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Aspects of Gender Neutral Language in Selected English and Polish Translations of the New Testament

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Abstract: Gender neutral language has been one of the most hotly debated issues in Bible translation in recent decades, especially in translations into English. The article presents some aspects of this problem expanding the perspective and comparing gender neutral language usage in modern translations of Scripture into English and Polish: the New International Version and the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible, with occasional references to other English and Polish translations. Renditions of selected New Testament terms such as *anthrōpos, anēr, adelphos/adelphoi* and *huioi* are examined, as well as English and Polish translations of *diakoneo* when it describes women accompanying Jesus in the synoptic gospels. Translations of "Junia/Junius" (Rom 16:7) are also compared as well as the issue of Phoebe the "deaconess" in Rom 16:1. The author concludes that solutions concerning gender neutral language in English and Polish translations of the Bible, sometimes similar, are not identical due to differences between these languages, due to different socio-linguistic norms characterizing Polish and English audiences respectively and due to the fact that the English translation is addressed to the evangelical Christians, while the Polish ones to the Catholics.

Keywords: Bible translation; gender neutral language; the New International Version; the Paulist Bible; the Poznan Bible

Introduction

One of the most interesting and hotly debated issues in Bible translation in recent decades has been the challenge of gender neutral or inclusive language.[1] Following sweeping changes in social status of women in the second half of the twentieth century in the West, gender neutral language has become a standard form of language in all Western societies and it cannot be disregarded in modern translations of the Bible. This may pose a problem since the Bible is the product of a predominantly patriarchal world. As long as its readers shared the same patriarchal perspective, translators could take such language for granted. Today, however, the emancipation of women in Western culture means that they do not want to be ignored as addressees of the Bible and expect gender neutral language to be used in contemporary translations.

The presence of gender neutral language in Bible translation became a bone of contention among American evangelical Christians in the 1990s and 2000s, resulting in a bitter debate in which linguistic arguments clashed with respect for tradition. Proponents of gender neutral language, following Eugene

1 Although each of these terms presupposes a slightly different perspective, I will use them interchangeably in my paper.

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Nida's distinction between formal and dynamic equivalence in the translation of Scripture, argued that modern English speaking society is ruled by different socio-linguistic norms than those in the biblical world and thus masculine forms used by the biblical authors, when their meaning is generic and does not refer to men only, should be translated dynamically. Opponents of this approach opted for formal equivalence, seeing in gender neutral language the betrayal of tradition and a distortion of God's word.[2] Ultimately, the former approach has won and over the last thirty years almost every English Bible has adopted gender neutral language to stay current with contemporary usage of English.

Disputes concerning the presence of gender neutral language in the translation of Scripture are not limited to speakers of English. However, due to syntactical and morphological differences between languages, as well as different sociolinguistic and cultural norms in societies that speak them, translators' approaches to these issues may be different. The aim of this paper is to examine briefly the usage of gender neutral language in two modern Polish Catholic translations of the Bible, Biblia Poznańska – the Poznan Bible (PoB) and Biblia Paulistów – the Paulist Bible (PaB)[3] and to compare it with the usage of such language in the 2011 revision of the New International Version (NIV), currently the most popular English translation of the Bible.[4] In Poland, unlike in the English-speaking world, there has been no wide debate on gender neutral language in the translation of Scripture and I will demonstrate that solutions concerning its usage are often language specific and cannot be generalized.[5] Moreover, the Catholic Church in Poland is fairly conservative with respect to the social equality of the sexes, including norms of gender neutral language. Nevertheless, in the translations examined below one may notice solutions indicating that translators took these norms into account although they introduced them in a way "through the kitchen door." I will also demonstrate that on the other hand, some renderings to be found in these translations may be regarded as more patriarchal in character than those proposed by the NIV, which in turn may reflect hidden aspects of how the social position of women is perceived by the Catholic Church in Poland.

Gender Neutral (Inclusive) Language in Bible Translation

Because the Bible was born in the patriarchal world "the biblical text may well be considered hopelessly insensitive in matters of gender."[6] Nevertheless, until the nineteenth century this was not a serious problem in biblical translation studies.[7] An important early challenge to patriarchal language was *The Woman's Bible*, a collection of Elizabeth Stanton's commentaries to evidently patriarchal biblical passages, published between 1895–1898. Stanton suggested in her commentaries an interpretation of the biblical text different from the traditional one, opening the way for a Bible translation which would not depreciate women.[8]

2 For more on the controversy surrounding gender-neutral language in biblical translation with arguments for and against this approach, see Carson *The Inclusive Language Debate*; Strauss, *Distorting Scripture?*; Strauss, "Current Issues in the Gender-Language Debate," 115-143; Grudem, *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*; Poythress and Grudem, *The TNIV and the Gender-neutral Bible Controversy*. While this controversy was partly an inspiration for me to compare the strategies concerning usage of gender neutral language in English and Polish translations of the Bible, I will not present it here.

3 All translations discussed in this paper are from the original biblical languages.

4 Presenting the NIV in the context of the gender neutral language debate in the USA (including controversies surrounding its predecessor, Today's New International Version), although interesting, is not my aim in this paper, so I will not discuss it here. A neat summary of this controversy with the conclusion that critics of the TNIV "politicized the issue" denying in this way the average churchgoer enough access to accurate information about this translation, see Blomberg, "Today's New International Version," 187-211.

5 Out of several papers concerning gender neutral language in Polish translations of the Bible, almost all, to my knowledge, were published in Polish. The one corresponding to some extent with what I am presenting in this article is Majkiewicz, "Kwestia płci," comparing a German translation of the Bible, Die neue Gute Nachricht Bibel with the Polish translation, Biblia Warszawsko-Praska, in terms of gender neutral language.

6 Porter, "The Contemporary English Version," 34.

7 There is, however, at least one ancient text, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, whose anonymous author retells many narratives from the Hebrew Bible highlighting role and authority of women. See more, DesCamp, *Metaphor and Ideology*.

8 Stanton, *The Woman's Bible*.

Interestingly, even before Stanton's book, in 1876, there appeared the first Bible translation authored by a woman, Julia Smith; but due to its poor quality and literalness, it soon fell into oblivion.[9] The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the rapid development of feminist movements in Western societies, especially in English-speaking countries. This resulted in a demand for gender neutral language—now a standard form of language in the secular context—in the translation of Scripture.

The first major attempt to respond to this demand was the New Revised Standard Version, published in 1990, where gender neutral language replaced many generic references to "man" or "men." Interestingly, several years before, in 1974, the RSV committee admitted its first female member, Lucetta Mowry of Wellesley College.[10]

We should bear in mind that gender neutral language in Bible translation may have two different functions. It may be an adaptation of the biblical text to ever (albeit slowly) changing linguistic and especially sociolinguistic norms of the recipients of Scripture. As such it might be regarded as a standard or acceptable translation procedure, an example of Nida's "dynamic equivalence." On the other hand, gender neutral language may be also an element of a broader, more systematic and radical critique and reinterpretation of the Bible and its translation through a lens of feminist thought. Feminist thinkers argue that the patriarchal ideology of the original biblical text is often retained in translations that "serve the cause of patriarchy at the expense of womankind."[11] To counteract it, "revaluation of gender relations should seek expression in new kinds of language for the Bible."[12] Yet, the outcome of this approach may be that objectivity of translation (however one defines it) is now overshadowed not by patriarchal, but by feminist ideology. Not distinguishing between these two purposes for gender neutral language may make discussion concerning it difficult or impossible. Thus, to avoid any misunderstandings, I wish to stress that I am interested below in translations that represent a non-feminist usage of gender neutral language.[13]

Gender Neutral Language in the NIV

A good example of modern English translation of the Bible using gender neutral language in the first function presented above is the 2011 revision of the New International Version (NIV). The Committee on Bible Translation, whose members are biblical scholars from various Christian denominations, includes female scholars.[14] As mentioned above, the NIV is one of several modern English translations of the Bible adopting this strategy.[15] Let us examine briefly some solutions adopted in this translation in order to compare them with renderings of the same biblical passages in the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible. Because of space constraints, we will focus only on three selected Greek nouns from the New Testament. These are: *anthrōpos* (usually indicating a human being, whether male or female); *anēr* (usually indicating a male), *adelphos/adelphoi* (brother/brothers or sibling/siblings) and *huioi* (sons or children). We will also discuss briefly John 6:10, where a specific usage of *anthrōpous* (people) and *andres* (men) lays bare the patriarchal perspective of this verse, resulting in its lack of logic and where an inclusive translation may solve this problem.

9 Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, 96–98.

10 Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures*, 152.

11 Korsak, "Translating the Bible: Bible Translations and Gender Issues," 141.

12 Simon, *Gender in Translation*, 112.

13 In feminist translations of the Bible gender neutral language not depreciating women is coupled often with gender neutral or bi-gender terms used with reference to God (e.g. adding "mother" to the text whenever God is referred to as "father" in the New Testament). Such solutions have in my opinion little to do with justified adaptation of the biblical translation to the changing sociolinguistic norms of the modern audience and reflect a specific ideology of translators not confirmed by the original. I discuss the feminist translation of the Bible separately in Gomola, "Feminist Thought in Bible Translations."

14 http://www.biblica.com/en-us/the-niv-bible/meet-the-translators

15 Others include New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), The New Jerusalem Bible, New Century Version, Contemporary English Version or New American Bible.

Anthrōpos

To say that *anthrōpos* is *crux translatorum* in English translations of the Bible would be, of course, an exaggeration. However, inclusive translation of *anthrōpos* that for centuries was rendered into English as "man" is one of the issues that divides proponents and opponents of gender neutral language in modern English translations of the Bible.[16] The reason is that in modern English "man" is regarded by many as an exclusive noun, referring to males only, and that is why it does not seem to be an adequate equivalent of inclusive *anthrōpos*. To see different strategies of translating this Greek noun, let us compare of John 3:4 in the RSV and the NIV respectively:

> "Nicodemus said to him, 'How can a man [*anthrōpos*] be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?'" (RSV)

> "'How can someone [*anthrōpos*] be born when they are old?' Nicodemus asked. 'Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!'" (NIV)[17]

The RSV renders the generic *anthrōpos* with "man," introducing masculine pronouns corresponding with it further in the text. (In the Greek text there are no anaphoric pronouns in this verse due to the fact that Greek, as an inflectional language, does not always need them). The NIV eliminates the possible androcentric character of the verse by rendering *anthrōpos* as "someone." Although "they" in the text may look awkward to some, it is a singular "they" used in such a context in modern standard English.

Anēr

An English equivalent of *anēr* is "a male human being," yet the NIV proposes in many cases a gender neutral translation of this term. The reason is the fact that *anēr* is used frequently in the New Testament as a "masculine generic," that is a grammatically masculine term with a general or inclusive meaning, similarly to the way "man" was used not so long ago in English.[18] Such usage reflects the patriarchal perspective of the biblical text or a specific idiolect of a biblical author[19] and changing this perspective/idiolect and adopting it to the needs of the modern English reader is understandable. To see the difference between non-inclusive and inclusive translation of *anēr*, let us compare two translations of James 1:12, one of many passages in this epistle in which this noun is used:

> "Blessed is the man [*anēr*] who endures trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him." (RSV)

Rendering *anēr* as "man," the RSV expects the reader to keep in mind that the biblical text does not exclude the possibility that *also* women may have to face trial and if they stand the test, they will receive the crown of life. The NIV solves this problem by using an inclusive term:

> "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."

Sometimes the generic meaning of *anēr* is represented in the NIV by the plural form:

> "Blessed are those [*anēr*] whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." (Rom 4:8)[20]

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16 Cf. Strauss, "Current Issues in the Gender-Language Debate," 127-131.

17 Here and below I am quoting of course one of many examples of inclusive translation of the abovementioned terms possible to be found in the NIV.

18 More on "masculine generics," see ibid., 127-132.

19 More on such an "idiolect" and on meaning of *anēr* in classical Greek and in the New Testament, see Blomberg, "Today's New International Version," 198.

20 Opponents of inclusive translation (e.g., Poythress and Grudem, *The TNIV and the Gender-neutral Bible Controversy*) argue that such translation obscures the fact that we stand before God as individuals. This is, however, a weak argument since there are passages in the Bible where the plural form is used to present important aspects of our relationship with God (e.g. "the blessed ones" in the Sermon on the Mount).

Huioi

Another masculine term that may be used generically in the New Testament is *huioi*, which commonly means "sons" (e.g. Matt 5:9, Gal 3:26, Rom 8:14). In Matthew peacemakers are called "sons of God" while in Pauline letters the term "sons" is used with reference to Christians in their new relation to God as Father through Christ. It is obvious that in such cases *huioi* comprises not only men. For that reason the NIV translates it not as "sons" but as "children":

> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children [*huioi*] of God." (Matt 5:9)

> "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children [*huioi*] of God. (...) The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children [*tekna*]. Now if we are children (*tekna*), then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ." (Rom 8:14,16-17)

> "So in Christ Jesus you are all children [*huioi*] of God through faith." (Gal 3:26)

Additionally, rendering *huioi* with "children" in Rom 8:14 finds its justification in verses 16 and 17, where there is shift from *huioi* to *tekna* (children) in the Greek text. This indicates that what is important to Paul is that we are God's *children*, not sons. Following this interpretation the NIV renders *huioi* with "children" also in Gal 3:26.[21]

Adelphos/adelphoi

In all instances discussed above inclusive English terms were used to render the generic meaning of a Greek term (*anēr*, *huioi*). Similarly, in the case of inclusive translation of *adelphos/adelphoi* (traditionally, "brother/brothers"), whenever they are used in generic meaning and refer to both men and women, the NIV proposes a dynamic equivalence, adding "sister/sisters." Although some may see in it an unjustified interpolation, this solution simply renders the intended sense of the text and does not add anything to it in terms of meaning.

> "Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers [*adelphoi*]) and sisters [*no separate lexical equivalent in the Greek text in this place*], I do not want you to be uninformed." (1 Cor 12:1)

> "You, then, why do you judge your brother [*adelphon*] or sister [*no separate lexical equivalent in the Greek text in this place*]? Or why do you treat them [*adelphon*] with contempt?" (Rom 14:10)[22]

John 6:10

John 6:10 is an interesting example of the patriarchal perspective of the Greek text of the New Testament that may confuse an attentive reader and is often preserved in translations, for example in the RSV:

> "Jesus said, 'Make the people [*anthrōpous*] sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place; so the men [*andres*] sat down, in number about five thousand."

A "literal" interpretation of this passage may lead us to two conclusions, each of them improbable: either 1) there were no women in the crowds that gathered around Jesus or 2) women were present but they were standing while the men were sitting. Of course neither conclusion is true. There were women and they

21 Note that this interpretative change does not comprise *hyiothesias* in Rom 8:15, 23, a term "referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture" (NIV's note to Rom 8: 15) translated in the NIV as "adoption to sonship." Note also that in the case of Galatians 3: 26, even the King James Version translates *huioi* as "children": "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

22 Similarly the NRSV: "Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister."

sat down along with the men; the author simply ignores this fact because he narrates the story from the patriarchal perspective characteristic of his culture. Unlike in previous cases, however, we cannot simply translate *andres* here as "people" because it is quite possible that the author's intention was to inform the reader that there were five thousand *men* not including women and/or children (as Matthew explicitly says; Matt 14:21). Yet, to avoid the strong patriarchal bias of the original Greek text, we might somehow rearrange it and it is the solution adopted by the NIV:

> "Jesus said, 'Have the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there)."

This translation is not as faithful as it might be as "they" in the NIV translation refers anaphorically to "people" while the Greek text says that "men" sat down, not "people."[23] However, thanks to the rearrangement of the text NIV translators kill two birds with one stone: they introduce women implicitly into this scene and allow them to sit down with the men.[24]

Gender Neutral Language in Polish Bible Translation

Having presented briefly the idea and examples of gender neutral language in modern English Bible translation using the NIV, I will turn now to instances of a similar approach in two Catholic translations of the Bible: the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible.

Poland is one of the few European countries in which the overwhelming majority of society still identify with Christianity (Catholicism), with a relatively high church attendance and in which the Bible is still an important text not only in cultural but also in religious terms. Both the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible stand in the long tradition of Bible translation in Poland that goes back to the second half of the 16th century or even earlier.[25] The first printed edition of the complete Bible in Polish, Biblia Leopolity (Leopolita's Bible) was published in 1561, less than thirty years after Luther's Bible and merely thirty-five years after Tyndale's New Testament. It was followed by four other translations: Brest Bible (1563),[26] Nieswiez Bible (1572), Wujek Bible (1599), Gdansk Bible (1632). As a result, Poland could boast five complete translations of the Bible into Polish before the mid-seventeenth century, two Catholic ones (Leopolita's Bible, Wujek Bible) and three Protestant ones (Brest Bible, Gdansk Bible and Nieswiez Bible).

The Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible are two of several twentieth-century translations of the Bible into Polish and two of four Catholic translations of the whole Bible published in the second half of the twentieth century.[27] This means that their translators did not enter the uncharted territory of translation of Scripture into Polish even though the range and temperature of debates concerning Bible translation in Poland cannot be compared with those in English speaking countries.[28] What also distinguishes Polish translations is that "each of them is presented to the audience as 'a' and not 'the' translation" thanks to which "the reader realizes that there could be – and have been – other approaches to translating the Bible into Polish."[29] Both translations were prepared by biblical scholars who are members of the Catholic clergy, which means that

23 *Anepeson oun hoi andres ton arithmon hōsei pentakischilioi*.

24 Cf. NRSV that also uses "they" in the way suggesting that it refers to "people" yet explaining in the footnote that "they" corresponds actually with *andres* in the Greek text. In this way NRSV simply conceals the problem present in the Greek text and does not solve it.

25 The earliest preserved Polish translation of the Book of Psalms, *Saint Florian Psalter*, was written between late 14th and early 15th centuries.

26 For the most recent discussion of the *Brest Bible*, see Koziara, "The Current State of Research."

27 Two other ones are Biblia Tysiąclecia (the Millennium Bible) published for the first time in 1960s, and Biblia Warszawsko-Praska (the Warsaw-Praga Bible) published in 1990s. The Paulist Bible was published in 2005 (the New Testament) and in 2008 (the complete Bible). The complete Poznan Bible was published in 1970s.

28 For a more detailed presentation of contemporary Polish translations of the New Testament, see Blumczyński, "Recent Polish Translations of the New Testament."

29 Ibid., 50.

translation teams did not include women.[30] In my analysis below I will present translations of the same Greek terms from the New Testament I discussed earlier, comparing this time the NIV with the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible to demonstrate similarities and differences between English and Polish translations with regard to the usage of gender neutral language. I will also sometimes present solutions adopted in the most popular twentieth-century Catholic translation of the Bible into Polish, Biblia Tysiąclecia or the Millennium Bible, published in the 1960s to commemorate the millennium of the baptism of the first Polish monarch in 966, when Poland became a part of the European Christendom. The Millennium Bible is the official Bible of the Catholic Church in Poland used in liturgy and preaching. Juxtaposing its strategy of formal equivalence with the more functionally oriented Paulist Bible or with the Poznan Bible may help us see better interesting changes taking place in Bible translation in Poland as well as differences between modern Polish translations of Scripture related to gender neutral language.

Anthrōpos

Translating *anthrōpos* into Polish, unlike its translation into modern English, has never been a serious problem since Polish has a closer equivalent to *anthrōpos*, i.e. "człowiek." Polish nouns, like German or French ones, are inflected for gender and "człowiek" is a masculine noun corresponding of course with masculine resumptive pronouns. This however does not cause any controversies among readers because grammatical gender in Polish (as in many other languages) has nothing to do with masculinity or femininity as anthropological categories. This fact and the fact that translating *anthrōpos* into Polish has never been problematic should be a reminder that certain aspects of gender neutral language in Bible translation are language-specific and cannot be generalized. Because rendering *anthrōpos* into Polish does not involve any shifts or modifications on the part of translators, I will not discuss it here.

Anēr

The Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible, like the NIV, retain the generic meaning of *anēr* whenever it is intended in the Greek text, rendering it with "człowiek," whose meaning, as it was mentioned above, is identical with the Greek *anthrōpos*. It is inclusive and may be used with reference to both men and women. Let us compare translations of James 1:12a, in the NIV, the PaB, the PoB and the MB:

> "Blessed is the one [*anēr*], who perseveres under trial." (NIV)
>
> "Szczęśliwy człowiek [*anēr*; "a human being"], który mimo pokusy wytrwa w dobrym." (PaB)
> [Happy is the one who, despite temptation, will persevere in the good.]
>
> "Szczęśliwy ten człowiek [*anēr*; "a human being"], który zwycięży pokusę." (PoB)
> [Happy is the one who will overcome temptation.]
>
> "Błogosławiony mąż [*anēr*; "a man"], który wytrwa w pokusie." (MB)
> [Blessed is the man who will persevere during temptation.]

The Millennium Bible, unlike the Paulist Bible or the Poznan Bible, proposes a formal equivalent of *anēr* rendering it with "mąż," an archaic version of the modern Polish "mężczyzna" (a male). This solution exemplifies a general approach of translators of the MB who decide very often to use "biblical style" or elevated language. It might be argued however, that "mąż" here is an example of what Strauss calls "Biblish" language that has nothing to do with standard forms of a given target language, or in this case, modern standard Polish.[31] Similar conclusions may be drawn comparing translations of Rom 4:8:

30 In the case of the Paulist Bible, women participated in the editorial part of the translation process polishing the text stylistically. Majkiewicz, "Kwestia płci," 137, n. 25.

31 Strauss, Fee, *How To Choose A Translation For All Its Worth*, 4.

"Blessed are those [*anēr*] whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." (NIV)

"Szczęśliwy człowiek [*anēr*; "a human being"], któremu Pan nie wylicza grzechów." (PaB)
[Happy is the one whom the Lord does not enumerate his sins.]

"Błogosławiony człowiek [*anēr*; "a human being"], któremu Pan nie pamięta grzechu." (PoB)
[Blessed is the one whom the Lord does not remember the sin.]

"Błogosławiony mąż [*anēr*; "a man"], któremu Pan nie poczyta grzechu." (MB)
[Blessed is the man whose sin will be ignored by the Lord.]

PaB and the PoB consistently translate generic *anēr* as "człowiek" in most if not all of its occurrences in the New Testament. We can say therefore that the strategy adopted by these two translations with regard to *anēr* is identical with that of the NIV. Let us see whether these two versions translate similarly other Greek terms discussed above.

Huioi

We have seen above that the NIV translates generic *huioi* inclusively as "children" in Matt 5:19, Rom 8:14 and Gal 3:26. Let us look at Polish translations of the same passages in the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible.

Matt 5:19
"Szczęśliwi, którzy zabiegają o pokój, ponieważ oni zostaną nazwani synami [*huioi*; sons] Bożymi." (PaB)
[Happy are those who strive for peace, for they will be called sons of God.]

"Szczęśliwi, którzy doprowadzają do pokoju, albowiem nazwani będą synami [*huioi*; sons] Bożymi." (PoB)
[Happy are those who lead to peace, for they will be called sons of God.]

Gal 3:26
"Wszyscy przecież dzięki wierze w Jezusa Chrystusa jesteście dziećmi [*huioi*; children] Bożymi." (PaB)
[All of you, thanks to faith in Jesus Christ, are children of God.]

"Wszyscy przecież dzięki wierze jesteście synami [*huioi*; sons] Boga – w Chrystusie Jezusie." (PoB)
[All of you, thanks to faith, are sons of God – in Christ Jesus.]

Rom 8:14

"Ci, których prowadzi Duch Boży, są synami [*huioi*; sons] Bożymi. (...) Właśnie ten Duch zaświadcza waszemu duchowi, że jesteśmy dziećmi [*tekna*; children] Boga. A jeśli jesteśmy dziećmi [*tekna*; children], to i dziedzicami." (PaB)
[Those led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (...) The Spirit himself testifies to your spirit that we are children of God. And if we are children we are also heirs.]

"Ci wreszcie, którymi Duch Boży kieruje, są synami [*huioi*; sons] Boga. (...) Ten właśnie Duch świadczy wobec naszego ducha, że jesteśmy dziećmi [*tekna*; children] Boga. A jeśli jesteśmy dziećmi [*tekna*; children] to i spadkobiercami." (PoB)
[These, who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (...) This Spirit himself testifies before our spirit that we are children of God. And if we are children we are also inheritors.]

As we can see, neither of Polish translations, unlike the NIV, uses an inclusive translation of *huioi* when it is used in generic contexts, instead opting for a masculine reference. The only exception is the usage of "children" in Gal 3:26 in the Paulist Bible. Interestingly, this strategy includes Romans, where the immediate context suggests a generic meaning of *huioi*, and where both Polish translations render this term as "sons." In Gal 3:26 the generic meaning is retained in the PaB through "children" but not in the PoB, which translates *huioi* as "sons". We may say therefore that the Paulist Bible leaves the attentive reader confused, unlike the NIV, where the gender neutral language makes it possible to read these two passages together without dissonance. On the other hand, the Paulist Bible goes one step further than the Poznan Bible, where there is no inclusivism at all and *huioi* is translated as "sons" both in Galatians and Romans.

Adelphos/adelphoi

As I have demonstrated above, when a*delphos/adelphoi* are used generically, the NIV does not hesitate to introduce "sister/sisters" into the text, although these terms have no equivalents in the Greek text. The PaB and the PoB differ here substantially from the English translation, as they never go beyond formal equivalence and translate *adelphos/adelphoi* simply as "brother/brothers" without any interpolations:

1 Cor 12:1
"Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers [*adelphoi*] and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed." (NIV)
"Bracia! [*adelphoi*; brothers]. Chciałbym bardzo, abyście mieli właściwą wiedzę o sprawach duchowych." (PaB)
[Brothers! My great wish is that you may have proper knowledge on spiritual matters.]

"Pragnę, bracia, [*adelphoi*; brothers] pouczyć was o darach duchowych." (PoB)
[I wish, brothers, to teach you about spiritual gifts.]

Rom 14:10
"You, then, why do you judge your brother [*adelphos*] or sister? Or why do you treat them [*adelphos*] with contempt?" (NIV)

"A ty dlaczego osądzasz brata [*adelphon*; brother] albo dlaczego pogardzasz bratem [*adelphon*; brother]?" (PaB)
[Why do you then judge your brother or why do you treat your brother with contempt?]

"Ty natomiast dlaczego osądzasz twego brata [*adelphon*; brother]? A ty dlaczego potępiasz twego brata [*adelphon*; brother]?" (PoB)
[Why then do you judge your brother? And you, why do you condemn your brother?]

Notice that while the NIV's translation of Rom 14:10 eliminates altogether the patriarchal character of the verse by adding "sisters" and introducing "them" to render *adelphon* in the second sentence of the Greek text, both Polish translations strengthen their non-inclusive tone, translating each occurrence of *adelphos* and its inflectional variants as "brother," even though it is clear that in this verse, as in many other places in the New Testament, *adelphos/adelphoi* is used in a generic sense, referring to both men and women. The only reason why Polish versions ignored this seems to be the fact that the translators were afraid that they may be accused of producing an "unfaithful translation," if by unfaithful one means adding terms that do not correspond with terms in the original Greek text. Both the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible do not differ here from the Millennium Bible in their non-inclusive approach:

"Dlaczego więc ty potępiasz swego brata [*adelphon*; brother]? Albo dlaczego gardzisz swoim bratem [*adelphon*; brother]?"
[Why do you then condemn your brother? Or why do you despise your brother?]

John 6:10

Discussing John 6:10 above we could see how the patriarchal perspective of the Greek text removes women altogether from the gospel account and how the NIV solved this problem by rearranging the text. The PaB adopts a similar solution or even more radical one, because its translators not only rearranged the target text but also added a modifier "only" (men) to it, thus pointing implicitly to the presence of women in the scene described by John:

"Jezus polecił im: 'Każcie ludziom [*anthrōpous*; people] usiąść'. (...) Usiedli więc, a liczba *samych* mężczyzn [*andres*; men *only*] wynosiła około pięciu tysięcy."
[Jesus told them: "Make the people sit." (...) And the people did so and the number of men only was about five thousand.]

The Poznan Bible ignores the problem of presence of women in this scene and translates the text literally:

> PoB
> "Jezus powiedział: 'Każcie ludziom [*anthrōpous*; people] usiąść!'. (...) Usiadło więc około pięciu tysięcy mężczyzn [*andres*; men]."
> [Jesus said: "Make the people sit" (...) So about five thousand men sat down.]

The Poznan Bible does not differ in its approach from the formally oriented the Millennium Bible:

> MB
> "Jezus zatem rzekł: 'Każcie ludziom [*anthrōpous*; people] usiąść!'. (...) Usiedli więc mężczyźni [*andres*; men], a liczba ich dochodziła do pięciu tysięcy."
> [So Jesus said: "Make the people sit" (...) And the men did so, and their number reached almost five thousand.]

Rearranging the text and adding a modifier not present in the Greek version seems to be a very conscious decision on the part of PB translators and the sole reason for it must have been the need to bring back women into John's account. If we remember that the PB never introduces "sisters" into the biblical text, this is even more impressive. It seems therefore that the PB is ready to "correct" illogicalities of the text, even those resulting from its patriarchal character, yet at the same time is not willing to risk overt usage of gender neutral language. While the former might be sporadic (and often not even noticeable unless one is familiar with other translations or with the Greek text) the latter should be more systematic, and – for example in the case of "sister/s" added to "brother/s" whenever the Greek text justifies this – would involve adding this term in numerous places in the text.

Comparison of Translations of Other Selected Gender Related Passages in the NT

I have examined instances of gender neutral language and how it is used (or not used) in the NIV, the PaB and the PoB. There are however other interesting textual and interpretative issues in the New Testament relating to women that go beyond the problem of gender neutral language and may affect how readers perceive the status of women in the early church and in the present. I will discuss briefly three such issues: "Junias/Junia" in Rom 16:7, *diakoneo* whenever it is used in the synoptic gospels with reference to women accompanying Jesus during his ministry, and the issue of Phoebe the "deaconess" in Rom 16:1.

Junius/Junia

Depending on how *Iounian* (Rom 16:7) is accented, one can interpret it either as a feminine name (Junia) or a masculine name (Junius).[32] This textual problem may have fairly serious consequences because in the same verse Paul writes that Junia(s) and Andronicus are *episēmoi en tois apostolois*, a phrase that may be translated inclusively ("well known among the apostles") or exclusively ("well known to the apostles").[33] Opting for "Junia" instead of "Junius" and for inclusive translation of this phrase makes it possible to deduce from the Pauline text that there was an important female apostle in the early church. This in turn might be the basis for other conjectures proposed by feminist theologians, for example that in the earliest

32 Most scholars argue, however, for the feminine name. For more on their arguments, see Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans,* 563- 65. See also Blomberg, "Today's New International Version," 201.
33 Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans,* 565.

Christianity there was "discipleship of equals."[34] Choosing "Junius" and the exclusive translation of the quoted phrase excludes such interpretations. And even if we put aside feminist interpretations of this verse, it is possible to say that it may be translated inclusively or exclusively with reference to women and their role and presence in the early church.

The NIV, like many other modern English translations, renders this verse inclusively:

> "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was."

The PaB also chooses "Junia" instead of "Junius," yet at the same time translates the other part of the verse exclusively:

> "Pozdrówcie Andronika i Junię, moich rodaków, którzy przebywali razem ze mną w więzieniu. Cieszą się oni szacunkiem wśród apostołów."
> [Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots, who have been in prison with me. They are esteemed by apostles.]

The PoB is closest to the NIV since it has "Junia" and translates the other part of the verse inclusively:

> "Pozdrówcie Andronika i Junię, moich krewnych i współwięźniów, którzy należą do grona wybitnych apostołów."
> [Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and fellow prisoners, who belong to a group of outstanding apostles.]

The last translation stands in contrast with the most popular Polish Catholic translation used in liturgy and preaching, the Millennium Bible. The MB opts for "Junias" and having removed a woman from the verse may add safely that both Junias and Andronicus are "outstanding among apostles."[35]

Diakoneo

There are certain well known passages in the New Testament (e.g. 1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:33-38) that may reveal how translators perceive the position of women in the church or family. I would like however to concentrate here on a less visible and often overlooked aspect of the biblical text that may also indicate specific attitudes concerning the social position of women, namely on a Greek term *diakoneo*.

Diakoneo (to serve, to minister) is a polysemic verb that occurs thirty-seven times in the New Testament in various contexts with slightly different meanings. In Matt 4:11 angels that came to Jesus after his temptation in the desert "attended him" (NIV) or "waited on him" (NRSV) and when Peter's mother-in-law was healed from fever by Jesus (Matt 8:15), she got up and began to "wait on him" (NIV) or "serve him" (NRSV). *Diakoneo* also describes the mission of Jesus, who "did not come to be served, but to serve" (NIV; Matt 20:28 and parr).

The verb is also used in the synoptic gospel accounts mentioning women accompanying Jesus during his ministry and witnessing his death. The NIV translates them as follows:

> Matt 27:55
> "Many women were there, watching from a distance [the crucifixion of Jesus]. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs [*diakonousai*]."

> Mark 15:41
> "In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs (*diēkonoun*)."

34 Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals*. However, not only feminist scholars admit that the role of women in the early church was quite significant and should be also more significant today. Blomberg quotes Thomas Schreiner's statement: "I conclude that women did serve as deacons in the New Testament and that they should serve as such in our churches today" (Schreiner, "A Response to Craig Blomberg," 193-194 in Bloomberg "Today's New International Version," 201).

35 In the MB the only trace of the problematic nature of this verse is a footnote informing that Vulgate has got "Junia" not "Junius."

Luke 8:3
"Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support [*diēkonoun*] them out of their own means."

Looking at how *diakoneo* is translated in these passages, we notice that women in them are never depicted as Jesus' "servants"; they "care of" his needs or "support" him and his disciples.

How is *diakoneo* translated in the Polish versions of the Bible discussed in this article? Let us compare Polish translations with the NIV and the RSV.

Matt 27:55
"Było tam również wiele kobiet, które przyglądały się temu z daleka. Przybyły one za Jezusem z Galilei, aby Mu usługiwać [to serve him/ to wait on him[36]]." (PaB)
[Many women were there, who were watching this from a distance. They had came from Galilee, following Jesus, to serve him/ to wait on him.]

"Także wiele kobiet przypatrywało się temu z daleka. Towarzyszyły one Jezusowi od Galilei i usługiwały [served him/ waited on him] Mu." (PoB)
[Many women were also watching this from a distance. They had been accompanying Jesus from Galilee and served him/ waited on him.]

"Było tam również wiele niewiast, które przypatrywały się z daleka. Szły one za Jezusem z Galilei i usługiwały Mu [served him/ waited on him]." (MB)
[There were also many women that were watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee and served him/ waited on him.]

Mark 15:41
"Właśnie one towarzyszyły Mu i usługiwały [served him/ waited on him], kiedy był w Galilei." (PaB)
[It was these women that accompanied him and served him/ waited on him when he was in Galilee.]

"One towarzyszyły i usługiwały Jezusowi, kiedy był w Galilei." (PoB)
[They accompanied and served him/ waited on him Jesus when he was in Galilee.]

"Kiedy przebywał w Galilei, one towarzyszyły Mu i usługiwały." (MB)
[When He was in Galilee, they accompanied him served him/ waited on him.]

Luke 8:3
"Joanna, żona Chuzy, zarządcy u Heroda; Zuzanna oraz wiele innych, które im usługiwały dzieląc się swoim majątkiem." (PaB)
[Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women served him/ waited on him sharing with him their property/means.]

"Joanna, żona Chuzy, zarządcy Heroda i Zuzanna i wiele innych. Kobiety te służyły im pomocą pieniężną ze swoich własnych zasobów." (PoB)
[Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's managare; Susanna; and many others. These women supported him financially using their own resources.]

"Joanna, żona Chuzy, zarządcy u Heroda; Zuzanna i wiele innych, które im usługiwały ze swego mienia." (MB)
[Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women served him/ waited on him using their own means.]

What strikes us when we compare Polish and English renditions of passages presenting women accompanying Jesus is the fact that not only the conservative Millennium Bible but also two other more

36 A Polish infinitive "usługiwać" (whose praeterite progressive form "usługiwały" is used in other Polish translations below) denotes doing something for somebody so that he/she does not have to do anything for himself/herself and in that sense it might be also translated as "wait on sb." Yet at the same time it is closely related morphologically and semantically to "służyć" [to serve] and thus may presuppose the subservient position of the one whose task is to "usługiwać." What is more, "usługiwać" is very different from "to care for one's needs" as this would be in Polish "troszczyć się o/opiekować."

woman-friendly Polish versions translate *diakoneo* using equivalents suggesting that these women were Jesus' servants. Although an exact translation of Polish "usługiwać" is difficult (see note 36), nevertheless, anyone who knows both English and Polish will notice that the more recent English translations like the NIV and the NRSV (though not the older ones) present women accompanying Jesus as fairly independent and acting out of love. In Polish translations the same women seem to act as if they were obliged to serve Jesus. Additionally, the NIV and the NRSV present Jesus as in a way dependent on the women who "cared for his needs," while Polish translations place Jesus in the center and the women as dependent on him. What is also interesting is that the role of women as "serving" Jesus seems to be so strongly ingrained into the minds of Polish translators that, while the text of Luke 8:3 clearly indicates that the financial support of Jesus and his disciple was the sovereign decision of Joanna and other women, Polish translations present this as "serving," using constructions that are stylistically doubtful or even faulty in Polish.[37]

Diakoneo is related to *diakonos,* which may mean simply "a servant" but in the early church was used to denote a specific church function of deacon. Church historians inform us that there were deaconesses in the early church (indispensable among other things during the baptism of women and assisting them when they went naked into the baptistery) and that such women were ordained.[38] In most contemporary Christian churches, including the Catholic church, there are no deaconesses today and therefore the way translators render Rom 16:1 (*foibēn tēn adelfēn hēmōn ousan diakonon* : "our sister Phoebe that is a servant/deaconess") may indicate the position of their denomination on this issue.

The NIV translates Rom 16:1 faithfully, retaining the Greek term:

"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae."

The NIV adds also a footnote explaining the character of this function in the early church.[39]

Both Polish translations avoid a direct (and possible in Polish) translation of *diakonon* and resort to a paraphrase:

PaB
"Polecam wam naszą siostrę Febę, która pełni posługę Kościołowi w Kenchrach."
[I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who performs ministry for the church in Cenchreae]

This decision on the part of translators is hard to understand, especially due to the fact that a footnote to 1 Tim 3:8 in the Paulist Bible points to Rom 16:1 as biblical evidence for the existence of deaconesses in the early church!

PoB
"Polecam waszej opiece Febę, naszą siostrę, która przebywa i usługuje Kościołowi w Kenchrach."
[I commend to your care Phoebe, our sister, who is in and ministers for the church in Cenchreae]

However, the PoB informs the reader in the footnote that the more direct translation (i.e. "Phoebe is a deaconess") is also possible and cross references to 1 Tim 3.

In this context, the most surprising is the translation of Rom 16:1 proposed by the Millennium Bible, that never uses gender neutral language:

MB
"Polecam wam Febę, naszą siostrę, diakonisę Kościoła w Kenchrach."

This translation is the same as the NIV, with the only difference being that the Polish version uses a feminine noun "diakonisa" (deaconess) instead of a masculine "deacon":

"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church in Cenchreae."

37 Only the Poznan Bible uses a construction stylistically correct in Polish, i. e. "służyły im pomocą."

38 Wilken, *The First Thousand Years*, 203.

39 Blomberg discusses the rendering of Rom 16: 1 in the TNIV (identical with the NIV) and shows how for some critics their traditional interpretation is more important than what the biblical text actually says; Blomberg, "Today's New International Version," 201.

The fact that the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible, whose translators were more inclined to use gender neutral language, render Rom 16:1 with a paraphrase, while the more conservative Millennium Bible translates it more faithfully, may suggest that this verse is not, unlike in many contemporary English translations of the Bible, a potential source of controversy surrounding the position of women in the church. The Catholic church defines and regulates this position by means of its official teaching and therefore the way Rom 16:1 (or 1 Tim 3:8-12 for that matter) are translated is not as important as in evangelical churches, whose members rely more directly on the authority of Scripture.

Conclusion

The above brief comparison of gender neutral language in translations of selected Greek terms in English and Polish translations of the Bible leads us to the following conclusions. First, issues of gender neutral language should not be generalized; languages possessing close equivalents of *anthrōpos* (and Polish is one of them) do not have problems with its faithful rendering. This in turn may be an argument for gender neutral translation of this term into English, because it indicates that rendering *anthrōpos* with "man" in English is not correct. (If it were correct, other languages should also translate it with their equivalents of "man"; but they do not do it). Second, although gender language issues in the translation of Scripture into Polish in the twentieth century were not thoroughly or officially debated, excerpts from Polish translations presented above show that certain gender neutral solutions found their way into the Paulist Bible and the Poznan Bible, especially with regard to generic *anēr* translated functionally as "człowiek" (a human being) and to a lesser extent with the translation of *huioi* as "sons/children" in the Paulist Bible. On the other hand, we have noticed that Polish Catholic translations shy away from more radical solutions like adding "sister(s)" whenever the original biblical text has *adelphoi*. Adding "sister(s)" in the contexts discussed above, defensible from the translational point of view, seems to be too controversial in the Catholic church in Poland. Paradoxically, then, the NIV appears to be a much more liberal translation in that respect compared to Polish translations, although it is addressed to evangelical Christians. Given that both evangelicalism and Polish Catholicism may be regarded as conservative forms of Christianity, the only explanation of the fact that the NIV proposes solutions hardly imaginable in the Polish Catholic translations may be the different socio-cultural milieu in which these translations and those who use them, function. In other words, contemporary American society is more liberal than contemporary Polish society and thus American evangelical Christians accept solutions that are unacceptable to Polish Catholics. This observation seems to be confirmed by the third conclusion concerning the way Polish and English translations depict women accompanying Jesus. The brief analysis presented above, although it was limited to select translations only, suggests that different position of women in modern American society is reflected in the NIV and the NRSV by rendering *diakoneo* with equivalents stressing the independent position of women and avoiding presenting them as "servants." Conversely, all Polish translations discussed above translate *diakoneo* in such a way that the subservient position of women accompanying Jesus is highlighted. This reflects to some extent the role still assigned to women in many aspects of the official teaching of the Catholic church in Poland. They are the ones that should "serve" even if this involves conceding their own ambitions and aspirations. Using these translations Catholic preachers in Poland may for example point to women "serving" Jesus as biblical exemplars to be imitated by female members of the audience. The English translations discussed here, reflecting different socio-cultural norms, preclude such interpretations. Finally, Polish translations of *diakonos*, compared with the NIV, suggest that these translations, directed to Catholic readers, may often ignore problems concerning certain sensitive biblical passages because the Bible is not the only source of authority in the Catholic church.

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