

PSALTERAS ING LIETVWISCHKĄ LIESZVWĮ pergulditas Jano Bretkūno; **NAVIAS TESTAMENTAS ING LIETVWISCHKĄ LIESZVWĮ** perraschitas per Janą Bretkūną. Labguwa (Labiau) 1580. Facsimile edition of both of the preceding by Jochen Dieter Range and Friedrich Scholz = *Biblia Slavica*, series VI: Supplementum: *Biblia Lithuanica*, Vol. 1.6/1.7 (ed. by Reinhold Olesch [deceased] and Hans Rothe with the collaboration of Friedrich Scholz), Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zurich, Ferdinand Schoningh, 1991.

The two volumes under review are facsimile editions of the Psalter and the New Testament, translated into Lithuanian by Jonas Bretkūnas, pastor at Labguva and undoubtedly the most important East Prussian Lithuanian author of the 16th century. According to Palionis, 1983, 7, Bretkūnas continued the work of preparation of Lithuanian texts begun by Martynas Mažvydas, Baltramiejus Vilentas, and others. Bretkūnas was also one of the creators of the Lithuanian literary language and if it were not for his publications written in a lively and picturesque folk language and style, his efforts to create new means of expression and the desire on numerous occasions to liberate himself from the constraints of the canonized original we could hardly have had Christian Donelaitis' *The Seasons*. For more details about his life see the review of Range, Jochen D. *Bausteine zur Bretke-Forschung: Kommentarband zur Bretke-Edition (NT)* in this issue of *Lituanus*.

In the foreword to *Biblia Lithuanica*, Vol. 1-6 (the Psalter) Professor Friedrich Scholz (pp. VII-VIII) writes that Bretkūnas began his Bible translation on March 6th, 1579 and finished on November 29th, 1590. The translation of the Psalter was completed during the period from the 20th of May to the middle of July in 1580. In the foreword to *Biblia Lithuanica*, volume 1.7 (the New Testament) Professor Scholz writes (p. VI) that the translation of the New Testament was prepared in the time period between March 6th, 1579, and May 16, 1580.

The facsimiles presented in these volumes were made from a copy of the manuscript which from ca. 1601 lay in the ducal library (later royal and university library of the University of Königsberg) until near the end of World War II, when it was brought to West Germany and in 1979 was incorporated into the Prussian archives in Berlin (Bibliothek des geheimen Staatsarchivs Preussischer Kulturbesitz). In addition to the two volumes already published (Vol. 1.6 = the Psalter; 1.7 - the New Testament) the following are in preparation: A facsimile version of the Old Testament (presumably volumes 1.1-1.5); a critical edition of the text with scientific apparatus and notes (volumes 2.1-2.8); volumes containing a commentary on the problems of research on Bretkūnas (volumes 3.1 ff.).

Prior to the rebinding and restoring of the eight original manuscript volumes they were filmed by the photographic section of the Prussian archives (Photoabteilung des Geheimen Staatsarchivs, Berlin-West). In a few cases, a few letters have been missed on the inside edges of the text where they were covered by the fold. The new binding has significantly increased the number of such cases, and a few tests have shown that rephotographing would give worse results in this respect. By carefully opening the volumes, one could make out the missing letters which will be entered in the critical edition (foreword to 1.6, p. X, 1.7, p. IX).

The manuscript is in general, as is evident from the facsimile, easy to read, even including the marginal glosses, many additions and corrections. On some facsimile pages the writing from the other side shows through the paper and it is difficult to make out the text. The same thing is true for the original, but the critical edition should make the reading easier for the person who is not familiar with Bretkūnas' style of handwriting. The entire manuscript was checked and corrected many times by Bretkūnas, who, even as he was preparing the first version, made many changes. Therefore the solution of many of the problems of textual criticism required an intensive and time-consuming study of the manuscript, problems for which solutions are to be offered in the edition volumes, see the review of the book by Jochen Dieter Range in this issue. The facsimile volumes will, however, allow the reader to check for himself or herself the results of the study of the problems of textual criticism given in the edition volumes. In addition, the facsimile editions offer a living representation of the manuscript which cannot be directly communicated through description (foreword to 1.6, p. VIII, 1.7, p. VIII-IX).

Fittingly Prof. Scholz has dedicated vol. 1.6 to that great man of Baltic studies Prof. Ernst Fraenkel who in 1947 opened the world of Lithuanian studies for him. Vol. 1.7 was dedicated by Prof. Scholz to the famous Latvian philologist Prof. Karlis

Dravinš who in 1978 first suggested to him a facsimile edition of Bretkūnas Bible.

Fortunately, Prof. Scholz received financial support for publication from the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung. As a result the volumes are handsomely bound and on high quality paper which does credit to the printer, Ferdinand Schoningh of Paderborn. I am looking forward to the appearance of future volumes in this series, a series which is already and promises to be in the future a fundamental source for Lithuanian and Baltic studies. Our thanks are due to Prof. Scholz and Jochen Dieter Range for their contribution.

Reference:

Palionis, Jonas and J. Žukauskaitė, eds. 1983. Bretkūnas, Jonas. Rinktiniai raštai. Vilnius, Mokslas.

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