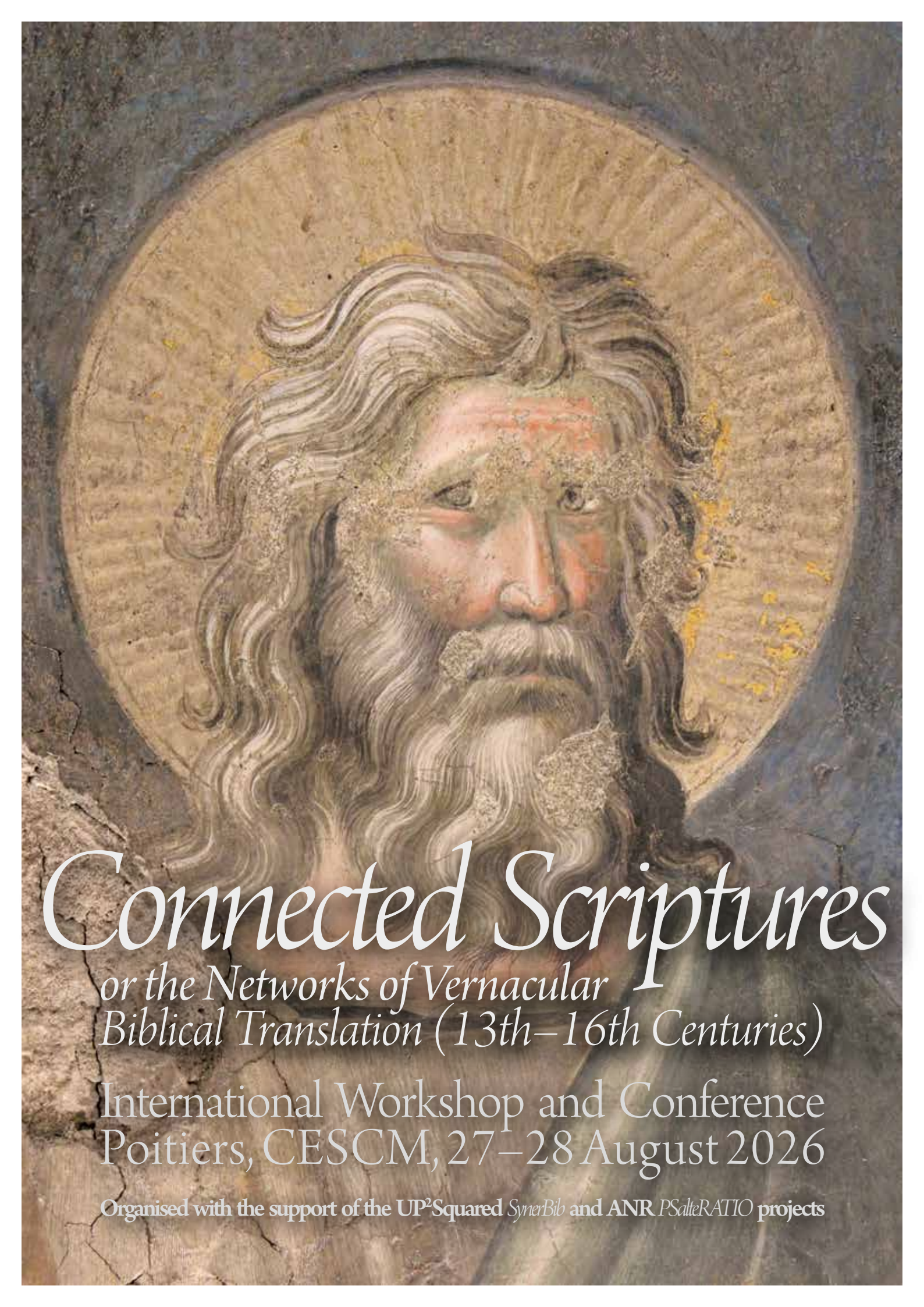




Connected Scriptures

*or the Networks of Vernacular
Biblical Translation (13th–16th Centuries)*

International Workshop and Conference
Poitiers, CESCO, 27–28 August 2026

Organised with the support of the UP²Squared SynerBib and ANR PSalteRATIO projects

The Case for a Comparative Philology of Vernacular Bibles

VLADIMIR AGRIGORAEI
CESCM UMR 7302, Poitiers—CNRS

Medieval thinkers often imagined history as a succession of transfers of knowledge and power moving from East to West, following the course of the sun. Encapsulated in the concepts of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii*, this vision expressed a prestige-driven understanding of culture that placed Western civilization at the culmination of a long historical journey. Yet the history of vernacular biblical translation reveals a strikingly different geography. While learned culture advanced westward, sacred texts in the languages of the people began to emerge at the westernmost edge of Europe, in the British Isles, and gradually spread eastward over the centuries. This countercurrent emerged where ancient Latinitas broke upon the “barbarian” shores and persisted throughout the Middle Ages as a largely invisible undercurrent beneath the dominant cultural narrative.

The resulting pattern resembles an ebb and flow. Vernacular Bibles circulated through high- and low-prestige environments, reaching beyond the principal centres of learning and authority and advancing across Europe in forms that could also enjoy institutional recognition. Their dissemination was not the triumphant progress celebrated by the ideology of *translatio*, but a slower and more subterranean process that remained largely concealed until the changing tides of the early modern period brought it to the surface during the Reformation.

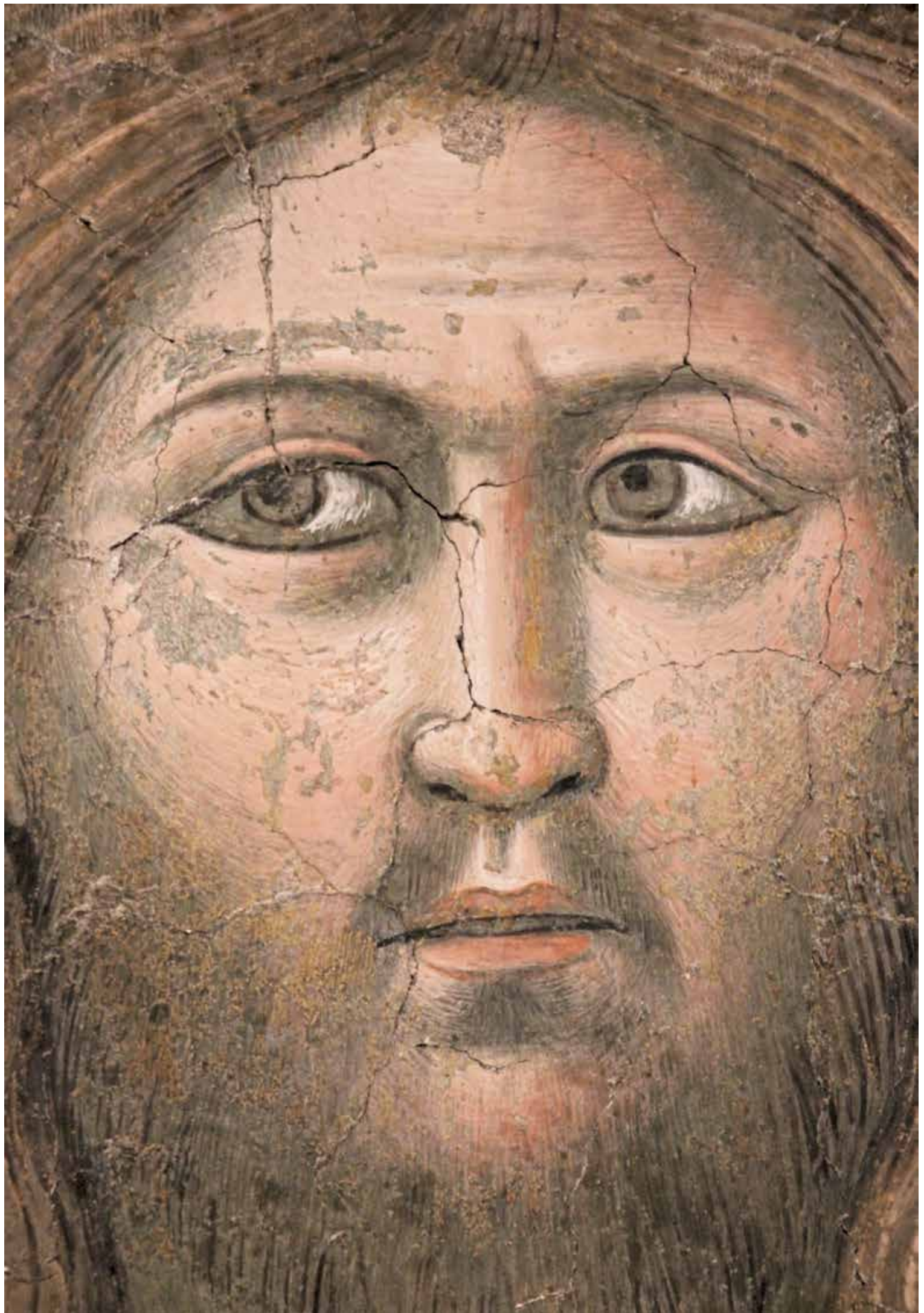
This dynamic distinguishes medieval Western Europe from the Byzantine Commonwealth. In the East, the translation of sacred texts did not follow low-prestige currents. On the contrary, Bible translation was an instrument of cultural integration and ecclesiastical expansion. Rather than emerging from the margins, it stood at the heart of the civilizing process: religious texts were translated in order to incorporate peoples into the orbit of Eastern Christianity, and the languages that received them acquired prestigious literary and liturgical forms. Translation there did not nourish underground vernacular traditions but helped create the standards of high culture. Consequently, the eastward drift of vernacular biblical culture that characterized the medieval West finds no true parallel in the Orthodox world. Limited echoes did emerge in a few border regions (most notably the Ruthenian lands and Transylvania) and their influence occasionally extended as far as Muscovy. It is only in these distant regions that the two spheres came into contact, giving rise to unusual cultural hybrids at the end of the Middle Ages.

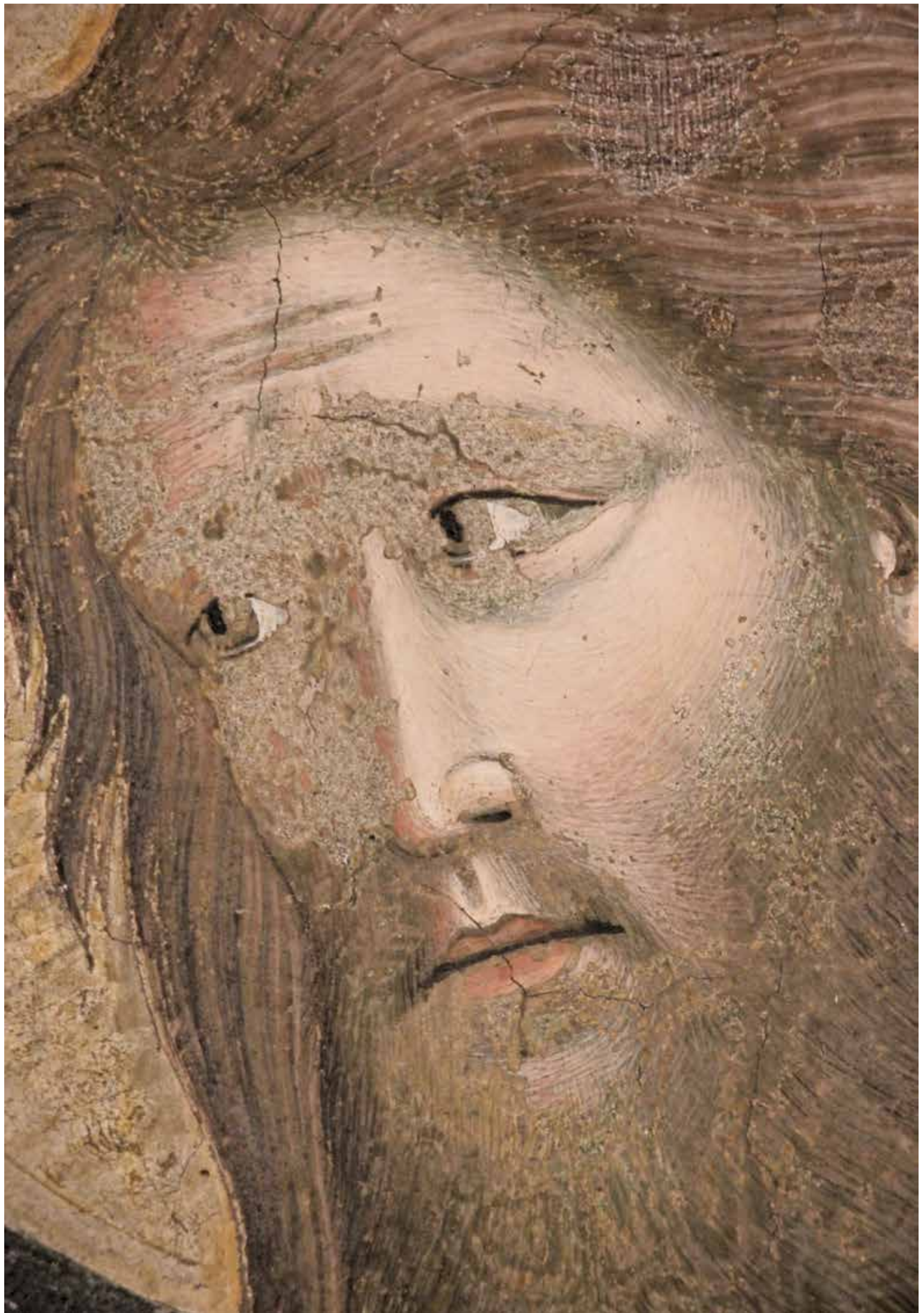
The uneven size of the various vernacular biblical corpora reflects, in large measure, the chronology of their emergence. English and German stand among the earliest traditions and consequently among the most extensive, with the English corpus attaining exceptional

dimensions. French translations began to flourish from the twelfth century onward and likewise constitute one of the large bodies of material, owing in particular to the proliferation of biblical adaptations. The Czech biblical tradition, which developed mainly from the fourteenth century onwards, is both remarkable for the size of its textual corpus and central to the eastward diffusion of biblical texts, shaping the Polish biblical tradition and influencing, to some extent, Croatian, Hungarian, Ruthenian, and even Romanian religious literature. Romanian and Ruthenian texts, by contrast, emerged relatively late, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; yet their complexity, arising from diverse source traditions and translation practices, combined with their marginal place in the study of European cultural heritage, makes them especially challenging objects of research. Other linguistic traditions—Castilian, Occitan, Italian, Catalan, Scandinavian, Iberian, Flemish, Welsh, Croatian, Hungarian, Polish, and many others—appeared at different moments along this chronological spectrum and produced highly variable numbers of translations and adaptations. Finnish, Estonian, Albanian, and several other traditions emerge only at the very end of the period under consideration, in the era of full Modernity, and exclusively under the influence of the Reformation.

Despite these differences, recurring similarities often point to common origins, shared methods, or parallel intellectual environments, connections that have rarely been investigated in a systematic manner. To mention only one example, the Old Norse adaptations of Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica* (the fourteenth-century *Stjórn*) belong to the same broad European phenomenon that produced the Old Czech *Glagolitic Comestor*, the Old French *Bible historiale*, and the Middle English *Cursor Mundi*. Yet it remains unclear whether such works derived independently from the same Latin source or whether they also reflect exchanges between vernacular traditions. One of the central questions is therefore not merely how biblical material descended vertically from a prestigious language into the vernaculars, but also how it may have circulated horizontally between vernacular cultures themselves.

The state of scholarship is as uneven as the corpora. Czech or Spanish biblical translations have benefited from sustained and sophisticated research; Middle English materials have received a substantial, though less exhaustive, degree of attention. By contrast, the French corpus remains only partially explored, its enormous size and fluid textual forms having discouraged comprehensive study, while Romanian or Bosnian texts have seldom been examined in relation to cognate vernacular traditions elsewhere in Europe. Moreover, scholarly





attention has inevitably waxed and waned, dictated by the evolving intellectual paradigms and political imperatives of the day.

Our conference seeks to overcome these boundaries by studying the corpora together and in comparison. Its purpose is to redefine the networks through which biblical knowledge circulated across medieval Europe, paying equal attention to vertical transfers from high-prestige languages and to horizontal exchanges between vernacular traditions. Only such a comparative approach can reveal the full complexity of a phenomenon that was simultaneously local and transnational, fragmented and interconnected.

Research must embrace a vast and intricate biosphere of biblical and Bible-related texts, ranging from sermon pericopes and interlinear glosses to the vernacular iterations of prayers like the *Pater noster*. Modern scholarship has too long neglected the rich landscape of paraphrases, adaptations, and creative rewritings by chasing the anachronistic ideal of a Bible translation proper.

In reality, the medieval mind operated under a far more fluid understanding of *translatio*—a concept that celebrated the broad migration of texts, ideas, and narratives rather than literal fidelity. The Middle Ages possessed no singular, immutable biblical text; there existed only the *Littera communis*, a virtual, shapeshifting *Textus inceptus* or *deceptus*, alive chiefly in the scholarly imagination. This elusive ideal fostered an onion-skinned proliferation of derivative works, vividly illustrated by metrical psalters or the sudden flowering of thirteenth-century biblical-historical compilations across Europe. If we focus solely on this last example (whether composed in German, French, Spanish, or English, and whether in prose or verse), these biblical-historical compilations collectively show that medieval literary culture was characterised by fluidity and formal flexibility, but also that the Bible itself was understood as a work of history, many of its books naturally finding their place within broader historical miscellanies.

Expanding upon a recent exploration of heresy and Bible translation, I have argued that the cultural lineage of scribes and translators who rendered the biblical text into local vernaculars formed a trans-European network, one that transcended linguistic boundaries and confessional divides, stretching from the westernmost edges of the continent, through Central Europe, and into the Eastern steppes (Agrigoroaei, ‘Préambule à une étude...’, *Biblicum Jassyense*, 8, 2021). Keenly aware of their contemporaries’ works in other tongues, these medieval translators employed remarkably similar justifications in their prefaces and deployed nearly identical textual strategies. Ultimately, the intricate and often fraught interplay between heresy and medieval translation did not emerge in isolation. Rather, it was forged because these scholars had read one another’s work and benefited from a continuous intellectual exchange. Across

lands and languages, contact was inevitable, allowing ideas to pulse through a underground vernacular web.

A vast terrain of hidden parallels and polemical arguments (both in defense of and in opposition to vernacular translation) remains entirely unmapped and unaccounted for by modern scholarship. Freimut Löser illustrated this lacuna through the intricate cultural cross-currents uniting the Dutch *Bijbelvertaler van 1360* (traditionally attributed to Petrus Naghel) and the Anonymous Austrian Translator, who rendered parts of the Bible between the 1320s and 1350s (cf. Löser and Stöllinger-Löser, ‘Verteidigung der Laienbibel...’, 1989). These striking affinities underscore how deeply these translations shared a common intellectual heritage.

While some of these cross-cultural threads remain hidden beneath the surface of textual history, others are prominent and extensively documented. Building on insights from Elizabeth Solopova, it is worth emphasising that England and Bohemia were already connected by significant cultural channels well before the Lollard and Hussite movements initiated the more explicit exchange of biblical exegesis and translation practices. Indeed, mirroring the intellectual landscape of Bohemia, late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century England saw biblical translation transformed into a vibrant subject of university lectures and rigorous academic debate, inspiring polemical treatises from the pens of both Lollard dissenters and orthodox traditionalists alike (cf. Solopova, Catto, and Hudson, *From the Vulgate to the Vernacular...*, 2020). So intimate was this insular-continental exchange that some of the most vital scholarly texts composed on English soil migrated to Bohemia, where they were transcribed by local scribes, leaving them preserved today exclusively within Bohemian codices.

Conversely, at the lower strata of society, German Waldensians mirrored the Hussite movement in their grassroots approach to sacred texts, subsequently transmitting some of these works to their brethren in the Occitan-Piedmontese regions. Hussite influence expanded into the Kingdom of Hungary, while Czech texts reached even farther into Ruthenia—a dissemination likely facilitated by Glagolitic monks introduced by Polish monarchs. Franciscans and Dominicans also participated in this landscape, creating a complex institutional dynamic given that the Church never formally prohibited vernacular translation of the Bible itself, but rather targeted translations associated with specific heretical figures.

Concurrently, the University of Prague and its theological faculty, established in 1348, served as an important intermediary in the transmission of vernacular literature and biblical translations. Its student body drew from a wide geographic array, including Hungarians, Southern Slavs, Silesians, Ruthenians, and Poles. Consequently, it is unsurprising that the Polish *Bible of Queen Sophia* was executed under distinct Czech linguis-

tic influence. Long before the era of Luther and Calvin, texts traveled between social classes and linguistic territories. These established networks directly facilitated the transmission of vernacular sacred, scholarly, and literary works across an axis extending into Eastern Europe. Ultimately, the history of these textual contacts is a history of people and their direct connections. The role of the individual remains difficult to define within this framework, and the scarcity of historical documentation for the period further complicates our understanding.

A principal concern in our field is the historical focus on prominent figures whose exceptional careers were often atypical of the medieval mindset. Lesser-known figures, such as the students *Thomas de Quinque Ecclesiis* and *Valentinus de Vylak* (the presumed translators of the Hungarian Hussite Bible) have been interpreted through this same lens, cast as representatives of a high-prestige milieu. Yet the legendary beginnings they are meant to stand in for are far from being historically accurate.

In reality, lesser-known cultural agents from all social milieus were the driving force of the European translation movement. Unsurprisingly, recent scholarship on ‘vernacular theologies’ increasingly indicates that vernacular translations were not inherently or directly linked to heterodoxy. With only a few exceptions specific to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the vast majority of translators were monks, friars, and secular clergy working under the patronage of the Church. This reality places current scholarship in a position where general assertions about groups or social categories must be suspended until a more detailed exploration of specific individuals, texts, and manuscripts is conducted. Our primary focus should be on the relationships between texts, postponing for later any speculation about their social and political interconnections, once the overall panorama of textual relations has become clearer.

The limitation of earlier scholarship lies precisely in the fact that textual relations across different vernaculars have rarely been investigated. National philologies often lack the structural framework or resources for large-scale, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural inquiries, seldom producing more than isolated samples of comparative research. For instance, few direct textual links have been established between English and Czech biblical translations, despite the fact that the socio-cultural ties between these two linguistic areas are well documented. Instead, historical analysis tends to focus on Lollards and Hus-

sites, or Protestantism and Orthodoxy—examining the contexts rather than the texts themselves.

Yet, some of the most compelling evidence of cultural interaction emerges from unexpected corners when research investigates the precise, underlying links between specific texts. To take one notable example, the Romanian Gospels of Sibiu can be textually linked to Czech biblical traditions (cf. Florescu, ‘Le Tétraévangile de Sibiu ...’, *Biblicum Jassyense*, 1, 2010). However, as Ana Maria Gînsac points out, these existing arguments require a comprehensive re-evaluation. Comparative research has been conducted primarily on a tentative basis, relying on randomly selected rather than systematically chosen sources. Consequently, traditional scholarship rejects this interpretation, as it contradicts long-established national narratives.

The central difficulty of vernacular philological biblical comparatism lies in the fact that the premises of individual linguistic traditions date back to the nineteenth century. During this period, the emergence of philological schools functioned as a byproduct of nation-building, with philology frequently conscripted to strengthen national identity through the interpretation of medieval and early modern texts. This political utility condemned vernacular philologies to isolation, often leading to the development of isolated goals and methods of research. Consequently, the purist, monolingual, and often exceptionalist approaches of national philologies must yield to a pan-European methodology. Such a framework would allow for a far greater acknowledgment of intellectual unity and continuous cultural exchange, particularly regarding these shared corpora of sacred texts.

None of these systemic re-evaluations can be achieved within the brief temporal and intellectual limits of a single conference, since the scope of the undertaking extends far beyond what any isolated meeting can adequately address. Rather than attempting to resolve such questions definitively, the aim of the present gathering is to open a preliminary and structured dialogue, one capable of clarifying the overall outlines of this vast cultural phenomenon and of identifying the principal lines of connection that bind these traditions together across linguistic and regional boundaries. In this sense, the conference seeks to lay the groundwork for a future monographic study, by beginning to determine which areas of the phenomenon are most securely documented and which remain obscure, whether due to fragmentary transmission, uneven scholarly attention, or still uncharted geographical and textual gaps in the overall map of vernacular biblical culture.

26 AUGUST 2026

19h00

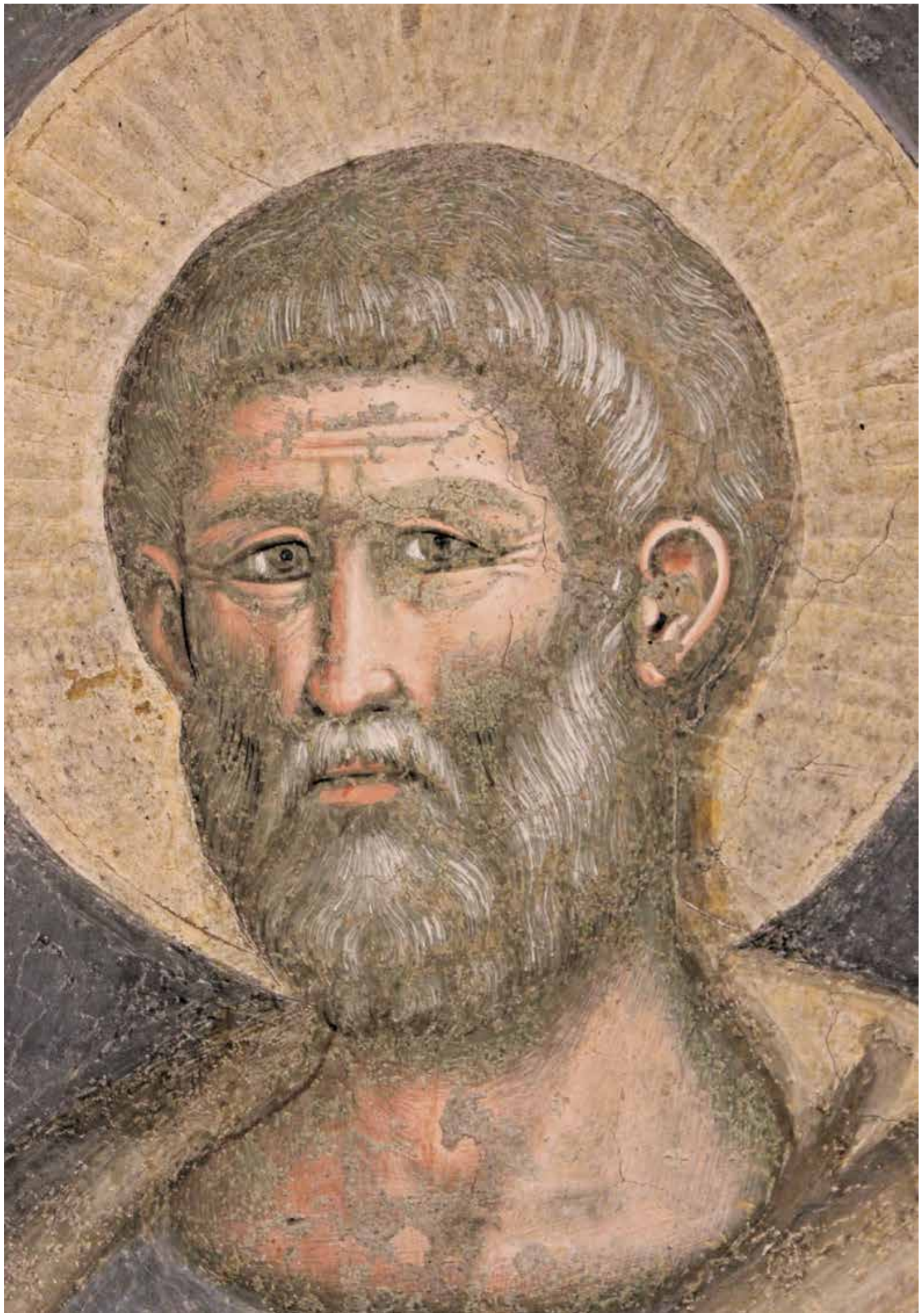
Welcome dinner at a local restaurant

27 AUGUST 2026: SALLE CROZET

9h00

Introduction to the conference.





27 AUGUST 2026: SESSION I

Chair: ANA MARIA GÎNSAC
'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' University of Iași

9h30-10h00

ANDRÉS ENRIQUE-ARIAS

University of the Balearic Islands, Palma

Adaptations of the Hebrew Bible for the Christian Public in Fifteenth-Century Castilian Bibles

The translation of the Bible into Castilian Spanish began relatively early, with two complete translations from the Vulgate created in the thirteenth century. However, the vast majority of the biblical codices that have survived were produced during the fifteenth century and are almost entirely translations from Hebrew. We do not know much about the reasons behind the creation of these Bibles, as most copies have survived without any indication of author, patron, recipients, or date and place of production. It seems they were commissioned by Castilian nobles who, likely driven by a mixture of intellectual curiosity and religious devotion, ordered these translations for their private libraries. A peculiar fact in the medieval European context is that these Christian nobles turned to Jews or converts to produce these translations from the original languages, departing from the common practice on the other side of the Pyrenees of translating from the Vulgate. In this presentation we will look at the linguistic choices favored by medieval Hispano-Jewish biblical translators in rendering a number of Hebrew morphosyntactic structures that have no immediate equivalent in Castilian. The results allow us to appreciate the strategies deployed by translators in harmonizing two realities: on the one hand, there is the Jewish tradition of translating the Bible with the utmost fidelity, and, on the other, the need to adapt these translations to a Christian audience, which required the creation of an accessible and understandable text. The results demonstrate that, although in varying proportions, all the vernacular translations make substantial use of Hebrew calques, thus clearly placing them within the Jewish tradition. However, none of them makes categorical and systematic use of these calques, revealing an intention to adapt to a non-Jewish audience.

10h00-10h30

PERE BESCÓS

University Pompeu-Fabra, Barcelona

The Iberian Context of the Medieval Catalan Translation of 1 Chronicles from Hebrew

The medieval Catalan translation of *1 Chronicles* preserved in the Egerton and Colbert manuscripts belongs to a broader Iberian textual context shaped by translation from Hebrew. Unlike the Peiresc and Sevilla witnesses, which follow the Vulgate, Egerton and Colbert transmit a Hebrew-based version. A comparison with medieval Castilian Judeo-Romance Bibles, especially Escorial I.i.3, Escorial I.i.4 and BNM ms. 10.288, reveals a close affinity with the Hebrew-based Castilian tradition. Chapters 10–29 of *1 Chronicles* provide several significant readings that point to a shared textual environment for the Catalan and the Castilian texts. In 1 Chr 13:2, for instance, the double Hebrew verbal structure is preserved both in the Egerton-Colbert version, in the form of *trematam e enviem*, and in the Castilian witnesses as *derramemos & enbiemos*. In 1 Chr 16:3, Catalan *ampolla de vi* (“bottle of wine”) corresponds to Castilian *anpolla de vino* (“bottle of wine”), against the Vulgate’s rendering as “semolina fried in oil” and the Hebrew term meaning “raisin cake”. At the same time, separative errors in Egerton-Colbert, such as *Mefar* for the Hebrew term meaning “fortress”, in contrast to the Castilian rendering “fortress”, show that the extant Catalan text does not seem to be the direct source of the Castilian witnesses. The Egerton-Colbert version thus seems to belong to the same Iberian Judeo-Romance tradition as these Castilian Bibles, while preserving its own independent textual history. Moreover, the absence of clear Castilianisms and the linguistic integration of the translation into fourteenth-century Catalan suggest an early relationship between the extant Catalan translation and the Castilian biblical translations from Hebrew.

10h30-11h00

Coffee break and open discussion

27 AUGUST 2026: SESSION II

Chair: FREIMUT LÖSER
University of Augsburg

11h00-11h30

VLADIMIR AGRIGORAEI

CESCM UMR 7302, Poitiers—CNRS

*Entangled Textual Lineages of Vernacular Scripture
in the Wake of English-French Contact*

The events of 1066 welded together two markedly different cultures: one emerging from the vernacular exchanges of the Celtic and Germanic north, and the other a Romance tradition that lay dormant under the dominance of Latin as a prestige language. This encounter stirred the first vernacular translations of sacred texts into French at a time when the Old English tradition was gradually fading out. The resulting convergence also contributed to the re-emergence of the Middle English tradition, shaped by French influence, with numerous examples in Psalms, Genesis, Proverbs, the Gospels, commentaries, glosses, and sermons. Two key examples stand out in particular and help us better understand the ambivalent nature of these links. The first is the complex development of the Anglo-Norman translations of the Psalter from an interlinear gloss tradition (c.1150), the surviving witnesses of which reproduce the dynamics of Old English interlinear glosses on the Psalms. The second is the case of the Early Middle English *Kentish Sermons* (c.1250): five homilies with biblical pericopes, translated from (and transmitted as) Sermons 2–6 in the French compilation derived from the Latin works of Maurice of Sully.

11h20-12h00

ELIZABETH SOLOPOVA

University of Oxford

Wycliffite Lexicography: At the Intersection of English and Czech Traditions of Biblical Scholarship

Lexicographical tools were used throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages within the context of biblical scholarship. Translation of the Bible into vernacular languages created new uses for existing tools and encouraged the creation of new ones. Considering that the translation of the Bible was a common European enterprise, we expect to see influences and shared practices in the development and use of such tools. The paper presents an important case of such influence, illustrating a close relationship between English and Czech traditions of biblical scholarship and translation. It focuses on an English-Latin Glossary based on the Wycliffite Bible and surviving in a single fifteenth-century manuscript. The Glossary has a number of unusual features and has for a long time been a puzzle for scholars. No source or model was previously found and its nature and purpose remained entirely unclear. The paper is a step towards solving this mystery: the Glossary has been identified for the first time as a Middle English adaptation of the popular Latin biblical dictionary *Mammothrectus*. It was previously believed that an English translation of *Mammothrectus* did not exist, presumably because direct comparison with *Mammothrectus* can produce at best an inconclusive result. The proposed identification was possible only because, in line with a comparative approach that views medieval Bible translation as a pan-European project, the rich Czech lexicographical tradition was taken into account. The source of the Glossary becomes apparent only if the role of Czech intermediaries is recognised. When the two traditions are compared, the influence of medieval English over Czech religious and literary culture tends to be emphasised. The discovery reported in the paper is particularly significant because it presents a case of influence in the opposite direction: Middle English appropriation of an achievement of Czech biblical scholarships.

12h30-14h00

Discussions and standing buffet at the CESCM





27 AUGUST 2026: SESSION III

Chair: MANFRED KERN
University of Salzburg

14h00-14h30

KATEŘINA VOLEKOVÁ

Charles University / Czech Language Institute, Prague

The Old Polish Dog and Sick Person:

The Legacy of Inter-Slavic Biblical Translation in the Late Middle Ages

In the late Middle Ages, Czech became an important intermediary language for inter-Slavic translations. Owing to its close morphological, syntactic, and lexical affinity with other Slavic vernaculars, translating from Czech was generally easier than translating directly from Latin, German, or French. This role was fostered by the strong cultural ties between Bohemia and Poland, established through dynastic contacts, ecclesiastical and monastic networks, and, from the mid-fourteenth century onwards, universities and student mobility. The influence of Czech is particularly evident in Polish biblical literature. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Old Czech Bible existed in four translation versions, preserved in dozens of manuscripts and two printed editions. This well-established biblical tradition profoundly influenced Polish biblical translation. The fifteenth-century Bible of Queen Sophia, the oldest surviving fragment of an apparently complete Polish Bible, clearly depends on the Old Czech Bible. Czech influence also extended beyond biblical translations to biblical study aids, such as glossaries. Moreover, Czech Bible provided an interpretative model that enabled Polish translators to render even intellectually demanding passages of the Latin originals with greater ease, as demonstrated by the translation of several difficult biblical expressions and phrases (e.g., *mingens ad parietem*). Thus, besides enriching Polish religious and biblical terminology, Czech also served as an interpretative intermediary in the transmission of Latin texts.

14h30-15h00

KATARZYNA JASIŃSKA

Polish Language Institute, Krakow

Coexistence, Conceptual Transfer, and Linguistic Interference:

German–Polish Relations in Biblical Texts

German-Polish relations in medieval and early modern biblical texts may be viewed, from the Polish perspective, in three interconnected ways. The first is the coexistence of Polish and German biblical translations within the same manuscript without evident mutual influence, as in the Florian Psalter, the oldest preserved Polish translation of the Psalms. The second reflects the conceptual impact of German religious thought, particularly Lutheranism and the Luther Bible, on Polish Protestant translations. This is especially visible in Stanisław Murzynowski's sixteenth-century Polish New Testament, whose translator relied on Luther's version as a guide for interpreting and rendering problematic passages of Scripture. The third type of interaction appears on the lexical level, especially in Christian terminology. Drawing on medieval biblical texts, the paper analyses direct and indirect German borrowings that shaped the vocabulary of Polish translators, some of which may even predate Christianity itself. Although none of these forms of interaction points to the direct dependence of Polish translations on a single German biblical text, together they reveal the broader dynamics of German–Polish linguistic and cultural exchange in the medieval and early modern periods.

15h00-15h30

Coffee break and open discussion

27 AUGUST 2026: SESSION IV

Chair: ELIZABETH SOLOPOVA
University of Oxford

15h30-16h00

MANFRED KERN

University of Salzburg

The Wenceslas Bible and its Multilingual and Multiregional Relations

The Wenceslas Bible is a luxury manuscript produced around 1390–1400 for King Wenceslas IV of Bohemia. It preserves what is probably the first systematic translation of the Old Testament from the Vulgate into Early New High German. This translation project appears to have been initiated by the Prague patrician Martin Rotlev around 1370–1380. Both manuscript and translation are embedded in a multilingual and multiregional cultural context. The paper examines that context from several perspectives. Medieval Bohemia was a multilingual region in which German, Old Czech, and Latin interacted closely. The Rotlev translation may have been connected to contemporary Czech Bible translations, although no direct influence has yet been demonstrated. Its programme, as formulated in the prologue, corresponds to key principles of the Hussite and Wycliffite translation traditions: making Scripture accessible to lay audiences and translating according to Jerome's principle of *verbum e verbo*. These ideas were also probably influenced by the programmatic reflections of the so-called Austrian Bible Translator, active in the Danube region between Passau and Vienna, illustrating wider intellectual links with Bohemia. Later complete Bible manuscripts from Franconia combine a Franconian New Testament with the Bohemian Rotlev Old Testament, demonstrating its interregional reception. Jan Hus, confessor to Queen Sophia of Bohemia, may also have influenced both the translation project and the conception of the illumination cycle of the manuscript; he may even have authored the Latin painting instructions. Some painters were Czech, and King Wenceslas's Czech maxim, *toho pzde toho*, appears throughout the manuscript. These features make the Wenceslas Bible a multilingual and multiregional masterpiece of fourteenth century Bible translation.

16h00-16h30

FREIMUT LÖSER

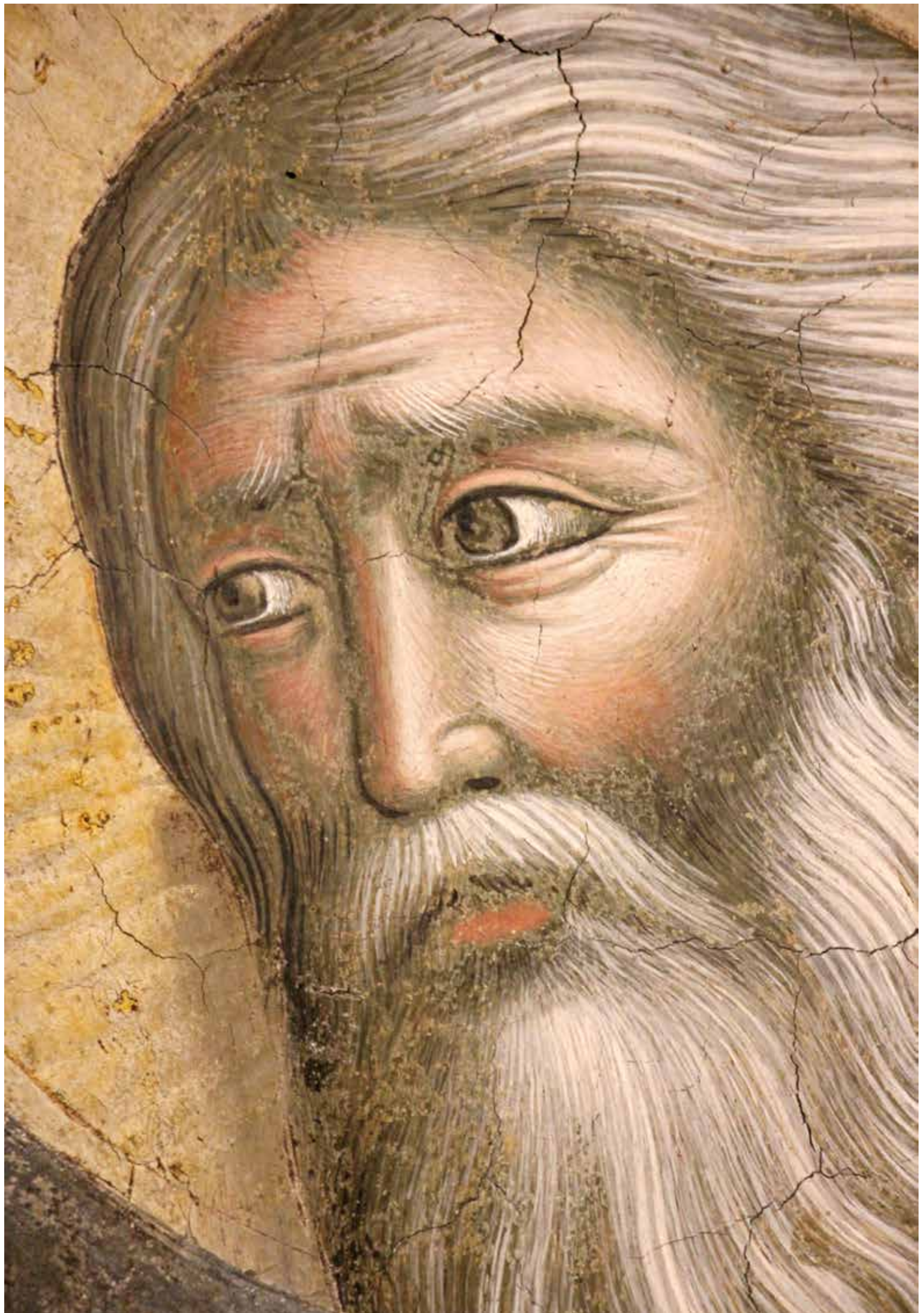
University of Augsburg

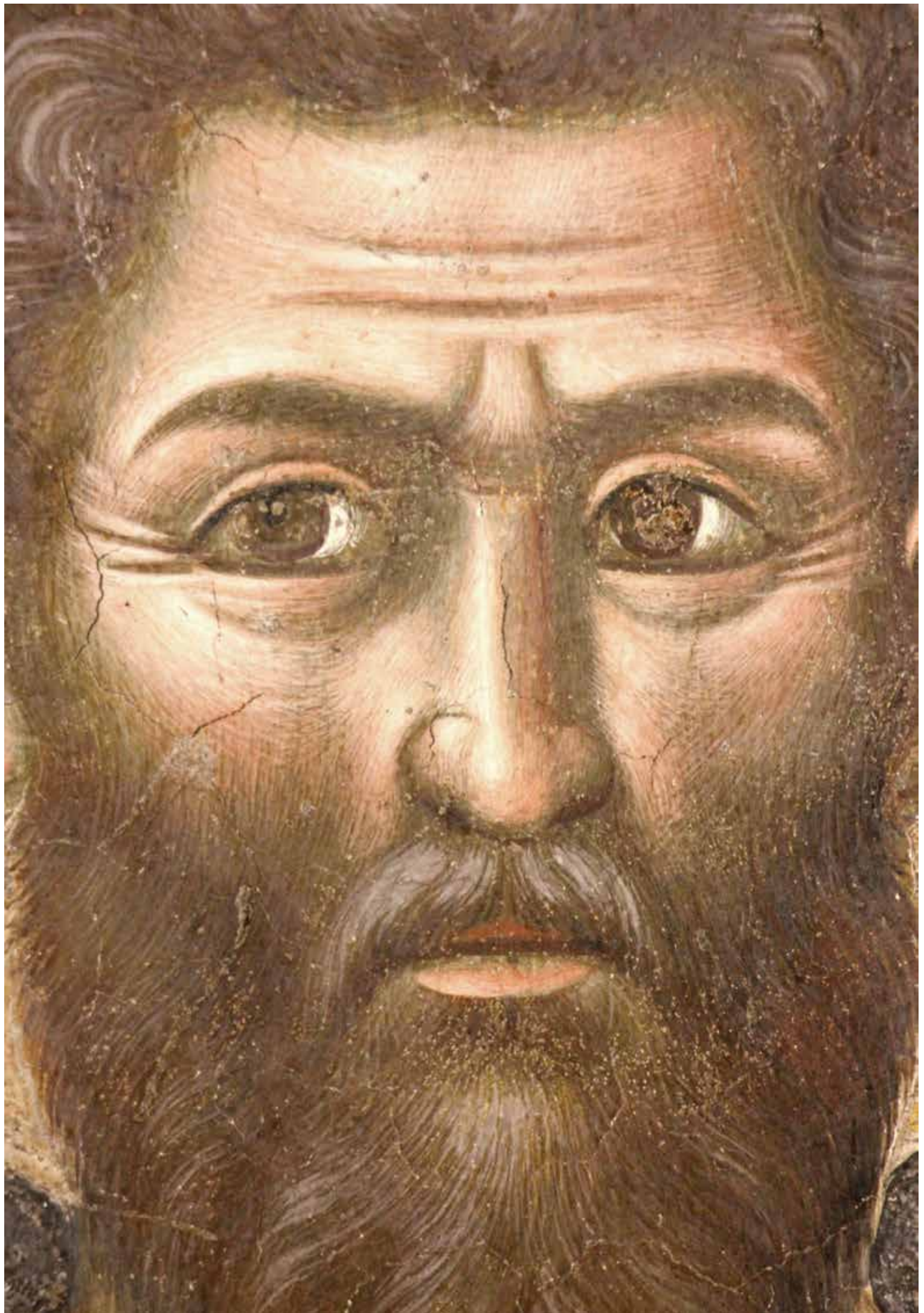
'In Former Times or in Other Places': Intertextual Strategies in the Defence and Use of the German Vernacular Bible and their Connections with Other Literary Traditions

The paper focuses on German-speaking countries and their neighbours. It discusses examples of translations of certain books of the Bible and their accompanying paratexts, in which the debate on the legitimacy of vernacular Bible translations reveals either connections between different languages and 'dialects', or links between different historical periods. On the one hand, examples such as the so-called Austrian Bible Translator raise the question of possible German-Dutch, German-English, and German-Czech relations (Petrus Naghel and Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen, the Wycliffite Bible, Jan Hus). On the other hand, several examples show how German texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries either reused older German translations, transferring them into a new period, for a different readership and into another 'dialect', or referred to them as a means of argumentation. The so-called Melk Gospels, for example, pre-served in more than ten manuscripts copied by Benedictine lay brothers in the fifteenth century, made extensive use of an older translation previously employed within the Teutonic Order, effectively 'translating' East Middle German texts into 'Bavarian-Austrian' in order to adapt them for public readings.

19h00

Evening meal at a local restaurant





28 AUGUST 2026: SESSION V

Chair: VLADIMIR AGRIGORAEI
CESCM UMR 7302, Poitiers—CNRS

9h00-9h30

GEERT CLASSENS
KULeuven

On Complete Vernacular Bible Translations in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century

Translations of the entire Bible into the vernacular were rather rare in the European Middle Ages, whilst there was already a long-standing tradition of translating individual books of the Bible. It is noteworthy that it was precisely in the second half of the fourteenth century that initiatives were taken to translate the Bible in its entirety into the German, English, Dutch and Czech vernaculars of the time. Petrus Naghel, the translator behind the Middle Dutch *Hernse Bible*, states expressly that he was asked to translate the entire Bible. There are also indications that the other three translations are complete Bible translations, even though this has not been achieved in all cases. I hope that by posing a number of questions, I can spark a discussion about the similarities and differences between these four translation projects. For example: can we define the concept of the ‘complete Bible’ more precisely based on these four translations? Further questions relate, amongst other things, to translation strategies, objectives and the intended audience.

9h30-10h00

WIM FRANÇOIS
KULeuven

Theology in Translation: Translating Theology: Luther's German Bible and the Making of Dutch Editions in the Early Reformation Era

Between 1523 and 1527, numerous Reformation-oriented editions of the New Testament were published in the Low Countries in a handy octavo or sextodecimo format. Some of these editions were based on Erasmus's *Novum Testamentum* (particularly the 1519 edition); others offered a translation of Luther's German text, while still others presented a composite version. In 1526, Jacob van Liesvelt even published a full Dutch-language Bible in Antwerp, whose text was based in part on Luther's translations, insofar as these had already appeared in print. In this contribution, I examine how Dutch-language editions from this period not only adopted the text, paratextual elements, and even the layout of Luther's German editions, but also conveyed his theological ideas to the Dutch-speaking world.

10h00-10h30

Coffee break and open discussion

28 AUGUST 2026: SESSION VI

Chair: KATEŘINA VOLEKOVÁ

Charles University / Czech Language Institute, Prague

10h30-11h00

MARTINA KRAMARIĆ

Institute for the Croatian Language, Zagreb

Linguistic Crossroads: Czech and Italian Influences in Medieval Croatian Biblical texts Translations

In medieval Croatia, translational literature drew on three principal linguistic sources: Old Church Slavonic, Latin/Italian, and Czech. While Old Church Slavonic predominated in liturgical writing, non-liturgical literature developed under diverse foreign influences and was written in varying combinations of Old Croatian and Old Church Slavonic, or in a more vernacular idiom. This paper examines non-liturgical translations of biblical and religious texts through two case studies: Czech-influenced homilies and Italian-influenced lectionaries. The *Homilijar na Matejevo evanđelje* (Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew) is a translation of the Old Czech *Evangelium sv. Matouše s homiliemi*, produced during the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century stay of Croatian Benedictines at Emmaus in Prague. Preserved in a single manuscript (Krk 42, Diocesan Archive of Krk), it transmits the homilies without the Gospel text itself. The Croatian version is of particular importance for Czech philology, since it preserves twelve homilies derived from a lost Czech source and contributes to the reconstruction of the original Old Czech homiliary. It also confirms the crucial role of Croatian translations in preserving texts whose Czech originals have disappeared. The second example concerns lectionaries, vernacular paraliturgical texts intended for lay audiences and reflecting features of everyday speech. Produced extensively in Dalmatia and Dubrovnik between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, their origins were long debated as either Latin or Old Church Slavonic. Recent research, however, has highlighted the decisive role of Italian influence, especially in the Zadar and Ranjina Lectionaries. The earliest phase of their development is particularly noteworthy for its free blending of linguistic traditions. Together, these examples illustrate both the linguistic diversity of medieval Croatian literature and its deep integration into wider Mediterranean and Western European cultural networks.

11h00-11h30

ERMA RAMIĆ-KUNIĆ

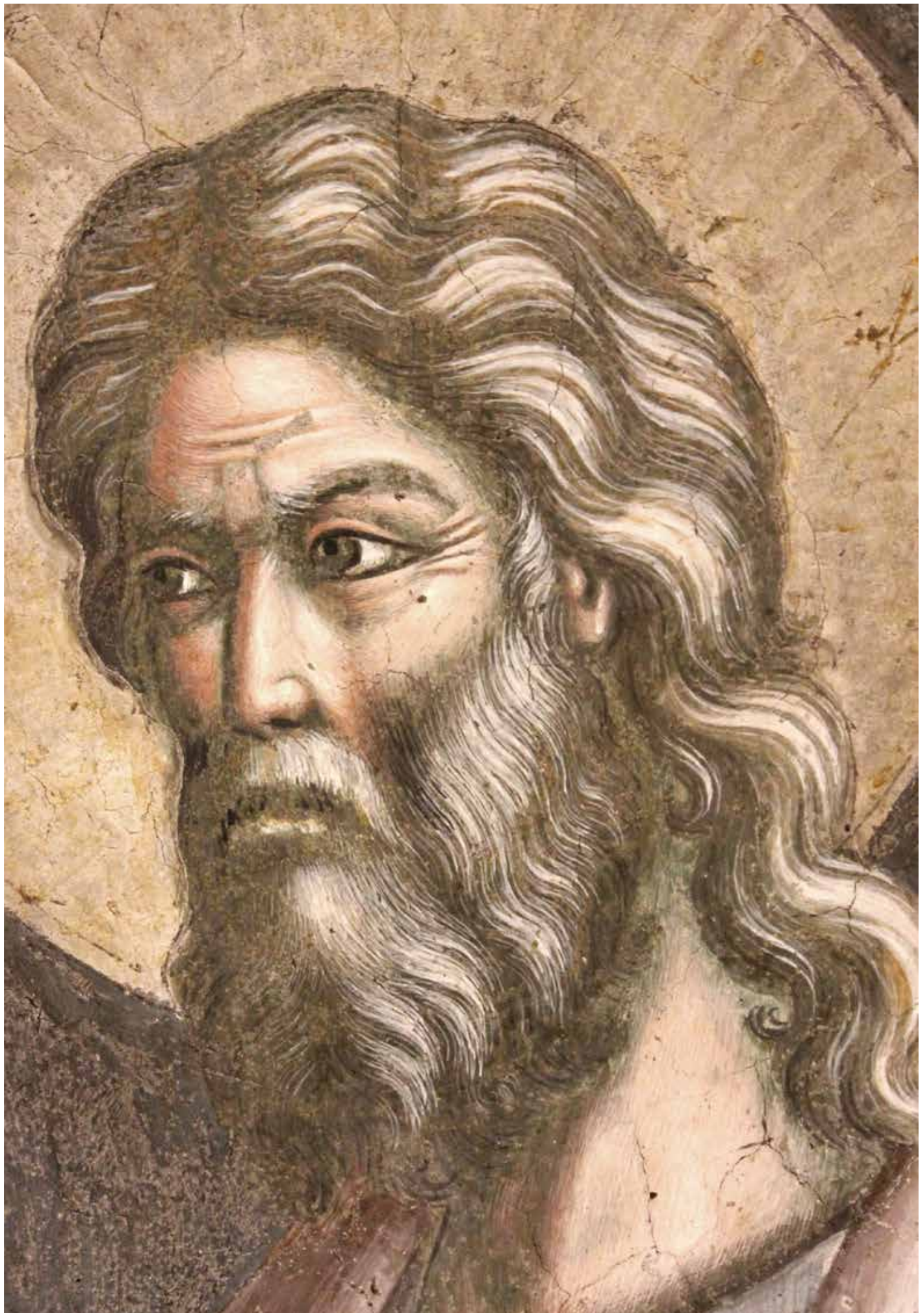
University of Sarajevo

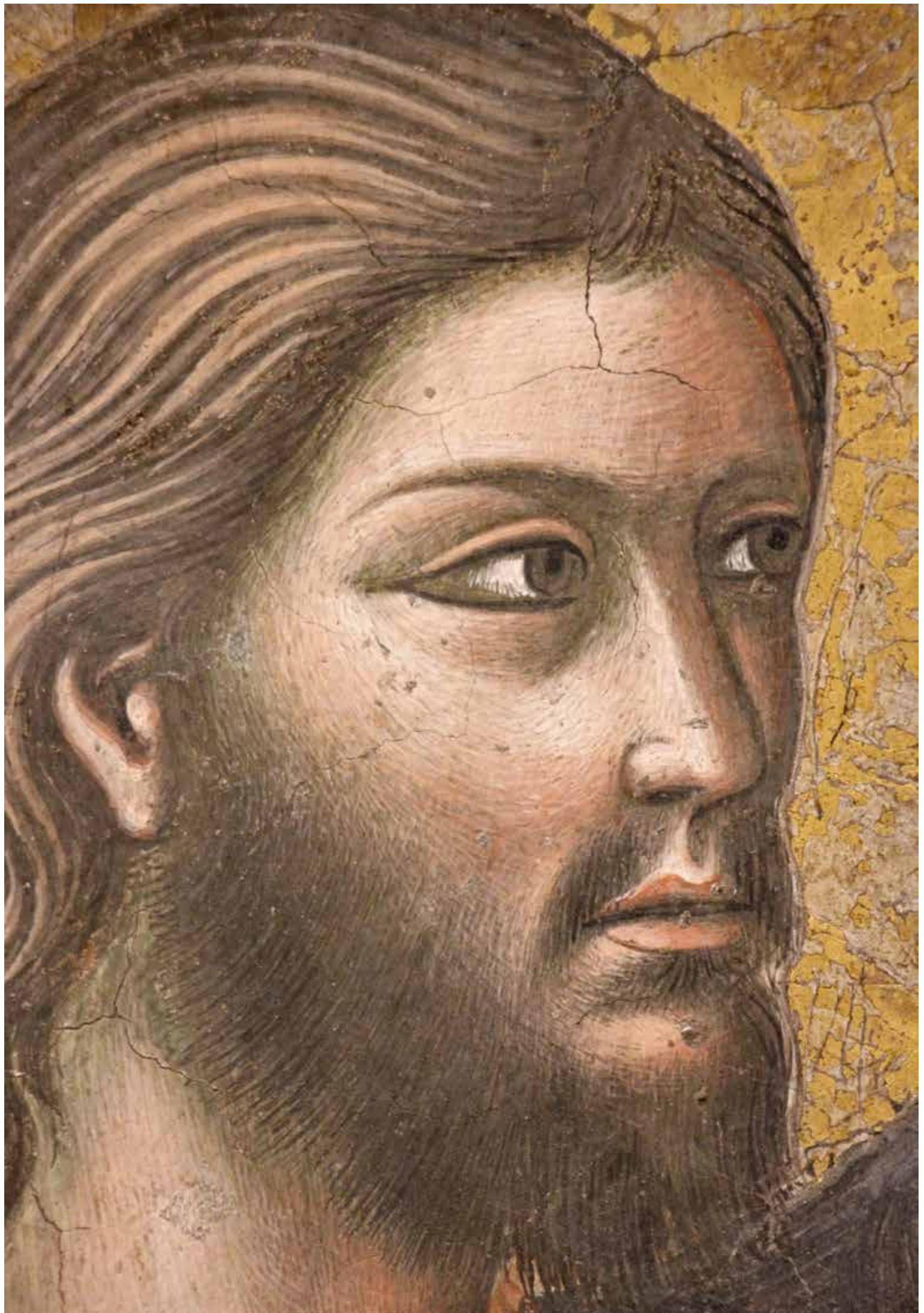
The Bosnian Biblical Tradition between Cyrillic and Glagolitic Networks

This paper examines the medieval Bosnian biblical manuscript tradition as a contact zone between different South Slavic textual, graphic, and confessional traditions. The Bosnian material is predominantly written in Cyrillic, but it cannot be understood as an isolated or exclusively local phenomenon. Its textual and linguistic features point to a broader manuscript environment in which Cyrillic and Glagolitic models, as well as eastern and western South Slavic traditions, were in continuous contact. The paper focuses on selected Bosnian biblical manuscripts, especially Gospel and Apostolos texts, in order to show how their language, orthography and textual structure reflect multiple layers of transmission. Particular attention will be paid to features that connect the Bosnian Cyrillic tradition with the wider Church Slavonic textual heritage, but also to those elements that suggest interaction with Glagolitic and western, Catholic manuscript culture. These include graphic and orthographic solutions, lexical and morphological variants, and textual correspondences that cannot be explained only within one closed scribal or confessional tradition. The aim is not to define the Bosnian corpus as a simple mixture of Orthodox and Catholic elements, but to show that it belongs to a wider network of medieval Slavic biblical transmission. In this sense, the Bosnian case offers an important example of how vernacular and Church Slavonic written cultures interacted across script, region and confession. The paper therefore contributes to a more nuanced understanding of connected biblical traditions in medieval Europe, where the movement of texts often exceeded the boundaries later imposed by national, confessional, or philological classifications.

11h30-12h00

Coffee break and open discussion





28 AUGUST 2026: SESSION VII

Chair: KATARZYNA JASIŃSKA
Polish Language Institute, Krakow

12h00-12h30

KATARÍNA DŽUNKOVÁ

Slavic Institute, Prague

The First Hungarian Translation of the Gospel, the 'Codex of Munich' (1420s–1430s), and its Relationship to Medieval Czech and German Bible Translations. Translation Aids and the Latin Original

The so-called *Huszita Biblia* (1420s–1430s), the earliest known Hungarian Bible translation, survives in three codices: the *Apor Codex* (Psalter), the *Vienna Codex* (Ruth, Judith, Esther, 2 Maccabees, Baruch, Daniel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets), and the *Munich Codex* (the Four Gospels), copied in 1466 at Târgu Trotuș (Romanian-speaking principality of Moldavia). Scholarship attributes the translation either to two Hungarian students at Charles University, *Thomas de Quinque Ecclesiis* and *Valentinus de Vylak*, said to have left Catholic Hungary for Orthodox Moldavia, then a refuge for Hussite communities, or to an original Hungarian translation produced within the Franciscan Observant order. The possible link to Czech and German translations was examined by L. Hadrovics (1994), while later advances in Old Czech biblical studies have allowed a reassessment of its links to the Old Hungarian text. My comparison of the *Munich Codex* with manuscripts and incunabula representing all four redactions of the Old Czech Bible translation, as well as with a Late Middle High German Bible translation (Cgm 5018), shows its closest affinity with the second Old Czech redaction. The correspondences are best explained not by direct Czech or German influence, but by shared translation aids, including Latin commentaries such as the *Mam-motrectus* or Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*, and lexical tools such as the *Catholicon*, *Interpretationes nominum hebraicorum*, and *Vocabularius Ex quo*, which account for identical Czech, German, and Hungarian lexical choices. The comparison with the Gospel vocabulary of Jan Hus reveals no direct correspondence. Overall, the findings provide substantial evidence for similar fifteenth-century translation practices across the Hungarian, Czech, and German traditions.

12h30-13h00

ÁGNES KORONDI

HUN-REN–National Széchényi Library,
Fragmenta et Codicum Research Group, Budapest

The Influence of Italian Observant Preaching on Old Hungarian and Old Polish Passion Narratives

Old Hungarian and Old Polish literatures developed in parallel during the Middle Ages, their earliest Bible translations were roughly contemporary. Their first significant corpus of vernacular texts appeared under similar influences and in the same period, the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The Observant movement originating from Italy had a decisive impact on both these vernacular corpora. The missionary activity of John of Capistrano boosted the institutional and spiritual background of these literatures resulting in the foundation or reformation of numerous Franciscan convents. These often served as literary hubs through which Italian Observant literary influences passed into East Central Europe. In addition to Bible translations, sermons or treatises discussing the Passion of Christ were among the longest and most significant texts in both Hungarian and Polish medieval vernacular literatures. Several Old Hungarian manuscripts (codices *Érsekújvári*, *Winkler*, *Nádor*, *Debreceni*, etc.) as well as many of the so-called Old Polish New Testament apocrypha (*Dominican Meditations*, *Przemysł Meditations*, *Comely Discourse About the Passion of Lord Christ*, *The Life of Lord Jesus Christ*) contain devotional texts or chapters about the Passion which combine passages from the Gospels with scholarly commentary and highly dramatic and emotional episodes. The paper will discuss how the Italian Observant dramatic sermon type best exemplified by the preaching of Bernardino of Siena influenced these East Central European vernacular biblical compilations.

13h00-14h30

Discussions and standing buffet at the CESC

28 AUGUST 2026: SESSION VIII

Chair: ÁGNES KORONDI

HUN-REN–National Széchényi Library, *Fragmenta et Codicum Research Group*, Budapest

14h30-15h00

VITTORIO SPRINGFIELD TOMELLERI

University of Torino

Compiling the Bible across Cultural Boundaries:

Textual, Linguistic, and Cultural Layers in the Gennadius Bible

The compilation of the Gennadius Bible (Novgorod, 1499) represents one of the most remarkable examples of textual and cultural transfer between the Latin West and the Orthodox Slavic world, reflecting the adoption within Muscovy of a Western conception of the Bible as a complete and unified corpus. Whereas biblical books had traditionally circulated in the Orthodox Slavic world as independent manuscripts intended primarily for liturgical use, Archbishop Gennadij's project introduced the idea of assembling the entire canon into a single codex, potentially with a view to future printing. This project should be understood within the broader Novgorodian tradition of translating Latin texts. Long-standing contacts with the Latin West had already fostered the translation of canonical and other learned works. The resulting biblical corpus emerged through a cumulative process of compilation in which earlier Church Slavonic translations, originating in different periods and regions of the Slavic world (local Church Slavonic recensions), were brought together with books translated directly from Latin. Alongside the Latin Bible, the translators appear to have employed exegetical and lexicographical works that had become standard tools of medieval biblical scholarship, most notably the *Mammotrectus*, the *Catholicon* of Johannes Balbus and Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*, which functioned not merely as lexical repertoires but as interpretative aids that guided the understanding and translation of difficult biblical passages. The paper argues that the originality of the Gennadius Bible lies in the convergence of several distinct yet interconnected processes: the adoption of the Western model of the Bible as a complete codex; the incorporation of Latin exegetical and lexicographical practices into the translation process; and the integration, within a single biblical corpus, of linguistic and textual layers inherited from different Church Slavonic traditions. By examining the interaction of these different layers, it aims to show how the Gennadius Bible reshaped the Church Slavonic biblical tradition and, more broadly, to illustrate the circulation of texts, methods, and scholarly (linguistic) knowledge across the cultural boundaries of late medieval Europe.

15h00-15h30

ANA MARIA GÎNSAC

'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' University of Iași

Interacting Textual Traditions in Early Romanian Biblical Translations

The interplay between Eastern and Western Christian textual traditions constitutes a defining feature of early Romanian biblical translations. This dynamic is evident in early Romanian Psalters, which date from the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Translated from Church Slavonic and revised according to various Slavonic redactions, the *Scheian Psalter* also incorporates the Athanasian Creed, a text which embodies features of the Latin confessional heritage, possibly mediated through Hungarian. The *Tetraevangelion of Sibiu* (1551–1553) reveals even stronger connections with Western biblical traditions. Although based on a Church Slavonic Vorlage, it shows influences from the German biblical tradition (the *Luther Bible*) and Old Czech Bibles (the *Dresden* and *Olomouc Bibles*). The *Apostolos* reflects, in addition to its primary Church Slavonic source, elements from the Latin biblical tradition and, potentially, the *Luther Bible*, suggesting that its revisers were familiar with multiple Western textual traditions. *Palia de la Orăștie* (1582), containing the first two books of the Pentateuch, is based on a multilingual textual tradition, drawing primarily on a Hungarian version while also using Latin and Church Slavonic texts. Together, these translations reveal how Church Slavonic, Latin, German, Czech, and Hungarian traditions converged in shaping the earliest Romanian biblical texts.

15h30-16h00

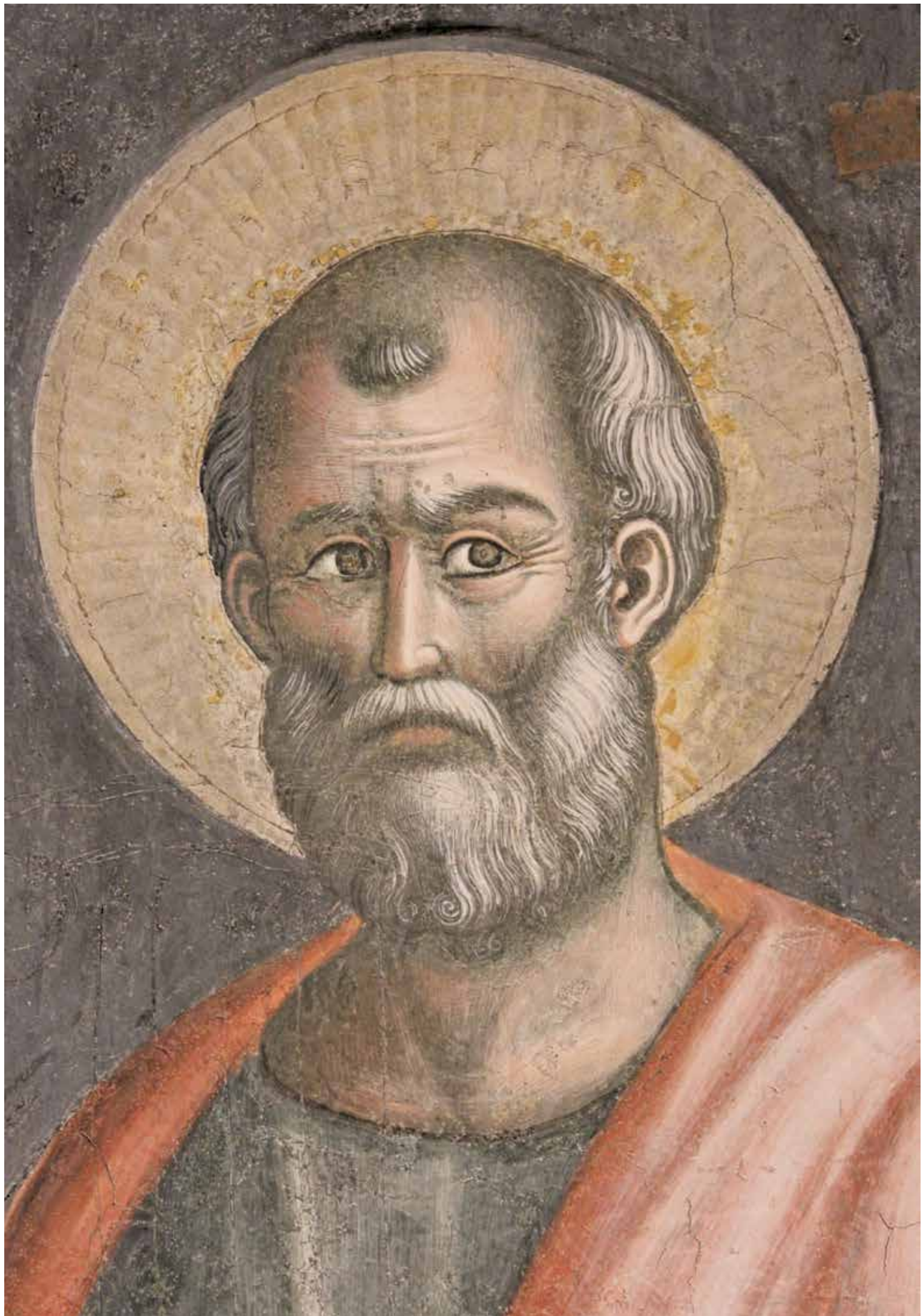
Coffee break and open discussion

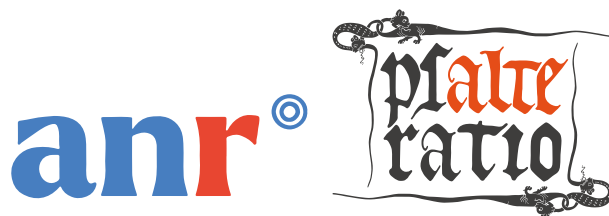
16h00-17h00

Round Table: presentation of the *ERC Synergy* Proposal and conclusions

19h00

Evening meal at a local restaurant





With generous support from the University of Augsburg, the Czech Language Institute in Prague, and the 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' University of Iași.