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THE “WESTERN TEXT” AND ITS CHIEF WITNESSES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The problem of textual criticism cannot be limited to an analysis of the variants provided by modern critical editions of the New Testament in the critical apparatus. The ultimate text of the Fourth Gospel is rich in anomalies and inconsistencies (internal contradictions, doublets, repetitions). This fact prompts the need for a deeper investigation and explanation of the text. Textual criticism poses questions about the prehistory of the text and its development. Modern critical editions of the *Greek New Testament* give us the text based on the main Greek manuscripts (“Alexandrian text”¹). They often treat patristic quotations and other witnesses of different versions of the Fourth Gospel as secondary or even as insignificant². If one begins with these kinds of *apriori* decisions and

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¹ See: F. G. K e n y o n, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, London 1975, p. 214-223; B. M e t z g e r, *The Text of the New Testament. Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration*, Oxford 1992, p. 215-219.

² There is a discussion among scholars about the function of patristic evidence for textual criticism. On the one hand there are those who diminish their significance and on the other hand there are scholars who underline their importance. To the first group belong: B. M e t z g e r, *Patristic Evidence and the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, NTS 18(1971-1972), p. 379-400; G. D. F e e, *The Text of John in the Jerusalem Bible: A Critique of the Use of Patristic Citations in New Testament Textual Criticism*, JBL 90(1971), p. 163-173. To the second group belong: M.-É. B o i s m a r d, *A propos de Jean V, 39*, RB 55(1948), p. 5-34; *ibid.*, *Critique textuelle et citations patristique*, RB 57(1950), p. 388-408; *ibid.*, *Problèmes de critique textuelle concernant le quatrième évangile*, RB 60(1953), p. 347-371; *ibid.*, *Le papyrus Bodmer II*, RB 64(1957), p. 363-398; J. D u p l a c y, J. S u g g s, *Les citations grecques et la critique du texte de Nouveau Testament: le passé, le présent, et l'avenir*, in: *La Bible et les pères*, ed. A. Benoit, P. Prigent, Paris 1971, p. 187-213.

assumptions, a variant which is not confirmed by at least some Greek manuscripts has to be rejected. However, a careful analysis of the variants presented in the textual witnesses (mainly in patristic quotations and versions) enable us to discern a „Western text” of the Fourth Gospel³.

One of the first who used the term „Western text” was I. S. Semler in eighteenth century with reference to the text of Latin manuscripts and the Fathers⁴. In fact this term is not satisfactory enough because the manuscripts of a “Western text” circulated also in Egypt⁵ and in the East⁶. J. J. Griesbach⁷, B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort⁸ already saw this difficulty in nineteenth century, but the traditional designation remained until today. Most scholars date the emergence of this text to the mid-second century or even earlier⁹. The “Western text” is very helpful in answering many questions connected with textual and literary criticism. The existence and significance of this text cannot be ignored in a modern exegesis of John’s Gospel¹⁰. According to F. C. Bur-

³ A. F. J. K l i j n, *A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts*, vol. I-II, Utrecht–Leiden 1969; F. G. K e n y o n, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 223-244; J. N. B i r d s a l l, “The Western Text in the Second Century”, in: *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text and Transmission*, ed. W. L. Petersen, Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press 1989, p. 3-17; D. C. P a r k e r, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text*, Cambridge 1991; M.-É. B o i s m a r d - A. L a m o u i l l e, *Un évangile pré-johannique*, vol. I-III, Paris 1993-1996; J. K. E l l i o t, “Codex Bezae and the Earliest Greek Papyri”, in: *Codex Bezae: Studies from the Lunel Colloquium, June 1994*, eds. D. C. Parker – C. B. Amphoux, Leiden 1996, p. 161-182; M.-É. B o i s m a r d, *Critique textuelle ou critique littéraire. Jean 7:1-51*, Paris 1998.

⁴ I. S. S e m l e r, *Ioh. Iac. Wetstenii libelli ad crisin atque interpretationem Novi Testamenti*, Halae Magdeburgicae 1766, p. 4-5: “[...] graeca recensia duplex; alia in Aegypto atque in provinciis sub occidente, alia in oriente, per Syriam, Antiochiam et graecas provincias...” (“[...] the Greek recension is two-fold; one in Egypt and in the Western provinces, the other in the East, throughout Syria, Antioch, and the Greek provinces [...]).

⁵ The papyri – P29 P38 P48 are evidence of the “Western text” in Egypt.

⁶ The texts of old Syriac (Sinaitic, Curetonian).

⁷ J. J. G r i e s b a c h, *Commentarius criticus in textum graecum Novi Testamenti*, Jenae 1811.

⁸ B. F. W e s t c o t t - F. J. A. H o r t, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, London 1882.

⁹ J. N. B i r d s a l l, *The Western Text in the Second Century*, p. 3-17.

¹⁰ The importance of the “Western text” for the Gospel of Luke and Acts was already underlined in the research of: B. F. W e s t c o t t, F. J. A. H o r t, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek*, Cambridge 1882; M.-É. B o i s m a r d, A. L a m o u i l l e, *Le Texte occidental des Actes des Apôtres, reconstitution et rehabilitation*, Paris 1994. See also: P. H e a d, “Acts and the Problem of Its Text”, in: *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. B. W. Winter, A. D. Clarke, Grand Rapids 1993, p. 415-444; M. W o j c i e-

kitt "if we have any real trust in antiquity, any real belief in the continuity of Christian tradition, we must be prepared to admit many Western readings as authentic, as alone having a historical claim to originality"¹¹. The main witnesses for the "Western text" of the Fourth Gospel are the manuscripts of Vetus Latina, Vetus Syra, the quotations of the earliest Fathers and the texts of Coptic, Persian, Georgian and Ethiopian versions.

I. THE GREEK

The Greek manuscripts which support the variants of the "Western text" are taken from different critical editions of the New Testament¹². The "Western text" can be found in Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis (D) from 5th century¹³. It is supported by papyri P29.38.48 from the third century¹⁴. But the main witnesses of this form of text are the quotations of early writers from the second century¹⁵. For the Gospel of John the most important are the quotations of the fathers from fourth and fifth century like John Chrysostome, Didymus the Blind, Epiphanius of Salamis, Cyril of Alexandria and Nonnos of Panopolis¹⁶.

chowski, *Nowsze studia nad tekstem Dziejów Apostolskich*, „Collectanea Theologica” 64(1994), nr 1, s. 55-61; E. Nodet, J. Taylor, *The Origins of Christianity. An Exploration*, Collegeville 1998, p. 14-22.

¹¹ Introduction to P. M. Barnard, *The Biblical Text of Clement of Alexandria in the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles*, Cambridge 1899, p. XVII-XVIII.

¹² B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. Martini, B. Metzger, *The Greek New Testament*, 4th edition, Stuttgart 1994, p. 350-354; E. Nestle, B. Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th edition, Stuttgart 1993, p. 276-278; H. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments. Text mit Apparat*, Göttingen 1913, p. 430-433; F. Blass, *Evangelium sec. Iohannem cum variae lectionis delectu*, Leipzig 1902, p. 44-47; C. Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece. Editio octava critica maior*, vol. I, Leipzig 1869, p. 840-847. We also used a book by W. J. Elliott, D. C. Parker, *The Gospel According to St. John. The Papyri*, vol. I, Leiden–New York–Köln 1995, p. 240-249.

¹³ D. C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and its Text*.

¹⁴ E. J. Epp, „The Significance of the Papyri for Determining the Nature of the New Testament Text in the Second Century: A Dynamic View of Textual Criticism”, in: *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text and Transmission*, ed. W. L. Petersen, Notre Dame 1989, p. 71-103.

¹⁵ Marcion (ca. 85-ca. 160), Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165), Irenaeus (ca. 140-ca. 202), Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-ca. 215).

¹⁶ The biographical information on the Greek writers see in: B. Altaner, A. Stuiber, *Patrologie: Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1980.

a) John Chrysostome (347-407) – biblical interpreter and archbishop of Constantinople is a representative of the Antiochian school which like the Alexandrian school, was a renowned intellectual centre and a distinctive school of Christian theology which flourished there and in the surrounding region throughout the fourth and the first half of the fifth century. In contrast to the Alexandrian school, it was characterized by a literal exegesis and a concern for the true humanity of Christ. The importance of John Chrysostome as a source for the “Western text”¹⁷ is strongly emphasized in the recent research of M.-É. Boismard¹⁸. According to him there were two editions of the homilies of John Chrysostome (one at the end of fifth century and the other one at the end of the sixth century). The text of J. P Migne¹⁹ contaminated by Textus Receptus²⁰ has to be corrected by using other manuscripts like *Grec 705* (9th century) from the National Library in Paris; *Grec 539* (10th century) from the Vatican Library, *Grec 540* (11th century) from Vatican Library; *Grec 545* (11th century) from the Vatican Library; *Grec 680* (11th century) from St. Marc Library in Venice.

On the literary level two kinds of works can be distinguished in the *Homilies of John Chrysostome*: 1. *the Homilies* and 2. *the Commentaries to the Homilies*. The latter appears to contain a more ancient text. According to M.-É. Boismard, the *Commentaries to the Homilies* of John Chrysostome were written by Diodor of Tarse (330-390), John Chrysostome’s teacher in the Antiochian school²¹. The beginning of Homily 54 contains the *Lemma* text which is the same as the current text²². But in the text of this Homily we find many quotations from John’s Gospel which are different from the current text.

¹⁷ This text is also called in the literature – “ancient Antiochene Text”. See: J. T a y l o r, *The Text of St John Chrysostom’s Homilies on John*, „Studia Patristica” XXV (1993), p. 172-175.

¹⁸ M.-É. B o i s m a r d, *Un évangile pré-johannique II*, vol. 1, p. 11-46; *Critique textuelle ou critique littéraire*, p. 12-23.

¹⁹ J. P. M i g n e, *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca prior. S. Joannes Chrysostomus*, vol. LIX, Paris 1862.

²⁰ M.-É. B o i s m a r d, *Lectio brevior potior*, RB 58(1951), p. 164: “[...] le texte de Chrysostome que nous suivons est celui de Migne, édition non critique dans laquelle se sont sans doute glissées beaucoup de leçons du Textus Receptus”.

²¹ See the argumentation for this proposition: M.-É. B o i s m a r d, *Un évangile pré-johannique II*, vol. 1, p. 191-205. See also: J.-M. O l i v i e r, *Diodori Tarsensis commentarii in psalmos*, vol. 1, Paris 1980; K. S t a a b, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften*, Münster 1933, p. 82-112.

²² The term “current text” is used as an equivalent for the text which occurs in the modern editions of the *Greek New Testament*.

b) Didymus the Blind (313-398) was the head of the Alexandrian catechetical school in the fourth century²³. The important witnesses (codices \aleph and B) were written in Alexandria at this time. The discoveries of the papyrus manuscripts containing the works of Didymus the Blind in Toura (Egypt) in 1941 gave us access to his texts. In his *Commentaries on Genesis, Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes* and *Zechariah* there are many quotations from the Gospels. The fourth Gospel is quoted by Didymus more extensively than any other. There are numerous quotations of John's Gospel in which Didymus the Blind supports the witnesses of several traditions including that of the "Western text"²⁴.

c) Epiphanius of Salamis (315-403) studied and practiced monasticism in Egypt and then returned to his native Palestine, where near Eleutheropolis he founded a monastery and became its superior. In 367 he was made bishop of Constantia (Salamis) in Cyprus. In the years 374-376 he wrote his main work *Panarion*, an account of 80 heresies including those from Greek philosophical schools, Jewish sects, and Samaritans. He also wrote a compendium of the teachings of the church known as the *Ancoratus*. In his quotations of the Fourth Gospel we can find traces of the "Western text"²⁵.

d) Cyril (375-444), bishop of Alexandria, is the author of a *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. In his *Commentary* he uses many quotations which may come from the "Western text"²⁶.

e) Nonnos of Panopolis (fifth century) was among the greatest epic poets in Egypt in his day. Later in his life he converted to Christianity and composed a hexameter paraphrase of John's Gospel known as *Metabole*. Nonnos, using the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, preserved a paraphrased version of the "Western text" of the Fourth Gospel in parts of his work²⁷.

²³ About the biography of Didymus the Blind see: W. J. G a u c h e, *Didymus the Blind: An Educator of the Fourth Century*, Washington 1934.

²⁴ See D. E h r m a n, *Didymus the Blind and the text of the Gospels*, Atlanta 1986.

²⁵ See K. H o l l, *Epiphanius (Ancoratus und Panarion)*, Leipzig 1933.

²⁶ See P. E. P u s e y, *Sancti patris nostri Cyrille archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Johannis evangelium*, Bruxelles 1965.

²⁷ M.-É. B o i s m a r d, *Critique textuelle ou critique littéraire*, p. 30-36. For edition of Nonnos texts see R. J a n s s e n, *Das Johannes-Evangelium nach der Paraphrase des Nonnus Panopolitanus mit einem ausführlichen kritischen Apparat*, Leipzig 1903, p. 31-33.

II. THE LATIN

The old Latin versions (VLat) contain variants which may come from the “Western text”²⁸. In order to detect these variants we can use the edition elaborated by A. Jülicher, W. Matzkof, K. Aland²⁹. Also we can use the text of *Capitula* which is given at the beginning of some manuscripts of the Vulgate. The *Capitula* as the summary of the content of the manuscript often includes the text of VLat³⁰.

Also the quotations of John’s Gospel in the works of Tertulian, Augustin and Zacharias of Besancon are useful for detecting the variants of the “Western text”.

a) Tertulian (160-240) in *Adversus Praxean* gives some variants of the primitive text of the Fourth Gospel³¹.

b) Augustin (354-430) in his *Tractatus in Joannis Evangelium* in some quotations preserved the text of the old Latin versions to the Gospel of John³².

c) Zachariah of Besancon lived in the 12th century. He wrote a work entitled *In unum ex quattuor sive de concordantia evangelistarum*³³. He used manuscript from Fulda but in his work there are variants which are close to the old Latin Diatessaron.

III. THE SYRIAC

Analysing text of the fourth Gospel we can find in it the variants of “Western text” attested also by Syriac witnesses which reflect its primitive text. The *Curetonianus* and the *Sinaiticus* represent different revised forms of com-

²⁸ See the discussion about old Latin versions in: B. F i s c h e r, „Das Neue Testament in lateinischer Sprache: Der gegenwärtige Stand seiner Erforschung und seine Bedeutung für die griechische Textgeschichte”, in: *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare*, ed. K. Aland, Berlin 1972, p. 1-92; B. M. M e t z g e r, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations*, Oxford 1977, p. 285-374.

²⁹ A. J ü l i c h e r, W. M a t z k o f, K. A l a n d, *Itala. Das Neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung nach den Handschriften. Johannes-Evangelium*, vol. IV, Berlin 1963.

³⁰ J. W o r d w o r t h, H. J. W h i t e, *Novum Testamentum Domini nostri Iesu Christi latine secundum editionem sancti Hieronymi. Pars prior – Quattuor evangelia*, Oxford 1889-1898.

³¹ See: *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, ed. A. Grelo, vol. II, Berlin 1954.

³² See: *Patrologia Latina*, vol. XXXV.

³³ See: *Patrologia Latina*, vol. CLXXXVI.

mon original text (third century)³⁴. The *Curetonianus* was published in 1858 by W. Cureton. The *Sinaiticus* was discovered by A. S. Lewis and M. D. Gibson in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. Other important witness is the *Palestinian Syriac Lectionary* (Syrpal)³⁵ in three manuscripts. They were used for liturgical purpose and their tradition may date back to 300-600 C. E. The *Peshitta* (SyrP) as a standard version of the Syriac churches is a revision of a form of the old Syriac made in fifth century. The *Harklean* version (SyrH) is from seventh century and does not depend on the Old Syriac³⁶.

Traces of the "Western text" can also be found in the works of Tatian, Ephraem of Nisibis and Theodore of Mopsuestia³⁷.

a) Tatian (120-173) was a Syrian author and a pupil of Justin Martyr (100-165). About AD 175 he wrote his famous *Diatessaron*³⁸, a version of the four Gospels arranged in a single continuous narrative. It is a very important source for recovering the most ancient text of the Gospels³⁹. No ancient Syriac manuscript of *Diatessaron* is known to exist today, however a third-century Greek papyrus fragment was discovered in 1933 at Dura-Europos, northwest of Baghdad which contains parts of this work. The Syriac quotations of the *Diatessaron* are found in the Commentary of Ephrem. There are also manuscripts of the *Diatessaron* in Arabic as well as texts in European languages written during the Middle Ages.

According to recent research Tatian used a harmony of the four Gospels known already to his master Justin Martyr about AD 140⁴⁰. M.-É. Boismard

³⁴ See the studies on the Syriac versions in M. B l a c k, „The Syriac Versional Tradition”, in: *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments*, p. 120-159; A. V ö ö b u s, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac II: New Contributions to the Sources Elucidating the History of the Traditions, with an Appendix: The Discovery of New Sources for the Archaic Text of the Book of Acts*, Louvain 1987, p. 1-34; T. B a a r d a, „The Syriac Versions of the New Testament”, in: *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research. Essays on the Status Questionis*, ed. B. D. Ehrman, M. W. Holmes, Grand Rapids 1995, p. 97-112.

³⁵ See A. S. L e w i s, M. D. G i b s o n, *The Palestinian Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels*, London 1899.

³⁶ See also the editions A. S. L e w i s, *The Old Syriac Gospels or Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe*, London 1910; G. A. K i r a z, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions*, Leiden–New York–Köln 1996.

³⁷ The biographical information on Syriac writers can be found in: A. B a u m s t a r k, *Geschichte des syrischen Literatur*, Bonn 1922.

³⁸ See W. L. P e t e r s e n, *Tatian's Diatessaron. Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship*, Leiden–New York– Köln 1994.

³⁹ L. L e l o i r, *Le Diatessaron de Tatiën*, OrSyr 1(1956), p. 209: “Pour retrouver les plus anciennes leçons évangéliques, la connaissance de l'oeuvre de Tatiën est d'une importance primordiale”.

⁴⁰ W. L. P e t e r s e n, *Textual Evidence of Tatian's Dependence Upon Justin's ΑΠΟ-*

argues that this ancient text was a source for the *Diatessaron* of Tatian and the *Syro-Latine Harmony*⁴¹. The latter existed in the following translations written in the Middle Ages: Arab⁴², Persian⁴³, English (the harmony of Pepys)⁴⁴, Dutch (the manuscript of Liège)⁴⁵, Italian (the Venetian and Toscan dialects)⁴⁶ and German⁴⁷.

MNHMONEYMATA, NTS 36(1990), p. 512-534; M.-É. Boismard, *Le Diatessaron: De Tatien à Justin*, Paris 1992.

⁴¹ See the arguments for this thesis and textual evidence in: M.-É. Boismard, *Le Diatessaron: De Tatien à Justin*; *Ibid.*, *De Justin à l'harmonie de Pepys: la parabole de la semence*, RB 103(1996), p. 433-440.

⁴² A. Ciasca, *Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmoniae Arabice*, Rome 1888; A.-S. Marjadi, *Diatessaron de Tatien*, Beyrouth 1935. The recent research shows that in the Arab Diatessaron occur the archaic texts – T. Barda, *An Archaic Element in the Arabic Diatessaron?* (TA 46:18=John 15:2), NT 17(1975), p. 151-155; *Ibid.*, *To the Roots of the Syriac Diatessaron Tradition*, NT 28(1986), p. 1-25.

⁴³ G. Messina, *Diatessaron Persiano*, Roma 1951. According to G. Messina the *Persian Harmony* is very complex. It is composed from the following sources: *Protoevangelium Iacobi*, *Gospel according to the Hebrew* and *Christian Targum* in Hebrew or Syriac. In recent studies on the Persian Harmony the scholars underline the archaic character of this text and its connection with *Vetus Syra*. See the discussion about the origin and function of the *Persian Harmony* in: B. Metzger, "Tatian's Diatessaron and a Persian Harmony of the Gospels", in: *Chapters in the History of the New Testament Textual Criticism*, Leiden 1963, p. 97-120; T. Barda, "In Search of the Diatessaron Text", in: *Early Transmission of the Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament*, Amsterdam 1983, p. 65-78.

⁴⁴ M. Gotes, *The Pepysian Gospel Harmony*, London 1922. The *Harmony of Pepys* (The name of his owner Samuel Pepys) – was written about 1400 in the Middle English. In many readings this text agrees with Tatian *Diatessaron*. The value of this Harmony was underlined in the research of M.-É. Boismard, who regards it as one of the best surviving witnesses of a pre-Tatianic harmony (*Le Diatessaron: De Tatien à Justin*, Paris 1992). See the description of *Pepysian Harmony* in: D. Ploij, *The Pepysian Harmony*, BBC 2(1926), p. 14-16; J. N. Birdsall, *The Sources of the Pepysian Harmony and its links with the Diatessaron*, NTS 22(1975/1976), p. 215-223; W. L. Petersen, *From Justin to Pepys: The History of the Harmonized Gospel Tradition*, „*Studia Patristica*” 30(1997), p. 71-93.

⁴⁵ C. C. De Bruin, *Diatesseron Leodiense*, Leiden 1970. The *Liège Harmony* was written by anonymous author in Limburgs in a dialect of Middle Dutch (13th century). The importance of it as the single Western Diatessaronic witness is underlined in the research. See D. Ploij, *A Primitive Text of the Diatessaron*, Leyden 1923; H. Lietzmann, *Ein neuer Tatiantext*, ZNW 22(1923), p. 150-153; H. J. Vogels, *Ein wichtiger Tatianfund*, ThR 22(1923), p. 150-153; F. C. Burkitt, *Tatian's Diatessaron and the Dutch Harmonies*, JThS 25(1924), p. 113-130; R. van den Broek, *Enkele opmerkingen over de Latijnse archetypus van het Middelnederlandse diatessaron*, *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 70(1977), p. 434-458; C. C. De Bruin, *Het Luikse Diatessaron*, Leiden 1984.

⁴⁶ V. Todesco, P. Vaccari, M. Vattasso, *Il Diatesseron in volgare italiano. Testi inediti dei secoli XIII-XIV*, Città del Vaticano 1938.

⁴⁷ C. Gerhardt, *Diatessaron Theodiscum*, vol. I, Leiden 1970.

b) Ephraem of Nisibis (306-373) is recognized as the most authoritative representative of fourth century Syriac Christianity. In his sermons, hymns and prose works he attacked Bardaisanites, Marcionites and Manichaeans. He composed numerous theological-biblical commentaries and is the author of the *Commentary on the Concordant Gospel*. It is „la plus importante des oeuvres exégétiques d'Éphrem"⁴⁸. According to scholars this *Commentary* is the one of the main witnesses to the text of the *Diatessaron*. Until early 1950s only Armenian manuscripts (A and B) dated 1195 C. E. gave us access into the content of the *Commentary*⁴⁹. But then large portion of a *Syriac Commentary* (some Syriac manuscripts) are available to scholars⁵⁰. Many quotations in the *Commentary* give us access to parts of Tatian's *Diatessaron*. However we have to carefully discern and separate between allusions and quotations which are sometimes mixed and complex in the text.

c) Theodore of Mopsuestia (350- 428/429) was a Syrian theologian, considered the greatest biblical interpreter of his time and the spiritual head of the exegetical School of Antioch. He is the author of a *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. The critical editions of his writings were done by J.-M. Voste⁵¹ and R. Devreesse⁵².

IV. THE PERSIAN

Many scholars consider the Persian version to be dependant on the old Syriac versions. In fact it contains variants which may reflect a primitive text of the Fourth Gospel⁵³.

⁴⁸ L. L e l o i r, *Doctrines et méthodes d'Éphrem d'après les oeuvres éditées*, Louvain 1961, p. 40.

⁴⁹ I. B. A u c h e r, *Evangelii concordantis expositio facta a sancto Ephraemo, doctore Syro*, Venetiis 1876.

⁵⁰ L. L e l o i r, *Saint Éphrem. Commentaire de l'Évangile Concordant. Versione arménienne*, Louvain 1953-1954; *Ibid.*, *St. Ephrem. Commentaire de l'Évangile Concordant. Texte Syriaque. Manuscript Chester Beatty 709*, Dublin 1963; P. O. V a l d i v i e s o, *Un nuevo fragmento siriaco del comentario de San Efrém al Diatésaron*, „*Studia Papyrologica*” 5(1966), p. 7-17.

⁵¹ J.-M. V o s t e, *Theodori Mopsuestensi commentarius in Evangelium Johannis Apostoli*, Paris 1940, p. 123-129.

⁵² R. D e v r e e s s e, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, Città del Vaticano 1948.

⁵³ B. W a l t o n, *Novum D. N. Jesu Christi Testamentum. Persian version*, London 1656.

V. THE GEORGIAN

The Georgian version on the one hand has connections with a Greek tradition attested by the *Koridethi Codex*, but on the other hand it is also linked to old Syriac versions. Some variants of a Georgian version may be an echo of the “Western text”⁵⁴. The critical edition is written by R. P. Blake and M. Brière⁵⁵.

VI. THE COPTIC

Analyzing Gospel of John in Coptic versions we can find some variants which may be derived from the primitive text⁵⁶. There are different critical editions:

- R. Kasser⁵⁷ – The Proto-Bohairic version (Cop^{bb0}).
- G. Horner⁵⁸ – The Bohairic version (Cop^{bo}).
- H. Quecke⁵⁹ – The Sahidic version (Cop^{sa}).
- H. Thompson⁶⁰ – The Sub-Achmimic version (Cop^{ach2}).

The analysis of the “Western text” and its witnesses shows us their importance for the textual criticism of the Fourth Gospel. Patristic quotations and variants from many versions cannot be omitted in our research of the text

⁵⁴ J. M o l i t o r, „Das Neue Testament in georgischer Sprache”, in: *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare*, p. 314-344; J. N. B i r d s a l l, „The Georgian Version of the New Testament”, in: *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research. Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, p. 173-187.

⁵⁵ R. P. B l a k e, M. B r i é r e, *The Old Georgian Version of the Gospel of John*, Paris 1950.

⁵⁶ G. M i n k, „Die koptischen Versionen des Neuen Testaments”, in: *Die alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare*, p. 160-299; F. W i s s e, „The Coptic Versions of the New Testament”, in: *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research. Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, p. 131-141.

⁵⁷ R. K a s s e r, *Papyrus Bodmer III, Evangile de Jean et Genèse I-IV, 2 en bohairique*, Louvain 1958.

⁵⁸ G. H o r n e r, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect*, vol. II, Oxford 1898.

⁵⁹ H. Q u e c k e, *Das Johannesevangelium Saidisch: Text der Handschrift Palau Rib. Inv.-Nr. 183 mit den Varianten der Handschriften 813 und 814 der Chester Beatty Library und der Handschrift M 569*, Roma– Barcelona 1984.

⁶⁰ H. T h o m p s o n, *The Gospel of John according to the earliest Coptic manuscript*, London 1924.

which is the closest of original. In fact, patristic quotations and early versions are the oldest witnesses of the Gospel. They are more ancient than Greek papyrus and codes which are the basis in modern textual criticism. Patristic quotations and versions which contain variants should be elaborated critically. An analysis of Greek, Latin, Syriac, Persian, Georgian and Coptic documentation let us to distinguish the variants of „Western text” which may be regarded as an earlier redaction of the Fourth Gospel, pre-dating the Alexandrian text.

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„TEKST ZACHODNI” I JEGO GŁÓWNE ŚWIADECTWA W EWANGELII ŚW. JANA

S t r e s z c z e n i e

We współczesnych badaniach egzegetycznych podkreśla się wagę „Tekstu Zachodniego” i jego świadectw w Ewangelii św. Jana. Zagadnienia związane z prehistorią tekstu Janowego i złożonym procesem jego redakcji pozwalają w wielu miejscach głębiej spojrzeć na egzegezę i teologię czwartej Ewangelii. Analiza świadectw greckich, łacińskich, syryjskich, perskich, gruzińskich pozwala na wyodrębnienie wariantów „Tekstu Zachodniego”, które mogą wskazywać na wczesną redakcję poprzedzającą Tekst Aleksandryjski.

Key words: Textual criticism, “Western Text”, Gospel of John.

Słowa kluczowe: krytyka tekstu, „Tekst Zachodni”, Ewangelia św. Jana.