

Nexus Slavorum Latini

Intersections of Neo-Latin and Slavonic Studies

A project conducted (2016–2019) at the Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, v.v.i., Bratislava, in collaboration with the Department of Classical Languages of Trnava University, the Institute of Slovak Literature of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University

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St Gorazd the Disciple of Sts Cyril and Methodius of whom it is written in *Vita Methodii* that he was "thoroughly educated in Latin books."

Nexus Slavorum Latini is a pilot project aiming to explore possibilities of combining the approaches of Neo-Latin Studies and Slavistics. The idea of focusing on such a bi-disciplinary research area is mainly based on three observations:

It was among the Slavs that Latin remained in regular and widespread use longest.

Martin Georg Kovachich wrote in 1786: "Latin has already ceased to be used in the public sphere almost everywhere. In our days, it is doubtless among the Slavonic peoples of the Hungarian Kingdom, Bohemia and Poland that Latin has remained in use most vigorously."

The majority of the Slavic nations regard their Latin cultural heritage as one of the key factors involved in the formation of their national identity.

The Croatian Neo-Latinist Vladimir Vratović observed that "the Latin language not only did not estrange Croatian writers from the essential problems of their people and the literature in the mother tongue, but even acted, especially after the seventeenth century, as a firm link between individual writers and whole regions. Thus the ground was being prepared for the National and Cultural Revival in the eighteen thirties. In all this the Croatian writers in Latin played a very considerable part."

The Polish Neo-Latinist Jerzy Axer wrote: "Latin, as a living language, continued to be used in Poland much longer than in the West, having acquired the status of the national language of the Polish nobility. This is also the reason why it could function there as a standard literary language in the sense in which it had ceased to function in the West already in the sixteenth century. Instead of withdrawing to the position of a language of panegyric conventions and academic ceremonies, Latin continued to be used as a language of creative practice in prose and poetry, but above all it continued to have access to a broad readership. Foreign visitors were surprised to observe that in Poland Latin was commonly used in all spheres of life... It would be long to quote those reports... The most important thing is that they identified this fact as a Polish peculiarity... In Poland, texts of the classical authors resisted being translated into Polish for a relatively long time because they were long commonly read in original."

The Belarusian historian A. A. Zhlutka says that works written by Belarusian authors in Latin reflect the most important events of Belarusian history and breathe the spirit of patriotism. He argues that the Latin language, dissociated from its ethnic roots, was to a great extent devoid of the power of assimilation, so characteristic of the new and politically dominant languages in Belarus, namely Polish and Russian. This particular character of Latin made it the most convenient "garment of the soul" for the young, arising national organism.

In light of the above, it is no wonder that Ján Kollár (1793–1852) wrote in his famous book on Slavonic literary reciprocity (*Über die literarische Wechselseitigkeit zwischen den verschiedenen Stämmen und Mundarten der slawischen Nation*, 1837, p. 51) that there was nothing that could be of greater benefit to Slavistics than the study of classical antiquity.

Bibliography: Jerzy Axer, "«Latinitas» jako składnik polskiej tożsamości kulturowej," *Tradycje antyczne w kulturze europejskiej. Perspektywy polskie*, ed. Jerzy Axer, Warszawa: Ośrodek Badań nad Tradycją Antyczną w Polsce i w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej, Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1995, p. 77; Martin G. Kovachich, *Merkur von Ungarn* 1/1 (1786), p. 124; Hans Rothe, "Humanismus bei den Slaven. Probleme und Aufgaben," *Festschrift für Hans-Bernd Harder zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Klaus Harer and Helmut Schaller, München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1995, p. 454; Vladimir Vratović, *Croatian Latinity and the Mediterranean Constant*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Most/The Bridge, 1993, p. 9 and 67; Алякс А. Жлутка, "Лацінская літаратура як феномен беларускай культуры," *Спадчына* 2 (1993), pp. 13-21.

The members of our team can only investigate a few narrowly defined topics.

Ladislav Kačič (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics) works on a critical edition of *Epitoma utriusque musicae practice* (Kraków 1515), a treatise of music theory authored by Stephanus Monetarius Cremenicianus.

Katarína Karabová (University of Trnava, Department of Classical Languages) examines Matija Petar Katančić's *Specimen philologiae et geographiae Pannoniorum* (Zagreb 1795) and its links with Neo-Latin authors in Slovakia.

Mária Strýčková (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics) explores Latin – Church Slavonic lexical parallels and relationships in the liturgical work of Joannicius Georgius Basilovits (1742–1821), a Greek-Catholic Basilian author of Slovak origin.

The research of Angela Škovierová (Comenius University and University Library, Bratislava) is devoted to Slovak Humanist Andreas Rochotius (ca.1583—after 1623) and his Latin drama in the context of other Slovak Humanists who lived and worked in early seventeenth-century Bohemia.

Oľga Vaneková (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slovak Literature) explores the Latin love poetry of Slovakia-based Humanist Johannes Bocatius (1569–1621), interpreting his work against the backdrop of the poetic creation of Ioannes Cochanius (Poland) and Matthaeus Collinus (Bohemia).

Ľubomíra Wilšinská (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics) focuses on the Basilian monastic tradition of the Carpathian region, analysing and interpreting Joannicius Georgius Basilovits's *Imago vitae monasticae* (Košice 1802) as a result of the symbiosis between the eastern and western monastic traditions.

Svorad Zavorský (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics) investigates the Ciceronianism of Joannes Baptista Novosoliensis (born ca. 1500), a Humanist born in Slovakia, educated in Italy, and finally based in Poland. Novosoliensis is the author of the first commentary ever written on Cicero's *Ad Quintum Fratrem I*.

We wish to open up the concept of our project to a broader discussion.

Therefore, on 5–7 December 2018 the Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, v.v.i., will host the international conference **Neo-Latin Scholarship on the Slavs**, at which Slavists and Neo-Latinists will meet to discuss a variety of Neo-Latin texts dealing with Slavonic issues and covering different genres, such as historiography, linguistics, philosophy, etc.

Our conference has attracted the attention of Slavists and Neo-Latinists from Italy, Austria, Bohemia, Poland, Sweden, Belarus, Ukraine, Croatia, Romania, and Slovakia.

<https://neolatinscholarshi.wixsite.com/conference2018>

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