



## A Year in Stanisław Grzepski's (1524–1570) *De multiplici siclo et talento hebraico*

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**Abstract:** The article explores Stanisław Grzepski's workshop of biblical exegesis and his hermeneutics. By analyzing his analysis of the system of biblical measurements and his views on the concept of the year in the Jewish-biblical world – as derived and reconstructed on the basis of textual comparison of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions of the Scripture, along with thorough mathematical calculations – one can perceive Grzepski's approach to the Bible. His hermeneutics, seen against the background of the presuppositions of medieval and Renaissance exegesis, allow the author of the article to draw certain conclusions concerning the threats that also modern exegesis should be cautious of.

**Key words:** Stanisław Grzepski, year, Renaissance exegesis, biblical measurement

The exegesis of the modern era starts with the works of humanists, who introduce new research tools (philology improved by the study of classical authors, text criticism, wide-ranging comparative research with extra-biblical texts). Thus, they put an end to the theological exegesis developed by ancient and medieval authors. Renaissance exegesis can be easily identified with the beginnings of scientific exegesis; nevertheless, this seems to be a simplification which consists of two complementary convictions. The first one is the recognition that there is no continuity between ancient-medieval and modern exegesis (the latter identified with scientific exegesis). The second one is the dogma concerning the objectivity of research of modern exegetes, which places them above any doctrinal dispute. In this article, we shall see to what extent these assumptions are valid, on the example of Stanisław Grzepski (1524–1570)<sup>1</sup> – one of the first and most eminent humanistic exegetes.

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<sup>1</sup> Fijałek, “Przekłady pism,” 126–207, esp. 129–196; Barycz, “Stanisław Grzepski – człowiek i twórca,” 1–59; Barycz, “Grzepski Stanisław,” 99–102; Hajdukiewicz, “Grzepski Stanisław,” 207–208; Barycz, “Stanisław Grzepski – człowiek i dzieło,” 530–587; Smereka, “Bibliotyka polska,” 221–266, esp. 226–228; Wyczawski, “Grzepski (Grepscius) Stanisław h. Świnka,” 221–266; Juszkiewicz, “Stanisław Grzepski,” 29–42; Dymek, “Stanisław Grzepski z Poborza,” 115–129; Linke, “The Sarmatian,” 53–71.

The figure of Stanisław Grzepecki remains better known among historians of technical thought<sup>2</sup> than among humanists,<sup>3</sup> philologists, historians, and even less among theologians, and yet he himself would probably consider himself a member of these circles. For example, he is not mentioned in the synthesis of Polish history by Andrzej Nowak, who draws attention to such figures of the Polish Renaissance as Abraham Kulwieć (1510/1512–1545)<sup>4</sup> or Andrzej Trzeciecki (1530–after 1578)<sup>5</sup> but remains completely silent about Grzepecki. Tadeusz Ulewicz mentions him among the first Greek language scholars from Kraków, along with Jerzy Liban (1464–after 1546) and Szymon Marcius (1516–1572/1574) who are vividly although synthetically characterized by the author, however, the only thing Ulewicz has to say about Grzepecki is that he was “close to Jan Kochanowski.”<sup>6</sup> While asking “Why Polish scholars do not know Kulwieć?”<sup>7</sup> Jakub Niedźwiedź from the Jagiellonian University points out that although Kulwieć deserves to be considered one of the most outstanding humanists in the country of Sigismund the Old, he is counted among the Lithuanian writers, so he is not considered in the study of Polish literature.<sup>8</sup> It is different in the case of Trzeciecki, whose connections with the Babin Republic left no shadow of a doubt that he is an important figure of Polish culture of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is an example that illustrates the otherwise well-known fact that religious divisions and barriers were not as significant as ethnic ones. Kulwieć is outside the interest of Polish scholars because he served Bona in Lithuania, and afterwards, as a protestant, he started his service in Prussia at Albrecht Hohenzollern’s court.<sup>9</sup> Grzepecki, however, was a subject of the king from the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and used the Polish language even in writing, ever since he wrote *Geometria*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, his identification with the Polish cultural circle should not be distorted by his (temporary) contacts with the Reformation. In his depiction of Mazovia, Jędrzej Świącicki expressed the opinion that time will not be able to erase the memory of Grzepecki.<sup>11</sup> It is more than a sim-

<sup>2</sup> It was a contribution of Jan Brożek, who in his collection of memories (second-hand because, as he writes it himself, he did not have the opportunity to meet Grzepecki, as he was too young to remember the humanist from Kraków) noted above all the participation of the scholar in the Volok Reform and his interest in geometry. Cf. Brożek, “Żywot Stanisława Grzepeckiego,” 195–212, esp. 197–204. Cf. Kucharzewski, “Nasza najdawniejsza książka o miernictwie,” 32/2, 34–36 and 32/3, 58–60; Koneczny, *Polskie Logos a Ethos*, 125; Orłowski, *Nie tylko szablą*, 79–82.

<sup>3</sup> Karpiński, *Renesans*, 104.

<sup>4</sup> Nowak, *Dzieje Polski*, IV, 262.

<sup>5</sup> Nowak, *Dzieje Polski*, IV, 264.

<sup>6</sup> Ulewicz, *Iter Romano-italicum Polonorum*, 203. Influenced by: Kot, *Polska złotego wieku*, 221–224.

<sup>7</sup> Abraham Kulwieć was one of Christian Hebraists from the Polish-Lithuanian circle of scholars, cf. Pietkiewicz, “Reception of Christian Hebraism,” 107–141, esp. 115.

<sup>8</sup> Niedźwiedź, “Nowa edycja *Confessio fidei*,” 365–377, esp. 368–369.

<sup>9</sup> Barycz, “Kulwieć Abraham,” 165–167.

<sup>10</sup> Grzepecki, *Geometria*.

<sup>11</sup> *Quo denim unquam tempus delebit memoriam Stanisłai Grepsji? Świecicki, Topographia*, 46; cf. Pazyra, *Najstarszy opis Mazowsza*, 196, 242.

ple articulation of awe for his former teacher from the Kraków Academy. Świącicki was certain that Grzepski will be remembered as a pioneer of the Renaissance in Mazovia, the one who instilled the spirit of the modern era in this voivodeship, formally connected with the Crown only on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1526. However, the key to solving the problem in question is probably the doubt – did he really instilled this spirit or not. Apart from the textbook for geometers working with the enforcement of the Vokod Reform from 1557,<sup>12</sup> there are no traces whatsoever in Mazovia that would suggest that this author exerted any influence on his countrymen.<sup>13</sup> Lesser Poland, Silesia, Greater Poland and Lithuania had their own humanists who were remembered. Thus, it still needs to be demonstrated that Grzepski contributed to the Polish Renaissance more than it was recalled. His work, *De multiplici siclo et talento hebraico*, was very popular and highly valued for almost 300 years since its first edition was published in Antwerp in the printing house of Christophe Plantin in 1568. It contained a clear synthesis of the sources (biblical, Greek, and Latin ones), contemporary studies, and ancient authors, who were partially known to him from direct reading, and mostly from other studies.

We shall attempt to demonstrate “Grzepski’s research method with the example of his understanding of the year and of the sources on which he has built this understanding. However, to present the originality of this particular approach compared to Grzepski’s other work, we shall first show his typical technique and its practical use for Isa 5:10 and related texts. This shall also enable us to appreciate Grzepski’s contribution to the study of the Bible, as well as to point out its limitations.

## 2. Stanisław Grzepski among the Researchers of Biblical Antiquities

The subject of the most famous work of Grzepski has been described by Świącicki, already quoted above as *pernobile argumentum*.<sup>14</sup> Was it only a literary exaggeration? From our perspective, the discussion concerning biblical metrics seems to be a peripheral matter and one that does not contribute a lot to the philosophical or ideological discussion. However, we need to realize that this is not the only possible point of view. This fact is proved by the number and importance of works dedicated to this issue during the Renaissance period (e.g., Guillaume Budé,<sup>15</sup> Philip Melanchthon,<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Orłowski, *Nie tylko szabłą*, 80; Nowak, *Dzieje Polski*, IV, 374.

<sup>13</sup> The Renaissance in Mazovia is associated mainly with architecture and sculpture sponsored by foundations of religious character (churches, burials in churches) and was developed mainly by John the Baptist. Cf. Kozakiewicz – Kozakiewicz, *Renesans w Polsce*, 129.

<sup>14</sup> Świącicki, *Topographia*, 46.

<sup>15</sup> Budéus, *De asse*.

<sup>16</sup> Melanchthon, *Vocabula Mensurarum*.

Georgius Agricola,<sup>17</sup> Leonardo di Portis,<sup>18</sup> Theodor Gaza,<sup>19</sup> Joachim Camerarius<sup>20</sup>). For a modern reader, it is not evident why the issues of metrology were so absorbing to Renaissance scholars. This is a question related to the difference that can be observed between the medieval and Renaissance exegesis. We must clearly answer what constitutes the specificity of the latter. After the ascetic-mystical medieval exegesis which aimed at unveiling God's mysteries hidden in the Holy Scripture, the Renaissance asked a question concerning the realism of the biblical Revelation, of which an important element was the material aspect of the message from God, of the text itself, and the world in which the communication of God's mysteries to man took place. The transition was continuous, and its first sign involved the revival of philological studies in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which constituted the basis for a new type of biblical commentary.<sup>21</sup> This continuity, as stressed by Walter Ullmann (1919–1983) in his works, was not applied only to epistemology or art but, most of all, in social life.<sup>22</sup> The literality of his interpretation was built upon the historical-philological method, based on an erudite study of ancient sources. The interest in the very matter of the text manifested itself in the revival of the study of biblical texts, and great progress in this field, brought about by Lorenzo Valla (1405–1457)<sup>23</sup> and the skillful popularizer who used his oeuvre – Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1536).<sup>24</sup>

Although the novelty of the Renaissance is often stressed, with its keynote formulated by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499): *fontes potius quam rivulos*,<sup>25</sup> which can be interpreted as a shift from Christian sources, especially the Bible, towards pre-Christian sources, there is also a possibility and a need to apply this epistemological principle to the study of the Bible itself.

The Renaissance study of history can be characterized as utilitarian, which is best seen in Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). He presents a determinism-based idea of shaping or at least foreseeing the future with the use of known historical models: “Anyone who has thoroughly analyzed matters in the past can easily predict what

<sup>17</sup> Agricola, *De mensuris*.

<sup>18</sup> de Portis, *De sestertio* (ca. 1500). The next edition of this work was published in Basel at Johann Froben ca. 1520 (according to others 1537). The following edition published in Rome in the printing house of Franciscus Minitius Calvus probably in 1524. Leonardo da Porto, called il Numismatico (1466–1545), was the author of this work. Cf. Mantese, “Tre cappelle gentilizie,” 227–243, esp. 235.

<sup>19</sup> Gaza, *Liber de mensibus atticis*.

<sup>20</sup> Camerarius [the Elder], “De numismatis.”

<sup>21</sup> Wielgus, *Badania nad Biblią*, 136–137.

<sup>22</sup> Ullmann, *Sredniowieczne korzenie*, 15–16.

<sup>23</sup> Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ*, 36–49; Graf von Reventolow, *Storia dell'interpretazione biblica*, 19–35.

<sup>24</sup> The discovery of the manuscript of Valla was made by Erasmus in 1504 and it was published in 1505 in Paris, though it was an incomplete version (lacking Phlm and Rev). As the editor of *Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum* he played an intermediary role (*mediator* [...] in *theological debates of sixteenth century*). Cf. Celenza, “Lorenzo Valla's Radical Philology,” 365–394, esp. 367.

<sup>25</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *Letter to Piero di Padova* (cf. Ficino, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, 152).

will happen in a given country.”<sup>26</sup> Such a view of history was accepted and propagated by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) who wrote: “For the principal and proper work of history being to instruct and enable men, by the knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future [...]”<sup>27</sup> Different tasks were assigned to history by the protagonist of encyclopedism – the tradition characteristic of the Renaissance in France and its heritage – namely Guillaume Budé (1467–1549), a lawyer by education, and a philologist and historian by passion. He stepped from a pragmatic understanding of the sense of history, to find in it a scheme organizing achievements of human culture. The thorough knowledge of Greek and Latin along with a general education allowed him, with the use of tools derived from the analysis of the style and history of institutions (helped extensively by his knowledge of the law, esp. Roman law), to evaluate the authenticity of the information provided by ancient sources.<sup>28</sup> The main source of history became not the oeuvre of previous historians, often accused of naivety and mythography by the representatives of critical modern historiography, but the documents from the archives, which made their collections available not solely to officials, but to researchers as well. Oftentimes those two areas of activity were combined, like in the case of Budé who was a king’s secretary and as such maintained the family tradition of working in the court.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, under the influence of Budé and Erasmus of Rotterdam, history began to refine the method, which was linked to the formation, interpretation, and lecture of the law. On the one hand, the world grew larger (the effect of geographical discoveries that began at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century), and on the other hand, the crisis related to conflicts, and soon religious wars were the two factors that spoke in favor of the formation of a law which would be truly universal for the heterogeneous world. It was assumed that it must be rooted in times when Christianity did not mark the divisions. Sabina Kruszyńska points out that Budé was a part of the group of French scholars who subordinated their inquiries in the field of religion to the realization of the project of the ideal (in the Erasmian spirit) world. Meanwhile, the Revelation was treated with great carelessness by arbitrarily compiling it with philosophy, gnosis or esotericism, which led to an irretrievable loss of the “state of equilibrium” both in themselves and in their readers.<sup>29</sup> The work of Stanisław Grzepski should be seen against this backdrop of a vivid discussion concerning the way and purpose of practicing history, along with the question of the use of the Bible as a historical source.

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<sup>26</sup> Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, I, 39 (translated to English after Polish edition: Machiavelli, *Rozważania*, 101).

<sup>27</sup> Hobbes, “To the Readers,” xxi.

<sup>28</sup> Kelley, “Clio and the Lawyers,” 25–49.

<sup>29</sup> Kruszyńska, *Zrozumieć niewiarę*, 71.

### 3. Isa 5:10 in *De multiplici siclo et talento hebraico* as an Example of Grzepski's Research Method

Grzepski sought to organize not only the biblical system of measurement but above all the perception of the world in which the Revelation realizes itself. Hence, the Mazovian–Kraków scholar undertook a thorough comparative study on the units of measurement and weights and their relation. The way he reads Isa 5:10 in his work can be treated as an example of his workshop. Grzepski states: “In the Septuagint, an ephah is sometimes translated as *oephi*, sometimes as *τρία μέτρα*, that is ‘three measures.’ Hence, it occurs in the sixteenth [chapter] of the Book of Exodus. Whereas a gomer is the tenth part of ephah, [where] in the Septuagint it was translated as *τὸ δὲ γομὸρ τὸ δέκατον τῶν τριῶν μέτρων ἦν*, which means: now a gomer is a tenth of an ephah (Exod 16:36). And in the fifth [chapter] of the Book of Isaiah instead of what one reads in Hebrew, [that] homer of seed will yield an ephah, in the Septuagint it is translated: who sows six artabs, will make three measures: *ὁ σπείρων ἄρταβὰς ἕξ, ποιήσει μέτρα τρία* (Isa 5:10). They present/explain a gomer or *corus* as the six artabs and the ephah as three measures.”<sup>30</sup>

Thus, Grzepski tries to match the two systems of measurement: the one from the Hebrew text and from the Septuagint. Hence, in the Hebrew text an ephah (i.e., 1/12 of the peck-measure<sup>31</sup>) equals 10 homers (gomors), whereas in the Septuagint, there is a measure that represents 1/3 of an ephah equal to 20 artabas (thus an ephah equals 60 artabas and a homer equals 6 artabas, as Grzepski writes). Therefore, in Hebrew and in Greek we have different measurement systems, though it is possible to ascertain the identity of the topics referred to in those texts.

The examples quoted by Grzepski from Exod 16:36 and Isa 5:10 illustrate both a substantial diversity of the Hebrew and Greek systems of measurement and the identity of the quantities in question.

Exod 16:36 (Hebrew)	וְהֵמֶר עֶשְׂרִית הָאֵיפָה הוּא
Exod 16:36 (Greek)	τὸ δὲ γομὸρ τὸ δέκατον τῶν τριῶν μέτρων ἦν.
Exod 16:36 (Hebrew)	And homer is the tenth [part] of this ephah.
Exod 16:36 (Greek)	Whereas the gomor was the tenth [part] of the three measures.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the Polish original: “W Septuagincie niekiedy tłumaczy się efe jako *oephi*, niekiedy jako *τρία μέτρα*, to jest ‘trzy miary.’ Stąd występuje to w szesnastym [rozdziale] Księgi Wyjścia. Gomer zaś jest dziesiątą częścią efy, [gdzie] w Septuagincie przetłumaczyli *τὸ δὲ γομὸρ τὸ δέκατον τῶν τριῶν μέτρων ἦν*, to jest: gomer zaś był dziesiątą częścią trzech miar (Wj 16,36). I w piątym [rozdziale] Księgi Izajasza zamiast tego, o czym czyta się w hebrajskim[, że] homer ziarna wyda jedną efe, w Septuagincie przetłumaczyli: kto siewie sześć artab, wyprodukuje trzy miary: *ὁ σπείρων ἄρταβὰς ἕξ, ποιήσει μέτρα τρία* (Iz 5,10). Gomora lub *corusa* przedstawiają/objasniają jako sześć artab, efe zaś jako trzy miary.”

<sup>31</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 112.

The Hebrew and Greek texts remain in a relation of a close resemblance, except for the substitution of the ephah (הֵאִפָּה) by “three measures” in the Greek version. The situation is more complex in the case of Isa 5:10:

Isa 5:10 (Hebrew)	כִּי עֲשֶׂרֶת צְמִידֵי־כָרֶם יַעֲשׂוּ בֵּת אֶהָת וְנִרְעֵה הֶמֶר יַעֲשֶׂה אֵיפָה
Isa 5:10 (Greek)	οὐ γὰρ ἐργάζονται δέκα ζεύγη βοῶν, ποιήσει κεράμιον ἓν, καὶ ὁ σπείρων ἀρτάβας ἕξ ποιήσει μέτρα τρία.
Isa 5:10 (Hebrew)	For the ten iugers of the vineyard will give (lit. “will do”) one whip, and the sowing of homer will give (lit. “will do”) an ephah.
Isa 5:10 (Greek)	For the work of the ten yokes of oxen will make one jug, And the sowing of six artabs will make three measures.

The problem with this verse is linked to the first part of the parallelism:

כִּי עֲשֶׂרֶת צְמִידֵי־כָרֶם יַעֲשׂוּ בֵּת אֶהָת

in which two units of measurement appear: צְמִידֵי־כָרֶם and בֵּת, just as הֶמֶר and אֵיפָה are present in the second one. Whereas the second of those units, namely בֵּת, was translated quite well, and not without ingenuity, as κεράμιον (a clay jug), the first one remains quite problematic. It is due to the fact that we do not know such a unit as צְמִידֵי־כָרֶם.<sup>32</sup> It is very interesting to see how the Greek translator handles this philological problem, but Grzepski does not want to deal with this. He focuses on the second part of the parallelism, which seems unambiguous in the Masoretic Text (MT): “a sown omer will make an ephah.” The conversion rate – 1 omer = 6 artabs and 1 ephah = 3 measures – is given in the same text. But what is the meaning of this verse? It is precisely this point of reference that allows one to state: “according to Isaiah the harvested crop will correspond to one-tenth of the sown grain.”<sup>33</sup> This direction of interpretation can be found already in Luis Alonso Schökel<sup>34</sup> or Lech Stachowiak.<sup>35</sup> According to Tadeusz Brzegowy, the first part of the parallelism in Isa 5:10 would be based on a similar idea: a large area of the vineyard (2000 m<sup>2</sup> i.e. 1/5 ha) would bring a small yield (22–23 l of must or wine). From 1/5 ha, it would be a small yield indeed, since nowadays it is assumed that 1 ha of the vineyard gives a minimum of approx. 3500 l of wine. The yield that Isa 5:10 speaks about would be approx. 35 times lower. Hence, the text of Isaiah is not so much a technical juxtaposition of

<sup>32</sup> The proposition to substitute those expressions by measures: two quintals, one *statio* (i.e., 1/8 modius) does not seem convincing. Cf. Alonso Schökel – Sicre Diaz, *I profeti*, 145. Joseph Blenkinsopp (*Isaiah 1–39*, 209) preserves omer and replaces ephah with the term *buschel*.

<sup>33</sup> Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza*, 312.

<sup>34</sup> Alonso Schökel – Sicre Diaz, *I profeti*, 147.

<sup>35</sup> Stachowiak, *Księga Izajasza*, 161.



measurements, as Grzepski sees it, making it a kind of Rosetta stone of biblical metrology, but rather a vivid image of the effects of God’s blessing.

In those conversions, Grzepski refers also to Lev 19:36,<sup>36</sup> as an alternative material. It is not an obvious thing to do, as we do not find any relations between the units of measurement in this fragment and Grzepski’s object of study. He does refer, however, to the juxtaposition of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin texts and the units of measurement appearing there. He makes such a comparison, though one cannot say that the language versions are in close correspondence with each other:

MT	מֵאֲנֵי צֶדֶק אֲבָנִי צֶדֶק אִפֶּת צֶדֶק וְהֵיוּ צֶדֶק וְהָיָה לְכֶם
LXX	ζυγὰ δίκαια καὶ στάθμια δίκαια καὶ χοῦς δίκαιος ἔσται ὑμῖν·
Vulgate	<i>statera iusta et aequa sint pondera iustus modius aequusque sextarius</i>

In the Hebrew text, the measures occur only in the second part of the verse (ephah, hin), whereas scales and weights are found in the first part. The Vulgate has respectively *modius* and *sextarius*, and in the first part *stater* and *ponder*, while the Septuagint in the first part employs scales and weights and in the second only *chous*. This remark refers especially to the Greek text which diverges from the Masoretic Text.

אִפֶּת צֶדֶק		<i>iustus modius</i>	a just ephah
וְהֵיוּ צֶדֶק	χοῦς δίκαιος	<i>aequusque sextarius</i>	a just hin

Grzepski points out that in Latin (*nostra translatio*) *iustus modius* and *sextarius iustus* correspond to Hebrew measures: ephah and hin. For him, the adjective has not only a moral but also a technical meaning. He assumes that “just” measures have a different (double) conversion value than the usual ones. This conclusion results from the following calculation. If *modius/medimnus/efa* contains six hins (since a hin is called a *sextarius*), and *corus* contains two ephahs, hence ephah is 1/12 of a homer. Based on Ezek 45:11, we state that “the ephah [may contain] a tenth of a homer” (after NAS). Grzepski discusses Ezek 45:11 in a relatively wide context, considering the plurality of definitions of measures in the Bible.<sup>37</sup> Thus, according to Grzepski, in the Bible we have a homer composed of 10 ephahs and 12 ephahs:

For it seems that the oldest peck-measure (*corus*) had twelve medimons [so] that in relation to the smaller one it had a twofold proportion, just as the temple talent, which is

<sup>36</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 117.  
<sup>37</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 116–118.



known to be very ancient, had a twofold proportion to the smaller common talent. The sixth of this *corus* could have two medimons, that is two *modiuses*. However, it seems that from it *modius*, or *satum*, received the name ephah, since obviously it was the twelfth part of the gomor or *corus* containing two medimons, and later even took the same name, even if later the decima gomor was not a duodecima (twelfth part).<sup>38</sup>

To simplify a bit Grzepski's complicated calculations, let us say in short what Grzepski says while commenting on the talent, which he divides into the smaller and larger one. The smaller talent occurs in two variants: valued at sixty minas and eighty minas.<sup>39</sup> He calculated the value of the temple talent at 120 minas. The temple talent is hence double of the common talent.<sup>40</sup> In light of his findings, the very occurrence of the name 'talent' ceases to mean a specific quantity, because to calculate it one would require a broader context, reconstructed from various places in the biblical text and its many variants.

The very grasping of this mathematical pattern is more important for him than the lecture of the text. Is he then a mere lexicographer specialized in biblical metrology? No, there is a more ambitious project behind his research. Grzepski assumed that biblical measures changed while keeping their names. For him, the Temple was a place where more ancient values of the measures were preserved. Thus, determining the milieu of the use of a given measure name became a necessary stage in the process of defining its value and converting between units.

For him, history is not the material of philosophy, as for Erasmus or Budé, in which everything relies on a mathematical clarity of rules. He is interested in history in its detail, specificity, and historical (not necessarily linear) dynamism. Therefore, he does not confine his concept to a single-vector model, which could be characterized as a determinant of progress. Grzepski's history meanders and looks for alternative riverbeds.

What is the practical relevance of Grzepski's calculations and his discovery of the double talent? Is it a mere mathematical assumption or an interpretative tool in the search for the meaning of a text? Let us look at the verse from Isaiah which we have already had the opportunity to speak about before. This time, however, we will be looking for its meaning rather than the data to determine the values of the measures.

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<sup>38</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 117.

<sup>39</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 61.

<sup>40</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 60.

#### 4. A Year in Grzepski's Thought

Already in the letter of dedication Grzepski notes the exegetical significance of the problem of understanding the measure of a year and expresses his confidence that he has something original to say in this matter.<sup>41</sup> It is surprising because the title of his work does not indicate that Grzepski will engage in matters concerning the measures of time. Its place in the structure of the work suggests that the chapter *Plura de anno*<sup>42</sup> represents some sort of a supplement. Given that the dedication letter comes from mid-August 1567, we can assume that the part of the text that has the year as its subject is an addition to the previously elaborated text that awaited printing. Does the text differ from its previous parts not only in subject matter (introduction of the problem of time measures), but also in methodology? Further study will demonstrate that it rather extrapolates its methodological achievements and erudite knowledge to the field of biblical chronology.

For the sake of clarity, before we deal with the chapter concerning the year, let us note that Grzepski studied the year when he wrote about the division of *corus*, i.e. the peck-measure, into ten or twelve parts. He quotes 2 Sam (which he describes as 2 Kgs) 15:7 as an illustration of the thesis that *Decima anni annus dicitur*.<sup>43</sup> The thesis relates to the assertion that *Uncia in libra pars est, quae mensis in anno*,<sup>44</sup> which is based on a relatively extensive citation from Fannius Palaemon.<sup>45</sup> The following questions can be asked: Where did Grzepski know Fannius from? What did the publisher of *Hebraicae Quaestiones in Genesim*, Jaques Paul Migne, quote in the footnote to Jerome's commentary to Gen 24:22, where the exact same text that we see in Grzepski appears?<sup>46</sup> It is absent from most editions of Jerome's notes.<sup>47</sup>

A reference to Fannius is made in the work *Liber de asse et partibus eius*<sup>48</sup> by a Swiss humanist Henry L. Glareanus (1488–1563), an author who, just as Grzepski did, wanted to show in a clearer and not digressive way what Budeus presented in his work *De asse et partibus eius*.<sup>49</sup> Glareanus refers to Priscian of Caesarea as an

41 Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 5.

42 Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 152–163.

43 Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 110.

44 Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 110.

45 Quintus Remmius Fannius Palaemon, about whom write Suetonius (*De grammaticis* 23) or Juvenal (*Satires* VI, 452; VII, 216), was active during Tiberius' and Claudius' reign. He is not to be confused with Gaius Phannius, a consul from 122 A.D., and a participant of the debate recorded by Cicero in *De republica*, who was evoked by Budeus in *De asse*. About this character cf. Winniczuk, *Pliniusz Młodszy*, 135–136; Kumaniecki, *Cyceron*, 92, 346; Aleksandrowicz, *Kultura intelektualna*, 65–66.

46 Hieronymus, *Hebraicae Quaestiones in Genesim* (PL 23, 973).

47 Cf. e.g., de Lagarde, *Hieronimi Quaestiones Hebraicae*, 36; Hieronymus, *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, I, 29; Józwiak, *Kwestie hebrajskie*, 82. In the last of the mentioned publications, the author refers to Josephus (*Antiquitates* 3, 9, 4).

48 Glareanus, *Liber de asse*, 12.

49 Glareanus, *Liber de asse*, A1.

intermediary link.<sup>50</sup> Budeus, on the other hand, does not seem to quote this thought. Who then introduced Fannius to the discussion, so that even Francis Hotman felt compelled to mention him in the very title of his work from 1575?<sup>51</sup> Fannius' poem has been published in print in 1538 in Solingen, in Iohannes Soter's printing house jointly with the medical works of Cornelius Celsus and Serenus Samonicus.<sup>52</sup> Palaeon's poetic work was still regarded as a source in the field of ancient metrics in the next century, and it is in this character that Johann Friedrich Gronovius (1611–1671) quotes it.<sup>53</sup>

Grzepski starts his divagations concerning the year with the distinction between the lunar and solar years. Theodor Gaza of Thessalonica (1398–1476) – a Greek humanist, whose *Liber de mesibus atticis* was published in Latin translation by John Perrello in 1535 in Paris, and in 1536 in Basel – seems to be Grzepski's primary guide in this matter. This author presents the issue of the ambiguity of the term 'year', especially in Egypt. What Gaza speaks about on pages 30–31 from the Basel edition, appears in Grzepski's work on pages 154–155. Although Grzepski quotes rather accurately Pliny's *Historia naturalis* VII, 48 155,<sup>54</sup> whereas Gaza fails to do so. He refers also to Xenophon, though in a way that does not facilitate the identification of the exact source of the citation. He does however indicate it, by mentioning that Xenophon did not give the information directly but touched upon the matters interesting to Grzepski in an ambiguous way. Yet another source of his is Solinus and the third chapter<sup>55</sup> of his *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*.<sup>56</sup> From this author, he gets infor-

<sup>50</sup> Similarly, in a polemical work Hotomanus, *De re numeraria populi romani liber*.

<sup>51</sup> Rhemnius Fannius; cf. Hotomanus, *De re numeraria populi romani liber*.

<sup>52</sup> Aurelii Corneli Celsi, *De Re medica*. In the headers of the pages on which the poem about weights and measures was printed, the name of Serenus Samonicus was incorrectly given. The publisher points out in a marginal note on the first page of the poem that some attribute this poetic text to Priscian. He meant, probably, Theodorus Priscianus (4<sup>th</sup> century), a doctor from Constantinople and a writer in the field of medicine, working in Latin (*Rerum Medicarum Libri Quatuor*), not Priscian from Caesarea, better known author from 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century, a grammarian and poet.

<sup>53</sup> Gronovius, *De Sestertiis seu Subsecivorum*, 850.

<sup>54</sup> Gajusz Pliniusz Sekundus, *Historia naturalna*, 102–103.

<sup>55</sup> In the first printed edition of *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, that was published in 1473 by Johann Schurener de Bopardia in Rome, chapters were not numbered, but only marked with hand-painted initials. Those are missing in some of the copies, probably those who were sold cheaper. The editions from 1520 (e.g., Eucharius Cervicornus in Cologne, Lucas Alantsee in Vienna) have the text split in the following way: chapter III concerning the length and methods of counting the year starts (according to generally accepted indications) in I, 34 and ends in I, 52. In Kraków, a relatively high number of old prints of this work can be found, including the Viennese edition (in the library of the Camaldolese monks monastery). Cf. Kołoczek, "Wprowadzenie. Palcem po mapie," 11–75, esp. 64. Other editions (e.g., Gulielmus Anima Mia of Venice, 1493; Johannes Rubens Vercellensis of Treviso, 1498) delimitate chapter II that starts in I, 7 and ends in I, 53.

<sup>56</sup> Solinus writes about the year in *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, I, 34–47 (cf. Gajusz Juliusz Solinus, *Zbiór wiadomości godnych uwagi*, 88–91).

mation about the multiple divisions of the year into months,<sup>57</sup> which allows him to construct his own reasoning.

We/One should note the order within the argumentation, expressed in the arrangement of the cited texts. The central argument, which is made plausible by the quotation from Pliny, has fundamental argumentative significance in his own reasoning. In this way, he prepares the assertion that “The year amongst the Hebrews, like weights and measures, is divided into tenths and twelfths, as well as into fifth and sixth parts.”<sup>58</sup> Once again, he relies on the authority of Gaza (p. 33) and Aristotle quoted by him. While the scholar from Thessalonica refers vaguely to the Septuagint, Grzepski does it in a more detailed way. As the argument, he cites 2 Kgs (i.e., 4 Kgdms) 15:23, 27, which is the story of Pekachiah:

“In the last Book of Kings, in the fifteenth chapter, it is said of Fakejah that he took over the kingdom in the fiftieth year [of the reign] of Azariah, king of Judah, and that he reigned in Samaria for twelve years,<sup>59</sup> according to the translation of the Septuagint: in this place we should understand the twelve years [as] small years, no doubt the sixth parts of the year. For not long after the killing of Fakejah, it is described that Fakcja occupied the kingdom in the fifty-second year [of the reign] of Azariah, king of Judah:<sup>60</sup> so that there is no doubt that twelve years should be taken as two years.”<sup>61</sup> The only problem is that we cannot find any edition in which 2 Kgs 15:23 contain the numeral “twelve.” The edition of the Complutensian Polyglot from 1514<sup>62</sup> is also clear in this regard. The same can be said about the Aldine Bible<sup>63</sup> compiled by Aldus Manutius (1450–1515), a friend of Pico della Mirandola, published in 1518, or about the Septuagint of Sixtus V from 1587. Moreover, it is difficult to find any Latin text that would allow the possibility of such a reading of 2 Kgs 15:23. Did Grzepski create an argument himself for the sake of maintaining his thesis? Did he include a conjecture unsupported by anything in his reasoning? It seems difficult, as Grzepski declares fidelity to the biblical text and a conviction concerning its semantic value: “in the [Holy] Scripture, there is nothing absurd” (*in Sripturam nihil est absurdi*).<sup>64</sup>

For example, he builds an argument based on the count of David’s years:

[...] according to the translation of the Septuagint, he says that Solomon was twelve years old when he took over the kingdom [1 Kgs (3 Kgdms) 2:12], Joseph says that he lived

<sup>57</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 154.

<sup>58</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 156.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs 15:23, although two years are mentioned there.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs 15:25.

<sup>61</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 157.

<sup>62</sup> *Vetus Testamentum multiplici lingua, sub loco* [959].

<sup>63</sup> Cf. “Aldus Manutius.”

<sup>64</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 161.

fourteen years before taking over the kingdom, counting seven years instead of six. And no one should undermine it by saying that in Hebrew nothing can be read about Solomon's age before taking over the kingdom. For what they translated in the Septuagint, they undoubtedly translated from Hebrew. And we cannot doubt the trustworthiness of the Greek copies, concerning this passage, since from Clement, who was a disciple of Peter, the same is quoted in the Apostolic Constitutions<sup>65</sup> in the second book in those words: καὶ γὰρ Σολομῶν δωδεκαετῆς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐβασίλευσεν.<sup>66</sup> For Solomon (says) at twelve years old he became the king of Israel. Therefore, it is probable that the Hebrews omitted this passage because it seemed not to be in accord with other places of the [Holy] Scripture. For it is written that Solomon become [the king] as an old man. If he was an old man, it is not probable that he lived for twelve years before the kingdom/reign, since it is written that he ruled for only forty years. Hence, if Solomon who reigned only forty years was twelve when he took over the kingdom, how could he leave as his successor a son Rehoboam [was] forty-one years old? Solomon could not beget Rehoboam at the age of ten. Thus, it seems that the place concerning twelve years has been omitted to avoid this kind of absurdity. Also, in the [Holy] Scripture there is nothing absurd, even if someone understands it [i.e. Holy Scripture] correctly, as it was understood by the Septuagint and Joseph, who kept this whole passage and did not see in the [Holy] Scripture anything contrary to the truth. Further, Joseph understood forty years of Solomon's reign as double years, since he said that Solomon reigned for eighty years and lived ninety-four. And there is no doubt that Joseph did not understand/did not have in mind [here] solar years, used by Greeks and Romans, for whom he wrote his history: hence we infer that for Hebrews, just as for other peoples, two solar years were described as a year.<sup>67</sup>

This argument is exact and supported by external testimony on the reliability of the version of the Septuagint. However, it is not completely biblical, because it is based in one part on the Septuagint (Καὶ Σαλωμων ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου Δαυιδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ υἱὸς ἐτῶν δώδεκα), and in the other part on Joseph. Thus, Grzepski creates the Hebrew version, which contains information concerning the twelve years of Solomon's life before taking over the reign, *ex nihilo*.

## 5. Does Grzepski Betray the Biblical Text? Conclusions

Grzepski believed in his system to such an extent that with all grammatical pedantry he forged arguments which would support it. Philological accuracy was more

<sup>65</sup> Apostolic Constitutions (*Constitutiones Apostolorum*) – a collection of eight books, most likely from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, by an anonymous author who signed as Peter the Apostle; a work important for the history of fourth-century theology and the formation of ecclesiastical law.

<sup>66</sup> *Const. ap.*, II, section 1, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Grsepsius, *De multiplici*, 160–161.

earnestly declared that practiced, and the aesthetics of the reasoning meant more than the source argumentation that supported it. However, he never abandons the principle that the text has a meaning as a system (the whole of a biblical text in all different versions with extra-biblical material).

The author sets himself the task of presenting the world recounted in the biblical macro-text in a way that would not focus on the linguistic and literary layer, but rather reach the reality depicted in the text. In practice, it means that he tries to match the measures and weights from the Hebrew and Greek texts to answer clearly the question concerning the specific quantities that are mentioned. He builds his ivory tower with patience and not without a great deal of erudite diligence, but he seems to have no scruples about filling in the gaps in the argumentation. We must answer the inquiry from the introduction of this article, concerning the difference between medieval and Renaissance exegesis, without avoiding also this truth – that the Renaissance put the value of explanatory theory to the fore, and did not hesitate to place it above the text being explained. This was to become a temptation for all modern exegesis, one which also today's scholars must face. As it usually happens with temptations, it is easier to resist those that are known and considered as such. Therefore, the study concerning the deficiencies of Grzepski's technique remains an interesting occasion for us to reflect on the development of modern exegesis until the present day.

In the lecture of the Bible, Grzepski has not succumbed to utilitarianism, falsely considered to be the essence of humanism as a method of exposition of a man in isolation or opposition to a supernatural purpose. In this manner, he continued the idea of *civitas christiana*, in which the measures are relative, and the only objective measure remains the word of God – one that lasts forever (Isa 40:8, cf. 1 Pet 1:25), exists above the philological matter, is always true and carries a salvific sense. Thus, he contributed to building an alternative to humanism that disintegrates philosophical thought created by medieval masters and autonomizes the spheres of life of the individual and the society.<sup>68</sup> Grzepski was a Christian humanist who did not aim at autonomizing earthly, religious, moral, or political realities. In the Bible, he sought a world-uniting principle, because they are infinitely different from each other.<sup>69</sup> He wanted to put together the ambiguous language, which is a mosaic of cultures and changes with the course of the history of the world, in a picture that has God and His Word as the compositional and semantic center. Perhaps this is the reason why it is difficult to find him a place amongst the luminaries of atheistic humanisms.

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<sup>68</sup> Ullmann, *Średniowieczne korzenie*, 186; Szlachta, "Humanistyczne wizje," 309–332, esp. 311.

<sup>69</sup> A similar understanding of Revelation can be found in Woźniak, *Różnica i tajemnica*, 395.



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