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The Reconciliation of the World Through the Blood of Christ's Cross as the Completion of the Work of Creation (Col 1:15-20)

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Abstract: The article contains a detailed exegesis of the Christological hymn in Col 1:15-20, highlighting the links between the theology of creation and kerygmatic theology. The first strophe (1:15-18a) emphasizes the author's intention to show the function of Christ in the creation of the world, whereas the second one (1:18b-20) exposes the fact that Christ's passion, death and resurrection were key moments in the history of the world, comparable only to the work of its creation. It is shown that both events are closely related in the hymn because reconciling the world to God in the blood of Christ is meant to be the completion of the work of creation, resulting in restoring a harmonious relationship between God and man.

Keywords: Col 1:15-20, Christology, reconciliation, creation theology, kerygmatic theology

This article aims at exegetically exploring the Christological hymn in Col 1:15-20. In order to achieve this, the function of Col 1:15-20 in the argumentative structure of the entire letter will firstly be examined, followed by a brief explanation of the most important literary aspects of the pericope. Finally, a detailed and comprehensive exegetical analysis of the hymn in terms of Christ's function as the One who, by God's will and through his work of reconciliation, completes the work of creation, will be conducted.

1. The Place of Col 1:15-20 in the Argumentative Structure of the Letter

The problem of the function of Col 1:15-20 in the pragmatic argumentation of the entire letter is inextricably linked with its author's purpose concerning the composition.[1] Traditionally, scholars assume that the letter consists of two main parts:

1 The current state of research (in 2010) on Colossians is briefly presented in Gupta, "New Commentaries on Colossians," 7–14.

dogmatic (chapters 1–2) and moral (chapters 3–4).[2] The author's pragmatic goal was to counter certain harmful tendencies in the community of the Church in Colossae, generally referred to as the "Colossian heresy."[3] It seems that the Letter to the Colossians could have been a kind of catechism presenting a coherent vision of the Christian faith to the faithful of pagan origin in an epistolary form.[4] Writing Colossians, in which one can see elements of deliberative, demonstrative and juridical rhetoric, the author intended to show the beauty and sublimity of the Christian faith. However, attempts to designate the main thesis in Col (using both rhetorical and epistolary analysis methods) around which its entire content would be integrated has not brought satisfactory results.

In general, exegetes divide Colossians into six units[5]:

1. Epistolary introduction (1:1-2).
2. Initiation of the path of faith (1:3-23).
3. Paul's participation in the mystery of Christ and his concern for the faith of the addressees (1:24–2:5).
4. Life in Christ and threats to faith (2:6–3:4).
5. Following Christ with a Christian lifestyle (3:5–4:6).
6. Concluding instructions and greetings (4:7-18).

The hymn in Col 1:15-20 is, therefore, an element of the structural unit that occurs immediately after the epistolary introduction in which Paul[6] thanks God for the faith of the addressees and asks for it being strengthened in Christ. The purpose of this Christological hymn is to sensitize Colossian readers (who were largely pagans converted to the Christian faith) to the absolute primacy and central role of Christ in their lives. Paul argues that Christ, who is revealed in the Church, has universal and indivisible authority over all creation, which God decided to reconcile to himself through his saving mission.

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2 See Lindemann, *Der Kolosserbrief*, 14.

3 This issue is competently reported by Bartosz Adamczewski (*List*, 141–142). See also Beale, *Colossians*, 12–15; McKnight, S., "Introduction"; White, *Der Brief des Paulus*, 35–45. Mark S. Medley ("Subversive Song," 421–435) argues that "the Colossian hymn draws upon the political ideology and imagery of the Roman Empire in the form of a counter-discourse, as was Jewish resistance poetry" (*ibidem*, 421). He sees Col 1:15-20 as a Christological song of protest against the legitimation of the Roman imperial power. The pragmatic intention of the hymn is to convince that "Christ is the one true Lord of all things, including the Roman Empire. Cosmic, universal lordship and redemption are the key notes of this song of protest and promise" (*ibidem*, 434–435). Similarly, Wright, "Disarming the Rulers and Authorities," 446–457.

4 See Adamczewski, *List*, 143. For a slightly different and more detailed proposal of the outline and argument of Colossians see Beale, *Colossians*, 17–21.

5 Cf. Adamczewski, *List*, 144.

6 In this article, we do not go into the question of Paul's authorship. As we can read in the letter, it was written by Paul and Timothy. Scholars have confronted this position treating Paul's authorship as disputed and classifying the letter as Deutero-Pauline.

2. Literary Peculiarities of Col 1:15-20 and Its Structure

Col 1:15-20 is an example of hymnic poetry.[7] Exegetes sometimes postulate to look for its *Sitz im Leben* in the early Christian baptismal liturgy or to treat it not as a canticle, but as a Christological confession of faith.[8] It seems, however, that the genre matrix for Col 1:15-20 should rather be sought in the Old Testament hymns (e.g., psalms) and blessings.[9]

In terms of rhetorical features, Col 1:15-20 can be interpreted as an *encomium*, that is, a song of praise in honour of some extraordinary figure.[10] In the Hellenistic-Roman literature of that time, we can find numerous works written in prose and poetry, celebrating the uniqueness of outstanding figures by exposing the extraordinary circumstances of their births in famous places, as well as by emphasizing the extraordinary qualities of their characters and deeds. These works were written in honour of rulers and people of particular merit for the community in the political, religious and other spheres of public life.[11] In the Hellenistic-Roman culture, the rhetorical *encomium* was also a way of praising gods by exposing their features, such as greatness, power, majesty, domination, care and kindness to their faithful believers.

An important place in the contemporary discussion on Col 1:15-20 is occupied by the problem of the literary origin of these verses. There is an almost universal consensus that this Christological hymn was not a product of Paul's literary-theological genius or of the Pauline school,[12] but a creative reworking of an earlier work that could have gone back to pre-Christian times.[13] As the proposals are very divergent, it is worth mentioning the most important of them.[14] Some exegetes claim that the origins of this hymn (especially vv. 15-18a) should be sought in pre-Christian, Judaic circles because in the current form of this work there are similarities to

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7 On this topic see Barth – Blanke, *Colossians*, 227–245. Hymnic characteristics in Col 1:15-20 aptly describes Steven R. Tracy (*Living*, 64–70).

8 These issues are discussed, for example, by David E. Garland (*Colossians*, 82–85).

9 See Adamczewski, *List*, 189.

10 See Tracy, *Living*, 81, who argues that the hymn aims to "centre upon the defence of the gospel, particularly the person and work of Christ, in the face of the Colossian opponents." See also Trainor, "The Cosmic Christology," 67: "the hymn seeks to recognise the social reality of the Colossian Christians. It celebrates the nature and function of Jesus in cosmic and universal terms, and imaginatively expands on the place of the Church, Jesus' 'body,' over which he is its head."

11 See also Barth – Blanke, *Colossians*, 236–241.

12 See the whole discussion and bibliography in Tracy, *Living*, 70–79; White, *Der Brief des Paulus*, 16–28.

13 Various scholars still believe that the hymn was originally written by the author of Colossians acknowledging that he may have utilized the traditional material while composing the hymn. See e.g., Moule, *The Epistles*, 60–62; Balchin, "Colossians 1:15-20," 67–94; Helyer, "Colossians 1:15-20," 167–179; McKnight, "Introduction."

14 Apart from these suggestions, attention is drawn to the similarity between the ideas present in Col 1:15-20 and the Stoic, Platonic and Hermetic thought. However, no textual proposals are given that would be a model for Col 1:15-20.

the Old Testament hymns praising God's Wisdom (e.g., Wis 7:25–8:4; Prov 8:22-31; Sir 24:3-12).[15] Others see the original material as a Gnostic hymn about the Redeemer[16] or about some divine-human being descending to earth. Still others believe that Paul adapted, completed and incorporated some early Christian hymn to Christ into Colossians.[17] Since the authors of these hypotheses cannot indicate any reliable source of such an original hymn, which then could have been re-edited and included in the epistle, it is more probable that it was created in the Pauline school,[18] which creatively elaborated ideas from the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament[19] and from various currents of Judaism and Hellenism of that time. The aim of this creative work would be the theological exposition of the idea of Christ's dominion over the entire cosmos.[20]

The exegetes are not unanimous on the internal structure of the hymn in Col 1:15-20.[21] The vast majority of them propose to divide this pericope into two strophes.[22] However, there are also scholars who distinguish three, four and even five strophes in this fairly short passage.[23]

15 See MacDonald, *Colossians*, 66–67.

16 First suggested by Ernst Käsemann ("A Primitive Christian Baptismal Liturgy," 158–159).

17 See Balchin, "Colossians 1:15-20," 65–94. See also Schweizer, "Colossians 1:15-20," 98–100.

18 John Behr ("Colossians 1:13-20," 247–248), following Barth's commentary (Barth – Blanke, *Colossians*, 235), believes that the hymn was written by the author of the letter (Paul or another person).

19 The Old Testament allusions and echoes in the entire Letter to the Colossians are extensively presented by Gordon D. Fee ("Old Testament Intertextuality in Colossians," 201–221), Christopher A. Beetham (*Echoes of Scripture*), Jerry L. Sumney ("Writing "in the Image" of Scripture," 185–229), Gregory K. Beale ("The Old Testament in Colossians," 261–274). Paul Foster ("Echoes without Resonance," 96–111; *Colossians*, 60) argues that there is no conscious use of the Old Testament within the letter.

20 John A. Dunne ("The Regal Status of Christ," 3–18) rightly emphasizes that a part of the conceptual background of the hymn is provided by regal motifs. The idea of Christ's lordship is one of the main emphasis of the whole Colossians. See among others the works by Andreas Dettwiler ("Démystification celeste," 330), Nahjib Ibrahim (*Gesù Cristo Signore dell'universo*), Ingrid Maisch (*Der Brief*; Clark, *Completing Christ's Afflictions*, 81). Some commentators dissent from this common opinion arguing that the idea is scarcely present in the letter. See Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte*, 205–219; Dübbers, *Christologie und Existenz*, and recently on the basis on lexical and syntactical data, Feník – Lapko, "The Reign of Christ in Colossians," 495–516.

21 John Behr ("Colossians 1:13-20," 148–149) argues that the hymn starts in Col 1:13 and has a chiastic structure with the central thought (5-E): "and He is the Head of the body, the Church" in 1:18a.

22 See details in Taylor – Reumann, *Ephesians*, 125–126; Trainor, "The Cosmic Christology," 61–64. See also Bruce ("The 'Christ Hymn' of Colossians 1:15-20," 99–100, 104–106) who notes a transitional link in 1:17-18a.

23 A summary of these hypotheses can be found in Tracy, *Living*, 79–80. See also Adamczewski, *List*, 192.

3. The First Strophe (1:15-18a)

The hymn in Col 1:15-20 begins with the relative pronoun ὅς (nominative, masculine, singular), indicating Christ the Son of God, in whom both the author and the addressees have redemption – the forgiveness of sins, in the context of verses 13-14 (v. 14: ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν).[24] On the other hand, in the following context, 1:21-23, the author makes the Colossians aware that they, who were once "strangers and enemies" (21a: ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθρούς), were reconciled thanks to Christ's death. This context determines the main line of meaning for the interpretation of individual expressions contained in the hymn, the pragmatic intention of which aims to show the addressees the role of Christ in the work of reconciling man to God.

The hymn first makes the addressees aware of Christ's relationship with God the Father: ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου – "He is the image of the invisible God." Calling God ἀόρατος "invisible" echoes both the OT theological concepts as well as the philosophical and cosmological ideas of the Hellenistic world.[25] The invisibility of God in the Old Testament is presumed wherever there are angels representing him, communicating his will to men (e.g., Gen 16:7-12; 22:11-12; Exod 3:2-6; 14:19-20). This should also be noticed in the legal regulations prohibiting the making of God's images (Exod 20:4-6; Deut 5:8-10) and indirectly in the prohibition of uttering his name. In the broadly understood Hellenistic culture of that time, the concept of a deity's invisibility results from the Platonic division of reality into a world experienced by senses and a world of ideas available only to mental cognition. Philo of Alexandria probably refers to this division in his theological concept of the invisible God.[26]

The idea of the invisibility of God necessarily implies the question: "How then can we know the invisible God when he is unavailable to sensual knowledge?" The Hellenistic world of the New Testament times answered this question by referring to the concept of the image εἰκών, which is indicated in Col 1:15, when Christ is called the image of the invisible God.[27] The Greek noun εἰκών can be translated into English as "image, representation, reflection, likeness."[28] Plato calls the world an "image" of God (*Timaios*, 92c) and the Sun an "image" of the idea of good (*Respublica*, 6.509a). Hellenistic thought was also no stranger to the idea of man as the image of God.[29]

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24 This context is emphasized by F.F. Bruce (*The Epistles*, *ad loc.*) and John P. Heil (*Colossians*, 64). See also Metcalf, "The Atonement," 284.

25 This idea appears explicitly three more times in the New Testament: Rom 1:20; 1 Tim 1:17 and Heb 11:27.

26 See Dunn, *The Epistle*, 87.

27 The background of the concept is discussed by David H. Johnson ("The Image," 9–15).

28 Louw – Nida, *Greek-English Lexicons*, 1923.

29 Bauer – Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 2260.

Most commentators of Col 1:15 interpret Christ as εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ[30] against the background of the Old Testament.[31] They essentially follow two directions. Some believe that the author refers to the idea – so prominent in Paul's theology – that every man, like Adam, is an image of God (see 1 Cor 11:7). By analogy, Christ as the New Adam is in a special way the image of God (the lexical correspondence between Col 1:15 and 2 Cor 4:4).[32] Others interpret the concept of Christ as the image of the invisible God against the background of the Old Testament wisdom literature,[33] which reflects the ideas of Hellenistic Judaism. In Jewish thought, developed especially by Philo of Alexandria[34] but also present in Wis 7:26, the invisible God makes himself visible through wisdom. The idea of wisdom as the image of the invisible God allowed the theologians of the Hellenistic Judaism to place a bridge between the unknowable world of the invisible God and the visible created world (including humanity). The wisdom of God, often personified in the Logos, was seen in Hellenistic Judaism both as the agent of God's image and the image itself.[35] According to Jewish sages, the idea of wisdom as the image of God found its embodiment in the Torah. This is especially evident in the Book of Sirach (24:23) and the Book of Baruch (3:36–4:1). Similarly, for the author of Colossians, God's wisdom, which is the image of God, is identified with Christ as his most perfect manifestation.[36] The emphasis is more on the revelatory than ontological aspect of the Father-Son relationship.[37] Taking into account the foregoing context (1:14), the author of the hymn explains in 1:15 that the salvific and redemptive mission of Christ, the termination of which was the death on the cross, is the continuation and completion of God's work of creation. Presenting Christ as the image of God perfectly fits into Jewish monotheism because it does not make him a distinctive subject, independent of the Father – the Creator is also the Redeemer.[38] The interpretation of Christ as the image of God in the light of

30 From a grammatical point of view, the phrase εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ can be interpreted in two ways: as a *genetivus possesoris* – the emphasis would be on Christ's belonging to God, and as a *genetivus obiectivus* – Christ as the image of God reflects him in himself. The second possibility seems to correspond more closely with the theological intention of the author of Colossians. The same conclusion is deduced by Margaret Y. MacDonald (*Colossians*, 58). See also Trainor, "The Cosmic Christology," 64–65.

31 See Barth – Blanke, *Colossians*, 247–249; Hughes, *Philippians*, *ad loc.* See also McConnell, "Colossians," 404; Macaskill, "Union(s) with Christ," 93–99.

32 Such a solution is strongly supported, for example, by Adamczewski (*List*, 195) (excluding the OT wisdom context). Christopher Northcott ("'King of Kings' in other Words," 205) argues that in Col 1:15 Christ "is presented as the legitimate ruler of the world, potentially in deliberate contrast to the world rulers of that day: the emperors of Rome, who were thus viewed by the merit of their special relationship with their gods."

33 See also Bruce, *The Epistles*, *ad loc.*; Moo, *The Letter to the Colossians*, *ad loc.* Contrarily Dunne ("The Regal Status of Christ," 9) who states that "this specific idea of image has no parallel in Wisdom tradition." Instead, he sees an allusion to Gen 1:26-28.

34 See e.g., *Legum allegoriae* 1.43; *De confusione linguarum* 97.147; *De fuga et invention* 101; *De somnis* 1.239.

35 See Dunn, *The Epistle*, 88.

36 Dunn, *The Epistle*, 89.

37 See Martin, *Colossians*, 57.

38 Similarly Thurston, *Reading Colossians*, 22–23.

the OT wisdom seems to be theologically broader and more expressive in our context. However, the concept of Christ as the New Adam should not be excluded but treated as complementary.

The second essential definition of Chris's identity in v. 15 is πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως – "the firstborn of all creation."[39] The idea of being firstborn finds an important place in the Old Testament.[40] The fact of being born as the first male child in a family resulted in the special privilege of inheriting. It seems that in our context the author does not generally refer to this Old Testament background (or more broadly, the cultural background), but the expression "the firstborn of all creation" should be interpreted as a second phrase specifying the identity of Christ. In the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, God's Wisdom was understood as created before everything (Prov 8:22-25; Sir 1:4), accompanying God from the beginning (Wis 9:9) and sharing the throne with God (Wis 9:4). Philo of Alexandria calls wisdom "the firstborn son."[41] In the Jewish sapiential tradition, the "firstborness" of personified Wisdom does not primarily mean being created as God's first work, but the emphasis is on its priority status.[42] Referring these contents to Christ as "the firstborn of all creation," it should be assumed that this term is not primarily about making the addressees aware of Christ's temporal priority in relation to the whole of creation, but about emphasizing his absolute supremacy over everything that exists in the world.[43]

This interpretation is confirmed further in verse 16, where the author develops the idea of the primacy of Christ as the One who transcends the created world, being the One by whom everything was brought into existence: the Creator.[44] The subordinate conjunction ὅτι (because, that) at the beginning of verse 16 determines the content to be interpreted as explaining why Christ is the firstborn of all creation. The main reason is above all the fact that "in him all things were created" – ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα.[45]

The very sophisticated structure of verse 16 should be noted.[46] To begin with, both the first and the last line create an inclusion framing the interior lines. In addition, the framing lines form the structure of chiastic parallelism: (A-B) ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα – (B'-A') τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται.[47] The accumulation of prepositional statements that define Christ's function in the work of creation is also

39 On the functioning of this term in *Corpus Paulinum*, see Barth – Blanke, *Colossians*, 245–247.

40 For additional information, see Bruce, *The Epistles*, *ad loc.* See also Dunne, "The Regal Status of Christ," 13.

41 See *De ebrietate* 30–31; *Quaestiones in Genesis* 4.97.

42 See Bauer – Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 726.

43 Eduard Lohse (*Colossians*, 48–49) puts it as follows: "The point is not a temporal advantage but rather the superiority which is due to him as the agent of creation who is before all creation. As the first-born he stands over creation as Lord." Similarly, Thurston, *Reading Colossians*, 23.

44 See Hughes, *Philippians*, *ad loc.*

45 More Garland, *Colossians*, 88–89.

46 More details in Heil, *Colossians*, 65–68.

47 This parallelism is also noticed by MacDonald (*Colossians*, 60).

striking. The author makes readers aware that all visible and invisible, earthly and celestial reality was created ἐν αὐτῷ – "in him," δι' αὐτοῦ – "by him" and εἰς αὐτόν – "for him." Such a condensation of prepositional phrases with an adverbial meaning was the usual way of expressing God's sovereignty over the created world in the Hellenistic-Roman world of that time. It is worth paying attention to several close parallels to Col 1:16: ὅτι ἐκ θεοῦ πάντα καὶ διὰ θεοῦ συνέστηκεν (Pseudo-Aristotle, *De mundo* 6); τὸ ἐφ' οὗ τὸ ἐξ οὗ τὸ δι' οὗ (Philo of Alexandria, *De cherubim* 125–126) and "Quinque ergo causae sunt, ut Plato dicit: id ex quo, id a quo, id in quo, id ad quod, id propter quod" (Seneca, *Epistulae* 65.8). Moreover, such terms are quite commonly used in the letters of Paul the Apostle as they are characteristic of numerous doxologies found in the *Corpus Paulinum*. Suffice it to quote Rom 11:36: "For from him, and through him, and for him are all things. Glory to him forever. Amen."[48]

As noted above, the author's argument in this verse tends to convince the reader of the absolute primacy of Christ in all creation: "in him all was created" (ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα). The creation of everything "in him," "through him" and "for him" makes him the firstborn (πρωτότοκος in v. 15) of all creation. Two things are particularly noteworthy here. First, the verbs in v. 16 expressing the creative act (ἐκτίσθη and ἔκτισται) are in the passive voice. Therefore, here we are dealing with a *passivum divinum* – it is God the Father who is the Creator, and Christ is the Mediator and the Instrument through whom, in whom and for whom the creative act was made by God. This language becomes clearer when we apply it to the Old Testament theme of God's personified Wisdom accompanying him in creating the world (see above). Jesus the Messiah is shown in Col 1:16 as the embodiment of God's Wisdom. In the context of the following verses of the hymn (vv. 18 and 20), it should be noted that this creative act includes Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection as well.[49] Secondly, the use of the two verbal forms for the act of creation is significant. In the first instance (ἐκτίσθη), the verb takes the form of an aorist indicative, the aspect of which principally indicates a one-time action performed at an undefined time in the past. In the second clause, the author uses the form of perfect tense (ἔκτισται), the aspect of which indicates that God's creative activity is still ongoing or at least its effects continue. The last line of verse 16: τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται could, therefore, be translated as "all things were created through him and in him and are being still created."

Numerous commentaries focus on establishing the meaning of the four heavenly and earthly beings, which were created in Christ, by Christ and for Christ, mentioned in the penultimate line of verse 16: εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ

48 See also 1 Cor 8:6.

49 Similarly, Aletti, *Saint Paul Épître aux Colossiens*, 102–103; Dunn, *The Epistle*, 91. See also Wellum, "Jesus as Lord and Son," 39.

εἴτε ἐξουσίαι – "be it thrones or reigns or principalities or authorities."[50] The great majority of scholars regard them as various heavenly spiritual powers, the identity of which is best explained against the background of intertextual references to biblical and other Jewish literature. "Thrones" should probably be placed highest in this hierarchy of heaven. A good background for a better understanding of this theme may be Dan 7:9; Rev 4:4; *Testament of Levi* 3.8 and *Apocalypse of Elijah* 1.10-11. The second place in the hierarchy of these heavenly powers are taken by "dominions" (Eph 1:20-21; *1 Enoch* 61.10 and *2 Enoch* 20.1). Parallel references to the lower hierarchies of "rulers" and "authorities" can be found a little further in Col 2:10.15, and also, for example, in 1 Cor 15:24 and Eph 1:21; 3:10; 6:12. Some exegetes postulate that the meanings of these four subjects should not only be limited to the angelic powers but also to the visible powers of this world.[51] The poetic character of the hymn in Col 1:15-20 and above all, the author's statement that it is about Christ's dominion over everything in heaven and on earth, over what is visible and invisible, strongly support this type of interpretation.

The coordinate conjunction καί, initiating verse 17, indicates that the following content will be a continuation of the argument that began in verse 16 with the conjunction ὅτι, supporting the thesis about the primacy of Christ over all creation made at the beginning of the hymn in verse 15. In turn, v. 17 is an addition to the argumentation about the priority of Christ because of the creation of everything through him, in him and for him. A consequence of Christ's primacy in the order of all creation is that "he is before/above all" – αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων (17a). The personal pronoun αὐτός at the beginning of this statement has an emphatic value. It is to designate the idea "he and no one else."[52] It is followed by the preposition πρό, which usually has temporal connotations in Greek.[53] This preposition is syntactically associated with the adjective πάντων, which should be related to the two occurrences of πάντα with the article τά in v. 16, and with τὰ πάντα in v. 17b as well as with πᾶσιν in v. 18. The adjective πάντα in the form of a neuter plural with the article means everything that is in the universe. Therefore, the occurrence of πάντων in v. 17a should also be assigned a neuter gender although grammatically, the masculine gender and feminine gender are also acceptable. So, the thematic emphasis of the hymn focuses on accentuating the absolute temporal priority of Christ over all created beings.[54] The author of the hymn fits here – as in the preceding context – in the Old Testament

50 See e.g., Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles*, 151–152; Bammel, "Versuch," 88–95; Dunn, *The Epistle*, 92; Adamczewski, *List*, 201.

51 Such a postulate is put forward by Clinton E. Arnold (*The Colossian Syncretism*, 251–255) and after him Hugolin Langkammer (*Wprowadzenie do Ksiąg Nowego Testamentu*, 40) and Adamczewski (*List*, 201).

52 Cf. MacDonald, *Colossians*, 60.

53 For further discussion, see Moule, *The Epistles*, 66–67.

54 This interpretation of πρὸ πάντων in 1:17a is proposed by Ernst Lohmeyer (*Die Briefe*, 168), C.F.S. Moule (*The Epistles*, 66–67), Jean-Noël Aletti (*Saint Paul Épître aux Colossiens*, 103).

wisdom tradition, ascribing to Christ the same prerogatives of eternity that the sages attributed to God's Wisdom (see e.g., Sir 1:4 or Prov 8:22-31). Without denying this level of meaning, the expression πρὸ πάντων should rather be interpreted complementarily[55] as indicating the supremacy of Christ in relation to the whole of creation,[56] as such semantics is suggested by both the previous and the subsequent context.

In the following context (1:17b) the idea that in Christ everything in the universe remains united (τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν) is present. The conjunction καί opening this statement introduces the idea that is complementary and parallel to 1:17a.[57] The verb συνέστηκεν (literally "lasts together," "is joined"),[58] which in this sentence performs the function of a predicate, acts in the grammatical form of *perfectum*, the aspect of which indicates the current state resulting from a past activity. It is about exposing the truth that now in Christ everything, that is, the whole universe, remains together – it is dependent on him as the principle of its existence. Undoubtedly, the preexistence of Christ the Son of God in relation to everything that exists in the universe is presumed here, but the emphasis is definitely on the present state.[59] The idea of the world being held together by God's action – and thus its internal cohesiveness and orderliness – resonates with the Hellenistic philosophy of that time,[60] especially with the Platonic and Stoic thought (see e.g. Plato, *Respublica* 7; Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Mundo* 6,2; Philo of Alexandria: *De vita Mosis* 2,133; *De fuga* 112; and *Quaestiones in Exodum* 2,118).[61] As in the preceding context, also verse 17 reflects a cosmological model of the universe, which was part of Platonic and Stoic[62] philosophical thought. According to this model, the universe is constantly kept in existence and remains connected thanks to God's Logos. This rational Logos, according to philosophers, provides the world with order[63] and rules over all changes taking place in the cosmos. Moreover, this philosophical-theological concept is present in Wis 1:6-7; 7:22–8:1, where these prerogatives of keeping the universe coherent and in order are attributed to God's personal Wisdom.[64] This is another clue for embedding the Christological hymn in the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament as the closest ideological matrix.

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55 Complementary interpretation of πρὸ πάντων in Col 1:17a is also supported by Joachim Gnilka (*Der Kolosserbrief*, 66), Dunn (*The Epistle*, 93), MacDonald (*Colossians*, 61).

56 Analogous non-temporal use of the preposition πρό is attested also, for example, in Jas 5:12 and 1 Pet 4:8.

57 Similarly Adamczewski, *List*, 202.

58 This term is comprehensively discussed by C. John Collins ("Colossians 1,17," 64–87).

59 This is also evidenced by the occurrence of the verb ἐστιν in 1:17a in the present tense (parallelism).

60 See Collins, "Colossians 1,17," 69–77.

61 See on this topic Talbert, *Ephesians* 189.

62 The stoic influence is emphasized by Victoria Balabanski ("The Holy Spirit," 180–182).

63 This thought is also expressed in the New Testament, in Heb 1:3.

64 For further discussion of this problem, see Dunn, *The Epistle*, 93–94. Collins ("Colossians 1,17," 65–67) gives other possible passages from the Hebrew Bible that can be a background of this verb (e.g., Ps 33:9; 119:90; 148:6; Isa 48:13).

The first strophe of the hymn ends with the statement καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας – "and he is the head of the body of the church" (v. 18a). This poetic line is parallel to the above-analysed verse 17a and is the last element of the reasoning why Christ is the image of God and the firstborn of all creation. The expression καὶ αὐτός, which initiates the statement, has, like in v. 17a, an emphatic value[65] and is intended to stimulate the reader and/or listener to reflect on the unique status of Christ. The conjunction καί takes the meaning of "also" in the context of listing the qualities of Christ, and therefore, this expression can be interpreted as "He also, and no one else."

Christ is called "the head of the body of the church" – ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας. It is quite an enigmatic statement in which the genitive τῆς ἐκκλησίας slightly disturbs the rhythm of the hymn, hence some authors claim that this noun was added at the stage of literary-theological adaptation of an earlier version of the hymn.[66]

The key concept is "the head" – κεφαλή, which defines Christ.[67] The presence of the article gives it an emphatic meaning in the syntax of the expression αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλή – "He is this head."[68] Thus verse 18a is used in the strophe 1:15-18a to summarize the qualities attributed to Christ in the previous statements regarding his supremacy in the entire created universe. The metaphor of Christ as the head should be interpreted in the light of two occurrences of this noun in the close context of Col 1:18. The first one is in Col 2:10, where Christ is called "the head of all sovereignty and authority" (ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας), clearly assuming a semantic shade associated with his power and reign.[69] And in the next instance of κεφαλή in Col 2:19, Christ is seen as the source of the existence and growth of the body. It seems that neither of these two shades should be excluded in Col 1:18. The context of the preceding verses in the first strophe of the hymn (1:15-17) evidently leads the reader to see Christ both as the head, i.e. the source and purpose of every creature's existence, and the One who rules over all creation.

However, Christ's function as head in Col 1:18a no longer refers to his supremacy over all creation; the extent of this supremacy is determined by the expression τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας. It is therefore about making the addressees aware of Christ's supremacy as head in relation to the "body of the church."[70] How should this be interpreted? In Hellenistic philosophy, there are assertions that the world is the body of

65 See MacDonald, *Colossians*, 61.

66 See Dunn, *The Epistle*, 94. An opposite opinion in Feuillet, *Le Christ*, 217–228; Kehl, *Der Christushymnus*, 41–45.

67 See, too, Garland, *Colossians*, 90–91.

68 Cf. Adamczewski, *List*, 203–204.

69 Cf. Heil, *Colossians*, 70–71. See also Dunne, "The Regal Status of Christ," 14; Scharlemann, "The Scope," 296–298.

70 See Moo, *The Letter*, *ad loc.*

the head, which is the deity.[71] This thought appeared in Plato's *Timaios* (28B) as well as in the Orphic texts, which showed Zeus as the head of the body of all creation.[72] Philo of Alexandria, on the other hand, writes of the Logos as the head of the whole body (σῶμα as in Col 1:18a) of the universe (*Quaestiones in Exodum* 2.68).

In Col 1:18a, the noun σῶμα does not denote the universe, but its semantic range is clarified by the noun τῆς ἐκκλησίας that function in apposition to it. The point in Col 1:18a is then to show Christ as the source and goal of the Church and his authority over her. There is also the question of how the author of the hymn understands the church. Against the background of other appearances of the noun ἐκκλησία in the New Testament, we can propose two possible interpretations. It can mean a gathering of people who believe in Christ, i.e. people gathering in his name in the houses and cities of the empire (e.g., in Colossae). This is the meaning of the noun ἐκκλησία, for example, in Rom 16:1.4.5.16; 1 Cor 1:2; 4:17 or in Col 4:15-16. Its special case is the plural expression "the church(s) of God" (see, e.g., 1 Cor 1:2; 11:16.22; 15:9; 1 Thess 2:14). If we assumed this meaning in 1:18a, we should speak of Christ's relationship with a specific community of the local church, and it would be the relationship of Christ with believers belonging to this particular community. The second nuance of the meaning of the noun ἐκκλησία in the New Testament, which can be found, for example, in 1 Cor 12:28, results from the etymology of this word in classical Greek, where it meant "calling" and "gathering." It was used in the Septuagint (along with συναγωγή) as the equivalent of the Hebrew noun *qāhāl*, which designated the "calling" and "gathering" of God's people, called by Yahweh to glorify him.[73] Following this line of interpretation, ἐκκλησία used in Col 1:18a should not be understood as a concrete community of the local church, but as the universal Church – the whole New People of God. It seems that the interpreter of the hymn in Col 1:15-20 is not faced with the choice of the first or second nuance of the meaning of ἐκκλησία. Undoubtedly, the context of the entire hymn suggests the understanding of Christ as the source and goal of the whole universal Church and his authority over her. On the other hand, the addressees of the letter understood this universal reign of Christ in a very concrete way – in relation to their local community.[74]

71 Numerous examples are provided by Dale B. Martin (*The Corinthian Body*, 15–34).
72 See also Martin, *Ephesians*, 108.
73 For further discussion, see Dunn, *The Epistle*, 96; Adamczewski, *List*, 205.
74 Similarly, Dunn, *The Epistle*, 96.

4. The Second Strophe (1:18b-20)

The expression ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή, standing at the beginning of Col 1:18b, evokes a clear echo of the locution that opens the first strophe of the analysed hymn: ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ (1:15).[75] At the same time, it is a literary opening of the second strophe of the hymn. While the theme of the first strophe focuses on presenting Christ as the source, aim and ruler of the entire created universe, the second part of the hymn stresses the salvific effects of the renewal of mankind through what happened in the phenomenon of the Son of God abiding in the world, especially in his act of reconciliation of the world to God through his passion, death and resurrection. In a poetic way, the author of the hymn divides the history of the world into two main stages. The first one – presented in the first strophe – began with the creation of the world and ended with the incarnation of Christ. As shown above, Christ, as the Firstborn of all creation, participated in the creation of the world and constantly reigns over it. The second stage in the history of the created world, continuing the first one in an essentially new and complementary way, is the period of God's reign in the world through the work of reconciling it to God in Christ's passion, death and resurrection. The second strophe of the hymn should be interpreted along this main semantic line.

In the first line of the second strophe, Christ is referred to as ἀρχή. It is a term whose meaning should be read against the background of its use in Judaism of those days.[76] It is noteworthy that the term ἀρχή was used to describe God's Wisdom as a person, which should not surprise the reader in view of her several other attributes ascribed to Christ in the first verse – as noted above.[77] In Prov 8:22, Wisdom is called "the beginning (ἀρχή) of the Lord's ways in his works." The context shows that it is about Wisdom's participation in the creation of the world. In *Legum Allegoriae* 1,43, Philo of Alexandria states that God calls wisdom "the beginning (ἀρχή) and the image (εἰκών)." It should not be overlooked that the second of these terms was attributed to Christ by the author of the hymn in the parallel verse initiating the first strophe (see above). Noteworthy, in Rev 3:14, the passage from the letter to the Church in Laodicea – a city next to Colossae – Christ is called "the beginning (ἀρχή) of God's creation." This is a very important premise that established theological terminology was used in the communities of the Church in this region of Asia Minor. The term ἀρχή in Col 1:18b should be understood as the beginning, the first fruits, the cause of something and the principle.[78]

This meaning of ἀρχή is also suggested by the adjective πρωτότοκος, which begins the second line of this strophe (identical to the first strophe). However, unlike

75 See Moo, *The Letter*, *ad loc.*
76 Cf. Moule, *The Epistles*, 69.
77 See also McConnell, "Colossians," 404.
78 Dunn, *The Epistle*, 97.

in the first strophe, where Christ was called "the firstborn of all creation," here he is described as "the firstborn from the dead" (πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν). This seemingly enigmatic statement carries a very important theological message.[79] In order to clarify its meaning, one should refer again to the Book of Revelation, where in 1:4-5 Christ is described as "He who is, and who was and who is to come..., the Firstborn from the dead (πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν)."[80] The context of this phrase clearly refers to the fact of Christ's resurrection.[81] Here the reader should detect an echo of Paul's statement "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died" (1 Cor 15:20),[82] indicating the temporal order of Christ's resurrection. But the meaning of the adjective πρωτότοκος governing the phrase ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν in Col 1:18b is not limited to priority in the temporal aspect. According to the idea expressed in Rom 8:29, Paul sees Christ as "the Firstborn (πρωτότοκος) among many brothers" and so as the first in God's family embracing those who believe in him. His resurrection is also to be theirs in the sense that with his resurrection began a new era in the history of salvation (the aforementioned, second stage in world history: see Rom 1:4). Christ's resurrection is, therefore, to be shared by all those who have died in him, by his whole family. Jesus' superiority in the family of believers is that of dignity, honour and authority – this idea will be developed and clarified in the immediate context.

The thought of Christ's primacy is continued in the following clause of purpose[83] initiated by the conjunction ἵνα: ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων "that he becomes/is in everything first."[84] Thus the author of the hymn explains that the purpose of Christ's resurrection from the dead was that he (emphatic αὐτός) "might become the first in everything" or, more literally, "so that he could become the first in everything." This interpretation is supported by the aorist form of the subjunctive γένηται "so that it may become" and the sense of the participle πρωτεύων, which in Greek means not only primacy in the local and temporal sense, but also the primacy of dignity and power. As a result, the author of the hymn aims to convince the addressees that the purpose (and consequently the effect) of Christ's resurrection was for him to have absolute supremacy – pre-eminence over all mankind.

In the second stanza, it is clear that the author intratextually refers to the first one. He correlates two types of Christ's superiority (πρωτότοκος in vv. 15 and 18).[85]

79 This issue is profoundly discussed by Charles H. Talbert (*Ephesians*, 190).

80 See Dunne, "The Regal Status of Christ," 16.

81 See also Bruce, *The Epistles*, 127.

82 See also 1 Cor 15:23; Acts 26:23.

83 Bartosz Adamczewski (*List*, 206) interprets this clause as an effect sentence, thus emphasizing the "justification of the title of Christ presented in 1:18b" in the interpretation.

84 McConnell ("Colossians," 404) argues that this expression shows that "Christ is described in Colossians in ways that would evoke images of the Roman emperor found in literature roughly contemporary with Colossians."

85 See also Heil, *Colossians*, 71.

In the previous strophe, by presenting Christ as the Head of the body of the universe and comparing him to God's primordial Wisdom, he is presented as the Firstborn of all creation. In the second one, however, the situation of the universe and of humanity is radically changed – in a way complemented and improved. This reality is a consequence of Christ's resurrection as the Firstborn from the dead. Consequently, all believers in Christ become a new creation.[86] At this point, we can find strong premises for the Pauline theology of Christ as the New Adam, who, through his passion, death on the cross and resurrection, gives rise to – as the Firstborn (πρωτότοκος) – New Man, through the redemption of the sin of the First Adam.[87] In the Colossian hymn, the theology of Christ as the New Adam is linked with the theology of Christ as God's Wisdom, exposed in the first strophe, in a very skilful and creative way.

The entire verse 19 is an extension of the thoughts from v. 18b, which is clearly indicated by the subordinate conjunction ὅτι (because) that begins this statement. This time it is about showing the results of the resurrection of Christ as the Firstborn from the dead. The opening conjunction ὅτι is followed by the expression ἐν αὐτῷ (in him), which occurs for the third time in Colossians 1:15-20 (previously in vv. 16 and 17). Placing ἐν αὐτῷ in the structure of the sentence immediately after the conjunction gives it an emphatic value (as already indicated), hence it takes the meaning "because it is in him (and in no one else)." This expression intratextually dialogues with its occurrences from the first strophe, showing the results of Christ's resurrection from the dead in the light of his participation in the creation and sustaining the world in existence, which was stated in the first stanza. While interpreting this passage, it should be kept in mind that the first strophe led the addressees to the idea of Christ as "the head of the body of the Church" (1:18a). Therefore, verse 19 pragmatically reveals the current ecclesiological perspective of the effects of the incarnation of the Son of God, the teaching and miraculous activities of Jesus as well as his passion, death on the cross and resurrection.[88]

Due to the poetic nature of the hymn in Col 1:15-20, the unclear syntax of ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι in v. 19 leads to an ambiguous interpretation. The only personal verbal form that can serve as a predicate is εὐδόκησεν (pleased/willed; 3rd person singular). In turn, the only word that can act as a subject is the noun τὸ πλήρωμα. Hence, we would have the meaning "for in him all fullness pleased to dwell."[89] Such a translation is grammatically correct, but syntactically contradictory to the continuation of this sentence in v. 20, where the participle

86 This idea was already developed by Paul in 1 Cor 5:15-21, where it is, like in Col 1:15-20, closely related to the theology of reconciliation.

87 Cf. Moo, *The Letter*, *ad loc.*

88 James Dunn (*The Epistle*, 99) even claims that this part of the hymn is about presenting Christ in a similar way to the synoptic tradition. Stephen Wellum ("Jesus as Lord and Son," 36–40) rightly emphasizes a close relationship of the Christology of Jesus as the Son of God and the Lord in Col 1:15-20.

89 Such an interpretation is supported, for example, by MacDonald (*Colossians*, 63).

εἰρηνοποιήσας in the nominative singular, masculine gender, is structurally related to the subject of v. 19. So, the clause in 1:19 demands a masculine, singular subject, which advocates the necessity to adopt an implicit subject resulting from the logic of the statement. The only person in the context who could act as an implied subject is God. In such a case, the phraseological structure: πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι should be interpreted in its entirety as a complement to the predicate (*accusativus cum infinitivo*). In such a case, the entire subordinate clause in 1:19 can be translated as "For in him [God] willed that all the fullness dwells" or "For God willed that all the fullness might dwell in him." Given the context of v. 20, which unfolds the idea present in v. 19 to show what God has accomplished in Christ (implicitly: because all the fullness dwelled in him), the second proposal should be accepted as the only correct one.

The neuter noun πλήρωμα (fullness) designating what dwells in Christ out of the will of God[90] was a term frequently used in both Hellenism and Judaism of that period.[91] In everyday Greek it was used, for example, to designate the entire crew of a ship. On the other hand, in religious and philosophical literature (e.g., Stoicism) it was used to describe all pervasive divine presence in the world.[92] A phraseology similar to that in Col 1:19 was applied for Zeus to say that he τὸ πᾶν πεπλήρωκε (fills everything [*perfectum*]). Also, one can find similar utterances in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, their subject always being God (e.g., πάντα πεπλήρωκεν ὁ θεός).[93] The idea of God's permeating presence is also very firmly rooted in biblical and extra-biblical Judaism, which can already be noted in Jer 23:24: τὴν γῆν ἐγὼ πληρῶ λέγει κύριος – "I fill the earth, said the Lord." In Wis 1:4 and other Jewish literature of the time,[94] it is closely related to the idea of Wisdom or God dwelling (the verb κατοικέω as in Col 1:19) in people.[95] Later this idea occupied an important place in Gnostic (especially Valentinian) thought, where πλήρωμα expressed the fullness of spiritual perfection emanating from God.[96]

Against this background, the meaning of Col 1:19 can be explained more specifically. The author makes the addressees aware that it was God's will (the verb εὐδόκησεν in the aorist) that the fullness of his immanence/presence should dwell in Christ.[97] He wants to convince them that Jesus Christ is the fullest expression of God – in him and through him God has revealed his being to man in the most

90 Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles*, *ad loc.*

91 See, too, Heil, *Colossians*, 72.

92 See, e.g., Seneca, *De beneficiis* 4,8,2.

93 See, e.g., *Legum Allegoriae* 3,4; *De gigantibus* 47; *De Vita Mosis* 2,238.

94 See e.g., *The Testament of Zebulun* 8,2; *The Testament of Benjamin* 6,4; *1 Enoch* 49,3.

95 In Eph 3:14-17 it concerns the union of the believer with Christ.

96 These issues have comprehensively been presented in the monograph by Joseph Ernst, *Pleroma*, see esp. chapter four. In recent scholarship the authors focus on "how the term fits into the agenda of Col, namely, to present Christ as offering the full presence and power of God" – quotation from Gupta ("New Commentaries on Colossians," 13).

97 See Dunn, *The Epistle*, 101–102; Hughes, *Philippians*, *ad loc.*; Thurston, *Reading Colossians*, 25.

perfect way. In his presence on earth – in words and deeds, and most fully in death and resurrection – God spoke to man most completely.

The last verse of the hymn (v. 20) is, structurally speaking, an extension of the idea expressed in a somewhat veiled poetic way in 1:18c and 1:19 (see above).[98] From a syntactic point of view, the final lines of the hymn are structurally dependent on the conjunction ἵνα, introducing a purpose clause in 18c, and are an extension of the content announced in v. 19 by the explanatory conjunction ὅτι. The argument in v. 20 continues the thought of the primacy of Christ in all things (v. 18c), which was manifested by the indwelling of the fullness of the Godhead in him (v. 19). The content of v. 20 is structurally dependent on the predicate εὐδόκησεν from v. 19. In this final verse of the hymn, the author therefore explains that the priority of Christ is also due to the fact that it is God's will to "reconcile everything to himself through him": δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν. The rest of v. 20 clarifies how the work of reconciliation was accomplished.[99] However, it should also be noted that in the structure of the hymn, verse 20 is a climax in relation to the thesis put forward in 1:14: in Christ "we have redemption, forgiveness of sins."[100]

The act of reconciling humankind to God (εἰς αὐτόν in 1:20) is expressed by using the verb ἀποκαταλλάσσω, which appears in such a compound form only in Col 1:20 and Eph 2:16 – apart from these texts we find it neither in Greek biblical literature nor in all the classical and Hellenistic Greek writings known to us.[101] It can, therefore, be presumed that this term was coined by Paul or the Pauline school. What would be the purpose of adding the prefix απο- to the verb καταλλάσσω already used by Paul in Romans and Second Corinthians to describe the reality of reconciliation of everything to God in the salvific work of Jesus Christ – namely in his passion, death and resurrection? The semantic function of the prefix απο- in Greek is generally to indicate that an action has been performed again.[102] In our text (and in Eph 2:16), it is most likely about relating the reconciliation of humankind to God through Christ's passion, death and resurrection to the original state of the ideal God-man relationship (the state before the first fall, narrated in Gen 3). This relationship has been shaken by people many times despite God's reconciling initiatives (the history of salvation of the Old Testament). In this context, the prefix απο- in the verb ἀποκαταλλάσσω in Col 1:20 would emphasize the finality and irrevocability of the reconciliation of people with God in the saving work of Jesus Christ.[103]

The grammatical form of the verb ἀποκαταλλάξαι – *infinitivus aoristi activi* – clearly indicates a one-time activity performed in the past. It therefore refers not to

98 See also Garland, *Colossians*, 93.
99 Cf. Moo, *The Letter*, *ad loc.*
100 This is also noticed by Talbert (*Ephesians*, 190).
101 See Moule, *The Epistles*, 71.
102 See also Thurston, *Reading Colossians*, 26.
103 Cf. Liddell – Scott – Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 192.

the whole of Christ's saving mission in the world, but to its special moment – to his passion, death and resurrection understood as components of one saving action of God.

Another important thing that results from the grammatical structure is the fact that the infinitive ἀποκαταλλάξαι functions as the complement of the verb εὐδόκησεν of 1:19, whose subject, as shown above, is God. Thus it is clear that the work of reconciliation carried out by Christ (δι' αὐτοῦ in 1,20) is in fact the work of God himself, reconciling everything (τὰ πάντα) to himself (εἰς αὐτόν).[104] This agency of God and a kind of instrumentality of Christ in the work of reconciliation is a very important element of the biblical theology of reconciliation because the reconciliation made by him (δι' αὐτοῦ) is shown as an extension and complement of the reconciliation initiatives undertaken by God in the Old Testament.[105]

One should also pay attention to the possible ambiguity of the interpretation of the expression εἰς αὐτόν in 1:20.[106] In the previous paragraph, we referred it to God who reconciles everything to himself through Christ. But from a grammatical point of view, the phrase εἰς αὐτόν can also be related to Christ and can mean *for him*. In this approach, both expressions δι' αὐτοῦ / and εἰς αὐτόν in v. 20a would have a Christological bearing – *by him* and *for him*, respectively, and would further emphasize the idea of the supremacy of Christ.[107] A strong argument in favour of this direction of interpretation is the reference of both phrases to Christ in the preceding context of the hymn, in v. 16c: τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται.[108] In my opinion, these two interpretations should not be opposed, but treated as complementary. This composition of the hymn can allow the reader to see its several complementary levels of interpretation as a proof of the author's poetic genius.

The beneficiary of the work of reconciliation accomplished in Christ is defined in Col 1:20 by the noun τὰ πάντα (everything), repeated several times in the preceding context. In conclusion, in v. 20 the noun has the same meaning as in its previous occurrences: everything that exists, the entire created world in the broadest possible sense[109] – all spiritual and material entities existing in the entire universe created by God with the participation of Christ as the Firstborn of all creation.[110] Adequately, the beneficiaries of the work of reconciliation accomplished by God in Christ are not only humans, but the entire created universe.

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104 See Porter – Clarke, "Canonical-Critical Perspective," 80.

105 On the most important premises of the theology of reconciliation in the OT, see Kręcidło, "Pojednanie w Starym Testamencie," 9–32.

106 See Metcalf, "The Atonement," 293.

107 This possibility was also seen by John H.P. Reumann (Taylor – Reumann, *Colossians*, 129).

108 This interpretation is supported by Adamczewski (*List*, 211), following Aletti (*Colossiens 1,15-20*, 30–32).

109 Similarly Bruce, *The Epistles*, *ad loc.* See also Porter – Clarke, "Canonical-Critical Perspective," 80.

110 See Heil, *Colossians*, 73.

Finally, while analysing individual motives in δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν, it should be noted that as a whole it is parallel to τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται in 1:16, hence it conducts a mutual dialogue with it.[111] The author of the hymn intentionally relates two realities: through him and for him God reconciled the world to himself. So, the work of reconciling the universe through the passion, death and resurrection of Christ is presented as the continuation and completion of the work of creation. The work of reconciliation is understood by the author as the creation of the world anew – a world in which those who remain in Christ are "new creatures." This idea plainly alludes to 2 Cor 5:17, where Paul affirms: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come."

The masculine participle εἰρηνοποιήσας (having made peace) introduces the next line of the second strophe, structurally dependent on the predicate εὐδόκησεν in 1:19. Thus, the subject of the act establishing peace is God. The whole phrase εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ ("having made peace through the blood of his cross") is structurally parallel to the previous one and clarifies its content, explaining how God reconciled everything to himself. The verb εἰρηνοποιέω (to make peace) in Col 1:20 does not appear in any other passage in the New Testament, while in the Old Testament, it appears only in Prov 10:10 LXX. Yet, one finds the adjectival form εἰρηνοποιοί in Jesus' macarism in Matt 5:9.[112] The idea of making peace was quite popular both in the Old Testament and in the culture of the Mediterranean world of that time. In Col 1:20, it should be related to the Old Testament *šālôm* as a God-introduced state of peace, prosperity, fulfilment, *etc.* The term *šālôm* expresses one of the main strands of the Old Testament theology of reconciliation (see e.g., Num 6:26; Judg 6:24; Ps 29:11; 85:9; Isa 9:5-6; 45:7).[113] In the Septuagint, the phrase ποιεῖν εἰρήνην (to make peace) was used to describe the end of war and the conclusion of a peace treaty between hitherto hostile parties (see e.g., Isa 27:5; 1 Macc 6:49.58; 11:51; 13:37). Looking at the pagan world of the ancient Mediterranean basin, we notice the idea of appeasing the angry deity by making an appropriate sacrifice to him or her. On the other hand, at the level of internal and external policies of various states, rulers "made peace" primarily by destroying their enemies. Peace was thus seen as the result of a war – a victory over the enemies.

It can be argued that it is this cultural awareness of the addressees that the author of the hymn refers to in εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ. Here we are dealing with a rhetorically clear juxtaposition between the idea of Christ, the triumphant Lord of the whole universe,[114] developed especially in the first strophe, and the idea of bringing peace to the whole universe "through the blood of Christ's

111 Cf. Martin, *Ephesians*, 107.

112 See also Filo, *De specialibus legibus* 2,192.

113 See Moo, *The Letter*, *ad loc.*; Kręcidło, "Pojednanie w Starym Testamencie," 24–29.

114 This direction is evident in MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 64. See also Scharlemann, "The Scope," 294–296.

cross."[115] God, therefore, did not reconcile the world to himself by making peace through the military destruction of his enemies, but through the blood of his Son shed on the cross.[116] Reconciliation was achieved through Christ's passion, death on the cross and resurrection.[117] This idea was already taken up in the proto-Pauline epistles in Rom 3:25 and 1 Cor 11:25 as well as in Eph 2:3-18.[118]

In the expression "through the blood of his cross" (1:20), one should not only perceive the elements of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ's life as a means of achieving the reconciliation of everything to God, but also the death on the cross as the most shameful punishment intended for bandits and captives, as well as a certain aspect of the scandal of the cross (see also 1 Cor 1:17-18, Gal 5:1; 6:12 and Phil 2:8). The price of the reconciliation of everything to God was both Christ's physical suffering and his humiliation, deprivation of dignity, and an attempt to erase him from the collective memory of Jewish believers. The idea of achieving peace by fighting and eliminating enemies, so deeply rooted in the ancient culture, is contrasted with the idea of a one-time expiatory sacrifice of Christ, thanks to which the reconciliation of everything to God was achieved.[119]

The last line of verse 20, ending the hymn: [δι' αὐτοῦ][120] εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς refers intratextually to τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς in v. 16. Through this parallelism the reader is sensitized to the universal effects of the work of reconciliation accomplished in Christ's death on the cross. As in Christ all things were created (v. 16) – both in heaven and on earth – so "through the blood of his cross" everything on earth and in heaven was reconciled to God.[121] It is thus evidently a question of juxtaposing the two most crucial stages in world history: the creation of everything and the work of reconciliation through Christ's blood of the cross. God's purpose in the work of reconciling the world in Christ was to restore to him the original harmony that the universe had after the creation and before the fall of the first people when evil crept into the world. Thanks to the work of Christ, the world was not only restored to its original state of perfection, but also the work of creation was completed – everything was born, i.e. created anew.

The final line of the second strophe should also be interpreted in the light of v. 18a: "He is the head of the body of the church." These correlated lines show the role

115 See Garland, *Colossians*, 94.

116 Heil, *Colossians*, 74. See also Metcalf, "The Atonement," 292–295.

117 Dunn, *The Epistle*, 103.

118 See Kręcidło, "Pojednanie podzielonej ludzkości," 199–220.

119 This issue is interpreted differently by Dunn (*The Epistle*, 103–104), who in the entire hymn of Col 1:15-20 primarily sees the language of triumph and war, and consistently argues that the "blood of the cross" is not the blood of expiatory sacrifice, but the blood of struggle.

120 This expression does not appear in some of the oldest manuscripts, therefore it can be treated as an addition. Others believe that the preceding clause: διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ should be seen as an addition as well. On the topic see in MacDonald, *Colossians*, 64–65.

121 So Bruce, *The Epistles*, *ad loc.*

of the Church in the work of reconciling the whole world to God through Christ. This role can be seen in other passages of Colossians, connecting it with the activity of proclaiming the Gospel (implicitly: through the Church, e.g., 1:6.27) and living the Gospel (1:10). It is further explained and developed in the immediate context of 1:20 in verses 21-23. The universal reconciliation of the created world (people and all that exists in it) becomes possible thanks to the active mediation of the Church.[122] A Christian community, whose members have accepted the gift of reconciliation, and now Christ's passion, death and resurrection are bearing abundant fruit in their lives, becomes an instrument in the process of reconciling all creation to God.

Conclusions

The exegetical analysis of the Christological hymn in Col 1:15-20 made possible to deduce a profound kerygmatic theology. The study of the first strophe (1:15-18a) highlighted the author's intention to show the function of Christ in creating the world and keeping it in existence, particularly by means of using metaphors from the Old Testament wisdom tradition and showing Christ as the New Adam. The poetic passage is also full of allusions to Hellenism and undoubtedly refers to the cosmological models of the universe conceived at that time. Using numerous metaphors, the author persuades the reader that Christ has an absolute primacy in the universe – he is the firstborn of all creation both in a chronological sense and in the sense of the priority of his authority and dignity. The first strophe ends by stating that Christ is the head of the body of the Church. At the same time, it presents a pragmatic idea leading to the argumentation of the second strophe of the hymn (1:18b-20). Referring to the primacy of Christ over all creation, the author focuses on the event of Christ's passion, death and resurrection as a key moment in the history of the universe. This salvific work of Christ, which is a phenomenon comparable only to the creation of the world, completes the work of creation. It is not only the restoration of the universe and of the relationship between God and man to the original state of harmony before the fall of the first people, but also, as it were, the creation of the world anew in Christ, in whom the whole fullness abides. The reconciliation of the world to God through Christ's blood shed on the cross completes the work of creation and presents man as a new creature in a qualitatively new relationship with God. The work of reconciliation has become a reality in the history of the world thanks to the testimony of the communities of the Church living the gift of reconciliation and proclaiming the Gospel.

122 Similarly Dunn, *The Epistle*, 104. See the extensive explanation in Peterson, "To Reconcile," 37–46.

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Suffering and Prayer in the Messianic Community of Jas 5:13a

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Abstract: Jas 5:13a encourages anyone within the community who suffers to pray. The text does not, however, specify whether the prayer is for the elimination of suffering or for the grace to endure it. The aim of this work, therefore, is to identify the purpose of the prayer proposed in v. 13a. The method employed is an analysis of v. 13a in its immediate context of Jas 5:13-18. The study reveals that the phrase "prayer of faith" in v. 15a offers significant clues as to the purpose of the prayer in v. 13a. The prayer of faith is a renewal of one's commitment to God and their trust in God. The invitation to pray in v. 13a is therefore a request to reaffirm that commitment to God in time of trials. The conclusion is that James is calling on Christians who suffer to reiterate their commitment to God *despite* their trials, and to pray for the grace to courageously endure their challenges.

Keywords: Commitment to God, Letter of James, Messianic Community, Prayer of Faith, Steadfastness, Suffering

The epistle of James pays attention to the theme of suffering[1] and testing, which is introduced in 1:12-13. Trials are to be endured with the hope of an eschatological vindication. They come with a positive value because through them the pious are tested and proven to be worthy of rewards in a victory that is God's. The epistle is addressed to a community confronted with suffering; the author understands this situation as a test (πειρασμός). Through a commitment to unity, love, and cohesiveness, members of the Christian community of James must learn to put up with miseries to receive the expected eschatological rewards.

A Christian is one who is baptized in Christ's name and publicly declares themselves to be a follower of the ways set down by Christ in the Bible for life on earth. This group of people made up the community of Christians addressed by the author of the Letter of James. They were the early Diaspora Jewish followers of the apostles who congregated around the apostle James. Their emergence was in response to the apostles' preaching about Jesus as the expected Jewish Messiah. They are

1 For the notion of suffering as an existential phenomenon and the challenges it poses to a Christian, see Tripp, *Suffering*; Rudolfsson – Flensner, "Suffering and Suffering with the Other," 278–286. Rehnsfeldt – Eriksson, "The Progression of Suffering," 264–272.

here referred to as the 'Messianic Community' to underscore their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This faith unites and keeps the members together as one entity with a common goal, mission, and orientation. Traditional positions on the early dating of James suggest that the community was confronted in the late 40s and 50s AD by existential problems associated with its time.[2] These problems included internal bitterness, the struggle between the Zealots and the pro-Roman parties, the tension between the rich and the poor, the decision to opt for what provided an opportunity for wealth and the conflict between such opportunities and the faith of the community.[3] The struggle between personal challenges of health and hunger and the quest for expected but not-fast-coming healing and relief equally necessitated unbearable suffering. This suffering came with consequent temptations to give up on the faith. It is to this community that the Letter of James 5:13a is addressed; the author invites those who suffer to pray. But the text does not specify the purpose of the prayer; if it is for the elimination of suffering or for perseverance? This article is therefore meant to provide an answer to the question above.

James Riley Strange in his commentary on the Letter of James understands this prayer as a petition for patience and endurance in the face of suffering.[4] Martin C. Albl concentrates on the sick in v. 14 and understands prayer as intended to procure healing for the sick person. He identifies in the text the responsibility of the community as a family to provide equal access to health care for all its members.[5] Douglas J. Moo suggests that an understanding of the prayer as a petition for the suffering to be removed is a possibility. He, however, interprets the text as a petition for the strength to endure the trial with a godly spirit.[6] Robert W. Wall explains the prayer as equally implying a request for deliverance from suffering.[7] Luke Timothy Johnson submits that the subject of the prayer is for relief from suffering or for the endurance to survive it.[8] John Wilkinson proposes that the invitation to pray in v. 13 does not include a promise that the prayer will remove the cause of the suffering. He identifies the prayer of vv. 15 and 16 as intended to bring healing. He cautions that it is not the logic of faith for healing to always come when one prays, healing depends on the will of God.[9] Kevin Condon pays attention to vv. 14-15 in the context of the sacrament of healing. He nevertheless, explains prayer in v. 13 as an invitation to raise one's mind to God rather than become cranky.[10] Andrew Bowden presents

2 For details on the dating of James, see Moo, *The Letter of James*, 77–81; Laws, "James, Epistle of," 622–623; Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 33–34. This work assumes the traditional position of early dating.
3 Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 33–34.
4 Strange, *The Moral World of James*, 27–28.
5 Albl, "Are Any among You Sick?," 139, 141.
6 Moo, *The Letter of James*, 514.
7 Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 264.
8 Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 329.
9 Wilkinson, "Healing in the Epistle of James," 328 and 337.
10 Condon, "The Sacrament of Healing," 35.

a summary of authors' approaches to Jas 5. His purpose is primarily to provide available literature on the subject of sickness and healing in James. He identifies the quest among authors to establish if sickness and healing are physical or spiritual or both. He acknowledges that some of these authors primarily understand the sickness as physical and the healing as both physical and spiritual.[11]

Most of the works reviewed above are commentaries on the Letter of James and offer a summary view of the entire letter without paying particular attention to any of the texts. Available scholarly articles deal with the entire pericope of 5:13-18 and none has sought to interpret v. 13a in the light of v. 15a. This article is particularly concerned with Jas 5:13a and the aim is to identify the intention for which the one who suffers should pray. The method is to analyse v. 13a in its immediate context of vv. 13-18 by underscoring the relevance of the phrase 'prayer of faith' in v. 15a. This phrase holds the key to discovering the purpose of the prayer in v. 13a. Prayer of faith is an affirmation of one's commitment to God and one's trust in God. Christians who suffer are thus invited in v. 13a to renew and reaffirm that commitment and trust, and not allow their trials to derail them.

The first part of this article discusses the progression in the understanding of suffering in the Bible. The progression reveals that biblically suffering is first understood as the consequence of sin against God, and subsequently as a test of virtue and faithfulness to God. This suffering can be overcome through recourse to God in prayer. In the following sections of the article, the work situates and examines v. 13a within the setting of Jas 5:13-18. The setting reveals that v. 13a forms part of the larger subunit of vv. 13-14 on suffering and cheerfulness, and prayer and praise. It also shows that with the theme of prayer, v. 13a resonates in vv. 15-16 and 17-18. The author encourages community solidarity and urges members to prayerfully endure their pains with the hope for eschatological reward and restoration. He invites Christians who suffer to remain conscious of the mercy and faithfulness of God and pray for the ability to persevere in their suffering and not give up. The prayer proposed by James is for the courage to endure difficult situations without having to give up one's belief in Christ. When a Christian resorts to prayer in suffering, there is hope for relief and therefore the courage to attain happiness in the midst of suffering.

1. The Notion of Suffering in the Bible

The Bible associates suffering generally with sin and traces it to the sin of Adam. It is equally understood as God's retribution for communal and personal sins. In the Old Testament, suffering entered the world as punishment due to the disobedience of

11 Bowden, "An Overview," 78.

Adam and Eve (Gen 3:16-19). The entire human race is associated with this sin and its consequences. The suffering resulting from sin is experienced as a corporate reality infecting the entire community (2 Sam 24:10-17). It is seen as brought forth by God for the purpose of correcting and bringing people back to good ways (Jer 31:15-29). Suffering is, in this context, understood as an indication that wrong choices have been made and act as an incentive for the identification and correction of such choices and the avoidance of similar errors.[12]

The doctrine of corporate solidarity in the punishment due to individual sin was a problem for the postexilic biblical thoughts. The exilic experience of extreme suffering led to the victims' protest against suffering on account of the sins of past generations. It led to the consequent rejection of the doctrine of corporate responsibility for sin and the tendency of shifting responsibility for sin to past generations. He who sins must bear the punishment for his or her sin (Ezek 18; Jer 31:29-30; see also Deut 24:16). For Ezekiel, even the victims of the exile should accept their own individual responsibility for the unfaithfulness that leads to it and bear the calamity of the exile.

Despite this position, the apparent prosperity of the wicked and the perceived suffering of the just even in the hands of the unrighteous were challenged as unjust and contradictory (Ps 34[35]; 87[88]; Job 3:3-12). Attempts at resolving this (Ps 36[37]; 72[73]) are made in the juxtaposition of God's providence and wisdom with the suffering of the just in the light of eternal reward and punishment in the after-life (Wis 1–5; Dan 12:1-3). Those who suffer are thus convinced that their current state of suffering is temporal; it will come to an end either in this world or in a new world that is still within the framework of history as is known today.

The approach to suffering thus takes on the phase of intellectual quest for meaning and lamentations in the Books of Lamentations, Job, and the Psalms, with questions of 'why' directed to God especially on the plight of the just (Ps 43; 44; 137; Job 19:5-13). The contribution of the lamentation approach consists in the context of frank dialogue with Yahweh that it provides as a coping strategy. This serves as a structured avenue through which God's attention is drawn to one's suffering, and translates as prayer. In the final phase of the development of this doctrine, suffering is understood not only as punishment for sin but also as the test of a person's virtue and faithfulness to God in Sir 2:4 and Wis 3:5. Thus Second Isaiah takes a more hopeful and future-oriented approach to suffering. It proposes to the later generations of the exile that suffering always paves way for the fulfilment of the divine plan when taken in faith. Through the acceptance of suffering Yahweh's servants are able to make reparation for the sins of others. The suffering of Yahweh's faithful servant produces greater good from God for others. This notion is anticipated in the Story of Joseph (Gen 37; 39–46). It is understood as vicarious suffering

12 Simundson, "Suffering," 221.

explained in the hymns of the 'Suffering Servant' in Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13–53:12.[13]

Influenced by the wisdom books, Christian tradition has in the epistle of James appropriated immensely and enhanced the wisdom literature understanding of suffering as a test of one's faithfulness to God (Jas 1:2-3, 12; 5:11). For James, this notion follows from the fact that Christians hold the faith that is of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jas 2:1). They are required to learn from suffering and to learn patience from the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord (Jas 5:10). They are to be conscious of the steadfastness of Job and his consequent reward of happiness from the Lord (5:11). Members of the messianic community of James are to appreciate and accept their suffering as proof of their steadfastness, confident that the compassionate God will reward them. Christian suffering is therefore identified in James as a means for the attainment of happiness because happiness is God's reward for those who are steadfast (5:11a).

The Pauline view on suffering is Christ-centred; it is understood as a divine instrument (Rom 5:1-9; Eph 1:7-10, 20-23). It makes Christ the one who suffers, into a model to be followed.[14] Christians have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection (Rom 6:3-5). Just as Christ had to suffer to merit redemption for humankind, and enter into his glory, so must his followers learn to accept persecution for the sake of Christ (Phil 1:29). The suffering of a Christian has a purpose; that of making up for what is lacking in the suffering of Christ and his Church (Col 1:24). It produces perseverance (Rom 5:3-4) and is an avenue for the attainment of glory that outweighs the present experience of displeasure (Rom 8:18).

The synoptic traditions depict Christ's experience of suffering as a vicarious one for the redemption of humanity. The novel and wholesome attitude of Jesus to suffering (Mark 8:31) is shown in his ready disposition to accept what God would will (Mark 14:36; Matt 26:39). He accepts it as a voluntary offer made for the redemption of humanity and his own glorification (Luke 24:25-26). Thus suffering is presented from the point of view of Christ, as an instrument for the manifestation and acceptance of God's will. It is a means for the redemption of humankind (Luke 23:31), and a channel for the attainment of Joy (Matt 5:10-12) and the glorification of Christ.

The Christian kerygma in Acts represents Jesus' suffering as an event that was, in the definite plan of God, destined for Jesus' glorification and the salvation of humankind (Acts 2:23-24; 3:13-15; 4:10-12). Though inflicted by humans, suffering when accepted and undertaken in God's name produces a victory that is God's vindication.

Christian tradition, therefore, redefines the post-exilic attitude to suffering and its challenging *corporate* dimension by presenting suffering as a reality to be embraced. For the Christian tradition, therefore, suffering though challenging is

13 Bukovsky, "Suffering," 776.

14 Kremer, "πάσχω," 51–52.

temporal and an avenue for the attainment of victory. For Christ's people, it is an opportunity to corporate with God's will and plans for the good of the victim and others. It is a means for the attainment of something good, likeable, and positive. Thus while the exilic experience led to a rejection of corporate participation in suffering due to the sin of other members of the people of God, Christ's redemptive suffering leads to an acceptance of suffering as God's will for the benefit of the one who suffers and for others.

2. A Study of Jas 5:13a within the Context of Jas 5:13-18

2.1. The Outline of the Pericope

Jas 5:13a belongs to the pericope of Jas 5:13-18 which forms part of a larger pericope of Jas 5:7-20 on community solidarity. This larger pericope is the final section of the Letter and contains an articulate community instruction on what must constitute the religious practices of a distinctively Christian community. The practices include prayer, healing, confession of sins, the forgiveness of sins, and correction. These themes are evidently reflected in 5:13-18 and form the landmarks for the outline or division of the passage into three major units with corresponding subunits. The first part is vv. 13-14 captioned: The Suffering, the Cheerful, and the Sick vis-à-vis the Church, Prayer, and Praise. The second is vv. 15-16 titled: The Prayer of Faith, Confession of Sin, and Healing. Vv. 13-14 serve as an introduction to vv. 15-16; it is especially the prayer expected for the suffering in 13a that is being elaborated by the author in vv. 15-16 regarding the sick. The third is vv. 17-18 on Elijah as a Model of the Righteous at Prayer. Graphically considered the outline of Jas 5:13-18 runs thus:

1) 13-14: The Suffering, the Cheerful, and the Sick vis-à-vis the Church, Prayer, and Praise
    13a The Suffering and Prayer
    13b The Cheerful and Praise
    14a The Sick and the Church
    14b Prayer for the Sick and Anointing with Oil
2) 15-16: The Prayer of Faith, Confession of Sin, and Healing
    15a The Prayer of Faith, and the Sick
    15b The Lord and Healing
    15c-16c Confession and Forgiveness of Sin, Prayer and Healing
    15c Sin and Forgiveness
    16a-c Confession of Sins, Prayer, and Healing
    16d The Prayer of a Righteous Man
3) 17-18: Elijah as a Model of the Righteous at Prayer

The outline, therefore, places v. 13 in the first section on suffering, cheerfulness, the Church, prayer, and praise, as well as the sick. The resonance of v. 13 is evident particularly in v. 15 on the theme of prayer and faith. Verse 13 especially is made up of three paratactic units with each constituted by two clauses in rhetorical asyndeton. It is divided into 13a on suffering and prayer and 13b on cheerfulness and praise. It is within the context of this outline that the study of v. 13a comes to light. The study of its theme of prayer necessarily extends to 'the prayer of faith' of v. 15a as a subhead.

2.2. The Suffering One in Jas 5:13a

The verse in question (Jas 5:13a) reads as follows: Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, προσευχέσθω· "Is any one among you suffering? Let him pray." Let us start our analysis with the first clause: Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν. The verb κακοπαθέω used here denotes suffering misfortune or putting up with hardship patiently.[15] It implies equally the actual sense of enduring suffering, toil, or exertion or being smitten by misfortune. The physical situations, persecutions, or personal experiences that distress a person (see 2 Tim 2:9; 4:5). It includes military misfortune and personal hardships in life. The noun form κακοπάθεια is used along with patience μακροθυμία in Jas 5:10 to imply the prophets' experience and endurance of situations of affliction or suffering. The verb, on the other hand, is used in 5:13 to suggest not principally the distressing situation of misfortune or a specific form of it, but the spiritually distressing sentiment the misfortune brings.[16] This embraces the inner or mental experience of pains and afflictions, which is in itself, the most tortuous and intangible form of suffering that, can sometimes be incomprehensible to others. The doubts, the anxieties, the absence of good wishes and the inability to avoid or take away displeasing situations from one's experiences render life heavy and unbearable, keeps sleep away and makes the night longer than normal. It is this that most times moves the victim into giving up on life and entering into depression and abandoning even the faith.[17] This anticipated effect is cautioned against in the 'trials of all kinds' mentioned and provided for in Jas 1:2 and 3-4. In the strict sense of the usage, sickness equally gives rise to this kind of suffering, and the sick are therefore included as enduring this inner suffering. This verse, therefore, prepares the way for v. 14.

The formulation of the rhetorical question in the singular does not point at any specific person with a specific experience of suffering. It is addressed to all members

15 Bauer *et al.*, *A Greek Lexicon*, 500.
16 Michaelis, "πάθεμα, κακοπαθέω, συγκακοπαθέω, κακοπάθεια," 937, 933–934.
17 Wilkinson, "Healing in the Epistle of James," 327.

of the messianic community ἐν ὑμῖν who may find themselves in such situation. This is especially in the context of the continuous struggle between the rich and the poor and the struggle to resist the proposal of the world. Scot McKnight however, suggests that "'suffering' in 5:13a most likely refers to the suffering of the poor at the hand of the abusively powerful, and it would also describe the suffering inherent to persevering patience."[18] Caught in this situation, a Christian may either hold forth or give up, and the author of James thus proposes prayer as a solution by inviting anyone who suffers to pray προσευχέσθω.

2.3. The Sufferer's Prayer in Jas 5:13a

The second clause of the verse in question (Jas 15:13a) consists of the imperative προσευχέσθω ("Let him pray") of the verb προσεύχομαι, which means to move one's heart, soul, might, and mind or intellect towards God and approach him confidently, to apply oneself in the state of alert and concern to, and occupy oneself entirely with God. This verb means then 'to request,' 'to pray,' 'to call on God,' or 'to approach or come before God.'[19]

The root word εὔχομαι is a technical term for invoking a deity with a view to attracting his favourable disposition. It includes any dimension of the invocation, to request, entreat, vow, consecrate etc. The basic meaning of the verb is to make a confident statement about oneself; it also implies 'to boast, brag, or assert'. It means to make supplication to a deity in return for preservation from spiritual, physical, or moral harm. It is founded on a relationship with God in the OT. In this relationship prayer is humanity's means of communication with God, who is identified as the source and mainstay of the universe. It means "to speak to or to make requests of God."[20] It places humans in converse with God.

In the OT, words like 'to speak,' 'to call upon,' or 'to cry' are often used to denote the act of praying. In the attempt to express an intense emotional involvement the Hebrew would use verbs like 'to groan,' 'to sigh,' or 'to weep.'[21] This captures the exhortation to pray as an invitation to wholeheartedly pour out and make one's entire feeling and sentiments known to God with the confidence that the personal and merciful God hears. Prayer thus "involves the whole person and means that a man comes before God with his whole being and in an attitude of humble submission (Jer 29:12ff)."[22] It involves the entire person, flows from the most profound

18 McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 433.
19 Palzkill, "προσεύχομαι," 163.
20 Bauer *et al.*, *A Greek Lexicon*, 417.
21 Shönweiss, "προσεύχομαι," 861.
22 Shönweiss, "προσεύχομαι," 864.

part of one's being (human heart) and reflects one's consciousness of belonging to the community of the people of God. This community itself recognizes and acknowledges God as a person, omniscient, omnipotent, compassionate, and Lord of the whole earth.[23]

To pray therefore is to make a confident statement to God about oneself in a thoroughly personal and specific manner (Gen 28:22-33). It provides for the material and spiritual needs of both the individual and the community. Through it, humankind is sustained in an enduring and intensive Godward orientation while on earth. In that Godward relationship, loneliness is overcome and turned into communion. Prayer expresses the relationship and interface between the believer and God (Jas 5:16). It is "the expression of the believer's experience of proximity to God and dependence on God, thus it also constitutes worship in the real sense."[24] It consists in an acknowledgement of God's salvific deeds in the past, asking for guidance, liberation from all forms of misfortune, and the courage to face trials.

If εὔχομαι as the root word for προσευχόμαι means, on the one hand, 'to make confident statement about oneself, or to boast or assert,' it implies that prayer is an expression of one's trust in God and in his ability to deliver on all that is good. It is a confident statement about the trust one has in God and for which one makes a petition to God. Prayer is a holy boast in the faith and hope of a Christian in God, an assertion of one's confidence in God. That confident statement and the orientation of the entire self and mind towards God together form part of the mechanics that make prayer an encounter that provides, relaxes, and soothes. Prayer is an enrichment that "releases believers from all anxiety concerning their own situation if they but let their requests be made known 'in every respect' (ἐν παντί, Phil 4:6) before God…."[25] It redirects the mind from the multiple anxieties of life towards the one Supreme and desirable Good, God of the Christian. The imperative προσευχέσθω ("let him pray") used by James in v. 13a therefore, implies a command deriving from the obligation incumbent on the suffering person as a member of the faith community of God to pray. It is a demand that he or she prays in such a circumstance. What is evident here is the fact that praying is a duty for a member of James' Christian community and at the same time a right that no one can take away from any member. Deprivations that enhance the suffering may exist, but a member of the faith community can never be deprived of the opportunity to pray.

23 Naseri, "Reading Luke 15:11-32," 146–147.
24 Balz, "προσεύχομαι," 166–167.
25 Balz, "προσεύχομαι," 168.

2.4. The Prayer of Faith in Jas 5:15a

The nature of this prayer is further elaborated in Jas 5:15a as that which is made from faith ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως ("the prayer of faith"). This, therefore, offers a further understanding of v. 13a; it is then pertinent to give some exegetical explanations to the passage. The noun εὐχή may in some contexts mean a solemn oath or vow (see Gen 28:20 LXX) as in the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon.[26] This understanding is prevalent in the LXX (Gen 31:13; Num 6:2; Deut 12:6; Ps 49:14; see also Acts 18:18; 21:23).[27] However, in the *Symposium* of the same Xenophon, it is also used to imply 'prayer.'[28] Since Jas 5:12 prohibits the use of oath; the author would therefore not be intending oath here; rather εὐχή is used here in v. 15 to imply prayer as in the *Symposium* of Xenophon cited above. It means "a speech or petition directed to God, prayer"[29] and shares the same root of προσεύχομαι and εὔχομαι discussed elaborately above as prayer.

The genitive τῆς πίστεως ("of faith") is qualitative and qualifies the prayer as one offered out of faith with no doubts (see 1:6), it is not a prayer offered wickedly (4:3).[30] The noun πίστις means faith; subjectively it implies confidence, and objectively it denotes the basis for confidence. Both the noun πίστις which means 'faith' and the verb πιστεύω which means 'to believe' or ' to have faith' are used to express the same concept. They are wholesome and regular biblical terms that depict the central theological expression of the relationship of humans to God and God to humans. They constitute consequently, the fundamental nature of the Christian religion.[31] The lexeme πίστις evokes trust and confidence and thus refers to the state of being someone in whom confidence is placed. It is anchored on a solemn assurance of faithfulness and loyalty, reliability, and fidelity. In this sense it means 'faithfulness.' It consequently, expresses, on the other hand, the confidence placed on someone or something based on the reliability of the person or thing. It expresses an acknowledgement of the reliability of the person or thing trusted and the consequent movement of the intellect and will towards the person or thing. In this sense, it means 'trust' in the absolute and in the religious sense, and often bears the sense of 'believing.' This is represented especially in the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas as "an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth at the command of the will moved by the grace of God."[32]

As faithfulness, πίστις is used biblically of God and of humans. It is used by God to express his covenant of faithfulness. On the basis of this divine faithfulness, the chosen people are expected to trustingly act in obedience to the Torah. They

26 Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.2:10.
27 Bauer *et al.*, *A Greek Lexicon*, 416.
28 Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.15.
29 Bauer *et al.*, *A Greek Lexicon*, 416.
30 Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 332.
31 Barth, "πίστις pistis," 92.
32 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* IIa. IIae, q. 2. a. 9.

act on the confidence that God will be true to his words and bring to fulfilment the promises he made to their progenies. As trust, it is used principally by humans to express their response to this divine faithfulness.

It was equally used in the Greek world to imply 'a token offered as a guarantee of something promised'; in other words, a proof, or a pledge.[33] This usage is evident in Aristotle.[34] The keywords, reliability, guarantee, proof, or pledge underscore the sense of provability and certainty. Thus, epistemologically it is possible to speak of the certainty of knowledge in terms of that which a thing is, on the basis of the reliable source of authority that it is so.

The prayer of faith then presupposes a relationship of trust with God, and means an invocation or a petition addressed to God with the conviction that God is faithful and reliable and has the power to generously grant all that is requested of him (Jas 1:5). It is offered by one who, in this relationship of trust with God occupies the self entirely with God. It requires trust in God with no double mind (1:6) as well as faithfulness to God. It is a prayer said 'in the name of the Lord'; an expression of trust in the power, nearness, and faithfulness of the Lord. It is a commitment to God, a prayer said without an iota of doubt (Jas 1:5-8). In this confident expression of prayer, "God's power – even the divine authority to hold back and unleash the rains – works at the behest of those groups who claim that God is one, that Jesus is the Messiah, and who back those claims by fulfilling God's whole law through submission to his divine will."[35] When understood thus, it implies that the invitation directed at the one who suffers to pray in Jas 5:13a is not only about individual prayer, but also the prayer of the Christian community with and for the one suffering. Thus, acknowledging sickness as one of the sources of suffering the author invites the sick in Jas 5:14 to summon the elders of the Church to pray over him and concludes that it is this prayer of faith that will save, heal and bring cheerfulness to the one suffering or sick (v. 15). In the context of the prayer of faith then, the invitation by James to pray in v. 13 is an invitation to express and demonstrate one's faithfulness and commitment to the dependable God in spite of the stress of suffering and the disillusionment it may provoke.

3. Suffering and Prayer in the Letter of James

Suffering implies a struggle for freedom from pain and evil and the quest for good. It changes one's outlook on life and predisposes a person to decide on being or not being. As a constituent element in living, it can be tolerated and given meaning

33 Bauer *et al.*, *A Greek Lexicon*, 818.
34 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.1:3; 3.13.
35 Strange, *The Moral World of James*, 31.

through a life orientated to suit and respond to the incapacity one experiences. Such discovered sense in suffering through a rediscovered meaning in life provides the suffering person with hope and the maturity and strength to find the reason for living and bearing with pains especially when it is chronic. This rediscovery is offered in the Christian context of James' community by prayer and faith. The author insists especially on eschatological expectation as a solution to the challenges of suffering (1:12). He links suffering to an offence against God and thus the need to pacify God and ask for forgiveness and the restoration of a good relationship with God (5:14-16). Prayer, which is understood as a dialogue between a Christian and God constitutes the basis for this restored relationship.

The mark of the Christian community would not just be their beliefs but also their behaviours in response to misery, economic poverty, and socio-political powerlessness.[36] As an expression of one's faith in God, prayer in time of suffering, therefore, becomes for James the good work of faith Christians must perform (2:14-24). Just as Abraham accepted the challenge of sacrificing his son to God, James invites Christians to accept their suffering with prayerful resignation to God's will and a renewed commitment to God. This prayerful approach to suffering is to be seen as an accomplishment of the works required of faith in 2:17-24. It is a powerhouse for courage and strength on the part of the one who suffers.

James' invitation to pray asserts the role of prayer in the life of the Christian community as a comprehensive and determined expression of its inner life and state of piety and faith, in a society hostile to believers. It is an expression of self-consciousness and assurance of the helping nearness of God. The call from James implies that those who suffer should not say, "I am being tempted by God" (1:13), or attempt to retaliate against those responsible for the suffering (5:7). They should rather make their cry reach "the ears of the Lord of hosts" (5:4) for the Lord is the one who "gives more grace" to the lowly (4:6).[37] James is drawing from the Wisdom books of Lamentation, Job, and Psalms on the function of prayer as a coping strategy for those who suffer.[38] He depicts prayer as a frank dialogue with God through which those who suffer draw God's attention to their suffering and seek to discover meaning in their suffering. In this prayer, suffering is appreciated as a test of one's faithfulness to God in the form found in Sir 2:4 and Wis 3:5 above.

James' invitation to pray may equally imply hope for the relief of suffering but primarily it is for the steadfast endurance or perseverance to withstand it (5:10). James R. Strange further highlights this position; he notes that James does not present prayer as a request to end suffering rather it is a petition for patience and

36 Wall, "Introduction to Epistolary Literature," 378.

37 Johnson, "The Letter of James," 222.

38 James is scholarly noted to have relied greatly on the OT wisdom literature and is even described as the Wisdom Book of the NT. See Wachob, "The Languages of 'Household' and 'Kingdom'," 162.

endurance in the face of suffering.[39] This understanding underscores the theme of enduring temptation and the reward that comes with it in Jas 1:2-3, 12. Douglas Moo also emphasizes this theme of prayer for endurance, patience, and steadfastness in James:

> Perhaps James would include petition to God to remove the trial. But James's concern when he deals with trials elsewhere (1:2-4, 12; 5:7-11) is to encourage believers to endure the suffering with the right spirit and with a divine perspective on history. Presumably, then, the prayer that he encourages here is for the spiritual strength to endure the trial with a godly spirit.[40]

Similarly, R.W. Wall insists on the irreplaceable role James ascribes to prayer in the battle against suffering:

> According to James, true religion is congregational and practical more than personal and theologically abstract. The conditions of effective prayer are the community's corporate evaluation of their trials followed by the appropriate congregational response, "Then pray!" Neither retaliate nor acquiesce, which are both self-centered responses, but actively take hardship and heartbreak head-on by praying to the Lord for deliverance. Prayer when rooted in a faith that is as "hard as nails" takes the offensive in redressing the evils of human suffering.[41]

Prayer enhances a Godward relationship in which the 'suffering' who prays dispels loneliness and enters into communion with the other in an ongoing dialogue of encouragement. Through prayer, the 'aloneness' that comes from one's preoccupation with the self gives way to the 'otherness' that derives from preoccupation with the other. This is the self-donation in which suffering when accepted in the light of the vicarious suffering of Christ becomes an occasion for God's will and the benefit of fellow humans. Through prayer, the Christian receives and cultivates an eschatological hope that will in turn assist him or her navigate courageously the challenges of suffering. It is a spiritual dynamism that permits one to reach out beyond the limitation of the body.[42] In prayer, faith is kept alive and hope is rekindled on the eschatological intervention of the Lord. Because of this hope for the Lord's action, it then becomes difficult for a Christian to give up in the face of challenges.

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39 Strange, *The Moral World of James*, 27–28; See also Johnson, "The Letter of James," 329.
40 Moo, *The Letter of James*, 514.
41 Wall, *Community of the Wise*, 263–264.
42 Jastrzebski, "Recent Developments," 516.

Conclusion

Suffering in the context of the Christian community of James is identified in Jas 5:13a as referring especially to the inner or mental experience of pains and afflictions. This form of suffering is the most tortuous and intangible, suffering within suffering which, in most times, may be incomprehensible to others. It leads to loss of faith, and consequently loss of hope and loss of the will to live. The invitation to pray in v. 13a has been established above as an invitation to make a confident statement about the trust one has in God and for which one makes a petition to God. The Prayer of faith (v. 15) is similarly understood as an expression of trust in the power, nearness and faithfulness of the Lord. In the context of the Christian religion, 'to pray' is in itself an expression of one's faith in the one to whom the prayer is directed. Consequently, the invitation directed at those who suffer to pray in v. 13a is an invitation to express their faith in God even as they suffer and not renounce God. The invitation identifies the prayer of faith as a petition directed to God without an iota of doubt in God's capacity to generously do everything and provide for the needs of those who trust in him. It is a renewal of the pledge to remain a follower of Christ notwithstanding one's external circumstances. It is a reaffirmation of Ps 116:10 "I trusted even when I said I am sorely afflicted." This prayer, arising from such faith, gives hope to the one who prays. It provides the suffering person with the courage to put up with the displeasing situation, with the hope that it will be better. It works against depression and loss of the will to live.

The author of James knows that suffering can lead to the loss of faith and hope and the will to live. He acknowledges the power, vitality, and connection with God inherent in the prayer of faith. It is this awareness that informs the author's invitation to Christians who suffer to pray in 5:13a. He thus proposes the prayer of faith as the irreplaceable response of a Christian to the challenges posed by suffering. The inner or mental experience of suffering should challenge Christians to pray especially for the courage to put up with the misfortune and not be overcome by it. It denotes the understanding of trials as a test of faith and an opportunity to attain perfection (Jas 1:2-4). The exhortation by James to pray thus implies, in other words, that instead of complaints, passive resignation, or lamentation, 'the suffering persons' should make a confident statement about their conviction and trust in the power of God to provide for and sustain them in their affliction. They should, like the devout Hebrew in the Psalms (30; 50:15; 77; 91:15), cry out to God in faith expecting the just and merciful one to fight their cause, restore their right, and provide them with the grace not to retreat or give in. Conversely, they are to draw from the essential element of prayer, which is submission to God's will (Mark 14:35f; Rom 1:10ff; 2 Cor 12:8f) and receive the grace of endurance and patience.

Prayer is thus considered, in context, a frank dialogue between the sufferer and God, and in this conversation, it is not the relief from suffering that counts but the possibility to vent the sufferer's frustration and be relieved. It provides a coping strategy for those who suffer as they express their confidence in God. Members of James' messianic community are expected in their suffering to appropriate the words of the *Psalms of Solomon* 15:1: "When I was persecuted I called on the Lord's name; I expected the help of Jacob's God and I was saved. For you, O God, are the hope and refuge of the poor." The intervention of God in the situation of conflict is always the right of his people who suffer. It is therefore their right to implore God through prayers for support and companionship. Prayer, therefore, becomes a continuous communion with God as the source of the community, an expression of trust in the God who is known to answer the call of his people (Ps 65:3). It serves as a reminder to God of his promises and salvific acts. The Christian community of James is expected especially to base its prayers on the unqualified faith in the salvation brought forth by God in Christ.

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Five Centuries of Bible Translations into Kashubian

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Abstract: This paper discusses translations of biblical passages into Kashubian, which originated in the Lutheran circles between the 16th and the 19th centuries, followed by translations made in the Catholic circles in the 20th and the 21st centuries. The history of these translations has been divided into two periods: "old translations" and "contemporary translations." The former comprise various biblical texts preserved in manuscripts and printed monuments, which came into being between 1586 and the second half of the 19th century. The fundamental texts of this period include the works by Szymon Krofey (1586), Michał Pontanus (1643), and *Perykopy smołdzińskie* (1699–1701). The old translations were done from German in the Protestant circles in West Pomerania. In turn, the "contemporary translations" of biblical texts into Kashubian embrace translations from the second half of the 20th century, which were produced in the Catholic environment of Gdańsk Pomerania: from Latin (Mk 4:3-20) by Alojzy Nagel (1973), from Latin (four Gospels) by Rev. Franciszek Grucza (1992), from Polish (the New Testament and the Psalms) by Eugeniusz Gołąbek (1993–2007) and my own translations from Hebrew and Greek (the Four Gospels, the Pentateuch, Ecclesiastes) prepared in 2001–2020.

Keywords: Bible, Kashubian, translations, *Pericopes of Smołdzino*, biblical translation studies

The Kashubians belong to this type of regional cultural-ethnic group whose cultural axis or indigenous value is their language. Those who today (2020) actively use the Kashubian language are estimated at approx. 200–250 thousand. Although Kashubian has the status of a regional language in Polish law,[1] linguists still discuss as to whether we are dealing with a language or only with a dialect.

The beginnings of the biblical translation tradition in Kashubia date back to the 16th century. However, there has been no comprehensive translation of the Holy Scriptures into Kashubian to this day although it should be noted that the past 25 years were characterized by increased activities in this field.

The history of biblical translations into Kashubian can clearly be divided into two periods: the first covering the 16th–19th centuries, when the first translations of biblical texts appeared mainly among the Kashubian population of the Lutheran faith,

1 Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages, chapter IV, Art. 19 (Journal of Laws of 2005, No. 17, item 141).

and the second period covering the 20th and the 21st centuries, the translators being Catholic Kashubians.

1. Old Translations (16th–19th cc.)

The oldest translations of the texts of the Holy Scriptures into Kashubian were found in Smołdzino, a small village in Pomerania, about 30 km north of Słupsk, at the end of the 19th century, when two researchers of Kashubian culture, the ethnographer Franz Tetzner and the linguist Friedrich Lorentz, discovered several monuments of Kashubian literature.

These were works of a religious nature, written (or translated) most likely by Lutheran clergymen in Kashubia in the 16th–18th centuries for the use of the local Kashubian population. They included: 1) "Duchowne pieśni" [Spiritual Songs] by Szymon Krofey; 2) "Mały Katechizm" [The Small Catechism] translated by Michał Mostnik; 3) "Zbiór perykop na niedziele i święta" [A Collection of Pericopes for the Sundays and Holy Days]; 4) "Śpiewnik starokaszubski" [Old Kashubian Songbook] and 5) "Zbiór różnych modlitw, pieśni, przemówień pogrzebowych, między innymi ze Smołdzina" [A Collection of Various Prayers, Funeral Speeches, including those from Smołdzino]. The first two were books printed in Gdańsk, while the rest were manuscripts. Besides "Śpiewnik starokaszubski," which was owned by a private person from Smołdzino, the works were housed in the archives of the parish church in Smołdzino. In the first half of the 20th century, they were acquired by the Library of the University of Greifswald, where they are kept at present, with the exception of "Zbiór różnych modlitw," whose location remains unknown. In the second half of the 20th century, thanks to two German publishers, Reinhold Olesch and Friedhelm Hinze, these monuments have new phototypic editions ("Duchowne pieśni,"[2] "Mały katechizm,"[3] "Perykopy smołdzińskie" [The Pericopes of Smołdzino][4] and "Śpiewnik starokaszubski").[5] They have become the subject of detailed research by linguists and historians, both in Poland and abroad. From the biblical point of view, these monuments were topics of my analyses in a series of scientific articles[6] and a monograph published in 2009.[7]

2 Olesch, *S. Krofey. Geistliche Lieder*.
3 Olesch, *M. Pontanus. Der kleine Catechißmus*.
4 Hinze, *Die Schmolsiner Perikopen*. The work is also on a CD in the Library of the Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń (Pracownia Pomorzoznawstwa CD 584).
5 Hinze, *Altkaschubisches Gesangbuch*.
6 For example, Sikora, "Teksty biblijne w Śpiewniku Szymona Krofeja z 1586 roku," 115–124; Sikora, "The Oldest Translations," 55–65; Sikora, "Przekłady tekstów biblijnych," 129–152.
7 Sikora, *Teksty biblijne*.

Although these old works do not contain a comprehensive translation of even one book of the Bible, their numerous biblical fragments should be considered the oldest translations of the Holy Scriptures into Kashubian that have been found so far. These Kashubian texts, included in the old monuments, have been rendered from German.

1.1. Translations by Szymon Krofey (1586)

The oldest printed work with biblical fragments is a small cantional published in Gdańsk in 1586. Its title page gives information about the work and its author: *Duchowne piesnie D. Marcina Luthera y ynszich naboznich mężow. Z niemieckiego w Slawięsky ięzik wilozone przes Szymana Krofea sługe slowa Bozego w Bytowie. Drukowano w Gdainsku przes Jacuba Rhode. Roku Panskiego 1586* [Spiritual Songs by D. Martin Luther and Other Pious Men. Translated from German into Slovincian by Szymon Krofey, Servant of God, in Bytów. Printed in Gdańsk by Jakub Rhode. Anno Domini 1586]. The book, including fragments of Scripture, was rendered from German into Slovincian (Polish: słowiński): *z niemieckiego w Slawięsky ięzik wilozone*, by Szymon Krofey (ca. 1550–1590), who was the pastor of the Lutheran congregation in Bytów in the 1680s.

His *Śpiewnik* contains translations of biblical texts, mainly *Psalmy i Kantyki* [Psalms and Canticles], from German into Kashubian. In the first part of the cantional, there are 11 Psalms (12; 14; 46; 51; 67; 103; 124 [twice]; 127; 128; 130). Although the title "Psalm" indicates a biblical text, its close analysis leads to a conclusion that it is rather a paraphrase in the form of a song.

Krofey's *Kancjonał* also includes three canticles from *Ewangelia św. Łukasza*: *Pieśń Maryi (Lucae 1)*, *Pieśń Zachariasza (Lucae 2) i Pieśń Symeona (Lucae 2)* [The Gospel of Saint Luke: Mary's Song of Praise (Luke 1), the Song of Zechariah (Luke 2) and the Song of Simeon (Luke 2)].

Apart from the songs, *Śpiewnik* comprises 25 short prayers. Most of them consist of two parts: an unmarked short biblical or liturgical fragment and a corresponding request to God. The Old Testament fragments used in the prayers are from, *inter alia*: Ps, Job, Isa and Jer, while the New Testament fragments include texts from Matt, Luke, John, Acts, Rom, 1 Cor and 1 Tim. However, these texts are not always faithful translations; sometimes they are paraphrases or specific compilations of several biblical texts combined with liturgical texts.

Krofey defined the language of the whole translation as *slawięsky* (Slovincian). There is no unanimity among scholars as to how exactly to define this language. Basically, the opinion is maintained that it is the ecclesiastical language of Kashubian Protestants used in Pomerania, which Krofey called *slawięsky* in order to distinguish it from the Polish language used by Catholics.[8]

8 Cf. Olesch, "Vorwort," *S. Krofey. Geistliche Lieder*, II; Neureiter, *Historia literatury kaszubskiej*, 24, 27; Treder, "Kaszubszczyzna dawnych przekładów," 311.

1.2. Translations by Michał Pontanus (1643)

The second Pomeranian monument containing Kashubian biblical texts is *Mały Katechizm Marcina Lutra* [The Small Catechism of Martin Luther] translated by Michał Pontanus (born in ca. 1583, died in 1654), an Evangelical pastor in Smołdzino, a man who was thoroughly educated, in those times. He had extensive philological knowledge; in addition to Latin, he knew Hebrew, Greek and Syriac.[9] The full title of the work is: *In nomine Jesu. Parvus Catechismus D. Martini Lutheri Germanica Vandalicus. Der klenie Catechiszmus D. Martini Lutheri / Deutsch und Wendisch gegen einander gesetzt / Mit anhange der Sieben Busspsalmen Konig Davids. Mały Catechizm D. Marciná Lutherá Niemiecko-Wandalski ábo Slowięski / to jestá z Niemieckiego języká w Slowięski wystáwion y ná jáwnosc wydan / z Przydatkiem Siedm Psálmów Pokutnych krolá Dawida y inszych Potrzebnych rzeczi: osobliwie Historiy Passiy nászego Páná Jezusa według Ewangelistá Mattheuszá / y niektorych Piesn duchownych. Drukowány w Gdaińsku przez Jerzego Rhetá / Roku Pánskiego 1643*[10] [In the Name of Jesus. The Small Catechizm by D. Martin Luther, German-Wendish or Slovincian, that is, from German to Slovincian executed and openly published, with the addition of King David's Seven Penitential Psalms and other useful things, especially the Story of the Passion of Jesus according to the Evangelist Matthew and with some spiritual songs. Printed in Gdańsk by Jerzy Rhetá in Anno Domini 1643].

The core of the monument consists of two printed parts: 1) *Mały Katechizm Marcina Lutra*, supplemented with *Psalmy Pokutne Króla Dawida*, from 1643 [The Small Catechism of Martin Luther, supplemented with the Penitential Psalms of King David, from 1643]; and 2) *Pasja* [The Passion] also printed in 1643 with *Pieśni Kościelne* [Church Songs]. The printed parts were bound with the so-called *Dodatek* [Supplement] to Pontanus, handwritten, probably in 1675.[11] It is a catechism structured in the form of questions and answers on the subject of the faith.

The first part consists of *Katechizm*, *Psalmy Pokutne* (*Siedm Psálmów Pokutnych krolá Dawida*) and *Modlitwa o odpuszczenie grzechów*. The main biblical texts are obviously the penitential Psalms (6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143).

The second part is *Pasja* according to Saint Matthew and seven liturgical songs (*Cantiones*). The first piece of this part is composed of a short, rhymed *Passion* arranged on the basis of the text of the four Gospels, followed by the biblical text of the Passion – two chapters from the Gospel of Saint Matthew (Mt 26:1-27:66).

Moreover, the whole *Katechizm* contains many biblical fragments, either single verses or whole periscopes. One can find citations from twelve OT books: Gen,

9 Cf. Tetzner, *Die Slowinzen und Lebakaschuben*, 133.

10 The editions of the book were published in 1758 and 1828, but their contents and titles were different. The fourth – phototypic – edition was made in Germany in 1958.

11 Cf. Lorentz, "Zur älteren kaschubischen," 559.

Exod, Deut, 2 Chr, Ps, Prov, Wis, Syr, Isa, Jer, Joel and Zech. The NT citations come from sixteen books: Matt, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Rom, 1 Cor, Gal, Eph, Col, 1 Thess, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus, Heb and 1 Pet.

There are also fragments compiling various biblical texts. They appear when *Katechizm* refers three times to the texts on the institution of the Eucharist, combining verses from the Synoptic Gospels and 1 Corinthians. A similar procedure was applied to the topic of sending out the disciples. Here, there is a compilation of excerpts from Matthew and Mark. Matthew's text of *Our Father* is quoted twice.

The language of the work is defined on the title page of *Mały katechizm* as *wandalski* [Wendish] or *slowięski* [Slovincian].[12] Using this word, like Szymon Krofey in his work, the author could have wanted to emphasize the distinctiveness of this language in relation to the Polish language of the liturgy. In his *Gramatyka Pomorska*, Friedrich Lorentz thinks that the term *slowięski* does not mean the Slovincian of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, but the language of the Evangelical Slavs of Pomerania.[13]

1.3. *The Pericopes of Smołdzino* (1699–1701)

The third monument containing biblical texts is the so-called *Perykopy smołdzińskie*. It is mainly made up of biblical periscopes aimed to be read during sermons and services. Their translations were most probably produced by pastors of the West Pomeranian parishes in 1699–1701.[14]

Perykopy smołdzińskie published by Hinze is composed of two groups of texts. The first one is a collection of biblical periscopes – OT readings and Gospel readings (149 in total) arranged according to the chronology of the liturgical year, aimed to be read on subsequent Sundays and Holy Days. The periscopes are given in the language of the local Kashubians and in German. The collection begins with readings for the first Advent Sunday, and ends – on the 27th Sunday after the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. The OT readings include periscopes from Isa (4) and Mal (1). Out of the 27 NT books, only seven do not appear in *Perykopy smołdzińskie*.[15] The commonest Gospel periscopes come from Matthew and Luke, the rarest from Mark. There are 28 pericopes from Matthew, 4 from Mark, 26 from Luke and 17 from John. The Acts are quoted in 8 pericopes, Romans in 12, 1 Corinthians in 9, 2 Corinthians

12 Here the terms "wandalski" and "slowięski" are synonyms, by the first term is the Latin equivalent of the other. Cf. Mańczak, "Nazwa «słowiński»," 106–107.

13 Cf. Lorentz, *Gramatyka pomorska*, 2.

14 According to Friedrich Lorentz ("Zur älteren kaschubischen," 557), most of the text of *Perykopy smołdzińskie* was translated by one author – the pastor Jan M. Sporgius. Rev. Sporgius succeeded the son of Michał Pontanus, Tomasz, on the position of the parish priest of the church in Smołdzino in 1696–1720. Cf. Szultka, "Studia nad piśmiennictwem," 87.

15 There are no fragments from 2 Thess, Phlm, 1 and 2 Tim, 2 and 3 John and Jude.

in 3, Galatians in 6, Ephesians in 6, Philippians in 4, Colossians in 2, 1 Thessalonians in 3, Titus in one, Hebrews in one, James in 2, 1 Peter in 6, 2 Peter in 2, 1 John in 3 and Revelation in one.

The second group of texts of *Perykopy smołdzińskie* comprises 14 occasional prayers, including *Our Father* as a faithful rendering of Matt 6:9-13. Moreover, there are four biblical passages: two from the Old Testament (Num 6:25-26 and Ps 106:1) and two from the New Testament (Matt 7:12 and 1 Cor 11:23-25).

Some scholars do not consider *Perykopy smołdzińskie* a Kashubian monument in the strict sense, similarly to the earlier linguistic monuments created in the Kashubian-Slovincian lands.[16] They define the language of *Perykopy smołdzińskie* as the literary Polish of the 17th-century, with a mixture of individual Pomeranian dialectisms of greater or lesser intensity.[17]

1.4. *Old Kashubian Songbook* (16th–18th cc.)

The literary monuments written in Kashubian, containing biblical texts, include the so-called *Śpiewnik starokaszubski* [Old Kashubian Songbook], although according to linguists,[18] the songbook contains fewer forms and words in the Kashubian language than, for example, the songbook by Szymon Krofey or *Perykopy smołdzińskie*.[19] In this songbook there are poems, the creation of which Hinze dates back to the 16th and 18th centuries.[20] In his opinion, most of these works are translations from German. Almost 3/5 of them are reworked versions of the songs from Krofey's *Duchowne pieśni*.[21] In the songbook, we find ten songs based on the motives of the biblical Psalms: 1; 30; 51; 103; 124 (two different versions), 127; 130 (two different versions) and 147. Their adaptations in the German version were ascribed to six authors, whose first and last names were mentioned.[22] Like in Krofey's *Pieśni*, it is difficult to recognise these pieces as translations of the biblical texts since they are more or less free paraphrases, often very elaborated as compared with the original.

16 Cf. Popowska-Taborska, "Uwagi o języku Perykop smołdzińskich," 34.
17 Cf. Zieniukowa, [rev.] "Die Schmolsiner Perikopen," 162.
18 Cf. Zieniukowa, "Die Sprache," 78.
19 Cf. Zieniukowa, "Die Sprache," 78.
20 Cf. Hinze, "Einleitung," *Die Schmolsiner Perikopen*, IX.
21 Cf. Zieniukowa, "Polszczyzna tekstów religijnych," 114.
22 The authors of the parahrases of the Psalms were: Martin Luther (1488–1546) – Ps 124 and two versions of Ps 130; Erhart Hegenwalt (1524) – Ps 51; Johann Kolrose († 1558) – Ps 127; Justus Jonas (1524) – Ps 124; Paul Gerhardt (1607–1679) – Ps 1; Johann Gramann (1540) – Ps 103. No authors' names were given for song 79 (Ps 30) and song 111 (Ps 147).

1.5. The Translations of *Our Father* and the Parable of the Sower from Luke 8:4-15 (19th c.)

Our Father (Matt 6:9-13) is one of the most frequently translated biblical fragments into Kashubian. Besides its oldest versions coming from the works by Szymon Krofey, by Michał Pontanus or from *Perykopy smołdzińskie*, there are a number of independent versions. They include the so-called *Ojcze nasz* [Our Father] from Szczenurze before the year 1840, *Wójćenaś* by Florian Ceynowa from 1861, *Ojcze nasz* in Slovincian, also from the 19th century, *Ojcze nasz* from 1835 made by pastors: Ernst F. Döhling and Auagust T. Kummer[23] and *Ojcze nasz* from ca. 1840 by Izmaił Sriezniewski,[24] *Ojcze nasz* by Marcin Pollex,[25] by Rev. Aleksander Świeczkowski from Żarnowiec[26] and by F. Lorentz from Witków.[27]

In the mid-19th century, the Russian linguist Aleksander Hilferding noted two versions of the parable of the sower from the Gospel of Saint Luke (8:4-15). The first one was dictated from memory to him by a Slovincian fisher, while the other, also given from memory, by "a certain old man from the land of Bytów."[28]

2. Contemporary Translations

In the 20th and the 21st centuries, several Bible translators, both clergy and lay people, belonging to the Catholic Church, translated smaller or larger parts of the Holy Scriptures.

2.1. Alojzy Nagel (1930–1998)

The chronologically first author of a contemporary translation was Alojzy Nagel, one of the most outstanding Kashubian poets of his generation. In a book by Jan Drzeżdżon, published in 1986, Alojzy Nagel stated, "In the mid-1960s, the Bible Society in London asked me to translate the New Testament into Kashubian. I took up this job, but due to lack of time I have not been able to complete it."[29]

It is difficult to establish what part of the translation Alojzy Nagel managed to accomplish. In fact, only one pericope from the Gospel of Saint Mark (4:3-20) was most

23 Cf. Szultka, "Nowe źródła," 148.
24 Cf. Srezniewskij, "Zamečanija o nareiji kašebskom," 52–60.
25 Tetzner, *Die Slawen in Deutschland*, 440.
26 Cf. Tetzner, *Die Slawen in Deutschland*, 468.
27 Cf. Lorentz, *Slovinzische Texte*, 47.
28 Cf. Hilferding, *Resztki Słowian*, 131.
29 Drzeżdżon, *Współczesna literatura kaszubska*, 277.

likely translated from Latin; the periscope was included in *Kaschubische Antologie* by Ferdinand Neureiter, and published in Munich in 1973.[30]

2.2. Rev. Franciszek Grucza (1911–1993)

Rev. Franciszek Grucza belonged to the literary-ideological group called *Zrzeszeńcy* [Associationists], who emphasized the linguistic distinctiveness of the Kashubians.[31] We do not know when exactly he began translating biblical texts. In 1991, the printing house *Hlondianum* in Poznań published the four Gospels separately,[32] and in 1992 they appeared in one volume as *Kaszëbskô Biblëjô*.[33] *Nowi Testament. IV Ewanjelje*. Rev. Grucza's translation bore the *imprimatur* of Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski of Gdańsk and the *nihil obstat* of Bishop Jan Szlaga. As stated by Rev. Grucza, the basis for his translation was the Latin version, the so-called *Neo Vulgate* (1970).[34] Rev. Grucza's translation met with a lively response from linguists. Critical assessments of his translation were not uniform: some scholars considered this translation as unsuccessful, while others assessed it positively.[35] A favourable opinion about the translation was expressed by Bishop Professor Jan Szlaga, who wrote, *inter alia*, "Personally, I have the impression that the special mark and beauty of the language of this translation were determined by the skilful archaization of the Kashubian language. In my opinion, it is accurate. From the theological point of view, the translation is correct, and the archaization of the language gives it a special solemnity, which should characterize any translation of the Bible and the biblical language itself. I even believe that Rev. Grucza's translation made a successful attempt to create biblical Kashubian. I highly appreciate the accuracy of this translation; the introductions and footnotes are also good."[36] Undoubtedly, this translation has already found its permanent place both in the history of literary translations[37] and in the history of the translation of biblical texts into Kashubian, as the first Kashubian translation of the four Gospels in the Catholic Church.

30 Cf. Neureiter, *Kaschubische Anthologie*, 280.
31 Cf. Treder, "Tłumaczenia Biblii," 278.
32 Grucza, *Ewanjeliô sw. Mateusza*; Grucza, *Ewanjeliô sw. Marka*; Grucza, *Ewanjeliô sw. Łukasza*; Grucza, *Ewanjeliô sw. Jana*.
33 Grucza, *Kaszëbskô Biblëjô*.
34 However, in his philological analysis of the translation, Edward Breza ("Biblia po kaszubsku," 23) showed that the author followed the Polish version of *Biblia Tysiąclecia*.
35 Cf. Treder, "Tłumaczenia Biblii," 289.
36 Grucza, *Kaszëbskô Biblëjô*, 6.
37 Since some linguists do not see any religious value in this translation, only a literary value. So, e.g. Breza, "Język przekładu Ewangelii," 324.

2.3. Eugeniusz Gołąbek (1949-)

In 1993, a year after Rev. Franciszek Grucza's rendering, the entire New Testament was translated by Eugeniusz Gołąbek[38] (b. 1949), an electrician by profession, and a passionate columnist and musician. Gołąbek's translation was issued with the consent of the 245th Diocesan Bishops' Conference.

In 1999, Eugeniusz Gołąbek published the Book of Psalms.[39] This translation is preceded by the Decree of the Primate of Poland, Józef Cardinal Glemp. In 2007, a lectionary by E. Gołąbek was published in Gdańsk, bearing the title *To je Słowò Bòżé Czëtania mszalné i spiéwë midzëlekcyjné na niedzele i swiãta we wszëtczich cządach lëturgicznëch rokù na kaszëbsczi przełożił Eugeniusz Gòłąbk* [This is the Word. Readings and Chants for the Sundays and Holy Days from All the Seasons of the Liturgical Year. Translated into Kashubian by Eugeniusz Gołąbek].

In the introduction to his New Testament, Eugeniusz Gołąbek explains that he produced the translation from Polish since he did not know Greek and Latin.[40] In their forewords two bishops: Marian Przykucki and Jan Szlaga, expressed their high opinions about this rendering. Bishop Przykucki stressed the translator's skill to render Kashubian idioms.

The translation was received by theologians and linguists with appreciation and approval. It is generally evaluated with the translation by Rev. Franciszek Grucza. In such an approach, it is obvious that both translations fit in the two currents of the literary evolution of the Kashubian language, which are still vibrant today. Eugeniusz Gołąbek's translation should be seen within the movement referring to the Polish language, with a spelling similar to Polish and a long tradition, reaching even the 16th century. In turn, Rev. Franciszek Grucza's translation appears to be part of the second movement, emphasizing the cultural and linguistic distinctiveness of the Kashubians, including their own spelling.

2.4. My Own Translations (2001–2020)

An essential novelty of my translations is that they have been done from the original biblical languages: Hebrew and Greek – κοινὴ διάλεκτος – "common language" of the Hellenized ancient world.[41] In my translation work I have used the contemporary critical editions of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.[42]

38 Gołąbek, *Swięté Pismiona Nowégo Testameńtu*.
39 Gołąbek, *Knéga Psalmów*.
40 Cf. *Swięté Pismiona*, 12.
41 Cf. Szlaga, "Hermeneutyka biblijna," 198.
42 Merk, *Novum Testamentum*; NA[26]; Aland *et al.*, *The Greek New Testament*.

My first publication was the translation of the Gospel of Mark from Greek into Kashubian in 2001[43]: *Ewanielëjô wedle swiãtégò Marka*. This text had the *imprimatur* of the Primate of Poland Józef Cardinal Glemp.

Two years later I published *Ewangelia Dzieciństwa* (Matt 1–2; Luke 1–2) and *Prolog Ewangelii według św. Jana* (John 1:1-14)[44] in Poznań, within the project *Verba Sacra*.[45] In the following years translations of the two next Gospels appeared, namely, in 2007 – *Ewanielëjô wedle swiãtégò Jana* with the imprimatur of Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski, and in 2009 – *Ewanieliô wedle swiãtégò Mateùsza*, in 2010 – *Ewanieliô wedle swiãtégò Łukôsza* with the *imprimatur* of Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki. These translations were also reviewed by Rev. Prof. Jan Perszon and Prof. Jerzy Treder.

In 2010, all the four Gospels, which I have translated, were published in one volume under the title *Ewanielie na kaszëbsczi tołmaczoné* [The Gospels Translated into Kashubian]. It is a revised text, harmonized with its earlier editions, with more extensive introductions and commentaries. A *nihil obstat* to this edition was given by Bishop Jan Szlaga. From this edition comes the text of the Magnificat on a ceramic tablet, hung by the Kashubians in the Church of the Visitation in Ain Karem, Israel, in March 2013.

The first biblical texts that I translated from Hebrew were the Psalms. In the next three editions of *Verba Sacra*. *Biblia kaszubska* [Verba Sacra. The Kashubian Bible], in 2011, 2012 and 2013, a total of 31 psalms were published. For the January 2014 edition, I prepared and put to print translations of selected fragments from the Book of Genesis.

In 2015, the whole Book of Genesis (*Knéga Zôczątków*)[46] was issued. In the foreword, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki wrote, "It is an extremely valuable achievement because so far only the first three chapters of this book have been translated – almost four hundred years ago by Michał Pontanus – from German into Kashubian, and in modern times, the translation of nine fragments of the Book of Genesis from Polish into Kashubian – for the purposes of the publication of the Kashubian Lectionary in 2007 – was undertaken by Eugeniusz Gołąbek. Thanks to Father Adam Sikora's striving for maximum faithfulness of the translation, *Knéga Zôczątków* is characterized by theological correctness; and the consistent use – by this biblical scholar who is well known not only in the region of Wielkopolska – of current language standards in the Kashubian translation, along with the implementation of the characteristics

43 Sikora, *Ewanielëjô wedle swiãtégò Marka*.

44 Sikora, „Ewangelie Dzieciństwa," 15–30.

45 The initiative of the Poznań film director Przemysław Basiński, aiming at presenting biblical texts by outstanding Polish actors. The venue of the presentation is the cathedral in Poznań. The first edition of *Verba Sacra* took place in the Jubilee Year 2000. Between 2004 and 2019 within the Wejherów branch of *Verba Sacra – Biblia Kaszubska* there were 17 editions during which biblical texts in Kashubian were read by Danuta Stenka.

46 Sikora, *Knéga Zôczątków*.

of "home" Kashubian, yielded a translation of the first OT book that is very close to contemporary spoken Kashubian."

Each next year brought a publication of another book of the Pentateuch. Thus the Book of Exodus (*Knéga Wińdzeniô*)[47] was published in 2016, and in 2017 – the Book of Leviticus (*Knéga Kapłańskô*),[48] in 2018 – the Book of Numbers (*Knéga Lëczbów*)[49] and in 2019 – the Book of Deuteronomy (*Knéga Pòwtórzonégò Prawa*).[50] All the works had the *imprimatur* of Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, based on the theological opinion written by Rev. Prof. Jan Perszon; they were published by the Main Board of the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association in Gdańsk and the Faculty of Theology of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

In 2020, my translation of the Book of Qoheleth (*Knéga Koheleta*)[51] in two language versions (Polish and Kashubian) was published, also authorised by Archbishop Gądecki on the basis of the theological opinions of Rev. Prof. Stefan Szymik and Rev. Prof. Jan Perszon. The publisher was the Faculty of Theology of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

The late linguist, Prof. Jerzy Treder (1943–2015) from the University of Gdańsk reviewed my translations many times. After the publication of the Gospel according to Saint Mark, this eminent expert on the Kashubian language, stated, "in general [...] also this translation [...] is part of the previous disputes about the shape of the general, standardized literary Kashubian."[52] In the context of the translations by Rev. F. Grucza and E. Gołąbek, this translation, in Treder's opinion, "complies the rules of the latest spelling, which is a system placed between the other versions, as to the degree of its distinctiveness from the Polish spelling" and "as for the syntax, Sikora's text is closer to Gołąbek's version and also to the Polish version of Biblia Tysiąclecia." In turn, in the linguistic layer "the translation has undoubted features of Central-Western Kashubian and the features of the language of the Associationists, and thus both reflect the language of Grucza's translation." However, "in terms of phraseology,[53] Sikora's translation more frequently complies with Gołąbek's text, thus approaching Polish, and departing from Grucza's rendering."[54] Generally, this version, like the earlier translation by E. Gołąbek, should be seen within literary Kashubian, reaching even the 16th century tradition, referring to Polish. In the conclusion to his review of *Ewanielie na kaszëbsczi tołmaczoné*, Prof. J. Treder stated, "Formally, in the light of the Vatican II documents, accepting only translations of the Holy Scriptures from

47 Sikora, *Knéga Wińdzeniô*.
48 Sikora, *Knéga Kapłańskô*.
49 Sikora, *Knéga Lëczbów*.
50 Sikora, *Knéga Pòwtórzonégò Prawa*.
51 Sikora, *Knéga Koheleta*.
52 Treder, "Translacja na kaszubski z greki," 377.
53 More on this subject: Treder, "Frazeologia w kaszubskich translacjach," 483–488.
54 Treder, "Frazeologia w kaszubskich translacjach," 487.

the original texts, the Kashubian translation by Father Sikora appears as the only one in the so-called official circulation. Naturally, the renderings by Gołąbek and Grucza fully retain their historical, cultural, missionary and educational significance, and from a linguistic point of view, they can still play a significant role as a reference point for new translations; they will constantly confirm whether the Kashubian language can meet the requirements specified for it by all the texts contained in the Bible."[55] Reviewing the translation of the Book of Genesis, J. Treder wrote, "The translator tries to translate literally, philologically precisely, abandoning any linguistic experiment. He successfully imitates the specificities of the original biblical text and also in most cases reproduces faithfully the peculiar expressive combinations of words and syntactic structure of the original, e.g. with the dominance of parataxis and other syntactic constructions, the one with no conjunctions and the one repeating simple conjunctions, such as 'and' and 'but.' It is not a mere coincidence that the Kashubians speak similarly at home."[56] The eminent Czech linguist and theologian Josef Bartoň echoes, "Therefore, the text of the translation largely reflects the formal structure of the original – its simple syntax (e.g., the dominant parataxis, a language close to colloquial spoken Kashubian) or the preservation of some vivid lexical-phraseological equivalents, i.e. traditional Semitisms."[57]

3. Biblical Texts Translated into Kashubian

The amount of biblical texts translated into Kashubian, distinguishing between the so-called old translations (16th–19th centuries) and contemporary translations (20th and 21st centuries):

Biblical book	OLD TRANSLATIONS	CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATIONS
OLD TESTAMENT		
Gen	1:27-28.31; 2:18.21-24; 3:16-19	the whole book
Exod	18:21; 20:3.5.7-17	the whole book
Lev		the whole book
Num	6:25-26	the whole book
Deut	6:6-7; 10:18	the whole book
Josh		5:9a.10-12; 24:1-2a.15-17.18b
1 Sam		3:3b-10.19; 12:1.7-10.13; 16:1b.6-7.10-13a; 26:2.7-9.12-13.22-23

55 Sikora, *Ewanielie na kaszëbsczi tołmaczoné*, 321.
56 Treder, "O języku kaszubskim," 122.
57 Bartoň, "Další svazek kašubské bible," 40–44.

Biblical book	OLD TRANSLATIONS	CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATIONS
OLD TESTAMENT		
2 Sam		5:1-3; 7:1-5.8b-12.14a.16
1 Kgs		3:5.7-12; 8:41-43; 17:10-24; 19:4-9a.11-13.16b.19-21
2 Chr		4:8-11.14-16a.42-44; 5:14-17
2 Chr	19:6-7	36:14-16.19-23
Neh		8:1-4a.5-6.8-10
2 Macc		7:1-2.9-14
Job	19:25	19:1.23-27a
Ps	2:10-11; 6:1-11; 24:7; 32:1-11; 34:12; 38:1-23; 51:1-21; 102:1-29; 103:10; 124; 127; 128; 130:1-8; 143:1-12; 145:2.15-16; 118:1; 147:9-11	the whole book
Prov	13:24; 18:22; 22:6; 23:13	8:22-35; 9:1-6; 31:10-13.19-20.30-31
Qoh		the whole book
Wis	6:10	1:13-15; 2:12.17-20.23-24; 3:1-6.9; 6:12-16; 9:13-18b; 11:22-26; 12:1-2.13.16-19; 18:6-9
Sir	2:15; 7:1.23	3:2-6.12-14.17-18.20.28-29; 15:15-20; 24:1-2.8-12; 27:4-7.30; 28:7; 35:12-14.16-18
Isa	1:16-17; 7:10-15; 9:1-6; 40:1-5; 43:25; 49:23; 53:4-6; 55:6; 60:1-6	2:1-5; 5:1-7; 6:1-2a.3-8; 7:10-14; 8:23b; 9:1-3.5-6; 11:1-10; 22:19-23; 25:6-10a; 35:1-7a.10; 40:1-5.9-11; 42:1-4.6-7; 43:16-22.24b-25; 45:1.4-6; 49:1-6.14-15; 50:4-9; 52:7-10.13-15; 53:1-12; 54:4a.5-14; 55:1-11; 56:1.6-7; 58:7-10; 60:1-6; 61:1-2a.10-11; 62:1-5.11-12; 63:16b-17.19b; 64:3-7; 66:10-14c.18-21
Jer	4:1; 14:20	1:4-5.17-19; 17:5-8; 20:7-13; 23:1-6; 31:7-9.31-34; 33:14-16; 38:4-6.8-10
Bar		3:9-15.32-38; 4:1-4; 5:1-9
Ezek		2:2-5; 17:22-24; 18:25-28; 33:7-9; 34:11-17; 36:16-17a.18-28; 37:13-14
Dan		7:9-10.13-14; 12:1-3
Hos		2:16.17b.21-22; 6:3-6; 11:1.3-4.8c-9
Joel	2:12	1:13; 2:12-18
Amos		6:1a.4-7; 7:12-15
Jonah		3:1-5.10
Mic		5:1-4
Hab		1:2-3; 2:2-4
Zeph		2:3; 3:12-18
Zech	1:3	2:14-17; 9:9-10; 12:10-11
Mal	3:1-4	1:14b; 2:1-2b.8-10; 3:1-4.19-20a

Biblical book	OLD TRANSLATIONS	CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATIONS
NEW TESTAMENT		
Matt	2:1-15; 3:13-17; 4:1-11; 5:20-26; 6:9-13.24-34; 7:7.12.15-23; 8:1-13.23-28; 9:1-8.18-26; 10:10; 11:2-10; 13:24-30; 15:21-28; 17:1-9; 18:1-11.15-18.23-35; 20:1-16; 21:1-16; 22:1-22.34-46; 23:34-39; 24:15-28; 25:1-13.31-46; 16:1-75; 27:1-66; 28:19	the whole book
Mark	7:31-37; 8:1-9; 10:13-19; 16:1-8.14-20	the whole book
Luke	1:26-80; 2:1-52; 5:1-11; 6:36-42; 7:11-17.48.50; 8:4-15; 10:16.23-37; 11:14-28; 14:1-11.16-24; 15:1-10; 16:1-9.19-31; 17:11-19; 18:9-14.31-43; 19:41-48; 21:25-36; 24:13-47	the whole book
John	1:1-14.19-28; 2:1-11; 3:1-21; 4:47-54; 6:1-15; 8:46-59; 10:1-16; 11:25-26; 14:23-31; 15:11.26-27; 16:1-27; 20:17.19-29; 21:15-24	the whole book
Acts	1:1-11; 2:1-13; 5:29; 6:8-15; 7:1-2.51-60; 8:14-17; 10:34-48; 13:26-33	the whole book
Rom		the whole book
1 Cor	1:4-9; 4:1-5; 5:6-8; 9:24-27; 10:1-13; 11:23-32; 12:1-11; 13:1-13; 15:1-10	the whole book
2 Cor	3:4-11; 6:1-10; 11:19-33; 12:1-9	the whole book
Gal	3:15-29; 4:1-7.21-31; 5:16-26; 6:1-10	the whole book
Eph	3:13-21; 4:1-6.22-28; 5:1-9.15-29; 6:1-17	the whole book
Phil	1:3-11; 2:5-11; 3:17-21; 4:4-7	the whole book
Col	1:9-14; 3:12-17.19	the whole book
1 Thess	4:1-7.13-18; 5:1-13	the whole book
2 Thess		the whole book
1 Tim	2:1-3; 3:1-6; 5:5-6.17-18	the whole book
2 Tim	3:14-15	the whole book
Titus	2:11-15; 3:1.5-7	the whole book
Phlm		the whole book
Heb	9:11-15; 10:38; 13:17	the whole book
Jas	1:16-27	the whole book
1 Pet	2:2.11-18.21-25; 3:1.3.6-15; 4:8-19; 5:5-11	the whole book
2 Pet	1:16-21; 3:3-13	the whole book
1 John	3:13-18; 4:16-21; 5:4-10	the whole book
2 John		the whole book
2 John		the whole book
Rev	12:7-12	the whole book

The above table shows that the whole OT books translated into Kashubian include: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Qoheleth. No passage has been translated from thirteen OT books, namely from Judges, Ruth, 1 Chronicles, Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 Maccabees, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Obadiah, Nahum and Haggai; all of the New Testament books have been translated.

Although the process of translating the Bible into Kashubian is in progress, there is still a considerable lack of translations of the whole Old Testament or its significant portion. Clearly, there are few translations from the original biblical languages. Apart from the Pentateuch and the Book of Ecclesiastes, no other book has been translated from the Old Testament in its entirety. On the other hand, from the New Testament, apart from the four Gospels, the three Epistles of Saint John and Revelation, the remaining 19 books have not yet been translated from Greek.

This overview of the published translations of larger or smaller parts of the Holy Scriptures into Kashubian shows that over the past five centuries, i.e. from the first known printed Kashubian biblical text, the number of translations has not been very impressive. After the first undertakings of translating the Bible into Kashubian, which were related to the Protestant Slovincian milieus, only the last half-century was a period of significant achievements in this field. The translations of the biblical texts into Kashubian, created in the 20th century by Rev. Franciszek Grucza, Eugeniusz Gołąbek and by me, can be placed within two existing currents in the literary evolution of the Kashubian region. The literary current referring to the Polish language, with a spelling similar to Polish and a long tradition, reaching even the 16th century, embraces Eugeniusz Gołąbek's translations and mine. On the other hand, the translation by Rev. Franciszek Grucza, emphasizing the ethnic and linguistic distinctness of the Kashubians, visible in their own spelling, belongs to the second literary current.

Translated by Maria Kantor

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Word and Image. Polish Medieval and Renaissance Religious Writings in the European Context

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Abstract: The article presents the Polish religious writing of the Middle Ages and Renaissance as an expression of correspondence between the word and image. It also demonstrates the impact of European graphics, including Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts, upon Polish religious works of the period (such as the works by Pseudo-Bonaventura in his rendering of Baltazar Opec's *Żywot Pana Jezu Krysta* and Jan Sandecki's *Historie biblijne* or *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*. The article also emphasizes that it was Dürer who paved the way for the book illustration, thus turning woodcuts into an art form in their own right. The fifteenth century was a watershed in book culture. As new illustration techniques at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries encouraged the growth of illustrated printed books, the codex became obsolete.

Keywords: Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts, Stanisław Samostrzelnik, word and image in books from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, illumination and book graphics, woodcuts, miniatures, *Postylla* by Mikołaj Rej, *Biblia Leopolity*, Jakub Wujek's *Postylla katolicka*, *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*

This article discusses the Polish religious writing of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, which unites the complementary aspects of verbal and pictorial content. It seeks to emphasize the common Polish and European heritage. It also demonstrates the impact of biblical graphics, including Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts, on the Polish religious works, for instance, on Pseudo-Bonaventura's rendering of Baltazar Opec's *Żywot Pana Jezu Krysta* [The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ] and Jan Sandecki's *Historie biblijne* [Biblical Stories] or *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* [Dominican Meditations]. The article also discusses medieval illuminated manuscripts (*Ewangeliarz gnieźnieński* [The Gniezno Gospels], *Ewangelistarz płocki* [The Płock Evangeliary], *Biblia czerwińska* [The Czerwińsk Bible], *Psałterz trzebnicki* [The Trzebnica Psalter]) and sixteenth-century prints (*Postylla* [Postilla] by Mikołaj Rej, *Biblia* by Jan Leopolita [Leopolita's Bible] and *Postylla* [Postilla] by Jakub Wujek) illustrated with biblical woodcuts. Further, it emphasizes that the early Polish illustrated books were initially printed in Cracow, and graphics were a medium of a universal visual language.

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1. The Book in Polish Medieval Culture – Outlining the Problems

In the Polish medieval culture, the book was highly privileged.[1] It was valued both for its spiritual merit and material worth. In addition to religious books, there existed texts indispensable to practicing trade, education, and acquiring general knowledge.[2] The book attracted not only the clergy and court but also the Cracow academic circles and wealthier bourgeois.

In Europe during the last century of the Middle Ages, there were three types of books: manuscripts, xylographic or block books, and typographic books. Until the fourteenth century, books were written and illuminated by hand, but from the sixteenth century onwards, most were printed using movable metal blocks in printing presses. In addition to these two methods of book production, the fifteenth century also brought xylographic or block books, printed entirely or partially with woodcut blocks. These books consisted of a series of wood engravings with hand-written or block-printed captions. After the invention and development of metal movable type along with the printing press, these texts came to be pressed typographically. In this way, the xylographic book gradually transformed into the modern illustrated book.[3]

The concurrence of three printing techniques in the fifteenth century can be attributed to the growing demand for religious, moralizing, educational, and entertaining texts. Additionally, from the opinions found in the fourteenth-century manuscripts, it transpires that the illustration was also gaining significance.[4]

But before these books emerged, the hand-copying of books intensified in the fourteenth century. In Western Europe, the highest demand was for educational and specialist texts, liturgical and common prayer books, religious works, and the common vernacular books of an "entertaining" sort.[5] The scribes worked in church *scriptoria* (monastic, cathedral, and collegiate), as well as in offices and courts. In addition to the output of specialized *scriptoria*, there was also individual demand. Furthermore, texts were ordered by universities, schools, and monasteries (*ars dictandi*) to exchange or sell. The evidence for this last intention of

1 Manuscripts and prints in the Polish medieval culture are discussed in multiple sources. On this topic see, for example, Birkenmajer, "Książka rękopiśmienna," 17–36 [1936]; Birkenmajer, "Książka rękopiśmienna," 264–283 [Reprint 1975]; Bieńkowska, *Staropolski świat książek*; Głombiowski – Szwejkowska, *Książka rękopiśmienna*; Szwejkowska, *Książka drukowana*; Potkowski, *Książka rękopiśmienna*; Moulin, *Życie codzienne zakonników*; Bieńkowska, *Książka na przestrzeni dziejów*; Świderkówna – Nowicka, *Książka się rozwija*.

2 Bieńkowska, *Książka na przestrzeni dziejów* (n. 1 above), 57.

3 See Kocowski, *Drzeworytowe książki średniowiecza*, 11.

4 "What an educated man can learn from letters (that is written words), the uneducated man can learn from illustrated books"; see Kocowski, *Drzeworytowe książki średniowiecza* (n. 3 above), 12.

5 Potkowski, *Książka rękopiśmienna* (n. 1 above), 81–82.

the manuscript process can be found in final remarks about payment for works and scribes' dedications.[6]

The medieval monks played an essential role in the process of translating and copying. They read, conserved, copied, and illuminated books in service to God and for inner improvement. In the Early Medieval period and the High Middle Ages, the Benedictine order was carried out by the process of codex transcription. Other monasteries, such as the Augustinians, Cistercians, Dominicans, canons regular, and Carthusians, also maintained significant *scriptoria* and libraries. In Poland, monastic *scriptoria* were operated by the Cistercian order in Mogiła near Cracow, canons regular at the Corpus Christi church in Cracow and Trzemeszno, and the Benedictine order on the mountain Łysa Góra, as well as by other monastic centers.[7] In monastic *scriptoria*, *ars dictandi* converged with *ars scribendi*.[8] At the same time, calligraphic and illuminating workshops flourished throughout the medieval towns.[9]

In the Late Middle Ages, the hand-crafted manuscript was a common instrument of social communication and a saleable (and profitable) material product. At the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the book emerged as an indispensable tool for information and came to be recognized as the commonly accessible work of art that shaped the readers' imagination.[10]

2. The Correlation between Text and Image in Medieval Books

The medieval period was characterized by a strong unity of word and image, ornament and letter.[11] This perspective is rooted in Horace's famous Latin phrase "*ut pictura poesis*," as well as in Plutarch's popularization of the words of Simonides of

6 These are Latin inscriptions from the following manuscripts in the Jagiellonian Library, Cracow: MS from the year 1409, written by Tomasz of Zamberk, BJ 2146, fol. 228v; MS from the 15th century, BJ 2075, fol. 177; MS from the early 15th century, BJ 2042, 394. Many inscriptions of this kind are discussed in Wattenbach, *Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter*, 511–513.

7 Pieńkowska, *Średniowieczna pracownia miniatorska*.

8 Marszalska, "Skryptoria klasztorne," 72.

9 Bieńkowska, *Książka na przestrzeni dziejów* (n. 1 above), 64.

10 Chojecka, *Ilustracja polskiej książki*, 10.

11 Numerous critical works from the fields of literary studies, bibliology, history, and art history discuss the subject of word and image in the Polish medieval writings. On this topic see, for instance, Banach, *Pismo i obraz*; Kocowski, *Drzeworytowe książki średniowiecza*; Chojecka, *Ilustracja polskiej książki* (n. 10 above); Praz, *Mnemosyne*; Dziechcińska, *Oglądanie i słuchanie*; Hojdis, *O współistnieniu słów i obrazów*; Pelc, *Słowo i obraz*; Wysłouch, "Ut pictura poesis," 5–17; Biała, *Literatura i malarstwo*. Among the English-language publications from recent years, they deserve attention, among others: Fransen – Reinhart, "The Practice of Copying," 211–222; Dackerman, *Painted Prints*; Dackerman, "Dürer's Etchings," 37–51; Armstrong, "Book Decoration," 297–314.

Ceos, who named painting a silent poetry, and poetry a speaking painting.[12] Among the most significant medieval books that united the semantics of word and image is the missing *Ordo Romanus*. It was a gift given by Matilda of Swabia, wife of Frederick II of Lorraine, to King Mieszko II, together with the letter to the Polish ruler, around the year 1026/1027, shortly after his coronation in 1025. The laconic dedication was matched by an ornamental miniature depicting the moment when the Polish king received the book.[13] At the same time, the number of illustrated codices in Poland was gradually increasing. The books were crafted at home or brought from abroad. The so-called *Codex aureus* (*Złoty kodeks*), also known as *Ewangeliarz gnieźnieński* (ca. 1050), heavily illuminated with gold leaf, had a Czech origin, similar to *Ewangelistarz płocki*, also known as *Kodeks pułtuski* [The Pułtusk Codex] (end of the eleventh century). *Mały ewangeliarz płocki* [The Little Płock Gospels] (ca. 1150) and the biblical *Liber geneseos* (second half of the twelfth century), also known as *Biblia czerwińska*, represented the Mosan art. The latter book displayed decorative initials of intertwining plant ornaments and a single, page-size miniature depicting the creation myth in connected medallions. *Psałterz trzebnicki* (first half of the thirteenth century) is exceptional, with page-size miniatures depicting the life of Christ and his mother, St Mary. Similar illuminations also characterized other indices that contained psalters (for instance, those of Głogów and the Wrocław Clarisses), graduals, and antiphonaries.[14]

The manuscript decoration was an integral part of the text. The medieval scribes specialized in copying, illuminating, and bookbinding. Their hand-crafted books had the status of art.[15] The work attempted to imitate divine beauty by visual means, which Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite conveyed in the following statement: "I tell you the truth, visible things are the images of invisible."[16]

The illustrative figures aimed to convey the textual message and, as such, functioned not only as decorative elements but as part of the lesson. Without a doubt, they made reading easier, more diverse, and visually appealing.[17]

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12 Citation after Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki*, I, 52.

13 This miniature is characterized and reproduced in Walicki, *Sztuka polska przedromańska*, 254 and figure 744; see Michałowska, *Średniowiecze*, 46, 65.

14 See Dobrowolski – Tatarkiewicz, *Historia sztuki polskiej w zarysie*, 129; Walicki, *Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska*, 251–276; Pelc, *Obraz – słowo – znak*, 38–40; Michałowska, *Średniowiecze* (n. 13 above), 46, 213.

15 See Karłowska-Kamzowa – Wiesiołowski – Wetesko, *Średniowieczna książka*.

16 Pseudo-Dionizy, *Epistola X*, citation after Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki*, II, 37. Quote in the Polish version: "Zaprawdę, rzeczy widzialne są obrazami niewidzialnych."

17 This subject is discussed in reference to the oldest illustrated scrolls by Anna Świderkówna and Maria Nowicka (*Książka się rozwija* [n. 1 above], 142–145).

3. Polish Graphics at the Turn of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries – the European Context

The graphic art of book illustration was well established in Europe at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[18] In Poland, the most vibrant graphics center throughout the sixteenth century was in Cracow, and in the second half of the century, centers emerged in Poznań, Toruń, Gdańsk, and Lviv. The key figures who decided on the final output of graphic production were engravers and typographers, as well as the text's author. In this period, Polish woodcut illustrations were heavily influenced by European graphic art, especially that of Albrecht Dürer.

The sixteenth century witnessed unprecedented growth in the number of graphic prints, which, by that time, had established itself as the form that was most accessible to wide audiences. In fact, such was the increase in scope that it far exceeded the illuminated manuscripts or panel paintings.[19] The illustrations were subordinate to the printed text, but they often functioned as autonomous works.

By way of example, the hand-crafted books illuminated by Stanisław Samostrzelnik (ca. 1480–1541), a Cistercian monk from Mogiła, stand out among the high-quality liturgical manuscripts and prayer books. He received commissions from the king and royal courtiers, for instance, Chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki and Deputy Chancellor Bishop Piotr Tomicki.[20] The manuscripts signed by Samostrzelnik came from the years 1524–1535 and were thus created in the period when the Italian Renaissance, especially in its Florentine as well as various northern varieties,[21] had already reached Cracow. His major works contain illuminations for four prayer books (Polish *modlitewnik*): *Modlitewnik Zygmunta I Starego* [Prayer Book of Sigismund I the Old] (1524), *Modlitewnik Krzysztofa Szydłowieckiego* [Prayer Book of Krzysztof Szydłowiecki] (1524), *Modlitewnik królowej Bony* [Prayer Book of Queen Bona] (1527–1528), and *Modlitewnik Wojciecha Gasztołda* [Prayer Book of Wojciech Gasztołd] (1528). Moreover, he also illuminated *Liber geneseos illustris familiae Schidloviciae* (1532), *Katalog arcybiskupów gnieźnieńskich* [Catalogue of Gniezno Bishops] and *Żywoty biskupów krakowskich* [The Lives of Cracow Bishops] (1530–1535) by Jan Długosz, and *Ewangeliarz* [Evangelion] (1533–1534) by Piotr Tomicki.

18 The subject of Polish graphic art of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance is discussed by the art historian Ewa Chojecka ("Znaczenie kulturowe grafiki polskiej," 86–114); Chojecka, *Ilustracja polskiej książki* (n. 10 above).

19 Chojecka, "Znaczenie kulturowe grafiki polskiej" (n. 18 above), 89.

20 Chojecka, *Ilustracja polskiej książki* (n. 10 above), 11, 13; Bieńkowska, *Książka na przestrzeni dziejów* (n. 1 above), 96.

21 Miodońska, *Miniatury Stanisława Samostrzelnika*, 6.

Fig. 1. *Modlitewnik Zygmunta I Starego* [Prayer Book of Sigismund I the Old], 1524 (public domain, https://kulturaupodstaw.pl/modlitewniki-krolow/ [access: 25.03.2021]).

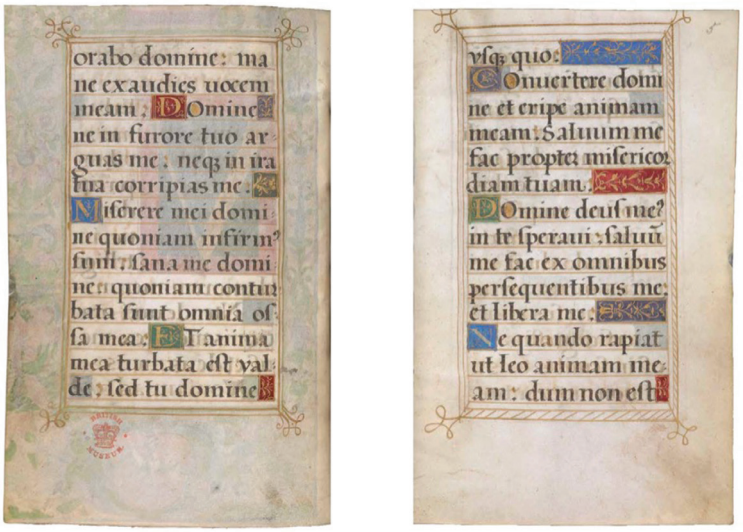

Fig. 2. *Modlitewnik Zygmunta I Starego* [Prayer Book of Sigismund I the Old], 1524 (public domain, https://kulturaupodstaw.pl/modlitewniki-krolow/ [access: 25.03.2021]).

Samostrzelnik's prayer books testified to the connections with the late-gothic Cracow school of book illumination and were arguably impacted by the German artists, Albrecht Altdorfer and Albrecht Dürer, and the Danube School. In addition to Austrian influences, there were also some minor influences from Netherlandish art and, indirectly, Italian painting (ornamental and heraldic motifs).[22]

The illustrated printed book, despite its late-medieval provenance, quickly became part of the new intellectual trends. Polish woodcuts emerged in the early sixteenth century, in 1507. These pioneering works, appearing alongside known innovations introduced by Hieronymous Vietor, were characterized by their high quality and richly ornamental woodcut frontispieces.[23] The new genre of mass illustration came from the printing shop of Florian Ungler.[24]

The numerous biblical woodcuts were used to illustrate, for instance, Chelidonius's *Passio Jesu Christi* (Cracow 1514, Ungler-Lern), a Pseudo-Bonaventuran devotional piece reworked by Baltazar Opec *Żywot Pana Jezu Krysta* (Cracow 1522, H. Vietor), and Jan Sandecki's *Historie biblijne* (Cracow 1527/1528, F. Ungler). The visible inspiration of Albrecht Dürer's art was, nonetheless, reduced to its simplest form and subject to the repetition of the composition scheme. The works rarely displayed ornamental book borders and primarily represented mass devotional graphics, which relied on formal simplicity and uncomplicated textual content.[25]

An interesting example of graphic illustration can be found in the Calvinist *Postylla* by Mikołaj Rej (Cracow 1557, M. Wirzbięta), published in the printing house of Maciej Wirzbięta.[26] This collection of sermons for Sundays and holidays remains one of the most masterfully crafted books of the sixteenth century. Its frontispiece formally alluded to a manneristic retable and was followed by half-page New Testament woodcuts created by an anonymous artist and signed with the initials ICB.[27] Inspired by Dürer's graphics, the author depicted the biblical stories in a natural landscape and architectural space. The second impression of *Postylla* (1560) showed the biblical parable about false prophets, presenting high-ranking clerics with wolf faces. The motif referred to the ideological controversy between dissenters and

22 See: Miodońska, *Miniatury Stanisława Samostrzelnika*, 5–23.

23 Szwejkowska, *Książka drukowana* (n. 1 above), 103, 105.

24 Chojecka, "Znaczenie kulturowe grafiki polskiej" (n. 18 above), 101; Szwejkowska, *Książka drukowana* (n. 23 above), 102.

25 Chojecka, "Znaczenie kulturowe grafiki polskiej" (n. 18 above), 102–103.

26 *Postylla* by M. Rej was printed three times in his life in 1557, 1560, and 1566.

27 Chojecka, "Znaczenie kulturowe grafiki polskiej" (n. 18 above), 106; Chojecka, *Ilustracja polskiej książki* (n. 10 above), 30. According to Konrad Górski, editor and publisher of Rej's *Postylla*, his woodcuts from Dürer's school were crafted especially for this work and adjusted to evangelical texts and to their interpretation by Rej. In addition, the scholar assumed that they must have been prepared in one of the Cracow print shops. This assumption is based on the high quality of the printed books in the early Renaissance. Okoniowa – Okoń, "Albrecht Dürer," 75.

the Roman Catholic Church, and its representation drew on pamphlet illustrations, especially leaflets, from the period.[28]

A publication which holds an important position in the history of Polish graphics in terms of the applied forms of illustration is the Bible translated into Polish by Jan Leopolita, issued in 1561 in the Cracow publishing house belonging to Mikołaj and Stanisław Scharffenberg. The first edition was dedicated to King Sigismund II Augustus under the name *Biblia Leopolity* (*Scharffenbergowska*, *Krakowska*) [Leopolita's Bible, Scharffenberg Bible, Cracow Bible]. The 1575 issue had significantly richer graphics. The printer dedicated it to Henry of Valois; after his infamous retreat from, he removed the title pages and the dedication to replace them with new title pages dated 1577 and a dedication to Stefan Batory. The text of the Bible was the same as in the 1575 edition, meaning that the 1575 and 1577 issues are the so-called title variations of the same publication.[29]

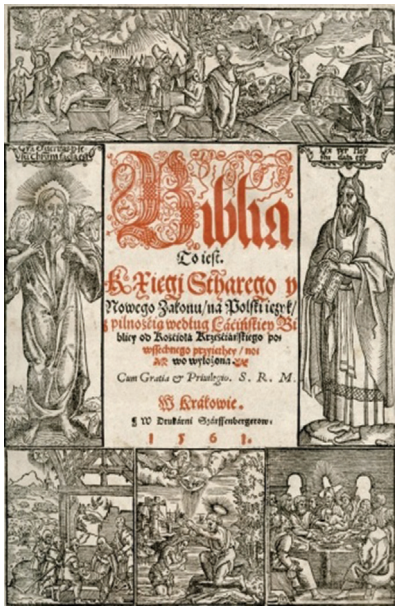

Fig. 3. *Biblia Leopolity* [Leopolita's Bible] from 1561, title page
(public domain, from the collection of the Jagiellonian Library, https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/publication/242444/ [access: 25.03.2021]).

28 Chojecka, "Znaczenie kulturowe grafiki polskiej" (n. 18 above), 106–107; Ziomek, *Renesans*, 227–232; Chojecka, *Ilustracja polskiej książki* (n. 18 above), 30.

29 This problem was investigated by Józef Muczkowski and Rajmund Pietkiewicz (*Biblia Polonorum*, 361, 626 [no. 2a]); "*Polish Biblical Editing*," 59 [n. 1], 76 [no. 2a]). See also: Łuczak, "Biblia Leopolity," 2–3.

The first issue of *Biblia Leopolity* (from 1561) had numerous woodcut initials and 284 illustrations made using the same technique (in the second edition, there are 285). The most interesting graphics in *Biblia Leopolity* belong to a collection of 87 woodcuts, with some of them replicated more than once. Their maker was not native as before his art made it to the Szarfenberger print, they decorated earlier a few issues of the *Luther Bible* (ed. 1534, 1535, 1536, 1539, 1541 and 1545) and the Czech translations: *Severýn's Bible* of 1537 and *Melantrich's Bible of* 1549 and 1560.[30]

As already mentioned, the first edition of *Biblia Leopolity* used a series of original woodcuts from Martin Luther's *Bible*, published in Wittenberg in 1534. In the 1575 and 1577 editions, copies of Jost Amman's woodcuts were added to the illustrations. They were crafted in Cracow, as evidenced by the initials of Cracow artists. Therefore, there are two stylistic variants of *Biblia Leopolity*: one including the Wittenberg woodcuts from the 1530s, the other based on the Late Renaissance artwork of Jost Amman.

Fig. 4. *Postylla katolicka* Jakuba Wujka [Jakub Wujek's *Postilla Catholica*] from 1584, title page
(public domain; from the collection of the Ossoliński National Institute, https://www.dbc.wroc.pl/dlibra/publication/9664/ [access: 29.10.2021]).

30 Zob. Krzak-Weiss, "Garść uwag," 4.

The first edition of Jakub Wujek's *Postylla katolicka* [*Postilla Catholica*] (Cracow 1573, print M. Siebeneicher) contained less meticulous illustrations. It used three types of woodcuts: small drawings depicting the life of Jesus; drawings borrowed from the Polish prayer book entitled *Hortulus animae*; and over a dozen woodcuts by Kryspin Scharffenberg from Baltazar Opec's *Żywot Pana Jezu Krysta*.[31] Its subsequent impression from 1584 (Cracow, print Jakub Siebeneicher) significantly improved the quality of illustrations and used original woodcuts by Jost Amman from his popular work, the *Icones Novi Testamenti*, published in Frankfurt am Main in 1571.

It is interesting to note that the printmaker Andrzej Piotrkowczyk bought the blocks used for illustrating postils by Rej from Maciej Wirzbięta and those for Grzegorz from Żarnowiec, in order to use them in the first impression of *Postylla mniejsza* [The Smaller Postilla] (Cracow 1590, print A. Piotrkowczyk). This reuse of prints caused a controversy, but it can hardly be held against Wujek, as certain editorial decisions may have been beyond his control.[32] The second impression of *Postylla mniejsza* (Cracow 1596), on the other hand, used earlier illustrations, which came from *Postylla większa* [The Larger Postilla] by Jost Amman.[33]

Other interesting examples of the Late Renaissance illustrations can also be found in the impressions of *Postylla*, this time printed not in Cracow but in Poznań (ed. Jan Wolrab, 1579–1580) and Toruń (Jan Kotenius, 1594).

3. "May everybody know that there are a hundred and twenty-one images here..." – Word and Image in *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*

As is well known, the power of the image was used in the Early Middle Ages to educate people and teach them biblical stories. The *Biblia pauperum*, a message of Christianity expressed in words and images, was a specific tool of catechesis for the clergy. The homilies or teachings they preached could be better understood by the faithful thanks to the visual aids placed in the churches. These representations served the preachers as an illustration of the truths of faith because the mutual complementation of word and image strengthened their message.[34] Some medieval *historiae passionis* were decorated with illustrations showing the viewer what was mentioned in the text. One example is the *Meditations* of John de Caulibus, which are accompanied by illustrations. In the introduction, the author wrote about the need for and importance of pictorial representations for meditations on the Passion, pointing out

31 Kawecka-Gryczowa, *Drukarze dawnej Polski*, 212.
32 Kuran, *Retoryka jako narzędzie perswazji*, 88–89.
33 Górski, "Pochodzenie tekstu," 11; Okoniowa – Okoń, "Albrecht Dürer" (n. 27 above), 74–75.
34 See Kaczor-Scheitler, "Biblia pauperum," 17–46.

that thanks to paintings, one can imagine events as if one were present at them.[35] Ludolf of Saxony, in his introduction to the *Vita Christi*,[36] and Peter of Alcantara, in *De meditatione*,[37] spoke about this subject in similar ways.

Rozmyślania dominikańskie best illustrates the amalgam of word and image. The codex is kept in the library of the Carmelite Order in Cracow under shelf number 287.[38] The work was identified by the distinguished historian Karol Górski (1903–1988), who discovered the text and co-edited it in 1965. Its anonymous author[39] must have completed the work by the year 1532 in the Dominican Order of Holy Trinity in Cracow, given the title of the text. The anonymous scribe used the fifteenth-century ductus. In 1532, alterations were introduced in different handwriting, and, after the first page was erased, a preface was added with the date of November 4, which was the Monday after All Saints' Day. Later, somebody else introduced more corrections and recorded the codex's history before it finally came to be stored in the Carmelite library in Cracow in 1721.

There is an abundance of critical analyses concerning *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*, the text's significance to sixteenth-century Polish culture, and its role in shaping religious veneration in the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance.[40] The discovery of *Rozmyślania* led to the formulation of the assumption that word and image are mutually dependent.[41]

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35 See Dobrzeniecki, "'Rozmyślania dominikańskie' na tle średniowiecznej literatury," XLI.

36 "Necessarium enim erit, ut aliquando ita cogites te praesentem cogitatione tua, ac si tunc temporis ibi praesens fuisses quando passus fuit," quoted after: Dobrzeniecki, "'Rozmyślania dominikańskie' na tle średniowiecznej literatury," XLII.

37 "Non vero considera haec tanquam dudum et ante multa saecula gesta, sed imaginare tibi tamquam praesentia sint et coram oculis tuis gerantur", quoted after: Dobrzeniecki, "'Rozmyślania dominikańskie' na tle średniowiecznej literatury," XLII.

38 Wydra – Rzepka, *Chrestomatia staropolska*.

39 Górski, "Analiza pisarska," XI, XIV.

40 See, for example, the following works concerning *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*: Dobrzeniecki, "'Rozmyślania dominikańskie'. Próba charakterystyki," 319–339; Dobrzeniecki, "'Rozmyślania dominikańskie' na tle średniowiecznej literatury," XXXIX–XLII; Górski, "Analiza pisarska" (n. 39 above), V–XIV; Górski, "Uwagi o 'Rozmyślaniach dominikańskich'," 303–321; Górski, "Prądy religijne," 128–129; Górski, "Znaczenie 'Rozmyślań dominikańskich'," 203–207; Górski, "Duchowość polska," 161–175; Rozanow, "Miniatury i iluminacje," XVIII–XXXVIII; Kopeć, *Męka Pańska*; Kopeć, "Nurt pasyjny," 55; Smosarski, "Męka Pańska," 97–98; Adamczyk, "Religijna proza narracyjna," 14 (n. 21), 39; Nowicka-Jeżowa, "Tradycja średniowieczna," 195–196, 214–215; Obiedzińska, "Topografia wizerunków," 109–113; Obiedzińska, "Symbolika Krzyża," 259–262; Czyż, "Obraz ciała i mowa uczuć," 46–49; Michałowska, *Średniowiecze* (n. 13 above), 611–614; Kopania, "Słowo – obraz – teatr," 7–48; Cybulska-Bohuszewicz, "Perwersyjny rdzeń," 5–23; Kiszkowiak, "Wątek 'Mater Dolorosa'," 227–243; Stramczewska, "Obecność miniatur," 59–69.

41 See Kuraszkiewicz, "Uwagi o języku," XV–XVII; Rozanow, "Miniatury i iluminacje" (n. 40 above), XVIII–XXXVIII; Stryjniak, "Sposoby wprowadzania przytoczeń," 420–427. Some scholars presented different views, for example, Smosarski, "Męka Pańska" (n. 40 above), 97–98; Stramczewska, "Obecność miniatur" (n. 40 above), 63–69.

The manuscript of *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* consists of 122 sheets,[42] which, in addition to the text, contain exceptionally rich and diverse illustrations and decorative material. It includes 117 miniatures and the initials and coat of arms of the Wolski family (Belina).[43] Based on the painting technique analysis conducted by Zofia Rozanow, it can be affirmed that the miniatures are heterogeneous.[44] They were created by two artists. The first drew 33 illustrations and was inspired by Albrecht Dürer; the second created 84, and the miniatures resemble the production of the sixteenth-century Cracow print shops in style.

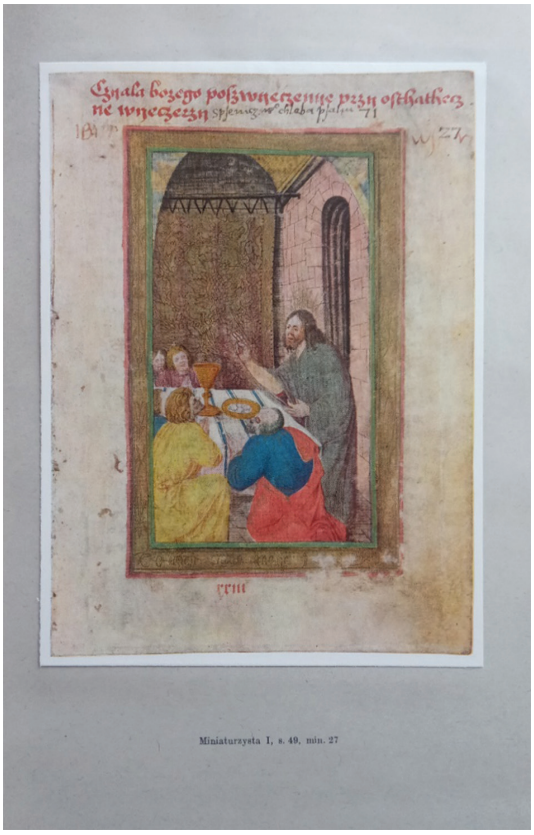

Fig. 5. Miniaturist I, p. 49, min. 27.
Source: Górski – Kuraszkiewicz, *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* [Dominican Meditations].

42 The manuscript shows the signs of damage and incompleteness. Four sheets, and possibly the frontispiece, are missing. See Górski, "Analiza pisarska" (n. 39 above), V–IX.

43 The coat of arms (on p. 6) gives grounds for the speculations as to the first owner or commissioner of the manuscript. It was placed overleaf miniature 1 after it was assembled. See Górski, "Analiza pisarska" (n. 39 above), VIII.

44 Rozanow, "Miniatury i iluminacje" (n. 40 above), XVIII–XXXVIII.

The first artist endowed the depicted figures with unique features, showed the events against varied backgrounds, and used lively colors and multiple contrasts.[45] Zofia Rozanow also noticed that many of the motifs used by the first artist appear in Dürer's *Mała pasja* [The Small Passion], *Duża pasja* [The Large Passion], and *Żywot Marii* [Life of the Virgin], as well as in *Mszał* [The Missal], commissioned by Erazm Ciołek.[46] Rozanow connected the first miniature artist with the print shop of Stanisław Samostrzelnik of its early years.[47]

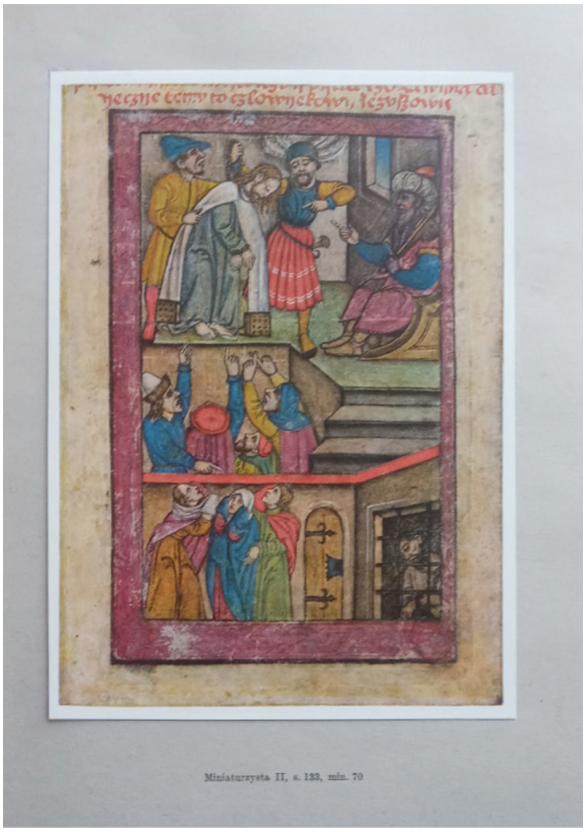

Fig. 6. Miniaturist II, p. 133, min. 70.
Source: Górski – Kuraszkiewicz, *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* [Dominican Meditations].

45 Rozanow, "Miniatury i iluminacje" (n. 40 above), XXIV–XXX.
46 Erazm Ciołek, *Mszał*, retrieved at: https://polona.pl/item/mszal-z-cysterskim-kalendarzem-liturgcznym,NjI4MDkxMjA/18/#info:metadata [access: 28.07.2020].
47 Rozanow, "Miniatury i iluminacje," XXX, XXXVIII.

The style of the second artist, on the other hand, can be distinguished by a naturalist presentation of figures, dynamic depiction of movement, pronounced black contouring, patches of coloring, and a narrow color range. Rozanow suggested that the second artist's likely inspiration was *Żywot Pana Jezu Krysta* (1522) by Baltazar Opec.[48] The scholar connected this artist with the "drawing" style of the Cracow illumination techniques, pointing out, however, that he represented "the so far unique instance of the local, dramatic dynamism, and formal brutality."[49]

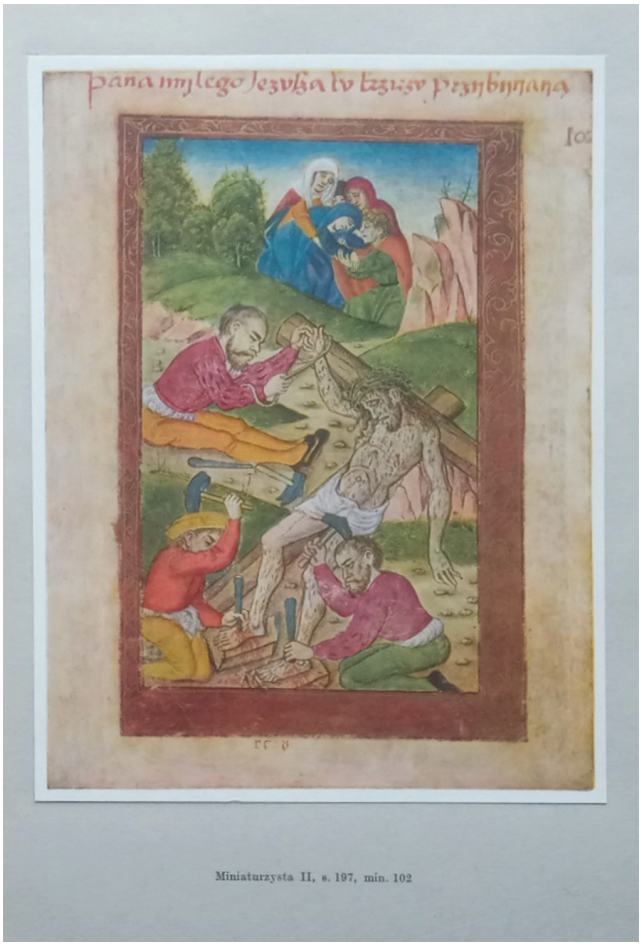

Fig. 7. Miniaturist II, p. 197, min. 102.
Source: Górski – Kuraszkiewicz, *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* [Dominican Meditations].

48 Rozanow, "Miniatury i iluminacje," XXX–XXXVIII.
49 Rozanow, "Miniatury i iluminacje," XXXVIII.

Another scholar, Barbara Miodońska, referred to the first artist as the "Master of Gethsemane" in her commentary on *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*. However, rather than discussing his stylistic dependence on Stanisław Samostrzelnik's print shop, she concentrated on the impact of Albrecht Dürer's art. She referred to the second miniaturist as the "Master of Passion" and developed Rozanow's initial idea that his style relied on the Cracow illuminating techniques from the first quarter of the sixteenth century, highlighting his graphic style in particular.[50]

The miniatures used in *Rozmyślania* were not merely a simple illustrated attachment. Since they presented the Passion's chronology, they constituted "a particular outline, parallel with the verbal narrative,"[51] intended to enhance the message. The following passage from the Preface of *Rozmyślania* demonstrates how its anonymous author understood the illustrations' complementary and collaborative function in the biblical-apocryphal narrative.

> May everybody know that there are a hundred and twenty-one images here, which can work immensely upon each man's pious meditation about the bitter and innocent passion of gracious Jesus. And for each of them by the grace of God almighty and innocent passion of gracious Jesus, four bishops gave forty days of indulgence. Who attends the mass and says his prayers and Hail Mary before, and mediates on the bitter and innocent passion of gracious Jesus, shall be rewarded for each picture a hundred and sixty days of indulgence. And if someone should, in front of each picture, say one prayer and Hail Mary and mediate on the bitter and innocent passion of gracious Jesus, he shall receive the indulgence of a hundred and nineteen thousand, six hundred and sixty days.[52]

In addition to the Preface and the indulgence promises contained in it, the author's appeals to the recipients, scattered throughout *Rozmyślania*, encouraged them to activate their sense of sight and to meditate on the images, which were meant to persuade them to pursue spiritual activity and inspire their sensitivity and imagination ("May every soul see the things that happened on Maundy Thursday, wake your

50 See Miodońska, *Małopolskie malarstwo*, 182–185, 189–192.

51 Michałowska, *Średniowiecze* (n. 13 above), 611.

52 All citation comes from Górski – Kuraszkiewicz, *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*, II. Polish version: "Wiedz kożdy, iż tu jest obrazkow sto i dwadzieścia i jeden, ktore człowieka wielce mogą pobudzić ku nabożnemu rozmyślaniu męki gorzkiej i niewinnej Jezusa miłościwego. A od kozdego z nich osobliwie z łaski Pana Boga Wszechmogącego i z skarbu męki niewinnej Jezusa miłościwego czterzej biskupowie dali po czterdzieści dni odpustow. Kto by z nabożeństwem przed ktorem zmowił Pacierz i Zdrowę Maryją, rozmyślając mękę gorzką i niewinną Jezusa miłościwego, a tak to czyniąc, od jednego obrazka otrzyma sto dni i sześćdziesiąt dni odpustow. A jeśliby kto przed kożdem obrazkiem, ile ich, zmowił jeden Pacierz i Zdrowę Maryją z rozmyślaniem męki gorzkiej i niewinnej Jezusa miłościwego, taki otrzyma odpustow dni dziewiętnaście tysięcy trzysta i sześćdziesiąt dni." Quotations in my transcription.

sorrow and weep with the sad mother…!"; "May every soul see what the savior suffered to redeem you!").[53]

The meticulously detailed descriptions of Christ's Passion went well beyond the original evangelical content, privileging the gory naturalism and cruelty ("… on each post they crushed his head forcefully and his head bumped against each post"; "and they hurled stones at him, and poured foul waste on him from above, …on to Jesus's head"; "they slapped his face, …punched blows between his eyes"; "…they used those sticks to hammer the crown on his head, …and as his head lay on his back, …the thorns pierced through bones to his brain").[54] Yet, the text also displayed a "conspicuous exaltation of emotionality"[55] ("Jesus' head hurt so much and suffered enormous violence"; "No writing is needed here, reason alone shows that here Jesus suffered torment").[56]

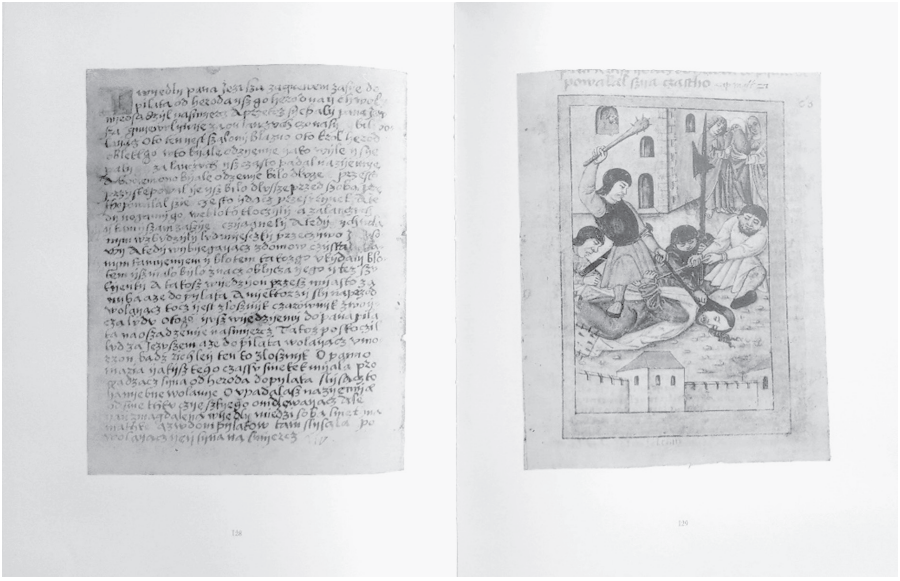

Fig. 8. *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* [Dominican Meditations].
Source: Górski – Kuraszkiewicz, *Rozmyślania dominikańskie*, 128–129.

53 Polish version "O, oglądaj, duszo wszelka, ty rzeczy, ktore sie działy [w] Wielki Czwartek, pobudź sie ku żałości i płaczy z matką smętną […]!"; "O, oglądaj, duszo wszelka, co miłośnik cirpiał twoj za cie, odkupując ciebie!"

54 Polish version: "[…] na kożdem słopieniu głowkę i czoło jego silno roztrącili i tłukła się głowka jego o kożdy słopień"; "I ciskali nań kamieniem, z góry lali nań nieczystości śmierdzące, […] blwali na głowę Jezusowę"; "dawali Jezusowi silne policzki, […] bili pięściami między oczy jego"; "[…] przybijali onymi laskami koronę w głowkę, […] aże leżała głowka jego na plecach, […] i wbieżały ostrożyny prze kości aże do mózgu."

55 Michałowska, *Średniowiecze* (n. 13 above), 611–612.

56 Polish version: "O, jakoż tu bolała głowka Pana Jezusa i silny gwałt cirpiała"; "Tu pisma nie trzeba, rozum to ukazuje, iż tu była silna bolą<czka> Pana Jezusowa."

Ewa Cybulska-Bohuszewicz noted that in creating these "extreme images," the author of *Rozmyślania* showed a propensity for hyperbole.

> The perversity of the work in question, however, crosses the expected rhetorical boundaries. It rather amounts to what can be called a macabre 'hyper-hyperbolization', which in fact organizes all levels of the literary realm. It is due to this macabre-hyperbolic representation, rooted in the fascination with suffering and death, that I talk about the pervasive imagination of the author (authors) of *Rozmyślania dominikańskie…*[57]

The text exhibited not only the physical suffering of Jesus but also the pain and despair of Mary accompanying her son. The parallelism of the "bodily" injuries inflicted on the son and the suffering of the "soul and heart" of the mother was reflected in both the verbal and graphic representations.

However, it is worth mentioning that although there are miniatures in *Rozmyślania*, there is no direct reference to them in the entire work, apart from the introduction. Therefore, it can be assumed that the linguistic element referring to images, as pointed out by Olga Stramczewska, could be demonstrative pronouns fulfilling a double function: an anaphoric reference to the text and an indication of the elements presented in the image.[58] The accumulation of demonstrative pronouns appeared in several fragments of *Rozmyślania* (e.g., "the villains," "the fierce crown," "with these favors"). In the manuscript, the text almost always preceded the thumbnail. For example, on page 5, there is a thumbnail about the text from page 4. This layout of the codex made it possible to read and contemplate the thumbnail in parallel. However, the presence of pronouns in the text is not a sufficient argument to conclude that the scribe wrote the text by looking at the thumbnails.[59]

Another issue relating to the miniatures is the laconic mention of colors in *Rozmyślania*. Information on this topic appeared several times in the manuscript, for example, when it speaks about the white robe of Jesus. The colors of the other elements can only be imagined by the reader on the basis of the miniatures. One gets the impression that the scribe deliberately omitted duplicate information because he was aware that the recipient would be able to use the thumbnail. However, such a conclusion would be rash, as noted by Stramczewska. A comparison of similar parts of the text of *Rozmyślania* with the text of the non-illustrated *Sprawa chędoga o męce*

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57 Cybulska-Bohuszewicz, "Perwersyjny rdzeń" (n. 40 above), 6. Original quote: "Perwersyjność omawianego dzieła przekracza jednak nawet spodziewane ramy tego zjawiska. Mamy tu wręcz do czynienia z czymś, co można by nazwać makabryczną 'hiper-hiperbolizacją,' która organizuje świat przedstawiony tego dzieła na praktycznie wszystkich jego poziomach. To ze względu na ów makabryczno-hiperboliczny charakter świata przedstawionego, powstałego w wyniku fascynacji cierpieniem i śmiercią, mówię o perwersyjnej wyobraźni twórcy (twórców) *Rozmyślań dominikańskich* […]."

58 See Stramczewska, "Obecność miniatur" (n. 40 above), 63.

59 Stramczewska, "Obecność miniatur," 64.

Pana Chrystusowej [The Cause of the Passion of Christ] from the same period shows that not describing colors was not a characteristic feature of that manuscript alone and was independent of the presence of miniatures.[60]

It is important at this point to remember the remarks of Karol Górski that almost all "the miniatures were placed on the manuscript *recto*; …the overleaf texts were certainly placed there after the sheet binding process."[61] Given these remarks, it is impossible to assert unambiguously that the text was influenced by the miniatures. Olga Stramczewska offers a critical approach to the existing hypothesis about the mutual dependence of text and image in *Rozmyślania*. Her conclusions are presented below.

In all likelihood *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* were originally intended as an illustrated *historiae passionis*, but the text and pictures were created independently. They were integrated only in the final stage of the creative process, and are not as much complementary as they function next to each other. The reader could follow the text only, or, in case he could not read, contemplate the image. The hypothesis about the strong influence of the image on the shape of the text should be therefore approached with caution.[62]

According to scholarly consensus, the description of the two-dimensional pain in *Rozmyślania* – the torment of Christ and the helplessness of Mary witnessing her son's disgraceful death – was complemented by visual means. For instance, Antoni Czyż remarked on the function of color illustrations in the reception of the apocryphon.

> All things considered, the text speaks plastically, like a 'painting', and the adjacent image makes it more precise, illustrates. The illustrated books were, after all, known in the Middle Ages, including the holy ones (such as *Biblia pauperum*), and *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* approaches this fine tradition as – to phrase it anachronistically, but to distinguish precisely – a passion 'comic book.'
>
> We can feel the peculiar and extreme power of the work. …Here the torturers tie Jesus' hands and legs on the cross, they insert splinters under his fingernails, his body flinching. …Here are the parts, the specimens of these images. There is always an illustration alongside. So if I am not imagining the inserting of splinters clearly enough, the picture will make it more vivid…[63]

60 Vrtel-Wierczyński, *Sprawa chędoga o męce Pana Chrystusowej*.

61 Górski, "Analiza pisarska" (n. 39 above), VI.

62 Stramczewska , "Obecność miniatur" (n. 40 above), 68–69. Original quote: "Istnieje zatem prawdopodobieństwo, że *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* zostały od początku pomyślane jako ilustrowana *historiae passionis*, ale tekst i ilustracje powstawały niezależnie od siebie. Dopiero w końcowym etapie tworzenia kodeksu zostały połączone w jedno dzieło i nie tyle dopełniają się wzajemnie, co funkcjonują obok siebie. Odbiorca mógł tylko czytać tekst lub – jeżeli nie potrafił czytać – tylko kontemplować obraz. Do hipotezy o silnym wpływie obrazu na językowe ukształtowanie tekstu należy podchodzić zatem sceptycznie."

63 Czyż, "Obraz ciała i mowa uczuć" (n. 40 above), 47–48. Original quote: "Ostatecznie zatem tekst mówi plastycznie, 'malarsko', a obrazek obok jeszcze to dookreśla, najdosłowniej ilustruje. Średniowiecze znało

Certainly, the miniatures in *Rozmyślania* were a means of persuasion. They worked on the audience's imagination and sensitivity, stimulating a contemplative engagement.

Conclusion

Medieval and Renaissance religious writings abound in the examples of the correlation between verbal expression and visual art. The book artists valued content and artistic merit equally. The medieval illuminated manuscripts, which served as prayer books for daily meditation, contained multiple decorative woodcuts. Following the invention of print, the image became an indispensable element of almost all books – not only as illustration but as a tool of persuasion in its own right. The Bible was decorated with colorful initials, miniatures, floral and zoomorphic symbolism, or interlace and geometric elements.[64] In illuminated woodcut books, the correspondence between image and word had a didactic function, in which it reflected the *Biblia pauperum*.[65] Broadly speaking, this correlation turned the image into written speech.[66]

The woodcuts used in the sixteenth-century prints functioned as illustrations. This practice confirmed the unity of the two systems – graphic and verbal. In the Early Renaissance, Cracow artists created high-quality woodcut art. The craft also owed its quick advancement to German artisans who sought work in Poland. By and large, Polish woodcuts were derived mainly from Dürer's school or borrowed directly from the German artist.

przecież książki ilustrowane, także święte (tym była *Biblia pauperum*), a *Rozmyślania dominikańskie* zbliżają się do tej świetnej tradycji, jako – powiedzmy anachronicznie, aby jednak dobitniej to określić – 'komiks' pasyjny. Czujemy osobliwą i skrajną moc dzieła. [...] Oto oprawcy wiążą Jezusowi ręce i nogi na krzyż, po czym – skulonemu wbijają drzazgi w paznokcie. [...] Oto są cząstki, próbki tych obrazów. Zawsze im towarzyszy ilustracja. Jeśli więc nie dość dobitnie wyobrażam sobie wbijanie drzazg pod paznokcie, barwny obrazek obok pokaże mi to konkretnie […]."

64 Knapiński, "Biblia w sztuce," 292.

65 Knapiński, "Biblia w sztuce," 279–296.

66 Banach, *Pismo i obraz* (n. 11 above), 30.

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The Concept of Matrimonial Consent in Can. 1057 CIC 1983

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Abstract: The article is devoted to matrimonial consent as described in Can. 1057 *CIC/83*, which has replaced the former Can. 1081 *CIC/17*. The regulation found in this canon emphasizes the importance of matrimonial consent and constitutes the basis for all reasons for the nullification of marriage. The analyzed norm, describing matrimonial consent in the positive aspect, was formulated in the personalistic spirit and adapted to Vatican II's teachings. Can. 1057 *CIC/83* was placed among the norms introducing the *De matrimonio* of *CIC/83* part, which resulted in ordering the vision of marriage in *CIC/83*. The studies on the normative content of Can. 1057 §1, *CIC/83*, focus on matrimonial consent, which establishes the matrimonial bond and is the only efficient cause of marriage, being a bilateral consensual contract and a sacrament for those baptized. The article discusses legal requirements assuring that consent will result in contracting a valid marriage. The article explains in detail the norm, according to which a defective matrimonial consent cannot be supplemented or replaced by another legal act. The article analyses the object of matrimonial consent in Can. 1057 §2, *CIC/83*, which was harmonized with the definition of marriage in Can. 1055 *CIC/83*. *Ius in corpus* is no longer such an object (as it narrows marriage to a communion finding fulfillment in the sexual and procreative sphere) but rather the parties to the contract, who give themselves to one another in an analogous sense (material object) and the communion for their entire life, in all its dimensions (formal object).

Keywords: marriage, matrimonial consent, object of matrimonial consent, *consensual contract*, sacrament of marriage

Considering the need to adapt the legal norms to the contemporary realities of life and to the teachings on the subject of marriage developed by Vaticanum II, as well as the postulates put forward by jurisprudence, the church legislator introduced a revised norm on matrimonial consent to *CIC/83*[1] – Can. 1057 *CIC/83*, which replaced the former Can. 1081 *CIC/17*,[2] containing the definition of matrimonial consent as the efficient cause of marriage and a vague, narrow, even "physiological" definition of consent,[3] which was the result of capturing the formal subject of matrimonial consent based on the primary purpose of marriage.[4]

1 Cf. Żurowski, *Kanoniczne prawo*, 75; Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 43; Chiappetta, *Il Codice*, 266–267; Góralski *et al.*, *Komentarz do Kodeksu*, 253–254.

2 Cf. Lüdicke, "Kryteria rozróżnienia," 61–62; Hemperek *et al.*, *Komentarz do Kodeksu*, 214; Rybczyk, "Projekt reformy," 204.

3 Cf. Żurowski, *Kanoniczne prawo*, 79–80; Chiappetta, *Il Codice*, 267.

4 Cf. Pastwa, *Istotne elementy*, 111–112.

1. The Position and Significance of Can. 1057 in *CIC/83*

When comparing the old and the new code, there is a noticeable difference in the location of the norm on matrimonial consent.[5] Can. 1081 *CIC/17* was placed at the initial position of the chapter *De consensu matrimoniali*, opening a series of provisions on the defects of matrimonial consent.[6] Thereby, in Can. 1081, §2 *CIC/17*, the legislator defined matrimonial consent from the positive side, and in the following canons, they described this consent from the negative side.[7] Can. 1057 *CIC/83* was placed among the canons introducing the title VII *De matrimonio*, of book IV. *De Ecclesiae munere sanctificandi*, right after Can. 1055 *CIC/83*, defining marriage, and Can. 1056 *CIC/83*, concerning the essential properties of marriage. These three canons constitute the structured vision of marriage in the Code.[8] The change in the placement of the provision on matrimonial consent itself was a well-thought-out move, resulting in a more logical arrangement of the norms and an emphasis on the extraordinary importance of this regulation in the entire marriage law. The legislator also elected to omit the negative description of matrimonial consent, defining it in a positive aspect only.[9]

Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* is of exceptional importance in the entire system of canon law, because it constitutes the measure of the validity of the act of matrimonial consent. From the provisions contained in this norm, it is possible to derive all grounds for the invalidity of marriage; however, it cannot be ascertained when a marriage is invalid,[10] with one exception: if the efficient cause of marriage is absent, i.e., matrimonial consent. Without doubt, a valid marriage cannot come to being in such a situation. The basis for the invalidity of marriage is a special form of simulation, which Bruno Primetshofer calls *negative Totalsimulation*, and Hermann Kahler – *absentia consensus.* In such a case, the marriage is invalid, not under Can. 1101, §2 *CIC/83* but pursuant to Can. 1057 *CIC/83*.[11]

5 Cf. Lüdicke, "Kryteria rozróżnienia," 61–62; Hemperek *et al.*, *Komentarz do Kodeksu*, 214; Rybczyk, "Projekt reformy," 204.

6 Cf. Urbanowska-Wójcińska, "Zgoda małżeńska," 60.

7 Cf. Lüdicke, "Kryteria rozróżnienia," 61–62.

8 Cf. Erlebach, "Problem wymiaru," 14.

9 Cf. *Comm*. 9/1 (1977) 119–120; Lüdicke, "Kryteria rozróżnienia," 61–62; Urbanowska-Wójcińska, "Zgoda małżeńska," 60.

10 Cf. Lüdicke, "Kryteria rozróżnienia," 62; Reinhardt, "Nowe tendencje," 97.

11 Cf. Kahler, *Absentia consensus*, 29–362; Reinhardt, "Nowe tendencje," 98–101; Primetshofer, "Der Ehekonsens," 773; Wąsik, "Symulacja zgody," 250–251.

2. The Sources of Can. 1057 *CIC/83*

The sources of Can. 1057, §1 *CIC/83* can be divided into three groups: The first group includes Can. 1081, §1 *CIC/17* and the encyclical *Castii connubii*, containing and re-announcing a comprehensive interpretation of the Catholic teaching on marriage.[12] The second group consists of the Constitution *Gaudium et spes* of the Second Vatican Council.[13] The third group includes *the Allocution of Paul VI* of February 9, 1976,[14] in which the Pope reminded that the efficient cause of marriage is matrimonial consent, not love.[15]

Reading Can. 1057, §1 *CIC/83* literally, it seems that the legislator omitted the teachings of Vaticanum II on matrimonial consent and made concessions to the conservative doctrine, repeating verbatim the contents of Can. 1081, §1 *CIC/17*.[16] It is only in the context of the sources that it becomes apparent that the normative content contained in the analyzed canon should be read in a new, personalistic approach. The consequence of this is the necessity to use such an interpretation of the norm in question that would take into account both the teachings of Vaticanum II and the post-conciliar doctrine[17].

Among the sources of Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* are the former Can. 1081, §2 *CIC/17* and Paul VI's Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of July 25, 1968,[18] in which the concept of the object matrimonial consent was extended.[19]

3. The Efficient Cause of Marriage

At the beginning of Can. 1057, §1 *CIC/83*, the legislator inscribed the legal principle of *matrimonium facit partium consensus*,[20] which is rooted in natural law and confirmed by the Church's Magisterium. According to this principle, matrimonial consent is the element that causes the establishment of, or creates (*facit*), marriage, forming the marital bond.[21] The principle itself is based on Ulpian's legal maxim,

12 Cf. *CICFontes/83*, 292; Skrzydlewski, "Castii Connubii," 1359–1360.
13 Cf. *CICFontes/83*, 292; Florczyk – Misztal, "Wprowadzenie do Konstytucji," 511.
14 Cf. *CICFontes/83*, 292.
15 Cf. Paulus VI, "Allocutio," 204–208; Navarrete, "Amor coniugalis," 619–632.
16 Cf. Pastwa, *Istotne elementy*, 125.
17 Cf. Stasiak, "Teologiczne podstawy," 83–84.
18 Cf. *CICFontes/83*, 292.
19 Cf. Navarrete, "Mutationes et praevisae," 4.
20 Cf. Chiappetta, *Il Codice*, 266–267; Bonnet, *Introduzione al consenso*, 3; Supremum Tribunal Signaturae Apostolicae, "Dioecesis Ultraiecten," 301; DS 643; DS 775; DS 756; DS 1327; DS 1497; DS 1813; DS 3713; DS 3701.
21 Cf. Hendriks, *Diritto matrimoniale*, 34; Majer, *Kodeks Prawa*, 782; Giacchi, *Il consenso*, 23.

derived from Roman law, contained in the *Digest*: *nuptias … consensus facit*,[22] or on its later, Christian interpolation.[23]

In the analyzed norm, the concept of *consensual contract* was adopted as binding in the matter of the relevance and sufficiency of a matrimonial consent for marriage, instead of the concept of *real contract*, according to which marriage arises through the mutual transfer of rights to each other, i.e., through the act of marital intercourse.[24] This is an important remark, because in the Code of John Paul II the concept of real contract was not completely rejected, as evidenced by Can. 1141 *CIC/83* and Can. 1142 *CIC/83*.[25]

Matrimonial consent, as the efficient cause of marriage, according to Can. 1057, §1 *CIC/83*, should not be equated with *casualitas matrimonii in abstracto*, or *casualitas matrimonii divina*, i.e., with the efficient cause of the essence of marriage, but with the efficient cause of the existence of a specific marriage, between a specific man and woman, i.e., with *causalitas matrimonii humana*.[26] It should be added that marriage should be understood here in accordance with its definition contained in Can. 1055, §1 *CIC/83*,[27] primarily as *foedus* – covenant. This technical term borrowed from biblical terminology, found in the text of the constitution Gaudium *et Spes, No.* 48, faithfully reflects the complexity of the concept of marriage and, moreover, refers to the idea of contract.[28] Formulated by Baldus de Ubaldis and based on the commentary to the Digest (D. 2.14), the rule states that *contractus essentialiter regulantur a consensu duorum* – each contract is regulated by the consent of the two parties, including its essence ("core of the contract").[29] Since marriage is a *bilateral consensual contract*, therefore, as with any contract, in order to come into being it requires agreement between the two parties– in this case, one man and one woman. A marriage contract becomes legally effective as a *solo consensu*, which means that apart from the declarations of will of the prospective spouses, no additional element is needed. Matrimonial consent plays the role of the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*) of marriage and the formal cause (*causa formalis*) of the marriage contract, constituting its internal structure.[30]

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22 Cf. *D* 35. 1. 15: *Ulpianus libro 35 ad Sabinum... Nuptias enim non concubitus, sed consensus facit*; *D* 50. 17. 30: *Ulpianus libro 36 ad Sabinum: Nuptias non concubitus, sed consensus facit*; Mosiek, *Kirchliches Eherecht*, 194.

23 Cf. Zubert, "Consensus sacramentalis," 9.

24 Cf. Gasparri, *Tractatus canonicus*, 6; Żurowski, *Kanoniczne prawo*, 77; Cavana, "La condizione," 239; Giacchi, *Il consenso*, 37ff; Fumagalli Carulli, *Intelletto e volontà*, 27; Bánk, *Connubia canonica*, 328.

25 Cf. Fernández Castaño, *Legislación matrimonial*, 42.

26 Cf. Robleda, "Causa efficiens," 656ff.

27 Cf. Góralski, "Rola zgody," 6.

28 Cf. Gerosa, *Prawo Kościoła*, 266–267; Wąsik, "Pojęcie małżeństwa," 197–198; Czapla, "Pojęcie «matrimoniale foedus»," 28, 31.

29 Cf. Fumagalli Carulli, *Intelletto e volontà*, 47; Полдников, *Формирование учения*, 265.

30 Cf. *Fernández* Castaño, *Legislación matrimonial*, 99; Duda, *Katolícke manželské*, 46; Bonnet, "La capacità," 35; Hurtado, *Resolutiones morales*, 53; Gasparri, *Tractatus canonicus*, 5ff; Moneta, "Il Matrimonio," 185; Chiappetta, *Il Codice*, 266–267; Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 45.

The canonical marriage of the baptized described in Can. 1055 *CIC/83* assumes a juridical-religious structure in such a way that it is impossible to separate marriage as a non-religious contract from marriage as a sacrament.[31] In canon law studies, a question is asked as to whether the adoption of the *solus consensus* principle – whereby the efficient cause of marriage is only matrimonial consent – trivializes or even veils the sacramentality of marriage, because this principle was adopted from Roman law into the system of church law in different times, in a climate of a different legal culture, different ecclesial vision of marriage and not yet specified concept of its sacramentality. Moreover, the concept of marriage as "*sacramentum naturae*" and "*sacramentum gratiae*" should not be mixed.[32] Attempts are being made to resolve this problem. Ulrich Rhode notes that the relationship between matrimonial consent and marriage is based on natural law. As a result, matrimonial consent as *causa efficiens* applies to all marriages, both those concluded according to natural law and sacramental ones.[33] According to Otto Pesch, the teachings of the Church on the sacramentality of marriage require matrimonial consent according to Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83*, which is a necessary condition for concluding marriage. Marriage, on the other hand, becomes a sacrament through the expression of consent among the baptized, which takes place in the Church.[34] Augusto Sarmiento states that the sacramental sign is constituted by mutual matrimonial consent, which is elevated to the dignity of an effective sign of grace among the baptized. Inseparability exists between consent and the sacramental sign. However, this is only the case in marriages contracted between baptized persons. On the other hand, in the case of the unbaptized, a distinction must be made between sacrament and consent, which is the efficient cause of true marriage, but which is concluded only at the level of natural law.[35]. Orio Giachhi takes the position that, in the case of baptized persons, the contractual nature of marriage and its sacramentality are intertwined with each other, in the sense that the consent of the spouses, as an essential element of the contract, is also an essential element of the sacrament since the spouses themselves are ministers of this sacrament and jurisdiction of the Church over marriage is not limited to its sacramental aspect, but also influences its contractual aspect, which determines the conditions for the validity of this act.[36] The legislator themselves in Can. 1055, §2 *CIC/83* declares that: *a valid matrimonial contract cannot exist between the baptized without it being by that fact a sacrament.* The sacramental profile of the Christian marriage is not something incidental, some external addition and supplement

31 Cf. Serrano Ruiz *et al.*, *Matrimonio canonico*, 41ff; Wąsik, "Pojęcie małżeństwa," 200.
32 Cf. Zubert, "Consensus sacramentalis," 12–13.
33 Cf. Rhode, *Vorlesung*, 49.
34 Cf. Pesch, *Ehe im Blick*, 2, 13.
35 Cf. Sarmiento, *Małżeństwo chrześcijańskie*, 165.
36 Cf. Giacchi, *Il consenso*, 24.

to the marriage contract, but is part of the essence of the marital bond itself.[37] Therefore, the doctrine of marriage in terms of contract and sacrament is inseparable, and its rejection would entail a rejection of the teachings of the Church's Magisterium.[38] This means that qualified consent in the case of baptized spouses is simultaneously the efficient cause of the contract and the sacrament of marriage.[39]

The transfer of matrimonial consent may only be executed by those legally capable of contracting marriage, as expressed in Can. 1057, § 1 *CIC/83* with the formula *inter personas iure habiles*. Consent cannot cause marriage to come to being in the event of the legal incapacity of one or both parties. This inability may be derived from God's natural or positive law, or from ecclesiastical law.[40] From the declaration of natural law in Can. 1055, §1 *CIC/83* it follows that marriage may be contracted only by one man and one woman.[41] There must be gender differentiation between the prospective spouses. Marriage cannot be a relationship between persons of the same sex,[42] or with a person who has performed a "sex change", because such an operation only concerns the phenotype and does not change the genotype, i.e., the essence of a person's sex.[43]

The proper expression of matrimonial consent presupposes the proper functioning of the mind (cf. Can. 1095 *CIC/83*) and the will of the prospective spouses. The defects of consent relating to the will may concern a substantive difference between the act of the will and the meaning of its declaration (cf. Can. 1096–1097 *CIC/83* and Can. 1099–1102 *CIC/83*) or a qualitative difference (cf. Can. 1098 *CIC/83* and Can. 1103 *CIC/83*).[44] Furthermore, impediments to marriage result in rendering the marriage null and void, unless a competent ecclesiastical authority has granted the required dispensation.[45] In addition, spouses must be physically capable of entering into a valid marriage[46]; an example is the impediment of *instrumental impotence*, i.e., the inability to perform sexual intercourse, which results from the anatomical deficiencies of the genital organs.[47]

Can. 1057, §1 *CIC/83* requires that the consent be externalized in accordance with the provisions of law – *legitimae manifestatus*. The manner of communicating

37 Cf. Vitali – Berlingò, *Il matrimonio canonico*, 9.
38 Cf. Aubé – Caparros, *Code de droit*, 916; Chiappetta, *Il Codice*, 267; Boggiano Pico, *Il matrimonio*, 297; Pawluk, *Prawo Kanoniczne*, 25–27; Giacchi, *Il consenso*, 24; Fumagalli Carulli, *Intelletto e volontà*, 45.
39 Cf. Gerosa, *Prawo Kościoła*, 281.
40 Cf. Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 45; Żurowski, *Kanoniczne prawo*, 78.
41 Cf. Fernández Castaño, *Legislación matrimonial*, 106–107; Żurowski, *Kanoniczne prawo*, 78; Gerosa, *Prawo Kościoła*, 281.
42 Cf. Żurowski, *Kanoniczne prawo*, 78.
43 Cf. Stawniak, *Niemoc płciowa*, 322.
44 Cf. Lüdicke, "Kryteria rozróżnienia," 63.
45 Cf. Sztafrowski, *Podręcznik prawa*, 29–30; Gajda, *Prawo małżeńskie*, 39–40.
46 Cf. Duda, *Katolícke manželské*, 46; Fumagalli Carulli, *Intelletto e volontà*, 28.
47 Cf. Majer, *Kodeks Prawa*, 801; Stawniak, *Niemoc płciowa*, 184–194, 326–337.

the matrimonial consent is specified in Can. 1104–1106 *CIC/83*. It should be expressed either by the prospective spouses simultaneously present or by a proxy duly appointed in accordance with law. It is to be conveyed in words or with equivalent signs. Using the assistance of an interpreter is allowed. On the other hand, the *canonical form*, i.e., persons to whom such consent is expressed, is specified in Can. 1108 *CIC/83* and Art. 6 Motu Proprio of Pope Francis *De concordia inter Codices,* of May 31, 2016 (ordinary form) and Can. 1116 *CIC/83* and Art. 10 Motu Proprio *De concordia inter Codices* (extraordinary form).[48]

Can. 1057, §1 *CIC/83* also contains the rule according to which the matrimonial consent expressed by the prospective spouses may not be supplemented by any human authority. This means that if the consent is deficient or defective, it cannot be replaced by any other legal act. This cannot be completed either by a later coexistence, or by long-term cohabitation, or by an act of will expressed through a third party (e.g., parents), nor can it be done by any human legal authority.[49] At the time of the works on the codification, the possibility that divine authority might supplement the consent was contemplated (*num divina potestas supplere posit consensum*) and the case *of sanatio in radice* was considered, where the Church validates marriage without either party knowing of this and when this same party is not willing to sanction the marriage.[50]

4. Definition of Consent

Can. 1057, §2 of *CIC/83* is classified as a determination[51] or definition of matrimonial consent.[52] A methodologically strict analysis allows us to find in this provision a *real* definition of matrimonial consent, which describes what consent is and *unambiguous*, which means that whenever consent is mentioned in the code, it is referred to in the same sense as the one stipulated by the contents of the norm.[53] According to Grzegorz Erlebach, this is a formal definition of matrimonial consent, which does not so much refer to a specific concept belonging to the canon law system, but rather has the reality regulated by this law as its object.[54] José Maria Serrano Ruiz believes that Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* is not an exhaustive definition of matrimonial consent,

48 Cf. Sztafrowski, *Podręcznik prawa*, 30; Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 45; Franciscus, *De concordia inter Codices*, art. 6, art. 10.
49 Cf. Vlaming – Bender, *Praelectiones iuris*, 375.
50 *Comm.* 33/1 (2001) 41.
51 Cf. Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 46.
52 Cf. Funghini, "L'escluzione," 282.
53 Cf. Ajdukiewicz, "Definicja," 846–847; "Definicja realna," 60; Kiczuk, "Jednoznaczność," 1052.
54 Cf. Erlebach, "Problem wymiaru," 13.

and additionally there occurs tautology therein. It concerns the phrase: *Consensus matrimonialis … ad constituendum matrimonium*. In order to eliminate this error, the author postulates that in the place of the expression *matrimonium*, a sentence from the definition of marriage should be substituted: *quo vir et mulier inter se totius vitae consortium constituunt*.[55]

5. The Nature of Matrimonial Consent

The legislator showed that the matrimonial consent in Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* as an act of will, as emphasized in the statement *consensus matrimonialis est actus voluntatis*.[56] However, it must not be forgotten that the act of human will presupposes prior intellectual knowledge and consent on the part of the reason, because: *nihl est volitum nisi praecognitum* – nothing is the object of volition unless it was previously known. The prospective spouse's reason must be aware of the voluntary act of granting matrimonial consent.[57] In the judgment coram Pena of December 10, 2010, we find a clarification of the definition of consent: *Consensus autem est actus rationis et voluntatis a nubentibus elicitus, quo iidem mutuam suiipsius donationem in matrimonio perficiunt*.[58] Moreover, matrimonial consent is a *human act* (*actus humanus*), since mutual donation and acceptance constitute a conscious, voluntary, and deliberate action by the prospective spouses, which derives from prudent will.[59] It is also a *legal act* which produces permanent legal effects.[60]

The internal will of a man and woman, separately, cannot establish marriage understood in accordance with Can. 1055 *CIC/83*. For this, the conjunction of the two wills of the prospective spouses, which merge into one reality, into a marriage pact is needed.[61] However, for this to happen, these internal wills need to be manifested. If the internal will is not communicated by the prospective spouses on the *externum forum*, using words or equivalent signs, it is ineffective. What is required is the materialization of the inner will of a man and woman in a perceptible sign which expresses these wills.[62] This is confirmed by the maxim: *intentio mente retenta, nec parti expressa, nihil in humanis contractibus operatur* – the internal intention of the will,

55 Cf. Serrano Ruíz, "L'errore sulla," 169.
56 Cf. Fumagalli Carulli, *Intelletto e volontà*, 137.
57 Cf. Bánk, *Connubia canonica*, 329; Michiels, *De delictis*, 84; Pastuszko, "Świadomość symulacji," 99.
58 Cf. "Dec. coram Pena, 10 dec. 2010," 41.
59 Cf. Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 46; Supremum Tribunal Signaturae Apostolicae, "Dioecesis Ultraiecten," 301; Sikorski, "Actus humanus," 144; Stępień, "Akt ludzki," 263–264.
60 Cf. Moneta, "Il Matrimonio," 185; Chiappetta, *Il Codice*, 266–267; Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 45; Góralski, "Rola zgody," 5.
61 Cf. Viladrich, *Il consenso matrimoniale*, 299.
62 Cf. Viladrich, *Il consenso matrimoniale*, 300–303.

which is not expressed externally, plays no role in the contracts between people.[63] The legislator also adopted in Can. 1101, §1 *CIC/83* an ordinary presumption whereby *the internal consent of the mind is presumed to conform to the words and signs used in celebrating the marriage*. This means that the consent expressed externally is a reflection of the inner will of the prospective spouses and there is no dissonance between them.[64]

Moreover, in order to ensure the legal effectiveness of matrimonial consent, it is necessary for the acts of will of a man and woman to be characterized by *adhesion*, consisting in the adhesion of the will, in the sense of a psychological act, to the legal concept of marital will. During the conveyance of consent, a psychological and legal consolidation of the will of the entities intending to enter into marriage is made. As a result, a marriage contract is created.[65]

6. Personalistic Concept of the Subject of Matrimonial Consent

The legislator themselves in Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* redefined the subject of matrimonial consent. During work on the codification at the session *of Coetus Studiorum de Matrimonio*, committed to updating matrimonial law, on October 24, 1966, a suggestion was made to closely link the definition of the object of the consent with the future definition of marriage: *definitio obiecti consensus matrimonialis nequit esse alia ac definitio matrimonii ipsius; ipsum enim matrimonium est obiectum illius consensus, cum actus ab obiecto specificetur* – the definition of the object of matrimonial consent cannot be different from the definition of the marriage itself; for marriage itself is subject to that consent, since the act of consent is determined by its object.[66]

In the former Can. 1081 §2 *CIC/17*, the object of matrimonial consent was reduced to *ius in corpus*, or more precisely, to the exchange of the law of *ius in corpus*. Such a formulation gave the impression that only the body of the spouses was the object of the consent.[67] Marriage, however, is more than just a sexually procreative communion, as it covers all levels of the spouses' lives.[68] The new personalistic treatment of the object of matrimonial consent inscribed in Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* is a consequence of the definition of marriage[69] adopted in *CIC/83*, but also of the sen-

63 Cf. Hurtado, *Resolutiones morales*, 53; Sanchez, *Sancto matrimonii*, 44.
64 Cf. Pawluk, *Prawo Kanoniczne*, 154.
65 Cf. Fumagalli Carulli, *Intelletto e volontà*, 138–139.
66 Cf. *Comm*. 32/2 (2000) 177; Rybczyk, "Projekt reformy," 201.
67 Cf. Burke, "La «traditio suiipsius»."
68 Cf. Wąsik, "Pojęcie małżeństwa," 196.
69 Cf. Hemperek *et al.*, *Komentarz do Kodeksu*, 221; Reinhardt, "Entsprechen Konsensanforderung," 70; Góralski *et al.*, *Komentarz do Kodeksu*, 254; Vela, "De personalismo," 56.

tence of the Apostolic Signatura, coram Staffa, of November 29, 1975, in which we read: *Obiectum consensus... declaratur esse coniuges ipsos*.[70] The object of consent in Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* includes a man and a woman who, in an irrevocable covenant, give themselves to each other and accept each other for the purpose of creating a marriage.[71] The man's act of will and the woman's act of will bestow them to each other as a mutual gift and acceptance of each other.[72] This concept is controversial and criticized because a person cannot give all of themselves to another person, and at best they can convey some of their services and activities.[73] Attempts are being made to solve this problem. Some canonists, following Card. Pietro Gasparri, distinguish *the material object of the matrimonial consent* – it is the persons of the parties to the contract who transfer themselves not in a physical, but in a moral sense, analogous to *the formal object*, which is – taking into account Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83* and Can. 1055, §1 *CIC/83* – the communion of the spouses' entire life.[74] Others create their own concepts. Ryszard Sztychmiler reduces the object of consent to mutual dedication and the transfer of rights to oneself by the prospective spouses, resulting from natural law and the teachings of the Church.[75] According to Wojciech Góralski, the object of matrimonial consent also includes, apart from *ius in personam*, the essential attributes of marriage, which, according to Can. 1056 *CIC/83* are the unity and indissolubility of marriage[76] and the whole complex of matters and duties specific to marriage, consisting in the creation of a community for mutual commitment and fulfillment.[77]

During the work on the revision of the Code, postulates emerged, claiming that the subject of matrimonial consent should also include conjugal love. Pope Paul VI made it clear in his address to the Roman Rota on February 9, 1976, that marriage is not legally based on love and therefore does not pertain to the object of consent.[78] If conjugal love were to be given legal significance and recognized as a component of the object of matrimonial consent, the lack of love would render the marriage nullified. However, there are no objective and sufficient criteria for verifying conjugal love, so in the procedural practice it would not be possible to decide whether a given marriage was validly contracted or not.[79]

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70 Cf. Supremum Tribunal Signaturae Apostolicae, "Dioecesis Ultraiecten," 306.
71 Cf. Góralski *et al.*, *Komentarz do Kodeksu*, 254; Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 46–47; Burke, "La «traditio suiipsius»."
72 Cf. Viladrich, *Il consenso matrimoniale*, 299.
73 Cf. Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 48.
74 Cf. Hendriks, *Diritto matrimoniale*, 51; Stawniak, *Niemoc płciowa*, 327–328.
75 Cf. Sztychmiler, *Doktryna Soboru*, 363–364.
76 Cf. Góralski *et al.*, *Komentarz do Kodeksu*, 254.
77 Cf. Góralski, *Małżeństwo kanoniczne*, 46–47.
78 Cf. Paulus VI, "Allocutio," 204–208.
79 Cf. Sztychmiler, *Doktryna Soboru*, 373–376.

Summary

The ecclesiastical legislator introduced a revised norm on matrimonial consent into *CIC/83*, inspired by the doctrine of Vatican II on marriage and Christian personalism. Can. 1057 *CIC/83* replaced the former Can. 1081 *CIC/17*. In the new Code, the position of the norm on matrimonial consent was corrected. The former Can. 1081 *CIC/17* placed at the beginning of the chapter *De consensu matrimoniali*, defined consent from the positive side while the following canons mentioning the defects of matrimonial consent described it from the negative side. In *CIC/83*, the legislator applied a different, more practical solution. Can. 1057 *CIC/83* was among the norms forming an introduction to the entire title *De matrimonio*, next to the definition of marriage and the provision on the essential attributes of marriage. This treatment allowed for the creation of a more orderly and uniform vision of marriage in the code. Moreover, the definition of matrimonial consent in Can. 1057 *CIC/83* gained the rank of a real and unambiguous definition in the entire system of canon law.

In the first paragraph of Can. 1057 *CIC/83* the legislator repeated verbatim the contents of Can. 1081 §1 *CIC/17*, with a slight change in punctuation. However, he had little room for maneuver here because the principle that matrimonial consent is the efficient cause of marriage – that is, the element that creates a particular marriage – is a declaration of natural law. This rule, read in the context of sources, acquires a fuller, personalistic dimension. It is complemented by another legal principle which states that the matrimonial consent expressed by the prospective spouses cannot be supplemented by any human authority.

The brief formula used in Can. 1057, §1 *CIC/83*, which states that matrimonial consent is the efficient cause of a specific marriage, carries deeper content. First, it testifies to the fact that this norm adopts the concept of a *consensual contract*, i.e., of the sufficiency of matrimonial consent for contracting marriage (*solus consensus*). Secondly, since the canonical marriage of the baptized persons takes on a juridical-religious structure, it indicates that consent simultaneously creates marriage in the contractual and sacramental dimension. This is because the sacramental profile of a Christian marriage is not an addition or supplement to the marriage contract but belongs to the essence of the marital tie. Negating this would lead to the rejection of the institution of marriage according to the teachings of the Church.

The church legislator, taking into account the postulate, developed while working on the codification, that the definition of the subject of matrimonial consent cannot be different than the definition of marriage itself, made far-reaching changes to Can. 1057 §2 *CIC/83*, which was adapted to the definition of marriage. In Can. 1081, §2 *CIC/17*, in line with the tendencies prevailing in canon law studies of the time, the object of matrimonial consent was harmonized with the primary purpose of marriage and was reduced to *ius in corpus*. Such a concept, however, gave the impression

that only the spouses' bodies and their sexual-procreative sphere constitute the object of the consent. However, in the light of the teachings of Vatican II, marriage is something more than just a communion of people implemented in the biological and reproductive sphere, because it covers all levels of the spouses' life. Therefore, in Can. 1057, §2 *CIC/83*, a new, personalistic approach to the subject of matrimonial consent was introduced, centered around the idea of spouses as parties to a contract who transfer themselves in an analogous sense (material object) and the communion of their entire lives, in all its dimensions (formal object). The proposal to include conjugal love as the object of matrimonial consent was rejected, as there are no criteria for its verification. Such a solution would translate into lawsuit practice and impossibility of resolving matrimonial cases.

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The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death in Islamic Foundational Sources as an Element of Cultural Diffusion

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Abstract: The article harks back to the publication entitled "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death in Islamic Foundational Sources" (*VV* 38/2 [2020]), which was devoted to the analysis of the eponymous theme in the foundational sources of Islam: the Quran and the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. The purpose of this paper is to examine whether the motif of angel(s) may have been borrowed from two monotheistic traditions that came before. The verification of the thesis that the motif of the angel(s) of death underwent diffusion was carried out in several steps. First, the motif was identified in the textual traditions of Judaism and early Christianity (i.e. sets of texts that were known and, in all likelihood, widespread in the Middle East during the formative period of Islam). As a result of the analysis, most of the themes recognised in the foundational texts of Islam were found. The next step was to identify possible routes of their transmission and percolation into the Islamic tradition and to determine the "ideological demand" for the motif of the angel(s) of death in the burgeoning Islam. Although Jewish and Christian imagery and beliefs about angels are an important (if not the primary) source of influence on Muslim angelology, there was most likely a two-way interaction between the monotheistic traditions, albeit to a limited extent.

Keywords: angels, death, cultural diffusion, Hebrew Bible, intertestamental literature, Talmud, Christian Apocrypha, Quran, sunna of the Prophet Muhammad

Diffusion is a concept used in the study of the dynamics of cultural developments. Generally speaking, cultural diffusion describes how various content types spread out between and penetrate cultures (or, every so often, particular social milieus within the same culture). While cultural diffusion is believed to be obvious and natural, the very presence of convergent cultural elements, whether material or immaterial, is not necessarily an outcome of diffusion and may well be a result of independent developments.[1] Therefore, a case-by-case diffusionist analysis is necessary, and

1 See e.g. Winthrop, *Dictionary of Concepts*, 83–84.

on its basis one can infer conclusions about the transmission of cultural elements through borrowing.[2]

Diffusion is made possible by intercultural exchange that occurs mostly through migration, trade, wars, etc. Mere exposure, direct or indirect, does not in itself warrant diffusion. Critical for absorbing cultural content is the cultural environment which it comes into and which attaches meanings and values to it. In other words, what prompts a borrowing is a similarity of the structural features of the donor and recipient cultures as well as a need for (and the utility of) a given element for the recipient culture. Finally, a reinterpretation of the borrowed cultural content within the recipient framework and its integration with the recipient tradition may be conducive to diffusion.[3]

In this article, diffusion is viewed in relation to a single eschatological theme present in groups of texts of the Jewish and early Christian traditions as well as of Islam. The article harks back to *The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death in Islamic Foundational Sources*,[4] a publication that examined the eponymous theme in the foundational sources of Islam: the Quran and the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. The detailed analysis of the Quran verses and *hadith*s was preceded by an overview of these sources (the rule of the *hadith*s selection was also provided) as well as by an introduction to the belief in angels in Islam.

The conclusions of the previous paper are a reference point for the present reflections on whether the motif of angels may have been borrowed from two monotheistic traditions that came before. As such, this article seeks to verify the claim that the theme of the angel(s) of death underwent diffusion. The verification will be done by: 1) identifying the theme in the Judaic and early Christian traditions, 2) identifying possible routes of transmission and percolation into the Islamic tradition, and 3) determining the "ideological demand" for the theme of the angels of death in the burgeoning Islam, and pointing to structural similarities between its vehicle cultures.

As in the previous paper, the research area has been limited to dynamic motifs by dealing solely with the angels accompanying the dying. Two contexts have been identified in Islamic foundational sources, in which a relationship between angels and death appears: political-military and eschatological. In the former, the angels inflict

2 Nowicka, *Świat człowieka*, 83–85. It is important to be aware of the two extremes between which comparative studies, whether on ancient literatures or ancient religions, have generally been pursued. One of these has been the so-called parallelomania, which Samuel Sandmel ("Parallelomania," 1–13) diagnosed and called a disease in his 1961 speech given before the Society of Biblical Literature. The other extreme has been parallel-onoia, against which Howard Eilberg-Schwartz spoke (*The Savage in Judaism*, 87–102). This cyclical pattern of the occurrence of the extremes in comparative approaches must be taken with caution and discernment. For the study of possible parallelisms cannot be dispensed with, but neither can it be made the key issue in comparing different cultures.

3 Nowicka, *Świat człowieka*, 85; Ferraro – Andreatta, *Cultural Anthropology*, 41–42.

4 Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 565–578.

death on the enemy at battlefield. In the latter, there are two key moments: death and burial, when the angels take out the soul from the body to heaven so it is judged by God, and when they question the deceased in the grave.

Principally, diffusion does not involve individual elements but has effect, so to say, on an entire culture, which is an elaborate system: "the elements and complexes of a culture are functional in that each part tends to be related to the others in ways that contribute to the operation of the whole culture."[5] So is the case in the Islamic context. The paths of its development were influenced culturally by the monotheistic religions – Judaism and Christianity[6]; their influences are traceable on many planes, mainly law and theology, both in theory and daily devotional practice. It would be overly simplistic to say that Islam took over individual, foreign elements and that they existed independently in culture: the Jewish and Christian traditions were the foundation upon which Islam began to build its own, integrated vision of the world via reflection on the Quran and, down the road, on the sunna, and that vision differed from its Jewish and Christian counterparts.[7]

Another reservation that should be made concerns primary sources. This article identifies the angelic theme in the Judaic and early Christian traditions exploring their text sources. One difficulty that the study runs into has a dual nature and is posed particularly by Talmudic literature. Firstly, these writings do not form a systematic study of theological issues, not least a theology of death. Rabbinic reflections on *post-mortem* experiences appear in a variety of thematic contexts and literary forms,[8] and sources of the rabbinic knowledge of what happens during and after death remain unknown. Secondly, the mainstay of Talmudic literature is oral teaching. David Kraemer puts it this way:

> *Presumptively*, the "original" or earliest forms of any given teaching or tradition are unavailable to us. We simply have no way of knowing whether we have recovered such an early tradition. If a teaching is attributed to Rav or Samuel, of the mid-third century, we have no way of knowing the form of the original teaching nor the changes which affected

5 Matera, "Understanding Cultural Diversity," 31; see also Ferraro – Andreatta, *Cultural Anthropology*, 42.

6 There have been a few works (based on the concept of religious evolutionism) on the relationship between the origins of angelology in Islam and pre-Islamic paganism, but the conclusions of the authors have been rather rejected in the discourse, see Burge, *Angels in Islam*, 10–12.

7 The Muslim vision of the world of angels – despite its syncretic character – has its own distinctive feature. As the article concerns the motif of the angel(s) of death in the foundational sources of Islam, hence the development of this idea in Muslim angelology has been omitted. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that angelology, the core of which is the reflection of Muslim theologians, was extended by rich and varied folk beliefs. A good introduction to the topic can be found in the text of Sebastian Günther, "As the Angels Stretch Out Their Hands," 307–346, dedicated to the role of angels related with the end of an individual's life and the end of the world according to the eschatological manuals from the classical period of Islam.

8 See e.g. Avery-Peck, "Death and Afterlife," 244; Raphael, *The Jewish Views*, 136.

> it in the course of preservation and transmission from the third to the sixth century, when it was finally recorded in the Babylonian Talmud. All we can know with relative surety, because it is all we actually preserve, is the "snapshot" of the teaching at the time of its preservation in the final document.[9]

Likewise, in the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad: the transmission of the *hadith*s occurred orally for many years, and individual notes were only made as mnemonic aids. The sunna got its final shape only in the 9th century.[10] Although the mature and already full-blown Arab-Muslim culture of the day used script on a wide scale, it "continued to favour oral-aural forms of transmission of content, and thus the content-makers and the users of culture (of subcultures) belonged to the same community of memory by the internalisation of the texts which were developed. Memorisation and oral transmission constituted a deeply rooted tradition in the Arab community."[11]

It therefore appears impossible to pinpoint the source of the figures of angel(s) of death that Arab (early Arab-Muslim) culture was exposed to. To determine whether the motif was mediated by textual or oral tradition (in which it may have functioned in many variations) seems irrelevant. What is essential, however, is to identify the theme in Judaism and early Christianity, which will prompt further questions about how common and open to borrowings it was.

1. The Identification of the Motif in the Context of the Textual Traditions of Judaism and Early Christianity[12]

1.1. Defeating the Enemies in the Battlefield

The idea of defeating the enemy on the battlefield with the help of angels is linked to the Medinan period (622–632) in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, when he became a community organiser, politician and military commander. The young Islamic community (*umma*) was born in the context of tribal disputes and feuds, as well as armed struggle. In Quranic allusions to the latter and in the *hadiths*, angels appear as their active participants.[13]

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9 Kraemer, *Meanings of Death*, 8.

10 See Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 566–567.

11 Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Accuracy of the Literacy Theory Claims," 73.

12 Due to the adopted research objective, the identification of convergent angelological contexts in the texts of the Judaic and early Christian traditions is not exhaustive; through a cursory analysis we want to indicate (in chronological order) the presence of the motif in particular sets of texts.

13 Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 569–570.

In the biblical texts, the motif of the participation of angels[14] in armed conflicts can also be discerned, both in early and late texts.[15]

The earlier texts do not yet have an angelology as extensive as the texts written from about the 3rd century BC, especially those representing intertestamental literature.[16] It is only in later texts that references to the appearance of angels occur, some of them beginning to bear their names, and finally the functions they perform are expanded and specified.

The relationship between angels and death in the context of the armed struggle *hic et nunc* fits into one of the three basic functional categories of angels – the messengers of God, that is, in interaction with humans – next to revelation and theophanic assistance as the other two roles.[17] For, in the relationship with humans, the function of angels was not limited only to the transmission of commands and messages, in other words, the will of God expressed verbally. Angels also undertook certain actions of a physical nature, including military.

Military functions are performed by the Angel of Yahweh (מלאך יהוה). In his dealings with humans – besides being an escort, a punisher, an intercessor, a saviour, a destroyer – he appears in the role of a warrior defeating people's enemies.[18] This is the case, for example, in the Second Book of Kings. It was introduced to describe an event contextualised historically as the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian forces around 701 BC. The biblical text on the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:13b–19:37)[19] consists of two parts, the first of which is believed to come from the annals (18:13b-16) and the second from the prophetic narrative (18:17–19:37).[20] In this prophetic part, the motif of the Angel of Yahweh appears to defeat the Assyrian enemies in order to defend the holy city: "And that night the angel of the LORD went forth, and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies" (2 Kgs 19:35).

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14 The Hebrew מלאך is based on the Semitic verbal stem *l'k* – "to depute, to send a messenger." The verb itself is not attested in Hebrew (but in the languages of the Southwestern group – Arabic and Ethiopic). Instead, it existed in Ugaritic and probably meant "to send a messenger with a message" (*DUL*, 482–483, *TDOT* VIII, 309–311).

15 According to James L. Kugel (*In Potiphar's House*, 247–270), an exegetical motif can influence the emergence or development of another one. These motifs usually arise when a text is difficult, unclear, and especially when a difficult word or phrase appears. It is also common for such exegetical motifs to be transferred from one biblical place to another. This results in the merging and harmonisation of motifs and of individual elements which belong to them.

16 In Christian biblical studies, the term intertestamental literature encompasses those texts that were written in the last centuries BCE and in the 1st century AD, were religious in nature, often referred to biblical texts, but were not included in either the Hebrew Bible or the Septuagint, nor did they enter the New Testament canon. Meanwhile, from the perspective of research on Jewish literature, one points to apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, see for more detail Pilarczyk, *Literatura żydowska*, 130, 138, 168.

17 Everson, *Angels in the Targums*, 14.

18 Everson, *Angels in the Targums*, 23.

19 For the biblical quotations, *The Revised Standard Version* (RSV) will be used.

20 Cogan – Tadmor, *II Kings*, 240.

An almost identical text about the siege of Jerusalem is found in Isaiah (Isa 36:1–37:38), and verse 36 (Isa 37:36) is exactly the same as in 2 Kings. Herodotus, referring in his *Histories* to the expedition of the Assyrian ruler, points to an event connected with a plague which was thought to have afflicted the Assyrian camp and caused the death of the soldiers and the abandonment of the further siege of the city. He mistakenly indicates the name of the ruler and calls him the king of the Assyrians and Arabs.[21] In Herodotus' text, Alexander Rofé sees an echo of the expedition to Jerusalem and suggests that it is a testimony to the development, known in the Second Temple literature, of the motif of the Angel of the Lord taking action and his defeat of Sennacherib's army. According to him, this motif may have reached Egypt through Jewish emigrants (*The Histories*, Book II is about Egypt).[22]

The arrival of Alexander of Macedon's armies in the Middle East in the 2nd half of the 4th century BC fundamentally changed the political system of the ancient world. After his death in 323 BC, the Seleucids took control of much of the collapsed Persian Empire, while the Ptolemies took command of Egypt and, throughout the third century BC, the territories of Syria, Lebanon and Israel. From the perspective of Judaism, the Ptolemies were seen as tolerant rulers and even favourable to it. This is reflected in the tradition associated with the translation of the Torah into Greek. The Seleucid occupation of the territories of Israel and their policy of severe Hellenisation[23] led to opposition and resistance, which took the form of an armed uprising led by the Maccabees.[24] It lasted from 167 to 164 BC during the reign of the Seleucid, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–163).

The events of the Jewish uprising led by the Maccabees are recalled in parts of the Books of Maccabees.[25] The literary interpretation of the Maccabean uprising efforts alluded to the idea of God and his angels defeating the Assyrian armies (e.g. 2 Macc 15:22-23). The texts expressed the belief that also during the battles between the Maccabean and Seleucid armies, angels were able to influence the outcome of earthly battles (e.g. 2 Macc 11:6-8).

21 Herodotus, *The Histories* II, 141, [after:] Cogan – Tadmor, *II Kings*, 250.

22 Rofé, *Israelite Belief in Angels*, 217, [after:] Cogan – Tadmor, *II Kings*, 251.

23 Bright, *Historia Izraela*, 428–435; Noth, *The History of Israel*, 359–367.

24 Bright, *Historia Izraela*, 442–443; Grant, *Dzieje dawnego Izraela*, 241.

25 The books of Maccabees, both canonical and apocryphal, were known and widespread in Christianity, also in Syriac Christianity, which especially had contact with the Arabs over several centuries. Since 2 Maccabees is most likely an epitome of a much larger work, its dating is also problematic. It is assumed that the epitome was written by a Jewish author between 125–63 BC, Attridge, "Historiography," 177, 181. *4 Maccabees*, like 2 Maccabees, was also written in Greek. The author is unknown; it is supposed that it may have been written in Alexandria or Antioch, between 40 AD and the 1st half of the 2nd century, Gilbert, "Wisdom Literature," 316, 318.

As Aleksander Michalak argues, the biblical account of 2 Maccabees actually depicts angels on the battlefield for the first time as "humanlike horse warriors" in direct confrontation with a human/human enemy[26]:

> (29) When the battle became fierce, there appeared to the enemy from heaven five resplendent men on horses with golden bridles, and they were leading the Jews. (30) Two of them took Maccabeus between them, and shielding him with their own armor and weapons, they kept him from being wounded. They showered arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy, so that, confused and blinded, they were thrown into disorder and cut to pieces. (31) Twenty thousand five hundred were slaughtered, besides six hundred cavalry (2 Macc 10:29-31).[27]

The image of armed angelic horsemen is also evoked in other episodes related to the "Greek" intervention and the attempt to seize the treasury of the temple in Jerusalem. The angelic horsemen, attacking the leaders of the plundering expedition of Apollonius and Helidorus, have splendid and shining armours, and the steed depicted is festively limbed:

> (23) […] and when Apollonius with his armed host marched in to seize the moneys, there appeared from heaven angels, riding upon horses, with lightning flashing from their arms, and cast great fear and trembling upon them[28] (4 Macc 2:23).
>
> (25) For there appeared to them a magnificently caparisoned horse, with a rider of frightening mien; it rushed furiously at Heliodorus and struck at him with its front hoofs. Its rider was seen to have armor and weapons of gold. (26) Two young men also appeared to him, remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed, who stood on either side of him and flogged him continuously, inflicting many blows on him (2 Macc 3:25-26).

The idea of angel(s) being involved militarily may be rooted in the vision of God's intervention in natural phenomena in a military context. This can be seen most notably in Exodus (Exod 14:31), when the Pharaoh's army is thrown into the sea.

In later extra-biblical texts, the angelological military context gained an eschatological dimension, and quite a few texts took on an apocalyptic character.[29] This is the case, for example, in the War Scroll,[30] where the motif of the fighting angels

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26 Michalak, *Angels as Warriors*, 200–201.

27 For the biblical quotations of 2 Macc, *The New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) has been used.

28 The reference is to Apollonius of Tarsus, friend of Seleucos IV Philopator (reigned 187–175).

29 That is, recognising in the present the end of times in which rampant evil must ultimately be defeated by God, Wassen, "Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 508–509. *The War Scroll*, despite dealing with ultimate things, is not an apocalyptic text *par excellence*, see Rowlad, *The Open Heaven*, 38–42.

30 It is a Hebrew manuscript found in Qumran Cave 1. The text is believed to have been written in the late first century BC or early first century AD. The surviving text consists of 19 columns, Schultz, *Conquering the World*, 32 and 74–76.

is present. Angels are here assigned a victorious role in the end-time battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. Despite the interpretive difficulty in accurately identifying the "sons of light," they are – in a dualistic order – those righteous men who, allied with the angels, fight under the leadership of the Prince of Light (identified by most scholars with the archangel Michael) against the wicked ones.[31] "Sons of light" can see the angels (1QM 10.10–11), who mostly appear anonymously.

The four names of Michael, Gabriel, Sariel, Raphael are referred to in the text as inscriptions on the shields of the four "towers" (it is not certain whether this was the equivalent of the Roman defensive array, testudo).[32] In Yigael Yadin's interpretation[33] the presence of the names on the shields expressed the belief that the four angels were personally leading the four units in battle.

The fighting angels are depicted in the manner of a military formation, and the terms "army," "armies/host(s)" also appear in several places in the text (1QM 4.11, 12.1, 8). Although there is no mention of the angels' armament, it can be assumed that it is similar to that of the sons of light, as the angels are their heavenly counterparts.[34]

The concept of the angels of God fighting on the side of Israel against the enemies is in the War Scroll, as Yadin points out, is "based on the numerous Biblical passages [...]. Also the Maccabees frequently turned to God requesting Him to send His angels to their aid. The Pseudoepigrapha and midrashic literature contain many descriptions of angels intervening in fights on Israel's side."[35] In view of the above, even if familiarity with the War Scroll (as well as other scrolls) was limited, which is most likely the case, its depiction of the fighting angels testifies to the prevalence of the motif and its persistence in Second Temple literature.

To sum up, the Jewish tradition contains the motif of the angel(s) as a soldier/army inflicting death on the enemy on the battlefield. It is consistent with the motif appearing on the pages of the Quran and the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. In both traditions, angels act on behalf of the God to whom they belong. Especially in the early biblical texts, if angels (here the Angel of the Lord) enter into relationships with human beings, they are exclusively extensions of his will and absolutely obedient to him. This is also a clear feature of the heavenly warriors, fixed in the foundational texts of Islam, and its cause should probably be sought in the religious doctrine contained in the Quran, proclaiming the absolute indivisible oneness of God (in the Battle of the Ditch, during the defence of Medina, the angels only completed

31 On the discussion of whether the intervention of the archangel Michael was expected, see Michalak, *Angels as Warriors*, 165–170; and Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 235–236; Schultz, *Conquering the World*, 244.
32 Michalak, *Angels as Warriors*, 161–162.
33 Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 240.
34 Michalak, *Angels as Warriors*, 191.
35 Yadin, *The Scroll of the War*, 237.

the work of God, who himself entered the centre of events by intervening in natural phenomena). The angels take part in clashes with the enemies of Israel/the enemies of the Prophet Muhammad by forming countless hosts of soldiers. As a rule, they are nameless, sent singly or in groups, sometimes invisible, often anthropomorphised. In the latter case, they can appear in full equipment: ride mounts, wear the garb of a warrior, wield weapons. In battle, heavenly units may be commanded by archangels. Finally, although the victory won by Israel or the Prophet Muhammad was a consequence of God's action, seen in terms of his miraculous intervention, this does not mean that Israel or the Prophet Muhammad's followers were entirely passive parties.[36]

1.2. Seizing the Soul and Ascending with It Into Heaven

In the Quran, and especially in the texts of the tradition, the moment of human death is linked to the presence of angels. The leading figure seems to be the Angel of Death (*malak al-mawt*), whom tradition and later Muslim angelology calls 'Izrā'īl. The function assigned to him by God is to take the soul of a person and pass it on to angels – helpers. They guide the soul through the heavens to learn its temporary fate, and then lead the soul to the body resting in the grave. The soul of the unbeliever does not make the heavenly journey, but is carried to the grave.[37]

In the biblical texts, there is no isolated figure of the angel of death (Heb. מלאך מות). In the course of the long-term formation of the corpus of biblical texts, various concepts and ideas were subject to evolution. This also applies to the figure of angels,[38] including angels who can be described as "angels of death."

In the etiological narrative of the creation of the Dead Sea (Gen 19), angels contribute to the destruction of two cities and the death of the inhabitants (Gen 19:1.13.18–19.25). They are not called angels of death, but they are unmistakably associated with it.

The connection of God's divine messenger with death is discernible in the text on the killing of the first-born, which is contained in Exodus (Exod 12:23). The term המשחית appears there, indicating the destroyer, or in this case, the author of death.[39] He is not called an angel in this text, but the same term also appears in other texts, its meaning being clarified and linked to the figure of the angel.

36 See Miller, *The Divine Warrior*, 158–159.
37 See Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 570–573.
38 *ABD* I, 249.
39 Cf. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 183, n. 23.

In the Second Book of Samuel (2 Sam 24:15-17), this term occurs to express the idea of destruction, the realisation of which is the Angel of the Lord.[40] He kills the people as punishment for the census taken by King David. A text with similar overtones is found in the First Book of Chronicles (1 Chr 21:15-16). In this text the idea of destruction is expressed by the Hebrew phrase: מלאך המשית, i.e. a clear connection is indicated between the angel and destruction, which means death. In all these texts, angels contribute to people's deaths.

In the biblical text, in the Book of Proverbs, the phrase "the messengers of death" (Heb. מלאכי מות) is used once: "A king's wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it" (Prov 16:14). William McKane suggests that these are messengers who bring bad news.[41] While this phrase does not necessarily refer to the angels themselves, it is undoubtedly evidence of the formation of a particular idea and enriching the language with the indicated phrase.

A completely different role is assigned to the angels in the Gospel according to Luke. There, they are no longer the cause of death, but accompany the dying man. In the pericope of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-26), there is a scene during which a group of angels carry the dead Lazarus to Abraham's bosom: "The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). The term "angel of death" or "angels of death" does not appear in the pericope, but the connection between angels and death in this case is evident, although different in nature compared to the Old Testament texts cited earlier. Josef Ernst states that this parabola is an evocation of an extra-biblical motif, and adds that the phrase "angels carried into Abraham's bosom" harmonises with typical Hebrew phrase such as "joined to the fathers" (Gen 15:15; 47:30; Deut 31:16; Judg 2:10). He further adds that in the message contained in the parable, there is no in-depth teaching of an eschatological nature.[42]

The figure of an angel whose fixed and God-assigned function is the termination of humanity emerges in post-biblical times.[43] According to Leila Leah Bronner, under the influence of other cultures, above all the Greek one, in later texts a characteristic "was the addition of a concept of the immortality of the soul to the already-established belief in bodily resurrection."[44]

Two treatises of the Babylonian Talmud, *Chagigah* and *Avodah Zarah*, may serve as examples.[45] In the tractate *Chagigah* (I, 4b-5a), the character of the Angel of Death (Heb. מלאך המות) is introduced as follows:

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40 Cf. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, 413: "It sounds as though he stayed the anger of the angel of the pestilence before the due time had come."

41 Cf. McKane, *Proverbs*, 488.

42 Ernst, *Das Evangelium*, 354–356.

43 Noy, "The Angel of Death," 148.

44 Bronner, *Journey to Heaven*, 43.

45 Tractates composed in Babylonian Talmud (*ca* 450–550 CE).

> When Rav Yosef reached this verse, he cried: "But there are those swept away without justice" (*Proverbs 13:23*). He said: Is there one who goes before his time *and dies for no reason? The Gemara answers:* Yes, like this *incident of* Rav Beivai bar Abaye, who would be frequented *by the company of* the Angel of Death *and would see how people died at the hands of this angel. The Angel of Death* said to his agent: Go *and* bring me, *i.e., kill,* Miriam *the* raiser, *i.e., braider,* of women's hair. He went, *but instead* brought him Miriam, *the* raiser of babies.[46]

Rav Beivai bar Abaye, whom the Angel of Death often visited, was recalled in the Gemara. The Angel tells him of the actions of the envoy to whom he himself gives orders to bring designated persons. Bringing to the Angel of Death means a prior death of the person brought. Rav Beivai bar Abaye presents an example of the messenger's mistake, when Miriam the hairdresser, instead of Miriam the babysitter, is brought to him. The actions of the Angel of Death are presented in a dialogical form.[47]

The tractate *Avodah Zarah* (I, 20b:2), on the other hand, cites an oral tradition concerning how the Angel of Death appears to a dying person and how he causes his death:

> They said (Hebr. אמרו) about the Angel of Death that he is entirely full of eyes. When a sick person is *about to* die, *the Angel of Death* stands above his head, with his sword drawn in his hand, and a drop of poison hanging on *the edge of the sword*. Once the sick person sees him, he trembles and thereby opens his mouth; and *the Angel of Death* throws *the drop of poison* into his mouth. From *this drop of poison the sick person* dies, from it he putrefies, from it his face becomes green.

The haggadah (narration) derived from the above-quoted passage is one of the most widespread depictions of the angel of death in popular Judaism.[48] In popular Jewish beliefs and folk legends, he is known as Azrail.

In an early post-biblical text (the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC), called the *Apocalypse of St. Paul*, there is a clear specification and presentation of angelic figures, who are assigned various functions related to a person's death. This text showing the role of angels is another evidence of the development of angelological thought, this time in the context of individual eschatology.

The *Apocalypse of Paul* (also called *Visio Pauli* or *Ammonitio Pauli*) is a particular example of a very widespread apocryphal text[49] that mentions angels present

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46 The writing in plain type is the text of the Talmud, and the italics are additions to the text for ease of reading and understanding.

47 This passage does not appear in all the editions and translations of the Talmud.

48 Noy, "The Angel of Death," 148–149; Schauss, *The Lifetime of a Jew*, 280–283.

49 Cf. Casey, "The Apocalypse," 1–32. According to Robert P. Casey, the primitive original of the *Apocalypse of Paul* was written, in Greek, between the years 240 and 250, probably in Egypt. The dating of this

at the death of humans. "The Apocalypse or Vision of Paul consists in the narrative of the ascension and voyage to the sky of the Apostle."[50] Paul assists in the death and judgment of souls, among other things, and the narrative is inspired by verses from 2 Corinthians 12:2–5. As Alessandro Bausi writes, it has been translated and we "know versions in the narrative of the ascension and voyage to the sky of the Apostle into the almost every language of the eastern and western Christianities."[51] It represents one of the earliest and most influential accounts of the journey to hell and predates the development of the idea of "purification from sin" as understood in the late Middle Ages. The Greek version of the *Apocalypse of Paul* was discovered in 1843 by Constantine Tischendorf, and he announced its discovery, along with arguments for its date, in 1851.[52] The number of translations of the text of the *Apocalypse of Paul* indicates how widespread it was in the Middle East, too.

The text of the *Apocalypse of Paul* is divided into paragraph sections, one of which includes paragraphs 11–18 called: *Deaths and judgements of the righteous and the wicked*. In the *Apocalypse* there is a specification among the angels and the presentation of the figures of angels, who are assigned various functions related to death.

The section indicated above is devoted to Paul, who "assists in the judgment of the three souls: the righteous, the sinner, and the sinner who tries to lie to God. In this part, the role of angels who look after people and tell God about their deeds is especially emphasized."[53]

The author or authors of the *Apocalypse of Paul* chose a guiding angel and Paul of Tarsus as the foreground "actors." The angel guides Paul and points out various heavenly figures and places where the dead, both righteous and sinners, are led. He also explains to him the role of the angels at the moment of death. In the fragment *Deaths and judgments of the righteous and the wicked* there are a number of motifs related to the role of angels at the moment of human death. These motives allude to their presence, their categorisation, and to their action. The text refers to the presence of

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apocryphon, its recensions and translations are debated. The version of the apocryphon known today was later also written in Greek. The Coptic translation (Copt), two Syriac translations (Syr. 1, Nestorian and Syr. 2, Jacobite), a Latin translation (1 major recension and 12 secondary recensions) and a Slavonic translation (two major recensions) were based on these Greek texts. The four Armenian versions appear to be derived from the Syriac version. The Arabic version as well as the Georgian one have not been edited and examined so far. There is an Ethiopian version of the *Apocalypse* in which the Virgin Mary appears in place of Paul the Apostle as the recipient of the vision, known as the *Apocalypse of the Virgin*, Bausi, "A First Evaluation," 133–134. One of the Syriac versions, from an Urumiyeh ms., was translated into English by an American missionary in 1864, cf. Perkins, "The Revelation," 183–212. This translation, or the greater portion of it, was printed by Constantin von Tischendorf, along with his edition of the text, cf. Ricciotti, "Apocalypsis," 1–8.

50 Bausi, "A First Evaluation," 133.

51 Bausi, "A First Evaluation," 133.

52 Tischendorf, "Lüde III," 439–442.

53 Starowieyski, *Listy i apokalipsy*, 244.

angels at the death of pious and sinners, "they are led when they are deceased" (*Ap-Pauli* 11.1).[54]

Two groups of angels accompany the dying. One of them is described: "and I saw angels without mercy, having no pity, [...] And I asked the angel saying: Sir, who are those? And the angel answered and said unto me: These are those who are destined to the souls of the impious in the hour of need" (*ApPauli* 11.3).

But then Paul sees another group of angels: "And I looked on high and I saw other angels [...] and I asked the angels saying: Who are these, Lord, in so great beauty and pity? And the angel answered and said unto me: These are the angels of justice who are sent to lead up the souls of the just, in the hour of need" (*ApPauli* 12.1).

Then Paul asks his guide:

> And said to the angel: I wished to see the souls of the just and of sinners, and to see in what manner they go out of the body. [...] and I looked carefully and saw a certain man about to die, and the angel said to me: This one whom thou seest is a just man. [...] and before he went out of the world the holy and the impious angels both attended: and I saw them all, but the impious found no place of habitation in him, but the holy took possession of his soul, guiding it till it went out of the body (*ApPauli* 14.1).

These two groups of angels make a kind of preliminary judgment on the dying person. This is expressed in the phrase: "the impious found no place of habitation in him" (*ApPauli* 14.1). On this judgement depends which group of angels deals with the deceased.

The unmerciful angels are also called ungodly, and the righteous angels are called saints. It is up to the dying person to decide who will take care of him. Both groups of angels stand by the deceased at the hour of their death. The angels lead the souls of the dead before God, to the first judgment.[55]

It is stated that the soul leaves the world: "And I said to the angel: I wished to see the souls of the just and of sinners going out of the world" (13.1), and, it leaves the body: "I wished to see the souls of the just and of sinners, and to see in what manner they go out of the body" (14.1).

Evil angels are shown as pulling the soul out of the sinner's body: "the malign angels cursed it; and when they had drawn it out of the body" (15.3), then the soul is brought into judgment: And when they had led it forth, the customary angel preceded it" (16.1), and "again I saw, and behold a soul which was led forward by two angels" (17.1).

At the hour of the death of the pious and the ungodly (sinners), two groups of angels go to the dying person, on the one hand, they are angels of righteousness, also

54 Rutherford, *Vision of Paul*, 151–166.

55 *IDB* I, 132.

known as saints, and on the other hand, the merciless angels, described as ungodly and evil. The former accompany the pious and faithful at the time of death, while the latter accompany the ungodly. The text indicates that both come to the dying person at the hour of his death. However, it depends on the life attitude of the dying person which group of angels will care for him.

Souls come before God (*ApPauli* 14.7; 16.4; 17.1). The righteous soul is ushered into the joys of Paradise (*ApPauli* 14.8); the soul of the ungodly is given over to Tartarus and cast into darkness (*ApPauli* 16.6), as is the soul of the criminal and the liar (18.2). Souls will only return to the bodies on the day of resurrection (*ApPauli* 14.4).

In summary, the Hebrew Bible as well as the Gospels do not introduce a distinct figure of the Angel of Death although the connection between the angel(s) present in the texts and death is very clear. These intuitions gain a mature form only in post-biblical texts, exemplified by the Talmud and the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Paul*. The Talmud draws the figure of the Angel of Death whose role, as in the foundation texts of Islam, is the termination of human life by drawing the soul out of the body.

The Angel of Death is referred to in Judaic (mainly folk) tradition as Azrail, and in the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad as ʿIzrāʾīl (ʿAzrāʾīl). As Stephen R. Burge established, "the form of the name suggests a Jewish borrowing, and this is confirmed by archaeological evidence, namely five Aramaic incantation texts, found in Jewish settlements in Mesopotamia and the Levant from the seventh century CE, pre-dating the emergence of Islam."[56] The Aramaic texts mention only the angels' names, so it is impossible to determine whether the name belonged to an angel whose function was linked to human death. At the same time, the name of the Angel of Death spread in the Jewish tradition only after the appearance of Islam, which may indicate a cross-cultural exchange. The same is true of the name of the angel of hell[57] – ʿEzrāʾēl – which appears in the Ethiopic version of the *Apocalypse of Peter*,[58] written probably only after the advent of Islam.[59]

The *Apocalypse of Paul*, on the other hand, brings in motifs almost parallel to those found in the foundational texts of Islam although it does not introduce the Angel of Death. The experience of the dying person as the soul is drawn out by groups of angels depends on whether that person was pious (just) or sinful (ungodly). In Islamic texts, the boundary lies between the believer and the unbeliever,

56 Burge, *Angels in Islam*, 36; see also Burge "'ZR'L, The Angel of Death," 219.

57 The angel is mentioned five times in this NT apocrypha. He is responsible for showing those who have suffered during their lifetime through the guilt of others the punishment that their culprits are serving in hell.

58 Stephen P. Burge ("'ZR'L, The Angel of Death," 221) believes that the use of a name in the Ethiopic version of the Apocalypse may reflect "a concurrent Arab milieu, making use of a name that readers would recognize" (the only surviving Ethiopian manuscript dates to the 16th century).

59 *The Apocalypse of Peter* was written in Greek, in a Judeo-Christian milieu, most likely before 135, possibly in Egypt, cf. Starowieyski, *Listy i apokalipsy*, 225–227.

and for the latter the experience of death is extremely painful. The soul, after being extracted by the Angel of Death, is given to one of the groups of waiting angels. The motif of assigning the soul to the appropriate group of angels seems almost identical to the picture in Paul's *Apocalypse*. Therein, the pious soul is surrounded by the angels of righteousness, while the soul of the sinner is among the merciless angels. In the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, the faithful are given to the angels of mercy, and the unfaithful to the angels of punishment. In both textual traditions, the soul learns its temporary fate. In the case of Paul's *Apocalypse*, it confronts God, who addresses it directly; in the Islamic tradition this is not clear. Finally, in contrast to the *Apocalypse*, the sunna of the Prophet Muhammad speaks of souls returning to the bodies and remaining there until the final judgment.[60]

The tradition of the Prophet Muhammad seems to be depicted in more detail: the soul of the believer wrapped in the soft, fragrant fabric of paradise makes a journey with white-faced angels of mercy through the various heavenly circles, and then the angels escort the soul back to the grave. For the unbelieving soul wrapped in rough cloth by angels with black faces, the gates of paradise are closed. Paul's *Apocalypse* is devoid of such details, which is probably due to its literary construction. In keeping with the nature of the apocalyptic literary genre, it is Paul who is led through the circles of heaven, and it is to him that the fates of the souls of the just and the unjust are revealed.

1.3. Questioning in the Grave

A motif of two angels coming to the deceased person's grave right after his burial to probe the soundness of the fundamentals of his faith (God, religion and the Prophet Muhammad) runs throughout the Islamic tradition. If correct answers are given, the angels reward the soul with a view of heaven. If the answers are wrong, the soul is given punishment of the grave (*'aḏāb al-qabr*) – the angels give it a beating with iron rods. Both experiences between death and resurrection and Doomsday are anticipatory of the soul's eternal destiny. Knowing the answers to the interrogatory confirms as much the person's axiological stance in life as his belonging to the community (Islam). In the canonical *hadith* collections, the interrogating angels are called by their names just once. In several *hadiths* the trial is carried out by a single angel or the account is limited to the punishment of the grave (this punishment is hinted at in the Quran as well).[61]

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60 The confusion concerning the terms *rūḥ* and *nafs* (see Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 572) makes a clear interpretation difficult. According to the generally accepted view, God at the hour of his death takes away from man the *rūḥ* he put in him at birth, to give it back to him only at the resurrection, while leaving him with the *nafs*, Smith – Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding*, 36.

61 Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 573–574. The subsequent angelological tradition expanded the narration referring to angels, the way they looked and the grave trials. The trial motif

The punishment administered to a deceased person by an angel or angels in the grave in earlier monotheistic traditions (still before Islam) is not unambiguously identifiable. According to scholars, the theme is related to the development of Kabbalah,[62] and Simacha P. Raphael wrote that only "by the medieval period, the idea of *din ha-kever*, or ‹judgment of the grave›, had become normative within Judaism."[63] The idea of דין חבוט הקבר came up as a result of rabbinic debates on whether a deceased man, or more precisely a deceased's body deposited in the grave, experienced physical stimuli.[64] The majority of rabbis agreed that a corpse felt pain in the grave, at least for some time, and by that an individual was given an opportunity to expiate for the sins committed during his lifetime.[65] This belief emanates from Talmudic literature, for example: "Atonement is achieved when the deceased begins to see and experience a bit of the anguish of the grave" (*Sanhedrin*, VI, 47b:5).

To recapitulate, the idea of "judgement of the grave," known in later traditions as חבוט הקבר ("the beating of the grave"), was not considerably elaborated in the Talmudic era, and its original form seems not to involve the presence of angels.[66]

In Islam, the idea of the trial of the grave carried out by angels might have evolved from the Quranic concept of an unidentifiable punishment meted out on sinners after death (6:93, 32:21, 52:47).[67] The Semitic *imaginarium* had to see some figure imposing punishment on sinners, whereas angels, being God's messengers and intermediaries between him and humanity, could fill this niche in a theologically unchallengeable way.

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with their presence was incorporated into the confessions of faith. The existence of Nakīr and Munkar (as well as the idea of punishment in the grave) was challenged mainly by the Kharijites (an early religious-political fraction of Islam) and majority of Mutazilites (a rationalist school within Islamic theology), Burge, *Angels in Islam*, 74, 253 (n. 34); Smith – Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding*, 47.

62 Here in the sense of mystic schools of Judaism, characteristic for the Middle Ages from the 12th century on, Deutsch, *The Jewish Black Continent*, 301; Raphael, *The Jewish Views*, 131–137; Schauss, *The Lifetime of a Jew*, 282–283.

63 Raphael, *The Jewish Views*, 131.

64 Still in the first centuries AD, rabbis shared a belief that a dead person's soul remains conscious, can move freely between heaven and earth, and lingers around the body for some time after death, Kraemer, *Meanings of Death*, 109; Schauss, *The Lifetime of a Jew*, 278–279.

65 This view was underpinned by the words of Rabbi Yitzhak (the fifth generation of tannaim): "Worms are as painful to the dead as a needle in the flesh of the living," *Berakhot*, III, 18b:5, *Shabbat*, I, 13b:7; see also Kraemer, *Meanings of Death*, 40, 135; Raphael, *The Jewish Views*, 107.

66 The medieval מסכת חבוט הקבר ("Tractate of the Beating of the Grave") ushers in the figure of the Angel of Death, who arrives at the grave and asks the deceased person for his or her name. If the soul cannot recall it, the deceased person is given a beating with a chain of fire or a stick of iron, Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent*, 301; Raphael, *The Jewish Views*, 166–167; Schauss, *The Lifetime of a Jew*, 282.

67 See the diagram in Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 575.

Moreover, Arent Jan Wensink points out that the Karramites[68] identified the trialling angels, Munkar and Nakīr, with guardian/recording angels.[69] According to the Quran (13:10-11): "It makes no difference whether any of you speak secretly or aloud, whether you are hiding under cover of night or walking about in the day: each person has guardian angels before him and behind, watching over him by God's command." These are guards of human memory, so-called Noble Watching Scribes, who record a person's good and bad deeds every day. The majority of exegetes[70] saw those guardian/recording angels also in the "two receptors" (*mutalaqqiyān* – two receivers/two receptors) of verse 17 of Surah Al-Qāf: "We [i.e. God – B.P.-S.] are closer to him than his jugular vein – with two receptors set to record, one on his right side and one on his left: he does not utter a single word without an ever-present watcher" (50:16-18).[71] The contamination of the angelic functions in the Karramites' concept shows that in the formative period of Islam, the idea of the punishment of the grave could have overlapped with that of two recording angels present by a person's side.[72]

2. Indication of Possible Paths Leading to the Spread and Adoption of the Theme

Still several centuries before the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) became active, the Arabian Peninsula was located within the orbit of Judaist and Christian influences, which doubtless varied in intensity depending on the region.

It is roughly presumed that the first Jewish communities were formed by emigrants from Palestine on the Arabian Peninsula in Al-Hijaz, the cradle of Islam. They fled from persecution by Titus in 70 AD, and again after Bar Kochba's uprising was quelled in 135. Still, a family tomb dating from 42 AD has survived in Hegra, the builder of which described himself in an inscription as "a Jew."[73] It is unclear

68 The Karramites (Arab. Al-Karrāmiyya) were a Sunnite sect with followers mainly in the central and eastern parts of the Islamic world. After the death of its founder, Ibn Karrāma (d. 869), it split into a number of fractions. The Karramites were quashed by the Mongol invasion in the 13th century. The Karrāmiyya propagated stark ascetism, community life and preaching. In terms of law they neared the Hanafi school of law.

69 Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, 165; see also MacDonald, "The Twilight," 57–58.

70 See Burge, *Angels in Islam*, 159–174.

71 The theme of angels as recorders of human deeds recurs many times in intertestamental literature, see Baynes, *The Heavenly Book Motif*, 96–105.

72 According to Günther ("As the Angels Stretch Out Their Hands," 328), the function of Munkar and Nakīr resembles to a certain degree the Zoroastrian concept of the angels Srōsh ("Obedience") and Ātar ("Fire"), who visit a person on the first night after his/her death. They are believed to help the soul cross the Bridge of Judgement, which is suspended between the world of the living and the dead.

73 Hoyland, *Arabia*, 146. The beginnings of the Jewish presence on the Arabian Peninsula are not very certain. Arab and Talmudic sources signpost to different traditions, putting the arrival of Jews on the timeline after the deluge, the time of Moses' battle against the Amalekites, the reign of King Solomon,

whether at the time Jews engaged in proselytic activity and to what degree Arab converts practiced Judaism.

At the time of Muhammad's prophetic activity, Jews mainly occupied the northern oases of Al-Hijaz, Taymā', Fadak and, more centrally, Khaybar and Jathrib. Jathrib (later Medina) was reportedly to have almost 50-percent Jewish population.[74] They mostly engaged in trade, crafts and banking, and they spoke Arabic. This was the language in which they communicated with Arabs although the Torah itself was not translated into Arabic. We do not know how deep their knowledge of religious writings or the Talmudic tradition was, yet they took care to preserve their religious autonomy, to comply with rules of law and to practice the rituals of the Jewish faith. This was the reason why the northern Arabs were familiar with a fair deal of the Jewish religious legacy.[75] Jewish communities left their stamp on Yemen in the south as well – here with considerable intellectual backing though. In the early 6th century, Judaism grew in significance under Dhu Nuwas, a Himyarite ruler who made it an established religion, and who launched persecutions of the Monophysites, a group that had settled there in the 5th century.[76]

Christianity began to penetrate the northern regions of the Arabian Peninsula from the 2nd half of the 1st century. In the 5th and 6th centuries, that part of the peninsula was highly Christianised, with a large number of bishoprics and with monastic life grafted onto the local soil after Egyptian models. The Arab tribes that migrated from the south to Syria and Iraq around the 3rd century created their kingdoms there, taking on the role of buffer states of Persia (the Lakhmids, mostly Nestorians) and Byzantium (the Ghassanids, mostly Monophysite Christians).[77]

Caravan traffic brought Christian ideas to the people of Al-Hijaz: a trade route ran along the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula from Southern Arabia to the Mediterranean world, triggering cultural exchange, including religious ideas. The trail crossed Mecca, where Muhammad himself had been a tradesman before he began preaching. Christians lived in Mecca and Medina leastwise from the end of the 6th century, yet it is not known whether their population was big enough to create a religious community.[78]

Until recently Christianisation was believed to have spread principally across the northern peripheries of the peninsula. More and more often, however, relatively

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the Destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar etc. Some scholars agree that Jews came to live on the peninsula not earlier than the biblical period, Maszkowski, *Obraz Jezusa*, 51–52.

74 Paret, *Mohammed und der Koran*, 12.

75 Rodinson, *Muḥammad*, 60–61.

76 Kościelniak, *XX wieków*, 114–118.

77 Kościelniak, *XX wieków*, 79, 82, 85–87, 91.

78 For more see Osman, "Pre-Islamic Arab Converts," 67–80. The Arab chronicler Al-Azraki (9th c.) said that over that period, there were pictures of Jesus and Mary among the images of deities at the Kaaba. Griffith, "Christians and Christianity," 309.

powerful influences of Christianity in the central Al-Hijaz area are pointed up,[79] confirmed by studies on biblical influences in the Quran (often via apocryphal thought).[80] Importantly, divisions within the Church must have made contradictory Christological ideas reach the peninsula (Nestorian, Monophysite and Chalcedonian). Present in various religious groups and sects active on areas abutting the desert, gnosis additionally complicated Christianity's plight. Having more limited contact with the religious centres, the Christians living in Al-Hijaz were surely more prone to heresy.[81]

There is a range of hypotheses concerning the inception of Islam that reject the dogmatic versions based on Muslim sources. And while these have the status of hypotheses, at least two should be brought up here as they shed additional light on the possible presence of a monotheistic community in central parts of the Arabian Peninsula before the Prophet Muhammad's first proclamations.[82]

According to Yehuda Nevo and Judith Koren, a local cult developed among the Arab people in the region of the Negev desert from around the 5th century, centred around Abraham as the founder of the faith and a paragon (Abrahamism). It was subsequently incorporated into Islam, feeding its dogmatics.[83] In this hypothesis, the adherents of Abrahamism are identifiable with the Quranic *hanif* (*inter alia* 2:135; 3:67, 95; 4:124; 16:120; 98:5) – confessors of the faith in one God in pre-Islamic Arabia who did not see themselves as Judaists or Christians. Abrahamism apparently succumbed to the overwhelming Judeo-Christianity (as an external element that reached Negev areas at the turn of the 6th and 7th centuries, possibly coming from Mesopotamia or northern Syria) and receded towards the interior of the Arabian Peninsula beyond the Negev in the 7th century.[84]

Over the same period, during the recent Byzantine–Sasanian War (602–628), the Jews of Edessa, who supported the Persian Sasanians, had to seek refuge from religious persecutions by Emperor Heraclius (610–641).[85] It is supposed that they headed to the northern regions of the Arabian Peninsula where they came across the then-active Arab Prophet Muhammad, with whom they formed an alliance invoking the common ancestor Abraham (the Jews claimed descent from Isaac, the son of Abraham's lawfully wed wife Sara, and Arabs – from Ishmael of the slave Hagar) and rights in the Promised Land. The alliance is believed to have led to the creation

79 Kościelniak, *XX wieków*, 103; Kościelniak, "Chrześcijańskie piśmiennictwo," 330, 338.

80 For more see Kościelniak, *XX wieków*, 132. Cf. Christopher Luxenberg's hypothesis (*Die syro-aramaeische Lesart des Koran*) about the Quran as a summary of biblical texts adjusted to the Arab mindset (Arabic *qur'ān* ← Syr. *qeryānā* – lectionary).

81 Kościelniak, *XX wieków*, 103. Before Muhamad, Arabia was often referred to as a seedbed of sects. Maszkowski, *Obraz Jezusa*, 58.

82 These hypotheses were posited based on archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic sources as well as chronicles of the neighbouring nations.

83 Nevo – Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 195, Grodzki, *Panteon sceptyków*, 218.

84 Nevo – Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, 190–191; Grodzki, *Panteon sceptyków*, 219–221.

85 Crone – Cook, *Hagarism*, 6–7; Grodzki, *Panteon sceptyków*, 182.

of the initially anti-Christian Judeo-Hagarism.[86] The proponents of this hypothesis explain:

> Their fusion was already explicit in the earliest form of the doctrine which was to become Islam. The preaching of Muhammad integrated a religious truth borrowed from the Judaic tradition with a religious articulation of the ethnic identity of his Arab followers. […] Their barbarian identity was expressed in terms sufficiently Biblical to be intelligible and defensible in the religious language of the world they had conquered. At the same time, the organic link between their truth and their identity remained. The structure of Hagarene doctrine thus rendered it capable of long-term survival, and the consolidation of the conquest society ensured that it did survive.[87]

No matter what the true origins of Islam were, still in the antiquity the Arabian Peninsula was an organism that would not close itself off from external influences, and the Arab religious community was not alien to other peoples of the Near East. While original and unrepeatable, the culture born in that sandy land was an organic part of Near Eastern cultures. Trade, missionary activities, migrations and politics in particular prompted a ceaseless flow of religious, social and intellectual traditions between the people of Al-Hijaz, Syria and Mesopotamia. The history of the first centuries of Islam was an integral part of the history of Near Eastern monotheisms.[88]

Around the mid-7th century, contacts, particularly between Arabs and Christians, intensified. The Arabs conquered and subjugated large areas where Christianity had been present for good several centuries (the oldest conquests included Syria, Palestine, eastern Mesopotamia and Egypt). In Islam's formative period, Muslims represented a minority in the caliphate.[89] Christian-Muslim interactions were cemented by the fact that the imperial administration initially hired Christians, many of whom were educated, conversant with state administrative procedures and learnt fast to speak Arabic.[90]

In the age of the Umayyad rule (661–750), that is still before the sunna took a full-fledged form, various faith-related issues were put to debate: every now and then Muslims disputed with Christians at the caliphian court in Damascus, in

86 Crone – Cook, *Hagarism*, 120; Grodzki, *Panteon sceptyków*, 183.
87 Crone – Cook, *Hagarism*, 77.
88 Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution*, 25–26.
89 For example, according to Richard Bulliet (*Conversion to Islam*, 44) and his estimates, Muslims represented 8% of the population of Iran in 750, when the Abbasids took over control of the country.
90 Mackensen, "Arabic Books and Libraries," 352. See e.g. the figure of St. John of Damascus (d. ca 749), and before him, his father and grandfather, who held high offices in the the caliph's administration in Damascus.

an intellectually open and inquisitive atmosphere,[91] even though Muslims were not generally interested in studying Christian (or other) ideas, and their knowledge of Christian doctrine served only the pragmatic purpose of demonstrating the superiority of Islam. David Thomas wrote:

> There was at least for a time a vogue for debates between faith representatives, analyses of rival doctrines, and easy cross-fertilisation of ideas. In this atmosphere, followers of the faiths learnt a great deal about and from one another. Many inquisitive Muslims, for example, became thoroughly acquainted not only with the major Christian doctrines but also with Christian origins and history, and with the many sectarian teachings that orthodoxy had condemned as heresy.[92]

Apart from Damascus, Basra and Baghdad were centers of animated debate, and Christian theology and philosophy (Orthodox, Monophysitist, Nestorian and Gnostic) are traceable in the teachings of the Muslim thinkers.[93]

Narratives derived from the Bible and around were known not only from translations.[94] Large narrative resources originating in the Judaic and Christian traditions were handed down by oral tradition, and their Semitic character made them easily transferable onto the Arab, sometimes Muslim, ground. They penetrated into Arab-Muslim folk lore and the Quranic-related discourse (e.g. commentaries for the Quran),[95] including the sunna, which was in the making just then. The process occurred spontaneously for the most part. Ruth S. Mackensen writes that, for example, Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 686–8), the Prophet's cousin, believed to have authored the first commentary to the Quran as well as the Prophet's companion Abū Hurayra (d. 678–9), a much-quoted traditionalist, "…fabricated so many tales to suit their several purposes that even their contemporaries could not have failed to recognize them as little better than audacious, though pious, liars. […] Ibn ʿAbbās like many others, drew on Jewish and Christian traditions and scriptures, although gathered secondhand."[96] The content would thus be assimilated mainly for Islamic theological needs: to highlight the truths of the creed and stimulate devotion.

The process is exemplified by the figure of the *qāṣṣ* (plural *quṣṣāṣ*), a public preacher teaching in streets, markets and even mosques outside prayer hours.

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91 The disputes were not only religious. The Umayyad caliphs were familiar with a considerable amount of historical and legendary lore of the ancient peoples, see e.g. Mackensen, "Arabic Books and Libraries," 340–342.

92 Thomas, "The Bible and the *Kalām*," 175.

93 Mackensen, "Arabic Books and Libraries," 352; Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the* Kalām, 60–64.

94 In Muhammad's time and the first years of Islam, the Bible as well as Bible-related texts reached the Arabs through Syriac translations, Kościelniak, *Tradycja*, 303.

95 For more on the subject in the context of New Testament borrowings see Kościelniak, *Tradycja*, especially 300–310.

96 Mackensen, "Arabic Books and Libraries," 351.

Gathering a group of listeners, the *qāṣṣ* recited the Quran publicly, was often a prayer leader, explaining Quranic stories.[97] Down the line, however, among the public preachers who served as instruments of official religious and political propaganda, popular independent commoner story-tellers began to appear more and more often. Condemned by religious authorities but widely popular with society, they drew on legends, histories and anecdotes from the Jewish and Christian and pre-Islamic traditions for edification and amusement, having processed and presented them according to their personal interpretations and current social demands.[98]

3. Ideological Demand

There is a number of more or less far-out concepts of the origins of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad and his activity. They reject the "orthodox" version of the early history of Islam built on late Islamic sources (8th–9th centuries and later) as unreliable. Due to insufficient sources external to the Islamic tradition and independent of it (non-Arab historiosophic writings and archaeological findings), several, if not more, alternative theories of the beginnings of Islam exist in the western Arabistic discourse, which apply various methods of academic criticism. A range of hypotheses point to links between the Arabs with an indeterminate monotheism, to the above-mentioned Abrahamism and Judeo-Christian roots of Islam, to Judeo-Hagarism, to similarities between certain elements of the Islamic theology and rabbinic Judaism, and to claims whereby Islam did not form until its social and political structure was established.

On the other hand, "the orthodox version" of the inception of Islam highlights the presence of nature (*fiṭra*[99]) in man, thanks to which he carries in himself a pure idea of absolute Truth.[100] The religious and cultural circumstances under which he grows up determine his confession. In other words, every man is born Muslim, and other denominations move him away from the true, authentic religion, putting to sleep his real nature, on which God leaves his stamp. God spoke to man through his messengers and prophets still before Muhammad: Noe, Abraham, Moses and Jesus arrived with God's messages in the same spirit. Both the Torah and the Gospel have their source in the divine Revelation but the Jews and the Christian falsified

97 Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution*, 39.

98 Mackensen, "Arabic Books and Libraries," 347.

99 Arabic *fiṭra* – "nature," "constitution," "natural, native, innate or original disposition" and "the faculty of knowing God with which He has created mankind," hence "religion of Islam," Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, *s.v.*

100 Nearly all canonical collections of the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad contain a *hadith* stating that every child is born with the *fiṭra,* i.e. in accordance with its nature in God's plan, Kahteran, "Fitra," 211.

their writings and by that walked away from the true religion. Muhammad did not therefore come to create a new religion but to restore the eternal divine order. He is the Seal of the Prophets (*khatam an-nabiyyīn*), who finally put the missions for the whole humanity to an end.[101]

Regardless of the true origins of Islam,[102] there seems to have been a demonstrable need for an ideological framework of a monotheistic concept. There are following premises for that:

- The Arabian Peninsula was an integral part of the Near East, and monotheistic ideas had been alive for generations in many of its regions;
- The doctrinal status of monotheisms in the Arabian Peninsula must have been complex in the 7th century, just as it was in the Near East;
- Muhammad must have had some knowledge of monotheisms existing in the Arabia Peninsula and the neighbouring regions not only because their followers were present amid the Arab tribes but also because he himself was a trader travelling with camel trains for many years;
- Muhammad preached the idea of one God; faith in one God was a metaphysical groundwork for all his teachings, regardless of the supposed politics, alliances, social or religious identification.

A number of concepts, including eschatological ones, present in the doctrines of the early monotheisms (and on the fringes thereof) were not so much attractive as they were natural for the new religious ideology to adopt in consequence of its development under the current social and cultural circumstances.

Muhammad and his supporters built their vision of the world on the elements of tradition by the side of which they had grown up. The next generations, living outside the Arabian Peninsula, were in sustained contact with those traditions. On the account of its structural similarities to the Semitic Arab culture and the ensuing similarity of imagery, the Near-Eastern melting pot of Judaism, early Christianity[103] and Judeo-Christianity facilitated conceptual borrowings. Contacts occurred not only through written media but also via oral tradition.

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101 For more see Prochwicz-Studnicka, "U źródeł narcyzmu grupowego," 143–149.

102 These visions belong to two different orders: one refers to history, the other is specific to faith.

103 Early Christianity, particularly in the Near East, was at least partly Semitic. The Christian liturgy was modelled on Semitic traditions, and with time rich Semitic theological tradition in the Syriac language was created. Semitic (that is Syriac) patristics was one of the three dominating patristic schools, the other two being Greek and Latin. "Semitic" Christianity (branched out into Syriac Christians and Eastern Syriac Christians) was geographically, linguistically, doctrinally and culturally akin to the Judaism of the age of the Babylonian Amoraites. Both the Jews and the Syriacs used the same text of the Tanach, which was translated to Syriac possibly in Judeo-Christian circles. Mrozek, "Chrześcijaństwo syryjskie," 125–126.

Summary

This article sought to verify the claim that the figures of the angel(s) of death were diffused in Islamic foundation sources by borrowings from earlier monotheistic traditions. The first step was to examine the theme of the angel(s) of death in the written traditions of Judaism and early Christianity. In the Quran, it appeared in three contexts: death on battlefield, death as the moment the soul leaving the body, and events in the grave. Analyses concern collections of texts that are fundamental to Judaism and Christianity and which spread widely in the formative period of Islam: the Hebrew Bible, selected intertestamental literature, early Christian apocrypha, and Talmudic literature. One limitation for conclusions was doubtless the fact that authentic oral tradition cannot be referenced directly, and is reflected only scantly in the texts under analysis. Therefore, the absence of the motif in the Jewish or Christian tradition does not exclude its presence is the Semitic narrative repository of the era.

The next step after the identification of the motif was to identify intercultural contacts from the time before Muhammad became active as a prophet in the Arabian Peninsula through the first two centuries of Islam's formation. The article pointed out to possible ways the angelic figures were taken over by or penetrated into Islamic tradition, emphasising not only the duration of contacts (sustained contact) but also its multidimensionality, where intellectual exchange occurred not only in elite circles but also at the level of building popular devotion.

"Ideological demand" was recognised as another argument supporting the claim of diffusion (for material elements it corresponds to "advantage of use"). The presence of such demand seemed rife, especially given the structural similarity of the cultures discussed.

Jewish and Christian imagery and beliefs relating to angels were an important, if not principal, source for the development of Islamic angelology. Certain images are common for all the three Abrahamic faiths. Despite its independent identity, Islamic angelology has a demonstrably syncretic character.[104] In the context of the present discussion of diffusion of the figure of the angel(s) of death, the fact that the theme could not be borrowed in isolation from other elements is not immaterial.

One should note that this was not a one-sided appropriation of the motif. There was likely a two-way interaction between the monotheistic traditions. One indication might be the very name of the Angel of Death – based on *'zr'l*. What remains open to debate is the influence of the interrogation by the angels in the grave on the later Kabbalah tradition.

104 Burge, *Angels in Islam*, 179–180; Günther, "As the Angels Stretch Out Their Hands," 340.

Another issue is how the motif evolved internally, within its tradition.[105] In Islam, the development had its roots in the Quran: reflection on the often perfunctory and illegible Quranic message the angels carried both caused angelology to unfold in theological writings and, still before, led to expanding and elaborating the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, until it was finally consolidated in the canonical collections in the 9th century.

This conclusion is key from the perspective of the subject of this article: when borrowed, content is transformed according to the system that absorbs it. To put it differently, reinterpretations of the motif that are present in Islam's specific religious and cultural terms round out the discussion of whether the process of diffusion took place.[106]

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105 See the diagram showing the presumable development of the concept of examination and punishment of the dead in their graves in Prochwicz-Studnicka, "The Motif of the Angel(s) of Death," 575.

106 Nowicka, *Świat człowieka*, 85; Ferraro – Andreatta, *Cultural Anthropology*, 41.

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Specificity of the Gospel of Mark as Interpreted by Theophylact of Ohrid

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Abstract: While Theophylact's *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* [*Explanation of the Gospel of Mark*] is known as the first commentary on the whole Gospel in Greek, the question remains: how much of Mark's Gospel is in this *Explanation*? The main aim of the article is to examine whether Theophylact notices the specificity of Mark's Gospel, or whether he is harmonizing Mark with Matthew, on which he commented earlier, or other Gospels. The analysis of the *Explanation of the Gospel of Mark* shows that Theophylact relates to content typical of the Gospel of Mark. He distinguishes Mark's theology from other Gospels, recognizing at the same time the theological unity of the four Gospels. His attentiveness to the details of the narrative is evidenced by the accurate presentation of divergences and, regarding some pericopes, the lack of harmonization.

Keywords: Theophylact of Ohrid, Gospel of Mark, Biblical commentaries, *Wirkungsgeschichte*

Nowadays, when so many excellent commentaries on Mark's Gospel are available, does a study of the 11th-century explanation have any value in interpreting this Gospel? The fact that Theophylact's *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* [*Explanation of the Gospel of Mark*] is the first commentary on the whole Gospel in Greek might be a sufficient reason for examining it. The role of this commentary in the transmission of the Gospel text and in the spread of Chrysostom's homilies is also important. Above all, however, the value of the *Explanation of the Gospel of Mark* is demonstrated by Theophylact's originality in his approach to Mark. The Bishop of Ohrid undertakes commenting on Mark, although he previously presented his interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew. Such an attention to the texts of the individual Gospels is eight centuries ahead of the breakthrough in New Testament exegesis[1].

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1 The effect of the development of studies on the Gospel of Mark from the end of the 19th century is the recognition of its value for diachronic exegesis (due to the priority of Mark among synoptics and the influence on the formation of the synoptic tradition, and due to the closeness to historical Jesus); its literary and theological features have also been noted. Meanwhile, Theophylact seems to have been the first to interpret Mark for values appreciated in the synchronic and theological approaches.

No one before Theophylact either explained the entire Gospel of Mark or did it consistently. Although his commentaries on the four Gospels have recently been made available in English,[2] there is still no satisfactory critical edition of them. Perhaps for this reason,[3] there is no adequate scholarly discussion about Theophylact's *Explanations*, their sources, and meaning for biblical studies.[4] Even if any references to the commentaries of the Bishop of Ohrid appear, they are rather perfunctory.[5] There is a belief that his text is dependent on *Catena in Marcum* and on John Chrysostom's interpretation of Matthew, although the relationship between the texts of both authors has not been fully investigated so far, and the Bishop of Ohrid comments on texts which John Chrysostom did not interpret.[6]

The main aim of the article is to examine how Theophylact relates to Mark's text. Does he notice the specificity of Mark's Gospel? Does he see the differences between parallel pericopes, and how does he explain them? Is he faithful to Mark or is he harmonizing with the already commented on Matthew or another Gospel?

The article presents the results of the analysis of the *Explanation of the Gospel of Mark*, referring to the content typical of the Markan Gospel. Firstly, it discusses examples of explanations in which Theophylact compares the Gospel of Mark with other Gospels. Then, it presents those fragments of the commentary in which the Bishop of Ohrid ascribes the authorship of a given Gospel fragment to Mark. Finally, it cites examples of such explanations, in which Theophylact refers to words, expressions, and pericopes absent in other Gospels, although he does not indicate that they are specific to Mark. It is beyond the scope of the research to compare Theophylact's comments on Markan-Matthean parallels and to assess whether Theophylact's interpretation of Mark influenced his explanations of other Gospels.

1. Comparison of Mark's Gospel with Others

Theophylact, commenting on the Gospel of Mark, compares its content with that of other Gospels.[7] He includes reflections on the necessity of the creation of four Gos-

2 Stade, *Matthew*; Stade, *Mark*; Stade, *Luke*; Stade, *John*.

3 Opinions about Theophylact, adopted without sufficient verification, can also be taken into consideration cf. Czarnuch, "Papuga Złotoustego?," 36–40.

4 Comprehensively on the need and possibilities for research in Theophylact's works in: Brown, "The Gospel Commentary," 194–196.

5 There are some references to Theophylact in contemporary commentaries on the Gospel of Mark. A list of these can be found in: Czarnuch, *Ewangelia Marka*, 14.

6 The author of this article is preparing a paper on the comparison of the commentaries of Theophylact, John Chrysostom and "Catena in Marcum" on four verses of the Gospel of Mark.

7 In the "Explanation of the Gospel of Mark," 28 places were found in which Theophylact juxtaposes the Gospel of Mark with other Gospels.

pels already in the "Preface" to the *Explanation of the Gospel of Matthew*.[8] He states that although one evangelist would suffice, four convey the truth better. In the opinion of the Bishop of Ohrid, the agreement of the four Gospels testifies to its truth and origin from the Holy Spirit.

The Bishop of Ohrid emphasizes the convergence of the Gospels in his emotional words: "Don't tell me that they don't harmonize with anything! See what they don't harmonize with. While this one said Christ was born, this one said he was not? Or this one – that he was risen, and this one – that he was not? Meanwhile, it is not so, because they are in harmony about the most essential and the most important facts."[9] According to Theophylact, even the differences between the Gospels confirm that the evangelists tell the truth: "So if they do not differ in the most important, why are you surprised if they seem to change in the smallest things? Because of this, they tell the truth even more, because they are not in harmony about everything."[10] The Bishop of Ohrid states that if the differences didn't exist, one might think that the evangelists wrote the Gospels after consulting one another. At the same time, he notes that the evangelists "seem to change in the smallest things" in their Gospels, suggesting that contradictions between the Gospels are just an illusion.

Evidence of this approach can also be found in the *Explanation of the Gospel of Mark*.

1.1. The Harmonization of Differences

The issue of the harmony of the Gospels, despite the differences between them, mentioned in the "Preface to the Explanation of the Gospel of Matthew," is also taken up by Theophylact in the *Explanation of the Gospel of Mark*. Commenting on the beginning of the narrative about the transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:1-2),[11] Theophylact notes that Luke places these events "after eight days," including both the previous day, when Jesus was called the Messiah, and the day when he led the disciples to the mountain. Mark, in turn, speaks of the six days that are in between. According to Theophylact, the Evangelists not only do not contradict each other, but are even in harmony with each other. The Bishop of Ohrid, noting the differences between the pericopes, gives a harmonizing explanation, in which he emphasizes that the reference to six days, compared to the Gospel of Luke which speaks of eight days, occurs in the Gospel of Mark. Theophylact does not mention here the Gospel of Matthew,

8 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Matthaei* (PG 123, 144–148).
9 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Matthaei* (PG 123, 148).
10 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Matthaei* (PG 123, 148).
11 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 580).

which also places the transformation "after six days" (Matt 17:1) and refers only to the text of Mark.

Theophylact states, with regard to some pericopes, that the Gospels describe various elements of the same event. Theophylact harmonizes the Gospel of Mark not only with Matthew, but also with the pericopes of Luke and John, to show the lack of contradiction between the Gospels. In the commentary to the pericope of the calling of Levi (Mark 2:13-17),[12] Theophylact aptly notices the difference between the parallel pericopes, regarding the name of the person called (Mark 2:14 has "Levi (the son) of Alphaeus," Luke 5:27: "Levi," and Matt 9:9: "Matthew"). Theophylact states that the publican appointed by Jesus had a double name, although the evangelists say it differently: Luke and Mark hide his name, calling him Levi, while Matthew is not ashamed to testify about himself.[13] When commenting on the pericope about Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:16-21),[14] the Bishop of Ohrid states that at first Jesus probably carried his cross alone (as the "other evangelist" said, Theophylact does not specify that he refers to John 19:17), and then Simon was forced to carry Jesus' cross: so both events took place. In turn, in the commentary on Mark 15:29-32, Theophylact refers to the words of Mark: "And those, who had been crucified with him, were reviling."[15] He explains that at first the two crucified insulted Jesus, but later, as Luke mentions, when one of them recognized that Jesus was innocent, he admonished the other blasphemer.

Theophylact comments in a similar way on the narrative about the expulsion of sellers and buyers from the temple (Mark 11:15-18),[16] juxtaposing it with the pericope of the Gospel of John (John 2:13-16). The Bishop of Ohrid explains that it probably happened twice, as John writes about it at the beginning of the Gospel, and Mark at the end. Theophylact does not discuss the fact that the expulsion of sellers and buyers is also found at the end of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The Bishop of Ohrid does not refer to the mention of the ban on moving equipment through the temple, which is characteristic only of Mark.[17] Thus, the explanation here is far from the content of Mark, although Theophylact accurately notices the difference between Mark and John in the location of this pericope.

Theophylact, in view of some pericopes of Mark, draws attention to the need for appropriate reading of the text to understand it properly. Theophylact, analyzing

12 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 513–516).

13 Theophylact, however, does not refer to the term "son of Alphaeus," found only in Mark.

14 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 665).

15 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 669).

16 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 616).

17 Theophylact in his commentary refers to some elements of the narrative: he explains what "robbers' cave" means, and who the "money changers" were. He gives allegorical meaning to several elements ("selling and buying," "tables and benches," as well as "pigeons"). However, these elements are found in the Gospels of both Mark and Matthew.

the beginning of the pericope about the meaning of faith and prayer (Mark 11:19-23),[18] strives to reconcile the observation made by Matthew: "the fig tree withered immediately, and the disciples were amazed when they saw it" (Matt 21:19-20) with Mark's sentence: "And in the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered to its roots" (Mark 11:20). The Bishop of Ohrid explains that the fig withered immediately after Jesus' words (as Matthew testifies), but the disciples did not notice it until the next day (as Mark writes). Therefore, Theophylact aptly notices the specificity of the Markan Gospel in the explanation of the pericope,[19] although he harmonizes the stories of Matthew and Mark.

1.2. Discussion on the Differences

In the explanations of some pericopes of Mark's Gospel, Theophylact discusses the differences between the Gospels and notices the contents typical of Mark, but he does not harmonize them.

In the commentary to the story about the healing of the paralytic carried by the four (Mark 2:1-5),[20] Theophylact lists the differences between this narrative and the pericope about the sick by a pond from the Gospel of John (John 5:1-9). He observes that the sick man described by John "had no man" and was by the pond in Jerusalem, while, according to Mark, he had four people and was at home in Capernaum.[21] The elements of Mark's narrative distinguished by Theophylact (the four carrying the sick one, and the double definition of the place of action: in Capernaum and at home) are characteristic only of this Gospel.

The originality of this explanation can be seen in its juxtaposition with John Chrysostom's commentary on the parallel pericope in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 9:1-8). The Golden mouthed one lists several differences between Matthew's and Mark's pericopes, which are not included in Theophylact's commentary.[22] More-

18 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 616–617).

19 Theophylact emphasizes in his explanation, the relationship between the words of Jesus and the state of the fig, which occurs in Mark, but does not refer to the immediacy of events, characteristic of Matthew and absent in Mark: in the Gospel of Matthew the word παραχρῆμα (i.e., immediately, at once) appears twice in proximity; Matt 21:19b.20

20 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 509–512).

21 Theophylact gives an allegorical interpretation of the name of the place. Christ is present also now "in Capernaum, in the house of consolation" (ἐν Καπερναοὺμ, τῷ οἴκῳ τῆς παρακλήσεως); that is in the Church, because the Church is "the house of the Comforter" (οἶκος τοῦ Παρακλήτου). Theophylact knows the Semitic meaning of the name of the place. Moreover, he does not stop at mentioning it. He explains that the "house of consolation" means the "house of the Comforter." Such a remark may be a reference to the Gospel of John, in which Jesus is described as the Comforter.

22 Firstly, the sick one described by John has been suffering for thirty-eight years, while Matthew does not mention the duration of the illness. Secondly, the words of Jesus to the sick one are different in

over, Chrysostom highlights two features of the narrative which are also mentioned by the Bishop of Ohrid.

Firstly, both commentators likewise emphasize the differences in the way the evangelists described those who brought the paralyzed one. The Golden mouthed one explains that the sick person described by John "had no one to help him," but, according to Matthew, "he has those who care for him and even brought him."[23] Theophylact, on the other hand, states: "While this one in John had no man, that one has four."

Secondly, both commentators, each slightly differently, refer to the place of the action. Chrysostom explains that, according to John, the sick person is lying by the pond, while according to Matthew, the sick one is in Capernaum.[24] Theophylact, on the other hand, determines the place in two ways. Firstly, he indicates that the patient described by John is by the pond, and the one described by Mark is at home. Then, he notes that the former is in Jerusalem, and the latter is in Capernaum. Thus, even if the Bishop of Ohrid takes the Golden mouthed one's comparison with the pericope of John, he refers to those features of the narrative which appear in the Gospel of Mark and only in it, i.e., the four bearers of the sick one and the double definition of the place of action: Capernaum and the house.

Considering the identity of the woman who came to Jesus with the alabaster vessel of nard oil (Mark 14:1-5),[25] Theophylact points out that, according to some,[26] all the evangelists describe the same woman. However, he explains that there were two different women: the first one, the sister of Lazarus, is described by John, and the second one by the other evangelists. He also adds that, thanks to mindfulness, one can even see three women: one is described by John, another, who was a prostitute and came to Jesus during his public ministry, is presented by Luke, and the third, who came to Jesus before the Passion and was not called a prostitute, is mentioned by the other two evangelists.

Theophylact accurately outlines the differences between the parallel narratives. He also notices the relationship between the term for the woman, the place, and the meaning of this pericope throughout the Gospel. Matthew and Mark place this pericope (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9) between the mention of the council of the Jewish superiors who wanted to seize and kill Jesus (Matt 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2)

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the messages of John and Matthew, because in John Jesus asks: "Do you want to be healthy?," while in Matthew he says: "Trust, son, your sins are forgiven"). Thirdly, the time of the events is different: for John, the healing was performed on the Sabbath, while for Matthew not.

23 Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Commentarius in Sanctum Matthaeum Evangelistam, Homilia 29,1* (PG 57, 357–362).

24 The Gospel of Matthew does not say that the scene takes place in Capernaum, but that Jesus returned to "his city" (Matt 9:1). Chrysostom begins his commentary on this pericope by explaining that Capernaum should be regarded as the above-mentioned place.

25 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 644–645).

26 It is possible to notice here a reference to the sources used by Theophylact, although unfortunately in the "Explanation" there is no precise definition of these "some."

and the betrayal of Judas (Matt 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11). The act performed by the woman, which Jesus defined as the anointing of his body for burial, is significant in this context. Theophylact draws attention to the relationship between the accomplished anointing and the impending torment. Such an explanation, although accurate in the context of Mark's Gospel, also corresponds with Matthew's narrative.[27]

In the commentary on the pericope about Peter's denial (Mark 14:66-72),[28] Theophylact notices the difference between Matthew, who tells about two servants revealing Peter, and Mark, who mentions only one. The Bishop of Ohrid states that the number of servants is neither an important issue nor related to salvation, so this discrepancy does not harm the truth of the Gospel. Such an explanation corresponds to Theophylact's expression in the "Preface to the Gospel of Matthew."

In the commentary on the pericope about the appearance of the Risen One (Mark 16:9-14),[29] the Bishop of Ohrid refers to the description, which can be found only in Mark, of Jesus' coming "in a different form" to two people going to the village. He recalls Luke, who also tells of how Jesus appeared in a different guise to two walking disciples. Theophylact, however, draws attention to the differences between these narratives: in Mark, there were two of the disciples, who told the others, but the latter did not believe them. According to Luke, in turn, two of the disciples met the eleven, saying that the Lord was risen. According to Theophylact, "the others," mentioned by Mark, who disbelieved are not among the same group that Luke calls "the Eleven." This explanation is in accordance with Mark's narrative: Jesus at first appears to Mary Magdalene, who announces "to those who were with him," then he shows himself to "two of them," who announce this fact to the rest, and finally, he appears to the Eleven. The term "those who were with him" indeed recalls the first task of the Twelve (Mark 3:14). However, it is possible that Mark refers to a larger group of disciples than the Twelve.[30] Theophylact, therefore, accurately shows the differences between the narratives and comments on them in conformity with the Gospel of Mark.

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27 Moreover, in the further part of the commentary on this pericope, Theophylact moves away from the content of the Markan Gospel. He notes that according to Mark, "there were some people who were outraged" (Mark 14:4), while according to John, it was Judas who was indignant. He adds that probably other apostles also admonished the woman, because they always heard Christ teaching about alms, but Judas' behavior was due to his love of money and his greed. Such a harmonizing explanation is not in line with the Markan Gospel. It is the Gospel of Matthew that presents the apostles as outraged by the actions of the woman and explicitly describes Jesus' teaching on alms (Matt 6:2-4). Thus, Theophylact in this explanation distances himself from the content of Mark.

28 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 661–664).

29 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 677–680).

30 According to Mark, the expression "those with him" (οἱ μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ) also refers to those accompanying Peter (Mark 1:36), David (Mark 2:25) and Jesus (Mark 5:40). The function of the prepositional phrase "A with B" in the Gospel of Mark in: Malina, "Dlaczego Jezus był ze zwierzętami," 243–246.

2. Clear References to the Gospel of Mark

Theophylact explicitly refers to this Gospel in eleven places in the *Explanations*. He does not compare it with parallel pericopes but emphasizes the origin of the explained expression from Mark the Evangelist. He most often uses expressions such as: "Mark says / tells / names," "The Evangelist speaks / names," but also "Mark remained silent" and "Mark inserts a story." In such explanations, Theophylact draws attention to the details provided only by Mark.

In the pericope about picking grain on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28),[31] only Mark gives the name of the high priest. Theophylact notes that the Evangelist calls him Abiathar, while the Book of Kings calls him Abimelech. The Bishop of Ohrid explains that either the high priest had two names or there were two people: the priest Abimelech and the high priest Abiathar. Dealing with this discrepancy, Theophylact gives an explanation which harmonizes the Gospel of Mark with the Book of Kings.

Explaining the pericope about the death of John (Mark 6:17-20),[32] Theophylact states that at this point Mark "inserts – taking the opportunity – a story about the death of the Baptist." While he does not specify what "occasion" he is referring to, it is probably the earlier mention of Herod's words about the beheading of John (Mark 6:16).[33]

In the commentary on the pericope about the capture of Jesus (Mark 14:43-49),[34] Theophylact draws attention to the expression "one of those standing," which occurs only in Mark and is used to describe the one who struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear. The Bishop of Ohrid states that it refers to Peter, while Mark remained silent in order not to glorify his teacher as jealous of Christ. Such an explanation is probably in harmony with the Gospel of John, which identifies Peter as the one who cut the ear (John 18:10-11) and, at the same time, distances itself from the content of Markan Gospel, in which there is nothing about the motivation of Peter (or the evangelist himself). Despite this fact, Theophylact in his commentary refers to the expression found only in the Markan Gospel.

31 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 517–520).

32 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 522).

33 The story of John's death (Matt 14:3-12) in the Gospel of Matthew is also preceded by a statement by Herod (Matt 14:1-2), who only states that John was raised from the dead, and therefore the powers are active in him (Matt 14:2). Meanwhile, according to Mark, Herod tells how John died and who perpetrated it: "the one whom I beheaded" (Mark 6:16). Thus, the connection between Herod's statement and the story of John's death is stronger in Mark than in Matthew.

34 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 656–657).

3. References to Content Specific to Mark

Theophylact comments on the Gospel of Mark not only by comparing it with others or clearly drawing attention to its origin from Mark. In the *Explanation of the Gospel of Mark*, he repeatedly[35] refers to the content existing only in the Gospel of Mark.

3.1. Comments on Pericopes without Synoptic Parallels

Theophylact broadly comments on the pericopes which do not have synoptic parallels: the parable of sowing (Mark 4:26-29), the pericope about the healing of the deaf who spoke with difficulty (Mark 7:31-37), the narrative about the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26) and of a young man clad in linen (Mark 14:50-54).

In the interpretation of the parable of sowing (Mark 4:26-29),[36] Theophylact shows the allegorical meaning of all the elements of the parable (e.g., "God's kingdom," "man," "seed thrown to earth," "sleep," "getting up at night" and "getting up at day," "sickle" and "harvest," as well as the stages of grain growth). The Bishop of Ohrid does not merely indicate that the people themselves are the earth, although he does say that "we bear fruit by ourselves." The only difference between the parable and Theophylact's interpretation is the harvest time. Mark states that harvest occurs when the condition of the grain allows it (Mark 4:29). According to Theophylact, by contrast, the fruits are picked "when summer allows," and the harvest is the time of the end.[37]

In the commentary on the pericope of the healing of the deaf who spoke with difficulty (Mark 7:31-37),[38] Theophylact refers to the details of the narrative: distance from the crowd, spitting and touching the tongue, looking to heaven, the prohibition on speaking and its nonadherence. The Bishop of Ohrid points out that the cause of the disease was a demon, which cannot be found in the Gospel of Mark. Perhaps such an explanation arose under the influence of the story about healing after the descent from the Mount of the transfiguration (Mark 9:14-29), in which the child's illness is caused by "a dumb and deaf spirit." Theophylact, explaining it in this way, moves away from Mark's narrative. However, in other aspects of the commentary on this pericope, he remains faithful to it, despite its similarities to the next narrative about healing. Theophylact gives different explanations for the common elements of the pericopes about the deaf who spoke with difficulty (Mark 7:31-37) and the blind man (Mark 8:22-26), the causes of healing in private, the spitting, and the prohibition on speaking.

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35 Almost fifty such fragments have been found.

36 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 533–536).

37 Perhaps the mention of summer was created under the influence of Mark 13:19 (and the parallel passages of Matt 24:32 and Luke 21:30), in which just as the proximity of the summer is recognized from the state of plants, the nearness of the coming of the Son of Man is to be recognized from certain events.

38 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 565–568).

In the explanation of the pericope about the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26),[39] Theophylact firstly states that "Bethsaida suffered great unbelief, and therefore Christ calls her unhappy," This is confirmed by the quotation from Matthew: "Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida, for if the miracles that had happened in you had been done in Tire and Sidon, they would have been converted long ago" (Matt 11:21). Then, however, he goes back to the details of Mark's narrative: taking out of the village, spitting in the eyes, laying on hands, partial healing, the prohibition on entering the village and saying what happened (the latter is found only in the Byzantine text).

Theophylact, commenting on Mark 14:50-54, deals with the identity of the young man dressed in linen.[40] He states that he was probably from the house where Jesus and his disciples ate the Passover. He adds that, according to some, it was James, the Lord's brother, called the Righteous, because he had one garment all his life. The link with James is based on Mark's text, which characterizes the young man as wearing only the linen which he left while running away.

3.2. Quoting Fragments of Mark's Gospel in the *Explanation*

Theophylact, commenting on the pericopes with synoptic parallels, mentions their fragments in a form consistent with the Gospel of Mark.

In the explanation of the fragment of the pericope about the healing of the demented one in the land of the Gerasenes (Mark 5:14b-20),[41] Theophylact points out that Jesus does not say to the healed person: "Tell how many things I have done to you," but "how many things the Lord has done to you."[42] He avoids here harmonization with the parallel of Luke: "Tell how many things God has done for you" (Luke 8:39).

In the commentary to the pericope about the presence of Jesus and the disciples in the vicinity of Dalmanutha (Mark 8:10-12),[43] Theophylact states that the pharisees are looking for a sign from heaven, but Jesus does not obey them, because the signs they are looking for[44] will accompany his second coming. The Bishop of Ohrid adds that the first coming of Jesus is full of gentleness, and therefore a sign from heaven was not given to this generation. Theophylact comments in accordance with Mark's text, because the synoptic parallels (Matt 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:29) mention that no

39 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 572–573).
40 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 657).
41 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 541).
42 Regarding the Gospel of Mark, the pericope quoted before the explanation has only a different order of words. The text of Mark 5:19 is as follows: ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν, and in Theophylact's explanation there is: ὅσα σοι πεποίηκεν ὁ κύριός.
43 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 569–572).
44 Theophylact enumerates these signs probably under the influence of the mention of the coming of the Son of Man (Mark 13:24-26).

sign will be given except the sign of Jonah, and Theophylact only announces a sign from heaven and does not refer to this prophet.

In turn, commenting on the reaction of Jesus to the indignation of the ten caused by the request of the sons of Zebedee (Mark 10:41-45),[45] Theophylact repeats a detail present only in Mark: "being the servant of all." Mark and Matthew convey the first part of Jesus' statement almost identically (they only have a different order of words).[46] However, they convey the condition to be met by the one who wants to be first differently. According to Matthew, he is to be "your servant," and according to Mark: "a servant of all." Theophylact explains this according to the text of Mark. He points out that the disciples of Jesus who want to be great, let them serve everyone, because "a great soul is characterized by enduring everything and being the servant of everyone."

3.3. References to the Details of Mark's Narration

In his commentary on the Gospels of Mark, Theophylact refers to details which are not present in the other Gospels.

Theophylact, in the commentary on the pericope on numerous healings in the evening (Mark 1:32-34),[47] points out that the double term which described the time of the day – "when evening has come, when the sun has gone down" (Mark 1:32) – aims to draw attention to this phenomenon. According to Theophylact, it was believed that no one was allowed to heal on the Sabbath, so sunset was awaited, because only then the sick could be brought to be healed. Theophylact accurately draws attention to the function of this expression, important for the narrative, which does not occur in parallel places in the synoptics.[48] However, the issue of healing as violating the Sabbath has not appeared in the Gospel yet, and in the commented pericope, the inhabitants of Capernaum are those who do not want to violate the Sabbath rest by carrying burdens.

Theophylact explains separately the pericope about people's behavior towards Jesus (Mark 3:6-12).[49] In comparison with the parallel pericopes (Matt 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11), only Mark mentions the followers of Herod.[50] At the beginning, the Bishop of Ohrid explains that the Herodians are either Herod's soldiers or the new party

45 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 608).

46 In Matthew: "who would like among you to become great" (ὃς ἐὰν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν μέγας γενέσθαι), while in Mark: "who would like to become great among you" (ὃς ἂν θέλῃ μέγας γενέσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν).

47 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 505–508).

48 The Gospel of Matthew in the parallel pericope (Matt 8:16-17) does not include this scene in the time of the Sabbath.

49 Theophylactos, *Enarratio in Evangelium Marci* (PG 123, 521–524).

50 The Herodians in Mark's narrative are representatives of the political power who, in collaboration with religious authorities, led to the death of Jesus, cf. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 138–139.

that regarded Herod as the Messiah and therefore wanted to remove the Lord. Then, Theophylact recalls the expression found only in the Markan Gospel, and by defining the purpose of Herodians' actions, he remains faithful to the Gospel.[51] Interestingly, Theophylact does not comment on Mark 3:6 as closing the pericope on the healing of a man with a limp hand (Mark 3:1-5) but explains it together with the following narrative about the influx of crowds (Mark 3:6-12). Thus, in the interpretation of Theophylact, the behavior of the Pharisees and Herod's followers is juxtaposed with the behavior of the crowd. The Bishop of Ohrid notes that Jesus is persecuted by those of the same nation, while strangers are grateful to him. Moreover, strangers come to Jesus from afar, while the Jews persecute Jesus, who comes to them. Such an explanation is an example of Theophylact's analysis, which is close to the contemporary synchronic approach.

Conclusion

The article discusses the issue of how Theophylact of Ohrid relates to the contents of the Markan Gospel in the *Explanation of the Gospel of Mark*. Firstly, it outlines the comments in which Theophylact harmonizes parallel pericopes to show that the differences between them do not indicate contradictions in the Gospel. Moreover, it includes the analyses of the explanations in which Theophylact discusses the differences between the parallel pericopes and does not unify them. Then, the article presents the places of the *Explanation* in which Theophylact refers to the author of the Second Gospel. Finally, it highlights comments which refer to words, phrases, and expressions found only in the Gospel of Mark. Among the explanations discussed, there are those in which Theophylact moves away from the content of Mark or approaches the Gospel of Matthew. In other comments, however, the Bishop of Ohrid aptly recognizes the specificity of the Markan Gospel and gives apt explanations.

The above-presented analysis shows how Theophylact relates to Mark's text and its specificity. Theophylact recognizes the theological unity of the four Gospels. He states that they describe the same events but in different ways. This does not mean that they are contradictory, but in this way the stories complement each other. At the same time, he distinguishes Mark's theology from those of other Gospels. This is particularly revealed in frequent comparisons of Mark's pericopes with parallel texts of the other Gospels. Theophylact refers to the content typical of the Gospel of Mark in many places of the *Explanation*. His attentiveness to the details of

51 Herodians wanted to "remove the Lord" (ἀπόλεσαι τὸν Κύριον); cf. Czarnuch, "The Good News about Death," 154–156.

the narrative is evidenced by the accurate presentation of divergences and, regarding some pericopes, lack of harmonization.

The article broadens the knowledge of biblical hermeneutics, especially the history of the interpretation of the Gospel of Mark. The widespread belief in the influence of *Catena in Marcum* and John Chrysostom's interpretation of Matthew on Theophylact causes the neglect of the value of the comments of the Bishop of Ohrid. He is accused of lack of thought, originality and compilation. So far, it has not been noticed that it was precisely Theophylact who was the first great commentator on Mark, not because of the values for diachronic exegesis but for values appreciated by synchronic and theological approaches. His recognition of the equal rank of the Markan Gospel made it possible to depart from the traditional preferences for Matthew and John over Mark.

It is advisable, apart from the characteristics of his exegesis, to juxtapose the *Explanation* with the sources on which it depends, to precisely define the originality of Theophylact as a commentator of the Markan Gospel. A careful comparison can also show which of the similarities can be attributed to real dependence and which result from the adoption of the same assumptions and of the same method.

Accordingly, Theophylact is the first author who should be examined in the studies on the connections between the commentaries on the four Gospels. The Gospel of Mark has already taken its rightful place in contemporary exegesis. Now it is Theophylact, the first man who comments on the whole Markan Gospel in Greek, who awaits similarly adequate appreciation.

Translated by Edyta Gryksa

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Joseph Ratzinger's Argument for the Epistemological Seriousness of Faith

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Abstract: Christianity, and the Christian faith, seems to be losing when confronted with scientific reason and scientific certainty. Christianity needs new arguments for the epistemological seriousness of its faith. Those could be found in Joseph Ratzinger's writings, providing new insights into fundamental theology. The subject of faith as an element that is crucial to him (and to Christianity) pervades all his works. This paper aims at proving that Ratzinger has worked out an original epistemological way of defending the Christian faith. It is an attempt to recreate his argument on the basis of his entire intellectual output. The present research leads to the conclusion that Ratzinger's way of argumentation is quite unique. In classical fundamental theology, the Christian faith (comprehended mostly as an individual act of faith) is placed at its end point, while in Ratzinger's fundamental theology, faith (understood mostly as a historical and communal act) is practically a point of departure. From the beginning of his reasoning Ratzinger (due to his meta-faith perspective) persuades that the Christian faith is epistemologically very serious. Faith may not only manifest its presence alongside other serious attitudes to reality, but also be capable of demonstrating its foundation, rationality, originality, uniqueness, and even absoluteness (definitiveness).

Keywords: Joseph Ratzinger, Christianity, faith, fundamental theology, argument, argumentation

Joseph Ratzinger (b. 1927, now Pope emeritus Benedict XVI) has called upon the Church to reinstitute the "argument about the rationality of belief or unbelief" and develop "the new presence of the rationality of faith" because she seems to be losing when confronted with scientific reason:

> That is one task the Church has today: to revive the argument about the rationality of belief or unbelief. Belief is not an opponent of reason, but the advocate of its true stature, as the Pope [John Paul II] has depicted with passionate commitment in his encyclical *Faith and Reason*. The struggle for the new presence of the rationality of faith is what I regard as an urgent task for the Church in our century. Faith should not withdraw into its own shell, behind a decision for which it gives no further reason; it should not shrink into being no

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> more than a kind of system of symbols, in which people can make themselves at home but which would ultimately remain a random choice among other visions of life and the world. It needs the wide realm of open reason; it needs the confession of faith in the Creator God, for without this confession of faith even Christology is diminished; it then talks only indirectly about God, by referring to a particular religious experience, while this, however, is necessarily limited and would then become just one experience among others.[1]

There is no doubt that this is truly an urgent task for the Church, especially for (in the academic world) fundamental theology[2] (among Protestant Christians sometimes known as apologetics). My intention here is to prove on the basis of Ratzinger's entire intellectual output (currently available only in German[3] and Polish[4]) that he not only challenges the Church and fundamental theology to act, but also as a theologian he has found a distinct way of defending the Christian faith epistemologically: upholding its epistemological rationality, uniqueness, and dignity (epistemological seriousness). I am going to recreate Ratzinger's argumentation in a condensed manner by collecting its main premises preceded by a general description of his understanding of the Christian faith.

Ratzinger's line of reasoning differs from the traditional, classic method of argumentation – typically employed by Catholic (but not only) theologians and philosophers – called the *fides et ratio* argument. Obviously, this term alludes to John Paul II's encyclical letter bearing the same title. Generally speaking, the *fides et ratio* argument is to demonstrate the unity, connection, harmony, symbiosis and interdependence between the Christian faith and reason, and their necessary mutual complementation. It draws on the centuries-old intellectual tradition of Christianity that has produced astonishing amalgams of faith and reason in the form of medieval systems. The beginnings of this tradition go back to antiquity and the Church Fathers. It gave rise to two complementary principles: *credo ut intellegam* and *intellego ut credam*.[5] The belief that faith and reason are in consonance and that there is no contradiction between them was distinctly expressed in the documents created by the First Vatican Council.[6]

This conviction also stands out in Ratzinger's entire output, containing numerous references to the relationship between the Christian faith (*fides*) and reason (*ratio*).[7]

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1 Ratzinger, "The Church on the Threshold," 284–298. As a rule, the quotations were taken from Ratzinger's texts published in English, otherwise, they come from the Polish edition translated into English by Tomasz Pałkowski.

2 Rusecki – Mastej – Kaucha, *Metodologia*.

3 Published in Gesammelte Schriften collection (1–16; 2009–2019).

4 Published in Joseph Ratzinger Opera Omnia collection (1–16, 2012–2020).

5 John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, 16–35.

6 Borto, *Magisterium*, 95–178.

7 Kałuża, "Josepha Ratzingera koncepcja," 63–77; Lekka-Kowalik, "Przymierze na rzecz rozumu," 17–31; Fisichella, "Verità."

His words speak with great force: "Faith would not be true to itself if it shunned reason. Its proper tasks include combating ignorance and eliminating false piety. The desire for education springs from within."[8]

It seems, though, that this is not the core (and the final) point of Ratzinger's thinking. For him non-contradiction and harmony between the Christian faith and reason are not ultimate conclusions. It simply could not be so. Ratzinger recognizes that it is impossible to uphold the belief that nowadays the Christian faith and reason are in simple consonance when scientific reason produces a new notion of reality and truth. This reason rejects God and religious faith from the realm of rationality (as irrational, subjective, and epistemologically weak). The Bavarian theologian does not stop at the *fides et ratio* argument but goes much further. He profoundly explores the Christian faith from inside and is certain that this faith can defend itself epistemologically "from itself."

1. Understanding the Christian Faith

According to Ratzinger, Christianity is essentially about believing. The structure of the Christian faith contains both an internal (*fides qua creditur*) and external component (*fides quae creditur*).[9] It is true that the Christian faith exists "inside" man, who simply believes inside his own self. Personal faith starts with a decision to say "yes" to faith, to be converted, to make a "leap" into faith. This is why Ratzinger calls faith "a fundamental decision which affects all spheres of our existence and which exists only when it is sustained by all powers of our existence," "an all-encompassing movement of human existence," "an about-turn by the whole person," "a shift of being" or, to use the biblical language, an act of the heart (Rom 10:9).[10] The latter not only consists in choosing God, choosing Jesus as the Truth, but is also in entrusting oneself to him and to one's love for him.[11] If this conclusive turn, this entrusting of oneself, is authentic and done wholeheartedly, it becomes – along with the Christian existence thus begun – an inner validation of faith. Faith then becomes the source of certainty. However, Ratzinger emphasizes (and this is essential for fundamental theology) that, even then, the very subject and his/her power of decision do not ultimately make faith a certain truth (epistemologically serious), but that God, who invites us to believe (who speaks and acts, and patiently builds his history with people), does: "Faith is possible only because it was God who first turned to me, because it was Christ

8 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, II, 815–816.
9 Mastej, *Od objawienia*; Mastej, "Wiara," 1323–1324.
10 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 47–48.
11 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 44.

who leans over me, speaking to me and inviting me to follow Him. Faith is possible because from the very beginning the Creator instils in me an inner dynamic so that my being inwardly strives after God. Now, what must happen is that this encounter really takes place."[12]

Thanks to the decision to believe, people of faith will see with greater clarity and certainty that they are not alone, that they are sustained in their existence by God, Jesus, and the Truth. By virtue of the decision to believe, people embed themselves in the enduring Truth and – using the language of St. Augustine and Ratzinger – they become true. It is now that they discover that, thanks to the Christian faith, the truth exists, that it is reality, and that it forever comes along with Jesus, Logos Incarnate.

The Christian faith is seen by Ratzinger as a unique phenomenon. In other religions or epistemologically serious approaches to life we can only find some remote analogies:

> The kernel of Christianity shall be that it is a 'belief'. We generally assume rather unthinkingly that 'religion' and 'belief' are always the same thing and that every religion can therefore just as well be described as a 'belief'. But this is true only to a limited extent; many of the other religions have other names for themselves and thus establish different centers of gravity. The Old Testament as a whole classified itself, not as 'belief', but as 'law'. It is primarily a way of life, in which, to be sure, the act of belief acquires by degrees more and more importance. Again, by *religio* Roman religious feeling understood in practice mainly the observance of certain ritual forms and customs.[13]

For Ratzinger, the Christian faith is a specific spiritual stance, which "generically" is completely different from reason and knowledge, "acting" completely independently of them:

> Let us repeat the same thing once again in another form: Belief in the sense intended by the Creed is not an incomplete kind of knowledge, an opinion that subsequently can or should be converted into practical knowledge. It is much rather an essentially different kind of intellectual attitude, which stands alongside practical knowledge as something independent and particular and cannot be traced back to it or deduced from it. Belief is ordered, not to the realm of what can be or has been made, although it is concerned with both, but to the realm of basic decisions that man cannot avoid making, in *one* form.[14]

The Christian faith is available to everyone. It does not depend on knowledge, education, or social status. The Christian faith is the immediacy of the bond with

12 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, I, 94.
13 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 28.
14 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 39–40.

God because Jesus Christ himself is the immediacy. This is the core of this faith from the beginning: "In Christ the mediator we meet God directly and it is here that Christ shows Himself as a real mediator who leads to immediacy; even more than that: He is the immediacy."[15] Belief enables a genuinely immediate relationship, being together, understanding each other, being bound to each other, a real community between man and the living and true God. This faith is a way of overcoming the obvious and unbreakable (for Plato and Platonism, and many others today) distance between man and God.

This is precisely why belief lies at the core of Christianity. For Ratzinger, belief is simple: Christians just believe in God. They believe not in something, not in anything higher or more powerful than man, but in God, and only in God. The declaration of the Christian belief is very brief: "I believe in You" and "I believe in Jesus Christ." It states that Christians have met the living God and that, in meeting Jesus, they encounter the "presence of the Eternal One in this world" and the "You" – the purpose of the world.[16]

Moreover, Ratzinger tells us what Christian belief is not. It is neither a purely intellectual act nor exclusively a volitional or an emotional act.[17] It is an action engaging the whole human person: all his or her existence and being. Although an individual's faith starts with his or her autonomous decision, it neither follows from this decision nor "hinges" on it. If this were so, its foundation would be very weak. An individual decision to believe hinges on the invitation to believe that comes from "outside": from God Himself, as well as from the real community of faith (the Church) and the history of the people of that faith. Faith is not an unthinking acceptance of the doctrinal and moral system of belief or a combination of traditions, or repeated practices that could give man something valuable. Faith initiated by a personal opening to Jesus as Christ is a way of life. Faith is not only a so-called act of faith – a one-off moment when the decision to embrace faith is taken or renewed – but a path for all of one's life, the art of living, and life's most important criterion.

The Christian faith is a belief in a God who has revealed Himself and Who is revealed in the world in a real way; as such, belief is manifested in specific content, formulations, truths of faith. In Ratzinger's opinion, belief can not only manifest itself in certain kinds of content, but it also wants to do so (as it has done from the beginning), and believes that only in this way can it stay true to itself and be taken seriously. The Christian faith does not speak with ambiguous symbols and metaphors (as Far Eastern religions do), but through lucid substance which it finds real and true.[18]

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15 Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa*, 107. In the original German version: "Im Mittler Christus begegnen wir Gott unmittelbar, und eben darin erweist er sich als der wahre Mittler, dass er zur Unmittelbarkeit führt oder vielmehr: sie selber ist" (Ratzinger, *Künder des Wortes*, 113).

16 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, II, 882; Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 43–44.

17 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, II, 881.

18 Ratzinger, *Principles*, 328.

This substance contains elements that are both accessible and inaccessible to human cognition. They are united into one, or "wedded" to each other.[19] They are united by faith, and this combination ("being wedded") is one of its irreplaceable functions.

For Ratzinger, it is obvious that the essence of the Christian faith can be expressed by every truly-believing Christian – who has his or her own unique life and history of faith – in their own way, with their own words and experiences. If, based on Ratzinger's whole output, we analyse faith and extract its structure, we could point out its core assumptions. However, we need to bear in mind that what Ratzinger believes to be crucial is the fact that the Christian faith relies on simplicity, unity, and immediacy. Only faith (as a simple act of a whole person: whole "I") inherently unites and integrates the numerous elements of its structure and dimensions. This occurs primarily thanks to the immediacy of "access" to God, the immediacy of communion with him, which belief presupposes, and thanks to which faith is at all possible. For truly believing Christians Jesus Christ is the Truth because he (and only he) is the immediacy of God. Without this closeness, it would be impossible to experience the Christian faith, talk about it, or advance any arguments based on it.

2. Premises of the Argument for the Epistemological Seriousness of Faith

A general explanation of Ratzinger's understanding of the Christian faith serves as introduction to recreating his argumentation (in a form of condensed premises) for the epistemological seriousness of faith.

2.1. The First Premise: Limitations of Reason

We can start by repeating the basic question asked by Ratzinger: Is there really the so-called autonomous, critical, scientific, "pure" reason? And, consequently: Is there "pure" rationality? Ratzinger has serious doubts about this. He believes that such a "sterile" or "ideal" reason does not exist because reason is always – like man himself – entangled in "a myriad of contexts," including those which are barely rational or non-rational. Reason is subject to limitation in many ways. Man is not the Absolute; he is subject to a number of conditions, dependencies, and boundaries, especially nowadays, since, in Ratzinger's opinion, "so much manipulation of our souls occurs"; we are surrounded by "all the talk of this world" and the "murky waters of our information and ideologies." Therefore, appearances and pretence oppress people's

19 Ratzinger, *Kościół*, I, 199.

being and reason. Man is not free, and neither is his reason: "pure reason simply does not exist; its working always depends on a myriad of contexts."[20] Our cognition has always been limited and incomplete.

There is and will always be a gulf between reality, being, existence, the truth of being, and human language, the latter being the basic tool of reason. Language is not capable of expressing the very reality with words, signs, symbols or myths. It can "imitate" it, but it will merely be a copy, a reflection. And – very importantly – the Bavarian theologian thinks that language is necessary and indispensable, because no knowledge whatsoever occurs without it.[21]

For Ratzinger, man (and his reason) is trapped in his selfishness, multiple fears, weaknesses, unresolved guilt, and evil. This is why the experience of truth and reality is marred by error, illusion, fragmentary truth, pride and utopias, all of which constitute the underpinnings of his ideologies.[22] Man always has to be critical of himself, and approach truth and reality with humility. Reason should also be like this. If reason is humble, it becomes truly critical – it becomes what it is. If it shows no humility, it is not critical and is not what it is. It does not lead to the truth.[23] Reason alone could not be trusted epistemologically. Reason needs to be epistemologically helped.

2.2. The Second Premise: Faith Comes (and Must Come) from Outside

The general structure of faith, Ratzinger argues, has two sides: the external (non-subjective) one, and the internal (subjective) one. The subject's decision to embrace faith is made possible only because the rudiments of faith and a personal invitation to believe come from beyond the subject:

> It is important that the faith not only reflects my experience but also that it reaches me from without, that it exists beyond me, that its existence is prior to mine, and that it directs me into this reality… However, man cannot limit himself to inner experience only, which is ultimately subjective; there is also the real. God's action is real: He comes to me as reality from the outside and at the same time from the inside because He embraces me from within and without.[24]

From outside comes God and his Word, Divine Revelation, the message about the existence, divinity, and the concreteness of God, about his love which embraces man, and the whole truth of man's life. This is what radically sets the Christian faith

20 Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa*, 325.
21 Ratzinger, *Rozumienie objawienia*, 332.
22 Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth. Holy Week*, 108.
23 Ratzinger, *Dogma*, 35–36.
24 Ratzinger, *W rozmowie*, 1189.

apart from philosophy, for which the beginning is not the Word, but thought (and reason).[25] Although Ratzinger claims that the realness of Divine Revelation is necessarily conditional upon man and his belief in it – without which there is practically no Revelation[26] – this implies that, without a Word coming from outside, faith would not be possible whatsoever. Faith, then, springs from a gift received from outside – from God:

> For to believe as a Christian means in fact entrusting oneself to the meaning that upholds me and the world; taking it as the firm ground on which I can stand fearlessly. Using rather more traditional language, we could say that to believe as a Christian means understanding our existence as a response to the word, the *logos*, that upholds and maintains all things. It means affirming that the meaning we do not make but can only receive is already granted to us, so that we have only to take it and entrust ourselves to it.[27]

This gift is concrete and definitive: Jesus Christ. Ratzinger writes that Divine Revelation consists of giving humanity the reality of Christ.[28] In essence, the Christian faith "wanted to be none other than understanding: understanding who and what in fact Jesus was."[29] Ratzinger thinks that the Christian faith started with the Cross event, with an understanding of the paradox that God can be hurt and killed, that God's love in Jesus Christ knowingly reached out to all human misery.[30] The Christian faith is not an acceptance of a system filled with content, but of the Person, the Person of Jesus Christ.[31] Ratzinger says that the uniquely precious thing about the Christian faith is that believers "enter through faith into Jesus' unique new origin, and they receive this origin as their own."[32] Thanks to faith, a believer becomes a new man. This becoming includes, necessarily, a moral dimension. What matters is "a certain style of being human which we do not develop on our own"; rather, it is a gift from Jesus (from outside), who is a fully realised Man.[33]

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25 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 49, 85.

26 This claim seems to be controversial. Ratzinger has good reasons to justify that claim, but there are also some good reasons supporting the opposite. This controversy among theologians deserves more attention and could not be presented in this article. Whatever solution this controversy finally might have, it does not destroy the second premise.

27 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 40–41.

28 Ratzinger, "The Nature of Tradition."

29 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 105.

30 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 106.

31 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 106.

32 Ratzinger, "The question about Jesus' origin." Cf. Mastej, "Paschalna," 145–149.

33 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, II, 885.

2.3. The Third Premise: Only Faith Discloses the Truth of Our Being

For Ratzinger, there exists a direct connection between the Christian faith and truth. The most telling passage on this issue reads as follows:

> Faith regards the truth, by which I mean a kind of knowledge which does not concern the functioning of this or that particular thing, but the truth of our being itself. Thus, faith concerns what we must do to attain the rectitude of our being. These assertions also presuppose that this truth becomes accessible only in the act of faith and that faith is the gift of a new beginning for thought which it is not in our power either to set in existence or to replace. At the very same time, however, they take it for granted that, once accepted, this truth illuminates our whole being and, therefore, also appeals to our intellect and even solicits our understanding. It is assumed that this truth addresses itself as such to reason and requires the activity of reason in order to become man's own possession and to deploy its full dynamism.[34]

The truth of being and the true substance of all things is God – the personal and loving Creator. The purpose of the world and the whole truth about it is contained in the Logos, the Divine Word, in Jesus Christ.[35] Ratzinger believes the Christian faith implies opening up to the truth about Jesus as the most important and definitive Word and Act of "God pervading us,"[36] which leads us to trust him completely and share in his being. When man makes a decision to open up to Jesus, then Jesus will carry him through life, and man becomes more receptive to the truth.[37] Jesus then becomes the Way and the Truth and the Life; man becomes a true man. In this way, the truth also becomes reality, in the sense that the subject becomes harmonised with the "object," the whole reality, its truth and meaning. This harmonisation has long been the object of philosophical thinking, in which, however, such a possibility has often been doubted. To Ratzinger, it is extremely important that Christianity is neither a tradition nor a habit, but rather a permanent co-existence with the truth – a life in the truth. He thinks that if Christianity is "practiced" as a tradition or a habit to the exclusion of the dimension of the truth, it is practically non-existent:

> If we really do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, the Logos of God, that what He says is true, then Christianity is only a tradition. In such a case Christianity may be beautiful, aesthetic, or attractive in some other way, but it lacks its vital strength. For I am not ready to suffer for a religion that is not true. But Christianity, for which suffering cannot be offered, is ultimately devoid of value because my comfort seems to outweigh

34 Ratzinger, "Conversion, Faith and Thought."
35 Ratzinger, "On Hope," 308.
36 Ratzinger, *Jezus z Nazaretu*, 825.
37 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, II, 813; Ratzinger, "Eucharist."

> a belief in God. The danger of rejecting the claim to the truth, either allegedly out of respect for others or on account of apparent humility, means in fact that we opt for love of comfort, that we do not accept the greatness of Christianity, that we falsify the faith.[38]

2.4. The Fourth Premise: No One Has Any Definite Proof, Which Is Why Every Human Person Is Bound to Have Some Kind of Belief

Ratzinger claims that everyone has to make "crucial decisions" – come to believe and keep faith in something, choose one of the foundations of their lives as the truth – in a situation where not only proof of truthfulness or evidence is unavailable, but the gaining of such proof is impossible.[39] Ratzinger says that the axiom of materialism, idealism, nihilism, relativism, or any other attitude is accepted on trust without any obvious proof, based on stronger or weaker premises, but mainly through intuition. Bearing Ratzinger's thinking in mind, we can ask whether people who claim to have proof or incontrovertible evidence while making "fundamental decisions" are being completely honest? Do they really have any proof? Is this, indeed, proof? According to Ratzinger, scientists prove only that what their tools and methods permit them to; they find answers to their own questions that they have asked earlier; they do not step beyond the empirical (nature) and accept as an axiom that they must not go beyond this realm (naturalism). For Ratzinger, this is an example of the "belief in science."[40] It was surely preceded by a (faith-like) "leap" into the empirical, measurable, mathematical, and naturalistic. It follows from Ratzinger's considerations that there are, strictly speaking, no total non-believers. In the colloquial language of today, the term "non-believer" denotes someone who does not share one's faith in the religious sense, but certainly believes in something or someone (even absolutely at times). Everyone must believe in something or someone.

According to Ratzinger, Christianity says clearly and honestly that there is no proof:

> In this sense faith cannot be rationally demonstrated. I cannot say, Whoever does not accept this is just stupid. Faith has its own way of life, in which what we believe is gradually substantiated by experience and is shown to be meaningful as a whole. There are therefore convergences, from the point of view of reason, that make it right for me to enter into it. They give me the certainty that I am not merely handing myself over to some superstition. But an exhaustive demonstration, such as can be given for natural laws, does not exist.[41]

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38 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, I, 404.
39 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 40.
40 Ratzinger, *Jezus z Nazaretu*, 907.
41 Ratzinger, "God and Reason."

If there were proof or evidence, faith would be needless, but this is not the case. Faith is necessary and represents a value in itself. Without it, there would be no gifts of faith – and, primarily, man's real freedom. Thus, we need to pose the following question in line with Ratzinger's thinking: If there were proof, and faith was not essential for making "fundamental decisions," would man be truly free in the basic sense of the word? Would he be able to make a fundamental choice about himself in order to determine and direct himself? For Ratzinger, faith always goes hand in hand with freedom and safeguards it.

2.5. The Fifth Premise: Only Faith Really Gives Freedom

This premise is related to freedom and refers to man's inherent desire for freedom. It states that man is always painfully affected by the "assaults" on his freedom carried out under various systems that deprive him of autonomy, the right to his own opinion, and to self-determination. So far, it has been impossible to establish societies that would be free from the appropriation of freedom. The desire to build such a society, Ratzinger believes, definitely presents a genuine wish, but, at the same time, a utopia. He says that anarchy is not the right solution; in any case, it has never existed anywhere in any society. He is amazed by the fact that all revolutions aimed at overthrowing a powerful authority in the name of freedom have strangely led to the installation of another strong, often stronger, or even authoritarian, power.

The Christian faith, the belief in one God as God (as the One which no human political power can subordinate) gives man freedom, an inner autonomy from all systems that are intent on depriving him of this freedom. For faith is a profession, but, at the same time, a renunciation of all gods, thus liberating man from them. The Christian faith demythologises the world, political systems and political authority, especially those that strive for absolute power. It demythologises ideologies, "social dogmas," "cosmic divinization," the power of "pure matter" and all other powers which might totally determine man. Faith releases one from "the worship of the power of the mighty," "the confines of pure reason" and those other powers which seem limitless, invincible and overwhelming, for example, the so-called laws of history (Marxism). Faith also liberates man from himself; it sets him free from the "ability to transcend himself towards the open and infinite truth of being"; it gives him the freedom to overstep the boundaries of his own "self."[42] For Ratzinger, the Christian faith also means that man opens up to the love of God that forgives his personal sins and misconduct (often unprocessed and hence decomposing) – that man faces real forgiveness: "Faith has to do, and must have to do, with forgiving; that it aims at leading man to recognize that he is a being that can only find himself in the reception and transmission of forgiveness, a being that needs forgiveness even in his best and

42 Ratzinger, *Lud i dom Boży*, 594; Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 58–59.

purest moments."[43] Ratzinger believes that without forgiveness, life is impossible in the long run. So only the decision of faith paves the way to freedom within.

The Christian faith states clearly that the earthly "powers," however powerful they may seem, are nothing compared to God. This faith gives believers an inner autonomy although their lives are constrained by society, politics, economy, and culture. Believers must not succumb to their influence; they can oppose them and use them for good purposes. Man has dominion over them, resulting from his belief in God. However, for man to have the inner power of demythologisation and freedom, he has to accept the truth as represented by God beforehand. He has to believe in God. Only then will he experience the liberating power of the Truth (cf. John 8:32). Notably, Ratzinger thinks that the well-known question "What is truth?" posed in the conversation between Pilate and Jesus, is not crucial at that moment. Much more important is that a meeting took place between an earthly ruler representing the most powerful empire of the time – and who had the authority to sentence to, or pardon from, death – and the One who did not have, and would not have, any earthly authority, yet had the fullness of power.[44] The Christian faith gives its believers a share in the authority of Jesus, which is not of this world but comes from the Father; it has no intention of appropriating or taking away anyone's freedom, but it is an authority stemming from love and obedience to the Father. It is not an earthly authority, and this illustrates its radicalism, radical otherness, uniqueness, definitiveness, and invincible strength.

2.6. The Sixth Premise: There Is Someone Who Has a First-Hand Faith (the Church)

This premise supporting the epistemological seriousness of the Christian faith is related to the Church of Jesus Christ, which, for the Bavarian theologian, is the one and the same history of the same faith (including the faith of Israel), and also a community of the way of the faith. Ratzinger takes the Church to be a "world of faith," built upon the foundation of people who have "transcended" towards the faith.[45] Faith as a personal decision does not need to be treated as one's own absolute "point zero," completely removed from the experience of others. Ratzinger's argument is very simple. A large majority of those joining the community of the Christian faith do so by the power of the faith received second-hand in order to meet God in a personal encounter – a first-hand faith:

> It is at first, as it were, a kind of borrowed faith in which one does not yet comprehend the content of what one believes but has confidence in a convincing living embodiment

43 Ratzinger, *Introduction*, 47.
44 Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth. Holy Week*, 103–113.
45 Ratzinger, *Principles*, 350–351.

> of it and thus opens the way to one's own growth. It is at first a secondhand faith that is, at the same time, an access to faith 'at firsthand', to a personal encounter with the Lord. For all that, we shall always experience faith to some extent at 'second hand', for it is our human portion to need one another even where there is question of ultimate realities.[46]

According to Ratzinger, the Church's faith is obtained "at first hand." The Christian faith is the faith of the Church that is its first subject. In the Church, and only in her – a community of people walking the path of the faith as the only "community of the way"[47] – the necessary process of faith development leading to Tradition takes place. Ratzinger believes that it is not possible to follow the path of the Christian faith or develop it without the assistance of the Church.[48]

For Ratzinger, the Church and her faith are the important realities which make the Christian faith authentic and epistemologically serious.[49] Subsequently, it becomes clear that the Christian faith is not validated only "on trust," that is, by the subject's act or decision (or by the intensity of the subjective decision to believe). Ratzinger makes the forthright claim that it is only thanks to the Church – this entity that exists "externally" to individuals – only thanks to "a faith shared with the whole Church," that the faith of a concrete person is "epistemologically comprehensible and tenable."[50] The faith of the *Ecclesia*, Ratzinger claims, makes validation possible because it is an objective reality, a fact, one composed of the stories of many believers. Basically, it is one story of the same belief in God that began with Abel and Abraham:

> The Church is also more than just the pope, bishops, and priests – sacramental missionaries. The persons mentioned here belong to the Church, but the 'community of the way', which we join through our faith, extends much farther – beyond the line of death. The members of the Church include all saints: Abel and Abraham, and all those witnesses of hope mentioned by the Old Testament, such as Virgin Mary the Mother of God, the Apostles, Thomas Beckett, and Thomas Moore, and also Maximilian Kolbe, Edith Stein, and Mother Theresa. The Church community includes all the unknown and unlisted whose 'faith is known only to Him' – people of all times and places whose hearts want to embrace Christ with hope and love – 'the pioneer and perfecter of faith' (Heb 12:2).[51]

One (real and factual) story of the same faith validates it in a concrete way – it validates its truthfulness. A specific subject of faith never starts its belief with itself only. To make this validation ineffective, one would have to – as we can suppose based on

46 Ratzinger, *Principles*, 351.
47 Ratzinger, "Why I Am Still in the Church," sec.: "Why I Stay in the Church."
48 Słupek, *Credo*, 63–99, 155–184; Słupek, "Benedykta XVI apologia," 217–235.
49 Borto, "Josepha Ratzingera ujęcie wiarygodności," 203–216.
50 Ratzinger, *Wiara w Piśmie*, II, 830.
51 Ratzinger, *Kościół*, II, 1138.

Ratzinger's thoughts – "invalidate" both the historical continuity of the same faith in one God, and the nobility, holiness, and heroism of the people of that faith.

Ratzinger is fascinated by the people of faith who have made a "leap" into faith or to whom faith "came" with so much obviousness that they had no other honest option but to embrace it. For him such people, apart from the many biblical figures, are: Augustine, Blaise Pascal, John Henry Newman, Romano Guardini[52] as well as Bonaventure, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, the Dominican Priest Las Casas, Vincent de Paul, Charles de Foucauld, Edith Stein, Maximilian Kolbe, John XXIII, and Mother Theresa.[53] Ratzinger devoted his doctoral dissertation to Saint Augustine, and his habilitation thesis to Saint Bonaventure; hence, we can venture the statement that, aside from theological problems that he sought in their works, he might have been more interested in examining how exactly they discovered the "obviousness" of the Christian faith – in other words, how they believed, what gave them an insight into their faith, enabling them to give outstanding testimonies of their lives.

2.7. The Seventh Premise: The Vital Need of People of Faith and Trust

This premise is represented by the simple question once posed by Ratzinger: "What would happen without the Christian faith and people of faith?" His answer was: "If the Church were no more, if there were no more people in the Church taking the faith seriously, the world would be different. If the faith of Christians faded away, then – without overstating – we could say that 'the heaven would fall' on our world. This would be its ruin, not liberation."[54]

Why did he say that? One explanation can be found in the argument that if there were no people of faith, there would be no people to trust. All of us, believers or non-believers, need someone trustworthy, someone with whom we can share our deepest secrets – who can be entrusted, in a sense, with ourselves. When is someone worthy of our trust? Well, as the Bavarian theologian explains, only when he or she lives by the trust, love and forgiveness that come from without: when we live by faith – the Christian faith. It helps us to stay humble, knowing that we are not omnipotent but limited, that we need Someone Infinite to carry us through our lives. We can help others bear the burden of their lives only when we believe that our own burden is truly borne by the love of Someone else – God, whose love makes him vouch for us, stand in for us, and redeem us.[55]

52 Ratzinger, "The Spiritual Basis."
53 Ratzinger, "On the Global Task," sec.: "Why I Stay in the Church."
54 Ratzinger, *Kościół*, II, 997.
55 Ratzinger, "The Salvation of Man," sec.: "Eternity as the Present."

Conclusions

The first part of this article gives a general explanation of the Christian faith in Ratzinger's theology. For him, the Christian faith is so original and of great value to Christians – a value that is fundamental to everything – that on this basis alone it is perfectly achievable or even necessary to raise a separate argument for Christianity. The epistemological seriousness and rationality of faith does not only result from (as some atheists think) the limitations of reason, and the decision to believe is not just an act of desperation caused by the psychological mechanism of man's self-defence against plunging into nihilism and despair, which sap all of his vital powers. For Ratzinger, faith is a profoundly rational attitude (although it cannot be taught only by speculations of reason) that can – and it factually desires to – explain and validate itself on the basis of its own self-consciousness and long experience in history.

Ratzinger defends the Christian faith epistemologically. His main premises collected in the second part of this article are as follows: the limitations of reason as not absolute and not omnipotent; faith (although it seems to be totally individual, subjective) always comes from outside a subject (which makes faith epistemologically trustworthy); only faith discloses the truth of our being and the truth (substance) of all things; no one (including science and scientific reason) has definitive proof, and every human being has to have some kind of belief; only faith (in one personal God who exists, speaks and acts) truly gives freedom; there is someone who is capable of being an epistemological guarantee of the Christian faith (the Church who has a first-hand faith); the necessary need of people of faith and trust (only people of faith and trust could be trusted; what would happen to the world without them?).

How should Ratzinger's argument be evaluated? Firstly, the recreated argument is but one of many different ways of argumentation found in his theology. Secondly, what makes this particular (recreated here) argument strong is the quality of its premises: each could be treated as a separate argument (defending Christianity). All those premises are deep-set in reality, logical thinking, and true human experience. Thirdly, Ratzinger's argument stays close to those of (besides St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure) Blaise Pascal, John Henry Newman, Karl Barth, Romano Guardini and Hans Urs von Balthasar. This kind of argumentation is still quite rare in contemporary Christian apologetics and fundamental theology (the *fides et ratio* argumentation pattern seems to be much more preferred). This is probably due to a fear of being accused of paralogism or of making a logical mistake. At first glance, indeed, this way of argumentation (called sometimes "faith-from-faith" argument) seems to be logically defective. But when patiently recreated and thought over, it is logical and consistent. Ratzinger's position seems to be very consistent: if the goal of fundamental theology (apologetics) is to lead a person to the Christian faith, it is obvious that

fundamental theology must explain first what that faith is all about. This is the reason why in Ratzinger's theology faith is the point of departure.

Ratzinger is certain that the Christian faith can defend itself epistemologically "from itself" (from its own self-consciousness). Seen from the meta-faith perspective as "a fundamental decision which affects all spheres of our existence," as an act of freedom (from all worldly powers and individual weaknesses) and as an act of choosing metaphysical humility towards reality, faith is epistemologically serious. However, for Ratzinger, at the epistemological root (and seriousness) of the Christian faith lies not the power of individual experience ("The reality of God is greater than all our experience, even our experience of God"[56]), but some historical content (historical facts) which validates the basic Christian axiom (that Jesus from Nazareth is truly the Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah). Without such historical substance, faith would not have come into being. For the Bavarian theologian, the faith of the Church is an objective reality, a historical fact. It is also a fact that the Church (Christianity) is situated on a long line of history between God and men: one history of the same belief in God that began with Abel and Abraham. It is a fact that this "one history" of one faith is confirmed by the multitude of witnesses (their faith "has written" the Bible; the Bible is a historical fact, too). Among those witnesses were those who have met him alive "on the third day," and this fact founded the Church and her faith (Christianity).

Finally, Ratzinger believes that today "faith must create its own philosophy" as it happened in the era of the Church Fathers.[57] This is mainly because contemporary philosophies have been built upon different grounds and assumptions than the Christian faith, hence their inability to manifest a Christian perception of reality and the Christian truths of the faith. They have rejected metaphysics and ontology (the truth of our being, the substance of all things) – a view beyond the material and measurable. We can venture the claim that Ratzinger has created precisely this kind of philosophy, a broad Christian theo-ontology as a Christian interpretation (understanding) of reality, being, and existence. He has done so as Joseph Ratzinger (a professor of theology, a bishop and President of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith) and also as Pope Benedict XVI. He has always been consistent: what opens our eyes (absolutely, definitively, always newly, always from outside of our immanence) and leads us to the truth is the Christian faith as the faith of the Church who has a first-hand experience of the living Lord and (in consequence) first-hand faith. This faith deserves our faith.

Translated by Tomasz Pałkowski

56 Ratzinger, *Principles*, 346.

57 Ratzinger, "The Philosophical Problem."

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The Biblical Dimension of Religious Instruction in Poland

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Abstract: The article concerns the issue of religious instruction in Polish state schools, especially its inspiration from the Bible as the primary source of the transmission of faith. When religious education classes were introduced in schools, a confessional model of their performance was adopted, thus leading to establishing closer ties with churches and religious associations as well as developing personal faith. The methodology of my research was based on analysing the current anchoring of the teaching of religion in the Polish state law and the guidelines of the Catholic Church. Next, the 2018 *Core Curriculum for the Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland*, related to the reform of the Polish education system and the completely new situation resulting from the liquidation of the junior high school stage of education, was used to show biblical guidelines for religious instruction and a set of methodological tools that guarantee its effectiveness. Confessional religion classes are currently organized in all government-run schools in Poland, and according to recent statistical data they significantly contribute to their better functioning. Consequently, there is a need to appeal for the continuation of religious education in schools and its modification based on multimedia technology, and there is a necessity to overcome the tendency to remove classes of religion from Polish public schools.

Keywords: biblical dimension, religious instruction, core curriculum, state or public school

Contemporary learners have at their disposal excellent means of acquiring information about the surrounding world in the form of modern multimedia. However, they cannot be left to themselves throughout this process since they need guides who will teach them to critically look at the reality found within the realm of spirituality. Therefore, the documents of the Church emphasize the need for all pastoral and catechetical activities to be permeated by the biblical message as Holy Scripture is not only the foundation of theology, but also of catechesis. One of the basic tasks of catechesis is to provide guidance towards a proper understanding of Scripture and to help acquire the permanent habit of reading it. However, the main problem related to catechesis lies in the fact that the Bible was not written directly for children and young people, but it depicts events and employs vocabulary that make it difficult for contemporary students to follow. This is additionally compounded by the constant mental and religious development of the catechized as well as the ever-shifting

elements of their mentality, thinking and understanding of the surrounding world.[1] Thus, a fundamental question arises: are there any methods, principles or ways of approaching the Bible so that it will open up its intricate world to the catechized youth and will become an area of their absorbing interest? In this context, one should ask about the possibility of using contemporary government-run (often called "public") schools[2] in this process.

1. The School as a Place for the Teaching of a Particular Religion

The presence of religion education[3] classes in the public education system as well as its financing are guaranteed by the Polish constitution in Art. 48, where it is stated that parents have "the right to rear their children in accordance with their own convictions. Such upbringing shall respect the degree of maturity of a child as well as his freedom of conscience and belief and also his convictions." The teaching of a particular religion is also regulated by the Act on the Education System of 7 September 1991 and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the Conditions and Manner of Organizing Religion Classes is Public Preschools and Schools of 14 April 1992. Catechization in Polish schools is conducted by 24 Churches and religious associations, which pursue their goals using the confessional model of teaching religion.[4]

In this educational context, the Bible is the main source of the Christian life and all the teachings of the Church. The fundamental problem concerning the concept of religious instruction in Polish schools is its relationship with catechesis. The discussion of the nineties of the twentieth century resulted in the creation of a coherent and compromise solution, which was included in the *Polish Catechetical Directory* of 2001 as well as the *Core Curriculum for Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland* of 2001. This solution consists in resigning over the recognition of religion classes as catechesis and also as classes of religious studies. An important feature of this model is its confessional nature. Since religious education is intended to achieve the entirety of educational tasks, it cannot focus solely on conveying knowledge; it must also participate in upbringing, which in the religious context, calls for guidance towards a specific community of faith. The confessional character of religion classes allows for implementing the function of religious initiation at least in a rudimentary form or as seeds of faith. It also creates an opportunity to teach prayer and present the liturgy

1 Cf. Misiewicz, *Adaptacja Biblii w katechezie*, 5.
2 Cf. Koźmiński, *Zarządzanie w warunkach niepewności*, 7.
3 The terms "religious education," "religious instruction" and "religion classes" have been used interchangeably as names for the teaching of a particular religion in schools.
4 Cf. Milerski, "Odnowienie umysłu," 179.

as the goal of religious education. Moreover, classes of religion can lead to moral education based on the *Decalogue*, thus assuming an evangelizing function, especially within new evangelization. It can, therefore, be concluded that confessional religion classes contain elements of all the catechetical functions listed in the directories although they do not fully implement them. For these reasons, religion classes can be considered an important component of the catechetical ministry of the Church even though they alone are not a complete catechesis. In Polish catechetical publications, the terms "catechesis" and "teaching of religion" are used interchangeably, and teachers of religion are referred as catechists.[5]

The task of the school as an educational institution is to create conditions for a comprehensive development of every individual and to indicate that the consequence of his or her maturity is the necessity to take responsibility for their decisions.[6] Therefore, the following actions should be performed: formulate objectives of education and upbringing, define methods of achieving them, establish adequate units in schools thanks to which it will be possible to implement the objectives, and involve all members of the school community in decision-making processes. A truly educational work requires the assistance, support and commitment of many entities.[7]

In the Polish education system, confessional religion classes have been conducted for three decades, introduced by the consensus of all the political forces of the time. The proponents of such a strategy argue their positions with the guidelines of the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, which defines the criteria that should guide religious education. The document clearly indicates that the primary source from which inspiration should be drawn is the message of Sacred Scripture.[8] The message should be meditated upon, understood more deeply, celebrated, constantly deepened by theological research, and made manifest in genuine moral values.[9] For this reason, the Catholic Church, which organizes the confessional religion classes, encourages that the Bible should hold a prominent position in educational activities.[10] At the same time, she calls for modern incentives rather than pedagogical dictates that should be used in presenting biblical content on which students can build their skills and attitudes. Proper argumentation in support of the adopted strategy is necessary. Such an approach may help overcome new challenges that arise at the intersection of religious education and the operation of public schools.

5 Cf. Tomasik, "Nauczanie religii," 179.
6 Cf. Nowak, "Współczesna koncepcja wychowania," 58.
7 Benedykt XVI, *Bóg i świat*, 125.
8 John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, 94.
9 Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 95.
10 Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 94.

Modern-day theological publications have restored the importance of the Bible as the principal source for teaching religion in schools.[11] There is no doubt that this postulate "must keep pace with the changes taking place in the Church and worldwide, and take into account the conditions, mainly social and religious ones."[12] The religion class that seeks its new place in the altered socio-religious reality has received valuable impulses for initiating and developing biblical religious pedagogy in the latest *Directory for Catechesis* issued in 2020.[13] The document contains information that catechesis uses various sources, but they all come down to the word of God, and through which it is expressed.[14] Religious instruction should recall the salvific truths of Christ, clarifying and applying them to the new challenges of different epochs and situations, becoming a bridge between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.[15] The biblical message that focuses ultimately on the person of Jesus Christ, who reveals God, makes the Gospel fascinating because it is beautiful, good, joyful and hopeful Good News.[16] These truths should be transmitted to the younger generation in every possible way because the contemplation of beauty awakens joy, pleasure, tenderness, a sense of fullness and meaning in the human being, as well as and opens them to transcendence.[17]

The documents addressing the issue of teaching religion point to the centre of this inspiration, which is Jesus Christ, as he becomes known from the pages of Scripture. The analysis of the contents of the document entitled *Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland* shows that its authors repeatedly referred to the issue of the Bible in teaching religion.[18] During the following years, a new *Core Curriculum for Catechesis* and *Religious Education Programme*[19] were prepared in 2010. These documents were dictated by changes in the Polish education system. The activities offered to students are designed to strengthen their conviction that the Bible tells the truth about God who is present in their personal histories. As it is assumed, educational activities should take the form of upbringing inspired by Sacred Scripture. The point here is that the personal God, discovered in the biblical texts, should become the foundation of the choices made by the catechized youth.

11 Cf. Wołkiewicz, *Główne idee*, 283.
12 Przybecki, *Duszpasterstwo w Polsce*, 20.
13 Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 34.
14 Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 90.
15 Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 94.
16 Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 107.
17 Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 109.
18 Cf. Polish Bishops' Conference, *Catechetical Directory*, 32.
19 Cf. Broda – Marzec, "Skuteczna reforma oświaty," 26–27.

2. Biblical Elements in *The Core Curriculum for Catechesis*

The planned strategy of educational activities in schools is revealed by the new *Core Curriculum for the Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland*[20] published in 2018 as a consequence of the reform of the education system, which led to the termination of the junior high school stage and the return to the eight-class elementary school. The document proposes the division of religious education into the same educational stages as in Polish schools. At the preschool stage, pupils should be introduced to religious life. In elementary schools, guidance should be provided for initiation to the sacraments of penance and reconciliation and the Eucharist in grades I–IV. Subsequently, adherence to Christ through the process of mystagogy should be deepened in grades V–VIII. In turn, building the Christian identity that enables one to bear witness to the Christian life is planned in secondary schools, in grades I–IV. It should be noted that the same expectations are formulated towards those in special situations related to various disabilities.[21] The document also introduces terminology that draws on both the tradition of teaching religion and the language of the latest state educational documents. Combining these two traditions resulted in the emergence of the following categories: catechetical goals, tasks of religious instruction, teaching content, student achievements and skills.[22] They all have included significant biblical inspirations for religion classes in schools.

In the discussed document, there appeared instructions to draw on Scripture in such a way as to show God revealing his love for people in the person of Jesus. It is primarily manifested through the creation of the beautiful world and the redemption of man. Special emphasis has been placed on discovering the message of the Bible "as the word of God addressed to people,"[23] word that is still fascinating and full of hope for the future.

At the educational stage of elementary school in grades I–IV, it was planned to present the Bible not only as a book of faith for Christians, but also as a source of morality, which is revealed primarily in the *Decalogue* and the teachings of Jesus. It was assumed that the correct interpretation of the Bible could give students a chance to understand and accept the categories of good and evil. Particularly valuable inspirations are brought by the biblical examples of moral attitudes displayed in the *Core Curriculum for Catechesis* and the model prayer of Christians of all times – *the Our Father*.[24]

In grades V–VIII of the elementary school, we can speak about planning a proper biblical religion class, emerging from the assumptions of modern biblical didactics. This stage is designed to introduce students to the history of salvation, familiarize

20 Polish Bishops' Conference, *The Core Curriculum*, 14.
21 Polish Bishops' Conference, *The Core Curriculum*, 11.
22 Polish Bishops' Conference, *The Core Curriculum*, 13.
23 Polish Bishops' Conference, *The Core Curriculum*, 212.
24 Polish Bishops' Conference, *The Core Curriculum*, 33–40.

them with the basic knowledge of Holy Scripture, its literary genres, the language of its message and the principles of interpreting the Old and New Testaments. Here, there are indications of how students can build a hierarchy of values in their relationships with God and can solve their existential problems on the basis of Divine Revelation. Moreover, further assistance, as planned, can help students perceive biblical texts on their own. The rank of a strategic task was assigned to the measure aimed at shaping moral awareness and an attitude of responsibility for one's choices based on the indications stemming from God's Revelation, especially the Decalogue and the Beatitudes, and the ones resulting from highlighting biblical personal models.[25]

In the grades I–IV of secondary school, at the stage of building the Christian identity of students, the area of deepening the knowledge of the Bible includes proposals for justifying its inspired character, building the ability to comprehend and analyse the biblical texts, and use them to justify one's faith. The *Curriculum* sees an important task in revealing the Word of God as the source of answers to existential questions, daily renewing the biblical message, identifying God's acts for the benefit of man in the biblical texts, especially through the first and most exalted place of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Yet another important task is to help students interiorize the most valuable biblical texts. This stage of school education is the most appropriate time for students to conduct their own study of the Bible.[26]

The completion of the process of embedding the Bible in the strategy of teaching religion in schools requires three crucial stages. The first one involves using a diverse methodological repertoire. The creators of educational packages for teaching religion, which are being developed, propose methods that can be used in class groups. These school methods can be divided into three main groups: methods highlighting the biblical text, methods designed for proclaiming the kerygma as well as methods intended to discover the kerygma, i.e. to pursue the biblical message on one's own.[27]

Among the methods intended for exposing the biblical text, one can distinguish impressionistic ones, which boil down to involving students in an appropriately exposed biblical text, and expressional ones, which consist in creating situations in which students recreate facts related to a biblical text.[28] The impressionistic methods, useful in teaching religion in schools, include a solemn reading of Scripture, reading a biblical passage with division of roles, paraphrasing a biblical text and presenting a biblical story. These methods aim at proclaiming the message of Scripture.[29] In turn, expressional methods include: simple staging, improvised staging, stage performance, pantomime, drama, press article, character presentation, tribunal, changing

25 Polish Bishops' Conference, *The Core Curriculum*, 57–64.
26 Polish Bishops' Conference, *The Core Curriculum*, 99–104.
27 Cf. Stypułkowska, *Biblijna formacja katechetów*, 347.
28 Cf. Okoń, *Wprowadzenie do dydaktyki ogólnej*, 268–270.
29 Cf. Marek, "Metody pracy z tekstem biblijnym," 271–275.

a biblical metaphor, writing an e-mail text and drawing. These methods are used to express emotions or thoughts related to the biblical text that is being discussed.[30]

The second group of methods, associated with the assimilation of knowledge, also known as expository methods, appears in school practice most frequently. With regard to biblical methods, these are methods of proclaiming the kerygma, essentially intended for the catechist as the one who proclaims it. These methods include: biblical commentary (introductory, in-depth, summarizing, liturgical), biblical talk (introductory, informative, consolidative, controlling, exploring), biblical lecture (linear, concentric, spiral). The methods of kerygma proclamation in religious education are used to present the kerygma of a biblical text directly or to help students understand it. Gerard Kusz argues that teaching about the Bible during a religion class, the teacher can use any method, provided that it leads to correlating God's message with the student's experience.[31]

The practice of teaching religion also involves methods of discovering the kerygma.[32] These are methods of inquiring knowledge individually, related to problem-based learning, and allowing for transforming one's passive knowledge into knowledge that can be actively used. They are conducive to learning new information and its application in everyday life.[33] The methods can be divided into the following groups: biblical text analysis (narrative text analysis, dialogue analysis, analysis of letters and speeches, analysis of parables and psalms), methods of a briefly formulated kerygma (alternative titles, short confessions of faith), methods of working with various texts (reading different translations of the Bible, biblical comparisons, working with a parallel biblical text, catechetical study of characters, selected issues, texts taken from one biblical book), questions and repetition (peer editing, observation, biblical interview), prayer and existential methods (rewriting short texts, memorizing the Bible, the Västerås Method (also called the Swedish method), biblical meditation, biblical journal, repeating the verses and words that moved the participants).[34] Many of the methods discovering the kerygma belong to the activating methods, the characteristic elements of which are the creative organization of work by the teacher and working in small groups.[35] The religion teacher creates an atmosphere of active work with the text, during which students can conduct various biblical searches.[36]

The second stage consists in a new strategy of presenting the achievements of biblical teachings to students through modern multimedia being at the disposal of

30 Barciński – Wójcik, *Metody aktywizujące w katechezie*, 96.
31 Cf. Kochel, *Katecheza w służbie słowa Bożego*, 100.
32 Korgul, *Dydaktyka dla katechetów*, 9.
33 Cf. Czerski, "Współczesne metody interpretacji," 27.
34 Cf. Łabendowicz, *Metodyka katechezy*, 5.
35 Cf. Kusz, *Biblia w katechezie*, 61.
36 Cf. Stypułkowska, *Biblijna formacja katechetów*, 353.

educational institutions.[37] Religious websites have been launched for the needs of the educational packages, which contain excellent films, professional reports, photographs of the biblical places, archaeological resources, biblical trivia, and multimedia presentations, showing the richness of Scripture in audio-visual forms. As the computerization of Polish schools is advanced, religion teachers can log on to the designated portals in real time to discover diverse resources of the biblical world not only in a theoretical form but also in an attractive multimedia one.[38]

The third stage is the correlation of religion classes with school programmes. It should consider the biblical contents from the resources of other subjects that are relevant to the goals of religious education. Consequently, the 2018 *Core Curriculum for Catechesis* includes a synthesis of the analogous document of the school education law. It adopts formulations useful for those authors of educational programmes, who, from the standpoint of other school subjects, would like to propose to integrate the content of the Bible in religious education classes so that students could understand its message better and accept it personally. It should also be remembered that the correlation of religious education with the whole school education sometimes means taking up complementary or polemical activity on the subject of the Bible as well as its message and significance for contemporary culture and the present times. Regardless of the teachers' preferences, religious instruction overlaps with other subjects in the following issues: the beginning of the world and the meaning of history, the foundation of ethical values, the function of religion in culture, human destiny as well as man's relationship with the natural environment. The application of the correlation between teaching religion and school education is necessary both for strict catechetical reasons (combining the Christian faith with life experiences), didactic reasons (easier assimilation of the same content, its various aspects being discussed during other lessons) and educational reasons (showing students the unity of the truth about man and the surrounding world).[39]

It seems that the usefulness of the message based on the Bible, message that can support school education, and broadly speaking, the Polish state, has been described in an interesting way by Paweł Mąkosa, who claims that the educational potential of religion classes is enormous, and their use depends on numerous factors, such as "transferring well-founded teachings about ethical and moral values, as well as arguments for their practice, assistance in their understanding, recognizing them as important and internalizing them through their inclusion in the structure of one's personality, creating motivation for their application, and implementing them in one's life on a daily basis."[40] Neglecting the reliable biblical formation in secondary schools

37 Kielian, *Przyszłość nauczania religii*, 101.
38 Cf. Zając, *Ewaluacja w nauczaniu religii,* 227.
39 Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 14.
40 Mąkosa, "Szkolna lekcja religii," 355.

– according to the organizers of religion classes – may thwart the implementation of any religious education, which is to prepare youth for the reception of the biblical readings during the liturgy and their adaptation to everyday moral choices.

3. One Issue and Several Variants of Discussion

During the period when religion classes was held outside the structures of public schools in Poland, it was predominantly believed that the family was the primary place for human development and a privileged place for the transmission of the Gospel and faith.[41] Nowadays, in the new educational reality, there have been increasingly numerous voices that teaching religion in schools is needless because the aim of modern education should rather be the acquisition of practical knowledge and life skills. In order to accomplish this goal, students are supposed to learn to think and act differently from what their own traditions say and what the word of God reveals them to do.[42] The new "values" of education should include: good civic attitudes, exercising one's rights, the autonomy of the individual, tolerance, celebrating diversity and multiculturalism and the right to express one's opinions. By recognizing the school as one of the most important environments of socialization, some intend to make it a privileged place for transmitting the new "values," and thus allowing no room for any norms interpreted on the foundations of Scripture.[43]

There are also numerous groups of scientists who adhere to the stance that the modern school should prefer individual rights rather than institutional authority, global ethics than universal values, individual choices than defining objective needs, life skills than objective knowledge, choice and tolerance rather than answers, certainties and dogmas, a broad concept of spirituality instead of religion. On the other hand, the philosopher David Carr claims that introducing issues concerning religion into the school environment is an indoctrinating approach because there are no valid objective tests or scientific evidence for religious claims. In his opinion, in the "cold hard glare of rational scientific scrutiny," the daily ritual of Christian worship in schools "may also have amounted to little more than a crude conditioning or indoctrination into views which are highly questionable, if not actually meaningless."[44]

The objections regarding the Bible as the basis for teaching religion in schools are also reported by students who participate in confessional religion classes because of their parents' decision or their own choices made when they reach the age

41 Cf. Kobyłecka, *Nauczyciel wobec współczesnych zadań edukacyjnych*, 12.
42 Cf. Mąkosa, "Znaki czasu dla katechezy w Polsce," 460.
43 Cf. Peeters, *Globalizacja zachodniej rewolucji kulturowej*, 208.
44 Carr, "Rival Conceptions of Spiritual Education," 171.

of maturity. There are many doubts concerning the assurances that Holy Scripture contains the word of God addressed to people of all times and that each generation is obliged to consider it in the context of their religious attitudes and cultures.[45] One of the reasons for this contestation is the literary style of Scripture and the non-biblical mentality of contemporary people, which causes dissonance between the Bible and their lives.[46] They are concerned by the fact that few things which require to be accepted with the obedience of faith coincide with the current human knowledge and worldview, and the passions that Scripture contains do not correspond to the modern disposition of a young person.[47] But the new school education system is focused on discovering the truth and resents the lack of any alternative. Students wish to look for their own solutions more than bow to the set rules of the Bible.

Contemporary religious education struggles with questions about the way of communicating the salvific mystery of God to modern man. Traditional methods of transmitting the message of salvation, confronted with little interest in the mystery, exclude the achievement of the goals intended.[48] I have presented the methodological instruments used in religion classes in schools. However, an effective assessment of the methods requires a certain time perspective, but even now we can see the tendencies in this regard especially that ambitious art, journalism, culture, valuable documents give way to sensational events, presented selectively according to the concept of selling media products.[49] The reality is presented in a simplified, sketchy way, accompanied by a trivial standardising commentary characterized by internal variability. The importance of a religious education textbook, a catechism or the Bible as an opinion-making medium of information has definitely diminished.[50]

Completely different views have also been expressed in the ongoing discussion about the biblical dimensions of religion classes.[51] Among many such opinions, it is worth mentioning the one of the Dutch educationalist Martinus Jan Langeveld who just before the beginning of the Second Vatican Council noticed that it had historically been proven that the rejection of God and religion led to a situation in which it was not necessary to save the concept of God but to defend the dignity of man.[52] For Christians who accept Jesus as the indicator of good and evil know that they are called to "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48, NRSV); to think "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable" (Phil 4:8); to be committed

45 Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 94.
46 Cf. Goban-Klas, "Pokolenie SMS-u," 105.
47 Cf. Kostorz – Pytka – Bechta, *Katechizm dla średnio zaawansowanych*, 61–62.
48 Cf. Marek, "O korzystaniu z Pisma Świętego," 47–48.
49 Cf. Kloch, *Kościół w Polsce wobec WEB 2*, 22.
50 Kloch, *Kościół w Polsce wobec WEB 2*, 395.
51 Cf. Mąkosa, *Edukacja religijna polskich emigrantów*, 25.
52 Langeveld, *Das Kind und der Glaube*, 55.

for the course of life like their Master and his Apostles, who filled their days with good "that they had no leisure even to eat" (Mark 6:31). Therefore, Christians begin, finish, and fill each day with moral principles, interpreted from the Bible and made as their own by their sovereign decisions.[53]

In the opinion of Pope Benedict XVI, the goal of Christian education, but also the purpose of integral education in general, is the well-being of the pupil. In the religious sphere, the abovementioned pupils' well-being is related to the value of hope because believers expect hope that is not related to any temporal goods but is rather directed towards eternal happiness.[54] This is why, in the opinion of Benedict XVI, the school should be a place of the transmission of technical and theoretical concepts and the testimony of service by word and example. In schools one should be guided by the logic of the gift of self, in which time, knowledge and skills are means serving both the common good and the good of another person.[55] The task of students and staff of schools, especially those inspired by Christian values, is to bear witness to God amongst their loved ones – to the close God who also shows himself in the search for the truth.[56] Therefore, it is reasonable to place the biblical category in the field of school theory and practice of education towards values, including the religious ones, which can be derived by interpreting the new *Core Curriculum for Catechesis*.[57]

Ultimately, implementing a confessional religion class based on the Bible means introducing it in all the areas of school functioning, especially in the area of upbringing and teaching. This specific ministry consists in guaranteeing a better encounter with the Bible in traditional forms of school teaching so that it can bring the maximum spiritual element to this system.[58] Using the Scripture message in teaching secular subjects may confirm the validity of difficult ethical decisions, purify the understanding of the issue of suffering, misfortune, and physical evil, to which no secular school subject is indifferent.[59]

The modern school, caught up in the magic of grades and gaining professional promotions, does not acknowledge its call to accomplish such tasks. And yet their implementation is important both for individuals and for social groups. These existential problems justify religion classes and, within their framework, closer contacts with the Bible. Pope Francis warns against the pernicious consequences of unreflective life in his Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, addressed to young people from

53 Cf. Kostorz – Pytka – Bechta, *Katechizm dla średnio zaawansowanych*, 155.

54 Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 30–31.

55 Benedykt XVI, "Ewangelia daru i bezinteresowności," 27–28. The Pope's address to the Ecclesial Movement for Cultural Commitment, the Federation of Christian Organizations for International Volunteer Service and the Christian Workers Movement, 19 May 2012.

56 Benedykt XVI, "Świadkowie Boga, który jest blisko," 33. The meeting with students of Rome's universities and Atheneum, homily delivered on 1 December 2012.

57 Cf. Chałas – Maj – Mariański, *Wychowanie ku wartościom religijnym*, 312.

58 Cf. Bissoli, "Katecheza i Biblia," 28.

59 Cf. Bukowski, "Biblia w literaturze," 206–211.

all over the world, where he invokes the Gospel text and firmly appeals for saving the faith of young people and protect them from spiritual loneliness.[60] Since the Bible should play an important role in this process of saving man, the institutions responsible for education have made plans to saturate the school space with its message.

Summary

In the face of regularly emerging voices calling for the removal of confessional religion classes from Polish state schools, this article is an attempt to strongly oppose such tendencies. Communicating the tenets of the Bible in religious education classes is one of the fundamental spiritual challenges of our times. The methods, proposed in the new *Core Curriculum for Catechesis,* introducing learners into the world of the Bible in schools allow them to be active, which can then be directed and transformed into various forms of religious doings. A skilfully assimilated biblical message for the needs of religion instruction can protect it from the danger of absorbing merely variable opinions and can guarantee what is certain and unchangeable in the pursuit of Christian maturity.

Translated by Grzegorz Knyś

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60 "We can, in fact, spend our youth being distracted, skimming the surface of life, half-asleep, incapable of cultivating meaningful relationships or experiencing the deeper things in life. In this way, we can store up a paltry and unsubstantial future. Or we can spend our youth aspiring to beautiful and great things, and thus store up a future full of life and interior richness," Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 19.

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The Phenomenon of Rewriting Scripture in Late Second Temple Judaism: Some Methodological Reflections on the So-Called "Rewritten Bible" Category

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Abstract: The term "Rewritten Bible" was introduced by Géza Vermes in 1961 to describe works from late Second Temple period that "retell" or "rewrite" Scriptures with characteristic changes. Since then, much has been written about this category of texts. Today some researchers are tired of discussing this concept, suggesting even a move away from the notion. Others, on the contrary, apply it to an increasing number of texts, including even works lying outside the specific context of late Second Temple Jewish literature. This article discusses the phenomenon of the "Rewritten Bible" (RewB) and takes up a polemic with certain approaches to the category, concerning terminology, scope, and character, as well as indication of the purposes of rewriting activity. The article shows that the category remains useful and important, within certain methodological clarifications.

Keywords: Rewritten Bible, Rewritten Scripture, Book of Jubilees, Antiquities of the Jews, Genesis Apocryphon, 4QReworked Pentateuch

Few terms have elicited as many vivid reactions among exegetes as the term "Rewritten Bible," proposed in 1961 by Géza Vermes.[1] The impetus for the lively debate was primarily the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, including previously unknown writings that Vermes, and others after him, classified as "Rewritten Bible" (henceforth RewB). It is an ancient practice of interpreting the sacred texts of Judaism, which involved not so much commenting or discussing them, as telling or rewriting anew, often with significant additions, omissions, and other kinds of changes. The new phase of the debate that continues until today began with the complete publication of the Qumran texts – and especially the texts of Cave Four – in the beginning of the nineties.

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1 Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 95.

The Qumran texts clearly showed that ancient scribes modified and supplemented some of the biblical stories. What made them feel that they could do this and that they should change sacred texts in a certain way? What was their attitude towards the source texts they interpreted so freely? Contemporary exegetes were surprised by how easily the biblical text was revised at the time when the canon of the Bible seems to have been roughly established. Certainly, the authority of the Pentateuch was specified – and most of the works of the RewB focus on the Torah (Pentateuch).[2]

How to name this phenomenon? "Rewritten Bible"? "Retold Bible"? "The Bible Reinterpreted"? "Para-Bible"? Or maybe the word "Bible" should be replaced by something else? What is its scale and scope? How to characterize the phenomenon itself? Is it a literary genre or a textual strategy present in various genres? An exegetical technique or a loose form of literary activity? Does it concern only texts written in Hebrew and can it be a solution to the Synoptic Problem?

Today, the RewB category is understood and implemented differently by individual researchers. Some of them are tired of discussing this concept, suggesting even abandoning it.[3] Others, on the contrary, apply it to an increasing number of texts, including even works lying outside the specific context of late Second Temple Jewish literature. In this article, I want to look at the phenomenon of "rewriting" authoritative texts and engage in a polemic with some approaches to the RewB phenomenon in the literature on the subject, incl. the terminology, the scope of the phenomenon in question, and the indication of the purpose(s) of the works of RewB. I will try to show old and new anachronisms accompanying the debate and convince that the category remains useful and important, within certain methodological clarifications.

1. The Phenomenon of Rewriting the Scripture

Some of the early interpretations of the Bible – or rather the interpretations of the sacred texts of Judaism, as the term "Bible" seems an anachronism at this stage – achieved their purpose by rewriting the biblical stories with the addition, omission and alteration of certain important threads, or retelling them in a modified form. In other words, some early Jewish writings interpret the books that now make up the Hebrew Bible by re-narrating them – rather than commenting on them in the verse-by-verse form known from rabbinical sources and modern critical commentaries on the Scripture. We observe this phenomenon not only in the writings preserved at

2 The ambiguous term "Torah" will be used here as a synonym for the Pentateuch – the first five books of the Bible.

3 See the questions posed by researchers in: Zsengellér (ed.), *Rewritten Bible after Fifty Years*.

Qumran, where the classic examples are the Book of Jubilees[4] and the Genesis Apocryphon,[5] but also in Josephus, esp. in his *Antiquitates Judaicae*, in the extra-biblical texts of early Judaism, and, interestingly, in the Bible itself. The best example here are the Books of Chronicles – a creative "rewriting" of the older traditions contained in the Books of Samuel and Kings (with significant omissions and modifications). In addition, there are also the traditions worked out in the Book of Deuteronomy, derived from the books of Exodus and Numbers (e.g., the Decalogue). We also have examples of reusing or updating older materials in the younger prophetic books.[6]

In some texts of the RewB, fragments of the narrative are literally copied, in others paraphrased in the author's own words, and elsewhere retold anew and with changes. The author may omit some episodes, drastically shorten others, add supplements that will create an original explanation of the transcribed text, or finally incorporate completely new traditions and motifs from other sources. Géza Vermes has identified RewB as "a narrative that follows scripture but includes a substantial amount of supplements and interpretative developments."[7] In the beginning, he did not propose any analytical definition for his term. Later, he returned to the topic, trying to specify it. He wrote that the RewB is characterized by "a close attachment, in narrative and themes, to some book contained in the present Jewish canon of Scripture, and some type of reworking, whether through rearrangement, conflation, or supplementation of the present canonical, biblical text."[8] Vermes tried to describe RewB as an "exegetical process" analogous to the creation of the midrash. In his opinion, the scribe created "haggadic development into the biblical narrative [...] in order to anticipate questions, and to solve problems in advance."[9] He saw the midrashic nature of RewB in frequent reading and interpreting the Scripture with the intention of explaining and supplementing its stories and resolving textual, contextual and doctrinal difficulties. Such creative reading leads to a RewB – a fuller, smoother, and doctrinally more

4 Book of Jubilees, also called the Little Genesis, is a pseudepigraphal work from the 2nd century BCE that presents the narrative of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus by retelling biblical stories in these books from a different perspective. It is notable, *inter alia*, for its chronological schema, by which events described in Gen and Exod are dated by jubilees of 49 years, each of which is composed of seven cycles of seven years.

5 Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20), also called the Tales of the Patriarchs, is one of the seven original scrolls from the first Qumran cave. The preserved fragment contains the stories about Lamech, Noah and Abraham, parallel to the text of the Book of Genesis. In many places, it is very close to the biblical text, in some it has exegetical inserts and explanations similar to the rabbinic midrash, and in others it contains completely new material, not known from the biblical tradition.

6 Whereas in the earlier period one may find rewritings of individual laws, prophecies, or narrative passages, the further one moves into the latter part of the Second Temple period the more extensive becomes the scale of rewriting, since entire works such as Chronicles, Book of Jubilees, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, and the Temple Scroll, rewrote complete literary works; see Segal, "Between Bible," 28.

7 Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 95.

8 Vermes, "Bible Interpretation," 186–188.

9 Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, 95.

advanced form of narrative.[10] In this sense, Géza Vermes initially understood the term as a "textual strategy," and therefore a kind of exegesis. Later, he used it somewhat vaguely as a defined "genre."[11] I will deal with this conclusions below.

It is important to distinguish here the phenomenon of rewriting the Bible anew from pseudepigrapha and apocrypha, which may be related to a person or event in the present canonical text, but in fact mostly contain new material, and use the biblical text only to a limited extent.[12] RewB is characterized by a parallelism to and close relationship with the scriptural base text. It must closely follow and work through it.[13] In the collection of RewB scholars usually mention the Book of Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, not infrequently also the biblical Books of Chronicles, the 4QReworked Pentateuch (4QRP)[14] or, less frequently, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[15] The fact that all these works (apart from that of Josephus Flavius) are present in the Qumran library shows that this way of reading the sacred texts was widespread and appreciated in the Essene community.[16] However, the Book of Jubilees or the Books of Chronicles are well attested also outside the Qumran community, which shows that RewB was more widely known in Second Temple Judaism.

The textual base of these compositions differs from case to case. Some contain non-Masoretic readings, especially from the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch group, some are based on Qumran texts, while the textual base of others is not known from anyone text with which we are familiar. For example, in his rewriting of Samuel, the Chronicler often did not use MT or the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX, but a text like 4QSam^{a}, one of the Samuel manuscripts from Qumran. The Books of Chronicles are closer to 4QSam^{a} than to MT.[17]

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10 Vermes, "Biblical Midrash," 308.

11 Vermes, "Bible Interpretation," 185–188.

12 The list of such apocryphal works is long, it is enough here to mention the Apocryphon of Jacob, Testament of Judah, Testament of Levi, Aramaic Levi Document, Visions of Amram, Words of Moses, Vision of Samuel, Pseudo-Ezekiel or Pseudo-Daniel.

13 Betsy Halpern-Amaru points this out in his book: *Rewriting the Bible*, 4.

14 4QReworked Pentateuch is a group of texts found in the fourth Qumran cave (4Q158, 4Q364–367), officially published in the mid-1990s. Their content includes partially unchanged legal fragments of the Pentateuch, and partially modified and supplemented ones. The main debate in recent years on the 4QReworked Pentateuch concerns the question of whether the texts of 4QRP should be treated as a copy of the Torah or an extended, independent work from the Rewritten Bible category. See Zahn, "The Problem of Characterizing," 315–339; Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture*.

15 Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is an apocryphal book probably written around 150 B.C. in Greek among Jews living in the Diaspora. The book consists of the testaments of the 12 sons of the patriarch Jacob. The content is structured and includes a biography, admonitions and encouragement, and the fate of each generation. The stories of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, and Benjamin are described. Interestingly, there are numerous similarities with the texts of the New Testament, which are understood as Christian interpolations, or possibly as pre-Christian material used by both the author of the apocrypha and the Christian authors.

16 I assume the identification of the community of Qumran with the Essenes movement.

17 Talshir, "The Relationship," 273–298.

2. Clarification of Terminology

At the very outset of terminological considerations, an important distinction must be made, distinction that is sometimes completely ignored. "Rewritten Bible" is a modern analytical term which has been defined in relation to ancient (Jewish) writings related to the biblical texts. While the terms "pesher," "midrash" and "targum," for example, are used in ancient sources, RewB has never been used.

	Terms used in ancient texts	Terms used in modern analyses
Ancient terms	pesher, midrash, targum	pesher, midrash, targum
Modern meta-level terms	- - - - - - - -	Rewritten Bible

RewB is analytical scholarly term the aim of which is to grasp some literary phenomena attested in ancient texts. This means that RewB cannot be discussed in a same way as pesher, midrash and targum which are terms appearing in ancient texts. In this sense the term RewB is anachronistic, i.e., it is modern scholarly term which is dependent on the way how scholars use it. Some researchers postulate to separate the works of RewB from peshers, midrashes and targums – to make this category more specific. Thus, they equate the different levels on which these terms function. And yet it is possible that midrash stories or targums contain literary activity specific to the RewB.

The term RewB is anachronistic for one more reason. When we consider the fact that at least until the beginning of the second century C.E. there was no set canon of the Hebrew Bible – so there was no "Bible" – the term "Rewritten Bible" turns out to be an anachronism in this case. Recently researchers have rightly grown suspicious of the word "Bible" it contained. James VanderKam had made it clear that there was neither a closed, nor even a fixed tripartite canon prior to the late first century and early second century CE at the earliest.[18] He was one of the first to propose the term "Rewritten Scripture" (henceforth RewS) instead of "Rewritten Bible."[19] His argument was adopted by others. Petersen, for example, replaces "Bible" with "Scripture" and defines Scripture as any writing or book that is attributed a particular authoritative status, especially in the context of writings of a sacred or religious nature.[20]

18 VanderKam, "The Wording of Biblical Citations," 52–54.

19 VanderKam, "The Wording of Biblical Citations," 42f. See also Campbell, "«Rewritten Bible» and «Parabiblical Texts»," 49.

20 Petersen, "Rewritten Bible," 287. Jonathan Campbell also writes about the anachronistic and too narrow character of the term Rewritten Bible. See Campbell, "«Rewritten Bible» and «Parabiblical Texts»," 48–50; Campbell, "Rewritten Bible: A Terminological Reassessment," 49–81.

Indeed "Rewritten Scripture" or "Rewritten sacred Scriptures" seems to be a better solution in a situation where the canon of the Bible is not yet clearly defined. But here comes a problem analogous to the consternation around the notion of RewB. Researchers rightly prefer the term "Rewritten Scripture," but at the same time they fall into Vermes' confusion by failing to define the term Scripture (Petersen is a rare exception here). When we discuss the textual evidences of the pre-canonical, late Second Temple era, terms such as "Scripture" or "scriptural," now used by many, also may create some difficulties. After all, in the basic sense in English it is synonymous with the "Bible." Is "scriptural" just "authoritative" or maybe something more, "canonical" or "biblical"? In my opinion, the term "Scripture" or "Scriptures" – used in the concept of RewS – unlike Bible, does not refer to a canonically defined collection of writings that has been definitively and formally closed. It indicates a character (holy writings) rather than a specific corpus. It results in the broadening of the scope of meaning that Géza Vermes initially intended. RewS encompasses various authoritative writings from the Second Temple period, including biblical ones (where we also meet the phenomenon of rewriting). Such an approach better reflects the reality of the creation of rewritten works, at the same time allowing to take into account the multitude of different forms of texts and the dynamism of literary processes. The term RewS emphasizes the way authoritative writings are used as matrices for the creation of authoritatively derivative texts, which by virtue of being rewritings contribute to the authoritative elevation of their antecedents,[21] whilst on the other hand the rewritings sun themselves in the authoritative light of their predecessors.[22]

Géza Vermes, in his last paper on the subject – unfortunately he died before its publication – defended the term "Bible" by suggesting that replacing it with "Scripture" is just a terminological trick.[23] This is true only if we do not properly define the term "Scripture(s)," emphasising that here it is not synonym of the "Bible." At the time the analyzed texts were written, there were no strict boundaries between biblical and non-biblical texts, between canonical and parabiblical texts. On the contrary, the situation was pluralistic both textually and canonically.[24] If no canon existed prior to, say, the late 1st century C.E., sticking to the term "Bible" or "biblical" appears misleading. The term "Rewritten Bible" – that is, derivative, secondary, non-canonical work – does not fit, for example, the Books of Chronicles, which are not so much RewB as the Bible itself. Similarly, the Book of Jubilees could be treated as the Qumran Bible rather than rewritten Bible.[25] Rewriting of Scripture may

21 Petersen, "Rewritten Bible," 287.
22 Malan, "Rewritten Bible/Scripture," 2.
23 Vermes, "The Genesis of the Concept," 3–9: "Frankly, replacing «Bible» by «Scripture» strikes me as a mere quibble" (*ibidem*, 8).
24 See Najman, "The Vitality of Scripture," 497–518.
25 In certain cases it is difficult to decide whether some texts are scriptural or not, e.g. Jubilees, the Book of Enoch, 4QReworked Pentateuch.

become authoritative as is well known from cases such as Deuteronomy or perhaps the 4QReworked Pentateuch as well.[26] One group's rewritten Bible could very well be another's biblical text. This examples shows at least two things: 1) that the relationship between the Scripture and the rewritten Scripture is complex, and the transition between the two is inherently fluid; 2) that the rewritten texts of Scripture could acquire the same authority as their written predecessors, they could become authoritative Scripture. The reverse process is also possible: some works were initially given high status, but then they lost that status.

Some scholars prefer the term "Parabiblical," but for the same reasons, it is an anachronism. It still includes the term "Bible" in this context, and it rejects in advance the possible canonical and authoritative status of the RewB itself (parabiblical – meaning non-biblical). Daniel Falk admits in his monograph *The Parabiblical Texts* that the so-called parabiblical texts are "lying between 'biblical' text and exegesis, but in certain cases it is hard to identify that what a 'biblical' text is."[27] Generally, in the discussion on the RewB phenomenon, anachronistic categories are easily reached.

3. The Temple Scroll and Other Legal Texts

The scope of texts that are examined under the so-called RewB category varies, depending on the attitude of the researchers. In the beginning, Géza Vermes and his successors limited the number of texts to very specific writings of Second Temple Judaism, always narratives (like the Book of Jubilees and the Genesis Apocryphon).[28] On this basis, they draw conclusions as to the whole phenomenon. But what about legal texts like the Temple Scroll (*11QTemple Scrolla*)? Philip Alexander in the 80s followed Vermes' original understanding of the notion and argued that rewritten biblical texts are always narratives, following the Scriptures in chronological order and

26 VanderKam, "Questions of Canon," 96–100; Lange, "The Status of the Biblical Texts," 27; Tov, "3 Kingdoms," 365–366; Tov, "The Many Forms," 11–28. These researchers indicate that 4QRP was the authoritative text in Qumran as representing expanded scriptural text. Sidnie Crawford is somewhat more cautious acknowledging that at least some of the 4QRP mss "were meant by the scribes that prepared them to be read as regular pentateuchal texts," but noting also that we have little clear evidence that they were considered authoritative by any particular group (Crawford, *Rewritten Scripture*, 56–57). Daniel Falk (*The Parabiblical Texts*, 111) shares a similar opinion as Crawford.

27 Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, 1.

28 See, for example, Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," 99–121 (he only includes the Genesis Apocryphon, the Book of Jubilees, Josephus' *Antiquities*, and the Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum). More recent, see Zahn, *"Rewritten Scripture,"* 323–336 (where only four Qumran texts are analyzed: the Book of Jubilees, Genesis Apocryphon, Temple Scroll, and 4QReworked Pentateuch); Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts* (where only three works are analyzed: Genesis Apocryphon, Reworked Pentateuch, and 4Q Commentary on Genesis A-D).

covering much of the content of Scripture.[29] Alexander's definition excluded legal and ritual texts from the category mainly for reasons of difficulties in clearly grasping the phenomenon of rewriting or working through a specific text.[30]

Daniel Harrington, as far as I know, was the first to include the Temple Scroll in the category.[31] Since then an increasing number of scholars began to broaden the notion to include the Temple Scroll, often, however, without any particular argumentation. Does the RewB include also halakhic, i.e., legal texts? It seems that the answer should be positive. An analysis of Josephus' *Antiquities* shows that author works not only with biblical narratives and stories, but also with significant parts of legislative texts, especially the legal and ritual material of the Pentateuch. This indicates that the creative work of retelling the sacred traditions was not limited to narrative texts, but also included law. We observe this phenomenon in the analysis of the Temple Scroll. Its author uses the same techniques found in narrative texts to demonstrate that the extrapentateuchal legislation that he embraces was also given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. As Emanuel Tov has shown, some parts of the Temple Scroll are even closer to the biblical text than the 4QReworked Pentateuch, while others contain explicit reworkings of the laws of the Torah. Some parts of the Temple Scroll and large parts of the 4QRP are copies of the laws of the Pentateuch, while others are more or less reworked by their authors/redactors, thus meeting the same definition as the narrative texts of RewB.

Moshe Bernstein argued some time ago for inclusion of the Temple Scroll as the "sole" legal exemplar of RewB.[32] But what about other legal texts? In the Book of Jubilees – the classic example of RewB – we find also laws and legal texts, esp. in the final two chapters of the book. After narrating the story of the Exodus from Egypt, Jubilees gathers laws of Passover from a variety of biblical locations, adds some biblically unattested Passover rules, and presents them as a coherent unit (49:1-23), with the heading, "Remember the commandment which the Lord commanded you concerning the Passover" (49:1). This is followed by a similar grouping and expansion of Sabbath laws (50:1-13). This is also rewriting of Scriptures. And what about smaller legal texts? Qumran legal texts, such as 1Q22, 2Q21, 4Q368, 4Q408 or 4Q577,[33] are very rarely taken into account, while there are numerous biblical rewritings, quotations and paraphrases in them. Such legal texts focus on working through the law of

29 Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," 99–121.

30 Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," 103.

31 See Harrington, "The Bible Rewritten," 239–247. Steven Fraade is wrong saying that in Harrington's publication there is "nothing to suggest that there might be legal texts to be considered in this regard" (Fraade, "The Temple Scroll, " 136).

32 Bernstein, "Rewritten Bible," 193–195. See, more recently, Fraade, "The Temple Scroll," 136–154. Fraade examines the category of "Rewritten Bible/Scripture," pushing for the inclusion of legal material within it and positing that the Temple Scroll does fit this mold.

33 The above-mentioned texts are analyzed, in the RewB category, in the book: Feldman – Goldman, *Scripture and Interpretation*.

the Pentateuch, mainly that found in Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus. Therefore, in the discussion on the RewB category, it seems that one should not reject *a priori* texts that rewrite biblical law.

We are still before the step of possible inclusion of other than Temple Scroll legal texts to the category. Today we understand better that the sample of few narrative texts is too small to judge the RewB phenomenon and that it is not limited to just a few great Qumran works. It is traditionally assumed that the phenomenon of so-called RewB was present in late Second Temple Judaism (2th century BC to 1st century AD). But we should also remember that textual activity found in RewB phenomenon is also evident within a wider range of Second Temple literature than is normally acknowledged.

4. Translations, Gospels and Works from the Christian Era

The analysis of the RewS can go in two different directions. Some researches narrow the category down to a few specific texts from Second Temple times. They operate according to the principle that while every work of the RewS is a biblical interpretation, not every biblical interpretation is automatically a RewS. Others, in turn, try to include in the collection more and more new works that are somehow related to the Scripture. They believe that any form of paraphrase or interpretation of biblical content already falls under this category, and since the RewS does not have to repeat the present canonical text, it is enough that it alludes to it and reinterprets it. This illustrates well how the definition of RewS, and what "Scripture" means here, is related to modern scholarly evaluations how the term should be used.

What about ancient translations? Could any translation that is not literal fall into the so-called RewB category? Those who draw the limit of the phenomenon most broadly, think so.[34] On a scale from manuscript copies containing minor revisions, through translations which follow the base text more or less closely and through retellings of scriptural narratives to compositions based only loosely on the Hebrew Bible – translations are inherently close to the source text, but the language changes. In the works of RewS, the language most often does not change (this is not the case), but the final text vary in relation to the source text. Some researchers exclude translations from RewS category assuming that it describes only works written in the same language as the original. Although the exclusion of translations seems justified – this is yet another kind of literary activity – the linguistic criterion is artificial. It would exclude, for example, Genesis Apocryphon written in Aramaic or Flavius who writes

34 See more in Segal, "Between Bible," 10–29; Crawford, *Rewritten Scripture*, 48–50. Vermes, for example, used the Palestinian Targum as an example of RewB.

in Greek. Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* are not a translation of Hebrew Scriptures – as he stipulates in the prologue – but a reworking of biblical traditions created in the form of rewritten Scripture.[35]

Some want to expand the scope of the RewB category with the synoptic Gospels. They actually see in the RewB discussion a solution for the so-called Synoptic Problem.[36] Irrespective of the question of Q, it is incontestable that the Gospel of Matthew rewrites Mark, its predecessor, by exhibiting a number of features such as adjustments, omissions, rearrangements and supplementations which at the level of content are understood to be prime characteristics of RewS.[37] Recently, several works have been written that view the process of creating synoptic Gospels analogously to the "rewriting" of the Scripture. In the collective work *Luke's Literary Creativity* (2016),[38] the authors propose a reading of the Gospel according to Luke as rewriting the life of Jesus contained in the Gospel of Matthew[39] and working through biblical motives from the Hebrew Bible, especially relating to Elijah and Moses.[40] This approach to the discussed notion has many advantages, but there are also few problems with it. A most important one is the relatively short time between the writing of

35 In eleven chapters of his *opus magnum* Flavius recounts a story known from the books of the Bible in a detailed way. He does not so much analyzes individual texts, does not give a philological, literary or theological interpretation of them, as he re-narrates them, remodeling the Semitic world of Hebrew culture into the Greek world of Platonic ideas. Material that may sound offensive or incomprehensible he omits or only mentions, and adds elements that answer actual or supposed questions and difficulties of a non-Semitic reader. Commenting on his own methodology, Flavius Josephus writes in the introduction to *Antiquitates Judaicae* that the content of the work will be "translated (μεθερμενεύω) from the Hebrew scriptures" (*Ant.* 1.5). He states that the work should be treated as a translation, nothing more. Elsewhere in the introduction, he promises to present "the exact details of the Scriptures" (τὰ ἀκριβῆ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς) without adding or omitting anything (οὐδὲν προσθεὶς οὐδ' αὖ παραλιπών) (*Ant.* 1.17). However, his assurances that he would not add anything or omit anything do not correspond to his actual literary practice. In fact, he approaches base texts in the form of the biblical books very loosely. His text is so far from being a translation that it is in fact a completely new and different text, although the dependence on the form and content of Scripture is very clear. The work of Flavius can be characterized as a very creative process of using the Scriptures, in which Flavius translates, adapts or synchronizes the versions found in the *Vorlagen*. This causes a number of changes to the plot of the narrative, the theological motives associated with it, as well as the roles of the characters. This fully qualifies this work as RewS. For more see Friis, *Translations*.

36 It seems that Jonathan Campbell ("«Rewritten Bible» and «Parabiblical Texts»," 50) was the first scholar to suggest the inclusion of New Testament texts in the RewB group. In his 2005 essay, he mentions texts such as Acts 7 and Hebrews 11 in the context of "Rewritten Bible."

37 Petersen, "Textual Fidelity," 36.

38 Müller – Tang Nielsen, *Luke's Literary*.

39 Especially in the first part, where we have articles such as: "Luke Uses/Rewrites Matthew" (Vadim Wittkowski); "Re-walking the 'Way of the Lord': Luke's use of Mark and his Reaction to Matthew" (Mark Goodacre); "Luke Rewriting and Rewritten (Francis Watson) or Acts as Biblical Rewriting of the Gospels and Paul's Letters" (Mogens Müller).

40 Here especially part two and articles such as: "Rewritten Prophecy in Luke-Acts" (Lukas Bormann); "The Lord Elijah in the Temple as in Malachi 3.1: 'Overkilling' Elijah Tradition in Luke 2" (Lotta Valve) or "Luke's Use of the Old Testament in the Sending of the Seventy Two" (Joseph Michael Lear).

individual Gospels – time too short to speak of rewriting "sacred," "scriptural" texts. In the phenomenon of rewriting, called by Géza Vermes "rewritten Bible," an irremovable element is authoritative, sacred status of retold works as Scriptures.

Anyway, an attempt is made in recent years to analyze more and more new texts and groups of texts using the RewS category. Some include into the group the above-mentioned Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs or the Testament of Moses (also called the Assumption of Moses), the apocrypha built on the story from Deut 31–34, but mostly containing of new content, absent in the Bible.[41] Others include gnostic texts such as the Gospel of Judas and the Gospel of the Saviour. Still others use the notion to explore works of *Epiphanius of Salamis*, the bishop of Salamis, Cyprus at the end of the 4th century[42] or the composition known as the *Cave of Treasures*, transmitted under the name of Ephrem the Syrian (fourth century), but most likely composed not earlier than the first decades of the sixth century[43] or even *Palaea Historica* ("Old Testament History"), an anonymous work composed sometime in the late ninth to early tenth centuries, that is probably most noteworthy for its copious assortment of parabiblical legends about biblical personalities.[44]

We are now in a phase where, on the one hand, a natural skepticism about the idea of RewB has arisen, and on the other, rewritten Bible is applied to an increasing number of texts, including, as one can see, texts of the nascent and developing Christ-movement. This inclusion in the category of still new writings from different periods and social worlds shows that the category is attractive and maybe useful as a research tool, but scholars are not keeping up with its development. What is needed is not so much to reject the concept, but to refine it and clarify each time it is used.

In my opinion, the above-mentioned attempts to constantly broaden the category break its internal logic and make this concept so capacious that it ceases to be operative. First, the RewS phenomenon is about rewriting, reworking the base text, perhaps with the intention of replacing it (see below), and not about using it on the basis of intertextuality. Second, in the conceptual framework of the initiators, the RevB applies to Second Temple period Jewish texts, and not to any writings based on the authoritative status of their predecessors (although there are many analogies in the literature). Third and most importantly, the phenomenon of creative rewriting of the Scriptures is possible only when authoritative texts have not yet acquired the status of canonical and unambiguously closed collection of Holy Scriptures. When the biblical text obtained the status of canonical and unchangeable, then

41 See, for example, Parchem, "Testament Mojżesza," 79–103.

42 Reed, "Retelling Biblical Retellings," 308–309.

43 "This work belongs to the category of «Rewritten Bible»: it offers a retelling of sacred history from the first day of creation until Pentecost, based on the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, but also drawing on patristic and apocryphal sources" (Minov, "Satan's Refusal," 244).

44 Van Loon, "The Meeting of Abraham," 1376. David Flusser ("Palaea Historica," 78–79) also saw *Palaea Historica* in RewB terminology.

the exegesis and actualization had to go beyond the biblical text itself and abandon the practice of "rewriting" the Scriptures. In response to the question why this form of biblical interpretation seems to be dying out after the first century C.E., it can be argued that it was precisely the process of establishing and stabilizing the canon of the Bible. This left much less room for new arrangements and new approaches to sacred traditions. This observation excludes any works that are created in the second century C.E. and later, because it is then that the phenomenon of RewB captured by Géza Vermes ends – and the process of multi-level interpretation of the canonically defined Bible begins and develops. Among others, the structured format of "verse plus commentary" become the dominant form of interpretation of both rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity.

Therefore, in order for the term RewB not to be a bottomless pit, but to be operational, several categories of texts should be excluded from its scope (bearing in mind that the clear distinction between them is neither simple nor obvious): 1) copies and revisions of biblical texts; 2) biblical translations; 3) the apocrypha and other works that possess most of the new material not found in the Bible; 4) texts written in time too short from the creation of the base work to include them in the category of "working through" the Holy Scriptures; 5) Jewish texts from the period when the canon of the Bible was already defined and the biblical text obtained the status of canonical and unchangeable. Other categories, such as legal texts, should be added. These are minimal but necessary restrictions to make the RewB category functional and clear.

Moshe Bernstein and Michael Segal argued in favour of adhering to a more stark understanding of the concept, excluding, for example, the Palestinian Targumic literature. Bernstein formulates a valid postulate: "In my view, in order to achieve greater methodological precision in our work on the ways in which the Bible is transmitted, translated, retold and interpreted in early Judaism, our classifications must be as sharply drawn as we can make them. Only after marking that which distinguishes literary forms from one another can we proceed to compare those features in divergent genres which appear to draw them together."[45] According to Bernstein, and I agree with him here, if we want to expand the research field delineated by Géza Vermes, it is only by adding legal texts.

In using the RewB category today, the point is not only to indicate examples (which is what it usually ends up at), but also to give its precise definition and delimitation of the level of analysis to which it may be applied. Criteria that either include or exclude works from this collection must be indicated, so that the discussion between researchers is possible and does not constantly revolve around definition

45 Bernstein, "Rewritten Bible," 175. See also Segal, "Between Bible," 10–29.

problems.[46] An overly broadly defined category is no longer productive, as it covers most of the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. In such a broad sense, almost every work becomes para-biblical by the fact that it alludes to biblical stories or law. Although the RewS should not be seen in the modern category of genre, as I will try to show below, it can be understand as a literary activity defined by certain external and internal characteristics. "Rewriting" is a specific form of working with the base text, a limited intervention in the text, an explanation or addition following the scriptural narrative, that is, a different type of work than translation into another language or, on the other hand, a text loosely referring to biblical motives. We consider here compositions that are clearly based on the Scriptures, those that run parallel to the text of one or more biblical books at the time, when the canon of the Bible was not yet established. The text of the Bible remains the organizing principle of the retold Bible.

5. Literary Genre or Interpretative Process?

Géza Vermes was changing his approach to what he described as the RewB. Initially, he seemed to treat it as an exegetical technique or textual strategy, later he wrote about it as a literary genre. Many researchers have asked whether the RewB is a specific literary genre, a writing technique characteristic of a few related genres, or a working method that could be used in any genre and any literary form? Should it be used as a modern technical term for a specific genre, limiting its use to literature that meets clearly defined criteria? Or maybe it defines a certain current of inter-testamental literature and covers the spectrum of works and genres with multiple relation to the texts of the sacred Scriptures?

Researchers are divided between seeing rewritten Scripture as a genre and a working method.[47] The problem of Géza Vermes and subsequent researchers with specifying the literary specificity of this phenomenon is symptomatic, because it seems that ancient authors themselves perceived their activity very differently. The author of the Book of Jubilees was convinced of the inspired nature of his work, while for Josephus quite the opposite was true. Rewritten Scripture authors did not seem to assume a ready-made and well-defined literary pattern. On the other hand, the method of work and the literary effect are similar: it is always a reworking of the biblical tradition in accordance with the current needs of the religious or secular community.

46 The first to compile such a list of the characteristics of RewB was Alexander ("Retelling the Old Testament," 116–118). This list can still be used as a starting-point for discussion.

47 See Harrington, "The Bible Rewritten," 239–247; Brooke, "Rewritten Bible," 777–781.

It seems that the authors perceived their activity in terms of a broadly understood reinterpretation and update of the sacred traditions of Judaism.

Philip Alexander argued for an understanding of the concept in terms of a genre. He provided nine extensive characteristics and claimed that any text to be included in this particular genre should possess all nine characteristics.[48] However, scholars like George Nickelsburg and Harrington understood the concept as a textual strategy, what allowed them to classify other texts under the rubric. With a increasing number of texts being included the way was paved for the subsequent development of the category.

Two arguments seem crucial here: the diversity of the texts in which we notice a characteristic rewriting process, and the generic diversity within the text itself. First, the diversity of works normally included in the notion, variations in form, subject matter, style, and theological emphases in Jubilees, Genesis Apocryphon, the Temple Scroll, 4QReworked Pentateuch, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus' *Antiquities* preclude viewing them as generically unified. The inclusion to RewS of the works such as the Jubilees, Genesis Apocryphon or *Ant.* 1–11 does not preclude simultaneous participation of these texts in genres, such as narrative, law or apocalypse – a bit like satire, which can appear in any other literary genre. The rewritten Scripture phenomenon seems to be not so much a genre but a kind of umbrella category that covers the spectrum of ancient Jewish works from Second Temple period and various ways of remodeling biblical material. As Jewish Scripture of the Second Temple period comprised various genres – e.g., legendary narratives, laws, historiography, prophetic visions and oracles, and other types of poetry – a given text classified as RewS could belong to any one of these.[49]

Second, there is one feature of the texts in this category that captures the nature of RewB. Within one work, we can find passages that are simply biblical texts and those that are retold biblical texts. Good examples are Chronicles and 4QRP, where large parts of the texts are identical to the originals, while others are slightly or strongly changed. Moshe Bernstein admits to his consternation about the 4QRP, seeing it once as a biblical text and once as a RewB, analogous to the Book of Jubilees.[50] Steven Fraade recently showed that the Temple Scroll incorporate a mixture of textual forms and classes, including that of RewB or "Reworked Pentateuch," but also others.[51] Texts like Jubilees and the Temple Scroll are of mixed styles and methods (e.g., rewritten Bible, reworked Pentateuch, narratives, and topically grouped laws), which should not be smoothed over in the desire to fit each within in a single genus

48 Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," 118f.

49 Zahn, "Genre and Rewritten Scripture," 274.

50 Bernstein, "Rewritten Bible," 183: "I am still uncertain myself, however, of the genre of 4QRP as a whole, and feel virtually trapped between the Scylla of calling it a biblical text and the Charybdis of referring to it as a biblical commentary form of 'Rewritten Bible.'"

51 Fraade, "The Temple Scroll," 144.

or genre. We also have to take into account the compositions, only a part of which can be classified as RewS. In contrast to Jubilees or *Antiquities*, which can be seen as RewS in their entirety, among copies of 4QRP[a–e] only 4QRP[a] reflects the rewritten phenomenon identified by Géza Vermes (4QRP[b–e] merely exhibit minor revisions). Moreover, several of texts from the category have a characteristic that links them with both other texts of RewS and texts that would not be normally admitted to that group – e.g. pseudepigrapha and apocrypha with thematically related fragments. Therefore, the RewB phenomenon cannot be closed and limited to one work or another and its specific genre. It permeates various works and various literary genres. Rewriting Scripture is rather a type of literary activity, a specific writing tendency, assuming the biblical text as the starting point for its work. The variety of forms of texts in this category and the complexity of this activity prevent it from being narrowly treated as one genus.

Finally, recent studies have made clear that the techniques used to reconfigure the scriptural text in works usually labeled RewS are fundamentally the same as those used to produce revised versions of the scriptural texts themselves; that is, new copies of scriptural books. David Carr in particular has demonstrated the extent to which revision and reconfiguration of earlier works was a standard mode of literary production in the ancient world.[52]

These arguments are convincing. Scholars increasingly tend to speak about an interpretational activity of "rewriting Scripture" rather than of a formal genre.[53] Géza Vermes responded to this by trying to combine both approaches; he wrote: „The question has been raised whether the "Rewritten Bible" corresponds to a process or a genre? In my view, it verifies both. The person who combined the biblical text with its interpretation was engaged in a process, but when his activity was completed, it resulted in a literary genre."[54] Does such an approach touch the essence of the phenomenon and its complexity? The recognition that we are dealing with a more comprehensive phenomenon of intertextuality appearing in various genre texts seems more promising. The texts related to the Bible found at Qumran show a variety of exegetical techniques and hermeneutic strategies used to rewrite their

52 See more in Zahn, "Genre and Rewritten Scripture," 274f. She asks: "If the rewriting that is constitutive of the category Rewritten Scripture is something that simply took place in the course of the scribal transmission of sacred texts – or, indeed, of any texts – how can Rewritten Scripture be identified as a separate genre primarily on the basis of that rewriting?" (*ibidem*). The author, however, points out that in a broader, more flexible and theoretical sense one can speak here of a genre: "Their rewriting of prior Scripture – perhaps in conjunction with other shared characteristics – could constitute sufficient reason to consider Jubilees and the Temple Scroll and others as also participating in a distinct genre called Rewritten Scripture" (*ibidem*). This position is not entirely convincing and, in my opinion, contains some elements of an anachronistic approach (assuming contemporary categories of thought). More on the genre theory and genres in historical perspective see in her new book: *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism*.

53 Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, 4–14; Petersen, "Rewritten Bible," 292–297; Petersen, "The Riverrun of Rewriting Scripture," 475–496; Teeter, "On 'Exegetical Function'," 373–402.

54 Vermes, "The Genesis of the Concept," 8.

literary antecedents. These techniques appear to be very similar to the exegetical strategies that can be traced back even to the earliest stages of the development of the Hebrew Bible itself, where similar phenomena are found. It would be very difficult to reduce this phenomenon to a specific literary genre. The six examples of literature (including the Targums and *Sepher ha-Yashar*) to which Géza Vermes originally assigned the classification are already too diverse in terms of genre to be attributed the same generic rubric.[55] RewS is best understood as a re-writing strategy, the writer's interpretative involvement, a special form of intertextuality that implies a close relationship between the original authoritative text and its reworking.

I think we can again speak of an anachronistic approach in this case. George Brooke appears to be right that in Second Temple Period there was no such thing as a "Rewritten Scripture" literary genre with clearly defined genre traits.[56] Rather, it was a certain method of work, the fruit of which is a spectrum of writings with variegated relevance to the text of the Bible each time. It is reasonable to ask whether, by classifying a work as RewB genre, we are not limiting our ability to recognize other aspects of its specific structure and rhetoric that would align it with aspects of other similar texts of the late Second Temple period. The Temple Scroll alerts us that such anachronistic approach, like a searching of specific literary genre chosen by the author may not be effective. Rather, what the author chooses for all or part of his work is a certain *modus operandi*.

6. What Are the Purposes of Rewriting the Scriptures?

In addition to the characteristic manner of the *Vorlage*-dependent composition, rewritten Scripture also has a specific function or functions. Since its appearance in research, many scholars have understood this phenomenon in the context of Jewish interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Géza Vermes considered RewB to be incorporation of interpretation directly into the biblical narrative. For Philip Alexander, Moshe Bernstein and James Kugel, the main reason why rewritten Scripture should be viewed as a means of interpreting the Scriptures is that it contains many of the exegetical motives known from later biblical commentaries.[57] These researchers point out that the phenomenon of re-telling the Bible is essentially the same or similar kind of endeavor as commentary, both of which seek to answer the questions posed in the texts and relate them to issues relevant to current readers.

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55 Petersen, "Textual Fidelity," 29. Similarly, Jonathan Campbell, see Campbell, "Rewritten Bible: A Terminological Reassessment," 55–58.

56 Brooke, "Genre Theory," 361–386.

57 Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," 101; Bernstein, "Rewritten Bible," 180; Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*, *passim*.

So is rewritten Scripture a form of biblical commentary? It seems that one cannot agree with this approach to the matter. The re-narrated Bible, though looks like a specific form of commentary, seems to be a different kind of creative activity. Author often omits entire fragments of the narrative known from the biblical books and modifies others. Thus, he deeply interferes with the source text and changes it irreversibly. Such activity cannot be reduced to the role of a commentary. The reader of the RewB may not have had any contact with the source text. Thus, rewritten Scripture ceases to be a commentary, and becomes the source text that was to be commented on. A commentary is a work which is by nature not self-dependent. It belongs to and makes sense only in conjunction with the interpreted original. Works of rewritten Scripture are often completely detached from their *Vorlagen* and function as autonomous, individual works. Reducing the phenomena of rewritten Scripture to the role of commentary also underestimates the variety of literary genres in which the Jewish biblical interpretation of late antiquity expresses itself.

According to Campbell, ancient readers would not have considered a work such as the Book of Jubilees as "rewriting" the books of Genesis and Exodus. His research position rejects the interpretation of Jubilees as having an intended interpretative or exegetical function.[58] Although Campbell goes too far, emphasizing the independence of these works to the point of negating the phenomenon of rewriting as such, he raises the question whether the interpretation of Scripture in such works is a deliberate and targeted exegetical activity or it is rather incidental and accidental. Is exegesis part of the actual purpose and function of a text such as the Jubilees? Or is the interpretive function a byproduct of the creative use of existing sources in the creation of new texts? It is not easy to answer these questions, just as it is difficult to answer questions about the function of many ancient works at all. There is rarely a clear-cut rationale for setting such a goal with a high level of certainty.

Perhaps the best example here will be the Book of Jubilees. On the one hand, one can immediately notice significant chronological, apocalyptic and legal additions that do not have the function of a commentary, because they add completely new traditions to the content of the Book of Genesis. On the other hand, the author's interpretative and exegetical activity is clearly visible. In many places, Jubilees supplements the biblical narrative with a number of secondary details that do not appear to be of great ideological significance. For example, the names of many wives and daughters have been added, and genealogies have been supplemented. Where the Book of Genesis is inconsistent, repeating or omitting important details (which was a pretext for diachronic studies of the Pentateuch and the search of its "sources"), the Book of Jubilees creates a narrative that is smooth, chronologically consistent and devoid of contradictions or controversies. One example is the transposition of Gen 37:1-2, Jacob's settling and the age of Joseph, from its position before Joseph's

58 Campbell, "«Rewritten Bible» and «Parabiblical Texts»," 43–68.

sale (*Jub.* 34:10) to *Jub.* 39:2, Joseph in the house of Potiphar. This verse is transposed precisely for the purposes of creating a smoother narrative. This transposition is due to narrative resumption. It follows the long extra portion of the war between Jacob and Esau, and re-centers the narrative on Joseph.[59]

One of the important purposes of the rewritten Scripture was to solve the difficulties that are present in the biblical text.[60] For example, in Gen 4:17 it is mentioned that *Cain had relations with his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch*.[61] To this moment, nowhere in Genesis 1–4 is there mention of Cain's wife, moreover, of no other woman than Eve. So where did Cain get a wife from? Only in Genesis 5 – a text from a different tradition, different "source" – it is said that Adam had other sons and daughters (Gen 5:4), but it is still unknown when they were born and whether Cain married one of them. The Book of Jubilees addresses this difficulty by telling in one continuous section the birth of two sons, Cain and Abel, but also a daughter, Awan (*Jub*. 4:1). Earlier in the creation narrative, there is a detailed account of the creating of angels on the first day (*Jub*. 2:2). In this way, the author of Jubilees fills a large gap in the genesis of beings so important in the theology of the Second Temple. The reader of midrashic literature is familiar with this practice of supplementing and "fixing" the biblical text because it is commonly used in targums and midrashes.[62] The additional material is sometimes used to resolve visible contradictions in the Bible and sometimes to fill gaps in the story, such as the names of minor characters or the inner motivation of the hero's actions. This form of rewriting also involves updating what some scholars call "applied exegesis," that is, such a presentation of the meaning of the text that will be relevant to the reader or that authenticates beliefs and practices close to the author.

Certainly one of the motivating factors behind scribal intervention in the tradition was a felt desire for clarification of the meaning or sense of the base text. But much more seems to be at play than simple sense exegesis. Let's see another example, the Temple Scroll. Some scholars tended towards understanding it as primarily an exegetical text, and sought to offer exegetical motivations or biblical precedent even for those sections of the Scroll that have no parallel in earlier pentateuchal traditions.[63] But as Fraade has recently shown, major aspect of the Temple Scroll is the grouping of laws according to topical rubrics (and not according to the progression of a narrative plot), something for which we have seen several analogues in late Second Temple

59 Jubilees remove details irrelevant to Israelite history, omit redundancies and erase verses that lead to contradiction or discomfort. The author/redactor tries to tighten narrative flow, connect one story to another, and even provide an entirely new meaning to an older biblical narrative. See more in Berkovitz, "Missing and Misplaced?," 40–63.

60 Fröhlich, "Narrative Exegesis," 82.

61 Translation after the New American Bible (NAB).

62 See, for example, Kaczorowski, *Wprowadzenie do Midrasza Bereszit Rabba*.

63 Callaway, "Extending Divine Revelation," 149–162; Swanson, *The Temple Scroll*.

literature (as in the later Mishnah), some of which fit within the rubric of RewS, whereas others of which clearly do not.[64] For Fraade, "the rewriting of a legal text respond to different intellectual needs and accomplish different rhetorical goals."[65] Molly Zahn in the same 2018 volume explored the issue of "exegesis" versus "ideology" in a fragment of the Temple Scroll.[66] She shows that "exegesis cannot really be separated from ideology" and that "the interpretive solution offered in Temple Scroll is highly ideological in nature."[67]

Telling the Scripture anew is a form of interpreting inherited sacred texts of one's own religion, but not in the way of commenting on them, but rather – at least in some cases – replacing them with a completely new work (the Books of Chronicles and the Temple Scroll were probably created for this purpose).[68] How faithfully the text of the *Vorlage* has been preserved or how much it has been changed depends on the shared and not shared ideological and theological paradigms of the authors.[69] Deliberate omissions appear in the process of transmitting the Hebrew text of the Bible and have ideological or theologically motivated goals. Fragments are not only omitted, but also consciously changed by later editors, if they found them embarrassing, controversial or contrary to their later understanding.[70] The Books of Chronicles are an excellent example of changes in the transmission of the text that are related to changes in theological and ideological paradigms. They show here a great resemblance to the Book of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll.

Thus, rewritten Scripture, as is to be expected, follows the biblical narrative, except when it edits the text to represent the author's point of view. Here lies one of the keys to understanding the phenomenon of rewriting. The idea that the author was trying to convey is in the changes made to the text – whether they are omissions, additions, or modifications to the content itself. If the author integrates changes and revisions into the narrative according to his theological goals, it is these revisions that create a window into the world of his own ideas and purposes.

The RewB contains much more than a repetition of a biblical narrative or biblical law, just as the Book of Deuteronomy is not only a re-account of tradition from

64 Fraade, "The Temple Scroll," 154.

65 Fraade, "The Temple Scroll," 153.

66 Zahn, "Exegesis, Ideology," 330–342.

67 Zahn, "Exegesis, Ideology," 331.

68 Wacholder, "The Relationship," 205–216. For a discussion of whether the RewS texts attempt to replace their scriptural antecedents or not, see in Petersen, "Textual Fidelity," 13–48 (esp. 31–35). He makes an important observation: "Texts exhibiting rewritten Scripture may be understood as an attempt to make authoritative texts of the past present in new contexts; yet, at the same time, they may also by virtue of being rewritings justifiably be viewed as engaged in the attempt to functionally replace their scriptural antecedents" (*ibidem*, 14). Molly Zahn ("Rewritten Scripture," 331)proposes a similar conclusion: "it does seem appropriate to say that rewritten texts, especially those with strong authority claims, in certain ways do seek to replace the texts that they rewrite." See also Glas, *Between Transmission and Revision*.

69 Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted*, 117.

70 Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted*, 212–213.

Exodus–Numbers, but a new map of thoughts, ideas and theological truths. Endres notes: "The effort expended on this re-writing of the sacred story suggests that the author intended to proclaim or to teach important doctrines or behaviors by means of this re-writing."[71] It seems that the important goal of the rewritten Scripture is more extensive than commenting, supplementing, or exegetically explaining the details of a biblical text – as is often claimed. It rather consists in presenting the narrative of the Holy Scripture a way that will convey the most important ideas and beliefs of the author to the next generations of recipients of sacred traditions. The point is to create a new medium for new values.

Conclusion

Most of the works found at Qumran and around the Dead Sea have to do with the books that later became known as the Hebrew Bible. One group of these manuscripts was referred to, after Géza Vermes, as the RewB. These are texts that "rewrite" biblical narratives, but with a characteristic rearrangement: omissions, additions and modifications to traditions known from Scripture.

Existing examples of this important phenomenon illustrate the central place which the writings that later attained the status of the Holy Scripture had for Jews during the Second Temple period. A special role here is played by the Pentateuch, the Hebrew Torah, which has the greatest number of pseudo-epigraphic texts, apocrypha, midrashes and commentaries based on it. Among the works of RewS, texts based on the authority of the Pentateuch also dominate. However, this authority was understood differently than today. The authors of the works of RewS saw no problem in modifying, deleting or even changing the theological meaning of the traditions contained in the Torah, so as to achieve an effect significant for their own groups of recipients.

In antiquity, the text was not published, as it is done today, but it was rewritten by making copies and enriching them with comments placed directly in the text. These rearrangements resulted from constant reflection on the text and new experiences. The phenomenon of remodeling old religious traditions goes beyond Judaism and the Bible, it is well known in the Ancient East. By this I mean, for example, various versions and re-workings of the epic of Gilgamesh. The study of these types of texts excludes the possibility of simple juxtaposition of existing sources next to each other, and yet this assumption was the basis of the classic Documentary Hypothesis of Julius Wellhausen. Also, we are not dealing with adding together ready-made units, as suggested, for example, in the case of the Jacob cycle and the Joseph cycle in the Book

71 Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 15.

of Genesis. Rather, we observe the far-reaching, free interference of the authors with the original sources: their modeling, including cutting out unwanted fragments and adding appropriate ones. The same editorial strategies were used in Mesopotamia and Israel. The analysis of the rewritten Scripture phenomenon sheds a lot of valuable light on the process of composing ancient literature, including biblical literature, which has been one of the dominant topics since the beginning of modern biblical studies.

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Gerhard Lohfink's Interpretative Key to the Sermon on the Mount

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to elicit and analyze the main interpretative key used by the German exegete Gerhard Lohfink in his reading of the Sermon on the Mount. It does not attempt, however, tracing in detail the scholar's interpretation of the individual passages within that biblical text. In Lohfink's understanding, the Sermon on the Mount is not addressed directly to all people but only to those who become disciples of Jesus, and who allow themselves to be gathered as the new Israel. By living according to the message of the Sermon on the Mount, communities of disciples become a light to the world, creating a "contrast society" and thereby demonstrating to the world that human relationships can be shaped in new ways. It is only through this mediation of Christian communities that the world at large can discover the message of the Sermon on the Mount which, in the end, is not a set of abstract moral norms, but rather an indication of the way of life appropriate for the social sphere in which God reigns.

Keywords: Sermon on the Mount, Gerhard Lohfink, "contrast society," discipleship, moral rules, the principle of love

Amongst the numerous works of Gerhard Lohfink (b. 1934), the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount and references to his studies on this piece of Matthew's text continue to hold a prominent position for at least two reasons. The first is the German biblical scholar's indisputable exegetical competence. In the 1980s, Gerhard Lohfink was one of the most renowned exegetes of the New Testament in German speaking countries, and the Sermon on the Mount was one of the central subjects of his research from the very beginning of his career. There is, however, a personal reason as well; it seems no less important than his professional exegetical competence. As he himself states, his decision to resign from the professorship in the field of the New Testament at the prestigious Faculty of Theology in Tübingen in 1986 was dictated by the desire to be fully involved in the life and work of the Catholic Integrated Community (Katholische Integrierte Gemeinde) in Munich. As Lohfink confessed: "There, I have encountered theology anew, more vital and more beautiful than the one I had known so far, but above all theology that grew out of a deep connection between faith and life."[1] Thus, this biographical circumstance, which is

1 Lohfink, *Auf der Erde, wo sonst?*, 16: "Dort ist mir die Theologie neu begegnet, vitaler und schöner, als ich sie je gekannt hatte – vor allem aber: erwachsend aus einer tiefen Verbundenheit zwischen Glaube und Leben."

sometimes considered a reason for the criticism of Lohfink's theological concept, allows him to perceive the Sermon on the Mount in a special way. Lohfink views it as something more than merely a text from the 1st century AD, which can be studied thanks to modern methods of biblical exegesis. From the very outset, Lohfink notices not only the historical significance of the sermon, but also its potential as a life program for Jesus of Nazareth's disciples, not only in biblical times, but also nowadays. This is what determines whether, in the case of the Sermon on the Mount, we are dealing with a program of a more humane form of social life or an unrealistic and ultimately dangerous utopia.[2]

Lohfink's publications vary in the weight of their approach. Some are solid studies with an elaborate critical apparatus, while others are rather pastoral in nature, containing collections of homilies or addressed to a reader with low theological proficiency. Each of them, however, stands as a testament to the author's mastery of exegesis and biblical theology; therefore, there is no need to distinguish between their values to evaluate and compare the worth of each of Lohfink's publications. The purpose of this article is not a meticulous examination of the individual passages of the Sermon on the Mount as interpreted by Gerhard Lohfink but extracting and analyzing the main interpretative key he uses to read this biblical text.

1. The Sermon on the Mount as a Composition of Jesus' Moral Teachings

Over the centuries, virtually all the interpreters of the Sermon on the Mount have noticed the unique character of the first of Jesus' Five Discourses in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 5–7). Referring to this fragment as "the constitution of the Kingdom of God" or the "Magna Carta of Christian morality" indicates the fundamental meaning of this text. Some interpreters saw it as a description of the radical way of life of early Christian communities. Due to its radicalism, the Sermon on the Mount was historically often either spiritualized and understood as private guidelines for moral heroes, or merely as certain images that constitute an invitation to make radical choices, without the intention or commandment to follow any specific conduct. For others, the text had a broader, even universally human, meaning and resembled a code of moral norms addressed to every human being and obliging them to follow it. Such an interpretation could be prompted by the socio-global key, according to which the biblical texts were often read.[3] The overuse of the first of the abovementioned viewpoints often led to the conclusion that Matthew's text is a proclamation

2 Lohfink, *Auf der Erde, wo sonst?*, 20.

3 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 83.

of the more or less utopian ethics of the Kingdom of God, perhaps envisaged only for a short time until the beginning of the Parousia expected to happen soon and therefore referring only symbolically to the inner attitude of Christians today. The second viewpoint sometimes allowed exegetes to infer that the Sermon on the Mount is an example of idealistic, universally human ethics, centered on the values independent of the Christian faith.

As Lohfink stresses, the main problem of these interpretations was, first, disconnecting the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount from the entirety of his message, which itself can be properly understood only in the context of the entire biblical tradition. The New Testament must be seen as the final cleansing and clarification of the contents of the Old Testament faith. As Lohfink emphasizes, Christian theology sees the New Testament as a kind of a "final redaction" (*Schlussredaktion*) of the Old Testament, which ultimately specifies and complements its message in the light of Christ's teachings.[4] Thus, there is a kind of "third possibility" between the individualistic interpretation and the socio-political conception of the Sermon on the Mount, and that is exactly what Gerhard Lohfink attempts to develop.[5]

He has no doubt that the Sermon on the Mount as a whole is a composition of Jesus' words made by the redactor(s) of the Gospel of Matthew, which, however, in his opinion, does not completely exclude the possibility that its individual parts reflect the actual utterances of Jesus.[6] It is also undeniable that this composition was conceived as a collection of all the moral teachings of Jesus.[7] Unquestionably, the words of Jesus collected in the Sermon on the Mount are not solely a noncommittal instruction. They are entirely directed at action, specific decisions and moral attitudes. In particular, the final part of the text (Matt 7) contains a strong moral impulse. Jesus clearly states that the verbal declarations of the listeners, even manifested by an external recognition of Jesus as Lord, are not enough, and that fulfillment of the will of the Father in Heaven is decisive (Matt 7:21). The parable of the two ways of building a house (Matt 7:24-27), following these words, strengthens this imperative even more.[8]

The fact that the Sermon on the Mount is permeated with the awareness of God's presence and action prevents the reader from one-dimensional concentration on the moral imperative, which could lead to treating it as a kind of radical moralizing.

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4 Lohfink, *Welche Argumente*, 93. This applies not only to the Sermon on the Mount but is an essential element of Lohfink's exegetical method of approaching biblical texts. Whereas the exegesis of older days was heavily focused on reconstructing the sources and earlier layers of the text, now, according to Lohfink, the overall theological significance of its final form (*Endtext*) is relevant. See: Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 118. See also Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 283.

5 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 12.

6 Lohfink. *Das Geheimnis des Galiläers*, 60.

7 Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 47.

8 Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 481–482. See also Lohfink, *Die vierzig Gleichnisse Jesu*, 229–233 and Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 71.

God himself transforms the world by entering history and proclaiming his kingship in Jesus Christ. This transformation is entirely the work of God, but, at the same time, it is fully the work of the human being, and the success of God's plan depends on the commitment of a person who open-heartedly accepts Jesus' prophecies and becomes his disciple.[9] The union of divine and human action is expressed in the literary form that Jesus often uses in the Sermon on the Mount. It is present in the blessings and appears in the Lord's Prayer as well as in other parts of the Sermon on the Mount. It is about the so-called *passivum divinum.* If Jesus preaches that the poor in spirit will be offered the kingdom of heaven, the mournful will be comforted, the meek shall inherit the earth (Matt 5:3-10) and those who ask will receive (Matt 7:7), certainly it is not about a kind of natural or historical necessity that would lead to this radical change in the condition of the suffering, but about an undeserved gift from God.[10] The same applies to the first three petitions of the Lord's prayer where the supplicant asks that God's name be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will be done in heaven and on earth (Matt 6:9b-10). Thus, the supplicant expects that God will make it happen himself, but he makes the desire for it to happen his own desire.[11] God's action does not exclude, but presupposes the necessity of human action, as evidenced by the many moral admonishments present in the Sermon on the Mount. They are contained in specific commands as well as in examples and parables. In view of such a multitude of moral teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, it is essential to find a unifying point of reference that will allow the text to be interpreted as a coherent whole. According to Gerhard Lohfink, one can understand the Sermon on the Mount only in the light of the answer to the question about its addressees.

2. The Addressees of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount begins with Jesus looking at the people surrounding him (Matt 5:1). This is not an anonymous crowd. In the preceding verses, Matthew quite precisely defines the origin of Jesus' audience. They form interconnected circles around Jesus, which are nonetheless still distinguishable. Before Jesus begins to teach, his closest disciples approach him. The crowds seem to be in a way distanced in the background. This mention turns out to be important although it may be interpreted in various ways. Two questions must be asked at this point. The first one concerns the role played by these listening crowds. Are they merely some kind of representatives of humankind? They may even constitute a secondary background

9 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 342.
10 Lohfink, *Gottes Taten gehen weiter*, 94–95.
11 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 345–346.

for the main scene of the teachings for the disciples. The second question relates to their relationships with the group of the disciples who come closer to listen to Jesus.

To solve these questions, Gerhard Lohfink analyzes the exact nature of the crowds as described by the author of the First Gospel. He lists the regions and urban centers from which the followers of Jesus come: "Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the regions across Jordan followed him." Lohfink assumes that here Matthew uses Mark's text (Mark 3:7-8), which is re-edited in a very significant way. Matthew removes Idumea, Tyre and Sidon from the text of Mark and adds the Decapolis. The mention of the entire land of Galilee from Mark 1:28, through which the news of Jesus' words and deeds spread, changes in a substantial way: "News about him spread all over Syria" (Matt 4:24).[12] Therefore, the territories populated by Gentiles or those considered as not belonging to the classical territories of Israel were removed. As a result, the map sketched by Matthew does not reflect the geographic and demographic situation in the time of Jesus, but basically coincides with the "map of the fathers" (*Landkarte der Väter*), i.e., with the area that used to be (according to the rabbinical narrative) the kingdom of David (the Decapolis belonged to this kingdom at that time).[13] Such a specification of addressees seems to have great importance for the understanding of the text here. The addressees of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew's intention, are neither just a handful of the chosen ones, nor are they directly referred to as the whole world, but the whole of Israel gathered again and present in its representatives. Matthew orders the representatives of all historic parts of Israel to walk up to the Mount of Beatitudes. This corresponds to the belief contained in the whole Gospel of Matthew that Jesus, first, is sent to Israel in order for it to become as it had always been meant to be: the salt and light of the world, and the city on the hill.[14]

Such a presumption corresponds to the mountain theme, which is not accidental in Matthew's narrative. Here, Jesus makes his speech from the top of the mount, although the parallel texts in the Gospel of Luke locate similar themes of Jesus' teaching on the plain (Luke 6:20-49, cf. 6:17). This is linked to the main theological thought of the entire Gospel of Matthew and to the spiritual context in which its addressees are rooted. It is the Torah – the Law – which is still God's word for Matthew's community and the most important authority of faith and morality. It can be presumed that for the readers of the Gospel of Matthew, the mountain theme evoked an association with Sinai, the mountain on which the Torah was gifted to Israel. Jesus, as he himself declares, has no intention of annulling it or replacing it with some other teaching, but acts as the final and authoritative (due to his messianic nature) interpreter and teacher of the Torah (Matt 5:17-20). Hence, the posture adopted by Jesus,

12 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 24–25.
13 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 28.
14 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 48–49.

which Matthew describes very precisely, is not accidental: it is a sitting position. Such posture in Israel was characteristic of teachers who taught the Torah with authority. Ascending the mountain, sitting, and surrounding oneself with disciples. indicates the significance of what was to happen.[15]

The entire elaborate introduction to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 4:23–5:1) shows that a triple circle of listeners gathers in front of Jesus, who preaches on the mountain. First, these are the closest disciples. They may be associated with the group of the Twelve. This is "the beginning and center of growth for a renewed, end-time Israel."[16] The second circle consists of the remaining disciples and sympathizers of Jesus. Finally, the third circle is composed of the representatives of all Israel. They are invited to hear and accept Jesus' sermon and thus become his disciples as well. Therefore, following Lohfink, we can say that the Sermon on the Mount constitutes a "disciple-forming didache."[17]

When we look at how the word "disciple" (μαθητής) is used in Matthew's Gospel, and also in the rest of the New Testament writings, we will see that it is one of the key words. A disciple is synonymous with a believer, one who has embarked on the path of listening to and copying the Master as well as actively following him. The gospel accounts leave no doubt as to the difference between Jesus' disciples and those in the rabbinical schools of the time. It is not the disciples who choose Jesus, but he himself appoints them. Nor are they appointed simply to learn the Torah, but because they have heard Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God.[18] Later in his Gospel, Matthew will define the task that will be given to believers in Jesus. While in the other Gospels, the purpose of the mission is the proclamation of the Good News itself (e.g., in Mark 16:15: "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature"), Matthew clarifies the task of the disciples: "Go and make disciples (μαθητεύσατε) of all nations" (28:19). It is not, therefore, a matter of merely preaching some universal truths, but of preaching in such a way that the listener embarks upon the path of following Jesus and becomes a disciple. It is an interesting detail that Jesus' last missionary command also resounds on a mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16). By commanding the disciples to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that he had commanded them (Matt 28:20), Jesus seems to be directly referring to the admonishments in the Sermon on the Mount.

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15 Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 270.

16 Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 165, 209: "der Anfang und das Wachstumszentrum des erneuerten, endzeitlichen Israel"; also Lohfink, *Jezus von Nazaret*, 132. Lohfink sees no problem with the fact that Matthew includes the account of the calling of the apostles only in 10:1-4.

17 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 32: "Die Bergpredigt ist Jünger formende Didache."

18 Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 43–44. Lohfink points out that this also applies to other New Testament writings. In the Acts of the Apostles, for example, "disciple" is synonymous with a Christian or a member of the community (*Gemeindemitglied*) of believers. Cf. Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 129.

To say that the addresses of the Sermon on the Mount are Jesus' disciples, and through them, all of Israel, could easily lead to the conclusion that it represents an exclusive teaching of religious ethics. However, Lohfink strongly objects to the fact that this would imply the exclusion of a universal perspective. There is a grain of truth in the statement that the Sermon on the Mount is a kind of lecture on universal ethics, since "universality is factually inscribed in the concept of the kingdom of God."[19] Particularity and universality must be seen here in the context of the biblical ideas of mediation and choice. God chooses Israel not because of its uniqueness or impeccability, but on account of his purpose being the salvation of the world.[20] And this is also where Jesus begins, by reassembling Israel back into a messianic community of disciples. The world will not be able to return to God without the mediation of a community of disciples that the Church constitutes. Lohfink emphasizes that the task entrusted to the community of Jesus' disciples precedes the experience of saving grace. That is why, immediately before the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew includes a reference to Jesus' miracles: "and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them" (Matt 4:24). The gift of God's salvation is always preceded by a call to action addressed to man. Before the disciples are called to greater justice, they become witnesses to God's mercy and experience it. In this way, the Sermon on the Mount becomes the teaching which was to form the disciples: each of them individually, but also as a community. Although the disciples are, in a way, the first listeners to the Sermon on the Mount, it applies not only to them, but through their lives it is intended to reach all of Israel, and ultimately, it is to be proclaimed and also shown by the example of their lives to all nations. This is an expression of divine pedagogy which does not wish to bring kingdom of God by violence but only by an appeal directed to human freedom, supported by the witness of those who are already living the reality of the kingdom. Lohfink describes this task of the people of God as a prefiguration which is ultimately supposed to draw all nations toward the reality of the kingdom of God: the community of the disciples is the prefiguration of all Israel, and the newly gathered Israel: the Church that will become truly the people of God is the prefiguration of all nations.[21]

When the renewed Israel finally becomes light and salt for the world – the Old Testament hope of a messianic pilgrimage of people to Zion – expressed by the prophets

19 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 50: "Im Begriff des Reiches Gottes ist auch wirklich Universalität angelegt."

20 Lohfink points out, however, that the choice of Israel is not random at all, but that God chooses the right place where the cultures and influences of that time intersect, the right time when enough painful experience had been gained with the wrong forms of society and the right people, such as Abraham. Cf. Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 49–59.

21 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 51–56.

and especially by Isaiah (e.g., Isa 2:1-5), will finally be fulfilled (*Völkerwallfahrt*).[22] They will come to the light which is radiated by a community living according to God's law. What will attract the nations will be neither military might, numbers, nor other signs of worldly greatness. It can only be the fascination with the disciples' form of communal life, that is, a renewed form of society.[23] Unlike other revolutions, which always ultimately resort to violence, the revolution associated with God's kingship is not meant to happen that way. God creates a place in the world where his reign will become visible. The renewed and reunited Israel, i.e., the Church, is to become a community which reveals God's will anew to the world through its life.[24] The disciples of Jesus are to become credible witnesses to a different logic than the one upon which the hitherto existing society is built. They are to give testimony that there is a different, better logic which allows a different society to be built. In this exact way, the concept of society becomes central to Lohfink's understanding of the Sermon on the Mount.

3. The Community of Jesus' Disciples as a "Contrast-Society"

Becoming a disciple of Jesus is preceded by an individual decision. This is also true of the whole Bible. Looking at the history of Israel, which began with Abraham's election and his personal decision, Lohfink states: "The possibility of recognizing, implementing and passing on the 'moral law' precisely depends on the fact that in the world there are people who have made the will of God the center of their existence, indeed their sanctity."[25] This individual decision, however, does not lead to a purely individual relationship with God, but presupposes a communal dimension from the very beginning. The message conveyed by the Sermon on the Mount cannot be understood, much less followed, without a concrete space of human relations within the community of faith;[26] Lohfink, therefore, resolutely opposes any overly

22 Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 105–106. The Gospel of Matthew contains a theme which seems to indicate the Evangelist's conviction that, with the appearance of Jesus, this eschatological journey of peoples has already begun: it is the pericope on mages (Matt 2:1-12). Cf. Lohfink, *Gegen die Verharmlosung Jesu*, 458–459 and Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 28–31.

23 Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret,* 106.

24 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 86: "The disciples are at the service of all people of God, and the people of God are at the service of all peoples." See also Lohfink, *Die vierzig Gleichnisse Jesu*, 234–235.

25 Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 101: "Daß das «moralische Gesetz» erkannt, getan und weitergegeben werden kann, hängt eben auch davon ab, daß es in der Welt ein Volk gibt, das den Willen Gottes zur Mitte seiner Existenz, ja zu seinem Heiligtum gemacht hat."

26 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 99. Lohfink (*Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 203) notes: "Die Wahrheit des christlichen Glaubens kann deshalb letztlich nur aufleuchten, wenn sie durch die Praxis der Christen einleuchtet." [The truth of the Christian faith can therefore ultimately shine through only if it becomes evident through the practice of Christians.]

individualistic interpretation not only of this text, but also of Jesus' entire preaching. The individualistic interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount is found, for example, in the works of Eugen Drewermann, which Gerhard Lohfink subjects to harsh criticism (especially in his joint publication with Rudolf Pesch),[27] Drewermann emphasizes the role of the individual so much that the whole context of Jesus' teaching, especially its rooting in the tradition of Israel and its reference thereto, is passed over as irrelevant, even downright erroneous and thus harmful. But it is precisely such a view that leads to Jesus' ethical references being taken out of context and becoming no more than an enigmatic call to the authenticity of life and action against the social and institutional pressure of the surrounding people.[28]

Jesus certainly did not want to found a new nation or state, nor did he ever call for a political and revolutionary change. However, everything indicates that he wanted to gather around him a community that would establish a new space of life in which people would treat each other differently than in the world surrounding them.[29] Interpreting Jesus' teachings, however, it is important not only to consider the communal dimension, but also to define properly the shape of that community. According to Lohfink, the interpretations that unilaterally place God's reign in the distant future and speak of the community of the redeemed in heaven are wrong. The new community is not just an object of dreams, a vision that will only come true in the distant future. It has already become a present-day reality, wherever people accept the kingship of God proclaimed by Jesus and are ready to live with others who have made the same decision.[30] The perception of the community of his disciples as merely a safe environment, separated from the problems of the outside world, in which like-minded people can develop their spirituality, is also erroneous.

The appropriate shape of the community which Jesus wanted does not arise out of nothing, but is based on the experiences of Israel, including painful ones. The history of Israel can also be seen as an experimentation with different forms of communal life, often forced by a situation of political oppression and dependence, with the final form being the one that Jesus adopts and establishes for the community

27 Lohfink – Pesch, *Tiefenpsychologie und keine Exegese*.

28 Lohfink – Pesch, *Tiefenpsychologie und keine* Exegese, 43–44. In a commentary on Matthew's Gospel published in 1992, Drewermann insists that no word of the sermon on the Mount can be taken as an ethical requirement, but merely as a description of what becomes possible for someone who really relies on God. Cf. Drewermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 369.

29 Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 69–70. Lohfink rejects the views of those who would like to turn the Sermon on the Mount into a set of norms intended directly to build social and state life (as postulated by, for example, Franz Alt, *Frieden ist möglich*, 9–13), as well as those who, like Max Weber ("Politik als Beruf," 505–560), argue that it is impossible to pursue any politics at all with the Sermon on the Mount or to build a functioning society on this basis.

30 Cf. Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 499. Lohfink (*Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 166) argues: "In fact, the kingdom of God in Jesus refers to a specific social reality."

of his disciples. From the acephalous union of twelve generations characteristic of the Judges' era, through the theocracy associated with the institution of the king and a certain form of subordinate temple-congregations (*Tempelgemeinde*) existing within the empire, to the union of synagogue-congregations (communes) (*Verbund von Synagogengemeinden*).[31] The latter form is not a kind of club or association that meets the specific needs of its members, but a community that embraces all aspects of life.[32] This seems to come closest to the proper form of the fundamental, mostly small community of believers that Jesus wanted and that was implemented in the original Church.

In his publications, Lohfink takes great care in choosing the German terms that represent a community of people. The closest thing to a core community of disciples is the term *Gemeinde*, sometimes translated as "commune." It expresses a bond, not only a spiritual one, which arises through individuals opening themselves to the Gospel of Jesus. The term *Gemeinschaft* very rarely appears in Lohfink's writings. It can be translated as a community, commonwealth. Ultimately, Lohfink chooses the concept of *Gesellschaft*, which is the broadest among the aforementioned concepts and refers to society as such. For Lohfink, the basic community of Jesus' disciples cannot be confined to itself, but together with other communities, it should form a social structure – society. It is more than just a group of people who have a common goal and meet from time to time. It is a network of communities, which encompasses all aspects of life. It is inevitable that this society of God will sooner or later become a "contrast-society" in relation to its environment (*Konstrastgesellschaft*).[33] This definition is one of the key concepts in Gerhard Lohfink's entire concept. In his opinion, the Church, understood as a "contrast-society" created by people dedicated to a way of life different from the pagan one on which most of the structures of this world are built, can only exist in the form of communities capable of revealing the divine version of society to the world.

For the contemporary reader, familiar and reasonably comfortable with the vision of religion as a private matter, and thus viewing the Church as a limited community of people who share the same views, the definition of the Church as a contrast-society is surprising and even disturbing. It is associated either with the intention to establish a closed ghetto for believers, or with an attempt at the appropriation of the existing society by creating a kind of theocracy, imposing religious views on non-believers,

31 Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 137–151.

32 Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 148–149.

33 Lohfink admits that the term "contrast society" is not a biblical concept, but the specific encryption key for the term, in his view, is the imagery of Matt 3:13-16: a town on a hill, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. Cf. Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 81–82 and 142. The term *Kontrastgesellschaft* could also be translated as "society of contrast, a counter- or antisociety" but in my opinion, the translation "contrast-society" seems more accurate. The translation of this term as "an alternative community" in the works of Michał Rychter (*Kościół jako społeczność alternatywna*, 223–236), seems to be less accurate.

and other similar activities well-known from the pages of history. It is precisely this fear, present especially in Protestant theology, which gave birth to the concept that contrasts the visible church and its structures with the idea of the "church in the souls." Only such a Church would be the goal of Jesus' teachings, not the visible ecclesiastical structures. The "invisible church," however, confined to the interior of a single human soul, would, as Lohfink points out, mean a betrayal of the realism of the redemption of which the Sermon on the Mount speaks. "Redemption is either specific or there is no redemption at all."[34] It is not enough for Christians to live as individuals in the bosom of the old society, hoping that they can gradually transform it with their attitude. Such a view underestimates the power of the non-divine structures supporting the old society. It is impossible for an individual to break free from the thought patterns and stereotypes that surround them unless they have access to a real alternative that makes a different way of life possible.[35] Therefore, a departure, an exodus from the current way of thinking and living is an essential step, which, however, does not have to, and even cannot, be understood in a spatial sense, because it is not about any form of escape. It is by no means about building an isolated ghetto, entirely separate from the rest of the civil society. Remaining in the old society (as its citizen) spatially cannot, however, go hand in hand with the consent to the role assigned to the Church in the framework of certain social theories, postulating the privatization of religion, and thus the "domestication" of the Church, treated only as one of many subareas (*Teilbereich*) of the whole society (*Gesamtgesellschaft*). An example of such concept is the social theory of Niklas Luhmann.[36] The area of religion has its place within it, along with law, science, media, education, and economics. Each of these fields is governed by its own laws. The influence of faith in Christ is limited to the field of religion and should not extend to other areas. In this way, according to Lohfink "society follows its own path, the path of its gods"[37] in all these areas since none of them, contrary to the claims of the followers of this vision, is free from ideological implications.

The Church, understood as a contrast society, must remain in the world, but it cannot dissolve into it, losing her own message. It would then become salt without saltiness (Matt 5:13). To prevent this, the Church must create her own space of life. This implies uninterrupted contact and exchange of inspirations with the secular society, but it cannot turn into syncretism, eliminating all differences.[38] "Precisely

34 Lohfink, *Gegen die Verharmlosung Jesu*, 139: "Erlösung ist konkret oder sie ist überhaupt nicht."

35 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 148.

36 The function fulfilled by the subsystem of religion in the superior system of the whole of society is to provide the sense of purpose, as well as help in solving problems resulting from the loss of the sense of security, or the randomness of existence. See: Luhmann, *Die Religion der Gesellschaft*, 41–42.

37 Lohfink – Pesch, *Tiefenpsychologie und keine Exegese*, 105: "geht die Gesellschaft durchaus ihren eigenen Weg, den Weg ihrer Götter."

38 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 150–151.

because the Church does not exist for her own sake, but completely and solely for the world, she must not become the world, but retain her own face."[39] Therefore, the Church is not meant to be a kind of environmental lobby nor the headquarters of any religious organization, nor an association preoccupied with moralizing her members.[40] It must grow into a visible, space of life, a place where God's reign becomes visible and experiential. A space in which people treat one another and relate to one another differently than it is commonly accepted in the surrounding society. This space does not exist outside the secular society but within it because Christ's disciples are nationals and citizens.

In the case of the term "contrast-society," as Lohfink points out, is not about opposing just for the sake of opposition itself. Nor is it an elitist concept that would depreciate the rest of the society. "Contrast" must be interpreted in the context of the Church's mission: it is obliged to be an alternative, exactly because society, as expressed by the image of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, describes the role of the disciples as the salt of the earth, a town on a hill and the light of the world (Matt 5:13-14). Precisely because the Church does not exist merely for her own sake, but because of her mission to the world, it cannot be molded into worldly structures and thought patterns. The Church cannot limit herself to social engagement or missionary activity, but must maintain her own outline, in which the divine redemption will manifest itself to the world, reuniting sinners with God.[41]

This context of the message carried by the Sermon on the Mount implies that although Jesus considered the social character of his message, he did not intend to create a new form of community life but drew inspiration from the social message of the Torah. The Torah contains the foundations of legal and social order (*Rechts- und Sozialordnung*) that was different from the societies surrounding ancient Israel in many key issues. The Bible contains Divine Revelation, but it is also a testimony to the experience gathered over centuries.[42] This also applies to the way of life according to God's Revelation, not only in an individual, but also in a social context. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus does not proclaim any principles defying the Torah, but performs its final eschatological interpretation, simultaneously confirming its binding force (cf. Matt 5:17-19).[43] With its negation of the obvious connection between civil and religious power, as well as the exploitation of the state's citizens, and, above all, emphasis on the care for the poor, as well as the periodic restoration of social justice (jubilee years), this order is the foundation which – as Lohfink claims – the New

39 Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 169: "Gerade weil die Kirche nicht für sich selbst, sondern ganz und ausschließlich für die Welt da ist, darf sie nicht zur Welt werden, sondern muß ihr eigenes Gesicht behalten."

40 Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 89.

41 Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 321–322.

42 Lohfink, *Welche Argumente*, 25.

43 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 109–111.

Testament communities made reference to. The network of small, distinct, interconnected communities, which the Church of the first century consisted of, is precisely a model of a contrast-society. The concept of the Church as a contrast-society being the primary addressee of the Sermon on the Mount is the interpretative key to the detailed moral principles contained therein.

4. The Interpretation of the Specific Moral Principles in the Sermon on the Mount

Even at first glance, it is evident that the Sermon on the Mount contains various kinds of admonishment, implicating, in a way, various specific callings, ranging from the literal imitation of Jesus, pursued by early Christian prophets and travelling missionaries after his resurrection, to the family life of ordinary members of God's people, who remained in their families and homes. There are so many correlations and connections between the moral guidelines relating to various forms of following Christ that it is very difficult to distinguish the ones included in the Sermon on the Mount which are directed only to a specific group of disciples from those directed to the whole of Israel.[44]

4.1. Who Does Jesus Proclaim to Be Blessed?

The problem with the interpretation of specific teachings of the Sermon on the Mount begins with the reading of the first part of the text, i.e., the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12). They constitute a kind of programmatic element of the whole composition. Lohfink describes them as the *Vorhalle* (vestibule) through which the road to the center of the Sermon on the Mount leads.[45] Their contents attract attention because Jesus speaks of the happiness of those who, due to poverty, being pushed to the fringes of society, sadness, suffered injustice and lack of mercy, experience something that is usually an obstacle on the way to man's happiness.

It is in this context that the accusation of an unrealistic utopia or even cynicism is often made: instead of dealing with suffering, those who suffer are comforted by showing them the prospect of posthumous relief. First, Lohfink points out that the macarisms in the Gospel of Matthew sound different than the parallel text in the Gospel of Luke, where poverty, sorrow and weeping seem to literally describe social problems, and the repeated word "now" (νῦν) emphasizes that it is about the current state of people affected by these problems (cf. Luke 6:20-23). In Matthew's

44 Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 46–47 and 56–57.
45 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 82.

beatitudes, the poor become "poor in spirit" and the hungry – "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." Although poverty is not underestimated here because it is associated with measurable human suffering, Jesus does not bless poverty itself, but the poor, and he does not bless hunger, but the hungry. He blesses them precisely because their poverty and hunger will be averted. It is not only a presage of the ultimate fulfilment of human longings sometime after the end of life. Neither is it a presage of an idyllic world. In Lohfink's conviction, these declarations become clear only when related to the context of the community of disciples as the seed of the contrast-society. It is in this space of a community of disciples determined to follow Jesus that the blessings can be fulfilled now before they are fulfilled in end times. Even if poverty, hunger, and sadness also affect the disciples, they are different than the ones in the surrounding world: it is the poverty of those who put their property at the disposal of others, it is a hunger for righteousness, it is sadness in the face of everything that disturbs the final revelation in the world of God's kingship.[46] All these and other serious human miseries can be averted; desires and longings can be satisfied by a new form of life in a community that draws its strength from the conviction that God's kingship enters man's existence with a new power in Jesus.[47]

In Jesus' mind, as Lohfink claims, it is the Church that is historically supposed to be the place where the eschatological consolation, abundantly bestowed by God, will become visibly present in the here and now. "The Church is the messianic place of God's consolation in the world."[48] At the same time, the Church is supposed to become a place where the transformation of the world, started by Jesus and in Jesus, will be continued.

4.2. A Call for Forgiveness and Renunciation of Violence

The issue of renouncing violence and forgiving one's wrongdoers occupies a lot of space in the moral admonishments of the Sermon on the Mount, so it can hardly be considered marginal. The following antitheses refer to it: the first (Matt 5:21-26), the fifth (5:38-42), and the sixth (5:43-48); it also appears in the Beatitudes (especially in the final verses: 5:10-12); it is the culmination of the Lord's Prayer (6:12, 14-15), and it also resounds in the golden rule (7:12). Therefore, even if one would like to contradict the statement that here we are dealing with Jesus' *ipsissima vox*, these teachings certainly reflect his *ipsissima intentio*.[49]

There is no doubt: Jesus commands the renunciation of vengeance, as well as the proactive love of your neighbor, even your wrongdoer. Obviously, the form in

46 Lohfink, *Gottes Volksbegehren*, 155–159.
47 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 83–86.
48 Lohfink, *Gottes Taten gehen weiter*, 98: "Die Kirche ist der messianische Ort des Trostes Gottes in der Welt."
49 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 43.

which Jesus expresses his teaching may be considered radical, which does not diminish the importance of his command in any way. Jesus does not speak of the difficulties arising from circumstances and dependencies, but instead he reaches to the roots: this is the meaning of the word "radical" (*radix* – root).[50] At the same time, he illustrates his prohibition of violence by referring to various situations associated with hostility towards your neighbor: whether in the form of anger and a simple conflict, or greater or lesser violence and hatred. Evidently, the specific examples enumerated by Jesus do not constitute, as Lohfink emphasizes, anything like a "cooking recipe" (*Kochrezept*), from which one can build a code of specific moral norms, as if from individual blocks.[51] Rather, they are indications that the love of your neighbor and willingness to forgive must be sincere if they are to be genuine. They always point to one conclusion: forgiveness and reconciliation are the only right path. In the new reality of God's kingdom, there is no time left to pursue one's claims. Jesus speaks about this directly, as well as in small but very distinct images and parables, such as the parable of the way to court (Matt 5:25-26).[52]

Just as in the reference to the entire Sermon on the Mount, especially in the case of the command to renounce violence, Lohfink states that it is a great deficiency of the discussion of this text that questions are not consistently asked about its addressees. The original context of the passages concerning the renunciation of violence was the instructions for the disciples sent on a mission by Jesus. Without a walking stick and sandals (cf. Matt 10:10), the disciples were defenseless and, in a way, forced to renounce violence. For those around them, this had to be a clear signal of their peaceful attitude.[53] This does not mean total passivity towards violence, but rather a prophetic provocation, a sign of an attitude free from opposition to the omnipresence of revenge and the use of brutal force.[54] Turning the other cheek to the one who slaps the right cheek[55] (Matt 5:39) is firstly a clear contrast to the attitude of various groups of "God's fighters" in Jesus' time (e.g., the zealots), who preached a diametrically different attitude: to violence you should react with the same violence; no aggression and no insult can be left without the same answer.

Naturally, the command to renounce violence is not limited to the original context of the missions of early Christian missionaries, as there exist many other forms of following Jesus apart from this. By calling us to renounce violence and to forgive our wrongdoers, Jesus expresses his opposition to succumbing to the primal

50 Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 279. Also Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 91.
51 Lohfink, *Gegen die Verharmlosung Jesu*, 100–102.
52 Lohfink, *Die vierzig Gleichnisse Jesu*, 179–180.
53 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 47.
54 Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 169.
55 A blow to the right cheek, i.e. not with an open hand, but with a wrist, was not only a symbol of violence in the Semitic culture of those times, but also a means of insult to the party receiving the blow, and such an insult could not go unavenged. Cf. Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 120–123.

human aspiration to gain and exercise power over others as well as to achieve importance and influence in society.[56] A single believer, despite their moral effort and good will, is unable to properly understand and persevere in the message of the Gospel. It is the community forming together with other communities the people of the new covenant – the Church – that directs a single believer towards the Gospel anew.[57] There are rivalries and fights over who is greater and more important, both outside the community of Jesus' disciples as well as within it. United around one common Father in heaven and his coming kingship in Jesus, the new Israel does not consist solely of people with extraordinary moral values. Just as it is not built on kinship, inheritance, talents, or state structure, neither is it based on man's good will alone.[58] The Church is made up of sinners who, by accepting the Gospel, are to live in a way that is an alternative to that of older societies. It is for this reason that forgiveness and reconciliation become attitudes that determine the credibility of the Church.[59] Where Jesus' disciples allow themselves to form a new family, there is no longer room for the old way of life full of vengeance, competition and contempt. Otherwise, God's plan to create a contrast-society, a new people who, despite living among other peoples, do not inherit their characteristics, such as authoritarian kings, territories and constant fighting for power and importance; it will remain a utopia. Therefore, forgiving our wrongdoers does not refer first to our great wrongs and cruelty we suffer in global disasters, but to everyday life in a community of disciples.[60]

The question remains: in what sense does the call to renounce violence apply to relationships with people outside the community of believers? Christian communities live in pluralistic societies, composed partly (sometimes mostly) of people who do not belong to these communities. The Sermon on the Mount does not refer directly to the rules governing secular societies, nor does it contain the norms by which these societies should be organized. If a society does not fully accept the magnitude of God's kingdom, it must have at its disposal coercive measures to enforce its law. This means the presence of a legitimized and channeled use of force. Despite this, the attitude of Christian communities, renouncing violence in their mutual relations, may play an important role in relation to secular societies. At this point Lohfink points out various possibilities. The first is the rejection of violence, an action having the nature of a sign. In the past, many Christians adopted this attitude.[61] Lohfink admits that there was no undisputed and universally binding pacifism in

56 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 101.

57 Lohfink – Pesch, *Tiefenpsychologie und keine Exegese*, 109.

58 Lohfink – Pesch, "Volk Gottes als «Neue Familie»," 239.

59 Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 298. Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 170.

60 Lohfink notes that when the Greek word for "brother" (ἀδελφός) is encountered in the Gospel of Matthew, it is used to describe not only familial relations, but also brothers in faith or the disciples of Jesus. However, there is no mention of an overwhelming sentiment of brotherhood in the sense of humanity shared among all people. See: Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 485.

61 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 60–61.

the early Church although some early Christian writers were categorically opposed to Christians joining any army.[62] The second possibility is an approximate fulfillment of Christ's precepts by minimizing violence. Certainly, Christians are also allowed to hold government offices – this is the third possibility – and it involves the use of state coercive measures against criminals. After all, it cannot be the case that Christians gratefully benefit from social order and the common good, protected by state means of coercion, but leave the application of these measures to others. These different possibilities exist side by side as plausible and ethically acceptable choices. However, the best service that believers in Christ can render to a secular society is, as Lohfink emphasizes, the construction of living communities in which relationships are established not only using the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, but by adhering to its message, especially Jesus' call to renounce violence.[63]

4.3. Relinquishing Unnecessary Worries

When the detailed moral guidelines of the Sermon on the Mount are seen not through the lens of an ethical program concerning every human being, or even a political concept according to which social relations in every country should be regulated, but as precepts for the community of disciples, the way of understanding a particular moral guideline also changes, concerning the issue of possessions, wealth and striving for worldly goods. It primarily teaches about permanent goods and cautions against unnecessary worries (Matt 6:19-34). This is the second area in which the community of Christ's disciples, which is the Church, must become a contrast-society which through its practice of life shows a logic different from the one generally adopted.

As Lohfink claims, also in reference to these texts, the primary context is the situation of those disciples who are sent to preach the Good News. The command to strip oneself of everything, even a staff that could have been used for defense (Matt 10:9-10), which is contained in the Gospel of Matthew, should not be understood in terms of a philosophical ideal of asceticism or extreme radicalism. Rather, as was the case with the rejection of violence, it is a feature that sets apart the disciples from the zealots who were a movement of men calling for armed opposition against the Roman occupation authorities. They, too, had the habit of going from place to place to express their ideas and gain followers.[64] Jesus' disciples are to reject not only violence, but also any intrusive, excessive concern for all worldly goods: even those

62 Obviously, some Early Christian authors, as well as certain communities of this epoch, considered military service to be utterly incompatible with the Christian way of living. Cf. Lohfink, *Wie hat Jesus Gemeinde gewollt?*, 194.

63 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 63. Also see Lohfink, *Czy Jezus głosił utopię?*, 57–59.

64 Lohfink, *Das Vaterunser neu ausgelegt*, 21. See also: Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 169. Lohfink, *Gegen die Verharmlosung Jesu*, 113–114.

perceived as essential. This concern, or even existential fear, is one of the key characteristics of an unredeemed human being.[65]

Historically, the fragment of the Sermon on the Mount concerning unnecessary worries (Matt 6:25-34) has been criticized as an expression of economic naïveté, an invitation to be an aesthete: someone who leaves work to others and lives at their expense.[66] To this day, the expression "blue birds" (πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ – Matt 6:26) refers to people who live at the expense of society. According to Lohfink, this interpretation is a direct result of the context-free reading of the Sermon on the Mount as a philosophical pondering directed at all humankind. True Christian freedom from superfluous concerns relates first of all to trust in the Father in heaven, but at the same time – with great realism – to the context of a brotherly community, which helps in satisfying the fundamental needs of life.[67] The disciples who are called to preach the Gospel directly and intensively can primarily and solely care for the Kingdom of God and its justice since they are supported by others who are not called to perform this ministry. Taking advantage of their assistance, however, they also provide support for them in faith and fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus. In this way, these mutual bonds enable their intense apostolic work.[68]

The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, namely the request for bread (Matt 6:11), should also be understood in this context. Lohfink is convinced that its original *Sitz im Leben* was precisely the situation of the Gospel preachers who, like Jesus, travelled around Palestine and announced the coming of the Kingdom of God.[69] They were not to store up for themselves any goods because this would undermine dynamism and make it difficult to travel. Instead, they were to ask for bread: for the next day only. This is how Lohfink understands the word ἐπιούσιος, which is not known in the ancient Greek apart from the Lord's prayer. It is not about providing a continuous supply of food, but about a request on that day in the evening when someone took them in, fed them and put them up (the "next day" began in Israel just after sunset).[70] This request is not intended to contrive, with God's help, in some magical way, the benevolence of strangers. Nor is it an expression of the expectation that the necessary nourishment will be provided by some miraculous, direct intervention of God. Jesus simply assumes that in Palestine, in addition to the disciples committed to preaching, there are other disciples living in families, as well as sympathizers,

65 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 127.
66 Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 128–129.
67 Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 246–247.
68 Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 172–174.
69 Lohfink, *Das Vaterunser neu ausgelegt*, 21.
70 Lohfink, *Das Vaterunser neu ausgelegt*, 24–26. Such an interpretation seems to be supported by the words uttered by Jesus in the later part of the Sermon on the Mount: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt 6:34). See: Lohfink, *Im Ringen um die Vernunft*, 293–295. Also cf. Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 116–118.

the healed, the curious, and thus those who are willing to put up the preachers. The community of disciples is not a hermetically closed group, but gathers people of various provenance, with a different way of life and also with a diverse commitment to the cause of Jesus. Here Lohfink emphasizes the importance of various forms of belonging to the new family that Jesus is building.[71] This does not mean diminishing the radicalism of Jesus' call to his listeners. Only complete openness to the reality of the Kingdom of God is the correct attitude. Every disciple is called upon to be perfect (Matt 5:48). However, the term τέλειος should not be understood in the sense imparted to it by Hellenistic ethics. This is not impeccability in the practice of virtues, but rather a reference to the OT תָּמִים, meaning being whole, undivided, not torn. The disciple should be wholeheartedly committed to the Kingdom of God.[72] This is not meant to be an act of moral heroism, but of devotion based on a fascination with finding the treasure of the kingdom of God. It is this indivisibility (*Ungeteiltheit*) that is at the heart of Jesus' radicalism as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. Radicalism is not only an attitude which is required here, but above all, an attitude that is made possible by God's action surpassing one's strength.[73]

Conclusion

Admittedly, the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount by Gerhard Lohfink is highly suggestive, because it not only allows one to understand this unique text, but also gives a coherent view of the whole of Jesus' teaching, and places it convincingly within the entire tradition of Israel. The key to a proper understanding of the indications of this biblical text is the concept of a contrast-society, understood as an environment in which it is possible to practice Jesus' moral principles. The attitude of forgiveness is of particular importance here, but it is also a place where people abandoned and forsaken (e.g., by a spouse) can find friendly relationships and need not fear loneliness. Further, it is a place where there should be no people without a livelihood; so it is a place of mutual sharing. The concept of a contrast-society is the basis for Lohfink's criticism of the contemporary Church. Although the starting

71 While highlighting various forms of belonging to the circle of Jesus' disciples, Lohfink also emphasizes, that, in the Gospels, even when somebody does not officially belong to this group, this does not automatically mark them as of lacking faith. Every person who accepts the words of Christ regarding the kingdom of God, coming in the person of Jesus Christ, has their own calling. Cf. Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 144. Also cf. Lohfink, *Ausgespannt zwischen Himmel und Erde*, 349.

72 Lohfink, *Jesus von Nazaret*, 147–148, and 502–503; also Lohfink, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?*, 173–174, and 274–277.

73 See also a detailed analysis of the notion of radicalism in the context of the teachings of Jesus in: Lohfink, *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt?*, 65–98, with summarizing theses on pages 97–98.

point seems to be the structures of the Church in her own homeland, this can be related to the situation of the entire contemporary Church. However, this is not a form of criticism that is often found in the contemporary public discourse. Lohfink avoids shallow criticism, which makes it worth taking a closer look at his opinion. The belief that it is possible to change the world with moral appeals alone is an illusion. This will only be possible when the Church, as a new society under the rule of God, becomes a clear alternative to the dominant models of social life in the modern world. Ultimately, as Lohfink emphatically states, the Church "can only transform the world by becoming herself a redeemed and transformed world."[74]

In the face of contemporary phenomena, such as the loss of the importance of the Church and Christianity in formerly Christian countries, the indifference or even hostility of many societies towards believers, not to mention the persecution of Christians, Lohfink confesses: "I sometimes wonder whether such a development is good or bad. It is certainly bad as people are isolated, persecuted, hurt and even killed because of their faith. It could well be good because Christians will have to rethink their beliefs under these conditions. It is no longer something natural. It demands a distance from illusory patterns in life, from erroneous behavior, and from false 'idols.' It demands a new life based on trust in God. It demands a sovereign human decision. This is certainly something good."[75]

To those critics who emphasize the overly idealistic character of the "contrast-society" proposal in the context of widespread secularization, Gerhard Lohfink replies asking "if not today, then when?," which is the title of one of his books.[76]

Translated by Grzegorz Knyś

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74 Lohfink – Pesch, *Tiefenpsychologie und keine Exegese*, 105; "nur dadurch Welt verändern kann, daß sie selbst erlöste und veränderte Welt wird."

75 Lohfink, *Der christliche Glaube erklärt in 50 Briefen*, 162: "Ich frage mich manchmal, ob diese ganze Entwicklung schlimm oder gut ist. Schlimm ist auf jeden Fall, wenn Menschen wegen ihres Glaubens isoliert, benachteiligt, verletzt oder umgebracht werden. Gut aber könnte sein, dass Christen sich unter diesen Umständen neu auf ihren Gauben besinnen müssen. Er ist eben längst keine Selbstverständlichkeit mehr. Er verlangt Distanz zu falschen Leitbildern, falschen Verhaltensweisen, falschen Göttern. Er verlangt eine bewusste Existenz aus dem Glauben. Er verlangt die eigene Entscheidung. Und das ist etwas Gutes."

76 Lohfink, *Heute – wann sonst?*

Lohfink, G., *Wem gilt die Bergpredigt? Zur Glaubwürdigkeit des Christlichen* (Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 1993).
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Abraham's Trials in Ancient and Medieval Jewish Writings

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Abstract: The article presents a brief overview of the Jewish rabbinical resources with regard to the Patriarch Abraham and his life, viewed as a series of trials. From the second century BCE, the Jewish authors were recognizing numerous events in Abraham's life as ordeals, gradually more and more difficult and challenging. Through them God put Abraham and his faith to the test in order to assure that his election of Abraham was right. On the basis of *The Book of Jubilees* and several rabbinical works, including *Pirqe Abot*, *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* and *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* as well as the writings of Jewish medieval commentators (esp. Maimonides and Rashi), the paper in detail analyzes the concept of these trials and the differences that can be identified in the sources concerning their identification and order. Firstly, the reasons of the rabbinical commentators' particular interest paid to Abraham have been given. Subsequently, the concept of his numerous trials, identified by the rabbis and Jewish scholars, have been discussed, followed by a thorough presentation of selected rabbinic works and discussions whether the experiences of Abraham's life should and/or should not be regarded as trials.

Keywords: Abraham's trials, Pirqe De Rabbi Eliezer, Bereshit Rabbah, Genesis Rabbah, Book of Jubilees, rabbinical commentaries, Abot De Rabbi Nathan, Akedah, Pirqe Abot

Abraham is a key figure in the collective memory of Israel. He is regarded as the forefather, the progenitor of the entire Israel and the role model to follow with respect to his deeds and character. It was also through Abraham that the idea of the Promised Land, or a homeland for the Jewish people, was created. Judaism – differently from the Christian tradition which recognizes the binding of Isaac on Mountain Moriah (Hebr. *akedah*, "binding") as a sole and single trial – perceives his entire life as a series of trials purposed for confirming his unusual character and unshakable faith in One God. By analyzing Abraham's life and experiences the rabbis proved the power of Abraham's faith and the confidence of the way he was experiencing it, which, for believers may become a perfect example to follow.

Akedah, the ultimate test of Abraham's obedience, is one of the most famous and most powerful narratives in the Hebrew Bible. At the same time, it is also a shattering account of devotion to God against all odds, an example of unlimited and unconditional faith and trust. In the Jewish tradition it is, however, just one of many trials which served the Almighty for examining the character and devotion of the Patriarch,

the last one. The rabbis are neither uniform as to which events constitute trials or what was their order and reasons. Thus, the purpose of this article is to present Jewish interpretations of Abraham's life as a series of challenges, given by the Almighty to the Patriarch, and to describe briefly which events of his life the Jewish tradition identifies as trials and whether there is one or many "lists" of such trials.

For the purpose of this study, numerous Jewish traditional sources referring to the trials of Abraham have been analyzed. Among many commentaries to the Torah, primarily *Pirqe Abot* (*m. Pirqe Abot*) has been taken into consideration. Further, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* (*Gen. Rab.*) and *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* (*Pirqe R. El.*), essential in this respect, have been reviewed, as well as *ʾAbot de Rabbi Nathan* (*ʾAbot R. Nat.*). The apocryphal *Book of Jubilees*, which in its contents follows the path of Abraham's life, but does not comment on his character, has also to be indicated among our primary sources, as numerous historical details regarding the life of Abraham prior to his departure to Canaan can be found there. Reference will also be made to some later rabbinical commentaries (e.g. Maimonides, Rashi) on the trials.

1. Jewish Sages and Rabbis' Reasons for Their Particular Analyses of Abraham's Life

Neither the reasons for God's election of Abraham or the detailed description of the trials Abraham passed can directly be found on the pages of the Torah. They can, however, be recovered from the Jewish tradition, including the rabbinical interpretation of Abraham's life. Due to the key importance of Abraham in the Jewish tradition (he is regarded as the Patriarch, Forefather and Founder of the Nation), his life and personality must have attracted the rabbis' attention and became targeted by their analyses and commentaries. The Torah itself and its certain features were definitely the factors that caused their particular interest. Namely, what the rabbis underline is that the Torah itself distinguishes the importance of particular characters by way of providing more and/or less interest (and verses) to the given person. For example, the Torah was not particularly interested in the idol-worshipper Terah or in the issues related to the lives of the other descendants of Shem, but only in the prospective importance of Abraham for the Nation of Israel and all humanity. Judaism interprets the fact that Abraham was chosen by God and subsequently successfully passed ten trials as proof of Divine infallibility. Therefore, his life was described in detail and that was the first hint for the rabbis to further, meticulously analyze it. They were looking for events in Abraham's life, by which God assured himself in his choice and Abraham's faith and dedication was getting stronger and unconditional – events that were "forging" Abraham as a prospective Father of Israel.

Another explanation for the reasons why the rabbis scrutinized Abraham's life can be the use of the rare word and/or words, which in similar context is not used anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible. The rabbis explain that the Torah itself attracts the attention of those who study it through some words used incidentally, encouraging, in such a way, for a more detailed and perceptive study.[1] In case of Abraham, the rabbis turned their particular attention to Gen 22:1, and the word נִסָּה (*nissa*, "to put to the test"), which in this specific form (Piel, third person, masculine, singular) appears exclusively in this verse. Its uniqueness drew attention and intrigued the rabbis.

Also, gematria, i.e. the specific Hebrew numerology, one of the hermeneutical methods of explaining texts, could be the reason for a search of ten special, particular events in Abraham's life, which could be classified as characterological trials increasing the power of Abraham's authority and the respect paid to him. Thus, the numerological analysis may also have attracted the rabbis and caused their further complex analysis of Abraham's life as described in the Torah as well as the numerological considerations related to the particular events in the Patriarch's life. Such numerical devices can be observed with respect to Abraham and the events that the rabbis interpreted as trials.[2] They noted that the particular events in Abraham's life corresponded with the numbers having specific meaning for the Jewish theology, such as seven or ten. Number ten with respect to the assumed number of the Patriarch's trials is analogous to the ten Egyptian plagues (Exod 7–12). The similarity does not regard only number ten as such but also the story hidden in this number (as well as in number seven). In both cases, it is connected with death. Some more detailed considerations will be made with respect to the seventh and tenth trials. It can therefore be assumed that the numerological analysis motivated the rabbis to examine the events in Abraham's life, which could be qualified as characterological tests asserting the Patriarch's authority.

2. A Trial or Trials?

In accordance with the long-lasting Jewish tradition, Abraham was put to a number of trials. Generally ten trials are mentioned, and there is a common understanding

1 In the commentary contained in *petiha* 53:9 to *Gen Rab*, rabbi Pinchas on behalf of rabbi Helkiah questions why in Gen 21:7 the very rare word מִלְּלָ֣ה (meaning "state, say") was used and explains that it is the Torah that gives a self-explanation, providing (using such specific and/or rare words) guidelines and hints for a more detailed analysis.

2 This specific methodology has been noticed among others by Scott B. Noegel ("Abraham's Ten Trials," 74), who pointed out to such tools as the seven-and-ten device. Following Gary Redensburg's view, Noegel saw that "in the Bible where rosters of ten occur, special prominence is given to the entries listed in the seventh and tenth position." For that reason particular focus and detailed analysis was given to the events of Abraham's life which were listed as seventh and tenth (in line with *Pirqe R. El.* these are the Covenant *Bein HaBetarim* and *Akedah*).

for the recognition of their multitude (and not just a single "trial"). It is already directly referred to in the *m. Pirqe Abot* (5,3), which dates back to the 2nd century BCE,[3] the text was later included into the Mishnah,[4] as well as in *ʾAbot R. Nat.* (33,1-2).[5] A full list of trials is provided by *Pirqe R. El.* and other rabbinical sources. It was later repeated in various configurations by such distinguished commentators as Maimonides (Rambam), Nahmanides (Ramban) and Rashi.

The number of trials, which Abraham passed, has been counted and/or classified by the rabbis in various ways. As *ʾAbot R. Nat.* (33,2) already notices, some can be paired, i.e. it can be stated that two of the trials regard the order to get underway (Gen 12:1-2; 12:10), two trials regard Abraham's sons (Gen 21:10; 22:1-2), and there are two trials related to his two wives (Gen 12:11-12; 21:10). There are also several "single" trials, such as the war with the kings (Gen 14), the unique trial regarding the Covenant of the Parts (Gen 15), also a single trial, when Abraham was thrown by Nimrod to the furnace in Ur Khasdim (this event is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but it is repetitiously mentioned in the *midrashim*[6]) and just one trial of circumcision (Gen 17). *ʾAbot R. Nat.* (33:2) explains that there were so many trials, because:

> So that when Abraham our father comes to take his reward, the peoples of the world shall say: "More than all of us, more than everyone, is Abraham worthy of getting his reward!" And it is of him that Scripture says, Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God has already accepted thy works. (Eccl. 9:7).[7]

Some rabbis take also notice of the relationship between Abraham's trials and God's ten creative pronouncements (Gen 1:1-28), through which the world was

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3 The rabbis who compiled *m. Pirqe Abot* lived in the centuries around the beginning of the Common Era, however, due to the fact that *m. Pirqe Abot* contains sayings attributed to sages from Simon the Just who lived around 200 BCE it is believed that *m. Pirqe Abot* started originating in the 2nd century BC and was later compiled and included into the Mishnah.

4 The Mishnah is the first major work of rabbinic literature, consisting of teachings transmitted over hundreds of years and finally compiled around 200 CE. It is a foundation of the Jewish oral tradition developed over several prior centuries and codified after the fall of the Temple, which continues with the Talmud, a work that is structured as a commentary on the Mishnah.

5 *ʾAbot de Rabbi Nathan* ("Fathers of Rabbi Nathan") is a companion volume to *m. Pirqe Abot*, presenting maxims of wisdom alongside explanations and stories. Dated to the 7th-9th centuries CE. The work has come down to us in two highly different versions, customarily termed Version A (40 chapters) and B (49 chapters).

6 It is also referred to in the non-rabbinic ancient work, i.e. Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 6,16, in Jacobson, *A Commentary*, 10.

7 Goldin, *The Fathers*, 132. The translation of *ʾAbot R. Nat.* (version B) by Anthony Saldarini (*The Fathers*, 214) contains a different text which goes as follows: "What is the purpose of this for all the inhabitants of the world? This is to teach you that when Abraham our Father, may he rest in peace, comes to receive his reward, the inhabitants of the world will say: More worthy than (all who are) here is Abraham to receive (his reward)."

made. Abraham experienced ten trials and passed all of them successfully, proving that he was worthy of sustaining the world created by these ten pronouncements.

Abraham's experiences should not be perceived as separate from one another. They all constitute one path, scheduled by the Eternal, which shapes Abraham's moral and spiritual development. Through the covenants with God and successfully passing the tests, Abraham became the first human being to reject false gods in favor of the one true God. Jews believe that the covenants between God and Abraham extend to all Jewish people. It was the start of the relationship between God and the Nation of Israel.

The *midrashim* and rabbinical commentaries differ between themselves with respect to which events in the life of Abraham should be regarded as trials and what their order was. They, however, are almost unanimous (with one single exception contained in *Jub*.) in viewing *Akedah* – the binding of Isaac and his offering at Mount Moriah as the last, tenth trial. They differ as to when putting Abraham to test started. For example, in line with the account provided in *Pirqe R. El.* (below in more detail) Abraham passed his two initial tests yet before receiving God's call to leave Haran. The call to go forth from Haran and set out to Canaan with Sarah and Lot was only the third trial. On the other hand, some *midrashim* as well as such contemporary American researchers as Israel Drazin and Stanley Wagner (describing the views of the rabbis in their study to Targum Onkelos) indicate that the first of Abraham's trials took place in Gen 12:1, when Abraham without any hesitation with respect to God's call *lech-lecha* (לֶךְ-לְךָ "go for yourself")[8] agreed to leave his family house in Haran and took the journey into unknown. They indicated, referring to later commentators, two possible ways of interpreting the "trials." In the first option (according to Nahmanides, Abraham ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi), God knew how Abraham would react but still intended to unleash his potential and increase it for the sake of self-consciousness. In line with the second view (according to David Kimhi, Chazkunee and Maimonides), the story of Abraham's trials was told in order to teach us, but not Abraham, how to live our lives. The Rabbis, quoting God's words spoken to Abraham *lech lecha*, were of the view that the Eternal must already have checked in some particular way the Abraham's "righteousness."[9] Thus, they strove to identify them in Genesis and analyze them in detail. The Torah does not contain this information, the search should be carried out in the commentaries and rabbinic studies. Below the detailed orders of the trials according to several, below-referred sources will be presented.

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8 As with many phrases in the Torah, "*lech lecha*" (לֶךְ-לְךָ) is enigmatic and open to many interpretations. It is understood as "Go to yourself," an internal odyssey. It has also been translated as "Get you out, Go for yourself, Go forth, Go out." That is to say, disassociate from where you are; a call with an external echo to it.

9 Detailed commentary on theological sense of the trials, in particular *Akedah*: Drazin – Wagner, *Onkelos*, 132–137.

3. Ancient and Medieval Rabbinic Writings

3.1. Pirqe Abot

Pirqe Abot, originated around the 2nd century BCE, later included into the Mishnah, is the oldest rabbinic work where the ten trials are explicitly mentioned. *Pirqe Abot* (5,4) indicates that "for ten trials Abraham, our Father, was put, and all he passed through, this shows the love of Abraham, our Forefather, [to God]," but it does not specify which these tests were.[10] *Pirqe Abot* stresses the importance of number ten, indicating, e.g., "ten utterances" of the world's creation, ten generations from Adam to Noah and then another ten from Noah do Abraham, ten trials of Abraham, and later ten miracles and ten plagues in Egypt. Consequently, the rabbis wanted to emphasize Abraham's uniqueness and importance. One of the later commentators of *Pirqe Abot*, rabbeinu Yonah Gerondi (d. 1264) specifically lists these tests, indicating the fiery furnace of Nimrod as the first one, *lech lecha* as the second, then departure to Egypt, taking Sarah to Pharaoh, the war of kings as the fifth, then the circumcision, taking Sarah to Abimelech, sending away Hagar and Ishmael, *Akedah* (which is the ninth on this list) and the burial of Sarah as the tenth and last one. They are, however, not listed in *m. Pirqe Abot* itself. Only the later rabbinic works provide more detailed lists.

3.2. The Book of Jubilees

The *Book of Jubilees* is a pseudepigraphic work dating back to the times of the Second Temple, in the 2nd century BCE.[11] According to the tradition it is a secret revelation of the angel of "Divine Presence" to Moses during his second Ascend to Mount Sinai (it is therefore also called the Testament of Moses and/or Moses' Apocalypse). Chapters 11–22 refer to the story of Abraham. There are only two verses in the entire description that refer to the trials of Abraham, including one verse listing specifically six of these trials through which God tested the Patriarch's character and faith. In *Jub.* 17:17, the following description can be found:

> Now the Lord was aware that Abraham was faithful in every difficulty which he had told him. For he had tested him through his land and the famine; he had tested him through the wealth of kings; he had tested him again through his wife when she was taken forcibly, and through circumcision; and he had tested him through Ishmael and his servant girl Hagar when he sent them away.[12]

10 My own translation of the traditional Hebrew text in Pecaric, *Sidur Pardes Lauder*, 579. According to R. Travers Herford's translation ("*Pirkē Aboth*: The Sayings of the Fathers," 707): "Ten trials Abraham our father was tried with, and he bore them all, to make known how great was the love of Abraham our father."

11 Y.M. Grintz, "Jubilees, Book of," *EncJud* XI, 473.

12 VanderKam, *Jubilees*, I, 551.

Further, there is a supplementary description: "In everything through which he tested him he was found faithful. He himself did not grow impatient, nor was he slow to act; for he was faithful and one who loved the Lord" (17:18).[13]

Having analyzed the above-referred part of *Jubilees* it is possible to identify six of the ten trials mentioned in the Abraham's story in *Pirqe R. El. The Book of Jubilees* mentions the promised land – Canaan – it probably refers to the commandment of departing from Haran and setting off to Canaan (*Jub*. 12:22), famine and departing to Egypt (*Jub*. 13:10), Abraham's wealth obtained from the kings (*Jub*. 13:28-29). The subsequent trials are the case when the wife of Abraham (Sarah) was taken by force from him by Pharaoh (*Jub*. 13:13-15), the circumcision of Abraham and all of his family and servants (*Jub*. 15:23-24) and the casting out of Ishmael and Hagar (*Jub*. 17:4-8). As it can clearly be seen, *Jubilees* also does not list all the trials, but it confirms the majority of them. It also confirms the accepted total number of trials as further, in 19:8, it explicitly mentions the tenth test: untypically, *Jubilees* regards as such not the *Akedah* of Isaac (this story is discussed in the preceding chapter 18) but the death of Sarah and Abraham's efforts to purchase the Machpelah Cave. *Jubilees* explicitly states that that was the last test of Abraham: "This was the tenth test by which Abraham was tried, and he was found to be faithful and patient in spirit."[14] Thus, already an early Jewish tradition, preserved in *Jubilees*, confirms the common belief present in the Second Temple times regarding the ten trials. Their specification, however, differs in details from the interpretation preserved in later texts.

3.3. Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer

Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer is a midrash that retells and expands upon the stories of the Torah, from the creation of the world through the story of Miriam's leprosy. *Pirqe R. El.* contains the fullest description of Abraham's trials, including the last one (in accordance with this source text) that took place on Mount Moriah. *Pirqe R. El.* is obviously not the only Jewish text, where the trials of Abraham are referred to. Still, *Pirqe R. El.* is very extensive and due to its broad contents and complexity it is a particularly valuable source for our analysis. Its principal redaction dates back to the 8th century CE,[15] and it was made almost right after the final redaction of *Talmudim* had been completed, which suggests that it can use some

13 VanderKam, *Jubilees*, I, 551.

14 VanderKam, *Jubilees*, I, 583.

15 The redaction of the text is estimated for the period of the 8th–9th centuries, but it contains a much earlier tradition (Stemberger, *Introduction*, 131–159). Stemberger states that "the work appears to have originated in the eighth or ninth century" [it seems that it is already quoted in the early ninth century by *Pirqoi ben Baboi*] (Stemberger, *Introduction*, 329).

additional portion of knowledge that is not yet contained, e.g., in the *Gen. Rab.*[16] *Pirqe R. El.* makes referrals to the Babylonian Talmud, however, it originated probably in Palestine, as the majority of rabbis quotes come therefrom, and it uses the descriptions of Abraham's story from other rabbinical sources. Below a detailed list of the ten trials based on the account provided in the *Pirqe R. El.* has been presented.

The first trial was the trial of salvation – survival of Abraham – and it was directly connected with his birth.[17] On that day a new star appeared in the skies. King Nimrod's magicians noticed that and concluded that the person who had just been born, would become a significant threat to Nimrod. That is why they intended to kill him. From the contents of *Jub*. (complementary to *Pirqe R. El.* in this context), it is known that Nimrod had all male new-borns killed in the year when Abraham was born. Terah hid Abraham in the cave and kept him in hiding for 13 years. When Abraham left the cave, he was speaking the language of God – the language of the first settlers after the Flood, before the Eternal mixed the languages.[18] During the time of hiding, Abraham got to know the Eternal and despised all the Nimrod's idols and gods. *Pirqe R. El.* quotes Ps 84:11: "For God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

The second trial occurred after leaving the cave, when Abraham was serving his father at home.[19] Abraham destroyed the idols and Terah handed him over to Nimrod and brought to court. He was sentenced to prison, where he spent ten years: three years in Kuthi and seven years in Budri. Here rabbinic numerology indicates important numbers, including "7" and "10." The seventh Egyptian plague (Exod 9:25) and the tenth plague (Exod 12:29-30) were associated with death. Abraham spent ten years imprisoned and was also near to death: right there in the end of his captivity by order of Nimrod (*b. B. Bat.* 91a) he was thrown into the furnace. But the King of Glory raised His right hand and extracted Abraham from the furnace and said to him, paraphrasing the verse from Gen 15:7 ("I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees"[20]): "I am the Lord that brought thee out of the furnace" [Nimrod's]. It is worth noting that the Hebrew expression אוּר (Ur) also in Babylon used to be associated with fire and furnace – therefore the rabbis note Abraham lived in Babylon: Ur Khasdim (Ur of the Chaldees) ‑ the place where Terah settled with his family.

16 Günter Stemberger (*Introduction*, 329) concludes that "it uses a wealth of older tradition and shows itself aware of the pseudepigrapha; it may also have adopted entire chapters from other sources, almost without alteration."

17 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 187–188.

18 *Gen. Rab.* 42:8, *b. Sotah* 12a.

19 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 188.

20 The biblical quotations from the King James Bible, if not indicated otherwise.

The third trial according to the rabbis is Abraham's migration from Haran to Canaan (the *lech lecha* trial).[21] As stated in *Pirqe R. El.*, Abraham's father Terah and his mother Athrai died long after Abraham left Haran, Terah in the year 2082 from Adam's times, and the date of the death of Abraham's mother is not provided. *Pirqe R. El.* points out that migration is the most difficult decision for every human being, far more than for any other creature (*b. Ketub.* 28b), based on Isa 22:17: "Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee."

The fourth trial was, as it is provided in *Pirqe R. El.*, the famine in the land of Abraham in Canaan.[22] *Pirqe R. El.* notes that it is the first famine since the Flood – which is contrary to the account provided by the rabbis in the *Gen. Rab.* where two famines are mentioned prior to the times of Abraham. Rashi, in his commentary, indicates that famine and draught occurred in Canaan only in order to force Abraham to journey to Egypt, which was the closest neighboring country.

The fifth trial took place when Sarah, Abraham's wife, was taken away from Abraham and brought to Pharaoh to become his wife.[23] Abraham did not object that, because he believed that God would save Sarah and himself. Rabbi Joshua ben Korchah (in some other versions of *Pirqe R. El.*: rabbi Tarphon) indicates that Sarah was taken to Pharaoh on the day of Pesach (it was the Passover night, and the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon Pharaoh and upon his house great plagues, to make known that thus in the future would He smite the people of his land, as it is said). Once Sarah was brought to the court, the marriage ceremony was carried out and the marriage document was written down. Pharaoh promised in this document that in case of divorce (upon issuing *get*) Sarah would be provided with wealth, including gold, silver, servants and land in Goshen. Immediately after the ceremony, God punished Pharaoh and his servants with disease and plagues (Gen 12:17). Both Pharaoh and his servants were afflicted with impotence, and the monarch could not consume his marriage with Sarah. This sign from God received by Pharaoh was prophetic, as by way of that Pharaoh learned from the Highest that he could not consume this marriage nor have any children. God provided Pharaoh with the information that the descendants of Abraham would return (to the Land of Goshen) and the Almighty would strike Egypt stronger and lethally once again. Where does this information come from? In Exod 11:1, it is written that "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt." Thus, Pharaoh freed Sarah providing her with a divorce letter and as a "severance pay" he gave her a significant property, including the Land in Goshen, where the Israelites later were enslaved. This is the account from which we learn about

21 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 188.
22 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 189.
23 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 189–190.

the gift of Pharaoh who gave Sarah his own daughter Hagar (*Gen. Rab.* 45,1),[24] born from a concubine, as her handmaid.[25] Abraham and Sarah left Egypt with their entire family and went to the land of the Philistines to rest.[26] A similar story happens again later with king Abimelech (*b. B. Qam.* 92a), who similarly to Pharaoh experienced impotence – thanks to another God's intervention Abraham and Sarah become wealthy.

The sixth trial, was the victory of Abraham over the four kings (Gen 14:1-16), "(when) all the kings came against him to slay him."[27] Thanks to God's intervention and help, Abraham and his 318[28] armed and trained servants fought off the attack of the four kings and released many people from slavery, Lot, Abraham's nephew, included. Amraphael, also called Nimrod (*b. Erub.* 53a; *Gen. Rab*. 52,4),[29] was defeated by Abraham and Eliezer during the "mid-night,"[30] when the Angel of Death passed and killed all the firstborns. *Pirqe R. El.* reports that thanks to his victory Abraham won great wealth (according to the account of Hillel the Elder) and as the first one provided a tithe to Shem, son of Noah (Abraham was the first to begin to give a tithe. He took all the tithe of the kings and all the tithe of the wealth of Lot, the son of his brother, and gave (it) to Shem, the son of Noah, as it is said, "And he gave him a tenth of all"). Also, in this *midrashic* text there is no direct mention of king Melchizedek, however, in this respect *Pirqe R. El.* is conform (in the footnotes) that Shem shall be identified with Melchizedek (*Jub*. 13:25).[31] As said by *Pirqe R. El.* Abraham praises God: "Sovereign of all worlds! Not by the power of my hand, nor by the power of my right hand have I done all these things, but by the power of Thy right hand with which Thou dost shield me in this world and in the world to come, as it is said" and later he quotes Ps 3:3: "But thou, O Lord, art a shield about me."[32]

The seventh trial is the Covenant of the Parts – *Brit Bein HaBetharim* (Gen 15:1-18).[33] In this seventh trial, Abraham experienced one of the most significant covenants with God, as it was the covenant unto "life and death." It has to be mentioned that the interpretation of the "flaming torch" (smoking furnace) in

24 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 379.
25 Vanderkam, *Jubilees*, II, 464.
26 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 191.
27 Friedlander, *Pirḳê,* 193–196.
28 Some rabbis indicate that there are numerological issues also in this case: Abraham's chief servant, Eliezer, and described as his sole heir in Gen 15:2, has a Hebrew name that adds up to 318.
29 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 451.
30 There is a similarity here to the description of Exodus from Egypt, which also happened during the "midnight" (Exod 12:29). See *Gen. Rab.* 43,3 (Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 352).
31 The direct indication that Shem is Melchizedek is made in the footnote 3 to *Gen. Rab.* 44,7 (Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 364), where it is explained that "Shem is identified with Melchizedek." Such identification is also made in Louis Ginzberg (*Legends*, 233) following the text of Book of Jasher 16,11 (Lumpkin, *Encyclopaedia*, 255).
32 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 196.
33 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 197–202.

Gen 15:17, passing between the pieces of animals was interpreted by rabbi Ze'er (most likely Azariah) with use of an example taken from Isa 31:9 ("the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem"), which suggests the constant presence of God in Jerusalem. It is also indicated that Isaiah, as well as probably other prophets believed in the power of the eternal covenant *Brit Bein HaBetarim*, whose time, duration and validity have no end date – it remains in force until the times of the coming of King Messiah.

The eight trial[34] occurred when Abraham was 99 years old and performed the rite of *Brit Milah* (Gen 17:24-27), i.e. the circumcision of the foreskin flesh of himself, Ishmael and all the male servants on the day of Yom Kippur, the seventh day of the month Tishri (Gen 17:23; *Gen. Rab.* 46:4; 47:8).[35] Other sources provide that it took place on Rosh HaShana or over during the Passover time (*b. B. Mes*. 86b, *Jub*. 34:18). *Pirqe R. El.* quotes in this respect the phrase from Isa 52:1: "put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." It also explains that:

> the foreskin is a reproach, as it is said, "For that is a reproach unto us" (Gen 34:14), because the foreskin is more unclean than all unclean things, as it is said, "For henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Is. 52:1). For the foreskin is a blemish above all blemishes. Circumcise the flesh of thy foreskin and be perfect.[36]

According to one of the many Jewish traditions, as presented in *Pirqe R. El.*, the circumcision of Abraham was performed by Shem, the son of Noah. Rabban Gamaliel – the son of Rabbi Jehudah HaNasi (the Prince) – said in *Pirqe R. El.* 29:2: "Abraham sent and called for Shem, the son of Noah"[37] (who was born circumcised) for to perform the rite of *Brit Milah* – the circumcision of Abraham, Ishmael and the male servants. It has to be explained that in the rabbinic tradition (it is accounted for in detail in the *Gen. Rab.*), the long-lived Shem is identical with the biblical king of Salem (Jerusalem), called Melchizedek – the Righteous King. It may be asked: if Shem were circumcised and knew the *Brit Milah* rite, opening the gates of God's blessings, why had he waited until that time to convince Abraham? Abraham had been living in Canaan for 24 years then. Until his circumcision in the year 2039, there were numerous other Shem's relatives still alive, not only Shem himself, but also Serug (d. in 2049), Arpachshad (d. in 2096), Shelah (d. in 2126) and Eber as the last of Shem's lineage

34 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 203–214.
35 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 204.
36 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 203.
37 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 203.

(d. in 2187). *Gen. Rab.* does not mention Shem as the mohel circumcising Abraham and his entire male family, and yet it originated before *Pirqe R. El.* Thus, it may be assumed that the story of Abraham's circumcision by Shem as it is provided in *Pirqe R. El* is a work of fiction, and such a mention of him performing the rite was supposed to highlight the significance and importance of the rite itself. In *Pirqe R. El.* 29,2, as rabbi Gamaliel reports, the rite took place: "In the selfsame day which (means) in the might of the sun at midday […] All those, who were circumcised had (excessive) pain on the third day, as it is said, «And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore»."[38] On the third day following circumcision, when Abraham was still very sore (Gen 34:25), he met God and His ministering angels (Gen 18:1): "The Holy One, blessed be He, and the angels descended to visit our father Abraham, as it is said, «And the Lord appeared unto him»."[39]

The ninth trial, in accordance with *Pirqe R. El.*, regards Abraham's decision to cast out Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21,12-14).[40] Ishmael was 17 at that time (according to Venice manuscript of *Pirqe R. El.* he was 27).[41] The account contained in *Pirqe R. El.* clearly confirms that Hagar was Abraham's wife, and not just a handmaid or servant, as Abraham wrote her a bill of divorce and gave her bread and water:

> he sent her and her son away from himself, and from Isaac his son, from this world and from the world to come, as it is said: "and Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water" (Gen 21:14). He sent her away with a bill of divorcement, and he took the veil, and he bound it around her waist, so that it should drag behind her to disclose (the fact) that she was a bondwoman.[42]

Since the divorce occurred by Hagar's fault, she was not entitled to any severance, such as in the case of Sarah being sent away by Pharaoh or by Abimelech. Further, there is information that following Sarah's death Abraham found Hagar and remarried her as his third wife.[43] She was then called Keturah – "fragrance, incense":

38 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 204.
39 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 205.
40 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 203–214.
41 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 216.
42 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 216.
43 The *Tannaim* disagree about Keturah's identity. According to one view, Abraham remarried after Sarah's death and had a total of three wives: Sarah, Hagar, and Keturah. Another tradition identifies Keturah with Hagar, and thus Abraham married only twice. Rashi boldly suggests that Keturah is Hagar: "She was called Keturah because her deeds were as pleasing as incense and because she tied up her opening [explanations emerging from two rabbinic folk etymologies on her name]; from the day she left Abraham, she did not couple with any man." Targum Yonatan, an Aramaic translation/commentary that is attributed to Yonatan ben Uziel, makes an even stronger statement to suggest that she was Hagar: "She was Hagar, who was bound to him from the start."

> after the death of Sarah, Abraham again took (Hagar) his divorced (wife), as it is said, "And Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah" (Gen 25:1). Why does it say "And he again"? Because on the first occasion she was his wife, and he again betook himself to her. Her name was Keturah, because she was perfumed with all kinds of scents.[44]

God approved this trial because Ishmael and Isaac's lives would collide both with the prospective of God's plans, as well as with Abraham's own expectations.

The tenth trial, being the climax of Abraham's experiences, was the binding (*Akedah*) of Isaac (Gen 22:1-16) on Mount Moriah (identified with Mount Zion, and sometimes called *Zophim* "watchers").[45] The account provided in *Pirqe R. El.* is basically consistent with the *Gen. Rab.*, except for the fact that (due to the time of its redaction) different rabbis make comments and participate in the debate. Rabbi Zechariah indicates that the ram offering on Mount Moriah took place exactly at twilight on a Shabbat.

The outcome of *Akedah* was the confirmation that Abraham was able to offer any sacrifice to God, including his son Isaac. The commentary in *Pirqe R. El.* enables us to empathize with Abraham's concerns, pleading God not to put him [Abraham] on any more trials, as the last one was the most difficult and terrifying of them all.

The rabbis in *Pirqe R. El.* infer from the description of *Akedah* that all the blessings from God always come for the "merit of prayer." Rabbi Isaac quotes Gen 22:5: "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship (וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה), and come again to you," as well as Ps 99:5: "Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship (וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ) at his footstool; for he is holy." It should be stressed that none of the translations ("to worship," "to bow oneself") fully reflect the profundity and the actual sense of the original word. The Hebrew verb חוה in *Hishtaphel* has yet a deeper meaning, emphasizing specific humility, humbleness and servitude with respect to the authority and power of the Almighty.[46]

The list of the trials, as presented above in line with the contents of *Pirqe R. El.*, has been fully and without any alterations accepted by Rashi. On the other hand, some scholars such as Maimonides and Joseph Hayyun (in *Millei de-Abot*, the commentary to *Pirqe R. El.*) modify this description. Maimonides in his commentary to the Mishnah lists the trials as follows:

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44 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 219.

45 Friedlander, *Pirḳê*, 223–230.

46 As explained by Warren Baker and Eugene E. Carpenter (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, 1119), this verb means, among others: to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The primary meaning is "to bow down." It is used to indicate bowing before a monarch or a superior and paying homage to him/her. In the Hebrew Bible it has been used, for example in the Psalms to describe the peculiarity of one's attitude towards God.

1) God tells Abraham to leave his homeland to become a stranger in the land of Canaan;
2) Upon arrival in Canaan, Abraham and his tribe experience famine that forces them to leave for Egypt;
3) The Egyptians seize Abraham's wife, Sarah, and bring her to Pharaoh;
4) Abraham faces incredible odds in the battle against the kings;
5) Subsequently, after not being able to have children with Sarah, he decides to marry Hagar;
6) Abraham is ordered by God to circumcise himself at an advanced age;
7) The king of Gerar, Abimelech, captures Sarah, intending to take her for himself;
8) God orders Abraham to send Hagar away together with a child he had with her;
9) In consequence of expulsion of Hagar, Abraham's son, Ishmael, becomes estranged;
10) God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac upon an altar.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, Rashi, fully following *Pirqe R. El.*, includes on the list of trials certain events which are recorded only in the *midrashim* and enumerates the following trials:

1) Abraham's hiding in an underground cave for thirteen years in Ur of the Chaldees, when the king Nimrod sought to kill him;
2) Nimrod casts Abraham into a fiery furnace for not worshipping idols (*b. Erub*. 53a, *b. Pesah*. 118a, *Gen. Rab*. 38:13);
3) Abraham receives the command to leave his homeland and family (Gen 12:1);
4) Experiencing famine in Israel which began as soon as Abraham arrived there (Gen 12:10);
5) Taking Sarah by the Egyptians at the order of Pharaoh (Gen 12:14-15);
6) Capturing Abraham's nephew Lot in the war of the four kings against the five, as a result of which Abraham went to war to rescue him (Gen 14:1-16);
7) God's foretelling that Abraham's descendants would be enslaved and oppressed (Gen 15:13-16);
8) Circumcision of Abraham and his son at the age of ninety-nine (Gen 17:24);
9) Expelling Ishmael and Hagar;
10) The *Akedah*.

Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartinura's list of Abraham's ten trials is similar to Rashi's list; however, he omits the thirteen years spent hiding from Nimrod, and includes the Abimelech's abduction of his wife (Gen 20:1-14). Rabbi Yonah of Geronah, as previously mentioned, is the only commentator (similarly to *Jub.*) who does not list the *Akedah* as the final trial and indicates the death of Sarah, and the purchase of a burial plot for her (Gen 23) as the last trial.

We can summarize the issues discussed, including selected events regarded as trials and their order:

	Pirqe deRabbi Eliezer/ Rashi	Book of Jubilees	Maimonides
1.	Saving Abraham from death ordered by Nimrod by hiding in the cave		*Lech lecha*
2.	Imprisonment, casting into furnace and salvation		Famine in Canaan and departing to Egypt
3.	*Lech lecha*	*Lech lecha*	Taking Sarah to Pharaoh
4.	Famine in Canaan and departing to Egypt	Famine in Canaan and departing to Egypt	War with the kings
5.	Sarah being taken to Pharaoh	Victory and wealth obtained from the kings	Marriage with Hagar
6.	Capture of Lot, war with the kings and victory over them	Sarah being taken to Pharaoh	Circumcision
7.	Covenant of the Parts (*Brit Bein HaBetharim*)	Circumcision	Taking Sarah by Abimelech
8.	*Brit Milah*	Expelling Hagar and Ishmael	God's order to send Hagar away with her son
9.	Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael	*Akedah*	Expelling Hagar and Ishmael
10.	*Akedah*	Death of Sarah	*Akedah*

3.4. Understanding the Trials in Accordance with *Gen. Rab.*

One of the key works to understand how the rabbis perceived the trials God put Abraham to is the Great Midrash (Midrash HaGadol) to the Book of Genesis – *Bereshit Rabbah*. In *Gen. Rab.* 32,3 the unknown author quotes Psalm 11:5 and explains that:

> "The Lord trieth the righteous; but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth" (Ps. XI, 5). R. Jonathan said: A potter does not test defective vessels, because he cannot give them a single blow without breaking them. Similarly the Holy One, blessed be He, does not test the wicked but only the righteous: thus, "The Lord trieth the righteous" R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: When a flax worker knows that his flax is of good quality, the more he beats it the more it improves and the more it glistens; but if it is of inferior quality, he cannot give it one knock without its splitting. Similarly, the Lord does not test the wicked but only the righteous, as it says, "The Lord trieth the righteous". R. Eleazar said: When a man possesses two cows, one strong and the other feeble, upon which does he

> put the yoke? Surely upon the strong one. Similarly, the Lord tests none but the righteous: hence, "The Lord trieth the righteous".[47]

Based on the text of *Gen. Rab.*, we can conclude that God, until the appearance of Abraham, could not find among all descendants of Shem any person who would provide him with the assurance of fulfilling his intentions.

Gen. Rab. does not describe all the trials but focuses only on two of them, where *lech lecha* (Gen 12:1) has not been precisely described as the "first" – the order of appearance of this event in Abraham's life has not been prejudged, still they described it in the commentary as "a trial" (*Gen. Rab.* 39,8.7). However, the last trial regarding *Akedah* was undoubtedly indicated directly by the rabbis in the *Gen. Rab*. as the "tenth" (*Gen. Rab.* 54,1).

According to the rabbis the commandment "go (forth)" contained in Gen 12:1 regarded stepping into the first trial; similarly, the last order "go" in Gen 22,1 (concerning the binding of Isaac) was the command to step into the last one. Abraham never hesitated and that is why God chose him as the Forefather of the future nation of Israel and of the whole world (*Gen. Rab.* 39,1).[48]

Customarily in Abraham's times, the care of parents was the duty of the eldest son. When Abraham left to Canaan, his parents were still alive – Terah was 130 and lived thereafter for 75 more years (Gen 1:32). Abraham, even as the God's chosen one could not just go away and abandon his parents as it would be contrary to the then-customs. Rabbis in the *Gen. Rab.* appropriately explained this issue. *Gen. Rab.* shows the fervent discussion of rabbis, who stress the unique righteousness of Abraham in comparison to other inhabitants of his home land. The rabbis explain the relationship between Terah and Abraham in particular way, claiming that Terah was actually „dead while alive."

„But first you may learn that the wicked [Terah], even during their lifetime, are called dead" (*Gen. Rab*. 39,7.3).[49] This, in the rabbis' view, exempted Abraham from the obligation of care for parents, as according to their interpretation, those who do not observe the God's Law, are dead while alive and therefore the descendants do not have to care for them – they are released from such a moral duty. God comforted Abraham and assured him that the Patriarch would be free to go and leave his parents without the risk of being misjudged (*Gen. Rab*. 38,12). Rabbi Abba bar Kahana explained that:

> Whoever has his name thus repeated has a portion in this world and in the World to Come. They raised an objection to him: But it is written, NOW THESE ARE THE

47 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 268; see also: Scherman – Zlotowitz, *Midrash Rabbah*, I, 32 § 3.3.
48 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 312; see also: Scherman – Zlotowitz, *Midrash Rabbah*, II, 39 §1.1.
49 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 314.

> GENERATIONS OF TERAH. TERAH BEGOT ABRAM, etc.? That too does not disprove it, replied he, for what is the meaning of, But thou [Abraham] shalt go to thy fathers in peace (ib. XV, 15)? He [God] informed him that his father had a portion in the World to Come; Thou shalt be buried in a good old age (ib.): He informed him that Ishmael would repent in his own days. (*Gen. Rab.* 38,12).[50]

An additional commentary to Gen 22:15-17 can also be found in *Gen. Rab*. (56,11), where God spoke to Abraham with the mouth of the Angel of the Lord:

> By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.[51]

Gen. Rab. (56,11) also gives an account of Abraham's response, which may sound very surprising. Abraham begs the Angel that this trial shall be the last one and that he is no more put on further trials: "He had begged Him [Angel of the Lord]: 'Swear to me not to try me again henceforth, nor my son Isaac. […]." This plea indicates that – as it was later interpreted by Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam) – this trial was also God's punishment. In light of the account in *Gen. Rab*., Abraham seriously struggled with this trial.[52] According to this interpretation the tenth trial was God's punishment – intended "pain of infliction" for the commitment Abraham made to king Abimelech (Gen 21:23-24)[53]. Abraham swore to the king that neither him nor his descendants would ever be expelled from the land of Canaan. Meanwhile, God (Gen 15:7) swore and promised the entire land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, thus the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech was contrary to the wish of the Highest: Abraham and his descendants were supposed to receive the "whole" of Canaan and not only its part. In this context, Rashbam analyses the word *nisah* from Exod 17:7 – the verb, which, as he indicates, in this context may signify not only a trial and/or a test, but also despair – the feeling Abraham experienced very strongly offering his son Isaac for a burnt sacrifice. The loss of a son meant the lack of a heir and death of the family. The Eternal almost immediately punished Abraham for his thoughtless action. Abraham humbly accepted the "death sentence" for Isaac, meaning the end of succession. By that for the last time – in the tenth trial – he proved his allegiance and faith in God.

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50 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 309.
51 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 500.
52 Freedman – Simon, "The Midrash," 500.
53 Drazin – Wagner, *Onkelos*, 133.

Discussing these questions the rabbis tried to explain the reasons for each trial, indicating in particular the peculiarities of Abraham's character and his special bond with the Eternal.

Conclusions

The accounts of Abraham's history as a series of ten trials has existed since the very beginning of the known interpretations of the Book of Genesis. The oldest sources, such as *Jub*. and *m. Pirqe Abot*, include mentions of the trials. Such a presentation of the Patriarch's figure was intended to provide theological foundations for God's election of this particular man (and none other). As described above, there is no single list of Abraham's trials, and the rabbinical sources vary as to the choice of events determined as trials and to their order. Their concepts are based on the text of the Hebrew Bible, but also on other sources and traditions.

What is common for all these considerations, it is that the history of Abraham, according to the rabbis has been God's relentless, continuous redemptive act aimed at saving and liberating the Jews throughout the centuries. The idea of the covenant with God (*brit*) starting from Abraham *Avinu*, is the foundation, the cornerstone of Judaism: Israel entered into a covenant with God – an agreement comprising of rights and duties of both parties. Abraham had to be put to ten trials of his faith in order to prove his worthiness to receive the gift of God's eternal covenant.

According to Maimonides, the statement "God tried Abraham" does not mean that God tested him, but he made of Abraham an example of the extreme boundaries of love and fear with respect to God. "For now I know that thou fearest God" (Gen 22:12) means that God announced to all mankind how far must a human being go fearing the Almighty. As said by Nahmanides, the *Akedah* as the last trial focuses on reconciling the pre-knowledge of God with man's free will. God knew how Abraham would behave, but from Abraham's point of view the trial was real; the Patriarch must have been put to trial and after standing it be awarded not only for his potential willingness to obedience, but for his true submission to God.

The only purpose of all of Abraham's experiences was to teach people how to act and how to believe. The particular events of Abraham's life should be examples and guidance. Through the trials the Almighty makes sure that every man is aware of the fact that submission and obedience would guide him to God: He is then "the LORD that doth sanctify" (Exod 31:13). God intends to illustrate his people how strong their faith to the truth of God's Word is and how well they have

understood and accepted the true Nature of God. Knowing and remembering the trials should remove God's anger and provide compassion and love.[54]

The rabbinical approach to the issue of Abraham's trials has been known only to limited audiences of scholars and is not very popular out of Judaism, although Christians often refer to Abraham as the Patriarch and Father in faith. The provided commentaries, selected for the purpose of this study, refer to old rabbinic literature. Of particular importance for the studies on Abraham's trials are such rabbinic works as *Gen. Rab.*, *Pirqe R. El.* and *Jub*. So there is a rich and comprehensive variety of sources, which enable in-depth studies of every single trial and analysis of its outcome and significance for future generations. The omission of the Jewish sources impoverishes possible results and limits the multidimensionality of Abraham's life and experiences. The use of the Jewish sources helps to better understand Abraham's life and recognize his immense importance in the history of salvation.

The overview of Abraham's ten trials clearly testifies to the existence of a rich, extensive rabbinic literature and of significant Jewish theological traditions in this respect, which should not be disregarded. Taking into account the contemporary commentaries, one may state that there is willingness and need for studies of rabbinical works. An evident encouragement to pursue such studies has been expressed, for example, by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in his preface to the document prepared by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2001), where he argues that "Christians can learn a great deal from a Jewish exegesis practiced for more than 2000 years."[55] The studies of the rabbinic works may help to develop our knowledge of exegetical methods and the theology of the biblical texts and will allow us to discover their impact on contemporary people's lives. Finally, they may open a new dimension to understanding Abraham's life and thus giving it farther perspectives.

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54 An example is *Zichronot* prayer at Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashana), where there is the following plea addressed to God for Him to remember the *Akedah*: "Remember on our behalf, O Lord our God the covenant and the love and the oath that you swore to Abraham our father on Mt. Moriah. Let it appear before you, this *Akedah*, that Abraham bound Isaac his son on the altar, and he suppressed his compassion in order to do your will with a complete heart. Therefore your compassion should suppress your anger against us. Through your goodness may your anger be removed from your city and your inheritance" – *Zichronot* of Rosh Hashanah Musaf, quoted in Milgrom, *Binding*, 70–77.

55 The Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People*.

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REVIEWS

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David J. Shepherd – Jan Joosten – Michaël N. van der Meer (red.), *Septuagint, Targum and Beyond. Comparing Aramaic and Greek Versions from Jewish Antiquity* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 193; Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill 2020). Ss. 356. $140.00. ISBN 978-90-04-41671-0 (Hardback), ISBN 978-90-04-41672-7 (E-Book [PDF])

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W ostatnich kilkudziesięciu latach poszczególne starożytne przekłady Biblii Hebrajskiej były przedmiotem intensywnych badań. W ten sposób powstały osobne dziedziny studiów biblijnych, zajmujące się szczególnie Septuagintą i targumami. Ich efektem są wydania krytyczne tych przekładów, a także ich tłumaczeń na języki nowożytne, czy też opracowań szczegółowych. Większość z nich koncentruje się na takich zagadnieniach, jak: tekst, wersje, podobieństwa, techniki translatorskie, historia przekazu czy późniejsze oddziaływanie (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). Postępująca specjalizacja w zakresie pogłębiania rozumienia przekładów aramejskich i greckich jako odrębnych dzieł powoduje coraz większe niezrozumienie wzajemnego związku tych dwóch wielkich tradycji translatorskich starożytności żydowskiej. Książka *Septuagint, Targum and Beyond. Comparing Aramaic and Greek Versions from Jewish Antiquity* to krótki przegląd porównań targumów z ich wersjami starogreckimi i Septuagintą, który potwierdza, że takie porównywanie ma stosunkowo długą historię.

Publikacja obejmuje wprowadzenie („Introduction", s. 1–10) oraz dwie części. Autorami wprowadzenia są redaktorzy tego tomu: David J. Shepherd, Jan Josten, Michaël N. van der Meer. Pierwsza część, „Fresh Approaches to Septuagint/Old Greek and Targum" (s. 13–193), zawiera osiem rozdziałów, których autorzy stawiają fundamentalne pytanie w ujęciu historycznym: jaki związek (o ile w ogóle) mają teksty wersji starogreckich z tekstami targumów klasycznych? Podejmując tę kwestię, jedni badacze koncentrują się na nowych szczegółach, drudzy umieszczają ją w zupełnie innych niż dotychczasowe ramach odniesień. Część druga, „Beyond Targum and LXX" (s. 197–337), przedstawia opracowania uczonych podkreślających znaczenie rozszerzania horyzontów badawczych także na inne dziedziny, w których ważną rolę odgrywają badania porównawcze przekładów, między innymi

z interpretacją rabiniczną. Każdy z czternastu rozdziałów przedstawionych w tej publikacji został opatrzony bibliografią. Ponadto książka zawiera indeks źródeł starożytnych (s. 339–349) oraz indeks autorów współczesnych (s. 350–356).

W obszernym wprowadzeniu redaktorzy książki uzasadniają potrzebę jej powstania i wydania jako osobnego tomu w ramach serii naukowej Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism. Od dłużego czasu zastanawiano się, w jakiej mierze na starożytną grekę Septuaginty mogła mieć wpływ jeszcze starsza aramejska tradycja translatorska. Postęp w badaniach nad obiema wersjami zrodził potrzebę przyjrzenia się tej kwestii na nowo, odstawienia na bok nadmiaru założeń wstępnych i skorzystania z różnorodności podejść metodologicznych. Zebrane w prezentowanym tomie materiały odzwierciedlają wspomnianą rewizję. Większość z nich przedstawiona została na wspólnym posiedzeniu International Organization for Targumic Studies (IOTS) i International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS) z udziałem przedstawicieli International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament (IOSOT), do którego doszło we wrześniu 2016 r. w Stellenbosch (RPA). Dodatkowo redaktorzy uznali za pożyteczne włączyć do niniejszego zbioru kilku artykułów, które wprawdzie nie zostały zaprezentowane na spotkaniu, lecz bezpośrednio dotyczą tego tematu i stanowią niewątpliwie uzupełnienie szerokiego spektrum podejść, które znalazły odbicie w konferencjach wygłoszonych w RPA.

Część pierwszą rozpoczyna rozdział „Reflecting on the Creation (בראשית): a Comparison of Genesis 1 in the Pentateuchal Targumim and the Septuagint" (s. 13–36), którego autorem jest Johann Cook. Zajmuje się on przekładami początkowych rozdziałów Księgi Rodzaju, szczególnie 1,26–27. W niektórych targumach (np. TgN i TgFr) autor odnajduje ślady celowego podkreślania koncepcji stworzenia jako rzeczywistości uporządkowanej, z natury dobrej, a nawet doskonałej, będącej odblaskiem Bożej mądrości. W przeciwieństwie do funkcjonujących w niektórych kręgach badaczy koncepcji przeciwnych, w których uznaje się wpływy filozofii platońskiej na przekład Księgi Rodzaju w LXX, Cook stwierdza, że brak jest na to dowodów.

Zagadnienia dotyczące przekładów Tory podejmuje następnie Robert Hayward w rozdziale drugim „The Passover of Egypt in Septuagint and Targum of Exodus" (s. 37–57). Głównym tematem badań tego autora są greckie i aramejskie przekłady Wj 12, na podstawie których dochodzi do wniosku, że paralele egzegetyczno-interpretacyjne między LXX i targumami (zwłaszcza TgN) mają w większości charakter atomistyczny, istnieje jednak istotna zgodność w kwestiach prawa religijnego. W uzasadnieniu swojej tezy Hayward odwołuje się do sprawy konwersji na judaizm, wskazując na użycie greckiego słowa γ(ε)ιωρας w LXX Wj 12,19 i jego odpowiednika w TgO i TgN. Zdaniem Haywarda jest mniej prawdopodobne, że takie zgodności odzwierciedlają odmienne *Vorlagen*, a bardziej, że są odbiciem wspólnego *Sitz im Leben*, może nawet wywodzą się z *bet midrasz* lub przynajmniej z jakiegoś kontekstu edukacyjnego.

Autorem rozdziału trzeciego, który odnosi się do zbioru Proroków, jest Michäel N. van der Meer. Podejmuje on temat: „The Greek and Aramaic Versions of Joshua 3–4" (s. 58–100). W przeciwieństwie do poprzedniego autora nie znajduje dowodu przemawiającego za tym, że pierwszy lub drugi przekład wywodzi się ze środowiska liturgicznego ani że wersja grecka pochodzi z jakiegoś otoczenia „szkolnego". Autor zauważa, że między Targumem Jonatana (TgJ) i wersją Symmacha istnieje zasadnicza zbieżność w przekładzie Joz 3,16, i wyciąga stąd wniosek, że w poszukiwaniu podobieństw między wersjami grecką i aramejską lub śladów wpływu jednej na drugą należy wnikliwiej przyjrzeć się późniejszym tłumaczeniom greckim, np. Symmacha.

Kolejny rozdział, który również zajmuje się przekładami zbioru Proroków, nosi tytuł „Optimal Translation in LXX and Tg. Jon. of 1 Samuel 1:1-5: Outline of a Comparative Theory of Translation Technique" (s. 101–128). Jego autorem jest Jeremy Hutton, który krytycznie podchodzi do twierdzenia, że przekłady mogą nam powiedzieć coś o kontekście społecznym, w którym powstały. Swoje spostrzeżenia dotyczące LXX i TgJ 1 Sm 1,1-5 stara się oprzeć na analizie kwantytatywnej, która wykracza poza samo wyliczenie różnego rodzaju interwencji translatorskich. Hutton stara się zidentyfikować i uporządkować uwarunkowania translacyjne, w ramach których powstały LXX i targum, wskazując, że choć czasem górują nad daną tradycją szczególne względy lingwistyczne, w przypadku targumu zasada linearności morfologicznej (reprezentująca kolejność słów w tekście źródłowym) odgrywa stosunkowo dużą rolę. Co więcej, mimo że zasada maksymalizacji morfologicznej (unikanie „spadających morfemów") jest w targumie wyjątkowo istotna, okazuje się, że ważniejszą rolę odgrywa ona w tłumaczeniu Akwili niż w LXX. Autor dochodzi do wniosku, że zamiast myśleć kategoriami fundamentalnych założeń czy technik translatorskich, więcej pożytku przyniosłoby, gdybyśmy spróbowali wyobrazić sobie, w jaki sposób tłumacz starał się sprostać wielorakim ograniczeniom translacyjnym (s. 123–126).

Paul Sanders, autor piątego rozdziału „No Death without Sin on the New Earth: Isaiah 65:20 in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic" (s. 129–140), omawia różnice w interpretacji Iz 65,20 w obu tłumaczeniach. Jego zdaniem przekłady LXX i TgJ badanego wersetu z proroctwa Izajasza świadczą o tym, że tłumacze nie wiedzieli do końca, co począć z fragmentem o „młodych" (tj. potencjalnie niewinnych), których śmierć będzie mogła spotkać w wieku stu lat (tj. przedwcześnie). Podczas gdy w LXX śmierć doczesną przenosi się z νεος – „młodego" na αμαρτωλος – „grzesznika", TgJ zachowuje wprawdzie związek „młodego" ze „śmiercią", ale „młodego" zmienia na „winowajcę". Sanders dodaje, że choć żadnemu z tłumaczy nie przeszkadzała perspektywa eliminacji grzeszników w nowej rzeczywistości, to jednak źle się czuli na myśl, że człowieka niewinnego mógłby spotkać taki sam los jak grzesznika.

Starożytnych przekładów Księgi Izajasza dotyczy także rozdział szósty, „The Old Greek of Isaiah and the Isaiah Targum: What Do They Have in Common?" (s. 141–156) autorstwa Arie van der Kooij. Stawia on pytanie, czy przekłady starogreckie i targumy

łączy wspólna tradycja egzegetyczna w podejściu do hebrajskiego tekstu tej księgi. Analizując kilkanaście wersetów Księgi Izajasza i jeden z Księgi Jeremiasza w obu tłumaczeniach, Van der Kooij dochodzi do wniosku, że choć występuje wiele charakterystycznych rozbieżności między nimi, to jednak przekłady te podzielają wspólne podejście lub metodę, obejmujące m.in. przekład odwrotny, interpretację metaforyczną czy swobodne przepisanie. Zaznacza jednak, że w obu wersjach mogą one wywoływać zupełnie odmienne skutki.

Jan Joosten w rozdziale siódmym, „Targum Jonathan and Its Relation to the Septuagint in the Book of Hosea" (s. 157–173), rozważa możliwość, że Tg Oz zależny jest od LXX. Autor zatrzymuje się przy Oz 6,11, gdzie przekłady LXX i targumu istotnie odbiegają od TM, oraz przy 13,13, który to fragment interpretują jakby sprzecznie z kontekstem. Na podstawie analizy Joosten przyjmuje, że w przypadku Oz 12,1 targum jest zależny od LXX. Jego zdaniem na taki wpływ mogą wskazywać również inne wspólne fragmenty, które wymienia. Chociaż ustalenia te trudno uważać za niezbity dowód, to jednak dalsze badanie LXX i Tg Dwunastu mogłyby dostarczyć dodatkowych przykładów w związku z tą hipotezą.

Część pierwszą książki zamyka rozdział ósmy z tekstem Anne-Françoise Loiseau „The Premature Death of the Wicked in the Old Greek of Proverbs" (s. 174–193). Autorka w kontekście Księgi Przysłów na nowo podejmuje koncepcję wpływu języka aramejskiego na greckich tłumaczy. W tym celu analizuje cztery wersety z TM, w których występuje hebrajskie słowo „przemoc" (חמס). Tłumacz LXX wstawia je do przekładu, ukazując obraz przedwczesnej śmierci grzeszników, a nie śmierci niewinnych. Zdaniem Loiseau tłumacz miał taką możliwość ze względu na polisemię aramejskiego rdzenia חטף – „pochwycić", „złapać", „obrabować", „podrzeć", ale także „spieszyć się", „zrobić coś w pośpiechu". Zdaniem Loiseau ostatnie z tych znaczeń leży też u podstaw przekładu Wulgaty.

Część drugą publikacji otwiera programowe opracowanie Jamesa Aitkena „The Septuagint and Jewish Translation Traditions" (s. 197–225). Przedstawia on relacje między LXX i targumem w historii literatury żydowskiej. Autor zauważa, że zarówno tradycja kompozycji, jak i tradycja translacyjna świadczą o ewolucji podejścia do autorytetu przekładów i o wpływie tego zjawiska na kopiowanie, uzupełnianie i rewidowanie tekstu. Zwraca też uwagę na pierwszeństwo języka greckiego w stosunku do aramejskiego, ze względu na stosunkowo późne pojawienie się targumów aramejskich. Mimo to Aitken podkreśla zjawisko kontynuacji przekładów greckich i aramejskich w starożytnej Palestynie. Autor wskazuje na konieczność uwzględnienia w badaniach obu wielkich tradycji translatorskich starożytnego judaizmu szerszego tła twórczości literackiej.

W tym kierunku podążają dwa następne rozdziały. W rozdziale dziesiątym, „See God and Die? Job's Final Words (42:6) according to His First Aramaic and Greek Interpreters" (s. 228–248), David Shepherd porównuje aramejską wersję Hioba, odnalezioną w Qumran (11Q10), z grecką i aramejską wersją ostatnich słów Hioba

(42,6). Na podstawie przeprowadzonej analizy autor wykazuje, że wersja starogrecka posiada więcej wspólnych elementów z wcześniejszymi przekładami aramejskimi (łącznie z 11QarHi) niż z późniejszym Tg Hi. Tłumacz wcześniejszej wersji interpretuje tekst w ten sposób, że Hiob wygląda własnej kremacji czy spalenia w ofierze, być może jako efekt doświadczenia teofanii (Hi 38–41). Natomiast w późniejszym Tg Hi translator stara się wykluczyć ewentualność, jakoby w 42,5–6 Hiob oczekiwał własnej śmierci. Mimo ograniczeń tego rodzaju egzegezy porównawczej Shepherd uważa, że potrzebne są dalsze badania, które pozwoliłyby ustalić, czy pod względem tradycji interpretacyjnych i podejścia translacyjnego wersja starogrecka pokrywa się ściślej z aramejskimi tekstami z Qumran, czy z targumami, jak to wcześniej wykazano w przypadku Hioba.

Tego rodzaju badania nad przekładami Księgi Kapłańskiej podejmuje Alun Thomas w rozdziale „A Comparative Study of the Translation Techniques of the Old Greek and Qumran Aramaic (4Q156) Versions of Leviticus" (s. 249–270). Autor zaznacza, że najstarsze tłumaczenia tej księgi na język starogrecki i aramejski różnią się w przekładzie niektórych elementów (np. sufiksów zaimkowych). Jednak przekłady te wykazują tendencję do odchodzenia od tekstu hebrajskiego tak, aby dostosować się do wymogów idiomatyki greckiej i aramejskiej. Thomas zwraca też uwagę, że o tej tendencji do dopasowywania, obecnej w starszych przekładach aramejskich (Qumran) i starogreckich, świadczy również ich skłonność do redukowania morfemów typu *nota accusativa*, odchodzenie od kolejności występującej w wersji hebrajskiej i pomijanie przekładów izomorficznych, charakterystycznych dla targumów i Heksapli.

Analizę późniejszych tradycji greckich przekładów tekstów biblijnych przeprowadza Christian Stadel w rozdziale dwunastym „More Evidence for a Samaritan Greek Bible: Two Septuagint Translation Traditions in the Samaritan Targum" (s. 271–288). Autor podaje przykłady z samarytańskiego tłumaczenia greckiego, określanego nazwą *Samareitikon*, które powstało zapewne pod wpływem jakiegoś przekładu greckiego, przypominającego ten z LXX. Przykłady te ilustrują odejście od tradycyjnej interpretacji żydowskiej, znajdującej się w obu tłumaczeniach, i powstanie przekładu wyjątkowego dla Targumu Samarytańskiego, mającego paralele w LXX, oraz przekładu, w którym ten targum używa słów greckich niewystępujących nigdzie indziej w tradycyjnych źródłach aramejskich, poświadczonych za to w LXX. Mimo że autor wskazuje na dość ograniczoną liczbę materiału mówiącego o grecko-aramejskiej interakcji w obrębie tradycji samarytańskiej, to jednak uważa, że dalsze badania w tej dziedzinie pozwolą odkryć kolejne ślady wpływu LXX na przekłady samarytańskie.

Shifra Sznol w rozdziale trzynastym: „*Targum Onqelos* and Rabbinic Interpretation in the Jewish Greek Translations of the Bible" (s. 289–316) analizuje związki TgO i TgJ z późniejszymi żydowskimi tłumaczeniami Biblii Hebrajskiej na język grecki, które powstały po przekładach Akwili, Symmacha i Teodocjona. Autorka prezentuje szereg przykładów, z których wynika, że te tłumaczenia greckie były pod wyraźnym

wpływem nie tylko wcześniejszych recenzji LXX, ale także przekładów (targumów) i komentarzy kojarzonych z rabinami. Na podstawie badań porównawczych Sznol dowodzi, że interpretacje zawarte w tych tłumaczeniach greckich, zaczerpnięte z targumów oraz egzegezy midraszowej i średniowiecznej, świadczą o tym, że owe przekłady greckie mogły powstać na przełomie VII i VIII w., a nawet później.

Autorką ostatniego, czternastego rozdziału, „Simeon the Just, the Septuagint and Targum Jonathan" (s. 317–338), jest Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman. W swoim opracowaniu przeprowadza analizę porównawczą dotyczącą interpretacji postaci Symeona z Nowego Testamentu we wschodnim i zachodnim chrześcijaństwie, wykorzystując w niej LXX i TgJ. Autorka ukazuje, że aż do XVI w. komentarze interpretowały go jako bohatera okresu przejściowego, który choć wyczekiwał Mesjasza, ostatecznie zepchnięty został na drugi plan przez nowy „system" chrześcijański. Taką identyfikację uważano za wystarczające uzasadnienie posługiwania się Septuagintą w Kościele wschodnim i Targumem Jonatana w Kościele zachodnim. Ponadto autorka zajmuje się na nowo spojrzeniem, w jaki sposób i dlaczego dane postaci (m.in. Akwilę, Onkelosa) utożsamia się w judaizmie z tłumaczeniem greckim i aramejskim.

Omawiana publikacja ukazuje nie tylko nowe podejścia do zrozumienia kwestii wzajemnej relacji LXX i targumów, ale jest także inspiracją do podejmowania badań wymagających poszerzenia pola zainteresowań w dyskusji nad wzajemnymi związkami tych dwóch wielkich tradycji translacyjnych starożytności żydowskiej. Niniejszy zbiór artykułów może stać się impulsem do coraz bardziej popularnych studiów nad greckim i aramejskimi przekładami ksiąg biblijnych w Polsce.

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Andreas Schüle, *Die Urgeschichte (Genesis 1–11)*, 2. erweiterte und aktualisierte Auflage (Zürcher Bibelkommentare AT 1/1; Zürich: Theologische Verlag Zürich 2020). S. 176. 35 EUR. ISBN 978-3-290-17527-6

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In letzter Zeit sind einige sehr gute Kommentare zur Biblischen Urgeschichte auf dem Verlagsmarkt erschienen. Erwähnenswert ist der Kommentar von Georg Fischer aus dem Jahr 2018 (HThKAT) und auch der Kommentar von Jan Christian Gertz, ebenfalls erschienen 2018 (ATD). Darüber hinaus ist für das Jahr 2021 eine Auslassung von Christoph Dohmen (NSK) zu dem Thema angekündigt worden. In diesem Zusammenhang ist es erlaubt zu fragen, was die herausragenden Merkmale des neuen Kommentars von Andreas Schüle sind?

Das neue Buch des Autors stellt – gemäß der Auskunft in der Fußzeile – die zweite, erweiterte und aktualisierte Ausgabe des bereits im Jahr 2009 veröffentlichten Kommentars dar. Das ursprüngliche Werk erschien in der gleichen ZBK-Serie.

Der Buchautor war in den Jahren 2003–2005 außerordentlicher Professor für Hebräische Studien an der Universität Zürich, wo er seine Habilitationsarbeit im Jahr 2005 verfasst hat. Anschließend war er Hochschullehrer an der Union Presbiterian Seminary in Richmond und ab 2012 danach Professor für Theologie und Exegese des Alten Testaments an der Universität Leipzig. Seine *Forschungsschwerpunkte* umfassen alttestamentliche Theologie und Anthropologie, Exegese des Pentateuchs (Genesis 1–11) und exilisch – nachexilischen Schriftprophetie (Tritojesaja).

Zur Bewertung der Kompetenzen des Autors auf diesem Gebiet dient *Die Urgeschichte (Genesis 1–11)* und gehört zweifellos das im Jahr 2006 in Zürich verfasste Buch *Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel. Der literar- und theologiegeschichtliche Diskurs der Urgeschichte (Genesis 1–11)*. Ihr Ergebnis war offensichtlich die erste Ausgabe des bereits erwähnten Kommentars *Genesis 1–11* aus dem Jahr 2009. Es war und ist deutlich erkennbar, dass der Autor nicht nur auf seinem vorherigen Werk aufbaut, sondern darüber hinaus eine enorme und ständige Kreativität entwickelt.

Nachdem die erste Ausgabe veröffentlicht wurde, setzte Andreas Schüle seine Forschungsarbeiten zum Thema *Urgeschichte* fort. Einige der Ergebnisse dieser

Arbeiten sind u.a. eine Artikelsammlung *Theology from the Beginning. Essays on the Primeval History and Its Canonical Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2017).

Die neue Ausgabe des „kleinen Kommentars", 10 Jahre nach der ersten Veröffentlichung, beinhaltet – wie der Autor es selber beschreibt – übliche Korrekturen und inhaltliche Durchsichten und Überarbeitungen. Die wichtigsten Änderungen gegenüber der Erstausgabe sind zu verzeichnen in Gen 1,1–6,4. Es ist beachtenswert, dass der Autor in der letzten Zeit zahlreiche, hochinteressante Artikel mit neuen Konzepten und Auslegungen veröffentlicht hat. Die Kommentare aus der ZBK-Serie sind gekennzeichnet durch ein vereinfachtes Format grundsätzlich ohne Fußnoten. Allgemeine Informationen sind dort lediglich eingeschränkt dargestellt, gleichwohl werden weitere Einzelheiten in anderen Kommentaren behandelt (ausführliche Literaturhinweise, detaillierte Darstellung der Forschungsgeschichte und *status quaestionis*, außerdem eingehende Analysen einzelner Wörter und Syntaxen). Diese „Informationsmängel" sind zurückzuführen darauf, dass in dieser Serie die theologischen und strukturalen Aspekte mehr hervorgehoben werden als die exegetischen. Dessen ungeachtet bieten die Kommentare enorme Vorteile, mit denen sie sich im Rahmen der Literaturvielfalt deutlich unterscheiden lassen: „Leichter Zugang zu dem, was im biblischen Text am wichtigsten ist".

Ferner erweist der Kommentar von Schüle bemerkenswerte Merkmale auf. Er bringt viel von einer inspirierenden „Auslegungsfrische" im Hinblick auf die Betrachtung der Texte Genesis 1–11. Der Autor hat dabei eine einfache Aufteilung angewandt: Einleitung (S. 11–30), Kommentar (S. 31–187), Auswahlbibliographie (S. 189–191) + Bibelnachweis (192). Im Vorwort beschreibt er zunächst die Erzählung der Urgeschichte im Verhältnis zum übrigen Text von Genesis (S. 11–13), dann die Komposition (synchrones Textprofil; S. 14–16); Entstehung (diachrones Textprofil) mit einer Unterteilung auf Priesterschriftliche und nicht-priesterschriftliche Texte (S. 16–20), Intertextuelle Bezüge (S. 21–22), schließlich die Altorientalische Literaturgeschichte (S. 22–25) sowie auch die Theologie (S. 25–30).

Die drei ersten Paragraphen bilden eine gute, nicht zu ausführlich und tiefgreifend oder zu detailliert beladene Diskussion über die Synthese des aktuellen Wissensstandards ab. Schüle bemerkt im Paragraph *Entstehung* zu Recht, dass aus der Urgeschichte verschiedene Traditionen entstanden sind. Allerdings vereinfacht er die Gesamtheit der Diskussion, indem er – was heute bei den Forschungsarbeiten an dem Pentateuch ziemlich beliebt ist – auf zwei grundsätzlichen Schulen (P und Nicht-P) hinweist. Für ihn verbleibt P die Quelle, gekennzeichnet durch eine unterschiedliche Tradition und eine theologische Auffassung (S. 17). Die Autoren dieser Schule finden Anregungen in der mesopotamischen Literatur, aber sie greifen auf diese Ressourcen auf eine sehr eigenständige und kreative Weise zurück (S. 18). Nicht-P wurde zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt an P angehängt.

Es gibt immer noch eine offene, klärungsbedürftige Frage hinsichtlich der Art und Weise, auf welche die Verschmelzung von P mit Nicht-P sowie auch „inhaltliche

Kohärenz von nicht-P" erfolgt haben (S. 19). Während in Gen 6,5–8; 8,21 ein Schwerpunkt liegt in einem „bösen Herzen" des Menschen, jedoch kann man aus Gen 2–3 eine solche Folge nicht herleiten.

Besonders hervorzuheben ist die im Paragraphen ausgeführte Diskussion über die von G. von Rad gestellten These, welche impliziert in J-Quellen (= Nicht-P) einen „lawinenartigen Anwachsen der Sünde". Wie Schüle es unterstreicht, Das Problem mit der These dieses Spitzenforschers besteht darin, dass über die Sünde in der Urgeschichte insgesamt einmal die Rede ist (Gen 4,7) (S. 19). Diese Aussage wird der Autor übrigens künftig als „eine spätere Einfügung" einordnen (S. 109). Sogar die Geschichte der großen Flut und deren Ursachen sucht im Bösen, welches das Herz des Menschen belastet („«genetisches» Defekt"), und nicht in den konkreten Sünden (S. 19). Nach dem Autor stellt die Geschichte eher „ein vertieftes anthropologische Interesse" dar (S. 19). Dies ist eine interessante und inspirierende Forschungsbeobachtung, welche sicherlich in tiefere Betrachtungen einzubeziehen ist.

Eine weitere These des Autors widerspiegelt auch die gegenwärtigen Forschungsentwicklungen. Schüle schlägt vor, die Entstehung der aktuellen Version der Urgeschichte nicht im Zusammenhang mit den Quellen von Pentateuch zu analysieren. Hinsichtlich der Texte von Nicht-P schreibt er: „Dabei überwiegt die Annahme, dass es nicht hierbei (vor allem in der Fluterzählung) um Erweiterungen, midraschartige Fortschreibungen und zum Teil auch Gegenentwürfe zur priesterlichen Urgeschichte handelt" (S. 20). Dieser Prozess war – nach Schüle – dialogisch geprägt, was der Autor auch anhand einiger Beispiele veranschaulicht.

Im Paragraphen „Intertextuelle Bezüge" weist der Autor auf einen „dialogischen Charakter der Urgeschichte" hin, diesmal allerdings in Beziehung zu einigen Texten mit prophetischer Herkunft und aus Weisheitsbüchern. In der Einleitung kann man leicht „Mängel" feststellen im Hinblick auf die Beziehungen zu anderen biblischen Texten (z.B. Bezüge auf Edenberichte in der prophetischen Literatur). Dennoch scheint der Autor hier ausschließlich Beispiele zu bringen, welche den bereits erwähnten Bezugscharakter dieses Teils der hebräischen Bibel bezeugen.

Im Gegenzug fällt der Abschnitt über die Berichte der biblischen Urgeschichte und altorientalischer Literaturgeschichte viel ausführlicher und interessanter aus. Der Autor unterstreicht hier Auswirkungen der mesopotamischen Literatur (Enuma eliš, Astrahasis, Gilgamesch) und ägyptisch (hauptsächlich aus Memphis) einerseits, andererseits betont er einen Ermessenscharakter dieser Bezüge, welcher den biblischen Autoren (insbesondere P) ermöglicht allgemein bekannte Motive auf originelle Weise zu nutzen und zu erweitern.

In dem Paragraphen über Theologie fokussiert der Autor die Aufmerksamkeit des Lesers auf dem Schöpfungsmotiv (in P ist das ein kosmologisches Ereignis), welches aber durch einen Mangel an „Kampf" gegen Chaoskräfte gekennzeichnet ist („Ruhe geprägt, die auch das Gottesbild des Schöpfungsberichts charakterisieren. Gleiches gilt für die Sintflut-Erzählung" (S. 26).

Allerdings bemerkt Schüle ferner: „Demgegenüber zeigen sich in den nicht-priesterschriftlichen Texten die für antike Mythologie typischen Konfliktmotive, die die Handlung bestimmen. Was Menschen sind, wo ihr Platz in der Welt ist und schließlich was sie tun und was sie lassen sollen – all das wird erzählerisch anhand spannungsvoller Beziehungsgeflechte thematisiert, die auch die Gottessfigur als drammatis persona einbezieht" (S. 26).

Ein anderes theologisches Motiv in der Urgeschichte präsentiert Schüle indem er schreibt: „Struktur und inhaltliche Orientierung gibt, ist die in der Priesterschrift verankerte Rede von der Gottebenbildlichkeit" (S. 26). „Die nicht-priesterschriftlichen Texte gehen dieser von P vorgegebenen Spur nach und thematisieren die Beziehungstrukturen menschlichen Lebens gleichermaßen in ihren Licht- wie auch Schattenseiten" (S. 27).

Letztendlich hat der Autor völlig recht, wenn er feststellt, dass „die Urgeschichte in ihrer Gesamtheit eine Völkergeschichte ist… Gen 10f. Und er erinnert dagegen sehr viel stärker an die Völkerkosmologien der exilisch-nachexilischen Prophetie" (S. 29) und meint: „Schöpfungstheologie und politische Theologie gehen Hand in Hand" (S. 29). Fortan resümiert der Autor: „Schließlich insgesamt keine Spuren eschatologisches Charakteristikum zu erwähnen, dass es in der Urgeschichte insgesamt keine Spuren eschatologischen Denkens gibt…keine Erwartung, dass das Böse und die Gewalt in der Welt durch eine schöpferische Transformation oder gar durch eine Neuschaffung der Welt überwinden würden… Damit steht die Urgeschichte in einem spannungsvollen Kontrast vor allem zu den prophetischen Stimmen des Alten Testaments…" (S. 29). Abschließend merkt Schüle an, dass „…Theorie, dass die Urgeschichte die prophetische Erwartung einer Neuschöpfung gezielt vorbereitet, indem sie auf die Defizite der gegenwärtigen Welt hinweist, hat zumindest keinen greifbaren textlichen Anhalt" (S. 30).

All diese – sehr allgemeine – Meinungen können kaum deutlich genug hervorgehoben werden. Sie stellen zweifellos einen wertvollen und innovativen Beitrag des Autors in die Forschungsarbeiten über die Botschaft der Urgeschichte. Zudem motivieren sie zur Durchführung weiterer Detailanalysen.

Der weitere Aufbau des Kommentars folgt den Kriterien aus den neuesten Bänden der ZBK-Serie. Der Autor schlägt eine Unterteilung in einzelne Perikopen vor (ohne Diskussion), gibt die Textübersetzung und allgemeine Informationen an. Dabei werden die grundlegenden Aspekte der jeweiligen Perikope (Struktur, Schlüsselwörter, allgemeine Bemerkungen der Literaturkritik, theologische Botschaft, Querweise) in *Überblick* hervorgehoben, begleitet durch eine eingehendere Analyse einzelner Textpassagen. Gemäß den für die ZBK-Serie angenommenen Kriterien wird nun hier die Analyse lediglich auf den Schlüsselworten und auf der theologischen Botschaft fokussiert.

Obwohl überlässt diese Art Analyse den Leser in gewisser Weise unbefriedigend einerseits, kann er jedoch mit klassischen Kommentaren zur Urgeschichte

andererseits befriedigt werden. Der Autor betont auf einfache Art seine Interpretationsweise von Textpassagen und gibt eigene Vorschläge. In dieser Hinsicht zeichnet sich der besprochene Kommentar durch viele Vorteile aus, welche beweisen, dass er in diesem Fall keine erneute Aufstellung des aktuellen Forschungsstands auf dem Gebiet der Urgeschichte bildet. Im Gegenteil stellt dieser Kommentar vor allem eine kreative, anregende, und manchmal eine neuartige Methode von Textauswahlen. Dies ist leicht ersichtlich in der bereits erwähnten Polemik mit der These von G. von Rad zum Thema der darin enthaltenen „Harmatologie". Weiterhin ist es auch erkennbar in dem Vorschlag, die Ereignisse in Gen 3 herauszulesen, und zwar nicht mit dem Schlüssel „der Ursünde" oder „des verlorenen Paradieses", sondern im Sinne „des goldenen Käfigs", zu dem die menschliche Natur nicht passt.

Eine ähnliche Art zu zeigen, dass etwas nicht zueinander passt, findet sich schon in Gen 2 (das Tiermotiv als eine „ungeeignete" Beihilfe für den Menschen). Durch diesen Ansatz, obwohl er nicht neu ist, lässt sich doch ein möglicher Entwicklungsweg aufzeigen, um die Ereignisse aus Eden herauszuhalten.

Das behandelte Buch beinhaltet auch einige interessante Exkurse (S. 58–60: Schöpfung und modernes Weltbild; S. 100–103: Hieronymus Boschs „Garten der Lüste"; S. 114–117: Zur Auslegungsgeschichte der Eden-Erzählungen). Jeder Exkurs stellt eine Art *Wirkungsgeschichte* dar und verweist den Leser auf aktuelle Weltanschauungsprobleme (der erste), kulturelle Inspirationen (der zweite) sowie auch Neuinterpretation der Edentradition in späteren biblischen Texten und in der intertestamentlichen Literatur (der dritte).

Der Kommentar von Andreas Schüle ist empfehlenswert nicht nur angesichts des retrospektiven und zusammentragenden Charakters der aufgesammelten Erkenntnisse (so klassisch aufgebaute Kommentare), sondern auch wegen der bereits erwähnten, neuartigen und stellenweise sehr frischen, nicht mit Details und Fußnoten überladenen Art und Weise der Betrachtung, des Inhalts und der Botschaft der Urgeschichte.

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Sławomir Zatwardnicki, *Księgi natchnione i ich interpretacja. Inspirujące przesłanie Josepha Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI* (Lublin: Academicon 2021). Ss. 240. 36 PLN. ISBN 978-83-62475-56-8 (oprawa miękka), 978-83-62475-59-9 (ebook)

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Publikacja zwraca na siebie uwagę ambitnym tytułem: *Księgi natchnione i ich interpretacja*, odpowiednio uwydatnionym formą graficzną na okładce, i chociaż zainteresowany czytelnik doznaje natychmiast małego rozczarowania faktem, iż rzecz traktuje jedynie o *Inspirującym przesłaniu Josepha Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI* (podtytuł), to jednak, mimo zawężenia problematyki jedynie do twórczej myśli niemieckiego teologa, kardynała i papieża, publikacja na temat tak ważnej kwestii zasługuje na najwyższą uwagę. Recenzowana książka nie jest chyba najnowszą (ostatnią) publikacją Sławomira Zatwardnickiego, gdyż równolegle na internetowym rynku wydawniczym w 2021 roku pojawiła się również jego książka: *Maryja. Dlaczego nie?* (Poznań: Rosemaria 2021) (ss. 235). Ten stosunkowo młody stażem naukowym twórca (ur. 1975, doktorat z teologii 2017 r.), obecnie adiunkt Papieskiego Wydziału Teologicznego we Wrocławiu oraz wykładowca teologii fundamentalnej i religiologii, ma w swym dorobku już 21 książek i sporo artykułów naukowych. Zwłaszcza tymi opublikowanymi w minionych latach zwrócił na siebie uwagę, tym bardziej że omawia w nich także istotne kwestie z zakresu hermeneutyki i metodologii biblijnej, gdy tymczasem jest to problematyka badań naukowych niezbyt często podejmowana, i co więcej, mało popularna wśród polskich biblistów i teologów.

Jak autor precyzuje we wstępie, w opracowaniu pragnie przedstawić „teologiczny namysł" Josepha Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI „nad księgami spisanymi z inspiracji Ducha Świętego oraz zasadami interpretacji, jakiej się one domagają" (s. 8). Zawartość tomu odpowiada tej intencji. Książka S. Zatwardnickiego porządkuje dziedzictwo myśli J. Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI w wyznaczonym tytułem obszarze: *Księgi natchnione i ich interpretacja*. Nie jest to jednak jedyny cel autora, bowiem jego drugim pragnieniem było – jak pisze – przywołanie „odniesień do refleksji pozostających pod mniejszym lub większym wpływem" papieża seniora przede wszystkim teologów polskich, choć nie tylko. Nie koniec na tym, gdyż książka jest nadto „świadectwem własnych poszukiwań" autora, inspirowanego „inspirującym przesłaniem"

papieża (s. 8). Te trzy poziomy wykładu należy wyraźnie podkreślić, gdyż nieustannie przenikają one analizy zawarte w recenzowanej pracy, stanowiąc o jej wartości, ale także niedoskonałości.

Na książkę składają się kolejno: „Wprowadzenie" (s. 7–13), następnie osiem rozdziałów, w których autor naświetla tematy związane z Bożym objawieniem, jego zapisem w Piśmie Świętym oraz zasadami i warunkami interpretacji ksiąg świętych (s. 15–212), a także sumujące „Zakończenie" (s. 213–217), wykaz skrótów (s. 219–220) i bibliografia (s. 221–239). We „Wprowadzeniu" autor sygnalizuje, iż zawartość pierwszych siedmiu rozdziałów została zorganizowana na podstawie dwóch tytułowych pojęć: „księgi natchnione" (rozdz. 1–3) oraz ich „interpretacja" (rozdz. 4–7). W ostatniej części (rozdz. 8) autor przedstawia relacje istniejące między „hermeneutyką reformy" Vaticanum II w ujęciu papieża Benedykta XVI a pojęciem „hermeneutyka wiary", omówionym wielostronnie w książce. Odnotować należy także, iż ważną częścią publikacji są liczne i rozbudowane przypisy. Od razu należy także wspomnieć istotną okoliczność dotyczącą recenzowanej publikacji. „Osiem rozdziałów konstytuuje jedno dzieło", jak pisze jego autor, jednak z drugiej strony przyznaje, iż „każdy z rozdziałów stanowi pewną całość, która pozostaje czytelna bez odniesienia do całości" (s. 11). Wynika to między innymi z faktu, iż niektóre fragmenty książki były publikowane już wcześniej.

Umowna pierwsza część książki (rozdz. 1–3) podejmuje teologiczne tematy Bożego objawienia, jego utrwalenia w Piśmie Świętym, roli żywej Tradycji Kościoła i wzajemnych relacji między tymi rzeczywistościami. Rozdział pierwszy: „Od Objawienia do ksiąg natchnionych" (s. 15–39), przynosi zatem omówienie fundamentalnych pojęć dotyczących Bożego objawienia i jego osobowego charakteru, a także miejsca Pisma Świętego i żywej Tradycji Kościoła. Autor czyni to analizując teologiczne wypowiedzi J. Ratzingera, który – jeszcze jako młody teolog – należał do grona autorów finalnej postaci Konstytucji dogmatycznej o objawieniu Bożym *Dei verbum* i jest współautorem zawartej w niej dynamicznej, osobowej koncepcji Objawienia, którego pełnią jest Jezus Chrystus. W rozdziale drugim: „Interpretacja Biblii w świetle misterium Wcielenia" (s. 41–69), autor przypomina dobrze znaną analogię między Słowem Wcielonym a słowami Bożymi „wcielonymi" w ludzką mowę, a następnie wskazuje na Jezusa Chrystusa jako podstawę jedności Pisma Świętego. Stąd konsekwentnie rodzi się konieczność uwzględnienia „egzegezy kanonicznej" (idea ważna dla J. Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI), znanej w historii Kościoła jako teologiczna zasada jedności Pisma Świętego. Rozdział ten zawiera przedstawienie wielkiej tajemnicy Wcielenia w świetle wypowiedzi Kościoła i teologa J. Ratzingera. Jest ono bowiem prawzorem i paradygmatem wcielenia się Słowa w słowo ludzkie (analogia), o czym należy pamiętać przy interpretacji tekstów świętych. Na osobne odnotowanie zasługują wprowadzone w tym rozdziale pojęcie „hermeneutyki chalcedońskiej" oraz podkreślenie swoistej „dwubiegunowości" we właściwej egzegezie biblijnej. Ogólnie jednak czytelnik spotyka tutaj znany skądinąd teologiczny wykład

Objawienia i natchnienia biblijnego, obecny od wieków w Kościele, i wynikające z niego implikacje dla hermeneutyki biblijnej. W rozdziale trzecim: „Inspiracje mariologiczne a teologia natchnienia" (s. 71–95), zamykającym umowną pierwszą część książki, autor stara się odkryć „rysy maryjne" natchnienia biblijnego, wskazując na drogę wiary Maryi jako wzoru odpowiedzi Kościoła i hagiografa na Boże objawienie. Jednak w pierwszym i kolejnych paragrafach autor powtarza jedynie treści znane i omówione już wcześniej (i wielokrotnie przez innych autorów). Znajdziemy tutaj wykład eklezjalnego wymiaru natchnienia biblijnego i znane dobrze ujęcie natchnienia Pisma Świętego jako tajemnicy analogicznej do misterium Wcielenia. Krytyczny czytelnik może się jedynie zastanawiać, czy autor streszcza myśl papieża Benedykta XVI, czy też wykład abp. Henryka Muszyńskiego o natchnieniu biblijnym, w tym o wspólnotowym i jednostkowym charakterze natchnienia biblijnego. Początki i podstawy tego eklezjalnego wykładu natchnienia biblijnego obu znamienitych autorów znajdują się w eklezjologicznym ujęciu natchnienia biblijnego Karla Rahnera (*Über die Schriftinspiration*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder 1958). Tylko na koniec rozdziału, i to marginalnie (s. 91–94), podjęta została kwestia „inspiracji mariologicznych" w kontekście teologii natchnienia, przy czym autor słusznie pisze o „rysach maryjnych" natchnienia biblijnego, nie naświetlając kompleksowości tego interesującego wątku teologicznego (por. wspólnotowy i jednostkowy wymiar/aspekt natchnienia). W tym miejscu wypada przywołać dyskusyjne stwierdzenie S. Zatwardnickiego, który pisze: „I na koniec warto byłoby jeszcze zwrócić uwagę na różnicę między przyjęciem Objawienia przez bezgrzeszną i pełną łaski Maryję a odkrywaniem «łaski po łasce» (por. J 1,16) Objawienia przez wspólnotę wierzących grzeszników (w tym autorów natchnionych)" (s. 88). Takie publicystyczne uproszczenie brzmi wprawdzie dobrze, ale fakt, że coś brzmi dobrze, nie znaczy jeszcze, że jest egzegetycznie i teologicznie prawdziwe, zwłaszcza jeśli czytać dalsze wywody autora (w nawiązaniu do 2 P 1,21)[1].

Druga umowna część publikacji (rozdz. 4–7) przybliża z kolei zagadnienia, głównie teologiczne, związane z interpretacją ksiąg świętych. W punkcie wyjścia podjęta została kwestia obecności i aktywności Ducha Świętego w procesie interpretacji tekstów natchnionych, gdyż tak należy rozumieć tytuł rozdziału czwartego: „Lektura ksiąg natchnionych w Duchu Świętym" (s. 97–115). Autor wskazał w nim na istotną i nieodzowną rolę Ducha Świętego w procesie interpretacji Biblii, ale także na miejsce „zmysłu wiary" ludzi wierzących (*sensus fidei*) oraz funkcję teologicznej zasady „analogia wiary" (*analogia fidei*), akcentując stale eklezjalną przestrzeń interpretacji – lektura Pisma Świętego dokonuje się we wspólnocie Kościoła. Jednak recenzent nie do końca jest przekonany, czy autor zachowuje tutaj wystarczające

1 W świetle zapisu Łukasza również Maryja – Matka Boża, mimo wyjątkowego wybrania i świętości (*kecharitōmenē*), poznawała stopniowo tajemnice Bożej ekonomii (zob. Łk 1,29; 2,19.51) lub – jak chce autor – „łaska po łasce", co jednak nie do końca odpowiada biblijno-teologicznym treściom J 1,16.

rozróżnienie między tym, co nazywamy *sensus fidei* (zmysł, doświadczenie wiary) a *analogia fidei* (spójność prawd wiary). Dobrze zatem, że kwestia wzajemnych relacji między tymi pojęciami została podjęta i płodnie naświetlona w następnym, piątym rozdziale: „*Sensus fidei* a *analogia fidei* w egzegezie" (s. 117–135). Ograniczone rozmiary recenzji nie pozwalają na stosowny komentarz do zawartych tutaj wywodów i twierdzeń. W rozdziale szóstym: „«Jakby dusza teologii» w komunii Kościoła" (s. 137–162), znajdziemy z kolei przywołanie myśli papieża-seniora na temat teologicznej zasady żywej Tradycji Kościoła, tym samym także eklezjalnego kontekstu interpretacji ksiąg natchnionych. Sukcesywnie autor omawia związek Pisma Świętego z Tradycją (i wspólnotą Kościoła), ostatecznie również związek z jego Boskim Autorem, co paradoksalnie potwierdza krytyczna, naukowa (diachroniczna) analiza Biblii (s. 140). Następnie omawia wierzącą, eklezjalną lekturę Biblii w ramach i kontekście żywej Tradycji. Punktem centralnym rozdziału jest pogłębiona prezentacja Jezusa Chrystusa jako źródła i normy wszelkiej interpretacji biblijnej, co ostatecznie owocuje końcowym (i którymś z kolei) stwierdzeniem, iż Kościół jest miejscem hermeneutyki Biblii. W tej części książki autor raz omawia myśl papieża, cytując go także *verbatim*, innym razem stanowisko Międzynarodowej Komisji Teologicznej lub także innych autorów, po czym powraca do papieskiego przesłania – głównego inspiratora jego analiz.

Pewnym zaskoczeniem może być obecność w recenzowanej publikacji rozdziału siódmego: „«Hermeneutyka lęku» w fundamentalizmie biblijnym" (s. 163–184). Jest tak, gdyż przerywa on obecny w książce generalnie pozytywny wykład teologicznych zasad przyświecających interpretacji tekstów natchnionych. W tym sensie wydaje się on wręcz zbędny. Każdy jednak, kto zna teologiczną myśl J. Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI (i sytuację egzegezy w kręgach Kościołów zachodnich i USA, zwłaszcza wspólnot reformowanych) nie będzie zdziwiony pojawieniem się tego rozdziału i tej problematyki. Autor przedstawia genezę, analizuje charakterystyczne elementy tego typu myślenia i przeżywania wiary oraz dokonuje krytycznej oceny fundamentalizmu biblijnego. Z punktu widzenia polskiej teologii i biblistyki jest to przydatne i potrzebne ostrzeżenie przed niebezpieczeństwami i manowcami egzegezy dosłownej (literalnej) – fundamentalistycznej[2].

Analizy i teologiczny wykład S. Zatwardnickiego zamyka rozdział ósmy: „Hermeneutyka reformy – hermeneutyka wiary" (s. 185–212), będący ukoronowaniem wywodów i nadający całości książki finalną postać i wydźwięk (i oczywiście inspirującemu przesłaniu J. Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI). Papież senior wskazuje na konieczność właściwego rozumienia soborowej odnowy i spuścizny Soboru

2 Uważny czytelnik natknie się na nieścisłość formalną. Autor przywołuje wypowiedź Michała Bednarza (s. 177, przypis 34), ale nie umieszcza jego tekstu w wykazie bibliograficznym, ograniczając się do cytowania pracy zbiorowej M. Heller – M. Drożdż (red.), *Początek świata – Biblia a nauka* (Tarnów: Biblos 1998). Jednak według przyjętych zasad artykuł autorski w pracy zbiorowej winno się cytować jak inne artykuły, np. w czasopismach czy słownikach.

Watykańskiego II – jego hermeneutyki reformy w kontekście i perspektywie proponowanej i przedstawionej w książce „hermeneutyki wiary".

W podsumowaniu z konieczności powierzchownej prezentacji najnowszej książki S. Zatwardnickiego warto odnotować, iż każdy rozdział zamyka jakby *summarium*, przy czym raz jest to podsumowanie, innym razem rekapitulacja, innym jeszcze – zakończenie, wnioski czy relektura. Natkniemy się także na domykające „perspektywy" czy „alternatywę".

Chociaż napisana językiem jasnym i zrozumiałym, lektura książki S. Zatwardnickiego nie jest ani łatwa, ani prosta, gdyż przypadkowy czytelnik spotyka się z materią raczej nieznaną i zarazem teologicznie gęstą, którą S. Zatwardnicki przybliża w różnych miejscach i konfiguracjach (powtórzenia są w książce dość liczne), a nadto przesłanie J. Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI nie jest zbyt znane i obecne w praktyce polskiego Kościoła. Wykształcony i przygotowany teolog znajdzie w książce głównie przypomnienie najważniejszych prawd związanych z tekstami natchnionymi i ich interpretacją, prawd znanych skądinąd. Z kolei mniej przygotowany czytelnik musi sobie zadać trud poznania tego oryginalnego spojrzenia na źródła chrześcijańskiej wiary – na Boże objawienie i natchnienie biblijne. Dodajmy, iż refleksja nad naturą Objawienia znacząco dominuje nad kwestią natchnienia biblijnego, potraktowanego raczej zwięźle, zwłaszcza jeśli mieć na uwadze treści ostatniego dokumentu Papieskiej Komisji Biblijnej, które w recenzowanej publikacji pojawiają się jedynie sporadycznie (cytowane jako NPP).

Liczne materiały zawarte w książce były drukowane już wcześniej, głównie w formie artykułów, czego autor nie ukrywa. Duże części materiału zostają przywołane wręcz *verbatim* (s. 11). Spowodowało to, wbrew zapewnieniom autora, dość liczne powtórzenia w książce tych samych treści czy tematów. Z kolei materiały będące prostym przedrukiem (*verbatim*) nie zostały opatrzone odpowiednią informacją we właściwym miejscu. Są to teksty bez zmian merytorycznych czy stylistycznych, dlatego w przypadku publikacji naukowej należałoby ten fakt opisać dokładniej w przypisie, głównie ze względu na przyszłe, ewentualne postępowanie awansowe[3].

Jakby uprzedzając przewidywany kolejny zarzut, autor wyjaśnia we „Wprowadzeniu" przyjętą w publikacji metodę pracy, którą roboczo można opisać terminem „inspiracja – inspiracje". Źródłem jego inspiracji jest teologiczna myśl J. Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI, inni autorzy są inspirowanymi. Problem związany z omawianą publikacją polega na tym, iż nie zawsze wiadomo, kto mówi i czyje są to inspiracje, czego – co należy uczciwie przyznać – autor jest świadomy (zob. s. 9 i s. 11–12). Pewnym zaskoczeniem dla recenzenta był fakt, iż bardzo podobny zarzut sformułował kilka lat temu ks. prof. Jerzy Szymik w recenzji rozprawy doktorskiej S. Zatwardnickiego: „To charakterystyczne dla stylu tej rozprawy, to jej erudycyjny walor

3 Por. przykładowo s. 43n książki i *Studia Gdańskie* 33 (2013) 14nn; s. 94n książki i *Teologia w Polsce* 8/1 (2014) 116nn; s. 106n książki i *Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne* 50/1 (2017) 89nn.

i skaza zarazem: Autora nie tyle interesuje analiza danego tekstu, co już jakby następny, «dalszy», etap danej kwestii, etap, który może osiągnąć bez konkretnej analizy konkretnego tekstu, ale dojść doń drogą wiedzy nabytej przez szeroką paletę innych lektur" (s. 3). Owa „metodologiczna nieostrość" autora recenzowanej publikacji w prezentacji papieskich opinii i opinii innych autorów nie jest zatem czymś wyjątkowym, ale – jak się wydaje – przyjętym sposobem pracy naukowej i redagowania tekstów. Należałoby się jednak domagać od autora zachowania należytego rygoru naukowego.

Inne pomniejsze uwagi krytyczne nie mają już takiej doniosłości, chociaż mogą prowokować polemikę czy dyskusję. Niektóre warto przywołać. Przede wszystkim, omawiając czy przybliżając polskiemu środowisku teologicznemu i Kościołowi w Polsce myśl J. Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI, należy pamiętać o specyfice i odmiennej perspektywie Kościoła niemieckiego (ogólnie teologii niemieckiej i szerzej – zachodniej), którego problemy nie są (jeszcze) problemami Kościoła w Polsce. Joseph Ratzinger dyskutuje czy polemizuje głównie z naukową, historyzującą teologią i egzegezą niemiecką, która jest dla niego stałym punktem odniesienia. Zatem niezbędny byłby swoisty „filtr", który przejmie i rozwinie jego znakomite intuicje teologiczne, natomiast pominie lub potraktuje marginalnie sprawy nieistotne dla religijnego i teologicznego życia Kościoła w Polsce (problem fundamentalizmu czy krytyki kanonicznej – pozostańmy w Polsce przy teologicznej zasadzie jedności Pisma Świętego).

Wartość publikacji wynika przede wszystkim z wartości i doniosłości biblijno-teologicznego wykładu, jaki współczesny „ojciec Kościoła" przedstawił i pozostawił wspólnocie wierzących. Sławomir Zatwardnicki jest tutaj pośrednikiem myśli wielkiego niemieckiego mistrza teologii, ale pośrednikiem sprawnym i rzetelnym, mimo poczynionych uwag krytycznych. W tym sensie lektura tej książki jest dobrym przygotowaniem do samodzielnego spotkania z Opera Omnia największego teologa XX–XXI wieku, spotkania z jego teologicznym dziełem, dostępnym już w ogromnej części w języku polskim. Pośrednio zasługą autora jest także przybliżenie wierzącym najważniejszych zagadnień dotyczących źródeł chrześcijańskiej wiary, to jest Pisma Świętego i Tradycji, dwóch nurtów jednego Objawienia, a także wynikających stąd implikacji dla interpretacji Pisma Świętego jako słowa Bożego. Nadto dla młodych adeptów studiów teologicznych książka może być dobrym wprowadzeniem do teologii Objawienia i natchnienia biblijnego, ale także dużą pomocą dla pytających, czym jest chrześcijaństwo i czym się ono karmi jako osobowa wspólnota wierzących. Tym samym recenzowana publikacja może być pomocą w odpowiedzi na pytanie, czym jest w istocie Chrystusowy Kościół. Należy na koniec dodać, iż powyższa recenzja została napisana z punktu widzenia teologa biblisty. Jej intencją nie jest wchodzenie w kompetencje teologów dogmatyków czy fundamentalistów, niemniej interdyscyplinarna dyskusja wydaje się wskazana i przede wszystkim może okazać się owocną dla polskiej teologii. Szkoda, że autor cytuje biblistów polskich tylko sporadycznie, i to głównie wspierając uprzednio założoną tezę.

Postscriptum

W wielu miejscach recenzowanej książki autor stawia teologom, ale głównie biblistom, wysokie wymagania duchowe, domagając się od nich wręcz życia „mistycznego" (s. 76). Powraca do tej myśli wielokrotnie, przede wszystkim w rozdziale czwartym (s. 97–115). To stanowisko wynika oczywiście z istoty wymagań kryjących się w pojęciu „hermeneutyka wiary" (i w teologicznym przesłaniu papieża Benedykta XVI). W tym sensie pisze on między innymi: „Albo który z egzegetów – to druga ilustracja – może chlubić się doświadczeniem trzeciego nieba, jakie stało się udziałem Apostoła Narodów (por. 2 Kor 12,1-4)? W takim razie należałoby zachować pokorę w wypowiadaniu się na temat natchnienia..." (s. 81). Ponieważ w recenzowanej publikacji S. Zatwardnicki zapowiada kolejną już pozycję wydawniczą, tym razem poświęconą właśnie natchnieniu biblijnemu (s. 11), stąd można jedynie życzyć płodnemu autorowi, by doznał Pawłowej wizji „trzeciego nieba" lub przynajmniej, tworząc nowe dzieło, zachował należytą pokorę i przede wszystkim stosowny rygor naukowy.