Latin *Nomina Sacra* in the Early Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of the Wycliffite Bible*

Joanna Grzybowska

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to investigate the use of 'nomina sacra' in the Gospel of Matthew from an early fifteenth-century manuscript of the Wycliffite Bible (Mscr. Dresd.Od.83). nomina sacra are abbreviations for names sacred for Christians. They were transferred to Latin texts from Greek manuscripts of the Bible. The sacred names were abbreviated by the means of contractions: 'pure contractions' – the first and last letter are spelled out and 'mixed contractions' – the first two letters are written out along with the last letter (Cappelli 1929/1982, 7). In the analyzed manuscript the scribe chose to use the latter form of contractions. Although at first the originally Greek abbreviation for the name Jesus was Latinised into $\overline{IHS}$, the influence of Irish scribes brought back the Greek-like form $\overline{IHC}$. At the same time the nomina sacra in Latin texts were marked for case e.g. the abbreviation $\overline{IHU}$ – *Iēsū* (denoting genitive, dative, ablative or vocative). The five different abbreviations of the relevant type used in the examined manuscript represent the second category of nomina sacra. There are two abbreviations for the name Jesus $\overline{ihc}$ and $\overline{ihu}$ as well as abbreviations for other proper nouns important for Christians – $\overline{isrl}$ (*Israel*), $\overline{aplis}$ (*Apostlis*), $\overline{ierhu}$ (*Ierusalem*).

Keywords: nomina sacra, scribal abbreviations, paleography, Wycliffe's Bible, manuscript

---

Abstrakt

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zbadanie użycia „nomina sacra" w Ewangelii wg św. Mateusza będącej częścią manuskryptu Biblii Wycliffe'a (Mscr.Dresd.Od.83) pochodzącego z początku XV wieku. „Nomina sacra" jest to nazwa odnosząca się do skrótów używanych przez skrybów w celu wyrażenia imienia uznawanego przez chrześcijan za święte. „Nomina sacra" były przykładem kontrakcji, abrewiatury, która zazwyczaj składała się z pierwszej i ostatniej litery danego słowa (kontrakcja czysta) lub dodatkowo również ze środkowych liter (kontrakcja mieszana). Skróty te po raz pierwszy pojawiły się w greckich manuskryptach Biblii. Tradycja używania tych skrótów została następnie przeniesiona do Biblii łacińskiej. W języku łacińskim, a później również w językach wernakularnych, istniały dwa systemy skrótów na imiona święte: czysto grecki, np. $\overline{IHC}$ – *Iesus* lub $\overline{XPC}$ – *Christus* oraz częściowo łaciński, np. $\overline{IHS}$ – *Iesus* lub $\overline{XPS}$ – *Christus*. W analizowanej księdze znajduje się pięć skrótów, które mogą zostać zakwalifikowane jako „nomina sacra": $\overline{ihc}$ (*Iesus*), $\overline{ihu}$ (*Iesu*), $\overline{isrl}$ (*Israel*), $\overline{aplis}$ (*Apostlis*) oraz $\overline{ierhu}$ (*Ierusalem*).

Słowa kluczowe: nomina sacra, średniowieczna abrewiatura, paleografia, Biblia Wycliffe'a, manuskrypt

1.1. The Origins of nomina sacra

Abbreviations were usually used by scribes in order to save time and space. Parchment was a valuable material to write on; therefore, scribes sometimes used faulty parchment (e.g. with holes made during the preparation process) (de Hamel 2013, 12). The term 'nomina sacra' was coined by Traube (1907) as a name of a group of abbreviations for names sacred for Christians (quoted in Bischoff 1986/2012, 152). Roberts (1979, 26) argues that the reason for using nomina sacra was not scribe's intention to save space or time, as was the case with other abbreviations, but rather to show the sacredness of these words. It is important to mention that scribes treated as nomina sacra not only words such as 'God' or 'Jesus' but also words such as 'Son', 'Father', 'Israel' or 'Jerusalem' (Comfort 2005, 119, 250).

The tradition of using abbreviated forms of sacred names was carried from Greek into Latin. It is interesting, however, how the tradition of abbreviating sacred names began and where it came from. Traube (1907) claims that nomina sacra came into Latin texts from Hellenistic versions of the Old Testament (quoted in Bischoff 1986/2012, 152). However, Wilkinson (2015, 90) argues that nomina sacra are not connected with the Greek Old Testament traditions. Moreover, Comfort (2005, 202) claims that the nomina sacra in Latin manuscripts are associated with the Greek texts of the New Testament rather than the Old Testament because the usual abbreviation for YHWH in the Septuagint was spelled out in Greek or Hebrew letters depending on the manuscript. Similarly, Hurtado (1998, 662) shows examples of Greek Old Testament manuscripts, such as 8HevXIIgr or P. Oxy. 50. 3522 with the Hebrew Tetragrammaton (יהוה).

Comfort (2005, 207) claims that the first nomina sacra used in a Greek biblical manuscript was $\overline{KC}$ standing for <KYPIOC>, i.e. *kurios*, meaning 'Lord'. According to Wilkinson (2015, 90), the word *kurios* was used both in Jewish and Christian manuscripts of the Bible; however, it was abbreviated only in manuscripts of the New Testament. At the same time, it is impossible not to notice the Jewish roots of the principle of abbreviating sacred names (e.g. Tetragrammaton). Roberts (1979, 29) suggests that the use of an abbreviation for a sacred word was a warning for a reader reading aloud and a mark of reverence.

Among sacred names which were abbreviated in Greek biblical texts were: ΘEOC[1] – 'God', XPICTOC – 'Christ', IHCOYC – 'Jesus' and KYPIOC – 'Lord' (Hurtado 2006, 97). These words were abbreviated in Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in several ways. Comfort (2005, 200) claims that Greek nomina sacra can be divided into two groups: abbreviation by contraction and abbreviation by suspension. However, abbreviation by contraction could consist of two letters, the first and the last letter of a given word, or of three letters with an additional word-medial letter. For example, the words previously mentioned could be abbreviated in the following ways: <IHCOYC> was represented by two variations of abbreviations – $\overline{IC}$ or $\overline{IHC}$; <KYPIOC>, however, was usually abbreviated with the sign $\overline{KC}$ and never with $\overline{KPC}$ (Comfort 2005, 208–211).

---

[1] The last letter in this word <C>, a simplified version of <Σ>, called 'lunate sigma' was used in Greek manuscript from around the fourth century BC to Late Middle Ages (Thompson 1912, 108).

1.2. Forms of nomina sacra in the Latin Language

When the tradition of using nomina sacra was brought into the Latin language, the Greek pattern of abbreviating sacred names was retained. The scribes writing in Latin used contractions as a means of abbreviating sacred names. The usual way of abbreviating nomina sacra was the so-called 'mixed contraction', i.e. an abbreviation comprised of three letters (e.g. $\overline{ihs}$ or $\overline{sps}$) (Bischoff 1986/2012, 152; Cappelli 1929/1982, 7).

The scribes writing in Latin used many different forms of nomina sacra for the same word. For example, there were two variations of an abbreviation for the name *Iesus* – $\overline{ihs}$ and $\overline{ihc}$. The first version ($\overline{ihs}$) was created from a Greek abbreviation in order to match the Latin spelling of the name *Iesus;* however, the letter <H> (the Greek letter *eta*), which appeared in the middle of the abbreviation, caused confusion resulting in a frequent occurrence of a spelling variation <Ihesus> (Mantello and Rigg 1996, 80). The second version of this abbreviation ($\overline{ihc}$) was introduced to the Latin system of abbreviations most likely around the eighth century by Irish monks who proposed the use of fully Greek nomina sacra for *Iesus* – $\overline{ihc}$ and *Christus* – $\overline{xpc}$ (Bischoff 1986/2012, 154).

Another abbreviation of a sacred name which occurs in more than one variant is the abbreviation for the word *Dominus*. In this case the variation affects the middle letter of the contraction, creating abbreviations like: $\overline{dms}$ and $\overline{dns}$ (Bischoff 1986/2012, 152). Whereas the variation between the forms $\overline{ihs}$ and $\overline{ihc}$ stems from different approaches to Latinising the Greek nomina sacra, the difference between $\overline{dms}$ and $\overline{dns}$ is connected to the scribe's choice of one of the middle letters in the word *Dominus* <m> or <n>.

In Latin manuscripts nomina sacra were often inflected for case. For instance the abbreviations $\overline{ihs}$ and $\overline{ihc}$ appeared as $\overline{ihu}$[2] or $\overline{ihm}$[3] and the word *spiritus* could appear, apart from the form $\overline{sps}$[4], also in forms such as: $\overline{spm}$[5] and $\overline{spu}$[6] (Bischoff 1986/2012, 152; Lindsay 1915, 401, 404; Charzyńska-Wójcik 2013, 714–715).

---

[2] denoting gen., dat., abl. or voc. (*Iesu*).

[3] denoting acc. (*Iesum*).

[4] denoting nom. sg., gen. sg., voc. sg. (*spiritus*).

[5] denoting acc, sg. (*spiritum*).

[6] This abbreviation tends to be incorrectly expanded into the forms *spiritus* and *spiritum* (in Toronto Corpus and Strake's edition of the Paris Psalter Latin) rather than the correct form *spiritu* (Charzyńska-Wójcik 2013, 714–715).

2.1. The Mscr.Dresd.Od.83 Manuscript of the Wycliffite Bible

The manuscript of Wycliffe's Bible analysed in this paper comes from the year 1400 and its exact measurements are 17 x 12 cm.[7] It is written on parchment using gothic script with initials and pilcrows written in blue ink. The *capitula* are written in blue ink as well and are followed by red abbreviations of the name of the evangelist. The beginning of each Gospel is richly illuminated with flowers, but other pages are not illuminated.

The Mscr.Dresd.Od.83 consists of the following books of the New Testament: the Gospels, the Epistles and the Book of Revelation. They are preceded by Jerome's prologues. The manuscript contains also the Calendar of Gospel Readings and the Readings from the Old Testament for different parts of the liturgical year.

2.2. Methodology

The analysis of nomina sacra in this paper is based on the Gospel of Matthew. The reasons for analysing this particular book is that most of nomina sacra appear only in the New Testament; at the same time, the Gospel of Matthew contains a lot of references to the Old Testament. In order to conduct the analysis I prepared a semi-diplomatic transcript of the Gospel. The reason for using this form of transcribing the manuscript is that it provides a sufficiently accurate picture of the original manuscript and, at the same time, makes collecting and analyzing data more efficient. The transcript consists of 24 620 words, which equals 100 060 characters (excluding spaces). The abbreviations were expanded whenever possible and italicized. It is especially important when it comes to nomina sacra as they were expanded according to their Latin spelling, which includes the inflectional endings within the abbreviations. This is important as the Mscr.Dresd. Od.83 manuscript, like other texts written in the Middle English period, proper names (and generally nouns) no longer show inflections (except for the genitive case).

Furthermore, the verses from the manuscript containing nomina sacra were compared with the corresponding verses from the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate. The reason for using a version of Latin Vulgate from 1592 rather than a version corresponding in age with the manuscript was that in the fifteenth century, and more generally throughout the

---

[7] According to the information provided by Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats – und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden (SLUB Dresden), where it is held.

Middle Ages, manuscripts of the Vulgate were extremely varied,[8] which was one of the causes of appointing the papal commission (after the Council of Trent) to prepare an edition of the Vulgate (Vicchio 2006, 21). It led to the creation of a version later called the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate. As an edition prepared from versions circulating at that time, it provides sufficient material for investigating the appearance of sacred names in the Gospel of Matthew as well as the grammatical case of these words in Latin.

2.3. nomina sacra in the Examined Manuscript

In the manuscript there are five different abbreviations which can be classified as nomina sacra. These abbreviations are: $\overline{ihc}$, $\overline{ihu}$, $\overline{ierhu}$, $\overline{isrl}$ and $\overline{aplis}$. As two forms of *Iesus* abbreviation ($\overline{ihc}$ and $\overline{ihu}$) are used within this manuscript, one of the main objectives of this paper is to find the possible reasons for the use of two nomina sacra for the name Jesus and only one form for each of the other abbreviations. All nomina sacra used in the Gospel of Matthew can be classified as mixed contractions, i.e. abbreviations of whole words consisting of one or more middle letters apart from the first and last letter, according to Cappelli's (1929/1982) division of Latin abbreviations. The nomina sacra mentioned above appear 162 times within the Gospel of Matthew.

2.3.1. $\overline{ihc}$ / $\overline{ihu}$ Abbreviations

The abbreviations for the name Jesus are the most common out of all the abbreviations by contraction, with 116 of them in the form $\overline{ihc}$ and 54 in the form $\overline{ihu}$. The scribe uses the abbreviations: $\overline{ihu}$ (*Iesu*) and $\overline{ihc}$ (*Iesus*) interchangeably in order to indicate that a given passage from the Gospel is about Jesus. Even though the two forms are used interchangeably, their number differs substantially.

Within the entire text of the Gospel of Matthew the abbreviation $\overline{ihu}$ appears 54 times and the unabbreviated form <iesu> appears only once. Therefore, it would be logical to assume that the abbreviation appears in places where *Iesus* corresponds to the genitive, dative, ablative or vocative case in the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate. However, the abbreviation corresponds to the grammatical case of the word only in 21 occurrences of the $\overline{ihu}$

---

[8] See Charzyńska-Wójcik (2013) for more reasons behind consulting the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate when analyzing the Wycliffite translations.

abbreviation, for example, in verse 1.1:[9] "The book of þe ge=neracioun of *iesu* crist þe sone of dauiþ. þe sone of Abra=ham/" the form of the abbreviation matches the genitive case it shows in the Latin sentence. In 33 occurrences the abbreviation matches either the nominative case (23 occurrences, e.g. verse 8.3 "and *iesu* heeld forþ þe hond...") or the accusative case (10 occurrences, e.g. verse 26.69 "...þou were wᵗ *iesu* of galilee/"). This led to a comparison of all $\overline{ihu}$ abbreviations with the corresponding verses from the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate, as there was a possibility of transmitting the Latin use of said abbreviation into a Middle English translation.

However, when the verses were compared with the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate, something different was observed. Only fourteen of the abbreviations correspond to the Latin form <iesu> (denoting genitive, dative, ablative or vocative) in the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate. The rest of them can be grouped into two categories: other declensional forms (nominative *Iesus* or accusative *Iesum*) and other ways of naming Jesus (e.g. pronouns). Table 1[10] below shows the verses where the abbreviations in the manuscript do not correspond to any words in Latin version of the Gospel or correspond to a form different than <iesu>. To facilitate comparison, the relevant items are underlined in the two texts.

Table 1. Comparison of the 'Iesu' Verses in the Dresd.Od.83 Manuscript and the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate.

Verse	in English	in Latin
1.18	But þe generacioun of crist was þus¶ Whan*ne* marie þe modir of _iesu_ was spousid to Ioseph; bifore þei camen togid*ere*. sche was founden hauy-n=ge of þe holi goost in þe wombe/	Christi autem generatio sic erat: Cum esset desponsata mater <u>eius</u> Maria Ioseph, antequam convenirent, inventa est in utero habens de Spiritu Sancto.
3.15	b*ut* _iesu_ answeride *and* seide to hi*m*/ Suffre now/ For þus it falliþ to us to fulfille al riȝtfulnes/	Respondens autem <u>Iesus</u>, dixit ei: Sine modo: sic enim decet nos implere omnem iustitiam. Tunc dimisit eum.

---

[9] The verse numbering in this paper corresponds to the verse numbering used in the transcript of the Gospel of Matthew (which in turn corresponds to the verse numbering in Hetzenauer's edition of the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate). Verses were not numbered in the manuscript.

[10] Within all the tables shown in this paper italics are used in places where a scribal abbreviation was used in the manuscript.

[11] This is to signify that there is nothing in the source text that *iesu* in the English text corresponds to, i.e. it has to be treated as an addition.

Verse	in English	in Latin
3.16	þanne ioon suffride hi*m/ and* whanne *iesu* was baptisid; anoo*n* he wente up fro þe wat*ir/ and* lo heuenes weren opened to hi*m; and* he say þe spirit of god comy*n*=ge doun as adowue. *and* comynge on hi*m/*	Baptizatus autem <u>Iesus</u>, confestim ascendit de aqua. et ecce aperti sunt ei cæli: et vidit Spiritum Dei descendentem sicut columbam, et venientem super se.
5.1	And *iesu* seynge þe peple; wente up i*n*to an hil/ *and* wha*n*ne he was seit; hise disciplis ca=men to hi*m/*	Videns autem <u>Iesus</u> turbas, ascendit in montem, et cum sedisset, accesserunt ad eum discipuli eius,
7.28	*and* it was doon whanne *iesu* hadde een=did þese wordis; þe peple won-dride on his techi*nge/*	Et factum est: cum consummasset <u>Iesus</u> verba hæc, admirabantur turbæ super doctrina eius.
8.3	and *iesu* heeld forþ þe hond; *and* touchide hi*m and* seide/ I wole; be þou maad clene/ and anoon þe lepre of him w*as* clen=sid/	Et extendens <u>Iesus</u> manum, tetigit eum, dicens: Volo: mundare. Et confestim mundata est lepra eius.
8.10	and *iesu* herde þese þingis. and won-dri=de *and* seide to men þat sueden hi*m/* Truli I seie to ʒou; I foond not so greet feiþ in israel/	Audiens autem <u>Iesus</u> miratus est, et sequentibus se dixit: Amen dico vobis, non inveni tantam fidem in Israel.
8.14	*and* wha*n*ne *iesu* was come i*n*to þe hous of symou*n*t pet*ir*; he siʒ his wyues modir liggynge *and* schaken wiþ feueris/	Et cum venisset <u>Iesus</u> in domum Petri, vidit socrum eius iacentem, et febricitantem:
9.4	and whanne *iesu* hadde seen her pouʒ*tis.* he seide/ wherto þenken ʒe yuel þingis in ʒoure hertis.	Et cum vidisset <u>Iesus</u> cogitationes eorum, dixit: Ut quid cogitatis mala in cordibus vestris?
9.19	*and iesu* roos *and* hise disciplis; *and* sueden hi*m/*	Et surgens <u>Iesus</u>, sequebatur eum, et discipuli eius.
9.22	and *iesu* turned and siʒ hir *and* seide/ Douʒtir haue þou trist; þi feiþ haþ maad þ*ee* saaf/ and þe wo*mman* w*as* hool fro þat hour/	At <u>Iesus</u> conversus, et videns eam, dixit: Confide, filia, fides tua te salvam fecit. Et salva facta est mulier ex illa hora.
9.23	and whanne *iesu* came i*n*to þe hous of þe prince. *and* siʒ mynstrallis and þe pe=ple makinge noise;	Et cum venisset <u>Iesus</u> in domum principis, et vidisset tibicines et turbam tumultuantem, dicebat:
11.20	þanne *iesu* biga*n* to seie repreef to citees; *in* whiche ful manye ver=tues of hi*m* were*n* doon; for þei diden not penaunce/	Tunc cœpit exprobrare Ø[11] civitatibus, in quibus factæ sunt plurimæ virtutes eius, quia non egissent pœnitentiam:

Verse	in English	in Latin
12.25	and *iesu* wi=tynge her thouȝtis; seide to hem; Ech kingdom de=partid aȝens it silf; sch*a*l be desolate/ and ech citee or hous departid aȝens it silf; schal not stonde/	Iesus autem sciens cogitationes eorum, dixit eis: Omne regnum divisum contra se desolabitur: et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se, non stabit.
14.29	And he seide/ Come ꝑou/ And Pet*ir* ȝede doun fro ꝑe boot; *and* wal=kide on ꝑe watris to co=me to *iesu*/	At ipse ait: Veni. Et descendens Petrus de navicula, ambulabat super aquam ut veniret ad Iesum.
15.32	and *iesu*; whanne hise disciplis weren cle=pid togidere. seide to he*m*/ I haue reuꝑe of ꝑe peple. for ꝑei han abiden now ꝑre daies wiꝑ me *and* han no ꝑing to ete; *and* I wole not leue he*m* fasti*n*ge; lest ꝑei failen in ꝑe wey/	Iesus autem, convocatis discipulis suis, dixit: Misereor turbæ, quia triduo jam perseverant mecum, et non habent quod manducent: et dimittere eos ieiunos nolo, ne deficiant in via.
17.4	And petir answeride; *and* seide to *iesu*; lord; it is good us to be here/ If ꝑou wolt; make we here ꝑre taber-nacli*s*; to ꝑee oon. to moises oo*n*; *and* oon to elie/ ȝitt ꝑe whi=le he spak; lo	Respondens autem Petrus, dixit ad Iesum: Domine, bonum est nos hic esse: si vis, faciamus tria tabernacula, tibi unum, Moy-si unum, et Eliæ unum
17.8	And ꝑei liften up her iȝen; *and* siȝen noman; but *iesu* aloone/	Levantes autem oculos suos, neminem viderunt, nisi solum Iesum.
18.1	IN ꝑat our pediscipli*s* camen to *iesu*; *and* seiden/ who; gessist ꝑou; is g*re*=tere in ꝑe kingdom of he=uenes?	In illa hora accesserunt discipuli ad Iesum, dicentes: Quis, putas, major est in regno cælorum?
22.15	¶ ꝑanne farisees ȝlde*n* awei *and* token acou*n*seil to take *iesu* in word/	Tunc abeuntes pharisæi, consilium inie-runt ut caperent eum in sermone.
22.35	And oon of he*m* atechere of ꝑe lawe ax=ide *iesu and* temptide him/	et interrogavit eum unus ex eis legis do-ctor, tentans eum:
22.37	*Iesu* seide to him/ ꝑou schalt loue ꝑi lord god of al ꝑin herte. *and* in al ꝑi soule. *and* in al ꝑi my*n*de/	Ait illi Iesus: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et in tota anima tua, et in tota mente tua.
26.4	*and* maden acou*n*=seil to holde *iesu* w*t* gi=le *and* sle hi*m*/	et consilium fecerunt ut Iesum dolo tene-rent, et occiderent.
26.17	And in ꝑe firste dai of ꝑeerf looues ꝑe disci=plis camen to *iesu*. *and* se-i=den/ where wolt ꝑou ꝑ*at* we make redi to ꝑee; to ete pask?	Prima autem die azymorum accesserunt discipuli ad Iesum, dicentes: Ubi vis pare-mus tibi comedere Pascha?

Verse	in English	in Latin
26.25	But iudas þat bitraiede him; answeride seiyn=ge/ maistir wher I am? *Iesu* seide to him/ Þou hast seid/	Respondens autem Judas, qui tradidit eum, dixit: Numquid ego sum Rabbi? Ait <u>illi</u>: Tu dixisti.
26.49	49 And anoon he cam to <u>*iesu*</u> *and* seide/ heil mais=tir/	Et confestim accedens ad <u>Iesum</u>, dixit: Ave Rabbi.
26.50	50 And he kisside him/ And *iesus* seide to him/ frend wherto art þou come? þanne þei camen nyз *and* leiden hondis on <u>*iesu*</u>; *and* heelden him/	Et osculatus est eum. Dixitque illi <u>Iesus</u>: Amice, ad quid venisti? Tunc accesserunt, et manus injecerunt in <u>Iesum</u>, et tenuerunt eum.
26.57	And þei heelden <u>*iesu*</u> *and* ledden him to cai=phas þe prince of pres=tis/ where þe scribis *and* þe farisees *and* þe eldre men of þe peple weren comen togidere/	At illi tenentes <u>Iesum</u>, duxerunt ad Caipham principem sacerdotum, ubi scribæ et seniores convenerant.
26.59	And þe prince of preestis *and* al þe counseil souзten fals witnessynge aзens <u>*iesu*</u> þat þei schulden ta=ke him to deeþ/	Principes autem sacerdotum, et omne concilium, quærebant falsum testimonium contra <u>Iesum</u>, ut eum morti traderent:
27.1	BUt whanne þe morutid was co=me; alle þe princis of preestis *and* þe eldre men of þe peple token acoun=seil aзens <u>*iesu*</u>. þat þei schulden take hym to deeþ/	Mane autem facto, consilium inierunt omnes principes sacerdotum et seniores populi adversus <u>Iesum</u>, ut eum morti traderent.
27.17	þerfore pilat seide to hem/ whanne þei weren togidere/ whom wolen зe; þat I delyuere to зou. wher barrabas; or <u>*iesu*</u>; þat is seid crist?	Congregatis ergo illis, dixit Pilatus: Quem vultis dimittam vobis: Barabbam, an <u>Iesum</u>, qui dicitur Christus?
27.20	Forsoþe þe prin=ce of preestis *and* þe eldre men counseiliden þe pe=ple þat þei schulden axe barrabas. but þei schul=den distrie <u>*iesu*</u>/	Principes autem sacerdotum et seniores persuaserunt populis ut peterent Barabbam, <u>Iesum</u> vero perderent.
27.26	þanne he de=lyuerede to hem barrabas/ but he took to hem <u>*iesu*</u> scourgid to be crucified/	Tunc dimisit illis Barabbam: <u>Iesum</u> autem flagellatum tradidit eis ut crucifigeretur.
27.27	þanne kniзtis of þe ius=tise token <u>*iesu*</u> in þe moot halle. *and* gadriden to hym alle þe cumpanye of knyзtis/	Tunc milites præsidis suscipientes <u>Iesum</u> in prætorium, congregaverunt ad eum universam cohortem:
27.37	*and* setten aboue his heed his cause writen/ þis is <u>*iesu*</u> of nazareth: kyng of iewis/	Et imposuerunt super caput eius causam ipsius scriptam: Hic est <u>Iesus</u> rex Judæorum.

Verse	in English	in Latin
27.54	And þe centurien *and* þei þat weren wᵗ hi*m* kepinge *iesu*. whanne þei siȝen þe erþe scha=kynge *and* þo þingis þat weren doon. þei dredde*n* greetli	Centurio autem, et qui cum eo erant, custodientes <u>Iesum</u>, viso terræmotu, et his quæ fiebant, timuerunt valde, dicentes: Vere Filius Dei erat iste.
27.55	And þer weren þer*e* ma=nye wym-men afer; þat sueden *iesu* fro galilee; *and* ministriden to him/	Erant autem ibi mulieres multæ a longe, quæ secutæ erant <u>Iesum</u> a Galilæa, mini-strantes ei:
28.5	But þe aungil answe=ride *and* seide to þe wy*m*men/ Nile ȝe drede/ For I woot þat ȝe seken *iesu* þat was crucified/	Respondens autem angelus dixit mulie-ribus: Nolite timere vos: scio enim, quod <u>Iesum</u>, qui crucifixus est, quæritis.
28.10	þanne *iesu* seide to he*m*/ Nile ȝe dre-de/ Go ȝe tel=le ȝe to my briþer*e*n; þat þei go into galile. þere þei schu-len se me/	Tunc ait illis <u>Iesus</u>: Nolite timere: ite, nun-tiate fratribus meis ut eant in Galilæam ; ibi me videbunt.

As shown in Table 1, in five of the Latin verses neither *Iesu* nor *Iesus* appears. In those verses the meaning is expressed by a 3SG verbal ending or a pronoun. In verses 1.18, 22.15, 22.35 the abbreviation $\overline{ihu}$ is represented by two forms of the masculine pronoun 'is' (eius, eum). In verse 11.20 the meaning is expressed by means of a verbal ending *cœpit* (3SG.PERF.IND.ACT.). Additionally, the nominative and accusative forms are used more frequently than the forms which match the syntactic function of the item in the English sentence.

The abbreviation $\overline{ihc}$ with as many as 116 occurrences, is more common than $\overline{ihu}$. In the Gospel of Matthew there are only three occurrences of an unabbreviated form. This confirms the clear preference of the scribe to resort to abbreviations in the case of nomina sacra. However, unlike the $\overline{ihu}$ abbreviation, $\overline{ihc}$ appears only in the subject position. In order to investigate the difference between the instances of using the $\overline{ihc}$ and $\overline{ihu}$ abbre-viations in the subject function, the relevant verses were compared with the Sixto-Clem-entine Vulgate. Table 2 shows only those verses in which the form in the manuscript does not correspond to the (overt) form in the Latin Vulgate.

Table 2. Comparison of the *Iesus* Verses in the Dresd.Od.83 Manuscript and the Sixto--Clementine Vulgate.

Verse	in English	in Latin
1.25	and he kneew hir not. til sche hadde born hir firste bigeten sone. and clepid his name *iesus*	Et non cognoscebat eam donec peperit filium suum primogenitum: et vocavit nomen eius Iesum.
8.1	whanne *iesus* was come dou*n* fro þe hil; miche peple sue=de hi*m*	Cum autem descendisset Ø de monte, secutæ sunt eum turbæ multæ
8.28	and whanne *iesus* was come ouer þe watir into þe cu*n*=tre of men of gerasa; two men metten him þat had=de*n* deuelis *and* camen out of g*a*ues ful woode. so þat no man my3te go bi þat wei/	Et cum venisset Ø trans fretum in regionem Gerasenorum, occurrerunt ei duo habentes dæmonia, de monumentis exeuntes, sævi nimis, ita ut nemo posset transire per viam illam.
9.1	And *iesus* wente up into aboot; and passide ouer þe watir. *and* cam into his citee/	Et ascendens Ø in naviculam, transfretavit, et venit in civitatem suam.
9.18	Whilis þat *iesus* spak þese pingis to hem; lo aprince cam *and* worschipi=de hi*m and* seide/ lord my dou3=tir is now deed; but come þou *and* putte þin hond o*n* hir; *and* sche schal lyue/	Hæc illo loquente ad eos, ecce princeps unus accessit, et adorabat eum, dicens: Domine, filia mea modo defuncta est: sed veni, impone manum tuam super eam, et vivet.
9.27	And whanne *iesus* pas=side fro þens; two blynde men sueden hi*m* criynge *and* seiden/ þou sone of da=uiþ; haue merci on us	Et transeunte inde Iesu, secuti sunt eum duo cæci, clamantes, et dicentes: Miserere nostri, fili David.
13.24	Ano*þir* parable *iesus* puttide forþ to he*m*; *and* seide/ þe kingdom of he=uenes is maad lijk to a man; þat sewe good seed in his feeld	Aliam parabolam proposuit illis, dicens: Simile factum est regnum cælorum homini, qui seminavit bonum semen in agro suo:
13.31	Anopir *par*able *iesus* put=tide forþ to hem; *and* seide; þe kingdom of heuenes is lijk to acorn of sene=uey; which aman took *and* sewe in his feeld/	Aliam parabolam proposuit Ø eis dicens: Simile est regnum cælorum grano sinapis, quod accipiens homo seminavit in agro suo:
13.33	Anothir *par*able *iesus* spak to hem/ þe kingdom of he=uenes is lijk to sourdou3/ which awo*mm*an took; *and* hidde in þre mesuris of mele; til it were al sowrid/	Aliam parabolam locutus est Ø eis: Simile est regnum cælorum fermento, quod acceptum mulier abscondit in farinæ satis tribus, donec fermentatum est totum.
14.14	*and iesus* 3ede out; *and* si3 agreet peple; *and* hadde reuþe on hem; *and* heelide þe sike men of hem/	Et exiens Ø vidit turbam multam, et misertus est eis, et curavit languidos eorum.

The comparison shows that the abbreviation is used not only in those places where the corresponding Latin verses show the nominative form, but also in verses where the meaning was conveyed by means of a 3SG verbal ending (cf. verses 8.1, 8.28, 9.1, 13.33, 14.14), a pronominal subject (cf. verses 9.18, 13.24) or by means of a different form of the name – *Iesu* or *Iesum* (cf. verses 1.25, 9.27).

2.3.2. Other nomina sacra

Apart from the nomina sacra indicating the name of Jesus, the scribe chose to use other abbreviations that also expressed concepts important and sacred for Christians. There are three abbreviations of this type: $\overline{aplis}$, $\overline{isrl}$, $\overline{ierhu}$. They represent the following words: *Apostlis, Israel* and *Ierusalem.*[12]

The abbreviation $\overline{aplis}$ appears only once within the Gospel of Matthew. It is also the only appearance of the word *Apostlis* in the Gospel of Matthew. The word appears in the genitive (cf. verse 10.2 "¶ *And* þese ben þe names of þe twelue *apostlis*; …"). The scribe chose the abbreviation which ends with the letters <-is>, which correspond to Middle English plural. This form also correlates to the Latin dative and ablative plural forms. Additionally, the form of the abbreviation does not correspond to the form appearing in the Vulgate (see Table 3 below). As there is only one occurrence of this abbreviation in the Gospel of Matthew, it is difficult to determine if different declensional forms of this 'nomen sacrum' were used.

The abbreviation $\overline{isrl}$ appears three times in the Gospel of Matthew. The word *Israel* in its unabbreviated form appears seven times. This contrasts with the use of the abbreviations $\overline{ihu}$ and $\overline{ihc}$, which appeared more frequently than the unabbreviated forms. A closer examination of the abbreviated and unabbreviated $\overline{isrl}$ cases reveals that there is no reason for not using the abbreviation as the abbreviated and unabbreviated forms appear in similar contexts. Another fact which distinguishes this abbreviation from the previously discussed nomina sacra is that only one form of the abbreviation is used within the manuscript, which also corresponds to the Latin nominative form.

The third abbreviation mentioned above, $\overline{ierhu}$, appears twelve times. There is only one instance of the word *Ierusalem* appearing without abbreviation. In this respect, $\overline{ierhu}$ seems to follow the pattern of the abbreviations $\overline{ihc}$ and $\overline{ihu}$. However, similarly to $\overline{isrl}$ and $\overline{aplis}$, there is only one form of an abbreviation for *Ierusalem* used in the examined

---

[12] These words are written here according to the spelling used in the manuscript.

corpus. Interestingly, the form i̅e̅r̅h̅u suggests that the word ends with the letter <u>. However, no declensional form of this word ends with this letter. This is due to the fact that the Latin words for 'Jerusalem' can be classified, according to Collins (1985, 140), into three categories of nouns: indeclinable – *Ierusalem*, first declension singular – *Hierosolyma*, *Hierosolymae* or second declension plural (neuter gender) – **Hierosolyma,** *Hierosolymorum*. Table 3 below shows the comparison of the *Israel, Ierusalem* and *Apostlis* verses in both the manuscript and the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate.

Table 3. Comparison of the 'Israel, 'Apostlis' And 'Ierusalem' Verses in the Dresd. Od.83 Manuscript and the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate.

Verse	in English	in Latin
Apostlis		
10.2	2 ¶ *And* þese ben þe names of þe twelue *apostlis*; þefirste Symount; þat is named Petir and An=drew his broþir/	Duodecim autem Apostolorum nomina sunt hæc. Primus, Simon, qui dicitur Petrus: et Andreas frater eius,
Israel		
10.23	and whanne þei pursue ʒou in þis citee; fle ʒe into anoþir/ Truly I seie to ʒou/ ʒe schulen not eende þe citees of *israel*; tofore þat mannes sone come/	Cum autem persequentur vos in civitate ista, fugite in aliam. Amen dico vobis, non consummabitis civitates Israël, donec veniat Filius hominis.
27.9	þanne þat was ful=fillid/ þat was seid by þe *pro*fete ieremie seiinge/ And þei han taken pretti pens þe priis of aman preisid whom þei p*re*-isiden of þe children of *israel*;	Tunc impletum est quod dictum est per Ieremiam prophetam, dicentem: Et acceperunt triginta argenteos pretium appretiati, quem appretiaverunt a filiis Israël:
27.42	seiden/ He made op*ere* men saaf; he mai not make him silf saaf/ If he is kyng of *israel*; come he now doun fro þe cros. *and* we bilee=uen to him/	Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere: si rex Israël est, descendat nunc de cruce, et credimus ei:
Ierusalem		
2.1	Therfore whanne *iesus* was born in bethleem of Iuda. in the daies of king Eroude; lo astromiens camen fro þe eest to *ierusalem and* seiden/	Cum ergo natus esset Iesus in Bethlehem Iuda in diebus Herodis regis, ecce magi ab oriente venerunt Ierosolymam,
2.3	But king eroude her=de/ *and* was troublid; *and* al ierusalem wiþ him/	Audiens autem Herodes rex, turbatus est, et omnis Ierosolyma cum illo.

Verse	in English	in Latin
3.5	þanne *ierusalem* wente out to hi*m and* al iudee. *and* al þe cuntre aboute iordan;	Tunc exibat ad eum Ierosolyma, et omnis Iudæa, et omnis regio circa Iordanem ;
4.25	*And* þere sueden hi*m* myche peple/ of galilee. *and* of deca=poli. *and* of *ierusalem*. *and* of iudee. *and* of biȝonde iordan/	et secutæ sunt eum turbæ multæ de Galilæa, et Decapoli, et de Ierosolymis, et de Iudæa, et de trans Iordanem.
5.35	Neiþir bi peerþe; for it is þe stool of hise feet/ Neiþir bi *ierusalem*; for it is þe citee of agreet king/	neque per terram, quia scabellum est pedum eius: neque per Ierosolymam, quia civitas est magni regis:
15.1	Thanne þe scribis *and* þe farisees ca=men to him fro *ierusalem*; *and* seiden/	Tunc accesserunt ad eum ab Ierosolymis scribæ et pharisæi, dicentes:
16.21	Fro þat tyme *iesus* bigan to schewe to his disciplis; þ*at* it bihouede hi*m* go to *ierusalem*/ *and* suf=fre manye pingis; of þe eldre me*n and* of scribis *and* p*r*incis of prestos. *and* be slayn. *and* þe pridde day to rise aȝen/	Exinde cœpit Iesus ostendere discipulis suis, quia oporteret eum ire Ierosolymam, et multa pati a senioribus, et scribis, et principibus sacerdotum, et occidi, et tertia die resurgere.
20.17	¶ And ie=sus wente up to *ierusalem*; *and* took hise twelue discipli*s* in p*r*iuetee. *and* seide to hem	Et ascendens Iesus Ierosolymam, assump-sit duodecim discipulos secreto, et ait illis:
20.18	Lo we goon up to *ierusalem*; *and* mannes sone schal be bitaken to þe p*r*incis of p*ree*s=tis *and* scribis. *and* þei schule*n* condempne him to deeþ/	Ecce ascendimus Ierosolymam, et Filius hominis tradetur principibus sacerdotum, et scribis, et condemnabunt eum morte,
21.1	ANd whanne *iesus* cam nyȝ to *ieru-salem*. and to bethfage at þe mou*n*t of olyuete/ þanne sente he hise two disciplis. a*n*d seide to hem/	Et cum appropinquassent Ierosolymis, et venissent Bethphage ad montem Oliveti: tunc Iesus misit duos discipulos,
21.10	¶ *and* wha*n*ne he was entrid into *ierusalem*; al þe cite w*a*s stirid *and* seide/ who is þis?	Et cum intrasset Ierosolymam, commota est universa civitas, dicens: Quis est hic?
23.37	¶ Ierusalem ierusalem þat sleest p*ro*fetis *and* stoonest hem þat ben sent to þee; how ofte w=olde I gade-re togidere þi children as an henne ga=deriþ togidere hir chike=nes. vndir hir wyngis. *and* þou woldist not/	Ierusalem, Ierusalem, quæ occidis prophetas, et lapidas eos, qui ad te missi sunt, quoties volui congregare filios tuos, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluisti?

2.3.3. Conclusions

The data collected from the Gospel of Matthew (Mscr.Dresd.Od.83) shows the scribe's preference for $\overline{ihc}$ to express the syntactic subject and $\overline{ihu}$ to express other syntactic functions. However, the scribe was inconsistent when it comes to use of these two abbreviations, as $\overline{ihu}$ was used ten times also in nominative position. Moreover, a comparison of the relevant verses from the manuscript and the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate did not provide a clear reason for using an abbreviation different than $\overline{ihc}$ in those ten cases. Additionally, an analysis of the corresponding verses from the manuscript and the Sixto-Clementine Vulgate showed the tendency to use nomina sacra for Jesus even when in the Latin text a pronoun or a 3SG verbal ending is used to indicate the subject of a sentence. Similarly, the use of nomina sacra instead of a pronoun in the Middle English translation can be explained only by scribe's intention to emphasize the sacredness of the person the biblical passage refers to.

What is more, there seems to be a clear distinction between the abbreviations for Jesus and other nomina sacra. There are two forms of the abbreviation for Jesus and only single form for each of the three other nomina sacra. There is no clear reason for the distinction that can be found in the manuscript itself. However, it is possible that the different use of nomina sacra in those cases is connected to Latin scribal practices and the widespread use of the $\overline{ihc}$ and $\overline{ihu}$ abbreviations in comparison to other nomina sacra. Moreover, when it comes to the abbreviations $\overline{isrl}$, $\overline{aplis}$, $\overline{ierhu}$, there is no clear reason why the scribe chose to use the nomen sacrum more frequently ($\overline{ierhu}$) and in other cases leave the majority of the occurrences unabbreviated ($\overline{isrl}$), especially because the Latin text does not provide any additional information in that matter.

Even though all abbreviations examined in this paper can be classified as nomina sacra, there is a noticeable difference between abbreviations for the divine name – Jesus and other sacred names. Apart from being used more frequently than other nomina sacra, the abbreviations for the name Jesus also retain two Latin declensional forms.

Works cited

Primary sources

Wycliffe's Bible = Das neue Testament englisch. 1400. Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek -Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek. Mscr.Dresd.Od.83.

Hetzenauer, Michael P. (ed.). 1914. *Biblia Sacra Vulgata Editionis Sixti V Pont. Max. Iussu*

Recognita et Clementis VIII Auctoritate Edita. Ex Tribus Editionibus Clementinis Critice Descripsit Dispositionibus Logicis et Notis Exegeticis Illustravit, Appendice Lectionum Hebraicarum er Gracarum Auxit. Regensburg and Rome: Friderici Pustet and Co.

Secondary sources

Bischoff, Bernhard. 1986/2012. *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Translated by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cappelli, Adriano. 1929/1982. *The Elements of Abbreviation in Medieval Latin Paleography*. Translated by David Heimann and Richard Kay. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Libraries.

Charzyńska-Wójcik, Magdalena. 2013. *Text and Context in Jerome's Psalter: Prose Translations into Old, Middle and Early Modern English*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.

Collins, John F. 1985. *A Primer of Ecclesiastical Latin*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.

Comfort, Philip Wesley. 2005. *Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Paleography & Textual Criticism*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Hamel, Christopher de. 2013. *Medieval Craftsmen: Scribes and Illuminators*. London: British Museum Press.

Hurtado, Larry W. 1998. "The Origin of Nomina Sacra: A Proposal". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117: 655–673.

Hurtado, Larry W. 2006. *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins*. Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Lindsay, Wallace Martin. 1915. *Notae latinae: an account of abbreviation in Latin mss. of the early minuscule period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mantello, Frank Anthony Carl and A. G. Rigg (eds). 1996. *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.

Roberts, Colin H. 1979. *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*: *The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy*. London: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, Edward Maunde. 1912. *Introduction to Greek and Latin palaeography*. Oxford:

Clarendon Press.

Traube, Ludwig. 1907. *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung*. Munich: Beck.

Vicchio, Stephen J. 2006. *Job in the Medieval World: The image of the Biblical Job*. Vol.2. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Wilkinson, Robert J. 2015. *Tetragrammaton: Western Christians and the Hebrew Name of God: From the Beginnings to the Seventeenth Century*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.