

Summary

Aurora, a verse Bible written by the end of the 12th century by Petrus Riga, a canon of the cathedral of Reims who afterward became a canon regular of St. Augustin at the same town, attained great popularity in late medieval Europe. Its success is attested, among other things, by a great number of extant manuscript copies. On the contrary, in subsequent centuries the work was considered an example of poor taste; hence, it has been fully published in print only in 1965 and has been researched so far to a very limited extent. In order to fill some gaps in current knowledge relating to the text in question, in my thesis I focused on the specificity of its transmission taking as the basis for the research the manuscripts themselves.

The introductory part of the thesis presents the state of research on *Aurora*, outlines the placement of the work in the process of developing new tools for biblical studies as well as the changing attitude towards the Bible as a book, and puts it into the context of the history of the genre of verse Bibles.

The core of the research consists in a detailed examination of manuscripts connected with medieval Poland (namely produced or used in that territory). For this purpose, I have researched modern Polish collections, foreign collections with holdings historically related to Poland, and evidence on lost manuscripts. As the territory of Poland during the middle ages was not stable, I have also included copies connected with the territories under Polish influence in a broader sense. As the goal was to see some patterns in the transmission of the text, in the first place I took into account the history of specific copies, their lay out, and other material features of the text and evidence that could shed light on the way of reading. All that led me to discern two groups of closely linked copies.

The biggest group of manuscripts is connected with the University of Krakow. The copies belonging to this group are easy to recognize primarily because of an unusual content (besides all the books versified by Riga they contain also three anonymous books that can be found only in few other extant copies). They are also concluded with a characteristic colophon naming the town of Krakow. All the manuscripts included in this group were produced around the middle of the 15th century. In the first place, they entered collections of several scholars associated with the University of Krakow (Johannes de Iunivladislavia, Stanislaus de Goździków, Andreas Grzymała, Johannes de Słupcza, Venceslaus the Poor). However, the text gained popularity also in smaller cultural centers, such as Radymno, a small town located on the trade route between Jarosław and Przemyśl, or Zbąszyń, known for the role it played as a center of Husitism in late medieval Poland. The group can be also expanded on a few lost manuscripts descriptions of which survived the second world war and the annihilation of the codices themselves. All the manuscripts included in this group have their own specificity; nonetheless, some general features can be noted. From the perspective of this study the most important trait concerns the special attention paid by readers to metrical sentences of general moral character, which is in line with the practiciness characteristic of the Cracovian intellectual atmosphere. It is also worth noting that the specific content of copies points to some geographical configuration linking the 'Cracovian group' to the territory of Bavaria and Tyrol, which fact suggests in turn that the Cracovian wave of popularity of *Aurora* may be related to the council of Basel and its rich antiquarian market.

The next, smaller group of manuscripts is not strictly linked to the historical territory of Poland. These copies were produced and used in Prussia, the territory controlled by the Kingdom of Poland only since 1466. The first manuscript of this group belonged to Johannes Albrechttau, a canon of the Sambian cathedral. Specific preliminary texts contained in this

volume and a very fortunate mistake of the copyist ascribing the text to Peter of Corbeil instead of Peter Riga, helped me to link the copy from Königsberg with another one, currently held in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The second codex belongs to a collection of 39 manuscripts brought to England by an Anglican priest Richard Pernham from his mission to Elbing (or modern Elbląg) in Ermland. The collection was probably purchased from the local gymnasium founded in the former Brigittine property, who, in turn, presumably took over, at least partially, the library of the Teutonic Order. Detailed provenance of this group is still to be investigated. Both manuscripts show similarities in layout and character and can be linked to one more copy mentioned by Valentin Rose in his catalogue of the Berlin State Library in the beginning of the 20th century. The scholar describes a manuscript that he encountered at a bookseller's in Berlin, and which he noticed and remembered precisely just because it gave the same wrong attribution of *Aurora* to Peter of Corbeil. The manuscript can be traced back to the gymnasium in Toruń in the 18th century, and the mention by Rose is the last evidence of its existence. *Aurora* is not the only text shared by these three codices. In fact, they can be fit into a net of codices linked between themselves by different texts they share.

Among other manuscripts that cannot be included in above described groups a few more can be mentioned that reflect patterns of the popularity of *Aurora* in medieval Europe in general (such as a 13th century manuscript which entered the library of the Cistercian monastery of Henryków or a 15th century manuscript from the Carthusian monastery in Kartuzy).

The comparison of the information relating to Polish copies of *Aurora* to the provenance data concerning manuscripts originating from other territories led me to the conclusion that the history of *Aurora* in Poland reflects some general tendencies in its popularity in Europe, yet its diffusion connected with the Krakow University is very characteristic both in terms of the time span and intellectual formation of its readers. The scale of this phenomenon and the close connections of the copies are also very conspicuous. Furthermore, the research has proved that in the case of *Aurora* not only mere provenance information, but also codicological features and specific traits of paratextual elements or preliminary texts can be useful as an indication of the role of the text.

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