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**Mark's Gospel for Serbian Readers: A Brand New Translation of the Gospel  
According to Mark in Serbian: A Reader's Response**

**Summary:** In the last two centuries, the Gospel according to Mark has been translated into Serbian approximately fifteen times. This paper reflects on a new translation of the Gospel of Mark by Professor Predrag Dragutinović. The translation is based on the critical edition of the New Testament and is both easy to read and meticulously translated with sharp, direct language. It captures the essence of the Gospel according to Mark, a simple, early Christian text that delivers the Good News immediately and directly. The author believes that the clear and simple language, contemporary expressions, and grammar used in this translation make it readable and understandable for modern Serbian readers. The primary purpose of this paper is to showcase Professor Dragutinović's efforts and to illustrate how this translation stands out among other contemporary Serbian translations of Mark's Gospel in terms of style and language. It is an accurate and direct translation that modernizes the Biblical message for contemporary readers who may not understand archaic language. Although the language of this translation could easily reach a younger Serbian audience, it does not simplify the message through improvisation; rather, it captures the spirit of the original text. Finally, the paper also presents a few observations, questions, and suggestions regarding this translation.

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## Mark's Gospel for Serbian Readers A Brand New Translation of the Gospel According to Mark in Serbian: A Reader's Response

**Summary:** In the last two centuries, the Gospel according to Mark has been translated into Serbian approximately fifteen times. This paper reflects on a new translation of the Gospel of Mark by Professor Predrag Dragutinović. The translation is based on the critical edition of the New Testament and is both easy to read and meticulously translated with sharp, direct language. It captures the essence of the Gospel according to Mark, a simple, early Christian text that delivers the Good News immediately and directly. The author believes that the clear and simple language, contemporary expressions, and grammar used in this translation make it readable and understandable for modern Serbian readers. The primary purpose of this paper is to showcase Professor Dragutinović's efforts and to illustrate how this translation stands out among other contemporary Serbian translations of Mark's Gospel in terms of style and language. It is an accurate and direct translation that modernizes the Biblical message for contemporary readers who may not understand archaic language. Although the language of this translation could easily reach a younger Serbian audience, it does not simplify the message through improvisation; rather, it captures the spirit of the original text. Finally, the paper also presents a few observations, questions, and suggestions regarding this translation.

**Key words:** The Gospel according to Mark, Biblical translation, Biblical message, contemporary language, Serbian translations of Mark's Gospel.

The new translation of the Gospel according to Mark into Serbian was published by the Bible Society of Serbia in 2023. The author of this translation is Predrag Dragutinović, a professor of the New Testament at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Belgrade and the head of the Biblical Institute.

The Gospel according to Mark has been translated into Serbian approximately fifteen times over the last two centuries. It has been published separately and in several editions of the New Testament in Serbian since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century — namely, in the translations of (we will refer only to the first editions of the translations below):

- Atanasije Stojković (1773–1832), published in 1824 [*Новији Заветъ Господъ нашего Йесуса Христа*];

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- Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864), published in 1847 [*Нови Завјет Господњи нашеја Иисуса Христова*];
- Platon Atanacković (1788–1867), published in 1860 [*Апостоли и Евангелија у Праздничне и Недељне дане преко циље године*] (only a few pericopes);
- Dimitrije Stefanović (1882–1945), published in 1929 [*Јеванђелије њој Марку*; the whole New Testament in his translation was published in 1934];
- Lujo Bakotić (1867–1941), published in 1930 [*Нови Завет*; the whole Bible in his translation was published in 1933];
- Emilijan Čarnić (1914–1995), published in 1963 [*Еванђеље по Марку*; the whole New Testament in his translation was published in 1973];
- The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, published in 1984 [*Свето Писмо: Нови Завјет Господњи нашеја Иисуса Христова*];
- Aleksandar Birviš (1928–2015), published in 1986 [*Животи и раб Иисуса Христова: чећијири еванђеља*];
- An unsigned translation of the Gospel according to Mark in Serbian was published in Sweden in 1993 [*Марко: Еванђеље њој Марку у савременом преводу*];
- Contemporary Serbian translation of the New Testament [*Нови Завјет: савремени српски превод = SSP*], translated by World Bible Translation Center, published in 1997;
- New Serbian translation of the New Testament [*Нови Завјет: нови српски превод с најоменама = NSPN*], translated by Miroslav Živković, published in 2005;
- Serbian New World translation [*Свето Писмо: превод Нови свет = PNS*], published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in 2006;
- New Contemporary Serbian translation [*Свето Писмо или Библија Старој и Новој Завјету: нови савремени превод = NSSP*], published in 2010;
- New Revised Serbian translation [*Biblija: Stari i Novi Zavet: нови ревидирани превод = NRSP*], revised by Pavle Simović and Zdravko Vučinić, published in 2014;
- New Serbian translation of the Bible [*Свето Писмо: нови српски превод = NSP*], published in 2018;
- Predrag Dragutinović, published in 2023 [*Еванђеље њој Марку*].

The work of the professor of New Testament studies from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Belgrade, the Serbian biblical scholar Dr. Predrag Dragutinović (1972), presents readers with an interesting and contemporary approach to the Biblical text. From this translation of the Gospel according to Mark, it is clear that Dragutinović has prepared thoroughly and considered both the general and detailed aspects of this work.

On the one hand, this translation is into modern Serbian, making it understandable for a general readership, especially younger people — those who do not use archaic words and constructions in their communication and thus face challenges when read-

ing older translations. On the other hand, it is not a simplification of the Biblical text; rather, it is a translation of the critical edition of the New Testament, completed according to the Nestle–Aland 28th edition (published in Stuttgart in 2012). Thus, while it is an easy-to-read translation, it is also a Gospel translated in an acribic and meticulous manner, using sharp and direct language.

These features of the translation lead us to the very nature of the Gospel according to Mark. This early Christian text, simple in terms of grammar and style, delivers the Good News immediately and directly, as Professor Dragutinović underlined in his foreword to the translation. His translating efforts are based on the approach of conveying the meaning of the Gospel while preserving the simplicity, immediacy, and consistency of Mark's language and style. As he stated in the foreword, the translator invested considerable effort to bring it as close as possible to the readers. The foreword is a piece of art in itself. In just a few pages, Dragutinović elegantly describes the Gospel, addresses the textual problems and the issue of authorship, explains his intention, and presents the text — all in a few words.

In our opinion, the clarity and simplicity of the language in this translation, along with its simple grammar and the use of contemporary expressions and constructions, make it readable and understandable to the modern Serbian readership. Let us take a glimpse into this translation to illustrate Professor Dragutinović's approach. Additionally, we would like to add a few observations, questions, and suggestions regarding this translation.

Relying on older translations, especially those by Stefanović, Čarnić, and Holy Synod, the translator connects to the Serbian Biblical tradition. Dragutinović uses traditional translation models, and unlike in SSP, NSP, PNS, NRSP, and NSSP, he does not replace the imperfect tense with the perfect tense. In the introductory pericope on John the Baptist, one can read “krštavaše”, i.e. “he has been baptizing” [έβαπτιζοντο] in Mk 1:5. There is a greater use of the imperfect tense in Dragutinović's translation: “beše”, i.e. “he has been” [јв] in Mk 1:6.13.23; “služahu”, i.e. “they had been serving” [διηκόνουν] in Mk 1:13; “dolažahu”, i.e. “they had been coming” [ήρχοντο] in Mk 1:45; “kazivaše”, i.e. “he has been speaking” [έλαλει] in Mk 2:2, 4:33–34; “poučavaše”, i.e. “he has been teaching” [έδιδασκεν] in Mk 2:13, 4:2, 11:17; “navaljivahu”, i.e. “they had been pressing” [έπιπίπτειν] in Mk 3:10; “kazivaše”, i.e. “he has been saying” [έλεγεν] in Mk 3:23; “davaše”, i.e. “they had been bearing” [έδιδον] in Mk 4:8, and so on. The use of the imperfect tense is not very common in modern Serbian; however, since this tense is slightly different from the Serbian perfect tense, it is easily understandable to readers. On the other hand, this feature of Dragutinović's translation directs the reader to the ancient Biblical context and the sacred character of the text.

Both imperfect tense and aorist tense are used in Dragutinović's translation. The aorist tense can be found in many verses. The translation mostly follows the Greek original. Additionally, Professor Dragutinović sometimes uses the aorist tense to translate participles; this is a justified approach since participles have not been part of the Serbian language for a long time. Consequently, both uses of the aorist tense can be found in this translation, such as: “pođoše”, i.e. “they had left for” [ήκολούθησαν] in Mk 1:18; “odoše”,

i.e. “they had left” [ἀπῆλθον] in Mk 1:19; “videsmo”, i.e. “we had seen” [εἴδομεν] in Mk 2:12, 9:38; “podigoste”, i.e. “you had lifted” [ὑράτε] in Mk 8:19; “dohvatiše, istukoše i poslaše”, i.e. “they had taken, beaten, sent” [λαβόντες αὐτὸν ἔδειραν καὶ ἀπέστειλαν] in Mk 12:3; “posla”, “izudaraše”, “osramotiše”, i.e. “he had sent”, “they had struck”, “they had humiliated” [ἀπέστειλεν, ἐκεφαλίωσαν, ἤτιμασαν] in Mk 12:4; “ubiše”, “pretukoše”, “poubijaše”, i.e. “they had killed”, “they had punched”, “they had murdered” [ἀπέκτειναν, δέροντες, ἀποκτέννοντες] in Mk 12:5; “izbaciše”, i.e. “they had cast out” [ξέβαλον] in Mk 12:8, and so on.

In Mk 12:3–4, the words “dohvatiše”, “pretukoše”, and “poubijaše” contain a participle in the Greek text that is translated using the aorist tense. There are more such instances, as well as translations of the participle in Greek by the perfect tense. For example, the participle “βοῶντος” (“of one who cries”) in Mk 1:3, was rendered in older Serbian translations as “vapijući”, i.e. “vapijućeg”. In Dragutinović’s translation, it is translated as the pronoun + perfect tense, “onaj koji viče”; there are more such examples. Furthermore, in some cases, the imperfect tense is translated as the perfect tense. For example, in Mk 1:21, “ἐδίδασκεν” is translated as “poučavao” (“he was teaching”), whereas in Mk 2:15, 4:2, and 11:17, the same word is translated using the imperfect tense as “poučavaše” (“he has been teaching”).

On the other hand, sometimes participles in the Greek text are translated using the imperfect tense. For example, the participle “ἔχομολογούμενοι” in Mk 1:5 could be literally translated as the Serbian verbal adverb “ispovedajući” (“those who are confessing”); however, that would disrupt the style and logical order of the sentence in Serbian. Dragutinović translates it as “ispovedahu”, i.e. “they had been confessing”.

However, verbal adverbs, in both past and present forms, are used for translations of participles. Dragutinović successfully translates the text literally. For instance, the participle “λέγων” in Mk 1:7 and elsewhere (Mk 1:15.24–25.40, etc.) and the participle “λέγοντας” in Mk 1:25, 2:12 and elsewhere, are literally translated by the Serbian verbal adverb “govoreći” (“one/those who is/are saying”). The participle “κρατήσας” in Mk 1:31 and Mk 5:41 is translated literally by the Serbian verbal adverb “držeći” (“one who is holding”). The participle “ἀφέντες” in Mk 1:18,20 is literally translated by the Serbian verbal adverb “ostavivši” (“those who had left”); “εἰσελθών” in Mk 1:21 is literally translated by the Serbian verbal adverb “ušavši” (“he who has entered”), and so on. At the same time, verbal adjectives are also employed for translations of participles. For example, the participle “σπαρέντες” in Mk 4:20 is literally translated by the Serbian verbal adjective “posejana” (“having been sown”); the participle “γέγραπται” in Mk 7:6 is literally translated by the Serbian verbal adjective “napisano” (“having been written”), and so on. These features of this translation align it with traditional translations and solutions inherited from Serbian Biblical heritage, connecting it to medieval culture and the past of Slavic Christendom.

On the other hand, there are some brand new translating solutions in Dragutinović’s work that tend to convey the meaning of archaic expressions — often found in older translations — to a modern reader. Professor Dragutinović goes even beyond newer Serbian translations in this refreshing and convincing engagement. For instance, in Mk

1:7, unlike all previous translators, rather than using the traditional translation of the Greek noun “himas” (“ό ίμάς”) as “a strap” or “a rope” (“remen/remenje” in translations from Karadžić to NSP; Stojković’s translation is an exception, with “oputa/opute”), in John the Batpist’s preaching, Dragutinović uses a modern term — “shoelaces” (“pertle”) — for “ιμάντα”.

Similarly, and apparently taking care of the context, in the passage where Jesus calls four fishermen to be his disciples, in Mk 1:19–20 (and also later, in Mk 3:9, 4:1.36–37, 5:2.18.21, 6:32.45.47.51.54, 8:10.13–14 as well) he translates the noun “τό πλοῖον” as “brodić” — a Serbian diminutive, unlike earlier translators, who used different solutions (a vessel, a boat, even a ship — “čamac” and “lađa”; “lađica” in NSP is an exception).

An interesting solution is certainly the literal translation of the verb “ἐξέρχομαι”, i.e. “ἐξῆλθον” in Jesus’ preaching in Mk 1:38 as “I came out” — “izašao” — instead of “I came”, i.e. “došao” in other Serbian translations. The same applies to the translation of the noun “τό τέκνον” in Mk 2:5 which is rendered as “dete” (“child”). In earlier Serbian translations, the term is translated as “son”, i.e. “sinko” or “sine” (Stojković’s translation, with “čedo” as an exception, repeated by Atanacković [p. 71 — a reference to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of Atanacković’s translation, published in 1860]). Professor Dragutinović here again introduces a new solution for the Serbian translation, which is somewhat surprising because it is just a literal translation! Nonetheless, it was not used by previous translators, nor by modern ones.

In the passage about the paralytic man, in Mk 2:3–5 and 2:9–10, the noun “ό παραλυτικός”, meaning the paralyzed man, is not translated using an archaic form such as “raslabljeni” (Stojković, Atanacković [p. 71]), or “uzeti” (Karadžić to Holy Synod), or the more common “oduzeti” (NSP, NRSP, and SSP), nor “paralizovani” / “paralytic” (NSSP), but instead as the modern and common term — “nepokretni”.

There are other examples of the use of contemporary and understandable common language in Dragutinović’s translation. Here, we will mention only a few characteristic solutions. In the passage on gathering in Levi’s house, the verb “κατάκειμαι”, i.e. “κατακεῖσθαι” in Mk 2:15 is translated as “ispružen” (“reclined”), unlike the archaic forms in older translations, and unlike paraphrasing in newer translations (Birviš, SSP, PNS, NRSP, NSSP, NSP). In the passage on fasting, the phrase “νιόι τοῦ νυμφῶνος” in Mk 2:19 is translated literally as “sinovi svatova” (“sons of the groomsmen”), unlike simply “svatovi” in other Serbian translations, and unlike simplification and paraphrasing (as in NRSP and NSSP — “prijatelji mladoženjini” / “friends of the bridegroom”). The noun “ό νυμφίος” in Mk 2:19–20 is translated as the modern expression “mladoženja” (“groom”), which differs from earlier translations, where an archaism — “ženik” was used (Stojković, Karadžić, Holy Synod). In the same passage, the noun “τό ιμάτιον” (“clothes”) in Mk 2:21 is translated as the contemporary word “odeća”. Dragutinović’s translation resembles the modernized version of Stojković’s translation of the same word in Mk 2:21 as “odelo”, correcting the archaic translations (such as “haljina”). In the same manner, Dragutinović translated the same word elsewhere as “odeća”.

In the passage on Sabbath, the phrase “ἤρχαντο ὁδὸν ποιεῖν” in Mk 2:23 is translated as “počeše krčiti put” (“began to make/clean their way”), which reflects the very

meaning of this construction — somewhat obscured in earlier Serbian translations (“praviti put”), or even skipped (NSP). The translation of the phrase “μετ’ ὁργῆς” (lit. “with anger”) in Mk 3:5 is unique and elegant. By translating it with the adverb “ljutito” (“angrily”), Dragutinović avoids previous somewhat archaic solutions such as the adverb “gnevno” (SSP) or the literal translation “sa gnevom” (Stojković, Stefanović, Bakotić, Čarnić, Holy Synod, PNS, NRSP, NSSP), or “s ljutnjom” (NSP). This brings the text closer to the present readers.

There may have been a better and more literal solution for the verb “ἔξιστημι”, i.e. “ἔξεστη” (Mk 3:21) than “poludeo” (“he has gone mad”); traditional translations such as “izvan sebe”, i.e. “he is out of his mind” (Stojković, Karadžić, Bakotić, Čarnić, Holy Synod) or “nije pri sebi” (Stefanović) seem to be more accurate. In the Parable of the Sower, there might be a more suitable solution for the Serbian translation of the verb “κατεσθίω” in Mk 4:4 (“κατέφαγεν”) than the translation “pozobaše” (“had eaten”). This has been the only solution for the translation of this verb in Serbian since Stojković’s translation to today; however, perhaps the Serbian verb “pojesti” (or: “pokljucati” — suitable for birds) is more comprehensible to modern Serbian readers than “pozobati”.

The turcisms (words or phrases borrowed from the Turkish language) in this translation were inevitable. In Mk 4:38, in the passage about the windstorm, the noun “τό προσκεφάλαιον” (“a cushion”) is translated as “jastuk”, as in NRSP and NSSP. There is no Serbian equivalent for this Turkish word, so modern speakers of Serbian use it, as more than 3,000 Turkish words are present in the contemporary Serbian vocabulary. We strongly believe this translation is a more recognizable word for common Serbian readers than “uzglavlje” (as in Karadžić, Stefanović, Bakotić, Čarnić, Holy Synod, Birviš, NSP, and SSP). Maybe Stojković’s solution — “podglavnica” — could be an inspiration for future solutions.

In the passage on the exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac, the word “čobani” in Mk 5:14 — the translation for “οἱ βόσκοντες”, i.e. “herdsman” — may need to be reconsidered. Namely, in Eastern European and Slavic contexts (and Turkish context as well, which is important because this word is also a turcism), this noun is more appropriately used for shepherds of the sheep. Perhaps the traditional translation — “svinjari” — would be more suitable for this specific context.

One of the remarkable examples of modern solutions is Dragutinović’s translation, which can be found in Mk 5:25, in the passage about the healing of the bleeding woman. In this passage, the phrase “ῥύσει αἷματος” (“flux of blood”) is translated as “odliv krví”. This phrase is much more understandable today than older translations such as “krvotočenie” (Stojković), “tečenje krví” (from Karadžić to Holy Synod), “krvarenje” (NRSP, SSP), and is even more common than “izliv krví” (Birviš, NSP).

In the same passage, the noun “τό ἱμάτιον”, i.e. “clothes” in Mk 5:27–28.30 is translated as modern “odeća” (as it is in Birviš, SSP, and NSP) instead of the archaic “haljina” (from Karadžić to Holy Synod, NRSP, NSSP). Again, Stojković’s solution — “odežda” — is an exception, and is similar to Dragutinović’s translation.

The noun “komandant” (“a commander”) is used as the translation of Greek “ὁ χλιαρχος” in the pericope on the beheading of John the Baptist in Mk 6:21. Although it

is of Italian origin rather than Slavic, this word is clear and obvious to the Serbian readership of today, especially considering the recent history of the Balkans. It serves as the modern replacement for the earlier term “zapovednik” (SSP, PNS, NRSP, NSSP, NSP) or the archaic “vojvoda” (Stojković, Karadžić, Stefanović, Bakotić, Čarnić, Holy Synod). It also successfully overcomes paraphrases such as “representative of the army” (Birviš).

In Mk 6:27 there is one more turcism: “dželat” — for the noun “ό σπεκουλάτωρ”, i.e. “a guard” or “an executioner”. This turcism is also present in other Serbian translations of Mk 6:27 (from Karadžić to SSP), except in a few, where the term “stražar” is used (as in Stojković, Bakotić, PNS, NRSP, NSSP). Although “stražar” (“a guard”) is a quite literal translation, the Turkish term “dželat” is much more fitting for the context, especially since the literal Serbian translation “izvršitelj” means something different in a contemporary context. On the other hand, Atanacković’s translation as “gubitelj” [p. 69] could be an inspiring example for finding a better solution.

The pericope on the feeding of the five thousand people brings an interesting translation. The verb “αἴρω” in Mk 6:43 (here: “ἵραν”) is translated literally as “podigoše”, i.e. “took up” (as in Čarnić), instead of the traditional “nakupiše”, i.e. “pick up” (from Stojković to Holy Synod, Birviš, NSP, SSP). This solution is applied again in Mk 8:19–20, in the pericope on the feeding of the four thousand people. The use of the same solution for the translation of the same verb in Mk 8:34, in Jesus’ words about taking up the cross by one (“ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν”), as “podigne svoj krst”, is likely completely new, since there is no such translation in Serbian.

In Mk 6:44, the translation of the plural “ἄνδρες” as the traditional form “ljudi” is replaced by the literal “muškarci” (as in NRSP, NSSP, NSP). In Mk 7:3 there is an explanation of the manner of ceremonial washing of hands in brackets — regarding the washing by the palm (as in Čarnić, Birviš), but the explanation refers to the palm being *full of water*. Here, Dragutinović altered the traditional paraphrase of the ceremonial washing of hands to the forearms. In the following verse, the noun “ἡ ἀγορά” (“a marketplace”) is translated by the modern term “pijaca” (as in NSP), which is the more common word of today, instead of the archaic “τορζίσče” (Stojković), “tržnica”, “tržište”, “trg” (Stefanović, Bakotić, Čarnić, Holy Synod, SSP, PNS, NRSP, NSSP) or the turcism “pazar” (Karadžić).

The adverb “καλῶς” (“neatly”) in Mk 7:9 is translated literally as “baš lepo”, similar to “lepo” (as trasnalted by Čarnić and Holy Synod), and it more closely resembles Stojković’s translation “veoma lepo”, which is the same as SSP. The Syro-Phoenician woman in Mk 7:26 is again translated literally, as “Grkinja” (“a Greek woman”) for “γυνὴ Ἰνδηνίς”, rather than as “a Gentile”. In the passage concerning the healing of a deaf and mute man, the phrase “κωφὸν καὶ μογιλάλον” in Mk 7:32 is translated as “gluvog i mucavog” (“a deaf [man] that stammered”) — which, in modern terms, is equivalent to Stojković’s “gluha i mutava” along with its later repetitions and variants.

The noun “τὸ ἀντάλλαγμα”, i.e. “an exchange” in Mt 8:37, is translated literally as “zamena” (like in Čarnić, Birviš, SSP, PNS, NSP), similar to Atanacković’s “izmena” [p. 73]. The noun “ἡ ψυχή”, i.e. “a soul”, at the same place (Mk 8:36–37) is translated as “život” (“a life”, “the self”), which is more appropriate for the meaning of the biblical text

than “duša” — “a soul” (as in Stojković, Karadžić, Atanacković, Bakotić, Holy Synod, NRSP). Even so, the same word is translated as “duša” in the passage regarding the first of all the commandments (Mk 12:30), and in the passage concerning the agony in Gethsemane (Mk 14:34) — according to the traditional approach to the text.

Translating terms such as “ο γναφεύς”, one who cleans or makes woolen cloth — “a fuller” — as mentioned in the description of the Transfiguration of Jesus in Mk 9:3, is a demanding task since appropriate terms are not familiar to modern people. This challenge is particularly evident in this instance because this profession is almost extinct in the contemporary Serbian context. Traditional translations such as “belilnik” (Stojković), “beljar” (Stefanović), and “belillac” (Bakotić, SSP, NRSP, NSSP), along with the feminine form “belilja” (Karadžić, Holy Synod) or the literal translation “suknar” (Čarnić), are somewhat distant from contemporary language. Paraphrases like “no one on Earth” could bleach Jesus’ clothes in that way (as in Birviš, PNS, NSP) are obviously influenced by some modern translations. Besides, such paraphrases do not adhere closely to the original Biblical text. Dragutinović’s solution, which replaces the archaic “suknar” with the modern “perač odeće” (“a launderer”), may sound somewhat rough (as does Mark’s language in general); however, it is a comprehensible expression in today’s context.

The word “šator” in Mk 9:5 is yet another example of a turcism for which there seems to be no suitable Serbian equivalent — it is the translation of the noun “ἡ σκηνή”, meaning “a tent”. This term is more accessible to contemporary Serbian readers (the word appears in PNS and NSSP as well) than the archaic word “senica”, which has been used in traditional translations (from Stojković to Birviš), and even in modern ones (NSP, SSP). There are more turcisms and, in fact, some arabisms in Dragutinović’s translation — such as “sat” (“an hour”) for “ἡ ὥρα”, i.e. “μίαν ὥραν” in Mk 14:37 (agony in Gethsemane); this term could easily be replaced by the Serbian “čas” (as used in Stojković, Karadžić, Stefanović, Čarnić, and Holy Synod). On the other hand, it elegantly alternates with the same word previously mentioned in Mk 14:35, where Dragutinović used “čas”. For the turcism “sunder”, used for “ο σπόγγος” (“a sponge”) in Mk 15:36 (the passage concerning the crucifixion of Jesus), it seems that there is no suitable contemporary Serbian equivalent; archaic Serbian words such as “guba” (Stojković) are most likely not known to the modern reader.

Surprisingly, the verb “ἀποκαθίστημι” (“to restore”) in Mk 9:12, i.e. “ἀποκαθιστάνει”, is literally translated by an archaic Serbian verb — “vaspostaviti”. A similar (more contemporary) solution is found in one translation — “uspostaviti” (Čarnić). On the other hand, older translations point in another direction: “ispraviti” (Stojković), “uređiti” (Karadžić, Stefanović, Bakotić, Holy Synod), “obnoviti” (SSP, PNS, NRSP, NSSP, NSP), or paraphrase (Birviš).

The phrase “πνεῦμα ἄλαλον” (“a mute spirit”) in Mk 9:17 (the passage on the healing of a mute boy) is translated literally — as “duh nemušti”. This translation is a unique solution. Dragutinović captures the nuances of both the Biblical and Serbian languages. This translation is closer to the earlier “duh nemosti” (SSP), more meaningful than “duh nemi” (Stojković, Karadžić, Atanacković [p. 74], Stefanović, Bakotić,

Čarnić, Holy Synod), and much more elegant then paraphrases, inspired by other, most probably English translations (Birviš, PNS, NRSP, NSSP, NSP). However, the translation of “ἄλαλον καὶ κωφὸν πνεῦμα” in Mk 9:25 is “duše nemi i gluvi” — as in older translations, different from two recent translations: “duše nemosti i gluivila / gluvoće” (SSP, NSP). In Mk 9:26, the verb “λέγω”, i.e. “λέγειν”, is translated by the verbal adjective “mislili” (“they thought”), contrary to the literal and traditional translations of “govorili” or “rekli” (“they said”). Perhaps this is a point in the translation that could be reconsidered.

The verse “ὅς γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν καθ’ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἔστιν” in Mk 9:40 is translated as “ko nije protiv *nas*, sa *nama* je” — that is, “whoever is not against *us* is on *our* side”. This translation conveys the literal meaning, different from “ko nije protiv *vas*, sa *vama* je” — that is, “whoever is not against *you* is on *your* side”, which can be found in earlier translations (from Stojković to Holy Synod). Consistently, the personal pronoun “ἡμῶν” is again translated as “our” — “naš” in Mk 11:10, “naše” in Mk 12:7, “našim” in Mk 12:11, and “naš” in Mk 12:29.

The “heavy millstone” — “težak vodenički kamen” — in Mk 9:42 is the translation of “μύλος ὄνικὸς”. Interestingly, in Serbian translations there is no translation of the adjective “ὄνικός” as “heavy”, “težak” (NSP is an exception, with a similar rendering: “teški vodenični kamen”). In earlier translations this adjective is either skipped (Stojković, Karadžić, Bakotić, Holy Synod, SSP, NRSP, NSSP) or translated (or paraphrased) as “of a donkey” — “magareći” (Stefanović, Čarnić, Birviš, PNS).

In Mk 9:45, the adjective “χωλός” (i.e. “χωλὸν”), meaning “lame”, is translated as “kljast” (as in SSP). The traditional translation is “hrom” (from Stojković to NRSP; Birviš is an exception as he paraphrases). Nonetheless, the word “kljast” in the translation could possibly be replaced by the more modern and common Serbian adjective “kljakav”.

In Mk 9:47, the adjective “μονόφθαλμος” (i.e. “μονόφθαλμον”), meaning “one-eyed”, is translated literally as “jednook”. This is a brand new solution since the Serbian translations, published in the last 200 years, have paraphrased this word as “s jednim okom” — “with one eye”. This is also a common and modern term that perfectly and literally conveys the meaning of the Greek original.

The pericope about marriage and divorce presents an interesting translation. The phrase “βιβλίον ἀποστασίου” in Mk 10:4 is translated as “razvodni list”, i.e. “a paper/certificate of divorce” — a phrase that is comprehensible to the common Serbian readership. This is certainly not the case with the archaic expression “knjiga otpusna/raspusna”, which means “a book of dismiss” (as used in Karadžić, Stefanović, Bakotić, Čarnić, Holy Synod). This translation is again much closer to Stojković’s translation of “razvodno pismo”.

The phrase “τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες” in Mk 10:23 is not translated simply as “bogati/bogataši” or “rich ones”. In earlier translations, the word “bogatstvo” and its derivatives were dominant. Some Serbian translations offered different wording — derivatives of the word “imetak”, such as “imućni” or “wealthy people” (Čarnić, Birviš, SSP, NSP). Professor Dragutinović provides a modern and straightforward translation: “oni koji imaju novac” — “people who have money”.

The noun “ὁ δοῦλος” in Mk 10:44 (in the passage on serving) is translated not as the traditional “sluga”, i.e. “a servant”, but as “rob”, i.e. “a slave” (as noted in Atanacković [p. 76], Birviš, PNS, NRSP, NSSP). This literal translation again echoes Stojković’s solution: archaic “rab”. Interestingly, Stojković’s translation, completed 200 years ago, still appears relevant today to a certain extent.

In the pericope on the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the question in Mk 11:5 — “τί ποιεῖτε λύοντες τὸν πῶλον” — is translated in an informal and colloquial way as “Šta vam bi da odvezujete magare?” (“What’s wrong with you to untie the young donkey?”). This formulation is close to and easily grasped by Serbian readers, especially the younger population. It is a vivid and direct expression, with both provocative and curious meaning, that makes Mark’s Gospel more accessible to the contemporary reader. This is quite a new formulation that differs from other Serbian translations.

In the Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers, in Mk 12:1, there is again a turcism — specifically, the noun “kula” or “a tower”, which translates to “ὁ πύργος”. This is a common Serbian translation (from Karadžić to Holy Synod and to NSP). Perhaps there is a Serbian equivalent for this turcism — “stražara”, meaning “a watchtower”, as used in Stojković’s translations from 1824. Paraphrases such as “stražarska kula” (as seen in SSP, PNS, NRSP, and NSSP) again involve this turcism. The noun “τό ύπολήνιον”, i.e. “a winepress”, is translated as “presa za grožđe”. Perhaps the terms “muljaonica” (Bakotić), “muljara” (Čarnić), or “muljača” (SSP) could serve as more suitable translations of this word. The word “zemljoradnici”, meaning “farmers” is a translation of the noun “ὁ γεωργός” in the same verse (in the plural — “γεωργοῖς”), but it does not seem to fit the context effectively (same as in Mk 12:2.7.9). The traditional translation “vinogradari” (“vinedressers”), present in Serbian translations from Stojković to SSP, could be an elegant solution. The word “vinogradar” is commonly used in the Serbian context today, with the appropriate meaning, while the word “zemljoradnik” has a broader and slightly different meaning today — e.g. “a farmer”, “a husbandman”, or even “a gardener”.

There might be a more appropriate and common Serbian word for “ὁ κύριος” (“a master”) in Mk 12:9 and Mk 13:35 than the somewhat colloquial hungarism “gazda”. Although this is a commonly and frequently used word, the traditional literal translation “gospodar” would also be a solid solution. Another Serbian word, “vlasnik”, meaning “an owner”, which has already been used in recent translations, also fits well. There is also the Serbian word “domaćin”, with strong historical and cultural significance in the Serbian context. This word could fit Mk 13:35, although it is not a literal translation; or perhaps it is, depending on its use in a rural (and almost extinct) context, where it could be an appropriate term, or in an urban context (the only contemporary one), where this word carries no such meaning.

The phrase “κεφαλὴν γωνίας” in Mk 12:10 is rendered somewhat freely as “noseći kamen” — “a chief stone”. On the one hand, it is not necessary to paraphrase here; the traditional translation “glava od ugla”, meaning “the head of the corner”, is quite literal. However, this literal meaning may not resonate with the contemporary reader, so Professor Dragutinović’s approach is completely justified. On the other hand, there

might be other solutions, such as Stojković's paraphrase "kamen osnovanja", which could be reshaped into a more modern expression.

The noun "τό δηνάριον" in Mk 12:15 is translated as "dinar" — "a denarius". The plural "δηναρίων" in Mk 14:5 is translated as "dinari". At the same time, the same word, "δηναρίων" in Mk 6:37, is translated as "denari". If this is not a typo, perhaps these two renderings could be harmonized.

The translation of one noun certainly deserves to be mentioned. It is the translation of the noun "ό γραμματεύς", found in Mk 12:28 (and also in some other verses), as "pismoznanač" — "an expert in Scriptures". This translation is fresh and meaningful as it carries a more precise meaning than the traditional terms "knjižnik" and "književnik", which have been redefined. The term "književnik" means "a scribe" but also "a writer", which can be confusing. There are also other translations of the noun "ό γραμματεύς" in Serbian, such as "učitelj zakona" ("a teacher of the Law") or paraphrases like "a knower of Scriptures" in more recent translations. Interestingly, previous translations often combined different renderings of this term. However, the noun "ό γραμματεύς" is concisely translated as "pismoznanac" in Dragutinović's translation of the Gospel according to Mark — starting from Mk 1:22, 2:6.16, 3:22, 7:1.5, 8:34 and so on, to Mk 15:1.31.

In the pericope on Great Tribulation, the noun "ό χριστός" in Mk 13:21 is surprisingly translated as "Mesija" — "Messiah" (as seen in Stefanović and Birviš), rather than the traditional term "Christ". Nevertheless, in Mk 14:61, the same term in the question posed by the high priest is translated as the traditional "Hristos", i.e. "Christ".

In the passage on the preparation of the celebration of the Passover, in Mk 14:15, the noun "τό ἀνώγεον" ("an upper room") is translated literally as "soba na spratu" (same as in Čarnić, SSP, PNS, NSP), which appears to be more common and understandable today than the traditional "gornja odaja / soba" (as in Holy Synod, Birviš, NRSP, and NSSP).

In the pericope on the Last Supper, Jesus' words of institution in Mk 14:24 traditionally include the word "new" ("nov") in the phrase "τό αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης" ("my blood of the covenant"): "krv moja novoga saveza". Here, Dragutinović follows the traditional rendering of the text and differs from other recent translations (e.g. Stefanović, Čarnić, SSP, NSP). In choosing the word "savez" instead of the traditional "zavet", he follows recent translations inspired by Stefanović, who proposed this solution. However, it raises the question of whether the mentioned interpolation should be included in the translation of the critical edition of Mark's Gospel.

In the same passage, in Mk 14:26, the verb "ύμνεω" meaning "to sing a hymn" (here: "ύμνήσαντες"), is paraphrased as "otpevali hvalospev" (as used in SSP, PNS, NRSP, NSSP, NSP). The traditional paraphrase "otpojavši/otpojaše hvalu" — as seen in translations from Karadžić to Holy Synod (Stojković translates the phrase as "odpojaše slavu", while Birviš paraphrases it as "otpevali zahvalne psalme") — is somewhat archaic; however, it could serve as an inspiring example for shortening this paraphrase or for the translation of the Greek participle as the Serbian verbal adverb along with the addition of the corresponding noun, e.g. "otpevavši hvalospev".

In the pericope on the Crucifixion, Mk 15:21, the interpunction should be reconsidered. A comma can seriously alter the meaning of the text; similarly, the absence of a comma can change the meaning as well. Perhaps a comma could be added after the word “polja” (“a field”), before Simon’s name; otherwise, it is not clear who Simon is — the sentence implies he is the owner of the field, and the man who is the father of Alexander and Rufus is described as coming from (Simon’s) field.

The passage on Jesus’ burial provides a remarkable example of Professor Dragutinović’s translating skills. In Mk 15:46, in the verse describing how Joseph of Arimathea rolled a stone against the door of Jesus’ tomb, the verb “προσκυλίω”, i.e. “to roll to” (here: “προσεκύλισεν”) is translated literally, as “dokotrljati” (here: “dokotrlja”). In earlier Serbian translations, there is no such accurate solution. The previous translations rendered “προσεκύλισεν” as follows: “navali” (Stojković to Holy Synod), “prevali” (Atanacković [p. 178]), “navalio” (Birviš, NSP), “navaljao” (PNS, NRSP, NSSP), “navalja” (SSP). Dragutinović’s translation appears to be much more modern and relevant for today’s readers.

In the following passage, in Mk 16:3, regarding the report on the resurrection of Jesus, the verb “ἀποκυλίω” i.e. “to roll away” (here: “ἀποκυλίσει”) is translated literally, as “otkotrljati”. This translation is also new compared to other Serbian translations, where one can find verbs such as “otvaliti” (Stojković, Atanacković [p. 82]), “odvaliti” (Karadžić to Holy Synod), “ukloniti” (Birviš, using a paraphrase “da ukloni”), “odvaljati” (SSP, NRSP, NSSP), “skloniti” (PNS); the exception is NSP, which uses “oktotrljati”. The same applies to the translation of the same verb in Mk 16:4. Here Dragutinović’s rendering aligns with newer translations into Croatian, such as the Jerusalem Bible in Croatian from 1996 (JB) and the New Testament and Psalms from 2011 (NZP).

Passages on the Great Commission and Ascension of Jesus are proper illustrations of Dragutinović’s care for the integrity of the text and its theological meaning. As in other instances, he accurately translated passive forms of verbs. In Mk 16:16, in Jesus’ words on those who believe and are baptized, the verb “σώζω” meaning “to save” (here: “σωθήσεται”, future indicative passive) is translated as “he will be saved” — “biće spasen”, instead of the earlier version “he will save himself” — “spaće se” (Karadžić, Stefanović). In the passage on Ascension in Mk 16:19, the verb “ἀναλαμβάνω” (here: “ἀνελήμφθη”; aorist indicative passive) is translated literally by Dragutinović as “he was taken up” — “bi vaznesen”, instead of the traditional “he ascended” — “vozneo se” (Stojković), “uze se” (Karadžić, Stefanović, Bakotić), “uznese se” (Holy Synod).

In Professor Dragutinović’s translation, there are no verses that are not present in the critical edition, such as Mk 9:29b, 9:44, 9:46, 11:26, and 15:28. This translation was accomplished in the modern Ekavian dialect of the Serbian language, which is the dialect spoken by the majority of Serbian speakers today. The reading of this translation is delightful. The language is direct and elegant. Dragutinović succeeds in translating many words and phrases verbatim into Serbian, resulting in a refreshing and easy-to-read translation.

In terms of style and language, this translation stands out among other contemporary Serbian translations of Mark’s Gospel. It serves as an actualization of the Biblical

message, aimed at contemporary people, urban and modern people who do not understand archaic language. Additionally, this translation addresses a younger Serbian readership, not through improvisation or simplification but by being an accurate and direct translation of the original text of the Gospel according to Mark.

It seems that Serbian readers of the Bible, particularly Serbian clerics and church members, can draw conclusions from this translation regarding the language used and the interpretation of Biblical text in a contemporary context.

On the one hand, older translations are often archaic, and on the other hand, the language is changing rapidly. Therefore, there is a small chance that these older translations will be used by people younger than 50 years today. The reality indicates that the time has come for emancipation from older translations.

Another obstacle for the modern urban population in Serbia is the use of the Ijekavian dialect, a dialect that has not been widely used in Serbia for generations. Of course, Serbian speakers of Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Croatia do use the Ijekavian dialect — and the translations should be harmonized for those readers. Still, for certain reasons, the Ijekavian dialect has been the primary dialect used in Biblical translations over the last two centuries, which has posed a difficulty for Ekavian readers.

In terms of language, Professor Dragutinović responded to both of these tasks, in a proper manner, with his translation of the Gospel according to Mark. Sure, it would be good to publish an Ijekavian version of the translation for speakers of the Ijekavian dialect.

Considering the translation effort of Professor Dragutinović and the outcome, one can conclude that translating the Biblical text into modern Serbian is both possible and justified. Therefore, there is no reason to pretend we are living in the Middle Ages, or even the 19th century, nor that we are all speaking the Ijekavian dialect. Consequently, we need to reshape our theological language and translate it into modern terms in order to effectively communicate the Biblical message to the world.

On the other hand, because the Bible is a sacred text, modern translations should avoid any uncritical simplification or profanation of its language. So, maybe the time has come for emancipation from certain recent translations of the Bible in Serbian as well — translations that represent an uncritical simplification of the Biblical text. These translations are not produced by studying and translating the original Biblical texts; rather, they are often modernized versions of earlier translations, paraphrases, or translations influenced by various English versions. Dragutinović demonstrates that it is indeed possible to convey the Biblical message in contemporary language to modern readers accurately and effectively.

However, translating and interpreting sacred texts — bringing the meaning of the text to the reader — has always been a challenging and demanding task, as evidenced throughout history. In addition to the linguistic efforts and time sacrificed by translators, as well as the resources spent, there are numerous other challenges connected to this process. Moreover, such efforts were not necessarily met with a warm welcome by the church audience, let alone by the religious elites. For example, Origen's critical

work on the biblical text was beset with certain difficulties (cf. Daly 1985, 108–113; McGuckin 2004, X, 10, 29, 70–71, 163; Holliday 2011, 685–686). Jerome's translation work also entailed certain obstacles, as attested in his Prefaces and Epistles (cf. Semple 1965, 234–243). In the Slavic world, the efforts of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Saints Cyril and Methodius to translate biblical texts were even met with resistance and open hostility. Their reward was persecution, as evidenced by the hagiographic report recorded in the so-called Pannonian Legends (cf. Дојчиновић 2016). The same fate awaited their Five Followers, the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius and successors of their work, who moved to Ohrid after persecutions. In the contemporary Serbian ecclesiastical and cultural context, only a few translations are in use, while many others have been forgotten and marginalized. Even until recently, the most popular translation of the Holy Scriptures in a century and a half - the work of Vuk Karadžić and Đura Daničić - was not greeted warmly and cordially in church circles; rather, it was met with mistrust and resentment, as it was considered an unworthy translation (cf. Стојановић 1924, 619ff). The studies of Mošin (Мошин 1974) and Bogdanović (Богдановић 1974) offered a different view on Karadžić's work; finally, only after about 175 years since its publication are there claims that the Karadžić–Daničić Bible should be considered a living classic, comparable to Luther's Bible in German context (cf. Недељковић 2022, 228–229). Nevertheless, we believe Dragutinović's translation will be accepted by a wide readership, and he will persevere in continuing his work. Additionally, we expect that this translation of the critical edition of the New Testament will be accepted by the Orthodox audience, as well as the work of the previous translators of the critical text, such as Stefanović (cf. Чаякановић 1929, 327–330; Чарнић 1972, 34–35; Буловић 1980, 166–167) and Čarnić (cf. Ковачевић 1963, 83–84; Вуковић 1973, 5; Атанасијевић 1973, 177–179; Богдановић 1976, 127–131).

We also hope that the efforts of Professor Dragutinović, embodied in the new translation of the Gospel according to Mark, will be just a prelude to many more accurate translations of the books of the New Testament. While we await his next translation, we warmly recommend this worthy and successful rendering of the Gospel according to Mark to the Serbian readership. Professor Predrag Dragutinović should persevere in this work and provide us with a translation of the entire New Testament, as this attempt demonstrates his capability.

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Јеванђеље по Марку за српске читаоце  
Нови превод Јеванђеља по Марку на српски:  
одзив читаоца

**Апстракт:** У последња два века, Јеванђеље по Марку на српски језик преведено је петнаестак пута. Најскорији је превод проф. др Предрага Драгутиновића са Православног богословског факултета Универзитета у Београду. Нови превод Јеванђеља по Марку урађен је према критичком издању Новог Завета. То је читљив и лако разумљив превод јасног и непосредног израза, који према мишљењу аутора успешно преноси дух Јеванђеља по Марку — јединственог ранохришћанског текста једноставног израза који радосну вест доноси непосредно и директно. Аутор сматра да јасан и једноставан језик, савремени изрази и граматика коришћени у овом преводу исти чине читљивим и разумљивим савременим српским читаоцима. Основна намера овог рада јесте да прикаже труд професора Драгутиновића и илуструје по чему се овај превод стилски и језиком издаваја међу другим савременим српским преводима Марковог Јеванђеља. То је тачан и директан превод који својим јасним стилом осавременује библијску поруку, чинећи је пријемчивом за данашње читаоце који можда (врло вероватно) слабо разумеју архаични језик. Иако се овај превод на одређени начин обраћа млађој српској читалачкој публици, он не поједностављује и не профанизује јеванђелску поруку, већ на примерен начин преноси дух оригиналног текста. У овом осврту на новообјављени превод Јеванђеља по Марку професора Предрага Драгутиновића, аутор се осврће и на ранија преводилачка решења, наводећи и неке репрезентативне примере. Напослетку, у тексту се такође износи неколико запажања, питања и сугестија у вези са новим преводом проф. Драгутиновића.

**Кључне речи:** Јеванђеље по Марку, превођење Светог Писма, библијска порука, савремени језик, српски преводи Јеванђеља по Марку.