

...t compilation of themes that discusses the relation between
...d hermeneutics. It invokes art, spirituality, history, society and
... alongside relevant hermeneutical and phenomenological items
... objectivity, community, experience, translation, interpretation
... e, language, and so on.'

el Rodríguez Ramírez, University of Guanajuato, Mexico

...explores the intersection of culture, language, and religious
... , and approaches hermeneutics as a meta-perspective to
... ristian religious communication. It draws on the work of scholars
... se geographical areas and academic fields, with a particular
... on Orthodox and Catholic Christianity and Slavic scholarship.

...e explores Christian experiential identities through hermeneutics
... menology, in the context of diversity across denominations
... eolinguistic and sociopragmatic perspectives. It offers the reader
... tion of specific cultural textscapes, considering the space of
... and religious narrations in a variety of discourses. The chapters
... ow the Gospel is conditioned and developed by specific strands
... nity, the values that emerge through cultural contact and contact
... denominations, how religion interacts with wider societal issues,
... sses of sacralization and desacralization of culture, space and
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...ritical insights into hermeneutics in the tradition of
... acher, Gadamer and Ricoeur, it presents a variety of case
... d topics, including Andalusian saeta, Biblical studies, Icelandic
... hies, issues of adaptation and exoticisation of the language of
... minorities, Old Church Slavonic scriptures, the Shrine of Fatima in
... and sign language.

...s exploration of religious narratives and interactions, the book not
... dens our understanding of Christian experience but also fosters
... across disciplines and cultures.

ZATA HAŁADEWICZ-GRZELAK is Assistant Professor at Opole
... y of Technology, Poland.

ZATA WIDEL-IGNASZCZAK is Assistant Professor in the
... ent of Translation Studies and Slavic Languages at the John Paul II
... niversity of Lublin, Poland.

HERMENEUTICAL NARRATIVES IN
CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Edited by Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak
and Małgorzata Widel-Ignaszczak

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International Perspectives

Edited by

Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak and Małgorzata Widel-Ignaszczak

صَلِّ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ شَبَّةً حَمَامَةٍ نَزَلَتْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ عَلَى مَذْكُورِي



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Hermeneutical Narratives in Christian Religious Experience

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International Perspectives

Edited by

Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak and
Małgorzata Wideł-Ignaszczak

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 Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, 1359 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA
 Bloomsbury Publishing Ireland, 29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 AY28, Ireland
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First published in Great Britain 2025

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-3505-1846-9
 ePDF: 978-1-3505-1847-6
 eBook: 978-1-3505-1848-3

Typeset by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

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Contributors

Paula Pina de Almeida is Professor of Law in the Social Sciences Department at the Institute University of Tomar (IPT), Portugal. She is a member of Techn&Art (R&D unit) as Researcher, a member of the Inclusion and Diversity Group in IPT, and the secretary of the Technical and Scientific Council of the Management School of Tomar. She is also a member of the Mentoring Group as part of Integration of students, and the Erasmus Coordinator for the degree in Human Research Management. She is a member of the Observatory on Success and Abandonment of students in high education. With a degree in Law, an MSc in Community Law, a post-graduate degree in Consumer Law and a PhD in Community Law, she has worked on projects related to labour law, tourism and civil protection legal frameworks. Her areas of expertise include labour law, inclusion and non-discrimination as well as frameworks for cultural heritage and public policies. She is the author of several national and international publications.

Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska is Professor Emerita in the Institute of English Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. Her main areas of interest cover literary semantics, stylistics, poetics, philosophy of language and artistic semiotics (specifically transmedial relations between natural language, the fine arts and architecture), on which subjects she has published extensively in acknowledged periodicals and collective volumes in Poland and abroad. Her monographs include *Language-Games: Pro and Against* (2004) and *Much More than Metaphor: Master Tropes of Artistic Language and Imagination* (2013); she also co-edited collected monographs, inter alia *Language – Literature – the Arts: A Cognitive-Semiotic Interface* (with O. Vorobyova, 2017).

Ásdís Egilsdóttir is Professor Emerita in the Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland, where she taught Medieval Icelandic Literature. She has focused on hagiography in Iceland, translation and memory studies, and gender studies. In particular, she trailblazed studies of masculinity in Icelandic medieval literature, discussing its varied manifestations and the demands that society placed on men in the Middle Ages. Ásdís has held various commissions of trust, for example, serving as alternate member of the Icelandic Naming Committee and on the board of the Institute of Research in Literature and Visual Arts, as well as of the Research Institute of Women's and Gender Studies. Her most recent publication is her Festschrift *Fræðinæmi* (2016), containing a selection of her articles. Currently, she is a member of an international network researching emotions in Old Norse literature.

Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak is Assistant Professor at the Language Centre of the Opole University of Technology, Poland. Her main research interests focus on Natural Phonology as well as cultural semiotics, in particular, the dyad of the sacred and profane in language. She was a member of the International Jury awarding the yearly Mouton d'Or Prize for the *Semiotica* journal (2015–17). She has co-edited four collective monographs; has been a reviewer for Springer, de Gruyter and Red Fame journals, among others; and has authored over 60 academic research papers and chapters and presented over 60 conference presentations. Her recent publications include an edited monograph in Polish, *Semiotactic Study of the Sacrosphere of Culture on the Material of Selected Examples of Visual Hierophanic Symbolics* (2019) and 'Markedness Effects in the Semiotactics of the Hieratic Marker of the Stone Tablets in the Christian Sacrosphere' (2023).

Helena Pocięchina retired in 2024 from her role as Associate Professor at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland. Her research interests include history of East Slavic languages and history and literature of the Old Believers in Poland. She has published a series of monographs (2014–16) and a scientific journal *Fontes Slavicae Orthodoxae* (2017–22). Her most recent publication is *Minaia: An Example of Hymnographic Literature and a Tool to Shape the Orthodox Worldview* (edited by Helena Pocięchina and Alexander Kravetsky, 2013).

Wiktor Pskit is Assistant Professor at the Department of Linguistics and Communication in the Faculty of Philology of the University of Lodz, Poland. His research interests include English–Polish contrastive linguistics (including syntax and word formation), generative syntax, language contact and religious language (especially the language of liturgy). He is the author of one monograph, *The Concept of Grammatical Category in Generative Grammar and Cognitive Grammar*, and many articles in peer-reviewed journals and chapters in edited monographs. These include 'Syntactic Reduplication and Plurality: On Some Properties of NPN Subjects and Objects in Polish and English' (2021) and 'Język liturgiczny Ordynariatów Personalnych dla byłych anglikanów: Zarys ogólny' (2020). He is also the editor of two collective monographs: *Topics in Syntax and Semantics: Linguistic and Philosophical Perspectives* and *Semantyczne i Pragmatyczne Aspekty Komunikacji: Od Deminutywów do Gestów*.

Małgorzata Rybka is Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland, in the Department of Polish Philology. Her main research interests are text linguistics and religious language. In 2014 she published the book *Kształtem jest Miłość: Obraz Miłości w Tekstach Jana Pawła II* ['The Shape Is Love: The Image of Love in the Texts of John Paul II'] and a collective monograph, *The Language of Religion Past and Present* (co-edited with Stanisław Mikołajczak). She is also the author of several articles related to the problem of teaching Polish as a foreign language. She led the research team that prepared the media monitoring report *COVID-19: Media Image of the Coronavirus and Its Socio-political Impact* within the framework of the 'Research on COVID-19' competition of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (2021).

Ventura Salazar-García is Professor of General Linguistics at the University of Jaén, Spain. His research addresses issues in functional grammar ('Modality in Spanish Sign Language (LSE) Revisited: A Functional Account' [2018]), sign languages ('Non-verbal Predictability and Copula Support Rule in Spanish Sign Language' [2005]), and applied linguistics ('Desafíos Lingüísticos y Didácticos de la Escritura Académica' [2021]). He recently has also focused on the semiotic analysis of the Andalusian religious culture. His publications include papers in journals such as *Studies in Language*, *Open Linguistics* and *Sign Systems Studies*. He has also carried out academic activities by invitation at institutions in several countries, including the University of Amsterdam, Pontifical Gregorian University, Harvard University, James Madison University and Saarland University.

Cláudia Pires da Silva gained a PhD in Economics from the University of Extremadura, Spain, in 2016. She is Adjunct Professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar (IPT), Portugal, Director of the Department Unit of Social Sciences at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, Member of the Academic Council of IPT and Member of the Technical Scientific Council of ESGT/IPT, Integrated Researcher and Deputy Director of the Techn&Art Research Centre – IPT (centre financed by FCT) bachelor and master internships supervisor, jury of Masters and Curricular Internships. She is a researcher in some funded projects (GEDITEC) and has published some articles in specialized journals, being also an article reviewer. She recently won the best communication award at the international tourism congress in Córdoba. She works in the area(s) of Social Sciences with an emphasis on Economics and Tourism.

Sally Stocksdales holds a doctorate in History from the University of Delaware, USA. She is an Instructor of History at Towson University, USA. Her research interests include Russian/Soviet History generally; the cultural history of Russia, especially the Silver Age era; comparing Russian serfdom and American slavery, as well as the emancipation era in each country; Russian religious and philosophical history; and the history of Simbirsk Province in the Imperial period. She is also interested in the philosophical genre of phenomenology. Among her publications is her most recent book, *When Emancipation Came: The End of Enslavement on a Southern Plantation and a Russian Estate* (2022).

Małgorzata Widel-Ignaszczak is Assistant Professor in the Department of Translation Studies and Slavonic Languages at the Institute of Linguistics of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. She is the author of the monograph *Transfer of Religious Lexis from Polish into Russian* (2017) and dozens of scientific articles; co-author of the academic textbook *Russian Language in Business: B1 and B2 level* (2015); and co-editor of the monograph *Crossing Borders: Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian Literary, Cultural and Linguistic Space from the Perspective of the 21st Century* and of the monograph *Language – Media – Religion: Contexts of Central and Eastern Europe, Theolinguistics 19*. She has been Secretary of the Religious Language Commission of the International Committee of Slavists since 2019. Her research interests undertaken in her publications include the following areas: (a) theolinguistics – issues of religious

language; (b) translation studies, especially research on Polish–Russian translation; (c) intercultural communication; (d) and applied linguistics, especially issues related to Russian in the business sphere.

Kalina Wojciechowska is Professor at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, Poland, in the Department of New Testament Knowledge and Greek Language; Professor at the Evangelical Higher School of Theology in Wrocław; and head of the ChAT Scientific Publishing House. She is an evangelical theologian and a biblical scholar. Her research interests include synchronic methods of exegesis (exegesis of the narrative books of the New Testament, exegesis of the universal letters of the New Testament). In her scientific work, she combines biblical studies with other disciplines of the humanities, primarily with linguistics and literary studies. She is the author of numerous scientific articles and books, for example: *Oczekując Miłosierdzia: Komentarz Strukturalny do Listu św. Judy* (Waiting for Mercy: Structural Commentary to the Letter of St. Jude, co-authored with Mariusz Rosik) and *Opowiadam Wam Jak Piotr: Elementy Stylu i Stylizacji w Ewangelii Marka* (I Tell You Like Peter: Elements of Style and Stylization in the Gospel of Mark, 2006). She has been a member of the Committee on Theological Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences since 2011 and a member of the Religious Language Team of the Council for the Polish Language at the Presidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences since 2012. Since 2010, she has been actively involved in preparing materials for the annual Weeks of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Marta Wrześniewska-Pietrzak is Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. She works at the Department of Polish Philology. Her main research interests are devoted to the language and identity of the d/Deaf. She published *Aksjologiczne Wyznaczniki Tożsamości w Wypowiedziach g/Głuchych i Czasopiśmie Środowiskowych "Świat Ciszy"* (Axiological Indicators of Identity in Texts Written by d/Deaf People and in "Świat Ciszy" Community Newspaper) (2017). She has also authored several papers referring to (surdo)glottodidactics, including the problem of teaching Polish to the d/Deaf and students with migratory backgrounds in Polish primary schools. She is also active in the area of religious language studies, being a coorganizer of a series of conferences "Język religijny dawniej i dziś" [religious language formerly and today] sample articles: "Obejmuję Spojrzeniem Duszę Całą Ojczyznę Umiłowaną" – *Ojczyzna Jako Wartość w Homiliach Jana Pawła II* ('I Embrace with My Soul My Entire Beloved Homeland' – Homeland as a Value in John Paul II's Homilies) (co-author: Małgorzata Rybka); „Spotkania w Blasku Wiary” – *Uwag Kilka o Perswazyjności i Atrakcyjności Nabożeństwa Kościoła Katolickiego* ('Meetings in the Glow of Faith' – A Few Remarks on the Persuasiveness and Attractiveness of the New Service of the Catholic Church); *Piosenka Religijna Jako Modlitwa, Która Uczy, Bawiąc* (A Religious Song as a Prayer that Teaches and Entertains).

Peter Žeňuch is Professor of Culturology and Slavistics at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. He researches the usage of folk, official and sacred language in written and spoken form as an ethnic and confessional identifier. He has published

several monographic works and scientific studies, including the monograph *Kyrillische Paraliturgische Lieder* (2006), *K dejinám cyrilskej písomnej kultúry na Slovensku* (2013) and *Slováci a slovenčina v jazykovo-historických a konfesijných súvislostiach* (2022). He is also a leading research fellow at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the field of Slavistics, a chairman of the Slovak Committee of Slavists and coordinator of scientific commissions at the International Committee of Slavists.

Svetlana Žeňuchová Šašerina teaches Russian language and culture at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia, and conducts research at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. She is engaged in the study of the Cyrillic manuscript heritage of Slovakia. She is the author of several commented editions of handwritten texts related to the Slovak cultural horizon, for example, *Dva uglianske rukopisy ponaučení a exempliel zo 17. storočia* (2019), *Cyrilský rukopis Klimenta Bukovského z 18. storočia* (2023), *Dva rukopisy Štefana Hlinku z Litmanovej na Spiši z 18. storočia* (2023).

Introduction

'Religious experience' as a multidimensional category

This volume aims to provide a heuristic platform for exploring relationships to the sacred within the context of Christian denominations.¹ We focus on a plethora of cultural and linguistic aspects, tangential to the hermeneutically defined 'religious experience': on the level of an individual human being, of autochthone communities, intangible heritage and society as such. The synergy of diversity found across particular strands of Christianity (Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Protestant) brings together particular simplex aspects of hieratic language and other sacred hieratic cultural textuality. Hermeneutics is used here as a meta-perspective to approach hieratic language, acting as a node that connects the theological kerygma with the sociolinguistic and theolinguistic aspects, thus bridging specific linguistic and pragmatic perspectives.

Hermeneutics helps to disentangle the tension between the particular and the specific, the centripetal and centrifugal forces within a denomination. Religion is understood here, in contrast to spirituality, and in accordance with Durkheimian thought, as a communal, institutional mode of relating to the sacred. Ultimately, one hermeneutical question arises that transposes a classical question by Ricoeur ('What does it mean to be a human being?'): What does it mean to be a Christian in a postmodern society? How relevant today are the words of Jesus the Nazarene as recorded by His close friends and immediate followers? Definitely, the volume cannot provide a definite answer to that overarching question, but it offers a plateau for individual quest thereof.

Any religious experience is multifaceted. Within the investigated hermeneutical horizon of the Christianity, the Word of God reaches the faithful not only via the words uttered but is received, through living signs of God's grace, materialized in the form of sacraments and other forms of religious life. Religious experience, as a multidimensional category, thus implies an inherent phenomenological aspect: the subject reaching towards the divine remains in a dialogical relation (internal dialogue) and, at the same time, is being transformed through the phenomenon of relating to the Absolute in intersubjectivity. Hence a dialectal phenomenological coupling occurs. In this process, the essence of faith transcends any cognitive aspect. As stipulated in any religious theosophical denomination, a human being is called to believe in God the Creator through the grace of faith, not through fact-based reasoning ('Thou hast believed because you have seen me; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed').

In the Introduction to the monograph *Hermeneutical Narratives in Art, Literature and Communication*, which can be assumed to be a predecessor to this enterprise, the

epistemological pivot for the volume was the concept of 'encounter'. 'Encounter' was there posited to imply primarily a meeting of the sender of a text with the receiver, that is, the addresser and addressee. But the encounter was conceived of also in a wider sense, for example to imply the embodied contact with the materiality and with the conceptual dimension of the text with a reader. These subsume, for example, incurrence of the listener with the speaker, encounters with artwork, with stretches of discourse, or even the liaising of 'the familiar' with 'the foreign'. It was also stipulated that the religious experience might be viewed as an asymmetrical hermeneutic relation, occurring through an engagement with specific symbols or textualities (Preface, *Hermeneutical Narratives* 2024: xvii).

Thus, the noema of 'encounter' necessarily presupposes a dialogue. Here we pursue this thread, assuming after the German Jesuit Josef Sudbrack that 'encounter' implies both reaching out towards the Other but also reaching out towards somebody's mercy or endowment (Sudbrack 1996: 114).² It was concisely phrased in Pope Francis Enciclica *Delixit Nos*:

Where the thinking of the philosopher halts, there the heart of the believer presses on in love and adoration, in pleading for forgiveness and in willingness to serve in whatever place the Lord allows us to choose, in order to follow in his footsteps. At that point, we realize that in God's eyes we are a 'Thou', and for that very reason we can be an 'I'. Indeed, only the Lord offers to treat each one of us as a 'Thou', always and forever. Accepting his friendship is a matter of the heart; it is what constitutes us as persons in the fullest sense of that word.³

Similar reciprocal dynamics can be found in Gadamerian hermeneutics: 'To recognize oneself in the alien, to become at home in it, is the basic movement of spirit, whose being consists only in returning to oneself from what is other' (Gadamer 2013: 13). Gadamer here turned the analytical attention to the issue of *Zugehörigkeit* (pertaining) and its opposite – the creation of the distance. 'Belonging' thus was conceptualized in terms of the historicity, that is, being part of a historical process and belonging to a linguistic community (Ger.) *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* ('awareness of the historicity of the outcomes' (Ricoeur 1989: 218)).⁴ It means that individual's participation in tradition is achieved by interpreting the signs of works and texts in which the heritage of the past is inscribed and given to us to decipher (Ricoeur 1989: 222).

Emerging dynamics is thus multilayered: amidst the scope of sacred phenomena, entailed are processes such as for example secularization, sacralization, desacralization. But the tension is also implicated between 'the specific' and 'the particular', 'the inherent' and 'the immanent'. For example, for a Roman Catholic, a rosary is a sacramentalium. St Lucia of Fátima's message and St Faustina Kowalska's Diary are deeply religious messages, and overarching Christian spirituality paths. On the other hand, those narratives would be devoid of any sacred value for a member of Protestant (Reformed) denominations, since the Protestant spiritual path relies, among others, on a theological rule *sola scriptura*,⁵ that is, 'nothing but the scriptures', meaning that nothing can be added to the Gospel.

The exact scope of the 'sacrality marking' is thus culture specific – not only across denominations but also on intra-religious level. Leszek Kolakowski emphasizes the connection between religious statements and the cult (*sacrum*), meaning that their components gain meaning through acts interpreted by the faithful as contact with God in ritual, prayer or mystical encounters.

Religion is not a set of propositions whose reasonableness comes from criteria establishing a reference range or from verifiability. Individual components of the sacred language must necessarily seem incomprehensible or even nonsensical outside the context of worship (Kolakowski 2003: 340; cf. Karwala 1995: 87). In this context, the hermeneutical dimension of communication with the sacred is determined, on the one hand, by world view, and on the other hand, it inherently has a universal and timeless dimension.

The emerging dimension is compliant with the canonical Ricoeurian hermeneutic statement, namely, that self-reflection being the goal and challenge, the interpretation is but a means to achieve it. What follows, there is no direct way for self-knowledge but a roundabout one of acquiring signs and works of art. In the same vein, religious experience is not accessible for investigation but through its materializations in specific cultural texts. It is always an embodied experience. Hence, even if scholars focus on the objective substantiality of data accessible to them, it cannot be forgotten that these data, in the form of visual or verbal textuality, have been produced by living subjects who wanted to substantiate the transcendence of their relation to the sacred.

The scope of the volume

The monograph is a result of the collaboration among scholars from different countries, so it has an international vocation. Apart from general issues of Christian faith, it focuses on Eastern Orthodoxy, Greek Catholicism, Roman Catholicism (the latter also functioning as a religious minority in countries where the Cyrillic alphabet is used), which is usually written and disseminated among academia in Russian. Here also scholars specializing in Old Church Slavonic are subsumed. Methodology-wise, the volume develops a critical overview of hermeneutics from different viewpoints while connecting different areas of research. Thus, it has an interdisciplinary nature stressed by the distinctive fields of research of the contributors who nonetheless relate to one specific investigative domain: Christian religious experience. The monograph shows what a dormant potential that area has, disclosing opportunities for further research.

Out of concern for the monographic nature of the publication, we opted to focus on one denomination and see how juxtaposing scholarships on several strands (Orthodox, Protestant, Catholic) could tell something about how those differences work and interplay, collating on one, overriding experience of the Resurrection.⁶ In this way, although all contributions relate to Christianity, nonetheless, the inherent shifts of focus reflect diverging hermeneutical horizons within specific communities believing in the Resurrected Jesus.

As pointed out in one of the reviews, the book is intended as 'a broad interdisciplinary set of essays on a related set of themes'. Nonetheless, individual chapters of the publication are closely profiled around theolinguistic and pragmatic issues (including the relationship between the man and the Christian *sacrum* reflected in culture and religious communication considered from the point of view of hermeneutical interpretation).

The volume inscribes, on the one hand, into scholarly output and readership expectations contained in Bloomsbury Press theological project (T&T Clark) but also continues a scholarly perusal initiated in linguistic analyses.⁷ The added dimension, which serves as an investigative domain, is the dialogical aspect of how relating to the Other would eventually make viable relation to the Creator and, thus, delving into unfathomable noema of religious experience. It also contributes to understanding hermeneutics in a very wide sense, that is, as the art of interpretation, in particular, its Ricoeurian strand of biblical hermeneutics.

The monograph is divided into four parts reflecting shifts of analytical focus and contextual dynamics. The first part, devoted to emerging synergy in religious experience, sets the general context for the volume (Part One: 'Psycho-textual synergies'). The aim of the section is to examine hermeneutical dimension of this field of language that we call 'religious language', both in the context of verbal and visual textuality. The part comprises three contributions of a general, overarching nature. The thrust of the section is syncretic, focusing on the bonding aspect of the religiosity across denominations. This section comprises the following chapters: Chapter 1, 'On synergy of pictorial and verbal narrativity: The hermeneutical importance of verbal pre-texts to Christian visual art', by Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczevska; Chapter 2, 'Ecological hermeneutics in the interpretation of biblical texts: A Lutheran perspective', by Kalina Wojciechowska; and Chapter 3, 'Phenomenological approaches to spiritual unification of Edith Stein and Pavel Florensky', by Sally Stocksdales.

Part Two, 'Cultures in contact', focuses on the situation of contact, subsuming both languages in contact, cultures in contact as well as denominations in contact. The contact (boundary) phenomena arise also in the seam of textualities in the context of translation. Understanding the translation implies the need to refer to Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons', that is, prior knowledge, a cognitive horizon, a modality of a particular way of seeing the world relates to the situation of contact in translation. The part gathers two chapters: Chapter 4, 'The hermeneutic of continuity and the Anglican patrimony in the Roman Catholic Church: A linguistic perspective', by Wiktor Pskit; and Chapter 5, 'Religious experience in translation: An interpretation of the "own and other" dichotomy in the light of the analysis of translations of Catholic texts into Russian', by Małgorzata Widel-Ignaszczak.

The subsequent part (Part Three 'Transference of tradition and meaningful connectiveness') is of centripetal, cohesive thrust, focusing on the community, cohesion and intangible heritage transfer as informed by selected manuscript sources. The chapters gathered in the part are thus grounded in the analysis of discourse related to tradition basing on databases of verbal narrativity. The following chapters are included: Chapter 6, 'Cultural communication in Cyrillic texts of homilies and its interpretations: The example of the eighteenth-century confessional tradition of

Mukachevo diocese', by Peter Žeňuch and Svetlana Žeňuchová Šašerina; Chapter 7, 'Hermeneutics of (in)comprehension of religious texts in Old Believer communities (on the example of Old Believers living in Poland)', by Helena Pocięchina; and Chapter 8, 'Icelandic Christian hagiography as cultural syncretism in the example of the Þorlaks saga', by Ásdís Egilsdóttir.

The final and closing part (Part Four, 'The societal life-space in communality and in territory') expands the analytical scope into societal issues as seen from the standpoint of a territory and a spatialized dialogue. It gathers three chapters: Chapter 9, 'Hermeneutical dynamics of the concept of "misericordia" in the theme of La Lanzada [the spear jab] in Andalusian saeta', by Ventura Salazar-García and Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak; Chapter 10, 'Linguistic accessibility of religious experience for signing d/Deaf people in Poland', by Marta Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Małgorzata Rybka; and Chapter 11, 'Pilgrimage as an embodied and emplaced religious experience in the case study of Fátima Sanctuary (Portugal)' by Paula Pina de Almeida and Cláudia Pires da Silva.

The case studies and research domains thus vary across such areas Orthodox Christianity, Anglican Church, Old Icelandic sagas, Catholic Christianity, Old Believers, Greek Orthodox Church and Lutheran congregation documents. The specific subject matter covers a wide range of themes and subsumes for example, Biblical studies, devotional text studies, relating biblical narratives to folk knowledge, pilgrims surveys responses, Islandic hagiographies and Andalusian saeta. The materials from specific geo-cultural lacunae studies subsume for example Russia, Slovakia, Iceland, Poland, Great Britain, Portugal and Spain.

The resulting monograph contributes to an understanding of hermeneutics in a considerably broad sense, that is, as the art of interpretation, in particular its Ricoeurian strand of biblical hermeneutics. As Joy observes, although Ricoeur admits that 'faith is the limit of all hermeneutics and the non-hermeneutical origin of all interpretations', he is nonetheless also aware that 'Christianity is from the very beginning an exegesis. So it is that the faith discourse and action advocated by the biblical text cannot be studied in isolation from the condition of hermeneutics that Ricoeur has already been at pains to decipher in textual representation' (Joy 1990: 83).

Chapter content description

The opening chapter by Elżbieta Chrzanowska-Kluczeńska sets the plateau for the scholarly inspection of religious art as a hermeneutical narrative, invoking the Gadamerian notion of *historical horizons* as well as art-historical hermeneutics of Oskar Bätschmann. The chapter puts forth two claims: (i) a belief in the narratological potential of several pictorial representations, contrary to a common idea that picturing (painting, sculpture) is non-anecdotal; (ii) the interpretative reliance on verbal pre-texts, whereby paintings of Christian religious motifs are instances of traditional ekphrasis in reverse (i.e. pictorial representations being triggered by verbal texts, mostly the New and Old Testament, Apocrypha, hagiographies and legends). The author focusses on transmedial synergy of both types of narrativity, with the empirical support in the form

of four artworks with religious themes: the painting *Christ Crucified with a Fiddler*, by Kacper Kurcz, 1605; the painting *Concert*, by Wlastimil Hofman, 1910; the painting *Temptation of St Anthony I*, by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), 1916–22; and the painting *The Head of Abgar* by Georg Baselitz, 1984. The hermeneutical value of Christian verbal texts to the understanding and interpretation of the resultant pictorial stories is indubitable, even in the case when paintings exploit religious motifs in abstract, ironical, grotesque or fantastic modes.

Kalina Wojciechowska uses the epistemological potential of ecological hermeneutics to re-examine narratives from The Old and New Testament relating to the interpretations of the text from Gen. 1.26–28, with the command traditionally translated as 'subdue the earth'. Based on the scrutiny of the semantic field and comparison of the contexts in which the Hebrew lexemes meaning 'domination' and 'subjugation' (רדה and כבש [rdh and kbš/ radah and kabaš] are used, variant methods of translation and a pro-ecological interpretation of this passage are indicated. The use of ecological hermeneutics enables spotting ecological potential in texts where it has not been noticed before or interpreted in an extremely anthropocentric way, that is, affirming all human activities, even those degrading nature. This is the case of the parable from Mt. 24.45–51, which in the chapter is interpreted from the ktiseological perspective (referring to the previously analysed history of creation and the placing of the earth under human care). The analysis pays attention to the semantics and pragmatics of the lexemes used and their connectivity, and new possibilities of interpretation are indicated. A similar methodology is used to discover the pro-ecological potential of texts that are non-narrative and refer to eschatology, that is, Rom. 8.18–22 (eschatological expectation) and 2 Cor. 5.14–19 (renewal of the entire creation).

The chapter by Sally Stocksdales is a hermeneutic comparison of the trinary formulae for spiritual unity and community in the oeuvre of two great Christian philosophers: the German-Jewish Phenomenologist and encloistered Discalced Carmelite nun, Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), and the Russian polymath and Hesychast monk Father Pavel Florensky. Stocksdales discusses the convergence of each mystic's account of both the origins and experience of a spiritual community – the process of which was a hermeneutic dialectic encapsulated by the respective phrases: 'From I to You to We' and 'From I to a dyad to a triad'. The comparison brings to the fore a multiplicity of hermeneutic and multi-directional aspects of both mystics' explications of a spiritual community and unity with God. As the author points out, 'As part of a community, subjects' motivations are specifically spiritual, because empathy motivates connection, understanding, and unity'. The unfolding hermeneutic process which produces a spiritual community for both Stein and Florensky, then, 'is a spiritual reality wherein individuals are united into a higher subjectivity, into a "we"'. Hence the chapter addresses the synergistic aspects on various levels: (1) the epistemological level, with specific cognitive underpinnings of the two philosophers; (2) the immanent idea of community on both the spiritual and the phenomenological levels; and (3) as the emergent linkages between the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic denominations.

Wiktor Pskit in his contribution delves into some of the aspects of the Anglican Patrimony in the current missal of the Ordinariates for former Anglicans. The

interpretative key for the discussion is the Benedict XVI's concept of hermeneutic of continuity. The study offers a linguistic perspective on highlighting the way in which the Ratzingerian hermeneutic of continuity applies to Christian worship. Specifically, the author focuses on one of the three official liturgical books for the Ordinariates that were produced by the interdicasterial Vatican commission: the *Divine Worship: The Missal* (2015). The analysis identifies sources that textually and linguistically contributed to the emergence of the Ordinariates' missal, and isolates linguistic features of that text. As a result, Pskit shows that the Divine Worship missal, as the fruit of Benedict XVI's ecumenical efforts, contributes to the liturgical diversity of the Western church. The hermeneutical continuity is implied mainly in the syncretic thrust of the missal: 'while being a novel variant of the Roman rite, the Ordinariates' missal brings together earlier traditions, including the Anglican, pre-Vatican II, post-Vatican II and even pre-Reformation elements of Christian worship. Linguistically, that challenging task was accomplished through employing a hieratic variety of the English language, known as 'Prayer Book English', as a device unifying the multifarious narratives.

The study by **Małgorzata Widel-Ignaszak** moves to the hermeneutics of contact in the context of the translation of hieratic texts. The aim is to investigate the 'Schleiermacher's dilemma' in the context of analysing the manifestations of the presence of the 'homely-foreign' ('own-another') opposition in the translations of texts of Catholic origin into contemporary Russian. Catholics constitute a religious minority in Russia, functioning in a country dominated by the Orthodox which implies special consideration by translators regarding the use of specific methods of transmitting Catholic religious experience to this cultural circle. This chapter raises the issue of the consequences of the dialogue of cultures, that is, the use of domestication and foreignization of the translation text as understood by Lawrence Venuti. The method of hermeneutical interpretation of the exponents of the 'own-another' opposition was used in the textual layer of translations. The 'Familiar' elements, that is, what is common to other confessional paradigms and which are directly accessible to perception, are examined through comparison. Elements of foreignness – what is individual and unique – can only be transposed by guesswork or intuition. Verbal exponents of foreignness, and therefore the introduction of what is individual into the text, are presented from the perspective of a personalistic orientation introduced to hermeneutics by Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Peter Žeňuch and **Svetlana Žeňuchová Šašerina** in their contribution explore hermeneutic potential of the texts of biblical interpretations as well as their translations (e.g. the exempla and parables) which are based on a complex cognition and symbolic distinctions of archetypes. In particular, the authors focus on the perception of cultural communication in Cyrillic texts of the Gospel pericopes interpretations in the environment of the Mukachevo Church in the Carpathian Ruthenia. These narratives are discussed as formative of the anonymous interpretative and didactic literary tradition. In compliance with canonical hermeneutical approach, the authors were interested in what happens across specific interpretative modalities: across subsequent religious languages (Latin, Greek Old Church Slavonic and Church Slavonic), and educational and formative narratives based on ways of experiencing the contact with the Bible. This is done through the analysis of archival sources scientifically elaborated

mainly by the authors themselves. The analysis shows the linguistic means through which producing interpretations in plain language fosters the cultivation of human spiritual thinking about the continuous presence of God in the world.

The topic of the contribution by **Helena Pocięchina** pursues the thread of the hermeneutical potential of the study of manuscripts. The research method consists in the hermeneutic reading of hieratic texts (liturgical, paraliturgical, polemic, homiletic) from various historical periods (from the mid-seventeenth century to the twentieth century) which are central to the culture of Old Believers who lived in the region of Masuria (currently Poland). The research is undertaken in order to determine the aspects influencing the incomprehensibility of the texts in Church Slavonic to a contemporary members of Old Believers communities. The analysis proceeds in accordance with the basic research assumptions of Friedrich Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, that is, combining grammatical interpretation in the form of analysis of the linguistic structures of the text, stylistic interpretation in the form of genre analysis, historical interpretation providing an analysis of the circumstances of the creation and functioning of the text as well as psychological interpretation.

The chapter by **Ásdís Egilsdóttir** discusses the process of conversion to Christianity in Iceland (1000 AD) and the emergence of textual culture as inseparable concepts. The analysis is based on medieval manuscripts of Icelandic hagiography and takes into consideration the theory of translation developed by Itamar Even-Zohar. The hermeneutics of imported and local culture is apparent in early written religious texts. Local, oral culture co-existed with the written works, composed or translated into the vernacular. Writing began almost simultaneously in Latin and the native tongue. Among the first written texts were clerical handbooks and homilies. Translations of saints' lives were soon to follow. Some of the translations were compilations from more than one source, where the translator often added explanatory notes of his own. The *Life of the first Icelandic saint, Þorláks saga* ('the life of St Þorlákr'), was written around 1200, first in Latin and Old Icelandic shortly thereafter. Icelandic hagiography offers an interplay of local lore and learned, clerical tradition. The concept of the 'miracle', where a problem of a medieval Icelander in his or her everyday situation is solved by the intervention of the universal phenomenon, the saint, is a good example. The lives of the Icelandic saints are written by contemporary hagiography and based on local and collective memory. In addition, *Jóns saga* (The life of St Jón) is influenced by theories and imagery of *memoria artificialis* (learned memory).

Marta Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and **Małgorzata Rybka** explore challenges implicit in the religious experience of Polish Catholic congregants who are not able to participate in the 'standard' liturgical services, nor access the Gospel due to the hearing impairments. Although the Bible has been translated into many of the world's (spoken) languages, its renditions into particular national sign languages are usually missing, or in the state of development. This is also the case of Polish Sign Language (PJM). In particular, the authors turn our attention to the complexity of religious issues, intertwined during engagement with religious servers, as seen through the eyes of the Deaf chaplains/preachers who use sign language (PJM) in communication. The study isolates specific linguistic, visual and multimodal strategies availed of and

devised by the preachers in order to adapt to the communicative needs of the d/Deaf community and to facilitate the need for the spiritual engagement with the sacred.

The aim of the chapter by Ventura Salazar Garcia and Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak is to define experientially a communicative situation established through the performance of Andalusian saeta: a type of short chant, sung during Holy Week processions by a performer upon seeing a hieratic image carried on the dais. It is done taking into account some of the asymmetries and binaries that are inherent in relating to the sacred. In particular, the authors focus on the theme of *la Lanzada* 'the spear thrust', from where they reach out to the theological and hermeneutical dimension of the concept of *miser cordia* 'mercy'. The discussion shows the structural parallels at three interpretative levels: the historical episode according to the gospel of Saint John, the somatic healing of the Roman soldier narrated by some apocryphal sources and the Redemption effect on the entire human race.

Paula Pina de Almeida and Cláudia Pires da Silva in their chapter offer a hermeneutical inspection of 'pilgrimage' as embodied and emplaced religious experience. Plotted against the grid of secularization phenomena and collectivity versus individuality of religious experience, the authors pursue the importance of the connection between religion and place. In particular, they posit that the pilgrimages to the Sanctuary of Fátima constitute a narrative that offers personal interpretations. Experience, narrative and language are thus structuring terms of author's reflection which, mutually, imply each other. The study is empirically grounded in the results of the 452 online interviews conducted from 10 till 13 May 2024 among the pilgrims present at the precincts of The Sanctuary of Fátima. The analysis reveals the enormous hermeneutical potential of an embodied experience in encountering the sacred, showing how the message of the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin, entrusted to three little shepherds resonates and is being re-lived and re-experienced among the pilgrims regardless of their denomination.

Notes

- 1 The editors would like to thank series editors Laura Gallon and Sarah MacDonald for their help and expertise at all stages of creating this monograph. A heartfelt thank you also goes to anonymous reviewers and Prof. Eva Maria Hrdinová for their help in upgrading the final quality of the texts.
- 2 See also a strictly philosophical approach in *The visible and the revealed* by Jean-Luc Marion. 2008. Fordham University Press. (Trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner and others).
- 3 <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/20241024-enciclica-dilexit-nos.html>
- 4 The ontological moment, as Ricoeur (1989: 212) emphasizes elaborating on Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, appears only with the emergence of the third segment of the triad: situation–understanding–interpretation. Prior to the text exegesis there is thus the exegesis of the world and of life. Prior to the text exegesis there is thus the exegesis of the world and of life. What follows, for Heidegger, interpretation primarity is tantamount to explication as an expansion of understanding. Furthermore, the enunciation does not reveal its subject per se, it only articulates its subject. That, for

Ricoeur, implies that in the oeuvre *Sein und Zeit* (Ger.) *reden* 'to say' has a priority over (Ger.) *sprechen* 'to speak' (Ricoeur 1989: 214).

- 5 Together with *solus Christus, sola gratia and sola fide*.
- 6 A caveat is in order at this point. The monograph is not conceived of as a comprehensive portrayal of Christian denominations currently in existence; that is, the monograph is not intended to relate to all varieties of Christianity. Nonetheless, if we conceive of the monograph as an ongoing project, to be perhaps taken up by another group of editors, with different backgrounds, the *Hermeneutical Narratives in Religious Experience* could develop into many other Christianity strands or reach beyond, to continue the format through other types of religious experience (Buddhist, Jewish or Muslim, for example).
- 7 For example, *Hermeneutical Narratives in Art, Literature and Communication*. 2023. Eds. Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak and Paula García. Bloomsbury Academic Press. Of relevance is also the theorizing on narrative as presented in a monograph *Texts, Transmissions, Receptions: Modern Approaches to Narratives*. Editors: André Lardinois et al. See also *Sobre el problema de Dios* by Angela Ales Bello, which provides a phenomenological perspective on religion and raises the question of God in the Husserl's oeuvre.

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Cultural communication in Cyrillic texts of homilies and its interpretations

The example of the eighteenth-century confessional tradition of Mukachevo diocese

Peter Žeňuch and Svetlana Šašerina

Introduction

In the context of the Christian tradition, the spiritual thinking of the nation was shaped mainly by the influence of translations of Biblical texts, their explanations and interpretations. Texts of a hermeneutical nature are an important source of knowledge for today's linguists and non-linguists alike. Such texts provide evidence of the development and evolution of cultural language and the Christian life of society. The formation of collective religious thought is reflected in diverse written sources. The collective unconscious as an intangible heritage connects contemporaries with ancestors, and the dynamics of this collective thinking is documented especially 'in the actualization of the meaning of archetypal linguistic images and symbols that provide a space for human self-determination' (Heriban 1992: 467). For this reason, the texts of biblical interpretations and their translations are primarily based on a complex cognition, distinction and classification of these archetypes as symbols and their meanings. This reveals not only the intention of the interpreter, but also 'through his interpretation a picture is provided of the linguistic development and the cultural and social situation which also influences the linguistic component of the texts being interpreted' (Heriban 1992: 737). Interpretive texts, meanwhile, mainly constitute a material basis for a comprehensive exploration of the linguistic and historical contexts of the cultural identity of the individual and the linguistic community in intercultural communication.

The creation and use of translations of the Gospel in a language that the people can understand (*lingua vernacula*), along with their exegetical interpretations, in sermons and in other didactic texts is considered to be a manifestation of the cultivation of society. Interpretations and homilies in a language understandable to common people convey the message (*kerygma*) of the Bible, which is also applied in a variety of liturgical

and extra-liturgical texts. The aim of producing interpretations in plain language is to cultivate human spiritual thinking about the continuous presence of God in the world.

The doubts of human beings about the greatness, immensity and perfection of God's love led to a preference for the use of classical languages (Latin, Greek) in the various types and genres of expository literature in the Christian European Middle Ages. It was these languages that guaranteed the accuracy and stability of the original meaning of the biblical text being interpreted. Spiritual production based on the principles of hermeneutics was associated especially with classical linguistic erudition and scholarship. An education in classical languages was required, which is essential for this classical knowledge of the truth of God. This aspect of classical linguistic scholarship, however, often eluded the widest circle of the popular Christian community, which is why sermonic and expository writing by the end of the Middle Ages also began to focus on communicating God's message in vernacular language.

Translations of the Bible and its interpretations in a language understandable to the people were not produced to criticize popular Christian infirmity and to moralize the simple believer, but to present a didactic argumentation that was based on the reasoning inherent in Christianity and not on the opinion of those to whom such reasoning was addressed. The various texts of interpretations, exegeses and sermons 'explained step by step the truthfulness, objectivity and justice of theocracy as the essence of the believer's cultural and spiritual thought' (Žeňuch & Šašerina 2021: 62). The translation of the Bible into Old Slavonic, a language understandable to the people, which was created in a Slavic context in the second half of the ninth century with the arrival of Sts Cyril and Methodius in Great Moravia, is an expression of this fact. Liturgical translations into vernacular language also provided opportunities for the knowledge of God (Garzaniti 2023: 183), who is present in every living vernacular, that is, 'in the language of the national community' (Burke [2004] 2011: 72).

In this chapter, we focus on the perception of cultural communication in Cyrillic texts of the Gospel pericopes interpretations in the environment of the Mukachevo Church in the Carpathian Ruthenia and discuss a part of the anonymous interpretative and didactic literary tradition. This tradition is associated with the Byzantine rite and its culture. The conditions for the development of its own hermeneutical and didactic production were formed in a literary and linguistically specific Cyrillic written heritage. The genre- and theme-diverse collections of texts not only contain interpretations of diverse Biblical stories, but also include texts of Biblical pericopes in a language that is understandable to the people. It is now very difficult to know who was the author of these translations, but from the development of the local literary and educational tradition point of view, these written relics in the vernacular language are very valuable as evidence of a flourishing local literacy and of a strengthening of education in the broad vernacular, even though the sacredness and inviolability of the Church Slavonic Biblical and liturgical language was stressed.

Education through the translation of Holy Scripture

This idea was emphasized by St Cyril (827–869) in a disputation with the trilingualists¹ in Venice in 867, when he pointed out that 'God is not powerless, nor is He envious,

that He would not want peoples who have their own language to be unable to know and glorify God in their own tongues' (Vragaš 1994: ŽK XVI), and thus also to understand reliably the meaning of the biblical kerygma in particular. As early as the ninth century, even before the advent of modern linguistics, St Cyril introduced *the word* as a sign in which intelligible content is united with its acoustic (speech) symbol, which is expressed through a graphic sign in the form of writing. St Cyril also pointed to the essence of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, which, although it has its anthropological origin, is unique for each linguistic community, as exemplified by the Great Moravian Slovenians. 'Each language of the Gospel is a means of bringing the Word of God into the concrete life of the believing community' (Heriban 1992: 256).

Education and knowledge of the world had to necessarily leave the scriptoria and monasteries by the time of the first medieval translations and interpretations of the Holy Scriptures in a language understandable to the people. Scholastic scholarship therefore began to spread not only in the cities but also to the common people in the countryside through the priests as local educators.

A sincere effort to understand the theocratic laws of the world constitutes the main essence of natural human thought. Human beings desire to develop their daily toil in harmony with the theocratic and cosmological order, to which, according to the natural faith of man, the eschatological principle of the life of the family, the genus and society is related. The simple man does not divide everyday life into religious and non-religious; this division is not natural to him. The two components are also united in human nature, which is represented by both the material (physical) and spiritual components of human existence, and therefore every 'human being desires the synergy of true knowledge of temporal laws based on the interconnection of reason and faith: for even the world was not created in time, but time came into being together with the world' (Šašerina 2022: 14–15). Furthermore, it is 'The opposition of the material and spiritual natures that is for a human being the best way of the apprehension of the image of God, inspiring actual human action' (Jančovič: 2015: 43–4). This is why this aspect is often emphasized in interpretive texts, by claiming that 'God actively manifests himself in human action, and is therefore perceived as a fixed part of human history' (Chovanec 2015: 76).

Language and cultural-religious tradition in the Mukachevo Church in the eighteenth century

In the aforementioned sense, a diverse spiritual production was also created in the environment of the Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Church of Mukachevo, which in the region of the Carpathian Ruthenia connected various cultural and religious orientations (Orthodox, Catholic, and even Protestant).²

Mukachevo's spiritual and ecclesiastical tradition was formed in a multilingual and interconfessionally linked cultural context. The Mukachevo Church includes the traditional dialect areas of Szepes, Sáros, Abaúj-Torna, Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa, Szabolcs and Máramaros counties, which are home to diverse linguistic and national communities: Slovaks, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Romanians and Hungarians.

The jurisdiction of the Mukachevo Church until 1777 also included Greek-Catholic believers living in an enclave in the area of present-day Vojvodina in Serbia. Greek Catholics from the Carpathian Mountains moved to this Serbian region in the first half of the eighteenth century. This Greek-Catholic population in Vojvodina, even from linguistic and cultural points of view, still maintains an inherent unity in its collective consciousness based on the linguistic-liturgical confessional tradition of the Greek-Catholic Church of Mukachevo.

The Greek-Slavic liturgical rite, the Church Slavonic liturgical language and the jurisdictional unity represent the identity of the historical Mukachevo tradition with the Roman Church and the Pope. On this basis, the worshippers of the historic Mukachevo Church still consider themselves a distinct Byzantine-Slavic confessional community, which since 1646 has also been formally united with the Roman See 'on the basis of the ecclesiastical union of Uzhorod' (Vasil' 2000: 40). Mukachevo's cultural identity is mainly documented by Cyrillic texts written in a variety of dialectal variants of national languages, which in the above-mentioned regions are still used today by these Greek Catholics (Uniates) in their everyday communication.

The ritual Latin Church, which is still manifested today, for example, in the celebration of official church feasts, also affected the Mukachevo cultural and ceremonial tradition. The origin of the feasts of the Greek-Catholic Church is therefore linked not only to the Greek-Slavic but also to the Latin tradition, while in particular the influence from the ritual Latin (Roman) Church continues to the present day. It can be very well documented in the observance of feasts, for example, Corpus Christi (second Thursday after the Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit), the Divine Heart of Jesus (ninth Thursday after Easter), the Feast of the Sorrowful Mother of God (September 15 and the tenth Saturday after Easter), the Feast of Christ the King (the last Sunday of the liturgical year), the Feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius (July 5) and so on – all feasts are celebrated in conformity with the calendar of the Roman Church. 'Even in some of the names of parts of the temple or objects used in liturgical ceremonies (e.g. sacristy, chalice, lention, etc.) an influence from the environment of the Latin rite can be detected' (Žeňuch and Strýčková 2020: 86–7). This influence can also be seen in folk religiosity, and is particularly salient in spiritual (paraliturgical) songs (cf. Žeňuch 2020). Cultural communication in the Cyrillic written tradition of this region was also manifested in the literary language of manuscript didactical gospels with exempla, in interpretations of the rules of secular and ecclesiastical life, in apologetic works, compendia, lucidaries, catechisms and so on.

The genre- and theme-diverse collections of religious texts from the Carpathian Ruthenia are inspired by secular and religious perceptions coming from the confessional milieu of the Christian East and West. These collections were created as not only transcriptions or linguistic variants of older prefaces with diverse content modifications. However, new texts were also created to respond to the contemporary, actual historical and social conditions of the life of a believer. Yet they emphasized the continuing value of Christian identity and Christian spiritual culture. For today's researchers, these written monuments are evidence of a developing spirituality and literacy, as well as of the strengthening of education in the folk milieu. In the context of the interpretation of spiritual-cultural content, the descriptive functionality of these

texts, which were used mainly as interpretations for public education, has increasingly come to the fore. In such interpretations for the people, metaphorical and allegorical motifs and symbols associated with the biblical and theological tradition were used in particular, applying events from everyday human life to confirm the theological explanations.

The production of transcripts of such texts in a vernacular context provided a space for the development of literacy and basic education. Thanks to the scribal tradition, the local literary tradition was also enriched. Manuscript collections of sermons and exegesis thus not only reinforced the basic truths of the faith, but also formed a synoptic picture of the life of the man of the time. 'Diverse collections of expository and exegetical exempla (lat. *exemplum*) served primarily as a tool for sermon production' (Brťáňová 2000) and in the emergence of other educational genres that developed Christian teaching in the context of local cultural and social conditions.

As an illustration of this fact, we can use the *exemplum* with the interpretation of the Gospel pericope for the Feast of the Presentation of the Mother of God to the Temple (21 November), which is recorded in the manuscript from Litmanová A³ for an edition of this manuscript and commentary (see Šašerina 2023). It describes the stay of the Virgin Mary in the Jerusalem temple and the selection of Joseph as Mary's betrothed and husband. The blossoming of Joseph's staff with a white flower serves as an image not only to point to the appropriateness of Joseph's selection as Mary's betrothed but also to emphasize Joseph's purity. This act of selection is also confirmed by the dove, which, as at the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, rose from the altar (i.e. the heavenly) part of the temple and hovered over Joseph's flowered staff. This also confirms the spiritual maturity of the forming spousal love and its purity, which God confirms precisely by His presence through the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the necessity of the marital commitment to mutual care and respect, which is constituted by this presence of God, is also pointed out. However, God's constant protection of the marital union before the eyes of those present, expressed in a visible way in the symbol of the dove, is made present in an invisible way in the marital union shortly after the celebration of the marriage ceremony:

[1]

а скоро было слоужбѣ Б[о]жой⁴, голубица невидимал сталася и так[ъ]
Прес[ва]таѣ Д[ѣ]ва Івсифови с[ва]тому в[ъ] опѣкоу дана и за облюбеницу
емоу послюблена годнаѣ. Gloss: *and when God's service came, the dove became invisible and so the Virgin Mary was given to St. Joseph's care and promised to him as his wife.* (Manuscript from Litmanová A, fol. 9v / Šašerina, 2023a: 48)

An interesting example of God's presence in human life is the text of the *exempla* in the interpretation of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14), which mentions the two thieves who suffered with Christ on Golgotha – one on the right and the other on the left. The short plot recounts the flight of Mary, Joseph and the newborn Jesus from Herod from Bethlehem to Egypt. During their journey, they fall captive to bandits who take the holy family to a cave in the mountains. The wives of these robbers live there too, and each raises her baby son. One of the women had

only one breast, from which she fed her child. The other woman was sick and her baby was starving and severely disabled, so Mary, in the captivity of the robbers, suckled the starving infant of the robber's wife besides Jesus. She also bathed him in the water in which she washed Jesus' swaddles, which caused the healing of the robber's son. After a short time, Mary, Joseph and Jesus were released by the robbers; their sons continued the robber's life as adults. The one whom Mary breastfed was crucified on Golgotha to the right of Christ. 'In this allegorical way, not only the importance of maternal protection is pointed out, but also the importance of Christian training, which can save a person even in the last moment of his earthly life' (Šašerina 2023a: 20, 98).

It is precisely examples like these in the local language that are very important, because, unlike complex texts of a hermeneutical nature, they interpret the Gospel message clearly and allegorically for the common people. The interpretation of the Gospel by means of allegorical imagery, though methodologically simple, is unambiguous in content and therefore forms an essential part of the interpretation of a teaching oriented towards the simple hearer or reader. Since hermeneutics is the art of interpreting the source text even for the simple believer, it must reach for such allegorical procedures from which the simple person himself can form an interpretation. The exempla and parable are therefore in consonance with the biblical narrative, whose message is developed by an example that is not lost in difficult noetic or gnoseological discourses. It turns out, however, that the interpretation of the biblical kerygma continues the human experience of God's action in the life of the individual.

The purpose of allegory or metaphor in developing folk piety is not to inform about the miraculous or to instruct or didacticize, but rather to offer a perspective based on personal experience and the linguistic-psychological impact of the image, the result of which is to point people to God. This goal can be achieved by the author not only through a reliable explanation of the subject of the kerygma in understandable language, but also by a rationally verifiable example based on human action in everyday life.

Such an allegorical kerygma is itself a proclamation of truth, so no complex interpretation is required, for the presence of the example is the kind of interpretation that reveals the empirical sources of the message in actual time and space. Jozef Heriban argues, therefore, that

in interpreting biblical texts, one must follow not only the tradition of the Church, but especially the rules of hermeneutics, which cannot be achieved by the means of a literary-scientific approach alone. The truth of the Gospel message, therefore, lies not in a simple description of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, but in an actualized interpretation of the events that form the basis of the proclamation of faith in the life of the Church. (Heriban 1992: 907)

The Gospel kerygma can only be truly interpreted by one who has witnessed its fulfillment and can describe it on the basis of his own cognitive processes, and thus also affirm the substance and truth of his interpretation. A true interpretation stands

on a convincing argumentation; therefore it is witnessing, not lecturing. Evidence of the truthfulness of belief and knowledge of the truth is not interpretations and reflections, which people often perceive as theological speculation. Interpretation must keep in mind the practical impact of man; therefore 'a message based on cognitive and sense-verifiable explanation is more understandable to the popular milieu' (Heriban 1992: 451). This means that interpretation of the Biblical narrative helps to understand the whole, not just the parts (pericopes), although the whole (the Biblical text) cannot be understood without understanding the parts.

The biblical text in the context of the linguistic and educational tradition of the Mukachevo Church

In the manuscript book of sermons and commentaries on the saints' lives by the priest Ignatij from 1660 (on the first leaf of the manuscript there is the note *Ignatij pap prédikációi Urmező [Máramaros] 1660 körül*, i.e., in English, *Sermons of the priest Ignatij from Ruske Pole [Maramureș] around 1660*), which is preserved in the estate of the ethnographer, linguist and bibliographer Hiador Stripsky in the Archives of the Society of St. Vojtech in Trnava (sign. Fasc. 254, no. 6⁵), there is also a several-page apologia devoted to selected issues of linguistic practice in the Mukachevo Eparchy (the quote is provided below in [2]). The author of the aforementioned apologia asks three questions: (1) why the Holy Liturgy is sung, (2) why the Hours are read and (3) why the Liturgy is celebrated in the Slavonic language. The author of the apologia emphasizes that the celebration of the liturgy has always been attended by simple people and points to the institutionalized languages in the Roman Church that dominated the Hungarian church environment. He points out that it is in the Mukachevo liturgical tradition, united with Rome, that the vernacular Church Slavonic language is used.

He states that the believers celebrate the liturgy in the Old Church Slavonic language⁶ (OCS henceforth) because it has been celebrated in this way since the earliest times. He also states that the present incomprehensibility of the OCS is due to the diversity in the development of the Slavic languages, and therefore the Slavs have ceased to understand this OCS as their ancient common Church language. He also points out that neither the Bulgarians (*болгар[ъ]*), nor the Croats (*хорват[ъ]*), nor the Russians (*московиты*) understand the OCS any more. Neither do the local Ruthenians (*русинак[ъ]*) – the members of the local Mukachevo Church – understand it. 'In contemporary terminology, the Mukachevo Church is associated with the term *Russian Church*, and related to this designation is the naming of its members with the term *rusnák, rusnáci*, by which these local Greek Catholics (Uniates) refer to themselves as members of the Greek Catholic particularist tradition' (Judák, Letz and Zeňuch 2023: 65–106).

Only then will simple believers understand the texts in the OCS, when they learn to read, listen to and interpret the Holy Scriptures, the author of the interpretation emphasizes. At the same time, he points out that in the texts of the Bible and the Church

Slavonic liturgy, the OCS has remained original and intact, even though simple people now speak only in their own dialects:

[2]

словенскимъ ѡязыкомъ слоужбоу божию слоужил[и] то и доднес[ъ] такъ чинать . . . христианскы[й] народ[ъ] и за стародавнаго вѣка литоргию с[ва] тую нехотвалися слоужити опроч[ъ] ѡязыком[ъ] латинскимъ, грецким, халденским[ъ] або словенским[ъ], бо и триденскый собор[ъ] не позволил[ъ] нато впроч[ъ] тым[ъ] ѡязыком[ъ] слоужбоу б[о]жою слоужити вещь, котрый ѡзык[ъ] вѣроу с[ва] тую оутвердили и соборы чинили а иншим[и] простыми ѡязыки негодится тоє дѣло дѣлати. . . людє . . . розоумѣли тои ѡзыкъ которы[й] болгарскы[й] ес[ть], але тера[зъ] то[и] ѡзык[ъ] полишили людє що пи[с]мо ес[ть], словенскый мало кто его розоумѣть, ани болгар[ъ], ани горват[ъ] ани московиты ани роуснак[ъ], хита будет[ъ] доуже оучитиса пи[с]ма . . . бо то[и] ѡзыкъ лише толко оу пи[с]мѣ зоста[лъ], а людє про[с] тии инак[ъ] наоучилися говорити. Gloss: *in the Slavonic (Old Church Slavonic and Church Slavonic) language they celebrated the Divine Liturgy and still do so today . . . the Christian people in ancient times did not celebrate the Divine Liturgy other than in Latin, Greek, Chaldean and Old Church Slavonic, yet the Council of Trent affirmed the celebration of the Liturgy in these languages and forbade the celebration of the Liturgy in the vernacular language, because it is not fitting to celebrate the Divine Service in vernacular languages . . . but the people . . . long ago understood the Old Church Slavonic language, which they called Bulgarian, but this language has been forgotten by modern man, and few understand it any more, neither Bulgarian, nor Croat, nor Russian, nor Ruthenian. But a man will understand it only when he learns it from the Bible . . . because this language has been left only in the Holy Scriptures, because people today speak in another language.* (Priest Ignatij 1660/Žeňuch 2013: 126)

Although the OCS is no longer understandable to the ordinary believer, the Slavonic liturgical language, Church Slavonic, stands closest to the vernacular linguistic awareness. The Byzantine-Slavic rite, the Church Slavonic liturgical language and the Cyrillic script are considered the immanent starting point, the unifying symbol and the ideological source of the development of the cultural-confessional identity of the believers precisely in the environment of the historic Mukachevo Church. This ideological dimension of identity is also valid for today's Greek Catholics (Uniates) from the Carpathian Ruthenia and can be documented in all the successor Greek-Catholic bishoprics of this region that were established in Slovakia, in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine, in Romania, in the northeastern part of Hungary and among the Greek Catholics in Vojvodina, Serbia. The ideological unity of the Mukachevo Church persists even in the diversity of linguistic variants of the local liturgical language.

Other literary sources also mention the 'Bulgarian-Russian' origin of the Slavic language in the Mukachevo Church. The idea of this Bulgarian-Russian origin has been spread since the Middle Ages, when the Latin world considered the Byzantine-Slavic Church in Europe as heretical or sectarian. In this context, therefore, can be

seen its contemporary designation with the terms 'Russian Church', 'Russian Faith'. Dalimil's Chronicle from the beginning of the fourteenth century, in which there is a reference to Methodius as an archbishop who celebrated divine rites in the Slavic language, can serve as an example. The chronicle tells how Bořivoj sat on the princely throne in Bohemia after his father's death. At that time, Svätopluk was the ruler in Moravia and the Bohemian prince was subordinate to him, so Svätopluk ordered him to receive baptism from Methodius, the Moravian archbishop, whom Dalimil in his verse chronicle refers to as a Rusyn: 'Ten arcibiskup Rusín bieše, mši slovensky služieše', that is, 'This Archbishop was Rusyn, he celebrated Mass in Old Church Slavonic' (MMFH 2008: 296), which, admittedly, does not imply his ethnic Ruthenian affiliation.

At the exact time when Dalimil's Chronicle was written, the aforementioned ideas about the Bulgarian-Russian origins of Byzantine scholarship in a Slavic context were widespread, as well as the idea that the Byzantine-Slavic Church was heretical or sectarian, especially because of the spread of Bogomil doctrine from Bulgaria. Herein lies the explanation for Dalimil's designation of Methodius' identity. Dalimil's chronicle was written in the early fourteenth century, when colonization under the Vlach law was also spreading in Hungary, permeating along with the Byzantine rite from the East Slavic milieu. The designation of Methodius as a Ruthenian thus signified his religious, ritual, Byzantine-Slavic identity.

It was on the basis of the colonization in Wallachian law that the conditions were created for the re-development of Church Slavonic writings influenced by the vernacular language. This is also documented by various translations of pericopes in manuscript and printed monuments, for example, from Lodomirová, Hrabské, Uglá and so on. As an example, we quote the Gospel of Matthew 8: 5-8, which is read on the fifth Sunday after the Descent of the Holy Spirit. We cite below a pericope in Church Slavonic and its variant translations with elements of the vernacular (Vašíčková 2017: 133-40).

A Canonical text in Church Slavonic⁷ is provided below in [3]:

[3]

Вшедшу же ему въ капернаумъ, приступи къ нему сотникъ моля его и глагола: Г[оспо]ди, отрокъ мой лежитъ въ дому разслабленъ, люте стражда. И гл[агол]а ему ин[с]оу[с]: азъ пришеде изцѣлю его. И вѣщавъ сотникъ, рече (ему): Г[оспо]ди, нѣсмь достоинъ, да под кровъ мой внидеши: но токму рцы слово, и изцѣлѣтъ отрокъ мой. Gloss: *And when he had entered into Capernaum, a centurion approached, petitioning him, and saying, 'Lord, my servant lies at home paralyzed and badly tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' And responding, the centurion said: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.'* (The Holy Gospel 2016: 34)

The text of the Pericope in the Peresopnytsia Gospel⁸ (provided below in [4]) is closest to the Church Slavonic source, which is distinguished by dialectal prepositional connections and verb forms; further on, archaic forms of the past tense are replaced by the 1-participle. Interestingly, in the text of the pericope, the vernacular refers to a disease of the centurion's servant:

[4]

Вшо[д]шоу же емоу до капернаоумоу. пристоупилъ к нему сотникъ. прослаци его гл[агол]а. г[оспод]и слоуга мои лежить в[ъ] домоу днюозломаныи, и велми са моучи[тъ]. И рекъ емоу ic[оус], я прише[д]ши оуздоровлю его: ѿповидѣль сотникъ рекоучи емоу. г[оспод]и, не е[ст]емъ годеи, абы еси вшолъ по[д] кровь мои. але толко слово реци, и оуздоровленъ бжде[т] слоуга мои. Gloss: *And when he had entered into Capernaum, a centurion approached, petitioning him, and saying, 'Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the gout (arthritis uratica) and badly tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' And responding, the centurion said: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed'.* (Peresopnytsia Gospel 1556–1561 / Chenira 2001: 152)

Another translation is taken from the Uglian didactical gospel¹⁰ (provided below in [5]) (see Figure 6.3), which speaks no longer of a servant, but of a centurion's son. In the Carpathian translations of the gospel pericopes, the introductory phrase *Часъ много*, typical of the beginning of any new pericope, is commonly used. Specific to the Uglian didactical gospel, for example, is the use of the phrase *рачиль прійти* instead of *came*, which emphasizes the narrator's respect for the gospel plot:

[5]

Часъ мно[а]го. гды нашъ м[и]л[о]ст[и]выи г[оспод]ъ ic[оусъ] х[ристо]с. рачиль прійти до капернаума. и пристѣпилъ ко его с[ва]тои м[и]л[о]сти нѣкій сътникъ. и стал[ъ] его просити мовачи. уч[и]т[е]лю С[ы]нъ мой лежит[ъ] немоцныи в дому. и барзо трѣпит[ъ] великои немоци. прошу тебе уздорови его. и сталъ мовити до него ic[оус]. я прійду там, и уздоровлю его. ѿповидѣль ему сотник. г[оспод]и не естъ ем[ъ] годным[ъ] абысь ты малъ вйти в[ъ] дом[ъ] мой. але едно рци словом[ъ] исцѣлет[ъ] втрокъ мой. Gloss: *And when our mercy Lord Jesus Christ meant to come into Capernaum, a centurion approached unto his saint mercy, beseeching him, and saying, 'Lord, my son lies at home paralyzed and badly tormented. I beg of you to heal him.' And Jesus started telling to him, 'I will come and heal him.' And responding, the centurion said: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter my house, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed'.* (Uglian didactical gospel, fol. 24r/ Šašerina 2019: 215)

The translation of the same pericope in the Gospel from Zabłudów¹⁰ (provided below in [6]) contains a duplicate description of the situation when the centurion asks Jesus for help for his servant. This reduplication may have been due to the influence of another Church Slavonic text, since the expressive means used (*дѣтищъ моя лежитъ въ хранинѣ*: *отрочищъ моя поверженъ естъ въ хранинѣ*, i.e. *my child lies: my servant lies in my dwelling*) do not match the canonical text. The text also preserves the church slavonic form of the dativus absolutus (*въшедшу ic[оус]у*, i.e. *when Jesus had entered*), which is rare in similar translations:

[6]

Во врѣмѣ оно рече, въшедшу ic[оус]у в капернаоумъ. прииде к[ъ] нему сотникъ, моласа ему и гл[агол]а. дѣтищъ мои лежит[ъ], в[ъ] дому раслабленъ люте сѣло. отрочищъ мои поверженъ естъ въ хранинѣ раслабленъ люте томимъ, сего ради и х[ристо]с гл[агол]еть ему. азъ пришед[ъ] исцѣлю его. И ѿвѣщавъ сотникъ рече, г[оспод]и нѣсмъ достоинъ даже под[ъ] кровь мои внидеши, но рци словом[ъ], и исцѣлѣтъ отрочъ мои. Gloss: *And when Jesus had entered into Capernaum, a centurion approached, petitioning him, and saying, 'Lord, my child lies at home paralyzed and badly tormented. My servant lies at my dwelling paralyzed and badly tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' And responding, the centurion said: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you even should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed'.* (Zabłudów Gospel 1569: fol. 137–8)

In the Kliment Bukovsky's didactical gospel¹¹ (provided in [7]), the lexeme *впрокъ* instead of *слуга* (both meaning *servant*) occurs again, of whom the centurion says that he is in great pain:

[7]

Часу много вошед[ъ] ic[оусъ] до капернаума. и пришолъ ко нему нѣакий сотникъ прослаци Его и мовачи; Пане впрокъ мой лежит[ъ] в[ъ] дому моемъ; великим[ъ] болемъ оутрапленный; и Рекъ ему ic[оусъ]; вступлю я тамъ до тебе. и оуздоровлю его: Рекъ ему знову сотникъ. Пане не естемъ а годеи. абыс[ъ] ти вошолъ под дахъ дому моего. але тилко рци слово, и будетъ здоровый впрокъ[ъ] мой. Gloss: *And when Jesus had entered into Capernaum, a certain centurion approached, petitioning him, and saying, 'Lord, my servant lies at my home badly tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' And responding, the centurion said: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under a roof of my house, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healthy'.* (Kliment Bukovsky's didactical gospel, fol. 135r/Šašerina 2023b: 92)

The translation of the pericope is not always complete. For example, in the pericope in the didactical Gospel from Hrabské¹² (provided in [8]), part of the text has dropped out:

[8]

Часу много гды наш м[и]л[о]стивый г[оспод]ъ ic[оусъ] х[ристо]с рачил[ъ] прійти до капернаума. и приступил[ъ] до его с[ва]тои м[и]л[о]сти нѣакий сотник[ъ]. и стал[ъ] его просити мовачи г[оспод]и с[ы]нъ мой лежит[ъ] в[ъ] дому немоцный. и барзо трѣпит[ъ] великои немоци. изнемагает[ъ] и стал[ъ] до него мовити ic[оусъ]: а прійду там[ъ] оуздоровлю его. ѿповидѣль[ъ] ему сътник[ъ] г[оспод]и не ес есмъ годеи. щобы ты имал[ъ] вънйти въ дом[ъ] мой. Gloss: *And when our mercy Lord Jesus Christ meant to come into Capernaum, a centurion approached, petitioning his saint mercy, and saying, 'Lord, my son lies at home sick and badly tormented, growing faint.' And*

Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' And responding, the centurion said: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof'.

Didactical Gospel from Hrabské, fol. 90 The translation which appears in the sermons collection from Ladomirová¹³ seems to be the best from a literary point of view. In terms of content, nothing has been lost from the text of the pericope, nor has anything been added to it; it is a stylistically and literarily well-crafted text in the vernacular:

[9]

Часоу много гды г[оспод]ъ нашъ милостивый ис[оусъ] х[ристо]с[ъ].
р[ачилъ] прійти до капернаума. и приступилъ ко его с[ъ]в[ѣ]т[ом]и м[и]н[и]
л[о]сти. нѣякій сотникъ, и сталъ его просити. мовач[и] г[оспод]и, с[ы]нъ
мой лежитъ в дому немоцный. и барзо трѣптитъ великою немощи
изнемагаетъ. и сталъ мовити до него ис[оусъ]. а прійдоутамъ и въздоровлю
его. ѿповидѣль ему сотникъ. г[оспод]и не ес[ь] ямъ годный, щобы ты мал
воиити в домъ мой. а едно и рци словомъ. исцѣлѣтъ ѿтрокъ мой. Gloss:
*And when our mercy Lord Jesus Christ meant to come into Capernaum, a certain
centurion approached, petitioning his saint mercy, and saying, 'Lord, my son lies at
home sick and badly tormented, growing faint.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come
and heal him.' And responding, the centurion said: 'Lord, I am not worthy that you
should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed'.*
(Didactical Gospel from Hrabské, fol. 90)

An effective mechanism to ensure the intelligibility of the Church Slavonic Gospel pericope was the reading of its translation in the vernacular language together with an interpretation in the form of a sermon. The translations of the Gospel pericopes in the above-mentioned manuscript monuments, together with their interpretations, form a linguistically and stylistically coherent text. It is precisely the variety of pericopes in the living vernacular and the use of diverse manuscript Gospels that not only suggest that the Church Slavonic language was poorly understood but also demonstrate the inevitable need in the local Mukachevo Church environment for a uniform printed Church Slavonic text of the Bible

Printed Church Slavonic Bible in Mukachevo Church

In the context of spiritual and linguistic-cultural development, the Bishop of Mukachevo, Andrej Bačinský (1732–1809), managed to build a theological seminary, which was transferred from the Mukachevo Basilian monastery to Uzhhorod in 1776. Bačinský managed to enthrone the local scholars to concentrate on the creation of various compendia and interpretations of liturgical and legal texts, which served in the education of the priestly adolescents. At the same time, candidates for study in the seminary in Uzhhorod had to demonstrate a good knowledge of the Church (Church Slavonic) and Latin languages before entering the seminary. 'However, knowledge of

the Church Slavonic language was not required out of national-emancipatory motives, but was based on the needs of the daily liturgical practice of the Church' (Haraksim 2000: 17–18).

The desire to improve the Church Slavonic linguistic practice led Bishop Andrej Bačinský to the idea of publishing a Bible for the needs of his church. It should be pointed out, though, that 'the offer to print a Church Slavonic Bible for the Greek Catholics of Mukachevo was made by Bishop A. Bačinský received from the Viennese printer Stefan Novaković in 1794' (Удвари 1986: 70). In a hermeneutical manuscript titled *Наставленіа ерменеѣтическаа* of 1799,¹⁴ a brief account of the history of the translation of the Church Slavonic Bible in the wider Slavic context is given in §33. The author of this essay proceeds on the basis of the argument that although the first translation of the Bible into the Slavonic language is attributed to St Jerome (lat. Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus), this is an incorrect statement. St Jerome did not make a translation into the Slavonic language but prepared a revision of the Latin text of the Bible. The first Slavonic translation, as it is written in the aforementioned Cyrillic hermeneutical writings, comes from the Slavonic apostles Cyril and Methodius, and this conviction lives on in folk consciousness as well:

[10]

Ѹ переводъ Славенскомъ общише нѣнѣ оученѣхъ моужей сіе ест[ъ] мнѣніе
яко переводъ сей начало свое имѣтъ ѿ Кирила и Меѡдіа иже славенскаго
народа ап[осто]лы бѣхоу. Gloss: *About the Slavonic translation of the Bible,
learned men have found that its origin is connected with Saints Cyril and Methodius,
who are the apostles of the Slavonic nations.* (Наставленіа ерменеѣтическаа
1799 / Žeňuch 2013: 120)

The author even claims that this Slavonic translation of the Bible was used by all Slavs without any change until the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries:

[11]

И сей переводъ во оупотребленій бысть оу всѣхъ славенскаго іазика
народахъ даже до вѣка 15^{го} илѣ 16^{го}. Gloss: *This translation was used by all Slavic
peoples until the fifteenth or sixteenth century.* (Наставленіа ерменеѣтическаа
1799 / Žeňuch 2013: 120)

By the end of the eighteenth century, as the author of the apologia points out, the various Slavic nations had each translated the Bible into their own Slavic language, but only the Slavs claiming the Byzantine tradition still use Cyril's original translation of the Bible:

[12]

Єдине Славено Росіане и Славено Оугре, іакоже и Горватї иже вбрядкомъ
ц[е]ркве восточніа послѣдоуютъ, при дренемъ вномъ переводѣ Кїрилловомъ
позостають. Gloss: *Only in Russia, Hungary and Croatia, where liturgies are*

celebrated according to the old Eastern tradition, is this ancient translation of Cyril still in use today. (Наставленіа ерменеїтическаа 1799/Žeňuch 2013: 120)

He adds, however, that today it is no longer possible to reliably determine from what sources and how exactly Cyril's translation of the Bible was made because we no longer have the source from which St Cyril translated the biblical texts, but it is certain that the translations came from the Septuagint. The author of the hermeneutical writing on the Bible, referring to Václav Fortunát Durych and his work *Bibliotheca Slavica* of 1795, says that he prefers to devote himself only to the interpretation of the use of such texts of the Bible which are written in the Church Slavonic language and which are also used in various forms in the Mukachevo Eparchy. From the text of the interpretation, we can see the intention to explain the origin of the Slavonic translation of the Bible, to which the author also adds a chronology of the Church Slavonic Bible translations published in print. He mentions the Ostrog Bible (1580–1) as the first Bible published in print, which was made possible by the support of Prince Konstanty of Ostrog. The first Bible published in the Church Slavonic language was thus created from manuscript prefaces that had been circulating in the Church since the time of its first translation from the Septuagint. It is evident from the argument of the hermeneutical writings that even its publishers were not proficient in the original Church Slavonic language at that time, and therefore various inaccuracies of a linguistic nature were brought into the printed translation of the Ostrog Bible:

[13]

Ўнакожъ ѿакоже ѿъ перевода того вѣдѣти ест[ъ] моужіе вній єдинїво славенскомъ граматическаго знанія ꙗзицѣ нейскоушнїи, а другїи во елѣнскомъ ꙗкоже єдинъ ѿ нѣхъ самъ ѿ себѣ сказоуєтъ: азъ рече, составѣлъ елѣко могохъ оумаленіємъ ей смысла ꙗбо оучїилица нїколы же вѣдѣхъ. Gloss: *as is evident from this translation, some did not know the grammar of the Old Church Slavonic, others did not know Greek, as one of the translators says: I have compiled the text of the translation of the Scriptures without distorting the sense and as well as I could, because I was not educated in any school of learning.* (Наставленіа ерменеїтическаа 1799 / Žeňuch 2013: 121)

This is probably why the Ostrog Bible contains some orthographic and grammatical errors that cause confusion in the interpretation of the Gospel texts. This edition was also used in many parishes of the Mukachevo Eparchy at that time. The cited apologia mentions as important the year 1663, in which the Ostrog Biblia was republished but already in a Moscow printing house, although without the necessary philological interventions and changes. It was only in 1735, when the responsibility for the revised edition of the Bible was taken over by the St Petersburg printer, and in 1736, by decree of the Russian empress Elizabeth (1709–62), that the editorial work on the two new editions of the Bible was accelerated in 1751 and 1756. This Bible is called the *Elizabeth Bible*.

The author of the apologia also offers information about the preparations for its next edition in the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra¹⁵ in 1788. However, the author of the

hermeneutical writing does not have sufficient information about the publication of this Bible; he only mentions that a new edition of this Church Slavonic Bible is also being prepared for the Greek Catholics of Mukachevo in the university printing house in Buda: 'по прїмѣроу сего послѣднаго печатанія кїевскаго аще пройзїдоутъ въ Бодїнѣ' (Žeňuch 2013: 122). The Church Slavonic Bible for the Mukachevo Church was eventually published in five volumes in Buda thanks to A. Bačinský in 1805–6, although the entire preparation of the text was the result of the monks gathered in the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra. Thus, Bačinský's Bible was not prepared for publication in the linguistic-cultural context of the Mukachevo Eparchy, and thus 'could not even have appeared in the local variant of Subcarpathian Church Slavonic described by Arseniy Kocak (1737–1800) in his grammar of 1772–1778' (Дзендзелівський and Ганудель 1990). For the publication of the Bible, Bačinský used only the printing plates of the revised Church Slavonic Elizabeth Bible, as evidenced not only by the language of the Bible text, but also by the 'menologion, which contains a list of saints of the Russian Orthodox Church' (Žeňuch 2017: 140). However, there are several corrections and insertions in the Bachinsky edition of the Bible, which were probably made by Gregor Tarkovič (1754–1841) in his capacity as church censor. These are primarily additions to inconsistently printed verses that were dropped from the forthcoming edition of the Bible. The corrections are printed in the marginalia next to the marks that supplement the biblical text. However, such additions and commentaries are absent in the Old Testament; they are found only in the Gospel texts of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John; in the texts of the Acts of the Apostles; in the Epistles of the Holy Apostles; and in the Apocalypse.

In the bishop's circular of 23 April 1794, written in Latin by Bačinský, it is said that the Church Slavonic Bible was supposed to serve the priests and believers of the Mukachevo Church in Hungary not only for the strengthening of faith, but especially for the improvement of the Church language, which Bishop Bačinský considered to be not only the language of the liturgical tradition but also a suitable means of communication for scientific and exegetical writings. Even on 1 January 1806 in a circular letter, Bačinský draws attention to the fact that his Bible is published in 'our language' and gives orders to use it (Шлепецький 1967: 240). From Bačinský's letter, we can deduce that he was surprised because the printed text of the Church Slavonic Bible is not in favour among priests and believers.

The Church Slavonic text of the Bible was used mainly for liturgical purposes, but national-linguistic development in this area was also directed towards the use of biblical texts in comprehensible or literary (written) languages of individual national and linguistic communities, to which all peoples and nationalities of the Mukachevo Eparchy belonged except the Ruthenians, yet this complex issue of national identification is explained by L. Haraksim (2000: 10–36). In national contexts, which included the Greek-Catholic believers of the Mukachevo Church, translations of biblical texts in national languages already existed in both Roman Catholic and Evangelical confessional contexts at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the Mukachevo Church, however, the traditional sanctity and inviolability of the Church Slavonic liturgical and biblical language was emphasized.

Conclusion

The ideas of the Byzantine-Slavic spiritual-cultural tradition were reproduced in the area of the Mukachevo Church since the seventeenth century not only in Church Slavonic but also through manuscript Cyrillic texts influenced by the vernacular language. Therefore, the spiritual heritage of the Church of Mukachevo includes not only the Holy Scriptures and liturgical rites in Church Slavonic. The literary language is the main cultivated means of communication, but also the identifying symbol of the linguistic community. The variants (redactions) of liturgical language in the Church Slavonic liturgical tradition of the Byzantine-Slavic rite are important evidence of the developing linguistic consciousness of its users. The publication of a five-volume Church Slavonic Bible for the Greek Catholics of the Mukachevo Eparchy in 1805–6 should thus only be seen as a tool for strengthening the Church Slavonic liturgical heritage and confessional awareness in the multilingual environment of the Carpathian Mountains.

Appendix

Below for illustrative purposes in Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, we provide photos of the source material analysed in this chapter.



Figure 6.1 Наставленіа ерменеѣтическаа' [unknown author] (1799). Library of Greek-Catholic Theological Faculty, University of Prešov. Prešov. Sign. 3202/II.

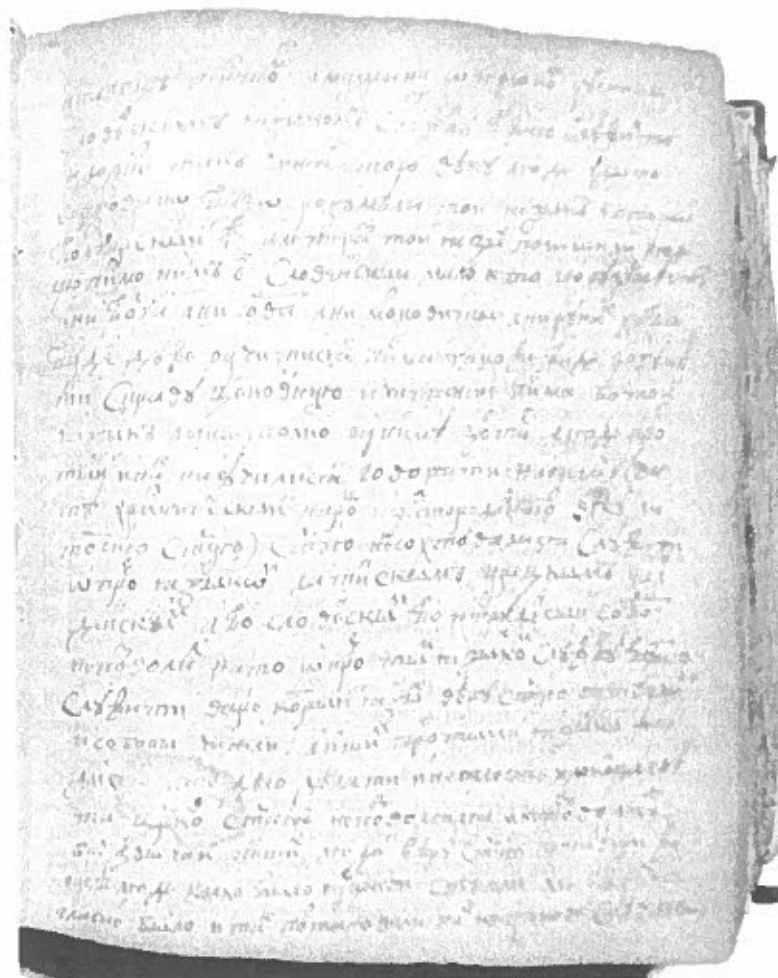


Figure 6.2 Priest Ignatij. 1660. Kniha kázni a výkladov k životom svätých. Archiv Spolku svätého Vojtecha (= Archive of the Society of St. Vojtech), Trnava, sign. Fasc. 254, č. 6.

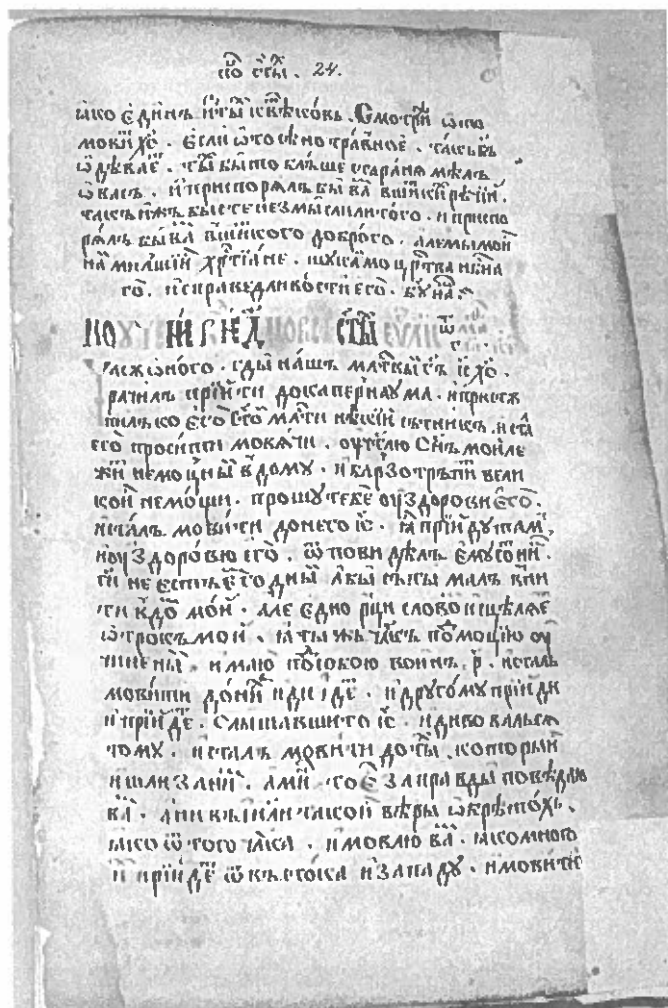


Figure 6.3 Ugrian didactical gospel, XVII century. Collection of the National Museum of the Czech Republic, National Museum Library. sign. IX.C.19. fol. 24r.

The 'Zabludów Gospel' [unknown author] (1569) is available on the web: <https://kp.rusneb.ru/item/reader/evangelie-uchitelnoe-1>

Acknowledgements

The study was supported by the project APVV-22-0088 'What do Slovak archives hold? The Spiritual Legacy of the East in the West'. The authors would like to thank

the National Museum of the Czech Republic in Prague, Library of Greek-Catholic Theological Faculty, University of Prešov (Slovakia), Archive of the Society of St. Vojtech, Trnava (Slovakia) for granting courtesy permission to publish the digital documentation of their archival material.

Notes

- 1 The trilingual fallacy was the theological view that only the three languages used for the inscription on the cross of Christ – Hebrew, Greek and Latin – could be used as the liturgical language. In the ninth century, St Cyril spoke out against the trilingual fallacy.
- 2 The former Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Church of Mukachevo represents a confessional tradition in the region of the Carpathian Ruthenia, which today unites the Greek-Catholic believers living in the regions currently belonging to the following four states: Slovakia, Ukraine, Hungary and Romania. From the ecclesiastical-legal point of view, these are the regions that comprise the following dioceses: in Slovakia, the Metropolis of Prešov, the Bishoprics of Košice and Bratislava; in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine, the Bishopric of Mukachevo, based in Uzhhorod; in Romania, the Bishopric of Maramures, based in Baia Mare, the Bishoprics of Oradea, Cluj and Satu-Mare; and in Hungary, the Bishoprics of Hajdúdorog, Miskolc and Nyiregyháza.
- 3 The manuscripts from Litmanová A and B are two Cyrillic manuscripts in the vernacular language, the author of which is unknown; the time of writing dates back to the eighteenth century. These texts are named after Stefan Hlinka, from whom these manuscripts were found by Ivan Franko in the early twentieth century. The manuscripts were transliterated and published in 2023 by S. Šašerina.
- 4 In square brackets we indicate parts of words which the author abbreviated in the usual way of the time, by indicating them under the *titlo*, which is an external diacritic symbol used for a scribal abbreviation.
- 5 The whole manuscript is not published, but is partially available in Žeňuch 2013: 124–9.
- 6 Old Church Slavonic is called the first Slavic written language, the language of the translations of the Holy Scriptures made by Cyril and Methodius. This Slavic literary language is based on the South Slavic dialect spoken around Thessaloniki in the ninth century. There are no significant or fundamental differences between Old Church Slavonic and Church Slavonic, although the linguistic awareness of the users, which is related to the emergence of national Slavic languages, has actively entered into the Church Slavonic language. At present, Church Slavonic is only the liturgical language of the churches of the Byzantine-Slavic rite.
- 7 The canonical text originates from the so-called Elizabeth Bible (1751). The text of this Gospel passage in Church Slavonic is given according to the modern Church Slavonic immutable canonical edition.
- 8 The author of the translation of the gospel recorded in the Peresopnytsia manuscript is unknown. According to I. Chepiha, the researcher who published this monument of writing in 2001, the text is written in Ukrainian literary and written language and dates from 1556–1561 (Čenira 2001: 7).
- 9 The Ugrian didactical gospel, whose author is unknown, dates back to the end of the seventeenth century. In the early twentieth century, it was found by Y. Yavorskiy

- during his field research. The manuscript was published by S. Šašerina in 2019. This pericope is written in Church Slavonic with elements of Ruthenian and Slovak origin.
- 10 Zabludov Gospel, printed book published in the town of Zabludów in the printing house of G. Khodkevich in 1569. The author is unknown; the language of the monument can be defined as Church Slavonic with elements of vernacular.
 - 11 'The Kliment Bukovský's didactical gospel dates from the eighteenth century. The manuscript was named after one of its owners, as indicated by the ex-libris, but in fact Kliment Bukovský was not its author; its real author is unknown. The language of the manuscript can be defined as Church Slavonic with elements of vernacular. The manuscript was published in 2023 by S. Šašerina.
 - 12 'The didactical gospel from the village of Hrabské, written in Church Slavonic with elements of vernacular, dates from the first third of the seventeenth century. Its author is unknown. The manuscript is in the collection of Y. Yavorskiy in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg; its transliterated edition was not realized.
 - 13 The manuscript of didactical Gospel from Lodomirová is anonymous, written in Church Slavonic with elements of vernacular. It dates from the second half of the seventeenth century. The original manuscript is in the Transcarpathian Ethnographic Museum in Uzhhorod; the transliterated version has not been published yet.
 - 14 The manuscript named *Hermeneutical council* is located in Library of the Greek-Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Prešov; its author is unknown. The book is dated 1799. The whole text has not been published, but it is partly available in Žeňuch 2013: 120–2.
 - 15 In the Orthodox tradition, Lavra (Greek: Λαύρα) refers to some of the largest monasteries, which have a special historical and spiritual significance. This is the case with the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, one of the first monasteries of Kievan Rus and one of the most important Orthodox shrines.

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Hermeneutics of (in)comprehension of religious texts in Old Believer communities (on the example of Old Believers living in Poland)

Helena Pocięchina

Introduction

As an element of culture, religion constitutes a very important sphere of a society's life, performing, among others, organizing functions: ideological, regulatory, communicative, integrating or political (Durkheim 1990; Luhman 1998). However, in the history of each society, periods of conflict between traditional and new forms of religiousness occur. Against the background of changes taking place in contemporary societies, the culture of Old Believers constitutes a singular object of research in this field on the grounds of its declared self-containment and simultaneously its permanency and diversity. Therefore it has attracted increasingly greater attention from historians, anthropologists and sociologists of culture. All the above-mentioned aspects of religious experience can be traced as a system of beliefs and practices in the doctrinal dimension in the social life of Old Believer communities ([Rus.] старообрядчество), [Pol.] staroobrzędowcy). This denomination emerged within Eastern Christianity during the formation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the mid-seventeenth century and developed outside the official state doctrine. Formally defying any changes in rituals, symbolism or liturgical language, the leaders of the Old Believer movement acknowledged the validity of liturgical and patristic books and other patterns of early Christian literature, but only those written or published only before 1666, that is, before the Synod of Moscow was called and the opponents of the reforms were anathemized.²

Among the Old Believer communities, two strands can be distinguished: those that do not recognize the church hierarchy, that is, reject Nikonite priests, беспоповцы ('Bespopovtsy' – the Priestless Old Believers); and those that do, the priested ones (the Popovtsy – поповцы). The pre-Synodal and pre-schism traditional literature allegedly underpin the doctrines of those two basic fractions of the Old Believers, shaping both the world view of the faithful themselves and the basis for self-identification, as well as their reception by 'outsiders'. The reference to antiquity, to 'ancient' books and traditions