The whole XVI century is often referred to as a golden century of the Polish culture. Among the other important events, it brought about rapid development of book printing in Poland as a consequence of vivid discussions held by the representatives of different Christian denominations. The multidenominational situation resulted in publishing of the several full Polish translations of the Bible within one century: Jan Leopolita’s Bible (1561), Brześć Bible (1563), Szymon Budny’s Bible (1572) and Jakub Wujek’s Bible (1599). Each book was edited in the framework of a certain denominational convention – the first one and the last one were Catholic ones, the second and the third ones – Protestant. However, each one had a commentary, which possessed a very complicated structure and hence should be considered a separate genre, in spite of being a kind of secondary work, fully dependent on the translation.

Biblical commentary has a very long history, which begins inside the Bible itself, since there are text passages with the clear explanatory intention. Every translation, being a secondary literary work, caused the appearance of new commentaries. And thus the tradition of the biblical commentary was built, according to which there are supposed to be two main elements within the commentary: the theological and the linguistic ones. There are also two different types of commentary from the point of view of its form: the separate and the marginal ones.
The theological commentary, considering the denominational understanding of the most important religious issues, was dispersed within the introduction and afterword to each book of the Bible. Nowadays, it can be regarded and studied as a separate text possessing definite genre features of polemics work. Especially brilliant texts were created by Szymon Budny and Jakub Wujek, and there is vast literature devoted to their contents studied from theological, philosophical and historical points of view.

The marginal commentary was usually a mixed type of commentary. The issues discussed within the marginal commentary can be technically divided into two main types: those of linguistic nature and the theological ones. Linguistics is generally predominant in Szymon Budny’s commentary. The explanation for this can be found in his agenda as a translator: his translation of the Bible was planned as one correcting all the mistakes of the previous translations and editions, including the Septuagint and the Vulgate. In his commentary, the most frequent issue is literal rendering of the Hebrew text. In Brześć Bible, one can note both types of marginal commentary, with strong predominance of the theological type. Jakub Wujek’s Bible reserves the marginal space mostly for short word explanations, whereas Jan Leopolita’s Bible lacks this type of commentary almost completely. For instance, there are only three marginal word explanations for the whole Book of Genesis in his edition.

The most interesting type of commentary is that interfering with the text of the Bible itself. This would be considered to be impossible in the epoch of extreme piety for the Bible, but nevertheless, the fact remains the fact – Jan Leopolita and Szymon Budny dare insert their commentary into the text of their translation. Still they technically mark the borders between their commentary and the text of the Bible. Szymon Budny makes it with a special graphic symbol, similar to the equation mark. Thus he often introduces his remarks regarding word construction, and so this type of commentary should be considered to belong to the
realm of linguistics. As to Jan Leopolita, he inserts his explanations by introducing the phrase *tho iest* or similar ones into the sentence containing the biblical text. This has once led to a scientific discussion considering the complicated nature of this type of text additions in Jan Leopolita’s Bible. This type of commentary happened to be so unusual and unexpected in this type of edition, that a number of scholars still refuse to recognize it as a commentary. This kind of commentary can be called inclusive, and it appeals to the very beginning of the Bible commentary tradition. What is peculiar in it is the time and the culture where one finds it, namely Poland of the XVI century.