

Rev. Mariusz Szram¹

Theatrical Visualization of Human Emotions as a Rhetorical Mean of Persuasion in the Homilies of Basil the Great on Human Vices

1. Preliminary issues

Basil the Great (died 379) belongs to the group of early Christian authors who had excellent rhetorical education and used it abundantly in their preaching work². From his youth, he was introduced to the oratorical art. In his native Caesarea of Cappadocia, he studied grammar under the guidance of his father (346-348), and there he began his rhetorical studies, which he continued first in Constantinople (348-349) and then in Athens (350-355) with his friend Gregory of Nazianzus³. After his studies, he took over

¹ Rev. Prof. Dr habil. Mariusz Szram, head of the Chair of Greek and Latin Patrology in the Section of the Church History and Patrology of the Institute of Theological Sciences at the Faculty of Theology of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin; e-mail: m.szram@wp.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-8646-6295.

² Cf. E. Staniek, *Wielcy mówcy starożytnego Kościoła. Antologia*, Kraków 2007, p. 165-175; S.M. Hildebrand, *Basil of Caesarea*, Grand Rapids 2014, p. 7. On rhetoric in the patristic era see: H.T. Kerr, *Preaching in the Early Church*, New York 1942; A. Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel*, London 1964; J. Bernardi, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens. Le prédicateur et son auditoire*, Paris 1968; A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*, Berkeley 1991; S.M. Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homilies in Fourth-Century Christian Literature. Prose Rhythm, Oratorical Style, and Preaching in the Works of Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine*, American Philological Association: American Classical Studies 26, Atlanta 1991.

³ Cf. P.J. Fedwick, *A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea*, in: *Basil of Caesarea – Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary*

the chair of rhetoric in Caesarea after his father (355-356)⁴. He probably remained in touch with the most eminent Hellenic rhetorician of the time – Libanius, whom he met in Constantinople, Nicomedia or Antioch⁵. It is obvious that the theoretical and practical experience of the orator Basil used in his later life as a monk, preacher, priest, and charity organizer⁶. A testimony to his positive attitude towards ancient culture, including philosophy and rhetoric, which can be described as “Christian humanism”, referring to the attitude of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, is the oration to the youth about the usefulness of reading the works of ancient authors⁷. Basil emphasized in it that young people should prepare themselves to understand Sacred Scripture by getting to know the carefully selected works of ancient Greek philosophers, poets, historians and orators⁸.

An oratorical talent and knowledge of rhetoric were reflected primarily in Basil’s homilies. In addition to exegetical homilies and dogmatic sermons, an important place in his pastoral work is occupied by homilies on

Symposium, v. 1, ed. P.J. Fedwick, Toronto 1981, p. 5-6; Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 143-144; C.L. Riley, *The Rhetoric of Homiletics: Preaching, Persuasion and the Cappadocian Fathers*, Texas A&M University 2015, p. 27, 57 (doctoral dissertation); M. Wysocki, *Basil the Great*, in: *Encyclopedia of Christian Education*, v. 1, ed. G.T. Kurian – M.A. Lampert, Lanham – Boulder – New York – London 2015, p. 115; N. Dumitrascu, *Basil the Great. Faith, Mission and Diplomacy in the Shaping of Christian Doctrine*, London – New York 2018, p. 145-148.

⁴ Cf. P.J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea*, Eugene 2001, p. 135. Due to the ambiguity of the sources, Jean Gribomont suspects that Basil could not perform this function. Cf. J. Gribomont, *Eustathe le philosophe et les voyages du jeune Basile de Césarée*, RHE 54 (1959) p. 121.

⁵ Cf. Riley, *The Rhetoric of Homiletics*, p. 57. The publisher of Basil’s letters Yves Courtonne considers the authenticity of Basil’s correspondence with Libanius for dubious. Cf. Basil, *Lettres*, v. 3, ed. Y. Courtonne, Paris 1966, p. 202.

⁶ Cf. Riley, *The Rhetoric of Homiletics*, p. 61; B.E. Daley, *Building a New City: The Cappadocian Fathers and the Rhetoric of Philanthropy*, JECS 7 (1999) p. 431-461.

⁷ Cf. S. Longosz, *Wstęp. Mowa Bazylego do młodych*, in: *Święty Bazyli Wielki, Do młodzieńców o korzyściach z czytania książek pogańskich*, VoxP 57 (2012) p. 899.

⁸ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *De legendibus gentium libris*. See: N.G. Wilson, *St. Basil on the Value of Greek Literature*, London 1975; E.L. Fortin, *Christianity and Hellenism in Basil the Great’s Address “Ad Adulescentes”*, in: *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought*, ed. H. Blumenthal – R.A. Markus, London 1981, p. 189-203; M. Lech, *Znaczenie antycznej literatury greckiej w edukacji młodych chrześcijan (na podstawie „Mowy do młodzieży” Bazylego Wielkiego)*, “Meander” 52 (1997) p. 141-153; T. Boura, *The Relationship between Hellenism and Christianity in St. Basil’s “Speech to the Young...”*, VoxP 57 (2012) p. 53-57.

Christian morality, delivered in the years 363-378⁹. An interesting phenomenon is the fact that a decisive minority among them are praises of virtues. The only homily on Christian virtue is the one on humility¹⁰. Most moral homilies, on the other hand, are those that condemn various moral flaws. From the review of the topics discussed in them, it can be concluded that a special problem in the time of Basil in Caesarea were misers, usurers, drunkards, adventurers and jealous people. Basil devoted separate homilies to the vices related to the aforementioned attitudes.

The common element linking Basil's homilies on vices is the use of the topos of moral flaw as a spiritual disease, popular in both ancient and early Christian literature¹¹. The behavior of a greedy man was described by Basil as a disease of the soul (πάθος τῆς ψυχῆς), similar to the disease of gluttons (τῶν γαστριμάργων), who prefer to burst from gluttony than to share leftovers with the needy¹². He called jealousy (φθόνος) a fatal illness (νόσος), consisting in contradicting God (ἐναντίωσις πρὸς Θεόν). Satan has succumbed to it and now causes it in man, provoking him to fight against God and other people¹³.

People with a sickness of soul, addicted to the vices stigmatized by Basil, were often accompanied by negative emotions. The preacher described their character and behavior, depriving man of the distinguishing feature of rationality among creatures, when discussing the defect of anger:

Since [...] this affect (πάθος), having once pushed aside caution, will itself take over the rulership of the soul, it turns a person completely into an animal

⁹ Cf. Fedwick, *A Chronology of the Life and Works*, p. 9-10; J. Gribomont, *Notes biographiques sur s. Basile le Grand*, in: *Basil of Caesarea – Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, p. 27-34; T. Sinko, *Wstęp. Życie i pisma św. Bazylego W.*, in: *Św. Bazyli Wielki, Wybór homilij i kazań*, Kraków 1947, p. 24-28; Staniek, *Wielcy mówcy*, p. 171-175. All fragments of Basil's moral homilies, quoted in this article, are in my own translation.

¹⁰ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *De humilitate*. See: M. Szram, *Cnota pokory w nauczaniu greckich Ojców Kościoła IV wieku*, Lublin 2014, p. 95.

¹¹ Cf. Staniek, *Wielcy mówcy*, p. 171-173. About comparisons taken from medicine, occurring in the preaching of Basil, see: Riley, *The Rhetoric of Homiletics*, p. 97-99.

¹² Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia in illud: Destruam horrea mea 2*. In the characteristics of the attitude of a rich and greedy man, you can see the references to the Greek moralist Plutarch, as well as to the Cynic diatribe, stigmatizing with a high dose of malignant irony different kinds of luxury beyond natural needs. See: Sinko, *Wstęp*, p. 24-26.

¹³ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia de invidia 3*.

(ἀποθηριοῖ παντελῶς τὸν ἄνθρωπον) and does not allow him to be a human, because there is no help from reason (ἐκ τοῦ λόγου)¹⁴.

Basil mentioned extreme emotions that can engulf human soul when describing the behavior of drunk people:

They fall into opposite affects (εἰς τὰ ἐναντία περιάγονται πάθη). [Some] are despairing and depressed and sorrowful and anxious. [The wine, on the other hand,] makes others cheerful and pleasant and joyful¹⁵.

The strength and disastrous influence of emotions on a person subject to vices and on the people around him were emphasized by Basil using invective and comparisons to the worst mental diseases. He considered those suffering from jealousy (νοσοῦντες τὴν βασκανίαν) worse than poisonous animals (τῶν ἰοβόλων αὐτῶν ὀλεθριώτεροι)¹⁶. He described the defect of anger (θυμός) as a short-term madness (μανία τίς [...] ὀλιγοχρόνιος)¹⁷. On the other hand, he called drunkenness (μέθη) departing from the senses (παρὰφρονία) and taking the mind away (ἀλογία)¹⁸.

Negative emotions accompanying these vices, disturbing not only the inner peace of the person characterized by a specific defect but also the surrounding environment, were – in Basil's opinion – an important warning which could discourage listeners from succumbing to these defects. Thus, it became a frequent practice of a Cappadocian preacher to present emotional states in a pictorial way, referring to visual impressions characteristic of a theatrical performance¹⁹. This manner of conduct enlivening the preacher's statements, can be treated as an acceptable for Christians

¹⁴ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* 1. Despite the emphasis on the role of the reason, Basil did not consider deprived of feelings stoic sage to be the ideal of a man, on the contrary – he considered affections as an important component of human nature. However, he recommended moderation in their showing, in reference to the ancient principle μεσότης. Cf. L. Małunowiczówna, *Konsolacyjne listy św. Bazylego Wielkiego*, RH 24/3 (1976) p. 70-71; A. Jasiewicz, „Argumenta consolatoria” w pismach św. Bazylego Wielkiego, SW 47 (2010) p. 74.

¹⁵ Basilus Caesariensis, *In ebriosos* 3.

¹⁶ Cf. Basilus, *Homilia de invidia* 4.

¹⁷ Cf. Basilus, *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* 1. See: Dumitrescu, *Basil the Great*, p. 170-172.

¹⁸ Cf. Basilus, *In ebriosos* 2-4.

¹⁹ Augustine of Hippo spoke about “Christian spectacles” (*spectacula christiana*), which could be invoked throughout the preaching of the Word of God during the liturgy.

kind of substitute for secular theatrical performances, which were negatively assessed by the Fathers of the Church as a vehicle of immorality and idolatry²⁰. The analysis of selected homilies by Basil the Great about the vices of anger, jealousy, getting rich and drunkenness made it possible to extract from these texts three presented below specific rhetorical means of persuasion, which were used by the preacher to illustrate various human emotions.

2. Introducing dialogue scenes with the participation of characters embodying the criticized flaws and showing various emotions

In order to illustrate the consequences of the criticized moral flaws, Basil introduced into his homilies fictitious figures of people who were under their influence and attributed specific statements to them. They were presented in the form of a short monologue or – more often – a dialogue with people from their backgrounds, as well as with the preacher himself²¹. It is a special combination of two types of thought figures – fiction and introducing the speaker, described in Greek textbooks of ancient rhetoric as εἰδολοποιία and διαλογισμός, and in Latin as *fictio* and *sermocinatio*²².

Cf. Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 39, 9; 80, 23. Cf. S. Longosz, *Chrześcijańskie widowiska zastępcze w propozycji Ojców Kościoła*, VoxP 67 (2017) p. 334-352.

²⁰ Cf. H. Jürgens, *Pompa diaboli. Die lateinischen Kirchenväter und das antike Theater*, Stuttgart 1972; O. Pasquato, *Gli spettacoli in S. Giovanni Crisostomo. Paganesimo e cristianesimo ad Antiochia e Constantinopoli nel IV secolo*, Roma 1976; J. Śrutwa, *Widowiska epoki klasycznej w ocenie Kościoła afrykańskiego II-V wieku*, RTK 27/4 (1980) p. 43-56; W. Myszor, *Teatr i widowiska w ocenie greckich pisarzy kościelnych*, in: *Chrześcijaństwo a życie publiczne w Cesarstwie Rzymskim III-IV wieku*, red. J. Śrutwa, Lublin 1988, p. 123-134; E. Stanula, *Widowiska w ocenie Ojców Kościoła*, SaeCh 2/1 (1995) p. 7-16; L. Lugaresi, *Il teatro di Dio. Il problema degli spettacoli nel cristianesimo antico (II-V secolo)*, Brescia 2008; S. Longosz, *Teatr miejscem kultu bóstw pogańskich w opinii autorów wczesnochrześcijańskich*, "Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne. Historia" 27/254 (1992) p. 135-149; Longosz, *Chrześcijańskie widowiska zastępcze*, p. 303-360.

²¹ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum 14* 4, 6-8; Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in divites* 2-3. The conversational character of Basil's homilies drew Riley's attention (*The Rhetoric of Homiletics*, p. 94).

²² Cf. M. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, Warszawa 1990, p. 116; H. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric. A Foundation for Literary Study*, tr. M.T. Bliss – A. Jansen – D.E. Orton, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998, p. 246-247, 365-371.

The words of evil people, as well as of people with whom they are in dialogue, appear in the homilies, expressed in emotions, emphasized with rhetorical exaggeration by the preacher. An example is the dramatized dialogue between the greedy and the poor in the homily against usurers. The greedy man initially denies being able to make the loan. Basil emphasized his stubbornness by using a number of synonymous phrases (Greek συννομιία, Latin *congregatio*)²³, reinforced by the repetition of the negative particle “no” at the beginning of each period (Greek ἀνάφορα, Latin *repetitio*)²⁴. In this way, the whole situation becomes dynamic and the accompanying emotions increase:

The greedy man, seeing this [poor and needy] man, does not take pity on him, he does not take nature into account, he is not moved by his entreaties, but stands adamant and implacable, does not yield to requests, does not bow to tears, persists in refusal. He swears and, wishing himself badly, swears that he has no money at all and that he is looking around to see if he could find a creditor himself, and he certifies a lie with oaths, acquiring perjury as a bad addition to inhumanity²⁵.

However, when a loan seeker, also torn by emotions caused by the fear of poverty (“pressed by necessity, bends and lowers”), mentions that he could take out a loan at interest, then the emotions of the moneylender undergo an unexpected change and stubbornness gives way to the undisguised joy of finding a naive client:

Lowering his eyebrows, he smiles, perhaps remembers his friendship with his father, and calls the applicant a good acquaintance and friend. Finally, he adds: We’ll see if there is any money lying there somewhere. It is a deposit of a friend who has placed it with us for trading. But he marked heavy percentages for it, and we will in any way reduce something and give it a lower percentage²⁶.

²³ Cf. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki*, p. 109; Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, p. 292-295.

²⁴ Cf. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki*, p. 108; Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, p. 281-283.

²⁵ Basiliius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum 14* 1. All underlines in the text come from the author of the article.

²⁶ Basiliius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum 14* 1.

This fictional dialogue, full of emotions accompanying the interlocutors, emphasized by the preacher, has the features of a theatrical performance, affecting both the sense of hearing and sight. In the summary, Basil described the moneylender's behavior with the verb κατασχηματίζω – “change the figure”, “adapt to the situation”, which the Polish translator Tadeusz Sinko translated as “odgrywanie komedii” (“playing a comedy”)²⁷. Although this translation differs from literal text of the original, it reflects well the theatricality of the entire scene described by the Cappadocian preacher. This scene fulfills, like other similar dialogues in Basil's homilies, one of the main criteria for recognizing a literary text as a theatrical drama, formulated after Aristotle by Origen in the Commentary on the Song of Songs:

A drama [...] is a piece played on stage by various characters: some enter the stage, others leave, and the text of the play is spoken by different people and addressed to different people (*aliis etiam discendentibus a diversis et ad diversos textus narrationis expletur*)²⁸.

3. A plastic way of presenting the characters' feelings with the use of stage movement and elements of the scenery

Apart from the dialogue with characters embodying the criticized vices, Basil often used a rhetorical figure of thought, known in Greek as ὑποτύπσις, and in Latin *descriptio*²⁹. It consists in a plastic presentation

²⁷ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum 14* 1, Polish translation: T. Sinko, *Homilia na Psalm 14 i przeciw lichwiarzom*, in: Św. Bazyli Wielki, *Wybór homilij i kazań*, Kraków 1947, p. 50.

²⁸ Origenes, *Commentarii in Canticum canticorum*, Prologus 1. Cf. Origenes, *Commentarii in Canticum canticorum* I, 1. See: L. Perrone, “The Bride at the Crossroads”. *Origen's Dramatic Interpretation of the Song of Songs*, EThL 82 (2006) p. 81-85; S. Longosz, *Teoria dramatu w pismach autorów wczesnochrześcijańskich. Wstęp, wybór tekstów, opracowanie i noty, w: O dramacie. Wybór źródeł do teorii dramatycznych*, v. 1: *Od Arystotelesa do Goethego. Poetyki – Manifesty – Komentarze*, red. E. Udalska, Warszawa 1989, s. 134; S. Longosz, *I germi del dramma cristiano nella letteratura patristica*, StPatr 31 (1997) p. 59-69; S. Longosz, *Dramatyzowane homilie patrystyczne załączkiem dramatu chrześcijańskiego*, VoxP 65 (2016) p. 423-424.

²⁹ Cf. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki*, p. 118-119; Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, p. 365, 496.

of the behavior of these characters, especially the accompanying emotions. Elements borrowed from theater play an important role in these descriptions, which adds drama and enriches them with a visual dimension³⁰. This is most clearly visible in homilies on anger and drunkenness, where the negative emotions accompanying these vices demand even such an illustrative presentation. The way in which it is carried out by the preacher resembles theatrical stage directions, containing precise instructions on the actor's behavior on stage.

The description of an angry man, presented in the homily against the defect of anger, is extremely vivid and presents to the eyes of the audience an almost living figure whose emotions have a drastic influence on his appearance and behavior:

He gnashed his teeth in anger, like pigs bound together, his face turned blue and filled with blood; body weight swelled, veins burst as breath is disturbed by an inner storm; the voice is rough and too intense, speech inarticulate and incoherent comes out disorderly and indistinctly³¹.

The state of a drunk person was also an opportunity for the preacher to evoke strong visual impressions, influencing the listener's imagination. Basil presents a drunkard very vividly as a caricature of human emotions, using the popular figure of thought, which is similarity or imaging (Greek εἰκῶν, Latin *imago*)³², with a certain amount of exaggeration, characteristic of a rhetorical trope, called hyperbole (Greek ὑπερβολή, Latin *superlatio*)³³:

Drunken are more foolish than cattle, since all quadrupeds and cattle and wild animals have set oestrus seasons, and those whose souls are overwhelmed by

³⁰ Cf. J. Kecskemeti, *Personnages tragiques et personnages comiques dans les homélies dramatisées des prédicateurs grecs*, "Euphrosyne" 22 (1994) p. 45-61; J. Kecskemeti, *L'homélie dramatisée dans la prédication grecque*, CPE 74 (1999) p. 20-34.

³¹ Basiliius Caesariensis, *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* 2. A similar illustrative description of the appearance of a man torn by emotions appears in the homily on jealousy. Cf. Basiliius Caesariensis, *Homilia de invidia* 5: "And one can recognize the jealous somehow from the very face. Their eyes are dry and dim, their cheeks are sunken, their eyebrows are drawn together, their soul is entwined with passion, with no measure of truth in conduct".

³² Cf. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki*, p. 119; Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, p. 201, 361.

³³ Cf. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki*, p. 106; Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, p. 263-264.

drunkenness and their bodies are overflowed with heat against nature, converge on impure and disgusting embraces and pleasures at every opportunity and at every time. And not only does this situation instill in them a lack of rationality, but also the delusion of the senses makes the drunk inferior to any beast. For which beast sees so badly and hears badly, like a drunkard? [...] Any frenzy among male cattle is smaller than the audacious lust of drunkards, because animals know the limits of nature, and drunk people look for the female in the male and look for the male in the female³⁴.

The means of dynamizing the description and influencing the audience's sense of sight is the element of movement, reminiscent of the actor's behavior on stage. The characters presented by the preacher move against the background of a precisely defined scenery, also evoking associations with a theatrical performance. It is precisely such a movement in a specific environment that reflects the emotions that a person terrified of having to pay off an accumulating debt undergoes: "If you knock on the door, the debtor is immediately under the bed; when someone runs violently, his heart beats; the dog barks, and he sweats and, taken in by fear, looks at where to run"³⁵. Basil also used the element of movement to show convincingly the emotions caused by the vice of anger, which – in his opinion – is by its nature associated with excessive mobility³⁶: "hands raised on knees and falling on all parts of the body, legs jumping tirelessly on the most important parts of the body, anything that catches the eye, used as a tool of madness"³⁷. The above-mentioned examples of the visualization of the negative emotions of the heroes of the homily about flaws, caused by showing them in motion in a specific environment, clearly refer to patterns taken from theater plays, which is confirmed by the preacher himself in his homily against people who get angry: "And since the anger from excitement has flared up to incurability, like a flame from the abundance of wood,

³⁴ Basilus Caesariensis, *In ebriosos* 3, 4.

³⁵ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia in Psalmum 14* 3.

³⁶ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* 1: "[People angry] in a quivering and jumping affect (σφαδάζοντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ θυμοῦ καὶ πηδῶντος) will not first calm down until they either do something bad to the man who irritated them, or if it happens so, they will hurt themselves". Bazyli notes that increased movement is also associated with emotions caused by excessive drunkenness. Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *In ebriosos* 5: "when the excess wine strains the breath and weakens the tension in the tendons [...] your body, not knowing the natural support, necessarily spins and is jolted".

³⁷ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* 2.

then one can indeed watch a spectacle that cannot be [...] utterly spoken (τὰ οὐτε λόγῳ ῥητὰ [...] θεάματα)³⁸. Basil emphasized this reference to the theatrical performance by comparing the change in the appearance of an overcome by emotions caused by excessive anger man, to putting on a mask on stage (ὡσπερ τι προσωπεῖον ἐπὶ σκηνῆς)³⁹.

4. Appealing to listeners as viewers and evoking their emotions through visual impressions

The fact that the theatrical character of depictions of human emotions in homilies on moral vices is the most conscious practice of Basil is evidenced by his direct signaling by the preacher himself. By presenting the poor man's emotions caused by the fear of the effects of extreme poverty, the Cappadocian used a rhetorical figure of thought in the form of a speaker directing himself to the audience (Greek ἀποστροφή, Latin *aversio*)⁴⁰. He addressed the listeners directly, announcing a visualization of the situation, similar to the action taking place on a theater stage:

How can I present to your eyes the suffering of a poor man (ὅπ' ὄψιν ἀγάγω τὰ πάθη τοῦ πένητος)? Here, after examining carefully his belongings, he sees that he has neither gold, nor will he ever have [...]. So what is he to do? Finally, he looks to his sons to put them on the market for sale and save himself from starvation. Now take a look at the struggle (Νόησον ἐνταῦθα μάχην) between the compulsion of hunger and paternal love: Hunger threatens with the most mournful death; natural affection draws away from it and encourages him to die with his sons. He has already moved forward several times, and restrained himself several times, and finally succumbed, raped by the necessity of inexorable poverty. [...] having shed tears, he goes to sell his beloved son⁴¹.

With similar phrases, referring to the sense of sight of the recipients of the homily⁴², Basil also began a description of the emotions accompanying

³⁸ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* 2.

³⁹ Cf. Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur* 2.

⁴⁰ Cf. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki*, p. 115; Lausberg, *Retoryka*, p. 162-163.

⁴¹ Basilus Caesariensis, *Homilia in illud: Destruam horrea mea* 4.

⁴² Riley (*The Rhetoric of Homiletics*, p. 192) drew attention to their frequent occurrence in the homilies of Basil.

an unjust rich man during the final judgment (“how can I present these horrors to your eyes”)⁴³ and a full of irony and sarcasm depiction of the image of a drunk soldier who was supposed to arouse fear in his enemies, but who cannot stand on his own feet (“it is a pitiful sight to Christian eyes”)⁴⁴. The above-mentioned exhortations of the preacher addressed to the listeners of the homily to follow it not only by the sense of hearing, but also by sight, combined two goals: on the one hand – increasing the image of feelings experienced by the presented characters, on the other – evoking stronger emotions also in the faithful. In this way, the theatricality of the message turns out to be an excellent means of rhetorical persuasion, fully engaging the listener and enabling him to avoid the vices stigmatized in the homilies and the negative emotions associated with them.

5. Conclusions

Basil’s use of the rhetorical means of persuasion discussed above, influencing the audience’s sense of sight, was intended by the preacher to more effectively deter the audience from imitating the attitudes criticized in his homilies. The subject of this visualization were various negative emotional states accompanying vices. Referring to very vivid imagery, the Cappadocian preacher endowed his statements with the value of theatricality. He presented a specific *spectaculum Christianum* to the audience. The director of this spectacle was the orator himself

⁴³ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia in divites* 6.

⁴⁴ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *In ebriosos* 7. A similar practice can be seen in Augustine of Hippo. Cf. Augustinus, *In Joannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* 49, 2. See: Longosz, *Chrześcijańskie widowiska zastępcze*, p. 341: “Zadaniem [...] komentatora w przepowiadaniu homiletycznym jest [...] według Augustyna «uwidowiskowanie» lub «uscenawianie» słowa Bożego lub wydarzeń biblijnych tak, żeby każdy mógł je zrozumieć i przyjąć w swoim wewnętrznym teatrze; kaznodzieja używa przy tym nierzadko terminologii widowiskowej, posługując się czasownikami: *spectare, videre, intueri*, albo też nazywając komentowane wydarzenie biblijne wprost widowiskiem czy przedstawieniem (*spectaculum*) lub teatrem, a występujące w nim postacie – aktorami” (“The task [...] of the commentator in homiletic preaching is [...] according to Augustine, to “visualize” or “stage” the word of God or biblical events so that everyone can understand and receive them in their inner theater; the preacher often uses the terminology of spectacles, using the verbs: *spectare, videre, intueri*, or calling the biblical event in question directly a spectacle (*spectaculum*) or theater, and the characters appearing in it – actors”. My own translation into English).

and the actors were stigmatized bearers of the vices, tormented by various emotions. Negative emotional behavior of people under their influence appeared before the eyes of the listeners, and in them also aroused emotions in the form of fear of falling into a similar state. In this way, equipped with a visual element, Basil's homiletic teachings, like the ancient Greek tragedy, played the role of a kind of purification of the soul (κάθαρσις) of bad emotions, which were a manifestation of addiction to moral flaws.

Theatrical Visualization of Human Emotions as a Rhetorical Mean of Persuasion in the Homilies of Basil the Great on Human Vices

(summary)

The presentation of various emotional states in a pictorial way, referring to visual impressions, characteristic of a theatrical performance, is a common practice of Basil the Great (d. 379) in his homilies on the vices of anger, jealousy, getting rich and drunkenness. The analysis of the homilies makes it possible to extract and discuss in this article three specific rhetorical means of persuasion that were used by the preacher to present human passions in a pictorial manner: (1) introducing dialogue scenes with the participation of characters embodying the criticized vices and displaying various feelings; (2) a plastic way of presenting the characters' passions with the use of stage movement and elements of the scenery; (3) appealing to listeners as viewers and evoking emotions in them through visual impressions. With the help of these rhetorical means, Basil presented a kind of theatrical spectacle to his listeners, arousing in them a feeling of fear of falling into the slavery of the vices criticized by the preacher. As in the ancient Greek tragedy, Basil's homiletic teachings, thanks to their visual elements, played the role of a kind of purification of the soul from bad sentiments related to addiction to moral vices.

Keywords: Basil the Great; emotions; moral vices; early Christian preaching; rhetoric; theatre; visualization of message

Teatralna wizualizacja ludzkich emocji jako retoryczny środek perswazji w homiliach Bazylego Wielkiego o ludzkich wadach

(streszczenie)

Przedstawianie różnych stanów emocjonalnych w sposób obrazowy, odwołujący się do wrażeń wzrokowych, charakterystyczny dla spektaklu teatralnego, jest częstą praktyką Bazylego Wielkiego (zm. 379 rok) w jego homiliach o wadach gniewu, zazdrości, bogactwa i pijaństwa. Przeprowadzona analiza homilii moralnych pozwoliła na wydobycie i omówienie w niniejszym artykule trzech szczególnych retorycznych środków perswazji,

które posłużyły kaznodziei do ukazania w sposób obrazowy ludzkich emocji. Są to (1) wprowadzanie scen dialogowych z udziałem postaci uosabiających krytykowane wady i przejawiających różne emocje, (2) plastyczny sposób prezentowania uczuć postaci z zastosowaniem ruchu scenicznego i wykorzystaniem elementów scenografii, (3) odwoływanie się do słuchaczy jako widzów i wywoływanie u nich emocji przez wrażenia wizualne. Za pomocą tych środków retorycznych Bazyli prezentował swojemu audytorium rodzaj teatralnego spektaklu, wzbudzając także u słuchaczy emocje w postaci lęku przed popadnięciem w niewolę wad krytykowanych przez kaznodzieję. Podobnie jak w antycznej tragedii greckiej pouczenia homiletyczne Bazylego dzięki elementom wizualnym pełniły rolę swoistego oczyszczenia duszy ze złych emocji związanych z uzależnieniem od moralnych wad.

Słowa kluczowe: Bazyli Wielki; emocje; wady moralne; kaznodziejstwo wczesnochrześcijańskie; retoryka; teatr; wizualizacja przekazu

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