The online conference on the Psalms was organised on March 19th, 2021 by the Theological Faculty of Trnava University within the framework of the APVV Project: A Commentary on the Psalms II and III.

The following presents: a) the main scope of the project, b) the current state of the project, and c) contributions to the conference.

a) The book of Psalms is one of the most popular readings for Christians and Jews alike, because it helps a believer to communicate their thoughts and feelings to God, especially in the most extreme moments of life. Therefore, a good understanding of a certain psalm improves one’s quality of life, especially in one’s spiritual, psychological, and emotional aspects. Furthermore, because of their poetic and intimate character psalms are attractive for non-religious people. The project consists of producing a critical commentary on the Book of Psalms. It includes the translations of the psalms from Hebrew and Greek (Septuagint), philological and text-critical notes to each translation, a modern, critical commentary, a rabbinic commentary, a patristic commentary, and a commentary of classical spirituality on individual verses and expressions; analyses of the form, the genre, and the structure of each psalm, and its theological, liturgical, and pastoral application.

As the Psalms are the product of the Ancient Near East culture, the readers will also be introduced to the basic concepts of this culture, its thinking, its society, the behavior, and the way personal and community crises were handled in the Ancient Near East society – much of which still applies today. This may be helpful when facing contemporary problems in global society, and the problems that Slovakia as a member of the EU is exposed to as well.

b) The project is running for its the third year. Three main Monographs to the Psalms (Psalm 119, Psalm 101-118 and Psalm 120-150) have been produced, with some accompanying Monographs and several Articles. The first application resulting from the Project is a special broadcast on Radio Devín: Nad Slovom/Above the Word, where the collaborators of the Project were invited to discuss their experiences on this work.

c) The conference papers represent a variety of themes reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the research team. M. Varšo presented an overview of the outstanding work in the Psalms 1–50, especially the new approach to an interpretation based on the intertextual reading of the poems from a canonical perspective. Also stressed, were the special relationships, the main topics, and the theologies unfolded in the first 50 psalms of the Psalter. J. Pigula focused on the interpretation of the Psalm in the first centuries of Christianity showing how the first Christian theologians – byzantine intellectuals – developed different techniques of the exposition in accordance with the literary instruments typical not just for the Judaeo-rabbinical, but also for Greek and Roman literary traditions, as they disregarded the classical education of that time. P. Vilhan focused on the death and afterlife in the Psalms of Korah explaining the biblical mode for approaching death. He confronted it through his personal experience in recently assisting dying patients in hospital. He proposed that the Commentary on the Psalms should have a chapter on this topic. B. Hroboň presented a special case of the Psalm from the Book of the prophet Habakuk. Since the text is not a part of the Book of the Psalms, it presents a special case of the prophetic psalmody. His paper was an output of the prepared Commentary to the
Book of Habakuk in the Vega project running in CSPS SAS and TFTU of Trnava University between 2018 – 2020. I. Moďoroši with his contribution: The Bible as the main interpretations source of J. A. Comenius reasoning, promoted the lesser-known merits of this person from modern history on the use of biblical axioms in the educative solutions of his well-known works.

The conference was open also to the public in the first part of the presentations. The second section was reserved just to the members of the team. They were informed about the state of the project, and the outcomes in the last year. A plan was proposed for the following year with binding instructions for each member of the team pertaining to the terms and duties.

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