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## **The sixth renaissance and liturgical Latin in the 21st century**

### **Abstract**

The paper is concerned with the notion of the sixth renaissance in relation to the status of Latin in the current linguistic landscape of the Roman Catholic Church. It argues that what amounts to be a revival of interest in Latin, especially as a liturgical language, though a marginal but at the same time dynamic phenomenon, may be regarded as an ecclesial analogue of the broader sixth renaissance. The factors that facilitate both revivals are presented, in particular the influence of the digital revolution. The discussion points to the symptoms of the renewed interest both in the Classical culture and languages and in liturgical Latin.

**Keywords:** sixth renaissance, liturgical Latin, revival, digital revolution

### **Introduction**

The paper discusses the relatively recent revival of Latin as a language of worship within the Catholic Church in the light of a broader phenomenon of the growing interest in Latin as part of what can potentially become the sixth renaissance. The first three sections present the concept of the sixth renaissance. The following part attempts to demonstrate that an analogous phenomenon, and possibly part of the broader sixth renaissance, can be found in the liturgical life of the Roman Catholic Church.

### **The concept of renaissance movements**

The conception of “renaissances” in the history of the western civilisation has been developed by Rémi Brague<sup>1</sup>. The core argument of the French philosopher is

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<sup>1</sup> R. Brague, *Eccentric Culture: A Theory of Western Civilization*, translated by Samuel Lester, South Bend, Indiana 2002.

based on the idea of the external position of the ancient Roman world with respect to the classical Greek tradition of Athens and the Jewish and Christian traditions of Jerusalem. The ancient Romans' awareness of being rooted in these earlier traditions was passed on to the medieval world of Latin Christianity. According to Brague, this explains why the western culture attempted to return to its authentic sources represented by Athens and Jerusalem. The attempts to rediscover the relevant sources come to be called renaissances and their important part is recovering and studying texts written in languages other than Latin, in particular in Greek<sup>2</sup> and Hebrew. As argued by Rico<sup>3</sup>, a catalyst for each of the renaissances, and actually what makes the renaissance possible, is a cultural or technological revolution. The best known example is the co-occurrence of the invention of the printing press and the Humanist Renaissance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

### **The first five renaissances**

Drawing upon Brague's work, Rico<sup>4</sup> regards movements involving a return to source texts of the civilisation as renaissances and argues that such renaissances have the following features:

- (1) a. maintaining a continuity with or breaking away from the immediate past;
- b. a connection with a breakthrough technological innovation;
- c. a renewed study and knowledge of ancient languages;
- d. establishing a canon of classical authors to be read and studied.

Based on the criteria in (1) above, Rico distinguishes five renaissances in the history of western culture. The first of them occurred in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC and had to do with the critical study and editing of Greek texts at the Library of Alexandria. It exhibited continuity with its immediate past and resulted in the first literary canon of Greek authors developed by Aristophanes of Byzantium. At that time the first Greek glossaries, grammars and commentaries appeared.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the paper "Greek" refers to ancient Greek.

<sup>3</sup> C. Rico, *La Sixième Renaissance*, 2015 <https://www.academia.edu/15567341> [accessed 4.09.2018]; Rico C., *Are we heading for a new Renaissance?*, a lecture delivered at the Paideia Institute (New York) on 8th October 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZwJ-KvvdQTI> [accessed 4.01.2022].

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

The “technological” innovation that triggered the process was the access to papyrus and the establishment of the first public library.

The second of the renaissances occurred in Athens (Greek) and partially in Rome (Latin) in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD and was facilitated by the use of the codex, which made it possible to insert comments on the margins. The major achievements of the period include advances in rhetoric and sophistics. The literary canon acquired the names of authors such as Cicero, Virgil, Horace and others.

The third revival in Classical studies is identified in the 9th and 10th centuries and is sometimes labelled the Carolingian Renaissance due to the contribution of the Emperor Charlemagne to the movement. A parallel part of the third renaissance is the Macedonian Renaissance centred around Constantinople. The technological revolution that occasioned the third renaissance was the invention of the Carolingian minuscule, which facilitated the study of manuscripts as sentence-initial capital letters appeared. While there was still no separation between words, it became possible to recognise the separation between sentences. One of the outcomes of the introduction of the minuscule was transliteration of ancient uncial manuscripts. The renewal is also marked by the rediscovery of Latin grammar and the establishment of trivium and quadrivium in the educational system. The literary canon includes a selection of ancient pagan authors, but there is a growing emphasis on ancient Christian writings.

The fourth renaissance took place in the 12th and 14th centuries, starting in the 12th century in the West and in the 13th century in the East. The technological innovation associated with the fourth renewal in Graeco-Latin studies is the introduction of the spaces between words. One of the practical effects of abandoning the *scriptio continua* method in favour of word spacing was that it enabled reading in silence. Another important achievement of that period is developing new ways of organising work in copying centres resulting in larger numbers of copies being produced. This contributed to a greater availability of Latin translations of philosophical and scientific works originally written in Greek or Arabic. Among other things, some of Aristotle’s works are rediscovered then. In the Byzantine world one can observe a development of philological studies.

The fifth renewal is also known as the Humanist Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries. What distinguishes it from the preceding four renaissances is that it breaks away from its immediate past in that it abandons the reliance on commentaries and interpretation of sacred scripture. Instead, it returns directly to

original Classical sources, including the Classical varieties of Greek and Latin. It is a period of spoken Latin and an intensive study of Greek. In terms of technological revolutions, the catalyst for the fifth renaissance movement is the invention of the printing press. Obviously, the invention led to the general mass reading. Another effect is that the copies of the same text become identical. The study of Greek and Latin was based on the pagan Greek and Roman authors rather than Imperial Latin and Hellenistic Greek ones, so the literary canon was also affected.

## The sixth renaissance

According to Leonhardt<sup>5</sup>, “the Latin millennium in Europe” inaugurated by Charlemagne between 800 and 814 came to an end around 1800. While the process was extended over several centuries, the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries marks the completion of the retreat of Latin from the status of the indispensable language of communication. In Leonhardt’s terms, Latin ceased to be a language in active use between 1760 and 1840. This is why in the context of most of the 19th and 20th centuries Latin is considered literally a dead language in the sense that the language is no longer used for spoken communication. Even as an object of inquiry Latin seems to be in retreat in worldwide terms particularly in the second half of the 20th century<sup>6</sup>. Recently, some scholars report on attempts at “total de-Latinisation” of education in Poland<sup>7</sup>.

The situation of Latin appears to change at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries as Rico<sup>8</sup> and Ochman<sup>9</sup> claim that for the last twenty years the Classical studies

<sup>5</sup> J. Leonhardt, *Latin. Story of a World Language*, translated by Kenneth Kronenberg, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England 2013, p. 245.

<sup>6</sup> J. B. Kuhner, *Global Latinists*, “New Criterion”, vol. 36, no. 6, February 2018, <https://new-criterion.com/issues/2018/2/global-latinists> [accessed 15.02.2020].

<sup>7</sup> K. Ochman, *Zmierzch cywilizacji łacińskiej czy początek szóstego renesansu?*, „Nauka” 2017, no. 4/2017, pp. 129-140; see also: G. Malinowski, *Nauczanie języka łacińskiego w Polsce. Rys historyczny i stan obecny* (<https://www.academia.edu/30959314>), and K. Ochman, *Łacina na skraju* ([www.polka1.pl/artykuly/lacina-na-skraju-1](http://www.polka1.pl/artykuly/lacina-na-skraju-1)).

<sup>8</sup> C. Rico, *La Sixième Renaissance*, 2015 <https://www.academia.edu/15567341> [accessed 4.09.2018]; C. Rico, *Are we heading for a new Renaissance?*, a lecture delivered at the Paideia Institute (New York) on 8th October 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZwJ-KvvdQTI> [accessed 4.01.2022]; C. Rico, *A new renaissance of Latin*, 2020, <https://www.polisjerusalem.org/a-new-renaissance-of-latin/> [accessed 25.02.2022].

<sup>9</sup> K. Ochman, *Zmierzch cywilizacji łacińskiej czy początek szóstego renesansu?*, „Nauka” 2017, no. 4/2017, pp. 129-140.

have experienced a significant renewal and that the movement aspires to become a sixth renaissance. The renewal is mostly concerned with Latin and to a lesser degree with Greek and other ancient languages, especially the so-called Biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic). The primacy of Latin in the purported revival of Classical studies is related to two important facts: on the one hand, Latin faced a significant decline since the early 19th century and it needs to be “rediscovered” itself, on the other hand, in the twenty-first century, apart from being associated with the ancient Roman culture, Latin is also a carrier of the Jewish and Christian traditions. Importantly, the current cultural movement involves spoken Latin and Greek.

Some scholars<sup>10</sup> point to an important forerunner of the potential sixth renaissance back in 1980s. Reginald Foster, a Catholic priest and papal Latin secretary, is credited with having trained a number of scholars in living Latin. He is well-known for teaching Latin at the Gregorian University in Rome and for organising since 1985 free summer school Latin courses known as *Aestiva Romae Latinitas*. Foster’s pioneering teaching work is assumed to have paved the way for a number of initiatives, many of them by Foster’s former students, originating in 1990s and in the early 21st century and aimed at the revival of Graeco-Latin studies. They include the following ones (locations and dates of establishment in brackets)<sup>11</sup>:

- (2) a. *Academia Vivarium Novum* (Rome, 1996), a school for boys with Latin as the primary spoken language;
- b. *Conventiculum Latinum Lexingtoniense* (Lexington, USA, 1996), an annual conference carried out entirely in Latin;
- c. *SALVI* (Septentrionale Americanum Latinitatis Vivae Institutum, Los Angeles, 1996), an institute for speaking Latin as a living language;
- d. *Kuklos Hellenikos* (Paris, 2006) for teaching Ancient Greek as a living language;
- e. the *Paideia Institute* (New York, 2010) promoting the study and appreciation of the classical humanities, in particular Ancient Greek and Latin languages and literature;

<sup>10</sup> C. Rico, *Are we heading for a new Renaissance?*, a lecture delivered at the Paideia Institute (New York) on 8th October 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZwJ-KvvdQTI> [accessed 4.01.2022]; J.B. Kuhner, *The Vatican’s Latinist*, “New Criterion”, vol. 35, no. 7, March 2017, <https://newcriterion.com/issues/2017/3/the-vaticans-latinist> [accessed 15.02.2022]; J.B. Kuhner, *Global Latinists*, “New Criterion”, vol. 36, no. 6, February 2018, <https://newcriterion.com/issues/2018/2/global-latinists> [accessed 15.02.2020].

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

f. the Polis Institute (Jerusalem, 2011) for Classical (Greek, Latin) and Semitic (Hebrew, Arabic, Sumerian) languages based on innovative teaching methods for speaking the relevant languages.

The list in (2) above is selective in that it only contains the best-known institutions. Some of the projects listed above are still continued, though some of them under changed names. What all of these initiatives have in common is that they promote learning Greek and Latin as living, spoken languages rather than focus on the study of Latin and Greek texts. This involves the development of new teaching and learning methods which facilitate speaking the ancient languages<sup>12</sup>.

Based on the criteria for renaissances in (1) above, a number of aspects of the potential sixth renaissance remain unclear since this is a process in the making. On the one hand, the current revival in Classical studies exhibits a certain continuity with the previous five renaissances, but, on the other hand, as emphasised by Rico, this is done in a different way. The technological innovation that functions as the catalyst for the current movement is the digital revolution. There is a large number of websites, blogs, forums in Greek and Latin as well as digital resources (online courses, dictionaries and databases, mobile applications, podcasts, Youtube channels) for learning ancient languages. Communication tools such as Skype, Teams or social media allow people from all over the world to have conversations in Greek and Latin. Another effect of the digital revolution on the Classical studies is an ever greater availability of original Greek and Latin texts that are digitalised and can easily be shared, which increases readership. As regards the literary canon, it is becoming larger in the context of the current revival since because the body of written works includes Koine Greek, Byzantine Greek, Imperial Latin and Neo-Latin authors. According to rough estimates there are about 5,000 speakers of Latin worldwide and, what is even more significant, most of them are young people<sup>13</sup>.

What distinguishes the purported sixth renaissance from its predecessors is the reliance on grassroots independent initiatives compared to dwindling numbers of students of Classical philologies at universities. Indeed, at the academic

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<sup>12</sup> M.E Lloyd. and S. Hunt (eds.), *Communicative Approaches for Ancient Languages*, London 2021.

<sup>13</sup> C. Rico, *Are we heading for a new Renaissance?*, a lecture delivered at the Paideia Institute (New York) on 8th October 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZwJKvvdQTI> [accessed 4.01.2022]; K. Ochman, *Zmierzch cywilizacji łacińskiej czy początek szóstego renesansu?*, „Nauka” 2017, no. 4/2017, pp. 129-140.

level the Classics seem to be under a threat of extinction<sup>14</sup>. By contrast, the sixth renaissance stands a better chance of survival as it involves a small but growing international community of teachers and students, many of them being relatively young. Paradoxically, the Covid epidemic with its limitations concerning face-to-face contact and meetings contributed to an increase in online activity in the field of Classical studies, including a plethora of online courses in Greek and Latin. As a result, exchange between Greek and Latin speakers simply went entirely digital<sup>15</sup>.

### **A revival of liturgical Latin in the 21st century?**

Liturgical Latin is a subvariety of Church Latin, where the latter is understood as “the distinctive usage of Latin developed ... to serve the Latin-speaking Church in the Western Roman Empire”<sup>16</sup>. As argued among others by Mohrmann<sup>17</sup>, the Latin found in the early Latin translations of the Scripture and from the fourth century onward in the liturgical texts is different from ordinary Latin of everyday communication. Liturgical Latin is defined as a hieratic language characterised by reliance on archaic language forms and structures, inclusion of foreign elements (primarily lexical borrowings from Biblical languages, i.e. Hebrew and Greek), and use of rhetorical figures typical of oral style (parallelism, antithesis, rhythmic clausulae, rhyme and alliteration)<sup>18</sup>. Mohrmann claims that the shift from Greek to Latin as the language of Christian worship around the 4th century AD took place only after a hieratic style of Latin, distinct from the variety used in every day communication, had developed.

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<sup>14</sup> J.B. Kuhner, *Global Latinists*, “New Criterion”, vol. 36, no. 6, February 2018, <https://newcriterion.com/issues/2018/2/global-latinists> [accessed 15.02.2020].

<sup>15</sup> S. Domagała, M. Loch, K. Ochman, *Latin Teaching in Poland: A New Renaissance with Communicative approaches?*, in *Communicative Approaches for Ancient Languages*, M.E. Lloyd and S. Hunt (eds.), London 2021, pp. 161-177.

<sup>16</sup> B.I. Knott, *Church Latin*, in *Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion*, J.F.A. Sawyer and J.M.Y. Simpson (eds.), Amsterdam 2001, pp. 179-180.

<sup>17</sup> C. Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin: Its Origins and Character*, London 1959; C. Mohrmann, *The Ever-Recurring Problem of Language in the Church*, “Theology of Renewal” 1968, no. 2, pp. 204-220.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*; see also U.M. Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer: Reflections on Liturgy and Language*, San Francisco 2012, pp. 45-72.

Although John XXIII's apostolic constitution *Veterum sapientia* (1962), issued just eight months before the opening of the Second Vatican Council, promotes the teaching of Greek and Latin and emphasises the role of Latin as the official language of the Roman Catholic Church, especially of theology and worship, the decades since the Second Vatican Council have seen the systematic decrease in the role of Latin in the Church in many dimensions. One can observe a steady decline in the active and passive mastery of Latin among the Roman Catholic clergy, let alone among the laity. The process seems to be an effect of a total disappearance of Latin from regular worship since the replacement of the Mass in Latin by the liturgy in vernacular languages in 1970, when the reformed Roman Missal of Paul VI was introduced. All of this has happened in spite of the post-conciliar papal documents reiterating need for the study of Latin by the candidates for priesthood. Actually, even the current Code of Canon Law (Canon 249) still upholds that “[t]he program of priestly formation is to provide that students not only are carefully taught their native language but also understand Latin well and have a suitable understanding of those foreign languages which seem necessary or useful for their formation or for the exercise of pastoral ministry”<sup>19</sup>. Quite importantly, while the post-Vatican II Roman Missal in all its three typical editions is written in Latin, the reformed liturgy is hardly ever celebrated otherwise than in vernacular languages. The pre-conciliar liturgy<sup>20</sup>, by definition said in Latin, was heavily restricted since 1970, although there have been some (mostly lay) initiatives aiming at its restoration (e.g. the Una Voce International organisation of the Catholic laity for the promotion of the Traditional Latin Mass)<sup>21</sup>. During the last two decades of the 20th century the Tridentine rite has survived mainly in the pastoral practice of the non-mainstream priestly institutes (e.g. Society of St. Peter) that received special permission from the Holy See to celebrate the pre-conciliar liturgy and of the Society of St. Pius X, whose canonical status remains unclear.

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib2-cann208-329\\_en.html#CHAPTER\\_I](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib2-cann208-329_en.html#CHAPTER_I) [accessed 18.02.2022].

<sup>20</sup> Some terminological clarification is in place here. There is a whole set of English terms that refer to the pre-conciliar liturgy: ‘Traditional Latin Mass’, ‘Tridentine Mass’, ‘Old Rite’, ‘Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite’, ‘Gregorian Mass’, ‘Vetus Ordo’ and ‘Usus Antiquior’. They will be used interchangeably below. By contrast, the post-Vatican II reformed liturgy is referred to as ‘New Rite’, ‘Mass of Paul VI’, ‘Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite’, ‘Novus Ordo’.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. <http://www.fiuv.org/>; <https://onepeterfive.com/non-catholics-petition-pope-latin-mass/> [accessed 22.02.2022].



While until recently the major Church documents, including papal encyclicals, exhortations, conciliar and synodal texts etc., were originally published in Latin and then translated into vernaculars, during the pontificate of Pope Francis the process is reversed and the relevant texts first appear originally in Italian and other major national languages, while the Latin version is published later on, most likely as a result of (re)translation from Italian.

The pontificate of Benedict XVI was marked by the Pope's efforts to revive Latin as the Roman Church's native language. These include the systematic use of Latin as the dominant language of papal Mass celebrations in the 2007-2013 period, the publication of *Summorum Pontificum* (2007) document on the status of the Tridentine Mass, and the erection of the Pontifical Academy for Latin. The Pontifical Academy for Latin was established in 2012 with its major goal being "the promotion and appreciation of the Latin language and culture", including different varieties of ancient and modern Latin. However, there has not been much activity on its part, as evidenced by the content of its website<sup>22</sup>.

From the point of view of the potential revival of liturgical Latin, the above-mentioned papal *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* (2007) seems to be particularly relevant as it significantly "liberated" the Tridentine Mass. According to a number of Internet sources, since its publication there has been an explosion in the number of old rite Masses around the world<sup>23</sup>. The Traditional Latin Mass can now be found on most of the continents and it gained some popularity even in unexpected corners, such as among the Native Americans<sup>24</sup>.

Although the growing popularity of the Tridentine liturgy remains a relatively marginal phenomenon and may not seem to be significant in the life of the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, it has its own dynamics and it should not be completely ignored, in particular in largely post-Christian countries of Western Europe, where the introduction of the post-Vatican II liturgical reform coincides with

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.vatican.va/content/romancuria/en/pontificie-accademie/pontificia-academia-latinitatis.index.html#pontificie-accademie> [accessed 12.03.2022].

<sup>23</sup> Cf. <https://www.crisismagazine.com/2021/the-growth-of-the-latin-mass-a-survey> [accessed 19.02.2022]; <https://lms.org.uk/statistics> [accessed 19.02.2022]; <https://www.hprweb.com/2021/01/the-demographics-of-the-extraordinary-form/> [accessed 20.02.2022]; <https://fssp.com/latin-mass-among-millennials-study/> [accessed 20.02.2022]; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-power-of-the-latin-mass-11631199405> [accessed 20.02.2022].

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/04/25/indigenous-sun-dance-latin-mass-242698> [accessed 26.04.2022].

the rapid decline in the Sunday Mass attendance during the recent 50-60 years<sup>25</sup>. What is striking, in a number of locations of the Traditional Latin Mass, the celebration was initiated in response to the requests from the laity. Even more significantly, these groups of faithful include a large number of young people<sup>26</sup>, as evidenced by the *Juventutem*<sup>27</sup>, an international organisation for young traditional Catholics whose very name points to the attachment of its founders and members to Latin. The *Juventutem* movement attempts to make its visible impact in the mainstream Church by its regular participation in the World Youth Day, a worldwide encounter of young Catholics with the Pope held about every three years in a different country, and its activity at the diocesan and parish levels. With the dwindling numbers of churchgoers in general, the growing number of participants of the Tridentine liturgy may shift the balance concerning the participation statistics of the old and new rite Masses. Beyond the involvement of the youth, the community of traditional Catholics tries to make its presence visible also by organising an annual pilgrimage to Rome, called after Benedict XVI's document *Summorum Pontificum* Pilgrimage, bringing together the clergy and faithful attached to the Tridentine Mass with liturgy celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica<sup>28</sup>.

Just as in the context of the potential sixth renaissance, the modern communication technology is a crucial tool for uniting the community of the Tridentine Mass goers. A lot of exchange takes place online, with a number of websites, discussion groups, personal blogs and vlogs, Youtube channels, social media accounts enabling people from distant corners of the world to keep in touch. The information about times and locations of liturgies is usually passed on via the Internet.

The revival of the pre-conciliar Latin liturgy entails a renewed interest in liturgical Latin, which seems to be an ecclesial analogue, if not part, of the more general sixth renaissance described above. The "resurrection" of the Traditional Latin Mass is due to a grassroots movement and effort on the part of the faithful. The interest in liturgical Latin manifests itself, among others, in local Latin courses,

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. <https://www.economist.com/international/2012/12/15/a-traditionalist-avant-garde> [accessed 10.02.2022];

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/3-reasons-why-young-catholics-love-latin-mass> [accessed 2.04.2022]; <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/why-younger-catholics-are-attracted-to-the-latin-mass-1.4627894> [accessed 2.04.2022].

<sup>27</sup> <http://juventutem.org/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.summorum-pontificum.org/>

including online ones<sup>29</sup>, and in the growing demand for hand missals or missalettes with parallel Latin and vernacular texts, many of them available also in electronic version online. Indeed, there is now a growing availability of digital aids enabling the faithful to participate in the TLM, e.g. websites, electronic versions of old missals, hand missals, prayer books and missalettes, mobile applications. Thus, it is not unusual for the faithful to make use of tablets or smartphones as aids during the old rite liturgy. The revival of the Traditional Latin Mass and liturgical Latin among young people can be interpreted as part of the effort to reclaim the Catholic identity by the young Catholics<sup>30</sup>. It is important to bear in mind that at the this point it is hard to assess the command of Latin among the Tridentine Mass participants. Obviously, some familiarity with Latin is required in the case of the faithful involved in the organisation of the liturgical celebrations, such as altar servers (frequently young boys) and members of Gregorian chant scholas.

An interesting consequence of the involvement of the Catholics attached to the Traditional Latin Mass in online communication is the appearance of Latin loans in metaliturgical online discourse, observable at least in English and Polish. This has to do with both ‘reactivation’ of older Latinate liturgical terminology as well as the emergence of new Latin-based or Latin-inspired English and Polish vocabulary<sup>31</sup>. This renewed impact of liturgical Latin on modern vernaculars resulting in Latin-English and Latin-Polish language contact definitely can be regarded as a symptom of the renewal of Latin.

The Traditional Latin Mass movement has recently been undermined by Pope Francis’ *motu proprio Traditionis custodes* (2021) heavily restricting access to the Tridentine Mass, for instance banning it from regular parish churches. The publication of the papal document entailed criticism from some high-ranking prelates and renowned Catholic commentators and sparked resentment and even protests on the part

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. for example <https://veterumsapientia.org/>

<sup>30</sup> P. Kwasniewski, *Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness: Why the Modern Age Needs the Mass of Ages*, Kettering 2017; P. Kwasniewski, *Reclaiming Our Roman Catholic Birthright: The Genius and Timeliness of the Traditional Latin Mass*, Brooklyn, NY 2020.

<sup>31</sup> W. Pskit, *Językowe konsekwencje Motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*, „Łódzkie Studia Teologiczne” 2011, no. 20, pp. 271-280; further study on the Latin influence on contemporary metaliturgical English and Polish discourse is in preparation.

of lay Catholics attached to the preconciliar liturgy<sup>32</sup>. The protests of the laity point to the vitality of the TLM movement, even though its members constitute a relatively marginal part of the Catholic community in global terms.

Even beyond the context of the Tridentine rite, Latin is occasionally used in mainstream Catholic worship. The most recent example is the announcement of the papal liturgical office concerning the solemn chant of the Passion of St. John in Latin during the Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday with Pope Francis<sup>33</sup>.

In a less direct way, Latin makes its comeback slowly through some “cracks” into the vernacular liturgical texts. It returns in an indirect way in the revised translation of the Roman Missal into English (2011). Unlike the previous 1974 version, which was in use between 1974 and 2010, the recent 2011 English translation exhibits a greater affinity to the original typical edition of the Roman Missal in terms of its faithfulness to the content of the text as well as lexical and structural influence of the original Latin prayers. The language of the 1974 English version of the Roman Missal is highly anti-hieratic and de-Latinised, i.e. deprived of any marks of the original Latin text. Apart from being overly simplified in textual terms, the 1974 missal is a product of a radical version of domestication with no lexical or structural similarities to the Latin prayers. The 2011 translation attempts to restore links with the original *Missale Romanum* in linguistic terms<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/249927/pope-francis-traditional-latin-mass-restrictions> [accessed 15.02.2022]; <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2021/07/liberal-authoritarianism-and-the-traditional-latin-mass> [accessed 15.02.2022]; <https://thefederalist.com/2021/07/27/the-latin-mass-is-the-future-of-the-catholic-church/> [accessed 15.02.2022]; <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2021/07/19/cardinal-mueller-on-the-new-tlm-restrictions/> [accessed 25.02.2022]; <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2021/12/20/the-cruel-and-incoherent-further-restrictions-on-the-traditional-latin-mass/> [accessed 25.02.2022]; <https://onepeterfive.com/monthly-rosary-rally-for-the-latin-mass-in-chicago-continues-on-march-6th/> [accessed 25.04.2022]; <https://twitter.com/EdwardPentin/status/1433359872045817860> [accessed 25.02.2022].

<sup>33</sup> <https://twitter.com/UCEPO/status/1514125345406042116> (accessed 15.04.2022); [https://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/libretti/2022/20220415-libretto-venerdi-passione.pdf](https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/libretti/2022/20220415-libretto-venerdi-passione.pdf) [accessed 15.04.2022].

<sup>34</sup> U.M. Cf. Lang, *The Voice of the Church at Prayer. Reflections on Liturgy and Language*, San Francisco 2012; W. Pskit, *The Post-Vatican II Roman Missal in English: A Preliminary Comparison of Two English Translations*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 2019, no. 67-11, pp. 47-60; for an appreciation of the 1974 translation see K.F. Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence. The Living Language of Christian Worship*, Collegeville 2003.

Another interesting instance of an influence of Latin on the liturgical vernacular is the missal for the Ordinariates for former Anglicans who converted to Catholicism in a corporate-like manner based on the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* (2009) issued by Benedict XVI. The book in question is titled *Divine Worship: The Missal* and was promulgated by Pope Francis only in 2015, which makes it one of the most recent missals in the Western Church. In textual terms it is mostly based on the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* going back to the 16th century. The English text is to a large extent a translation – or actually translations revised over time – of selected portions of the Roman Missal of that time. The English of the Ordinariate missal represents a hieratic liturgical variety of the language marked by the presence of numerous Latinate borrowings and “exotic” syntax mimicking the original Latin structures. Some of the English prayers are labelled with the initial Latin words of the original Roman Missal texts, including a large body of Scripture-based texts (e.g. psalms)<sup>35</sup>.

## Conclusion

The paper discusses the key symptoms of the onset of the sixth renaissance of Classical studies and the corresponding renewed interest in liturgical Latin in the ecclesial environment. Let us summarise the parallels between the proposed sixth renaissance and the revival of liturgical Latin. In both contexts one can observe a significant role of the digital revolution as a catalyst for the process. Both phenomena rely on grassroots initiatives with a large proportion of young people among those involved in the relevant movements. This might be related to the fact that both movements have a kind of countercultural flavour, which seems to attract some of the young. However, while the renewed interest in Latin in general amounts to be the sixth renaissance, a return to Latin as a language of worship occurs for the first time in the history of the Western Church following a decline in the use of liturgical Latin since 1970s.

What amounts to be the sixth renaissance in Classical studies and the revival of liturgical Latin may well turn out to be merely ephemeral and short-lived

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<sup>35</sup> P. Beyga, *Tradycja anglikańska w mszale dla Ordynariatów Personalnych byłych anglikanów*, Opole 2018; see also W. Pskit, *Język liturgiczny Ordynariatów Personalnych dla byłych anglikanów. Zarys ogólny*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 2020, no. 68-6, pp. 155-167.

phenomena. It is worth watching how the relevant initiatives develop. Definitely, what makes these processes potentially sustainable is their reliance on the grassroots effort and on young people.

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## **Szósty renesans a łacina liturgiczna w XXI wieku**

### **Streszczenie**

Artykuł omawia pojęcie szóstego renesansu rozumianego jako wzrost zainteresowania kulturą antyczną, a w szczególności antyczną greką i łaciną jako językami używanymi w mowie, oraz paralelnego względem niego odrodzenia łaciny liturgicznej w obrzędach rzymskokatolickich. Zwracamy uwagę na czynniki warunkujące oba zjawiska, w szczególności na pozytywny wpływ rewolucji cyfrowej jako narzędzia umożliwiającego potencjalny szósty renesans greki i łaciny oraz powrót do łaciny jako języka obrzędów w rycie rzymskim. Omawiamy też przejawy obu „renesansów”, wskazując między innymi na wpływ zainteresowania łaciną liturgiczną, zwłaszcza wśród młodszego pokolenia katolików, na współczesną angielszczyznę i polszczyznę.

**Słowa kluczowe:** szósty renesans, łacina liturgiczna, odrodzenie, rewolucja cyfrowa