ what in greater detail the
12. fourteenth chapter of the First Book of Moses describes, and what is
13. confirmed by the [Second Book of] Chronicles in the twentieth chapter,

fol. 27a – translation:

1. in the seventh verse, it says, *that You, our God, Jehovah, drove out the inhabitants*
2. *of this land before the people Israel. You gave [it] to us, the descendants of Abraham,*
3. *Your friend forever.* In addition to that, it is written in the same psalm:

He says, “You will be

4. *an offeror⁵⁴ in the place of Melchizedek.”* Whom did he bless for the priesthood –
5. lord Jesus or lord Abraham? One needs to look into the First Book of
6. Moses, where it is written in the same chapter fourteenth: *The king of Sodom*

50 In the manuscript: “*truthful, righteous*”.

51 There is no information in the Bible that Abraham took someone prisoner. It says only that he defeated the army of four kings (Gen. 14:15).

52 That is, “*the women and the other people (of Lot)*”? (Gen. 14:16).

53 That is, the kingdom of Sodom?

54 That is a *priest* (see note 17).

7. domski spotykając Abrahama, gdy sie wracał od pora[ż]y⁵⁵
8. króla Kidarlihamu i innych królów które z nimi byli, a Malcha-Zadyk
9. król Szalamskij wynios mu wina i chleba iż był ofiarnikiem Bogu Na-
10. jwyszszemu, błogosławił go. I rzek: ‘Błogosławia Abrahama Bogu
11. Najwyszszemu, Dzierżawcy nieba i ziemi, Błogosławia Bóg Najwyszszij,
12. któryj podał nieprzyjacoły pod nogi nóg twoich.⁵⁶ Otoż
13. to jasnie wiedać [kożdyj może]⁵⁷ że Pan Bóg nie Pan-Jezusowi daje podnożkiem

fol. 27b

1. nieprzyjacoły, tylko Abrahamowi. I to też – Malche Zedik nie pana Jezusa
2. na ofiarnictwo błosławił, ale Abrahama. I to też – Dawid nie pana
3. Jezusa panem zwał, tylko Abrahama, jako przyjaciela Bożego, bo
4. Dawid, slugą Bożym będąc, musiał zwać Abrahama,
5. przyjaciela Bożego, panem. Sirach mówi: *Abraham wielkij ociec mnogim narodom. Był żaden należon, a niemasz mu równi u sławie.*
7. *Ten strzeg zakon Najwyszszego Boga i trzymał z nim w przymierze, który pewne cierpiet na ciele swoim należno wiernemu jest.*⁵⁸

fol. 17a

13. W rozdziele

fol. 17b

1. pierszym i w czwartym jeszcze odpowiedź chrzescijanom na psalmie
2. Dawidowa stodziesiąta. Dawid: Rzek Pan {Pan}⁵⁹ panu
3. mojemu Ale to że nie panu Jezusowi rzek, tylko Abramowi rzek:
4. *Siadź Mi po prawicy, a chod Mi w sprawiedliwości, a czyn mi prawość. A Ja nieprzyjacoły twoje podłożę podnożki*

55 In the manuscript *porady* “advice”.

56 Budny’s Bible, Gen. 14:17-20 – (17) *Y wyszedł król Sodomski spotykając go: gdy się wracał od porażki Kedarlahomoray (innych) królów którzy z nim / [...] (18) A Malkicedek król Szalem(ski) wyniósł (mu) chleba y wina / a (iż) był ofiarnikiem Boga najwyższego błogosławił mu. (19) Y rzekł / Błogosławion Abram Bogu najwyższemu dzierżawcy nieba y ziemię. (20) Y błogosławion Bog najwyższy / który podał nieprzyjaciela twojego w rękę twoje.*

57 Omission. Cf. in fol. 8b:7-8 *kożdyj to człowiek może wiedać [...] “Everyone can know it”*; in fol. 10a:3: *kożdyj człowiek wiedzieć może [...] “everyone can know”*.

58 Budny’s Bible, Sirach 44:20–21 – (20) *Abraham jest wielki ociec wielu narodów / któremu żaden należion nie jest równy ustawie. (21) Ten strzeg zakonu Najwyższego / a trwał z nim w przymierzu / które pewne sprawił na ciele swoim / y należion jest wiernym w pokuszeniu.*

59 Erroneous repetition.

7. *came out to meet Abraham, when he returned from the [defeat]*
8. *of king Kedorlaomer and the other kings that were with him. And Melchizedek,*
9. *king of Shalem, brought to him wine and bread, for he was an offeror of God Most*
10. *High, he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abraham by God Most*
11. *High, the Lord of heaven and earth. Blessed be God Most High,*
12. *who put the enemies under the feet of your feet".⁶⁰ Thus, [everybody]*
13. *can know clearly that the Lord God does not give to the lord Jesus*
as footstool

fol. 27b – translation:

1. *the enemies, but to Abraham only; and likewise – Melchizedek did not bless the lord Jesus*
2. *for the priesthood, but Abraham; and likewise – David did not call the lord*
3. *Jesus 'lord', but only Abraham, the friend of God, because*
4. *David, being God's servant, had to call Abraham,*
5. *God's friend, 'lord'. Sirach says: *Abraham was a great father of numerous**
6. *nations. And there was none found, and there is not the like to him in glory.*
7. *He kept the law of God Most High, and stayed in covenant with Him,*
8. *that he established in his body, [and in temptation] he was found faithful.*

fol. 17a – translation:

13. In chapter

fol. 17b – translation:

1. *one and four⁶¹ there is one more answer to the Christians concerning the psalm*
2. *of David hundred and ten.⁶² David: *Said the Lord to my lord.**
3. *This, however, he did not say to lord Jesus, but to Abraham only, he said,*
4. *"Sit at My right hand, and walk with Me in justice, and do Me*
5. *the right, and I will make your enemies a footstool*

60 Sic!

61 Literally, first and fourth, *id est*, Gen. 14.

62 Literally, hundred and tenth.

6. *nóg twoich*.⁶³ Tedy o tym czytaj rozdział pierszy i czwarty Pierszych księgach Mójzesowych, że Abram tylko swoim dworzem we trzech set człowieka czterech królów wojska zbił: Kedyrlifa, Amrafela, Tedyhela i Jeryocha i podeptał nogami.
10. W tej że psalmie mówi Pan Bóg: *I będziesz Mnie ofiarnikam na miejscu Malachasadychowem*.⁶⁴ To jest kaplanem. W tym że rozdziele pierszym i czwartym najdziesz, kogo to Malechasyko wem na miejscu swoim błogosławił. Masz jeszcze o tym pana

fol. 18a

1. [Iza]jasza⁶⁵ proroka rozdział czwarty a wiersz pierszy i drugi, że Abram był panem Dawidowym i wszystkim królem. A zaś to jeszcze pisze u wierszu ósmym, aże Abram jest przyjacielem Bożym. Tedy to Dawid, będąc sługą, musiał Abrahama, przyjaciela Bożego zwać Panem. Masz o tym w Pierszych Księgach Mojżesowych w rozdziele drugim u wierszu szóstym i w piątym. Masz o tem w Krojnikach Bożych które jest w Biblii w rozdziele d[wu]nastym⁶⁶ u wierszu siódmym, że był Abraham – przyjaciel Bożyj. Ale wszędzie tego w Piśmie świętym p[eł]no⁶⁷ jest, że Abrahama Dawid zwał panem.

63 Budny's Bible, Matth. 22:44 – *Rzekł Pan Panu moiemu / siądz po prawicy mojej / aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoich / podnożkiem nog twoich* (< Budny's Bible, Ps. 110:1 – *Rzekł Iehowa Panu moiemu / siądz po prawicy mojej / aż położę nieprzyjaciół twoie podnożkiem nogam twoim*).

64 Cf. Budny's Bible, Ps. 110:4 – [...] / *ty (jeſteś) ofiarnik na wieki / wedle sprawy Melkisedeka*. Cf. also Heb. 5:6 – *Ty ofiarownik do wieku / wedle porządku Melchisedeka*.

65 In the manuscript – *Azyjasza*.

66 The chapter number referred to is written here: *dnastym*, that can be understood as *d[wu]nastym* “t[wel]fth”, but not as *dwudziesztym* “twentieth”. And the reference can be identified only as an allusion to 2 Chron. 20:7. Cf. the commentary on Ps. 110 in the *First treatise*, where 2 Chron. 20:7 too is quoted (f. 27a:1-3).

67 In the manuscript – *pilno* “urgent”.

6. *of your feet.*" Then, read about that the first and fourth chapter⁶⁸
7. of the First Book of Moses that Abram only with his
8. court (three hundred people) defeated the army of the four kings:
9. Kedorlaomer, Amraphel, Tid' al, and Arioch and trampled them with his feet.
10. In the same psalm, the Lord God says, "*You will be My offeror*⁶⁹
11. *in the place of Melchizedek.*" That is a priest. In the same chapter
12. one and four,⁷⁰ you will find whom Melchizedek⁷¹
13. blessed in his place. On that, you have also the fourth chapter

fol. 18a – translation:

1. of the prophet Isaiah, first and second verses,⁷² that
2. Abram was the lord of David and all kings. And it is further written in
3. the eighth verse⁷³ that Abram is God's friend. Therefore, David, being
4. a servant, had to call Abraham, God's friend, a lord. About that, you have
5. in the First Book of Moses in the second [third]⁷⁴ chapter in the sixth
6. and fifth verse.⁷⁵ About that, you also have in God's Chronicles that are
7. in the Bible, in the t[we]lfth chapter in the seventh verse, that Abraham
was a friend
8. of God. And all over the Holy Scripture it is full of that it was Abraham
[whom] David
9. called 'lord'.

68 *Id est*, Gen. 14.

69 That is *a priest* (see note 11).

70 Literally, first and fourth, *id est*, Gen. 14.

71 In the manuscript mistakenly (under the influence of 17b:11), instead of the proper name, the adjective derived from it is used.

72 "The fourth chapter... the first and fourth verses" (i.e. 4:12) and "the eighth verse" (v. fol. 18a:3). But Isaiah 4 consists of only 6 verses. If we present these references in the form of numbers: 412 and 418, then, considering the peculiarity of the references to the Bible in this work (see above *The sources of the commentary...*), we can assume that they also can be understood as "the forty first chapter, the second verse," and "the eighth verse" (i.e., 41:2, 8). Abraham actually called in Is. 41:8 as "a friend of the God". As for Is. 41:2, Abraham is not called there, but there is a gloss to this verse in the Budny's Bible: *O Abrahamie mowi [...] "it is said about Abraham". Cf. the commentary on Ps 110 in the First treatise* where Isaiah 41:8 (fol. 26a:10-12) too is quoted.

73 See the previous note.

74 Such it is in the manuscript from the private collection.

75 That is, "in the twenty third chapter" (Gen. 23:5-6). It is quoted also in the *First treatise* (fol. 14b:12-26a:1).

Transliteration of the Arabic alphabet used in the Belorussian-Tatarian version

ا	ب	پ	ة/ت	ث	ح	ج
-	b, bi	p, pi	t	ś, si	ch	cz

د	ڏ	ر	ڙ	ڙ/ڙ	س	ش
d	dz, dži	r, rz	ž	ž, zi	ś, si	sz

ص	ڇ	ڻ/ڻ	ڦ	ع	ف	ق
s	c, ci	z	t	-	f	k

ک	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ی
ki	l, l̄	m, mi	n, ni	h	w, wi	j

Transliteration of the diacritical dots and vowels

diacritical mark	transliteration
ُ (fatha)	e
ِ (fatha + alif)	a
ُ (damma), ڻُ (damma + waw)	u / o / ó
ڻ (kasra), ڻڻ (kasra + ya)	i / y