

# VOX PATRUM

## KATOLICKI UNIWERSYTET LUBELSKI JANA PAWŁA II Sekcja Historii Kościoła i Patrologii

### Komitet Redakcyjny

ks. dr hab. Marcin Wysocki, prof. KUL (KUL, Polska) - redaktor naczelny  
dr hab. Marcela Andokova (Uniwersytet Komeniusza, Bratysława, Słowacja) – zastępca redaktora naczelnego  
dr Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski (King's College, Londyn, Wielka Brytania) – zastępca redaktora naczelnego  
dr Dawid Mielnik (KUL, Polska) - sekretarz

### Redaktorzy tematyczni

ks. prof. dr hab. Mariusz Szram (KUL, Polska) – teologia patrystyczna  
prof. dr Carol Harrison (Uniwersytet Oksfordzki, Wielka Brytania) – patrologia  
dr hab. Piotr Kochanek, prof. KUL (KUL, Polska) – bizantynistyka  
ks. dr hab. Oleksandr Kashchuk (Ukraiński Uniwersytet Katolicki, Lwów, Ukraina) – historia Kościoła  
dr hab. Marta Przyszychowska (badacz niezależny, Hiszpania) – filozofia wczesnochrześcijańska  
dr Anna Głowa (KUL, Polska) - historia sztuki wczesnochrześcijańskiej  
dr hab. Ewa Osek, prof. KUL (KUL, Polska) – przekłady  
mgr inż. Wojciech Stawiszyński (badacz niezależny, Polska) – bibliografie

### Rada Naukowa

ks. dr hab. Stanisław Longosz – redaktor założyciel (KUL, Polska)  
prof. dr hab. Agnes Bastit-Kalinowska (Université de Lorraine, Nancy, Francja)  
o. prof. dr hab. Bazyli Degórski (Papieski Uniwersytet Świętego Tomasza z Akwinu „Angelicum”, Rzym, Włochy)  
prof. dr Geoffrey David Dunn (badacz niezależny, Australia)  
prof. dr Alberto Ferreira (Seattle Pacific University, USA)  
ks. prof. dr Giulio Maspero (Papieski Uniwersytet Santa Croce, Rzym, Włochy)  
ks. prof. dr hab. Józef Naumowicz (UKSW, Warszawa, Polska)  
ks. prof. dr hab. Jerzy Pałucki (KUL, Polska)  
prof. dr Rubén A. Peretó Rivas (National University of Cuyo, Argentyna)  
prof. dr Ilaria Ramelli (Durham University, Wielka Brytania)  
ks. prof. dr hab. Piotr Szczur (KUL, Polska)

### Redakcja „Vox Patrum”

Aleje Raławickie 14, C-813, 20-950 Lublin  
voxpatrum@kul.lublin.pl; www.voxpatrum.pl

Wszelkie materiały do publikacji w „Vox Patrum” należy zgłaszać za pośrednictwem strony internetowej.

# VOX PATRUM

ANTYK CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKI

Tractatus populares:  
Homiletic forms as an effective communication means  
from Christian Antiquity to the Humanist era

Co-editors of the volume

Marcela Andoková

Róbert Horka

Wydawnictwo KUL

85  
2023

Wykaz recenzentów zamieszczany jest raz w roku na stronie internetowej czasopisma

Wersja online czasopisma jest wersją podstawową

Projekt okładki i stron tytułowych  
DOROTA WOŹNIAK

Opracowanie techniczne i skład komputerowy  
KS. MARCIN WYSOCKI – DAWID MIELNIK

Wydano na podstawie tekstu przygotowanego  
przez Komitet Redakcyjny „Vox Patrum”

© Copyright by Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2023

Czasopismo dofinansowane ze środków Ministerstwa Edukacji i Nauki w ramach programu  
„Rozwój czasopism naukowych” na podstawie umowy nr RCN/SN/0262/2021/11 z dnia 8 grudnia 2022 r.  
Okres realizacji projektu: 1 grudnia 2022 r. - 30 listopada 2024 r.



**Ministerstwo  
Edukacji i Nauki**

---

ISSN 0860-9411  
eISSN 2719-3586

Wydawnictwo KUL  
ul. Konstantynów 1H, 20-708 Lublin  
tel. 81 740 93 40, e-mail: wydawnictwo@kul.pl

Druk i oprawa: volumina.pl Sp. z o.o.  
ul. Księcia Witolda 7-9, 71-063 Szczecin, tel. 91 812 09 08, e-mail: druk@volumina.pl

# Artykuły





# Clement of Alexandria's Homily *Quis Dives Salvetur?* and Its Pastoral Challenges for Alexandrian Christians<sup>1</sup>

Jana Plátová<sup>2</sup>

---

**Abstract:** The article reconsiders the structure of Clement's writing *Quis dives salvetur?* and as a consequence questions the traditional designation of this text as a homily. In the first part, the article focuses on the Gospel text quoted by Clement and attempts to explain some of the unusual choices of the text. In the second part, it highlights some pastorally interesting or, on the contrary, controversial aspects of Clement's interpretation: (a) the use of the Stoic concept of indifferent things, which makes it possible to give emphasis to the freedom of human decision; (b) the thorough justification of the allegorical interpretation of Mk 10,21; (c) the pastoral project of the "divine business" based on Lk 16,9 and finally (d) the possibility of a second repentance after baptism justified by the story of the Apostle John.

**Keywords:** Clement of Alexandria; *Quis dives salvetur?*; Interpretation of Mk 10,17-31; Early Christian homiletics; Biblical exegesis; Allegorical interpretation

---

Clement of Alexandria's text on the pericope of the vocation of a rich young man<sup>3</sup>, entitled *Τίς ὁ σφζόμενος πλούσιος* (lat. *Quis dives salvetur?* – *QDS*) is traditionally referred to as a homily<sup>4</sup>. Even a cursory glance, how-

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is a result of research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 22-20873S "Clement of Alexandria's Biblical Exegesis as a Source of His Concept of Corporeality".

<sup>2</sup> Doc. Jana Plátová, Associate Professor at the Centre for Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Texts, SS. Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic, e-mail: jana.platova@upol.cz; ORCID: 0000-0003-0670-6613.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Mk 10,17-31; Mt 19,16-30; Lk 18,18-30.

<sup>4</sup> The text is referred to as *logos* in Eusebius (*HE*. VI 13, 3) and in Clement himself (*QDS* 4, 1), which does not exclude the usual designation "homily". Cf. Ch. Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, v. 1, Leiden – Boston 2004, p. 509: "[...] an essay written as a *sermon* (but not delivered)" or J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. II: *The ante-nicene literature after Irenaeus*, Allen 1999, p. 15: "the little

ever, reveals that the text is too long for that purpose. Carlo Nardi believes that it was initially two or more quite short homilies<sup>5</sup>. Apart from the length itself, the content and stylistic differences between the first and second part also suggest such considerations. Let us look at the structure of the text and the topics and style that characterises them (see the Appendix)<sup>6</sup>.

### 1. *QDS* 1, 1-4, 3: Introductory Passage: the Situation of the Addressees

In the introductory part, Clement introduces the situation of the addressees and explains what led him to write a treatise on the subject<sup>7</sup>. Right at the beginning, he presents his text as a work written for the sake of the salvation of the souls of rich Christians<sup>8</sup>. Clement criticises two tendencies he sees as problematic among wealthy believers: some of them, upon hearing the radical gospel demand (“go and sell what you own”, Mk 10,21 par.), immediately give up the hope of the heavenly life. They do not even bother to listen to Jesus’ immediately following words that even what they consider impossible in their own way of thinking is possible with God (cf. Mk 10,27f), and they simply resign themselves to any spiritual growth<sup>9</sup>. Another group of wealthy people rightly understood that Jesus also offers salvation to them; nevertheless, they do nothing for it. They are like competitors, who expect the laurel of vic-

---

work *Who is the Rich Man that is saved?* is a homily on Mark 10,17-31, which however seems not to be a sermon delivered in a public service”. The title of the work is given by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III 23, 5 and VI 13, 3. The text itself is preserved in the 12th century codex Scorialensis Ω-III-19 (f. 326v-345r). Clement’s other works, *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus* and *Stromata* are preserved in another codex, Laurentianus Pluteus V 3 from the 10th/11th century.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. C. Nardi, *Clemente Alessandrino, Quale ricco si salva? Il cristiano e l’economia*, Roma 1991, p. 8; C. Nardi, *Clemente di Alessandria*, in: *La Bibbia nell’antichità cristiana I. Da Gesù a Origene*, ed. E. Norelli, Bologna 1993, p. 372.

<sup>6</sup> Since our text was primarily conceived as a paper for a conference on the homiletic genre (“Tractatus populares: Homiletic forms as an effective communication means from Christian Antiquity to the Humanist era”), our approach to Clement’s text is focused only on his exegesis in *QDS*, without references to other Clement’s works.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 1, 1-4, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 1, 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 2, 2.



tory without the effort of long-term training<sup>10</sup>. Clement considers a different reaction as the right one: to adopt a kind of golden mean based on an attentive reading of Jesus' own words: "Hope is neither beyond their reach nor, on the contrary, to be obtained without settled purpose"<sup>11</sup>. In contrast to the servile and hypocritical favour of people who uncritically glorify wealthy Christians because they hope to benefit from it, Clement, through his writings, wants to set an example of unselfish care that may not appeal to everyone but which leads to the salvation of other people's souls<sup>12</sup>. The whole introductory passage is written in a rather complicated third-person style. There is no indication that it could be a homily. More likely, it seems to be a sophisticated justification for Clement's work, which could be written and added to the text as an introduction later on.

## 2. *QDS* 4, 4-10: Text of the Gospel cited by Clement

The relatively long introduction immediately continues by quoting the Gospel text. Three interesting things are remarkable here: (1) The quotation is unusually long – Clement does not usually quote the whole pericope but paraphrases it and shortens it in various ways<sup>13</sup>; (2) The quotation is from Mark, not from Matthew which is the Gospel most often quoted by Clement<sup>14</sup>; (3) The text given by Clement differs significantly from the text we know from Mark (according to Nestle-Aland).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 2, 3; 3, 4-6.

<sup>11</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 3, 2, GCS 17, 161, 16-20: "ὅπως ἂν καὶ δι' οἴων ἔργων τε καὶ διαθέσεων ἐπαύραιντο τῆς ἐλπίδος, ὡς οὐτ' ἀμηγάνου καθεστῶσης αὐτοῖς οὔτε τὸναντίον εἰκῆ περιγυνομένης". English translation of G.W. Butterwoth (LCL 92), p. 275.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 1, 1-5.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus* I 90, 1 (Prov 8, 4 ff.); Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* II 5, 1 (Wis 7,17-20); 12, 2 (Heb 11,3-25); 83, 2 (Prov. 8,17f); III 3, 4 (2Cor 11,13-15); 80, 1 (Rom 7,2f); IV 15, 4 (Mt 19,29); VII 84, 3 (1Cor 6,1f), and others. Cf. also A. van den Hoek, *Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods*, VigCh 50/3 (1996) p. 223-243.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Register*, ed. O. Stählin – U. Treu, GCS 39, Berlin 1980, p. 11-18. C. Cosaert (*The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria*, Leiden – Boston 2008, p. 118-131), in his meticulous analysis demonstrates, that apart from *QDS* there are only two citations of Mark in Clement's entire work (Mk 8,38 in *Strom.* IV 70, 2 and Mk 9,29 in *Ecl.* 15,1).

Ad (1): The reason for the inclusion of the full text of the pericope is given explicitly: “For there is nothing like hearing once more the actual sayings which, because in our childishness we listened to them uncritically and mistakenly, have continued until now to trouble us in the gospels”<sup>15</sup>. Clement seems to be very anxious that the Gospel text be heard in its entirety.

Ad (2): Clement is concerned that the words of the Gospel are quoted only according to Mark, although the Gospel is neglected by Clement or by the church fathers in general. The reasons for such a choice are widely discussed: Michael J. Kok asks why Mark’s Gospel was retained in the canon and at the same time practically ignored by early Christian writers. He finds that the patristic writers were hesitant to embrace Mark because they perceived it to be too easily adapted to rival and non-orthodox Christian factions<sup>16</sup>. Matteo Monfrinotti points out four differences between text of Mark, chapter 10 and the other synoptic Gospels (there are additions or variants in the verses 17, 21, 24 and 30), and believes that just these differences are the reason for Clement’s choice of Mark<sup>17</sup>. Other authors work with the hypothesis of so-called Secret Gospel of Mark and tend to conclude that Clement became interested in the various versions of Gospel of Mark at the end of his life<sup>18</sup>.

Ad (3): Clement’s text (though referred to as Marks’) does not correspond to the standard version of this Gospel, or even to the versions of

---

<sup>15</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 4, 3, GCS 17, 162, 16-18: “οὐδὲν γὰρ οἶον αὐτῶν αὐθις ἀκοῦσαι τῶν ῥητῶν, ἅπερ ἡμᾶς ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις ἄχρι νῦν διετάρασεν ἀβασανίστως καὶ διημαρτημένως ὑπὸ νηπιότητος ἀκροωμένους”, tr. G.W. Butterworth, LCL 92, p. 279.

<sup>16</sup> See M.J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century*, Minneapolis 2015; for Clement’s use of Mark see esp. the second part of the book, p. 163s. Kok believes that Clement used the rich man pericope to counter strict ascetic teachings and low Christologies (p. 249-250).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. M. Monfrinotti, *Quis dives salvetur? Ricezione ed esegesi di Mc. 10,17-31*, “Augustinianum” 2 (2013) p. 317-320; M. Monfrinotti, *Mc. 10,17-31: dal Quis dives salvetur? al Codice neotestamentario Alessandrino*, in: *Povertà e ricchezza nel cristianesimo antico (I-V sec.)*. XLII Incontro di Studiosi dell’Antichità Cristiana, SEA 145, Roma 2016, p. 132-135; M. Monfrinotti, *Mc 10,24 in Quis dives 4,9: sulla lezione τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐπὶ χρήμασιν*, “Rivista Biblica” 69/1 (2021) p. 67-69.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. A. Le Boulluec, *La lettre sur l’Évangile secret de Marc et le “Quis dives salvetur ?” de Clément d’Alexandrie*, “Apokrypha” 7 (1996) p. 27-41 and J. Plátová, *The Text of Mark 10:29-30 in “Quis dives salvetur?” by Clement of Alexandria*, in: *The Process of Authority. The Dynamics in Transmission and Reception of Canonical Texts*, ed. J. Dušek – J. Roskovec, Berlin – Boston 2016, p. 265-266.

other Synoptic Gospels. Clement seems to have used a peculiar edition of the rich young man in *QDS*. The main differences can be seen in the verses 21, 24 and 29-30<sup>19</sup>. David D.M. King seeks to show that Clement's way of dealing with the biblical text is very cunning. He shows Clement as an author, who picks the words from each gospel and makes subtle but very important changes to the biblical text in order to incorporate the wealthy into the church<sup>20</sup>. A similar view prevails among many modern New Testament scholars<sup>21</sup>. According to another view, it is not Clement's intentional adjustment of the biblical text, but Clement was working with a Gospel text circulating around Alexandria at that time. It is possible to understand the Gospel-text in *QDS* not as an author's arbitrary modification of the biblical text, but as an interesting proof of the plurality of the Gospel text in Antiquity<sup>22</sup>. The most attention was paid to this question by Matteo Monfrinotti, who focused on the variant τοὺς πεποιοῦντας ἐπὶ χρήμασιν in the verse 10,24<sup>23</sup>. Supported by the fact, that this reading is attested by the Codex Alexandrinus and many other gospel codices<sup>24</sup>, Monfrinotti is convinced that Clement's reading comes from the Marcan Gospel, which Clement possessed. He does not believe, on the contrary, that it was Clement himself who intervened in the gospel pericope.

### 3. *QDS* 6, 1-27, 2: Clement's Commentary on the Biblical Text Verse by Verse

Clement's own interpretation is further divided into two quite different parts. The first one can be characterised as a commentary on the pericope about the rich young man (*QDS* 6, 1-27, 2). Clement explains Gospel verse

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Monfrinotti, *Quis dives salvetur? Ricezione ed esegesi di Mc. 10,17-31*, p. 320-324.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. D.D.M. King, *The Peculiar Edition of the Rich Young Ruler in Clement of Alexandria's "Quis Dives Salvetur"*, in: *StPatr* 110/7 (2021) p. 177-185.

<sup>21</sup> See for example J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, EKK II/2, Zürich 1979, p. 93, n. 8; V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, London 1966, p. 435.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Le Boulluc, *La lettre sur l'Évangile secret de Marc*, p. 27-41; Plátová, *The Text of Mark 10:29-30*, p. 253-269. The plurality of the Gospel text in Alexandria in general is also attested to by C.P. Cosaert, *The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria*, Leiden – Boston 2008, p. 305-310.

<sup>23</sup> See above all Monfrinotti, *Mc 10,24 in Quis dives 4,9*, p. 63-87. The author has also addressed this issue in his earlier studies cited above in the footnote 17.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Monfrinotti, *Mc 10,24 in Quis dives 4,9*, p. 77.

by verse, although he does not give equal attention to each one (see the Appendix). Note also that on two occasions, Clement abandons Mark and bases his explanation on Mathew and Luke<sup>25</sup>. It is certainly consistent with the exegetical principle he mentions right at the beginning: the text of each Gospel can differ in particulars, however, the Gospels all together give the same mutually corresponding meaning<sup>26</sup>. On the other hand, in the case of our author, there is undoubtedly a specific reason for abandoning the text of Mark in favour of another synoptic Gospel. The words “if you wish to be perfect” (Mt 19,21) are missing in Mark. These are highly important to Clement, however, because they allow him to develop his own reflections on human freedom: “In this divine way, *if you wish*, he showed the self-determination (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον) of the soul he was conversing with”<sup>27</sup>. Clement then reflects on the admirable interplay between God who offers salvation as a gift and wants a person to appropriate it on the one hand, and of a person who can freely choose salvation and makes an effort for it on the other<sup>28</sup>. Another verse different from Mark is Lk 18,22: “There is still one thing you lack [...]”<sup>29</sup>. Compared to Mark 10,21, the difference is only a stylistic variant (ἔτι ἐν σοι λείπει instead of ἔν σε ὑστερεῖ·), Clement might have chosen Luke because he wanted to refer to the situation of Martha and Mary in Luke 10,38-42<sup>30</sup>.

#### 4. *QDS* 11, 1-20, 6: The Heart of Clement’s Commentary: An Allegorical Interpretation of Mk 10,21

Clement treated most thoroughly the explanation of the words: “Go and sell what you own” (see Appendix)<sup>31</sup>. Apparently, these are the words,

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 10, 1-2: commentary on Mt 19,21 and *Quis Dives Salvetur* 10, 3-7: commentary on Lk 18,22.

<sup>26</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 5, 1, GCS 17, 163, 13-16: “Ταῦτα μὲν ἐν τῷ κατὰ Μάρκον εὐαγγελίῳ γέγραπται καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις δὲ πᾶσιν <τοῖς> ἀνωμολογημένοις ὀλίγον μὲν ἴσως ἐκασταχοῦ τῶν ῥημάτων ἐναλλάσσει, πάντα δὲ τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς γνώμης συμφωνίαν ἐπιδείκνυται”.

<sup>27</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 10, 1, GCS 17, 165, 26-27: “καὶ θεῖως τὸ «εἰ θέλεις» τὸ αὐτεξούσιον τῆς προσδιαλεγομένης αὐτῷ ψυχῆς ἐδήλωσεν” (tr. JP).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 10, 1-2, and 21, 1-3 (interpretation of the verse Mk 10,27).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 10, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 10, 6-7.

<sup>31</sup> Mk 10,21 interpreted in Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 11, 1-20, 6.

which caused despair and resignation of wealthy Alexandrian Christians, as mentioned above<sup>32</sup>. This is probably why Clement devotes more space to explaining Mk 10,21 than to the other verses. Clement uses Mk 10,21 to show how this text can be understood not just literally. Based on the Stoic concept of indifferent things (τὰ ἀδιάφορα), Clement considers such facts as e.g., wealth and poverty, fame and disgrace, health and illness or life and death neither good nor bad in themselves<sup>33</sup>. It depends, however, on the skill of a person who uses them as a tool, either well or badly either as their servant or their ruler. It is a person gifted by reason who decides the quality of usage of that tool. The person has the ability to make a free decision (κριτήριον ἐλεύθερον) and the sovereign power (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον) to deal with everything he/she has been given<sup>34</sup>.

Clement does not consider a literal explanation of the words “go and sell what you own” as correct. He instead thinks that the property in this case must be understood as thoughts (δόγματα), affection (συμπάθεια), desire (ἐπιθυμία), or even an unhealthy dependence on property that must be “banished from the soul”<sup>35</sup>. Clement gives several reasons for the allegorical interpretation. Firstly, poverty or destitution itself, into which a person falls against his/her will, does not liberate him/her, but on the contrary, throws him/her into a double torment, which can “inflame the innate stores of evil”<sup>36</sup>. Secondly, renunciation of wealth need not be a demonstration of Christian virtue. It is well known that even before the coming of Christ, some philosophers preferred an ascetic way of life for a variety of reasons. Clement gives the names of three philosophers (Anaxagoras, Democritus, and Crates) and two reasons (time for philosophizing and “dead wisdom”, which is probably meant as an opposite to “eternal life” and reputation and empty fame)<sup>37</sup>. Instead, Jesus invites us to the loss of possessions *for*

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 2, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* II 109, 3-4 and J.R. Donahue, *Stoic Indifferents and Christian Indifferents in Clement of Alexandria*, “Traditio” 19 (1963) p. 438-446.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 14-15.

<sup>35</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 11, 2, GCS 17, 166, 24-30: “«πώλησον τὰ ὑπάρχοντά σου». τί δὲ τοῦτό ἐστιν; οὐχ ὁ προχειρῶς δέχονταί τινες, τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν οὐσίαν ἀπορρῆναι προστάσσει καὶ ἀποστῆναι τῶν χρημάτων, ἀλλὰ τὰ δόγματα <τὰ> περὶ χρημάτων ἐξορίσαι τῆς ψυχῆς, τὴν πρὸς αὐτὰ συμπάθειαν τὴν υπεράγαν ἐπιθυμίαν, τὴν περὶ αὐτὰ πτοίαν καὶ νόσον, τὰς μερίμνας, τὰς ἀκάνθας τοῦ βίου, αἱ τὸ σπέρμα τῆς ζωῆς συμπνίγουσιν”.

<sup>36</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 11, 3; cf. also 12, 4-5 and 14, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 11, 4, GCS 17, 167, 6-9: “οὔτε καινὸν τὸ ἀπείπασθαι πλοῦτον καὶ χαρίσασθαι πτωχοῖς ἢ πατήσιν, ὃ πολλοὶ πρὸ τῆς τοῦ

*the sake of eternal life.* The new thing Jesus asks for in the Gospel, according to Clement, is “to get rid of the soul and its thinking of passion and cut off from the heart the mundane way of thinking”<sup>38</sup>. On the one hand, ascetic philosophers gave up external possessions (thus they outwardly seem to follow Jesus’ command). On the other hand, they accommodate themselves in the passions of soul such as conceit or boasting, and despised not only possessions but also people<sup>39</sup>. Instead of blindly following their example, it seems far better and more worthy to do the opposite: to keep the wealth (and not worry about the remorse of not obeying Jesus’ command literally) and to use it to help those in need<sup>40</sup>. This is related to the third purely practical reason: if everybody recklessly gave up his/her possessions, it would have been impossible to follow other Jesus’ commandments encouraging sympathy and effective help for the poor<sup>41</sup>. Clement consequently quotes texts from the New Testament to demonstrate that owning of material possession is advisable for living according to the Gospel. These texts include the encouragement to “use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends” (Lk 16,9), “store up treasures for yourselves in heaven” (Mt 6,20), Jesus’ teaching about the Last Judgement (Mt 25,35-46), and finally Jesus’ visit to the rich tax collectors (Lk 19,5f; Mk 2,14f; Lk 5,27-29)<sup>42</sup>.

Interpreting wealth as a passion (πάθος) and understanding wealth as an indifferent tool that can be used in a good and in a wrong way enables Clement to distinguish between two kinds of poverty and analogically also two kinds of wealth<sup>43</sup>. The richness of the passions and earthly poverty connected to a miserable existence is to be rejected without any hesitation. The freedom from passions (ἀπάθεια), which Clement considers a kind of spiritual poverty, and the richness of the virtues are, however, desirable. Clement refers to Mt 5,3 (“how blessed are the poor in spirit”)<sup>44</sup> and requires being free from passions but being rich in virtues of the soul, which

---

σωτήρος καθόδου πεποιήκασιν, οἱ μὲν τῆς εἰς λόγους σχολῆς καὶ νεκρᾶς σοφίας ἔνεκεν, οἱ δὲ φήμης κενῆς καὶ κενοδοξίας, Αναξαγόραι καὶ Δημόκριτοι καὶ Κράτητες”.

<sup>38</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 12, 1, GCS 17, 167, 14-17: “τὸ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτὴν καὶ τὴν διάθεσιν γυμᾶσαι τῶν ὑπόντων παθῶν καὶ πρόρριζα τὰ ἀλλότρια τῆς γνώμης ἐκτεμεῖν καὶ ἐκβαλεῖν”.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 12, 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 13, 1; 14, 1.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 13, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 13, 3-7. See also Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* III 54, 2-56, 1 and IV 28, 6-29, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 17, 2-19, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 17, 5.

are: faith, hope, love, friendship, knowledge, gentleness, humility and truthfulness<sup>45</sup>. At the end of the interpretation of wealth, Clement refers once again to the verse in which Jesus encourages the wealthy man to sell his possessions. Based on two different kinds of wealth and two different kinds of poverty, Clement lets Jesus explain in a fictional speech how to “sell the possessions”: instead of the original wealth, which occupied the soul and obstructed the entrance into heaven, there is a need to put different wealth into the soul, which makes the soul divine and brings it into eternal life. It is an attitude which is in harmony with God’s commandments<sup>46</sup>. This fictional speech of Jesus can easily be imagined as part of Clement’s original sermon.

### 5. *QDS* 27, 3-41, 7: “Divine Business” and the Possibility of Second Repentance

Up to this point, nothing can be objected to in Clement’s explanation. His pastoral project seems, however, to be more problematic as he further develops it in the second part of his homily. Based on Jesus’s appeal, “make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings” (Lk 16,9)<sup>47</sup> Clement introduces the practice of the so-called “divine business” (θεία ἀγορά)<sup>48</sup>. He challenges wealthy Christians to use the property they possessed up to now unjustly, i.e. only for themselves, and to do good and redemptive deeds: to take care of those in need. In the care of the needy, the wealthy man should be neither lazy nor sparing but generous, and he himself should go and search for those to whom he can do good; he should even ask these people to accept his gift. He/she is to offer his/her resources with joy. After all, he/she will gain for his/her acting nothing less than eternal life as a reward! Caring for these “God’s little friends”, the wealthy man or women can gain a sort of protection from God<sup>49</sup>. Clement thus openly

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 18, 1, GCS 17, 171, 8-10: “ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρετῇ, πίστει καὶ ἐλπίδι καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ φιλαδελφίᾳ καὶ γνώσει καὶ πραότητι καὶ ἀτυφίᾳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, ὧν ἄθλον ἡ σωτηρία”.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 19, 3-6.

<sup>47</sup> The English translation according to *NAS*.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 32, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 31, 6-33, 3.

proclaims that money can buy salvation for the rich one<sup>50</sup>. By giving away earthly riches, a person gains spiritual riches – the kingdom of God, resp. immortality (ἀφθαρσία). The advantage of this “divine trading” is support even of the wealthy ones already here on earth. Through their charitable work, the wealthy gather around themselves an “army without guns”, consisting of the elderly, orphans and widows, who fight for the wealthy before God with intercessory prayers. Their actions have extraordinary power in the sphere of spiritual battle because these “little ones” are close to God in a special way<sup>51</sup>.

The second part of the text *QDS* seems different in other respects as well. While in the first part, Clement proceeds verse by verse, and the text resembles a commentary rather than a homily (an exception is the more extended passage focusing on the words “go and sell what you own”, which was already spoken about and which can be easily counted as a real homily in the past), the formulations in the second part of Clement’s text (*QDS* 27, 3-42, 15) are quite different. They are not linked to the biblical text as closely as in the first part, and they are more courageous and more poetic. In this part, Clement often speaks in the second person, whether he is addressing the audience himself or having Jesus speak to them in fictional speeches<sup>52</sup>. Clement’s words are based on Jesus’ new commandment to love God and a neighbour, including the immediately following explanatory parable of the Good Samaritan attested to in the Gospel according to Luke (Lk 10,27-37)<sup>53</sup>. The second part of the homily is linked to the first one both by the topic of care for the needy ones and by the verse Mk 10,27:

<sup>50</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 32, 1, GCS 17, 181, 5-6: “ὁ καλῆς ἐμπορίας, ὃ θείας ἀγορᾶς· ὠνεῖται χρημάτων τις ἀφθαρσίαν”.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 34, 2-35, 1. For more on the context and the topic see esp. A.M. Ritter, *Christentum und Eigentum bei Klemens von Alexandrien auf dem Hintergrund der frühchristlichen „Armenfrömmigkeit“ und der Ethik der kaiserzeitlichen Stoa*, ZKG 86 (1975) p. 1-25 und J. Ulrich, *Clemens Alexandrinus’ “Quis dives salvetur” als Paradigma für die Beurteilung von Reichtum und Geld in der Alten Kirche*, in: *Gott und Geld*, ed. M. Ebner et al., Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie 21, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2007, p. 213-238 and A. van den Hoek, *Widening the Eye of the Needle: Wealth and Poverty in the Works of Clement of Alexandria*, in: *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society*, ed. S.R. Holman, Grand Rapids 2008, p. 67-75. Cf. also W.D. Hausschild, *Christentum und Eigentum. Zum Problem eines altkirchlichen „Sozialismus“*, ZEE 16 (1972) p. 34-49; M. Hengel, *Eigentum und Reichtum in der frühen Kirche. Aspekte einer frühchristlichen Sozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1973.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. above all Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 29, 6-31, 5, etc.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 27, 3-28, 4.



“With man this is impossible, but not with God”<sup>54</sup>. Even the one who sadly walks away like the young man in the Gospel and the possibility of his salvation does not seem to be in sight does not need to fall into despair. One always has a second chance, justified not in human effort but in God’s mercy and grace. To support this hope, Clement does not hesitate to enter boldly into a discussion questioning the usual penitential practice of the Church in Alexandria in the second part of his writing<sup>55</sup>.

The final part of the homily is delivered in a festive speech on the tender love of God the Father, which in its sympathy takes on a female form (συμπαθὲς γέγονε μήτηρ)<sup>56</sup>. If a person accepts God’s love into his/her soul and lets it grow, regardless of the quantity and greatness of the past sins, he/she is able to fight against them<sup>57</sup>. This also applies for those Christians who, because of ignorance, weakness or circumstances, which cannot be influenced, have again succumbed to sins even though they have already been baptised and have already renounced their sins. Even in such a case, Clement is certain about the possibility of repeated repentance and conversion and about God’s subsequent coming back to his children<sup>58</sup>. God can again dwell in a person on condition of their willingness to finish with their sin once and forever and not look back again. There is no way, however, to count on God’s forgiveness boldly in advance: “Of sins already committed, then, God gives remission, but of those that are to come each man procures his own remission”<sup>59</sup>. In the attempt to formulate the uniqueness of God’s forgiveness, Clement goes beyond what is expected: he brings God the Father to the scene, “who alone of all is able to make undone what has been

<sup>54</sup> This verse is primarily commented on in Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 21, 1-3.

<sup>55</sup> See especially *Clemens Alexandrinus, Quis Dives Salvetur* 36, 1-2 and the literature mentioned in the footnotes 58 and 64.

<sup>56</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 37, 2, GCS 17, 184, 1-3: “καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄρρητον αὐτοῦ πατὴρ, τὸ δὲ εἰς ἡμᾶς συμπαθὲς γέγονε μήτηρ. ἀγαπήσας ὁ πατὴρ ἐθελώνθη”.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 38, 4.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 39, 1-2. For more on the topic of “second repentance” see Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* II 56-59 and A. Méhat, „Pénitence seconde“ et „péché involontaire“ chez Clément d’Alexandrie, VigCh 8 (1954) p. 225-233; D.P. O’Brien, *The Pastoral Function of the Second Repentance for Clement of Alexandria*, StPatr 41 (2006) p. 219-224.

<sup>59</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 40,1, GCS 17, 186, 7-8: “Τῶν μὲν οὖν προγεγενημένων θεὸς δίδωσιν ἄφεσιν, τῶν δὲ ἐπιόντων αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἑαυτῷ”, tr. G.W. Butterworth, LCL 92, p. 353.

done, by wiping out former sins with the mercy that comes from him and with the dew of the Spirit”<sup>60</sup>.

## 6. *QDS 42: Final exemplum*

Clement’s text culminates in the story of the second conversion of the young man, who fell back into his sins and became a chief of robbers after his baptism<sup>61</sup>. It is simple to imagine that this functions as a closing *example* in a genuine homily. Clements’ appeal is dual: firstly, to prove that even a second conversion after baptism is possible under certain circumstances and despite contemporary practice. Secondly, to show pastoral care through the example of John the Apostle. Clement here probably takes the whole narration from an older non-canonical tradition, as evidenced by the words “hear a story that is no mere story (μῦθος), but a *true account* (λόγος) of John the apostle that has been handed down and preserved in memory”<sup>62</sup>. It is very likely that Clement is here drawing on some text unknown to us today, which later became part of the apocryphal *Acts of John*. The story of John the Apostle and the second conversion of the young robber is also found in the writings *Virtutes Iohannis* attributed to the sixth-century author ps.-Abdias, which is part of the critical edition of the *Acts of John*<sup>63</sup>. The whole topic concerning the source of this narrative is quite extensive and undoubtedly deserves further investigation, but it is beyond the scope of this article. However, wherever Clement quotes this story from, it is certain that he aims to change Ancient Christian penitential practice. With the possibility of repeated repentance, which was quite a discussed topic in the Church of Alexandria<sup>64</sup>, Clement does not suggest it here as a private person but

<sup>60</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 40, 1, GCS 17, 186, 10-12: “ὁς μόνος τῶν ἀπάντων οἶός τέ ἐστιν ἄπρακτα ποιῆσαι τὰ πεπραγμένα ἐλέω τῷ παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ δρόσῳ πνεύματος ἀπαλείψας τὰ προημαρτημένα”, tr. G.W. Butterwoth, LCL 92, p. 353.

<sup>61</sup> This passage is not preserved in codex Scorialensis Ω-III-19, but only by Eusebius, *HE* III 23, 6-19.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 42, 1, GCS 17, 188, 2-3: “ἄκουσον μῦθον οὐ μῦθον, ἀλλὰ ὄντα λόγον περὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἀποστόλου παραδεδομένον καὶ μνήμη πεφυλαγμένον”, tr. G.W. Butterwoth, LCL 92, p. 357.

<sup>63</sup> See *Acta Iohannis*, ed. E. Junod – J.D. Kaestli, CCAp 2, Turnhout 1983, p. 799-834.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. E. Junod, *Un écho d’une controverse autour de la pénitence: l’histoire de l’apôtre Jean et du chef des brigands chez Clément d’Alexandrie (QDS 42,1-15)*, RHPR

under the apostolic authority. This is probably the reason why this text, unlike Clement's other texts, was quoted in its full version by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*<sup>65</sup> and subsequently made its way into the Medieval collection *Legenda aurea*<sup>66</sup>.

Clement's text then concludes with a vision of a happy future for converted Christians in heaven<sup>67</sup>, whom the Saviour himself leads into the Father's arms. As it is appropriate to a real homily, it ends with the words of the final doxology<sup>68</sup>.

## 7. Conclusion

*Quis dives salvetur?* is a unique and first-ever comprehensive explanation of the pericope on the rich man's vocation. It probably contains at least two actual preached homilies (the part on the explanation of the verse "go and sell what you own" and the entire second part including the final *exemplum*); however, these two or more parts are secondarily incorporated into one whole.

There are several reasons why Clement's text is so remarkable: (1) it is the very first allegorical interpretation of Mk 10,17-31; (2) it provides evidence of the existence of an alternative text to Mark; (3) it has preserved for us the non-canonical tradition about the Apostle John; (4) Clement here proposes two remarkable pastoral projects. The first one, so-called "divine business", has turned out to be quite problematic and not actually viable in the history of the Church. The second one, however, i.e., the possibility of repeated repentance, has been widely accepted.

---

60 (1980) p. 153-160; V. Grossi, *Nota sulla pastorale giovanile nella chiesa antica. A proposito di un diverbio tra l'apostolo Giovanni e un vescovo locale asiatico (Clemente Alessandrino, Quis dives salvetur 42)*, "Lateranum" 71 (2005) p. 313-318.

<sup>65</sup> See footnote 61 above.

<sup>66</sup> On the literary 'fortunes' of the final *exemplum*, see C. Nardi, *La fortuna del "Quis dives salvetur"*. *Il racconto del giovane brigante*, in: C. Nardi, *Clemente Alessandrino, Quale ricco si salva? Il cristiano e l'economia*, Roma 1991, p. 117-172; cf. J. Plátová, *Klementovo kázání Který boháč bude spasen? jako pramen Zlaté legendy*, "Studia Theologica" 21/3 (2019) p. 45-66.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 42, 16-19.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Quis Dives Salvetur* 42, 20.

## Appendix: Structure of the text *Quis dives salvetur?*

### Introduction

1, 1-4, 3	Situation of the addressees; reason for writing
4, 4-10	text of the gospel (according to Mark)
5, 1-4	exegetical principles
<b>Part I</b>	<i>commenting the biblical text verse by verse</i>
6, 1-3	commentary on Mk 10,17
6, 4-8, 2	commentary on Mk 10,18
8, 2-9, 2	commentary on Mk 10,19-20
10, 1-2	commentary on Mt 19,21
10, 3-7	commentary on Lk 18,22
11, 1-20, 6	commentary on Mk 10,21
20, 7	commentary on Mk 10,22
21, 1-3	commentary on Mk 10,27
21, 4-7	commentary on Mk 10,28
22, 1-24, 2	commentary on Mk 10,29-30
25, 1-8	commentary on Mk 10,30
26, 1-27, 2	commentary on Mk 10,31
<b>Part II</b>	<i>loosely related reflections on the salvation of the rich ones</i>
27, 3-38, 3	the generosity of God's love and the commandment to love one's neighbour (on Lk 10,27-37)
(31-35)	"divine business" (on Lk 16,9)
38, 4-41, 7	calls to repentance, possibility of the second repentance
<b>Conclusion</b>	
42, 1-15	<i>exemplum</i> (the story of the second conversion)
42, 16-20	vision of a happy future in heaven

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Acta Iohannis*, ed. E. Junod – J.D. Kaestli, CCAp 2, Turnhout 1983.
- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* und *Paedagogus*, ed. O. Stählin – U. Treu, GCS 12, Berlin 1972.
- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata I-VIII*, ed. O. Stählin – L. Früchtel – U. Treu, GCS 17, 52, Berlin 1970-1985.
- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata VII-VIII, Excerpta ex Theodoto, Eclogae prophetae, Quis dives salvetur, Fragmente*, ed. O. Stählin – L. Früchtel – U. Treu, GCS 17, Berlin 1970, tr. G.W. Butterwoth, Clement of Alexandria, *The Exhortation to*

- the Greeks. The Rich Man's Salvation. To the Newly Baptized*, LCL 92, Cambridge 1968, p. 270-367.
- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Register*, ed. O. Stählin – U. Treu, GCS 39, Berlin 1980.
- Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica I-VII*, ed. G. Bardy, SCh 31, Paris 1952; SCh 41, Paris 1978.
- Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. E. Nestle – K. Aland et al. Stuttgart 2012, tr. *New International Version (NIV)* 2011 and *New American Standard Version (NAS)* 1977.

### Studies

- Cosaert C.P., *The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria*, Leiden – Boston 2008.
- Donahue J.R., *Stoic Indifferents and Christian Indifferents in Clement of Alexandria*, “Traditio” 19 (1963) p. 438-446.
- Gnilka J., *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 2/2, Zürich 1979.
- Grossi V., *Nota sulla pastorale giovanile nella chiesa antica. A proposito di un diverbio tra l’apostolo Giovanni e un vescovo locale asiatico (Clemente Alessandrino, Quis dives salvetur 42.)*, “Lateranum” 71 (2005) p. 313-318.
- Hauschild W.D., *Christentum und Eigentum. Zum Problem eines altkirchlichen “Sozialismus”*, “Zeitschrift für die Evangelische Ethik” 16 (1972) p. 34-49.
- Hengel M., *Eigentum und Reichtum in der frühen Kirche. Aspekte einer frühchristlichen Sozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1973.
- Hoek van den A., *Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria. A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods*, “Vigiliae Christianae” 50/3 (1996) p. 223-243.
- Hoek van den A., *Widening the Eye of the Needle: Wealth and Poverty in the Works of Clement of Alexandria*, in: *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society*, ed. S.R. Holman, Grand Rapids 2008, p. 67-75.
- Junod E., *Un écho d’une controverse autour de la pénitence: l’histoire de l’apôtre Jean et du chef des brigands chez Clément d’Alexandrie (QDS 42,1-15)*, “Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses” 60 (1980) p. 153-160.
- Kannengiesser Ch., *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, v. 1, Leiden – Boston 2004.
- King D.D.M., *The Peculiar Edition of the Rich Young Ruler in Clement of Alexandria’s Quis Dives Salvetur*, in: *Studia Patristica 110/7: Clement of Alexandria*, ed. M. Vincent – V. Hušek, Leuven – Paris – Bristol 2021, p. 177-185.
- Kok M.J., *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century*, Minneapolis 2015.
- Le Boulluec A., *La lettre sur l’Évangile secret de Marc et le Quis dives salvetur? de Clément d’Alexandrie*, “Apokrypha” 7 (1996) p. 27-41.
- Méhat A., *“Pénitence seconde” et “péché involontaire” chez Clément d’Alexandrie*, “Vigiliae Christianae” 8 (1954) p. 225-233.

- Monfrinotti M., *Quis dives salvetur? Ricezione ed esegesi di Mc. 10,17-31*, "Augustinianum" 2 (2013) p. 305-335.
- Monfrinotti M., *Mc. 10,17-31: dal Quis dives salvetur? al Codice neotestamentario Alessandrino*, in: *Povertà e ricchezza nel cristianesimo antico (I-V sec.). XLII Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana*, SEA 145, Roma 2016, p. 131-139.
- Monfrinotti M., *Mc 10,24 in Quis dives 4,9: sulla lezione τοὺς πεποιοῦτάς ἐπὶ χρήμασιν*, "Rivista Biblica" 69/1 (2021) p. 63-87.
- Nardi C., *Clemente Alessandrino, Quale ricco si salva? Il cristiano e l'economia*, Roma 1991.
- Nardi C., *Clemente di Alessandria*, in: *La Bibbia nell'antichità cristiana I. Da Gesù a Origene*, ed. E. Norelli, Bologna 1993, p. 361-376.
- O'Brien D.P., *The Pastoral Function of the Second Repentance for Clement of Alexandria*, "Studia Patristica" 41 (2006) p. 219-224.
- Plátová J., *The Text of Mark 10:29–30 in Quis dives salvetur? by Clement of Alexandria*, in: *The Process of Authority. The Dynamics in Transmission and Reception of Canonical Texts*, ed. J. Dušek – J. Roskovec, Berlin – Boston 2016, p. 253-269.
- Plátová J., *Klementovo kázání Který boháč bude spasen? jako pramen Zlaté legendy*, "Studia Theologica" 21/3 (2019) p. 45-66.
- Quasten J., *Patrology, v. 2: The ante-nicene literature after Irenaeus*, Allen 1999.
- Ritter A.M., *Christentum und Eigentum bei Klemens von Alexandrien auf dem Hintergrund der frühchristlichen „Armenfrömmigkeit“ und der Ethik der kaiserzeitlichen Stoa*, "Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte" 86 (1975) p. 1-25.
- Ulrich J., *Clemens Alexandrinus' Quis dives salvetur als Paradigma für die Beurteilung von Reichtum und Geld in der Alten Kirche*, in: *Gott und Geld*, ed. M. Ebner et al., Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie 21, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2007, p. 213-238.
- Taylor V., *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, London 1966.



# Beatitudes in Juvencus' Epic *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* – Philologically Analyzed and Poetically Translated

Viktor Wintner<sup>1</sup>

---

**Abstract:** Gaius Vettius Aquilinus Iuvenus is the author of the first biblical epic which is known as *Evangeliorum libri quattuor*. It retells the Gospel story in classical hexameter in order to adapt its form to the literary aesthetics of the 4th century pagan society. Through the analysis of his poetic version of the beatitudes, this study aims to uncover and appraise the basic principles of his periphrastic technique, whether they apply to the form or content of the Matthean original. It shows that the author constantly tries to vary its syntax with the intention to disturb its monotonous regularity. He also promotes the value of heavenly rewards promised to Christians, providing them with sympathetic epithets and embellishes the original with stylistic figures such as alliteration or contrast. As for the content, the most significant change is the occasional insertion of author's comments, the purpose of which is to provide the Matthean text with additional theological information that he might find missing. The study concludes with our free translation of this passage into iambic heptameter or fourteeners.

**Keywords:** biblical epic; Juvencus; beatitudes; versification; translation

---

## 1. Introduction

Gaius Vettius Aquilinus Iuvenus, a priest of Hispanic origin who lived during the reign of Constantine the Great, is the author of the first biblical epic. Known as *Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, it retells the story of the four canonical gospels in classical hexameter in order to adapt its literary form to the requirements of the 4th century Roman society. The purpose of this paper is to analyze his versificational technique, revealing what mark the

---

<sup>1</sup> Mgr. Viktor Wintner, PhD candidate at the Department of Classical Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic; email: 475669@mail.muni.cz; ORCID: 0000-0001-6677-6571.

author's epicization left upon the form and content of the original biblical text. Considering the regularity of its structure and the richness of its eschatology, the Matthean passage devoted to the Beatitudes (Mt 5,1-12) offers us a great opportunity to scrutinize Juvencus' adaptation of the Gospel (I 452-471), both in terms of stylistics and theology. Our analysis discussing the syntax, vocabulary, stylistic figures and theological contributions of the poet is concluded with our free translation of this passage into iambic heptameter or fourteener.

## 2. Analysis

At the beginning it should be mentioned that Juvencus versifies the Matthean version of the Beatitudes only. Even though he harmonizes the narratives of all the canonical gospels, it is known that he usually prefers the selection and versification of one version of a particular event or speech to the combination of several versions<sup>2</sup> and so it is in the case of the Beatitudes<sup>3</sup>.

### Mt 5,1-2

Videns autem turbam, ascendit in montem; et cum sedisset, accesserunt ad eum discipuli eius; et aperuit os suum et docebat eos dicens<sup>4</sup>:

### ELQ I 452-453

Hos populos cernens praecelsa rupe resedit ac sic discipulis gremium cingentibus inquit:

The introductory verses have undergone significant syntactic modification. The original number of the verb forms was reduced from seven (*vi-*

---

<sup>2</sup> R. Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator*, Oxford 2006, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Juvencus was writing before Jerome's translation of the Bible which is why we quote here the *Vetus latina Bible: Itala. Das Neue Testament in Altlateinischer Überlieferung. I. Matthäus-Evangelium*, ed. A. Jülicher, Berlin 1976, p. 20-21. As for the punctuation, however, we follow the Vulgate: *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. R. Gryson – R. Weber, Stuttgart 2007.



*dens, ascendit, sedisset, accesserunt, aperuit, docebat* and *dicens*) to four (*cernens, resedit, cingentibus* and *infit*), decreasing the number of clauses from five to two, which contain only one present participle (*cernens* and *cingentibus*), one present (*infit*) and one perfect indicative (*resedit*). The resulting syntactic structure is thus more balanced, less repetitive and stylistically more attractive for its readers<sup>5</sup>, who (whether they were Christians or not) must have belonged to the intellectual elite deeply familiarized with the language of epic poetry<sup>6</sup>.

As for the vocabulary of this passage, the phrase *praecelsa rupe* might be inspired by the words of Virgil *una in praecelsa consedit rupe Celaeno* (*Aen.* III 245) by which he introduces the speech of the Harpy who is cursing Aeneas and his men for attacking her and her sisters<sup>7</sup>. It is known that Juvencus, following his pagan predecessors, tries to depict the mountains in the epic way regularly, as we can see in many other instances where he never forgets to provide them with a proper epithet (I 364 – *umbrosos montes*, III 669 – *montis celsa* or III 318 – *abruptum conscendere montem*)<sup>8</sup>. The adjective *praecelsus*, however, he uses not only to describe the height of the mountains or other physical objects (like the walls of the Temple in IV 86 – *egreditur templo, cuius praecelsa notantes / moenia*), but also to accentuate the demands on the perfect life such as in the conversation between Jesus and the rich young man (III 514 – *Nunc si perfecta requiris / prendere praecelsis meritis fastigia vitae*) or to underline the authority of the title *magister* (IV 61 – *Sed vos noluerim praecelsi nominis arcem / adfectare*)<sup>9</sup>. Juvencus' predilection for emphasizing adjectives starting with the prefix *prae* is known too. He uses them much more often than any other of the preceding poets (even inventing ten words of his own e.g. *praeblandus, praegratus, praepulcher* etc.) and for this he occupies a special

<sup>5</sup> It is known that even though parataxis is not alien to classical epic, it was not desirable that it dominate the epic discourse. Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament*, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> Otherwise, they would not have been able to recognize author's intertextual references. See M. Müller, *Tod und Auferstehung Jesu Christi bei Iuvencus (IV 570-812): Untersuchungen zu Dichtkunst, Theologie und Zweck der Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, Stuttgart 2016, p. 379.

<sup>7</sup> H. Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, Groningen 1940, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> K. Thraede, *Juvencus: Der Übergang zur Bergpredigt des Matthäusevangeliums*, in: *Alvarium: Festschrift für Christian Gnllka*, ed. W. Blümer – R. Henke – M. Mulke, JbAC Ergänzungsband 33, Münster 2002, p. 380.

<sup>9</sup> The word "praecelsus" can be found six times in ELQ. See M. Wacht, *Concordantia in Iuvenci Evangeliorum libros*, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 1990, p. 230.

place in the history of Roman literature<sup>10</sup>. Finally, the Matthean passage is embellished by the alliteration of the letter ‘r’ in the phrase *rupe resedit* which might have been inspired by the Vergilian line *summa petit scopuli siccaque in rupe resedit* (*Aen.* 5, 180)<sup>11</sup>.

### Mt 5,3

Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.

### ELQ I 454-455

Felices humiles, pauper quos spiritus ambit, illos nam caeli regnum sublime receptat.

The syntax of the first beatitude of Juvencus’ basically copies the subordinate syntactic structure of the original with only one but notable exception, i.e. the insertion of the subordinate clause *pauper quos spiritus ambit*. Its content is fully in accordance with the content of the Gospel itself, but its insertion into the original narrative is the result of the author’s decision to interpret the *pauperes spiritu* by the adjective *humiles*. His purpose might have been to specify the meaning of the matthean phrase which could be, in fact, interpreted in a number of different ways. Does Matthew mean those who live in misery, disappointment and despair?<sup>12</sup> Does he mean those who do not cleave to wealth, power and glory?<sup>13</sup> Or, is he just speaking about some good-hearted but simple-minded people who are willing to believe in everything which is presented to them uncritically?<sup>14</sup> It is known, after all, that the critics of Christianity used to (mis)interpret this verse in a similar way<sup>15</sup>, so it is probable that Juvencus tried to set things right by underlining that the blessed ones have been chosen because of their humility, not because of the simplicity of their souls. Such an interpretation would be

<sup>10</sup> Thraede, *Juvencus: Der Übergang zur Bergpredigt des Matthäusevangeliums*, p. 381-382.

<sup>11</sup> Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, p. 119.

<sup>12</sup> J. Mrázek, *Kázání na hoře*, Jihlava 2017, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> M. Limbeck – P. Müller – F. Porsch, *Stuttgarter kleiner Kommentar zu den Evangelien*, Stuttgart 2009, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Mrázek, *Kázání na hoře*, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> L. Majtán, *Ježišova zVRCHovaná reč: Evanjelium podľa Matúša, 5. – 7. kapitola*, Doľany 2021, p. 20.

in accordance with his younger contemporaries Hilary<sup>16</sup> and Jerome<sup>17</sup> both of whom, in their commentaries on Matthew, emphasize the same quality.

As for the vocabulary of this passage, there are two more notes to be made. The introductory word *beati*, which is typical of the beatitudes as such was replaced by the adjective *felices*. The possible semantic shift arising out of this replacement does not need to be over-analyzed given the fact that the original word with the length of its second and the third syllable cannot be used in dactylic hexameter without much difficulty. This modification of the original can be, therefore, interpreted in terms of metrical adaptation. The same tendency will be encountered in the following verses too, where it also applies to the promotion of rewards waiting for those who are deemed worthy as we can see in the phrase *caeli regnum sublime*, i.e. 'the lofty kingdom of heaven'<sup>18</sup>.

### Mt. 5,5

Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.

### ELQ I 456-457

His similes mites, quos mansuetudo coronat, quorum debetur iuri pulcherrima tellus.

In the following lines, the original order of the beatitudes is changed, the second and the third being swapped. This change of the Matthean narrative structure might be the result of Juvencus' attempt for harmonization. He puts together these lines, which speak about some character quality described by an adjective like the *pauperes spiritu* and the *mites* in the first and third beatitude, in contrast to the those depicting certain psychological activity described by verbs such as the *lugentes* and *qui requirunt* from the second and the fourth beatitude. Whatever his true purpose, once again, he modifies the original syntax by the insertion of one subordinate clause, into which, in this case, he puts additional information specifying the me-

<sup>16</sup> Hilarius Pictaviensis, *In Evangelium Matthaei Commentarius* 4, 2: "Igitur humilia spirantes, id est, esse se homines recordantes, in coelestis regni possessione constituti".

<sup>17</sup> Hieronymus, *Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei Libri Quattuor* 5, 3: "[...] adiunxit, spiritu: ut humilitatem intelligeres, non penuriam".

<sup>18</sup> S. McGill, *Juvencus' Four Books of the Gospels: Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, London – New York 2016, p. 139.

aning of the Matthean beatitude. As it seems, the inserted clause which reads *quos mansuetudo coronat* aims at the interpretation that ‘the meekness’ of the blessed denotes the calmness of the soul freed from anger and hatred towards those who do an injustice, the interpretation of Origen<sup>19</sup>, who is usually regarded as one of Juvencus’ main theological sources<sup>20</sup>. The word *mansuetudo* can also be found in the commentary of Hilary, who presents it as one of the indispensable moral qualities for accepting Christ<sup>21</sup> and in Jerome who contrasts the *superbiam* of the men who gain the earthly lands by force with those who enter the holy land *per mansuetudinem*<sup>22</sup>. Given that Vetus Latina mentions its adjective form *mansueti* (f g<sup>1</sup> h q)<sup>23</sup>, the pre-hieronymian Bible might have been Juvencus’ main source in this case.

In comparison to the original, this line does not begin with the traditional introductory adjective denoting those who are blessed; instead the anticipated word *felices* is paraphrased as *his similes* whereby Juvencus eliminates the repetitive structure of the original, trying to accommodate the Gospel narrative to the literary taste of his well-educated contemporaries. This attempt for *variatio* is fundamental to Juvencus’ versificational technique as such<sup>24</sup>. As before, we can see that he promotes the rewards for the blessed, who are going to inherit ‘the most beautiful land’ using the superlative of the adjective *pulcherrima*, perhaps, also to stress that the beatitude does not mean just some earthly land but heaven itself – a distinction which Jerome finds useful too, as we have seen. Finally, the claim of the meek is further promoted by the insertion of the word *iuri*, emphasizing its rightfulness.

<sup>19</sup> R. Heine, *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, v. 1, Oxford 2018, p. 331.

<sup>20</sup> E. Colombi, *Paene ad verbum: Gli Evangeliorum libri di Giovenco tra parafrasi e commento*, “Cassiodorus” 3 (1997) p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Hilarius Pictaviensis, *In Evangelium Matthaei Commentarius* 4, 3: “Quia per mansuetudinem mentis nostrae habitaverit Christus in nos”.

<sup>22</sup> Hieronymus, *Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei Libri Quattuor* 5, 4: “Non terram Iudae, nec terram istius mundi [...] quam crudelissimus quisque et bellator magis possidet; sed terram quam Psalmista desiderat, dicens: ‘Credo videre bona Domini in terra viventium’ (Ps. 26,13)”.

<sup>23</sup> A. Orban, *Juvencus als Bibelexeget und als Zeuge der “Afrikanischen” Vetus-Latina-Tradition: Untersuchungen der Bergpredigt (Mt. 5,1-48) in der Vetus Latina und in der Versification des Juvencus (I 452-572)*, VigCh 49 (1995) p. 336.

<sup>24</sup> S. Rollins, *The Parables in Juvencus’ Evangeliorum libri IV*, Liverpool 1984, p. 63.

**Mt 5,4**

Beati, qui lugent, quoniam ipsi consolabuntur.

**ELQ I 458**

Hoc modo lugentes solacia magna sequentur.

Contrary to the Juvencinian adaptation of the preceding beatitudes, the syntactic structure of the following one is much simplified. Whereas the original sentence consisted of three clauses, two of which were subordinate, Juvencus' paraphrase contains only one clause which is the result of the transformation of the verb *lugent* into present participle followed by the omission of the causative adverb *quoniam*. The alternative structure would, however, not be grammatically functional without the replacement of the adjective *beati* with the phrase *hoc modo*. As we can see, the beatitude on mourning is thus two times shorter than the preceding ones, but that might have been the very purpose of the poet and paraphraser – to smooth the original sentence and to distinguish it from the preceding beatitudes applying the principle of *variatio* also in the field of syntax.

The relative shortness of the passage is also caused by the fact that, this time, Juvencus does not insert any further interpretation into the original by keeping the object of the word *lugere* as general as Matthew himself. The subsequent interpreters of the line, Hilary and Jerome would, on the other hand, try to specify it claiming that it describes either these who are mourning their own sins<sup>25</sup> or those mourning the sins of the others<sup>26</sup>. The Matthean verb *consolabuntur* was, probably due to its metrical qualities<sup>27</sup>, replaced by the phrase *solacia magna sequentur* which is, as can be seen, equivalent to the original both semantically and morphologically. Moreover, Juvencus embellished these words with the figure of alliteration (the repetition of the letter 's') and, as before, emphasized the value of the reward waiting for the blessed (*solacia magna*).

<sup>25</sup> Hilarius Pictaviensis, *In Evangelium Matthaei Commentarius* 4, 4: "Lugentibus aeternae consolationis solatia repromittit [...] peccata vetera flentibus".

<sup>26</sup> Hieronymus, *Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei Libri Quattuor* 5, 5: "Lucus hic non mortuorum ponitor communi lege naturae, sed peccatis et vitiis mortuorum".

<sup>27</sup> Absent in Juvencus totally, see Wacht, *Concordantia in Iuvenci Evangeliorum libros*, p. 46.

**Mt 5,6**

Beati, qui esuriunt et sitiunt iustitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur.

**ELQ I 459-460**

Pabula iustitiae qui nunc potusque requirunt, illos plena manet satiandos copia mensae.

Another kind of syntactic reduction can be seen in the beatitude number four where the final subordinate clause turns into the main clause through the (re)omission of the word *beati (sunt)* and causal conjunction *quoniam*. The resulting sentence is twice as long as the preceding one, but despite matching the length of the first two beatitudes, it has a unique syntactic structure of its own (i.e. two clauses compared to the three of the first and the second beatitude). The verbs of the original *esuriunt* and *sitiunt* are paraphrased as *pabula... potusque requirunt* the result of which is the alliteration of the letter ‘p’ phonetically unifying the couple ‘food and drink’ separated by the words *iustitiae qui nunc*<sup>28</sup>. As we can notice too, the motif of justice, the constitutive element of the Matthew’s gospel<sup>29</sup>, is fully preserved. The same applies to the motif of satiation in the main clause of this beatitude, which is amplified to such an extent that it occupies the whole verse presenting the poetic picture of a table laden with food. Thus, the reward awaiting the righteous is stressed once again and even in much more elaborated way than before.

**Mt 5,7**

Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi miserabuntur.

**ELQ I 461-462**

Felix, qui miseri doluit de pectore sortem, illum nam Domini miseratio larga manebit.

<sup>28</sup> Juvencus’ poem is, in fact, very rich in this stylistic figure as it even contains the examples of three (I 551; II 237 or IV 234) or four consecutive alliterate words (III 400 or III 443). See A. Thor, *Studies on Juvencus’ Language and Style*, Uppsala 2013, p. 234-238.

<sup>29</sup> Majtán, *Ježišova zVrchovaná reč: Evanjelium podľa Matúša, 5. – 7. kapitola*, p. 24.

The syntactic structure of the fifth beatitude goes back to the first one starting with the main clause containing the introductory adjective *felix*, which is followed by one subordinate and one coordinate clause. As can be seen, Juvencus continues varying the syntax of the original from verse to verse trying to make the structure of every beatitude somewhat different and thus stylistically less monotonous. The usage of the introductory adjective *felix* is to be considered a part of this process as it reappears after being absent from three beatitudes straight and even now it is used in a slightly different way from the original, i.e. in the nominative singular. The compound adjective *miseriordes* had to be replaced because of its metric qualities and Juvencus, trying to preserve its constituent parts partially, at least (*miserum-cors/miseri... de pectore*), paraphrased it by adding a new clause to the original text. The phrase *de pectore* can be of some interest on its own, as the usage of the preposition *de* instead of *ex*, *ab* or ablative absolute is one of the features of Juvencus' post-classical Latin<sup>30</sup>. As before, a proper epithet highlights the heavenly reward (*miseratio larga*). The phrase is, however, preceded by the word *Domini* specifying or confirming the originator of the mercy promised to the merciful which, though absent in Vulgate, can be found in the several codices of Vetus Itala Bible, probably read by Juvencus<sup>31</sup>. The couplet concludes with the alliteration of the letter 'm' in the words *miseratio (...) manebit*.

### Mt 5,8

Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.

### ELQ I 463-464

Felices, puro qui corde caelum tuentur, visibilis Deus his per saecula cuncta patebit.

Beatitude number six is also equipped with an introductory adjective imitating the Matthean expression *beati* and, this time, its original plural form *felices* is preserved too, distinguishing the beginning of this beatitude from the preceding one stylistically. The syntactic structure of the Gospel version was modified once again by the insertion of the subordinate clause

<sup>30</sup> Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, p. 121.

<sup>31</sup> Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, p. 121.

*qui (...) tuentur* and by the omission of the subordinating conjunction *quoniam*, turning the originally subordinate clause into coordinate one. The final syntactic structure of this sentence is thus similar to the structure of the preceding beatitude except for the fact that, as for the second line, Juvencus, keeping the principle of the syntactic variation, does not use any conjunction at all.

The reason for the aforementioned addition of the subordinate clause starting with *qui* is Juvencus' effort to elaborate upon the Matthean phrase *mundo corde* by supplementing it with the words *caelum tuentur*, thus creating the poetic image of the men who look up to the skies seeking their Lord. This modification can be regarded as a kind of narrative improvement binding both parts of the original beatitude with the motif of looking and seeing, which is absent in the original phrase *mundo corde*. Patristic commentators also found it necessary to stress the connection between the purity of heart and the sight of God, Origen, for instance, explaining that a heart is to be understood as an eye<sup>32</sup>, Hilary adding that only those with pure heart are allowed to see God in His immortality<sup>33</sup> and Jerome saying that 'the Pure one is to be observed with pure heart'<sup>34</sup>. Even today in Jewish culture, the heart was regarded as the centre of thoughts, will and other cognitive functions<sup>35</sup> so it is right to assume that Juvencus was trying to fill a certain gap in Matthew's narrative that he might have found a bit disturbing.

Unsurprisingly enough, this passage also confirms Juvencus' tendency to highlight the excellence of the heavenly rewards, for the men with pure hearts are promised to look upon their Lord *per saecula cuncta*, i.e. for an eternity.

## Mt 5,9

Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur.

## ELQ I 465

Pacificos Deus in numerum sibi prolis adoptat.

<sup>32</sup> Heine, *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, v. 1, p. 332.

<sup>33</sup> Hilarius Pictaviensis, *In Evangelium Matthaei Commentarius* 4, 7: "[...] quod solis mundis corde dispositum est, hoc quod in Deo est immortale cernemus".

<sup>34</sup> Hieronymus, *Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei Libri Quattuor* 5, 8: "Mundus mundo corde conspicitur".

<sup>35</sup> Majtán, *Ježišova zVRCHovaná reč: Evanjelium podľa Matúša*, 5. – 7. kapitola, p. 27.



Contrary to the preceding verses, the Juvencinian beatitude devoted to the peacemakers does not begin with the usual introductory adjective of Matthew and given the absence of the subordinating conjunction *quoniam*, it reminds us of the 'one-clause' syntactic structure of beatitude number three (*Hoc modo lugentes solacia magna sequentur*). Juvencus' beatitude of the peaceful, however, lacks any stylistic connection to the preceding verses (like the phrase *hoc modo*, for instance) which make it seem rather isolated. On the other hand, considering the evidence of the syntactic variation which we have encountered until now, we can also regard it as the intentional continuation of the same periphrastic tendency.

In comparison with the original text, Juvencus seems to put a greater emphasis upon the kinship between God and the peacemakers, the latter not only 'being about to be called His sons' (*fili Dei vocabuntur*), but literally 'adopted'. Thus, as Matthew indicates, Juvencus pronounces openly. The usage of the active instead of the passive voice to stress the closeness of this relation seems to support this claim in the same way as author's common praxis of promoting heavenly rewards with the aim of motivating his readers to take the path of the Christian faith. The word 'adoption' is also used by Hilary, who says: *Pacificorum beatitudo adoptionis est merces, ut filii Dei maneant*<sup>36</sup>. Possibly, the repetition of 'p' in the words *pacificos* and *prole* tries to stress the position of the peacemakers as Lord's posterity.

### Mt 5,10

Beati, qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.

### ELQ I 466-467

Felices nimium, quos insectatio frendens propter iustitiam premit; his mox regia caeli pandetur.

The following Juvencinian beatitude seemingly copies the syntactic structure of the original, starting with the coordinate clause headed by the adjective *felices*, which is even corresponding to Matthew's plural. The last clause, however, is not introduced by the conjunction *quoniam*. In fact, Juvencus uses no conjunction at all, changing the clause into a coordinate

<sup>36</sup> Hilarius Pictaviensis, *In Evangelium Matthaei Commentarius* 4, 7.

one and forestalling the succession of two subordinate clauses. As we can see, the introductory adjective *felices* is followed by the adverb *nimum*, which is to be understood together as *felices valde* with a possible relation to the Virgil's Georgics praising the life of peasants<sup>37</sup> and which could be translated as 'most blessed'<sup>38</sup>. The reason for Juvencus' promotion of the men who face persecution is probably the fact that he, living in the times of the Diocletian's Great persecution (301-311 AD), might have experienced it on his own, which is why he describes it with the expressive epithet *frendens* underscoring its cruelty<sup>39</sup>. The heroic clausula *regia caeli* closing the second verse of the beatitude (and also reappearing in I 482 and II 513) might have been inspired by Virgil, who used the same phrase while speaking about Zeus' son and Aeneas's ancestor Dardanos, who was said to have ascended to the skies<sup>40</sup>. There are, however, some other possible sources of inspiration too<sup>41</sup>. Looking, at last, upon the final word of the beatitude *pandetur* isolated at the beginning of the following verse, we can see that, though rarely, Juvencus does not hesitate to use enjambment, the need of which probably arose here out of his aim to get more space in order to portray the image of the royal palace opening its gates to the righteous, varying the recurrent Matthean phrase *regnum caelorum*.

### Mt 5,11-12

Beati estis cum exprobaverint vobis homines et persecuti fuerint et dixerint omne malum adversum vos propter iustitiam. Gaudete et exultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in caelo; sic enim persecuti sunt et prophetas, qui erant ante vos.

<sup>37</sup> Vergilius, *Georgica* II 458: "O fortunatos nimum, sua bona si norint, / agricolas". See Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, p. 122.

<sup>38</sup> McGill, *Juvencus' Four Books of the Gospels: Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, p. 46: "Most blessed they whom grinding persecution / afflicts due to the justice of their lives".

<sup>39</sup> In addition to this, Juvencus regularly provides those who suffer from persecution with the adjective *iusti* emphasizing the innocence of those who were sentenced to death for committing no other crime than confessing their faith. See Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator*, p. 120-121.

<sup>40</sup> Vergilius, *Aeneis* VII 210. See Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, p. 122.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Ovidius, *Metamorphoses* I 257 / II 298; Lucanus, *Bellum civile* I 46 or Statius, *Thebais* XI 218. See McGill, *Juvencus' Four Books of the Gospels: Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, p. 140.

## ELQ I 468-471

Gaudete operum quos iusta tenentes urgebit praeceps stimulis iniuria saevis;  
 plurima nam merces vobis servatur in aethra, namque prophetarum fuit insectatio talis.

The last lines of the Matthean text are combined together making the longest of the Juvencinian beatitudes, which is, in fact, in accordance with the content of the gospel as these two lines belong together the first saying 'who is to rejoice' and the second explaining 'why'<sup>42</sup>. Juvencus' adaptation of the beatitude consists of four clauses three of which are coordinate and one subordinate compared to the nine clauses of the original (four coordinate and five subordinate ones). This passage is a very good demonstration of the author's effort to smooth the syntax of the Matthean text by removing all of its repetitive structures such as the three clauses in perfect subjunctive *cum exprobaverint (...) et persecuti fuerint et dixerint* or the pleonastic expression *gaudete et exultate*, which, though typical of biblical stylistics, were not desirable among the readers of the pagan classics<sup>43</sup>.

As for the vocabulary of the passage, it can be noticed that the author keeps up his tradition of varying the beginning of every beatitude, this time, replacing the original *beati* with the introductory word of the twelfth line, *gaudete*. The list of the transgressions against the righteous is totally omitted and substituted by Juvencus's own poetic paraphrase of the line *urgebit praeceps stimulis iniuria saevis*<sup>44</sup> containing both the figure of alliteration (*stimulis... saevis*) and contrast (*iniuria* in relation to the *iusta* from the preceding line)<sup>45</sup>. This line is obviously Juvencus' most free-thinking poetic adaptation of the beatitudes. The last couplet will show us his variation technique once again. The repetition of the same conjunction is eliminated by the alternation of *nam* and *namque*. The Matthean phrase *in*

<sup>42</sup> Mrázek, *Kázání na hoře*, p. 61.

<sup>43</sup> Rollins, *The Parables in Juvencus' Evangeliorum libri IV*, p. 164.

<sup>44</sup> Which can be translated as 'Gioite, se una violenta offesa / vi affliggerà con feroci torture perché agite guistamente' (F. Galli, *Giovenco: I libri dei Vangeli*, Roma 2012, p. 92.) 'Gioite voi, che pur operando secondo equità / sarete incalzati e sferzati da una crudele violenza' (L. Canali – P. Santorelli, *Aquilino Giovenco: Il poema dei Vangeli*, Milano 2011, p. 71) or simply as 'Rejoice just men, who suffer cruel abuse' (McGill, *Juvencus' Four Books of the Gospels: Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, p. 46).

<sup>45</sup> Juvencus probably used some of the Itala codices (a, b, c, d, g<sup>1</sup>), which read *propter iustitiam* instead of the Vulgate's *propter me*. See Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, p. 122.

*caelo* standing for *regnum caelorum* is replaced with the more classical words *in aethra*, the expression *aether* being traditionally associated with the divinity as can be seen, for instance, in Statius, who uses the phrase *aethrae rector Iuppiter* (I 2, 135)<sup>46</sup>. The word *persecutio* is substituted by *insectatio*, the first being metrically incompatible with dactylic hexameter and, finally, the value of the rewards waiting for the persecuted is elevated by the superlative *plurima*, which can be translated by the adjective ‘immense’<sup>47</sup>.

### 3. Conclusion

The biblical version of the Matthew’s beatitudes underwent numerous changes the most significant of which we are going to summarize. Firstly, the somewhat rigid structure of the original (*Beati... quoniam...*) was modified by the declension or omission of the introductory adjective *felix*, by the prolongation (*Felices humiles... or His similes mites...*) or reduction (*Hoc modo lugentes... and Pacificos...*) of the original sentence, by the occasional change of order (*His similes mites... instead of Hoc modo lugentes...*) and by the connection of two originally separate parts (*Gaudete operum...*), all of this done in order to free the original text of its monotony and repetitiveness. Secondly, the Matthean beatitudes were embellished with a number of stylistic figures including contrast (*iusta – iniuria*), alliteration (*rupe resedit, solacia (...) sequentur or pabula... potusque*)<sup>48</sup> or poetic images like the one of the table filled with food<sup>49</sup> or the pricks of injustice<sup>50</sup>. Finally, it is well-known that Juvencus provides the original text with numerous adjectives in order to intensify the emotions of his readers and to fill his hexameters<sup>51</sup>. In the beatitudes, however, he also does it with certain theological purpose, i.e. to motivate his readers to take the

<sup>46</sup> Kievits, *Ad Iuvenci Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, p. 122.

<sup>47</sup> “[...] for your immense reward is kept on high” (McGill, *Juvencus’ Four Books of the Gospels: Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, p. 46.) and “[...] immensa ricompensa infatti vi attende in cielo” (Galli, *Giovenco: I libri dei Vangeli*, p. 92).

<sup>48</sup> Due to his prolific use of alliteration, Juvencus belongs to the archaically inclined author such as Apuleius, Fronto and Tertullianus. See Thor, *Studies on Juvencus’ Language and Style*, p. 234.

<sup>49</sup> “Illos plena manet satiandos copia mensae”.

<sup>50</sup> “Urgebit praeceps stimulis iniuria saevis”.

<sup>51</sup> Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator*, p. 42.

path of the Christian faith because the rewards waiting for them in heaven will be generous. This is why he supplements the Matthean narrative with additional adjectives like *sublime*, *pulcherrima*, *magna*, *larga* and many others. The promotion of the heavenly rewards goes hand in hand with the prioritization of the persecuted Christians (*nimum*), which is justified by the cruelty of their persecution (*insectatio frendens, quos... urgebit praecipis stimulis iniuria saevis*). The original narrative is also supplemented with Juvencus' own short theological commentaries (*Felices humiles* or *quos mansuetudo coronat*), which, in accordance with the contemporary interpretation, specify the meaning of the passages that the poet might have found unclear or prone to misrepresentation. Their incorporation into the original narrative is, however, so natural and unobtrusive that it clearly supports the claim that Juvencus does not try to be a commentator on the Bible but the Bible itself<sup>52</sup>. In general, Juvencus' poetic versification of the beatitudes is a formally enhanced but theologically faithful version of its Matthean counterpart.

### Juvenician Beatitudes Translated<sup>53</sup>

Beholding crowds he sat upon a tow'ring mount and then  
 surrounded by disciples thus his sermon he began:  
 'The humble ones are blessed, though their spirits are so poor,  
 because for them the realm of heav'n will op'n its golden door.  
 The meek are blessed too as tameness crowns their hearts and so  
 they are the men on whom the Lord will heav'nly lands bestow.  
 The mourning ones will also find great comforts such as these  
 whom God adopts as children for they strived to keep the peace.  
 The ones who crave the food of justice should not be afraid  
 because for them great tables piled with dishes will be laid.  
 The men who pity others from the bottom of their hearts  
 will get the lavish gift of pity which the Lord imparts

<sup>52</sup> R. Herzog, *Die Biblepik der lateinischen Spätantike: Geschichte einer erbaulichen Gattung*, München 1975, p. 115.

<sup>53</sup> Our choice of meter derives from the classical translation of *Iliad* by George Chapman (1611) accessible via <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/51355/51355-h/51355-h.htm> (accessed: 15.01.2023). The beatitudes of the mourning and the peacemakers had to be put together to make a couplet as they are the only ones which do not occupy two verses in Juvencus' text.

and those whose hearts immaculate look up to heav'nly height  
 are blessed as His face will always gratify their sight.  
 The greatest are, however, those who persecuted were  
 for seeking righteousness. The lot of angels they will share.  
 Rejoice, then, you, the people who, for doing what is just,  
 were fighting grave injustice the same way the prophets must  
 have done when they were facing brutal persecution, so  
 rejoice, because a great reward awaits you for your woe'.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. R. Gryson – R. Weber, Stuttgart 2007; *The Bible. Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha*, ed. R. Carroll – S. Prickett, Oxford – New York 1997; *The Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version, anglicized edition*, Oxford 2001; *Itala. Das Neue Testament in Altlateinischer Überlieferung. I. Matthäus-Evangelium*, ed. A. Jülicher, Berlin 1976.
- Q. Vetti Iuveni *Libri Evangeliorum IIII*, ed. C. Marold, Lipsiae 1886; *Gai Vetti Aquilini Iuveni Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, ed. I. Huemer, Vindobonae 1891; L. Canali – P. Santorelli, *Aquilino Giovenco: Il poema dei Vangeli*, Milano 2011; F. Galli, *Giovenco: I libri dei Vangeli*, Roma 2012; S. McGill, *Juvenius' Four Books of the Gospels: Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, London – New York 2016.
- Hieronymus, *Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei Libri Quattuor*, PL 26, 15-208.
- Hilarius Pictaviensis, *Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei*, ed. J. Doignon, SCh 254; 258, Paris 1978-1979.
- Origenes, *Commentaria in Evangelium secundum Matthaem*, ed. E. Klostermann – E. Benz, GCS 38, 40, Leipzig 1933, 1935, tr. R. Heine, *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Volume I*, Oxford 2018.

### Studies

- Bradtke M., *Lateinische Stilmittel*, Stuttgart 2016.
- Colombi E., *Paene ad verbum: Gli Evangeliorum libri di Giovenco tra parafrasi e commento*, "Cassiodorus" 3 (1997) p. 9-36.
- Green R., *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvenius, Sedulius, Arator*, Oxford 2006.
- Herzog R., *Die Bibelepik der lateinischen Spätantike: Geschichte einer erbaulichen Gattung*, München 1975.
- Kievits H., *Ad Iuveni Evangeliorum librum primum commentarius exegeticus*, Groningen 1940.

- Limbeck M. – Müller P. – Porsch F., *Stuttgarter kleiner Kommentar zu den Evangelien*, Stuttgart 2009.
- Majtán Ľ., *Ježišova zVRCHovaná reč: Evanjelium podľa Matúša, 5. – 7. kapitola*, Doľany 2021.
- Mrázek J., *Kázání na hoře*, Jihlava 2017.
- Müller M., *Tod und Auferstehung Jesu Christi bei Iuvencus (IV 570-812): Untersuchungen zu Dichtkunst, Theologie und Zweck der Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, Stuttgart 2016.
- Orban A., *Juvencus als Bibelexeget und als Zeuge der "Afrikanischen" Vetus-Latina-Tradition: Untersuchungen der Bergpredigt (Mt. 5,1 – 48) in der Vetus Latina und in der Versification des Juvencus (I 452-572)*, "Vigilae Christianae" 49 (1995) p. 334-352.
- Roberts M., *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in the Late Antiquity*, Liverpool 1985.
- Rollins, S., *The Parables in Juvencus' Evangeliorum libri IV*, Liverpool 1984.
- Souter A., *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.*, Oxford 1996.
- Thor A., *Studies on Juvencus' Language and Style*, Uppsala 2013.
- Thraede K., *Juvencus: Der Übergang zur Bergpredigt des Matthäusevangeliums*, in: *Alvarium: Festschrift für Christian Gnilka*, ed. W. Blümer – R. Henke – M. Mulke, JbAC Ergänzungsband 33, Münster 2002, p. 377-384.
- Wacht M., *Concordantia in Iuvenci Evangeliorum libros*, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 1990.
- Wetmore M., *Index verborum vergilianus*, New Haven 1961.







## Gnomes of Gregory of Nazianzus as Part of Didactic Literature – an Inspirational Source of Homilies?<sup>1</sup>

Adriána Ingrid Koželová<sup>2</sup>, Ján Drengubiak<sup>3</sup>

---

**Abstract:** The term *didaktikos*, first used by the ancient Greeks, referred to someone who was able to teach. However, not only in the sense of providing information and knowledge, but effectively conveying them so that they serve practical purposes. The aim of the contribution is to find out whether the gnomes of Gregory of Nazianzus formally meet the basic standards of didactic literature and thus to point out whether it is appropriate to use them as an inspirational source for writing sermons. By means of analytical and comparative method, we assess the presence of the basic features of homilies as well as whether they can be identified in the gnomes of Gregory of Nazianzus. The analysis confirms that homiletic texts are compatible with the gnomes by Gregory of Nazianzus and can be thus used as an inspirational source for writing sermons. Nazianzus' gnomes – the subject of our research – are also interesting for the readers today and have a lot to offer. Even if it is unlikely that the poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus attracts broad readership, the sermon can be the tool that conveys the author's moral legacy.

**Keywords:** Gregory of Nazianzus; sermon; gnomes; didactic literature

---

---

<sup>1</sup> Output of the projects: KEGA 025PU-4/2021 Inovácia výučby literatúry v príprave študentov učiteľstva a prekladateľstva francúzskeho jazyka s dôrazom na rozvíjanie primárnych a sekundárnych jazykových kompetencií (Innovation in teaching literature in the French language teacher's training and translation studies, focusing on the practice of primary and secondary language skills) and KEGA 005PU-4/2020 Realie z antickej kultúry ako súčasť prípravy študentov translatických odborov (Ancient Greek and Roman culture studies as part of the preparation of students in translation studies) and VEGA 1/0109/21 Poemata de se ipso Gregora z Nazianzu (1/0109/21 Poemata de se ipso by Gregory of Nazianzus).

<sup>2</sup> Adriána Ingrid Koželová, full professor at the Institute of Romance Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovakia; email: [adriana.kozelova@unipo.sk](mailto:adriana.kozelova@unipo.sk); ORCID: 0000-0001-9102-5972.

<sup>3</sup> Ján Drengubiak, associate professor at the Institute of Romance Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovakia; email: [jan.drengubiak@unipo.sk](mailto:jan.drengubiak@unipo.sk); ORCID: 0000-0003-0259-0879.

The etymology of the phrase didactic literature refers to the Greek διδάσκω (I teach). The basic characteristic of didactic literature is the effort to teach a lesson. The reader directly or indirectly learns lessons from the text, depending on the topic or genre. Didactic literature conveys different messages and shapes moral, ideological and worldview beliefs of the reader. The typical genres that bring such a lesson are fables, gnomes, maxims, georgics or parables. Nevertheless, the origins of didactic literature date back to antiquity and span across poetry, prose and drama. The founder of didactic poetry is Hesiod (the end of 8th and beginning of the 7th century BC). His two epics, *Theogonia* (*The Birth of the Gods*) and *Erga kai hémérai* (*Works and Days*) differ in tone. *Theogonia* reminds of Homeric epics and can be seen as a polemic take on Homer himself: what Homer presents chaotically, Hesiod structures and organizes. This very structuring of information to be conveyed could be already seen as having didactic elements, while the organizational principle permitting clearer understanding of the complex relations within Hesiod's epic is genealogy. Hesiod's sense of order is visibly reflected in the work of *Works and Days*, which has a looser structure and is therefore easier to read. This epic is a true representative of didactic epic. It provides advice, lessons and guidance on work and life. Among other things, Hesiod offers instructions on how to maintain both house and field and offers guidance on astronomical observations. Hesiod offers practical lessons that are embellished by folklore elements, occasional puzzles, gnomes, proverbs or the oldest known European fables, parables and myths. These very beginnings of didactic literature show that in order to instruct, the author deems gnomes or proverbs appropriate. We can find gnomes also in the work of Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389). The essence of his message is to convey learning in a convincing and comprehensible way. That is why he supported his reasoning in favor of the teachings of the church also in the form of moral poetry in *Poemata moralia*. St. Gregory of Nazianzus is a representative of the golden age of patristic literature in the 4th and 5th centuries BC. In the Western world, it was St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Hilar and St. Jerome. In the East, it was the Cappadocian fathers (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory of Nazianzus) or St. John Chrysostom. The importance of their work is both theological and literary and represents a huge spiritual wealth that still stands at the heart of research, since it offers the historical, cultural and social thesaurus of the early Middle Ages. The goal of our paper is to determine whether the works of Gregory of Nazianzus, namely his gnomonic poems, are still attractive and relevant today. Methodologically, we are bas-

ing the research on a comparison of the formal characteristics of gnomes and homilies, indicating both common features and differences. Pertaining to the content, we strive to highlight the timeliness of Gregory's gnomonic poems as an inspirational source of homilies.

The gnome is a concisely formulated wisdom, saying or generally valid idea with a moral undertone, written usually in verse or in rhythmic prose<sup>4</sup>. For the purposes of this paper we use an umbrella term *gnomic tradition* to include Gregory of Nazianzus' poems and didactic writings using gnomes. The gnomonic tradition includes thus didactic poetry, some philosophical works, but includes as well different forms, e.g., creations of folk wisdom. From a strictly literary point of view, the latter are not gnomes but they border and overlap with them. Within the framework of poetic creation, we distinguish didactic poetry and gnomonic poetry. The aim of both is to educate the reader about the chosen topic, but gnomonic poetry differs in that its theme is ingrained in ethics. It is important to note though that to an author whose main objective is to write didactic poetry it is not an obstacle to address topics outside the scope of didactics. As an example, we can use again Hesiod's work *Works and Days*, in which we find instructions and these belong to the gnomonic tradition. The Greeks themselves regarded Hesiod as the founder of both didactic and gnomonic poetry<sup>5</sup>.

Gregory of Nazianzus was the first Christian author to use gnomonic form. However, it is believed that he was inspired by two lesser-known authors, Naumachius and Phocylides. Both are considered to be gnomonic poets, however, only snippets of their work have survived to these days<sup>6</sup>. Gnomonic poetry, or literature in general, like the gnomes themselves, deals with topics targeting ethics and morality by projecting them into human behavior, attitudes, fulfilling the obligations of a citizen within the fabric of social relations and family life. Talking about gnomonic poems, it is important to remember that the authors used but a few verses in order to convey their message and that the length of the poem was not the author's primary intention<sup>7</sup>. As an example of gnomonic poetry, we can cite the Bible and its ancient Book of Proverbs and the Book of Wisdom. Greek literature was enriched by the gnomonic poetry of Hesiod, Theognis, Phocylides. Later, the

---

<sup>4</sup> F. Štraus, *Slovník poetiky*, Bratislava 2007, p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> T. Vítěk, *Sedm mudrců a jejich výroky*, Praha 2010, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> H.L. Davids, *De gnomologieën van sint Gregorius van Nazianze*, Nijmegen Utrecht 1940, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> W.T. Wilson, *The Mysteries of Righteousness: The Literary Composition and Genre of the Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*. Eugene 2013, p. 18.

style, customized content and forms of gnomic poetry occur in the works of other important authors such as Solon, Pindar, Menander or playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides<sup>8</sup>. Gregory knew their work and drew inspiration from it. He enriched his own writing with the ideas and forms he encountered. *Patrologia Graeca* refers to Gregory's four gnomic poems (I, II, 30; 31; 32; 33). Their content is targeting ethical issues and the questions of the rightful life. This fact is not surprising, because culture in antiquity absorbed gnomic poetry as an ethically educational and aesthetically pleasing genre. Thanks to popularity, the authors of gnomic poetry were able to spread their ideas, while the choice of poetic form made their message more expressive and memorable. Gregory of Nazianzus sought the same effect in his poetry<sup>9</sup>.

Since we are interested in the gnomic poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus and its appeal to the recipient in the 21st century, we will try to determine whether it could be used as a topic in homilies. At this point, it would be convenient to ask whether something like this even needs to be explored, since the theme of the homily can be practically anything. But is that really the case? Such a view of the homily would be at best superficial, because like any other genre – the homily has its characteristics. The field of religiosity and spirituality is characterized by several genres such as psalm, prayer or song. They occur mostly in the Bible, religiously motivated literature and press, liturgical texts, theological texts. Homilies, sermons, pastoral letter have their obligatory place during the liturgy<sup>10</sup>. For a better understanding of the homilies, it is useful to add the J. Mistrík's distinction between catechetical and confessional genres. Catechetical genres educate people in areas such as religion, history of religion, morality and apologetics. It is in this category that homilies, sermons and catechism belong. Confessional genres, i.e., those by which believers declare their creed, are personal prayers, sacraments, etc. Their intent is didactic, since insufficient mastery of the topic on the part of the believer is assumed<sup>11</sup>. The transition from the form of a traditional (more deductive rather than inductive) homily to the homily as seen today was marked not only by the changes within the social classes, but also by the development of various philosophical, religious or political groups and

---

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, *The Mysteries of Righteousness*, p. 19-22.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, *The Mysteries of Righteousness*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> K. Bieleková, *Homília ako žánr a text*, Prešov 2020, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> J. Mistrík, *Štylistika*, Bratislava 1997, p. 484.

schools of thought<sup>12</sup>. Nowadays, a homily reflecting expectations of the recipients does not choose verbatim sentences from the Bible, but distills the main idea and builds on it. The foundation of the homily is the Bible as an example or proof of the truthfulness of the preacher's words. If the excerpt from the Bible hadn't been included in the homily, it would have been just a sermon or a morality speech<sup>13</sup>, where the sermon offers topics unknown to Jesus and the apostles. Sermons are thus texts not rooted in the exegetic tradition and can be divided according to their object and character (e.g., social sermon, dogmatic sermon, morality sermon). The sermon is understood in a broader sense as any speech following the reading of the Gospel, where the homily is the most accomplished representation of sermon, since the homily is based directly on the gnostic truth and events written in the Bible. The sermon mostly responds to current questions of society and also relies on church dogmas. At present, we can see a preference for homily in churches at the expense of thematic sermons<sup>14</sup>.

What are the basic characteristics of the homily? The description of the homily is a rather complex and complicated matter. An important role in it is played by a rhetor/priest (the subject), whose task is to convincingly state objective facts, biblical truths (the object). However, the connection between the subject and object is rather complicated because the question of faith is a personal topic and each individual experiences faith in the context of his or her own existence and life experience that depend on the degree of understanding and identification with biblical truths.

When addressing the composition, it is necessary to organize the material pertaining to homilies into a single thematic unit. The modern composition of homilies, applied from the mid-1950s, highlights above all its dialogic structure, spontaneity, clarity, dynamic nature of presenting ideas, length and exegesis of the text. The Bible serves as an example or proof of the truthfulness of the preacher's words, nevertheless, it is not a verbatim copy of biblical passages that are included into the homily (it would be the case of the so-called exegetical homily, which explains one verse after another, but since the content of individual verses is often diverse, the homily itself becomes heterogenous). Instead, the homily distills the

---

<sup>12</sup> K. Bieleková, *Vývoj homílie a jej súčasné žánrové zaradenie*, in: *Epištoly o jazyku a jazykovede*, Prešov 2012, p. 197.

<sup>13</sup> J. Vrablec, *Najplnšia forma kázne*, Bratislava 1990, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Bieleková, *Vývoj homílie a jej súčasné žánrové zaradenie*, p. 199-200.

main idea that is then offered to a recipient. This idea is processed by the priest in the deep structure of the text according to the following structure: kerygma – announcement, didascaly – instruction, paraklesis – influence or encouragement, mystagogy – unification with God, which is the culmination of the homily<sup>15</sup>.

Homily is most often built on the principle of an argumentative essay. It focuses on the analysis of the nature of a phenomenon, on clarifying relationships and context. Its basic characteristics are cohesion, successiveness, gnomic character, objectivity, but the most significant feature is their explicative nature, which is linked to cohesion in that it is achieved by a strong bond between motifs, their logical and semantic intertwining. The resulting text is thus more comprehensive. The successiveness, i.e., the organization of arguments that follow from one another, is yet another means of achieving coherence of the treated topic, that in turn gains gnomic validity. The argumentative essay often builds on the dichotomy between objectivity – subjectivity, nevertheless, it is the objective approach that is favored. Homily differs in that it applies more freely and deliberately subjective approach to the reading to the archetypal material which is the Bible. Persuasion and promotional function, clarity, ornamentality, suggestiveness, but also extralinguistic factors (e.g., official tone, the presence of the addressee) point to the rhetoric side of the homilies, for which didactic (use of definitions, exemplification, enumeration, actualization) and literary style (abundant use of sentence modality, idioms, expressiveness) are characteristic<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, we consider the means by which the rhetorical nature of the homilies is shaped. Their choice depends on what function they perform in the text. Theoretically, any lexical unit can be used in the homily. The notional lexical units form the core of the homilies, but for reasons of emphasis Latinisms, Greekisms, archaisms, occasionalisms, dialectic words, as well as diminutives and euphemism can be used. Everything has its merits and significance in a specific text and for a particular recipient. By all these means of expression, the objective of the preacher is to achieve suggestiveness, to elicit positive emotions in the recipients. Literary means of expression are also used for the same purposes. Of these hyperbole, gradation and repetition are used prominently. Another important feature of the homilies is that they model and illustrate a certain point including ex-

<sup>15</sup> K. Bieleková, *Kompozičná stavba homílie*, “*Studia Philologica*” 13 (2008) p. 96-97.

<sup>16</sup> Bieleková, *Kompozičná stavba homílie*, p. 97.

amples. Comparisons, personal experience, testimonies, anecdotes, fables or allegorical stories, everything is permitted. In short, the preacher must have a rich vocabulary<sup>17</sup>.

All the means of expression used by the preacher are part of his idiolect. It is formed individually and reflects his education, interests, personal inclinations and, of course, it is inspired by the works of other authors on both thematic and literary level. When creating a homily, the preacher naturally reaches for works that inspire him, but at the same time instruct him and serve as a basis for his own testimony. Gnostic poems by Gregory of Nazianzus could be such inspirational texts for preachers and their homilies. However, in order not to leave this claim only at the level of impression or presumption, we will point to the relevance of Gregory's by analyzing his gnostic works. Gregory's moral poems cannot be described as uniform. They are diverse in that they are intended as encouragement (I, II, 1; 2; 3; 6; 8; 9; 10), others are warnings (I, II, 24, 25; 26; 27; 28; 29) or laments (I, II, 12; 14; 15; 16; 37; 38). Gregory does not avoid gnostic poems (I, II, 17, 31; 32; 33; 34) intended solely for moral instruction either. Yet three poems even have an unconventional form of dialogue (I, II, 8; 11; 24)<sup>18</sup>.

The first gnostic poem is Poem I, II, 17 *Variorum vitae generum beatitudines* (The blessings of different paths through life). This gnostic poem can attract the reader by developing the theme of blessings. Verses 1-32 deal with the blessings of specific ways of life and virtues. In them, Gregory praises celibacy, solitude and those who have embarked on a journey seeking Jesus Christ. Verses 33-54 encourage the reader to follow one of the blessed paths of life presented in previous verses. However, Gregory points out that if a life in celibacy brings pride and looks for worldly pleasures, it is worse than a married couple living virtuous lives. Verses 55-66 recall that although there are several paths, only a narrow path gives one's life a true meaning. Thus, in terms of content, the poem is a reference to blessings (Mt 5,3-12; Lk 6,20-23) that Jesus delivered in his speech on a mountain (Mt 5-7) and is thematically suitable for the homilies. The poem is interesting also from the standpoint of the use of a stylistic figure, namely anaphor. Almost every second verse begins with a word *blessed*. As mentioned above, the use of anaphor fulfils two tasks – on the side of the content as well as stylistics. By repetition and accentuation, it achieves emphasis.

---

<sup>17</sup> Humbert z Romans, *O formaci kazatelů*, Praha 2016, p. 89.

<sup>18</sup> E. Brodňanská – A. Koželová, *Gregor z Nazianzu: morálna poézia*, Prešov 2020, p. 28.

- Požehnaný, kto v pustine žije, s ľuďmi vo svete  
vôbec sa nestýka, no v myšlienkach Boha len má.  
Požehnaný, kto s mnohým hoci sa potýka, mnohé  
nenaháňa, lež srdce celé on Bohu len dal.
- 5 Požehnaný, kto Krista za všetok majetok kúpil,  
majetkom je mu len kríž, nesie čo vysoko ho.  
Požehnaný, kto poctivo získaný majetok vlastniac  
podáva strádajúcim dlaň, čo mu naplnil Boh.  
Požehnaný je život blažených nezadaných, čo
- 10 blízko sú pri čistom Božstve, tela keď zvládli sa striasť.  
Požehnaný, kto zákonom manželstva málo sa poddal,  
hojnejší podiel lásky Kristovi darúva v ňom.  
Požehnaný, kto nad ľuďom vládnuce vedie skrz svoje  
obety sväté a veľké ku Kristu smrteľníkov.
- 15 Požehnaný, kto iných na pastvu božského Krista  
privádza, bezchybný v stáde, hoci len jahňat'om je.  
Požehnaný, kto silnými poryvmi čistej mysle  
nádheru nebeských svetiel dokáže vnímať a zrietať.  
Požehnaný, kto rukami ťažko pracujúc ctí si
- 20 Pána a pre mnohých je príkladom, jak sa má žiť.  
Všetko toto sa stalo náplňou nebeských lisov,  
ktoré našich duší ovocie prijímajú,  
inakšia zdatnosť odvádza zase na iné miesto.  
Pre mnohé spôsoby života mnohé aj príbytky sú.
- 25 Požehnaný, komu veľký Duch nadelil núdzu na vášne,  
ten, koho život na zemi smutný a žalostný je,

Ὁλβιος, ὅστις ἔρημον ἔχει βίον, οὐδ' ἐπίμικτον

Τοῖς χαμαὶ ἐρχομένοις, ἀλλ' ἐθέωσε νόον.

Ὁλβιος, ὃς πολλοῖσι μεμιγμένος, οὐκ ἐπὶ πολλοῖς  
Στροφᾶτ', ἀλλὰ Θεῶ πέμπσεν ὅλην κραδίην.

Ὁλβιος, ὃς πάντων κτεάνων ὠνήσατο Χριστὸν,  
Καὶ κτέαρ οἶον ἔχει σταυρὸν, ὃν ὕψι φέρει.

Ὁλβιος, ὃς καθαροῖσιν εἰς κτεάτεσσιν ἀνάσσων,  
Χεῖρα Θεοῦ φέροι τοῖς ἐπιδευομένοις.

Ὁλβιος ἀζυγῶν μακάρων βίος, οἱ Θεότητος  
Εἰσὶ πέλας καθαρῆς, σάρκ' ἀποσεισάμενοι.

Ὁλβιος, ὃς θεσμοῖσι γάμου τυτθὸν ὑποείξας.

Πλειοτέτην Χριστῶ μοῖραν ἔρωτος ἄγει.



Ὁλβιος, ὃς λαοῖο φέρων κράτος, εὐαγέεσσι  
 Καὶ μεγάλαις θυσίαις Χριστὸν ἄγει χθονίοις.  
 Ὁλβιος, ὅστις ἐὼν ποιμνης τέκος, οὐρανίοιο  
 Χώραν ἄγει Χριστοῦ, θρέμμα τελειότατον.  
 Ὁλβιος, ὃς καθαροῖο νόου μεγάλῃσιν ἔρωαῖς,  
 Οὐρανίων φαέων δέρκεται ἀγλαΐην.  
 Ὁλβιος, ὃς χεیرهσσι πολυκμήτοισιν Ἄνακτα  
 Τίει, καὶ πολλοῖς ἐστι νόμος βιότου.  
 Πάντα τὰδ' οὐρανίων πληρώματα ἔπλετο ληνῶν,  
 Αἱ καρποῦ ψυχῶν δέκτρια ἡμετέρων,  
 Ἄλλην ἀλλοίης ἀρετῆς ἐπὶ χώραν ἀγούσης.  
 Πολλαὶ γὰρ πολλῶν εἰσι μοναὶ βιότων.  
 Ὁλβιος, ὃν πτωχὸν παθέων μέγα Πνεῦμ' ἀνέδειξεν·  
 Ὅστις ἔχει ζωὴν ἐνθάδε πενθαλέην· (I, II, 17, 1-26; PG 37, 781-783).

These verses, or a part thereof, may be used when writing a homily. Gregory speaks to the reader in a way he or she understands. He explains the blessings by including minute stories inspired by life, which is in fact one of the forms of homilies. Some of the verses could even be seen as a personal prayer (Blessed are those, of the pure mind, who can perceive the beauty of celestial lights). Simultaneously, all verses underline the gnostic nature of the poem. The wisdom of life and the moralizing tone of Gregory of Nazianzus are intertwined.

Poem I, II, 31 *Distichae sententiae* (Two-verse statements) are defined by ethical teachings. They relate to themes that are symptomatic of Gregory's works: gluttony and moderation, wealth and poverty, artificiality and nature, marriage and virginity, virtues and vices. Gregory's source is primarily the Bible, but there are statements that can be attributed to ancient Greek authors as well. They share the authorship of an archaic aphorism γνῶθι σεαυτόν (gnōthi seauton – know thyself).

Gregory points to it in the 7th verse:

Poznaj sám seba,<sup>19</sup> najdrahší, odkiaľ si, ako si vznikol,  
 prvotnú krásu totiž dosiahneš poľahky tak.

Γνῶθι σεαυτόν, ἄριστε, πόθεν καὶ ὅστις ἐτύχθης,

Ῥεῖά κεν ὧδε τύχης κάλλεος ἀρχετύπου. (I, II, 31, 7-8; PG 37, 911)

This verse provides the possibility to incorporate Greekism into the homily, which the composition of the homily permits as means of at-

<sup>19</sup> A Delphic maxim *Gnōthi seauton*.

tracting attention of the recipient. From the point of view of content, Gregory's poem is an inventory of ideas, reflections on life as well as wisdoms of life. Virtually every two-verse can motivate the recipient to reflect and contemplate on, to be a theme a sermon. Each two-verse is a separate gnome and is usable individually, e.g., as a homily motto or as a part of a longer poem. As an example, we select verses with allusions to the Bible:

- Zlato sa totiž skúša vo vyhni, dobrý muž v strastiach;<sup>20</sup>  
 neporušenosť je často omnoho ťažšia než bôľ.  
 Poľahky zriekne sa veľkého Boha, kto zrieka sa Syna;  
**kto ťa zbožnosti učí, máš si ho otca jak ctíť.**
- 55 **Červy stravujú všetko;**<sup>21</sup> ty to, čo máš, nenechaj hrobom –  
 priaznivé meno mať, to je pri pohrebe česť.  
 Χρυσὸς μὲν χοάνοισι δαμάζεται, ἄλγεσι δ' ἐσθλός·  
 Ἄλγος ἀπημοσύνης πολλάκι κουφότερον.  
 Ῥεῖά κεν ἀρνήσαιτο Θεὸν μέγαν, ὃς γενετῆρα·  
 Ἴσθι δὲ καὶ γενέτην ὡς πατέρ' εὐσεβίης.  
 Σῆτες ἔδουσιν ἅπαντα· λίπης τὰ σὰ μηδὲ τάφοισιν·  
 Ἐξοδίη τιμῆ, δεξιὸν οὖνομ' ἔχειν. (I, II, 31, 51-56; PG 37, 914-915).

This gnomic poem is typical for Gregory by its ending – the final verses draw attention to the Trinity.

- Pod' teda, celý svet zanechaj tuto, jeho tiež bremä,  
 60 k životu nebeskému rozostri plachtu ty hneď.  
 Všetky vždy najlepšie diela, hodné čo Boha sú, dokonč,  
 ale o Trojicu najviac zo všetkých starať sa hľad'.  
 Δεῦρ' ἄγε, κόσμον ἅπαντα καὶ ἄχθεα τῆδ' ἀπολείψας,  
 Ἴστίον ἐς ζωὴν οὐρανίην πέτασον.  
 Πάντα μὲν αἰὲν ἄριστα θεοπρεπὲς ἔργα τελείσθω,  
 Ἡ δὲ Τριάς πάντων ἔξοχά σοι μελέτω. (I, II, 31, 59-62; PG 37, 915).

In every difficult situation, as several of his poems prove, Gregory turns to the Trinity especially when revealing his human weakness or

<sup>20</sup> See. Sir 2,5. Since gold is tested in the fire, and the chosen in the furnace of humiliation.

<sup>21</sup> See. Sir 7,17. Be very humble, since the recompense for the godless is fire and worms; Mk 9,46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

helplessness. This, too, is one of the hallmarks of homilies, namely the encouragement of the recipient and his/her assurance in positive feelings. Gregory's gnomic poem possesses this characteristic.

Poem I, II, 33 *Tetrastichae sententiae* is the next in a series of Gregory of Nazianzus' gnomic poems. Unlike poems I, II, 312 and 32, which bear the Greek name Γνώμαι (*Gnómai*; Statements), this is called Γνωμολογία (*Gnómologia*) – a collection of gnomes. In this sense, the term *gnomologia* has been in use only since the Middle Ages. Before that, the word defined merely gnomic style, and from the Hellenist period it was understood as gnomelike – a brief statement having a generally valid ethical content by a wise person<sup>22</sup>. Maxims in four verse stanzas represent Gregory's symbolic almanac. It is instructive and its common theme are the common situations of life. The author portrays alternately common situations related to everyday life, as well as serious topics that one argues, contemplates and deliberates about constantly. In these four verse stanzas, Gregory therefore gives the reader a moral compendium for every day. In the context of the homily the poems are interesting from the point of view of the syntactic structure. The structure without specific connotations that objectively states facts is the traditional theme/rheme organization of the sentence. By changing and disrupting this sentence order, the sentences acquire emotional coloring and emphasis. In such cases, the preacher would first say the points to be highlighted and accented, while the highlighting could be done for various reasons – because of the information itself, or because of pragmatic reasons. The recipient can be alerted by inverse statements or peculiarities in word order e.g., placement of the verb at the end of a sentence, attached sentence constituents, etc. Gregory's verses in Slovak translation precisely offer such syntactic singularities. As an example, we could use the whole of Gregory's poem, therefore what follows are but a few representative passages:

- 20 Ved' ak je svetlo toľké, koľká bude tma?  
 Je skutok bez slov viac, než slovo nečinné.  
 Zdvihnutý nebol nikdy nik bez života,  
 Εἰ γὰρ τὸ φῶς τοιοῦτον, τὸ σκότος πόσον;  
 Ἄφωνον ἔργον κρεῖσσον ἀπράκτου λόγου.  
 Βίου μὲν οὐδεὶς πρόποθ' ὑψώθη δίχα· (I, II, 33, 20-22; PG 37, 929)

<sup>22</sup> T. Víték, *Sedm mudrců a jejich výroky*, Praha 2010, p. 123.

- 65 Pred milých piesní šteklivými obratmi,  
 pred slovom zlým si voskom uši uzavri,  
 no otvor ich pred pekným, dobrým zakaždým.  
 Sú blízko seba vravieť, konať, počúvať.  
 Κηρῶ τὰ ὦτα φράσσε πρὸς φαύλους λόγους,  
 Ὡδῶν τε τερπνῶν ἐκμελῆ λυγίσματα·  
 Τοῖς δ' αὖ καλοῖς τε κάγαθοῖς ἀεὶ δίδου.  
 Εἰπεῖν, ἀκοῦσαι, καὶ δρᾶσαι, μικρὸν μέσον. (I, II, 33, 65-68; PG 37, 933).
- 80 Mrav zronený je lepší, ako hýrivý.  
 Hľaď pokladať za krásu mysle spôsobnosť.  
 Nie tú, čo kreslia ruky, či čas uberá,  
 lež mysle rozvážnej, čo pohľad spozná ju.  
 Za hanbu nespôsobnosť mysle považuj.  
 Κρεῖσσον κατηφές ἦθος, ἢ τεθρυμμένον.  
 Κάλλος νόμιζε τὴν φρενῶν εὐκοσμίαν,  
 Οὐχ ὁ γράφουσι χεῖρες, ἢ λύει χρόνος,  
 Ὅψει δ' ὅπερ νοῦ σῶφρονος γνωρίζεται·  
 Αἴσχος δ' ὁμοίως τὴν φρενῶν ἀκοσμίαν. (I, II, 33, 80-84; PG 37, 934).

Like two or four-verse maxims (I, II, 31; 33), *Definitiones minus exactae* is characterized by biblical and philosophical content. Although all moral poetry is Gregory's testimony, this gnomic poem is even more personal in tone than usual, which gives it authenticity. This characteristic is natural and desirable for homilies. Here, too, Gregory can serve as an inspiration. For illustration purposes we include verses in which Gregory of Nazianzus reveals his weakness as well as his willingness to fight vices. Such affinity is likeable and invites the recipients to espouse the author's attitudes:

- Kam chcem len pohnúť sa, je vôľou slobodnou.  
 Ak hnutie rázne je, ho volám horlivosť;  
 no neochotné tyraníou vôle zveň.  
 40 Viem, úsudok je vecí rozoberanie.  
 A túžba chuťou je na dobré či na zlé.  
 Ἡ δ' οἷ θέλω κίνησις, ἐξουσιότης.  
 Τὴν σύντονον δὲ καὶ προσθυμίαν λέγω·  
 Τὸ δὲ ἀκούσιον, βουλήσεως τυραννίδα.  
 Λογισμὸν οἶδα πραγμάτων διαίρεσιν.  
 Πόθος δ' ὄρεξις ἢ καλῶν ἢ μὴ καλῶν. (I, II, 34, 37-41; PG 37, 948).

Analysis of gnomic poetry and homilies shows that they are compatible. It follows, that the didactic intent of the gnome can naturally permeate homilies. Not only the content, but also the formal aspect of gnomic poetry is compatible with this type of texts. Didactic intent, moral teachings, sharing and spreading of the wisdom of life by means that are accessible to a large number of recipients, such as the use of personal examples and experience, is the goal of both gnomic poetry and homilies. The gnomic poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus, which belongs to his writings on morals, can be inspiring for writing homilies. The timelessness of his work, which is largely due to the intimacy and openness, amazes recipients even today. Many of Gregory's words may be included in the homilies. On the other hand, it is also true that the moral poetry of one of the church's fathers, dating to the 4th century, cannot aspire to a status of a bestseller. Nevertheless, the power of the homiletic texts could help the spread and reception of Gregory's poetry and of his ideas. Gregory's work can appeal to today's recipient through its emotional charge as well as general truths that it conveys. The spread of Gregory's writings and the interaction between gnomic and homiletic works could be moreover aided by the sainthood of the author.

## Bibliography

### Sources

Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Poemata moralia*, PG 37, tr. E. Brodňanská – A. Koželová, *Gregor z Nazianzu: morálna poézia*, Prešov 2020.

### Studies

Bieleková K., *Vývoj homílie a jej súčasné žánrové zaradenie*, in: *Epištoly o jazyku a jazykovede*, Prešov 2012.

Bieleková K., *Homília ako žáner a text*, Prešov 2020.

Bieleková K., *Kompozičná stavba homílie*, "Studia Philologica", 13 (2008) p. 96-97.

Davids H.L., *De gnomologieën van sint Gregorius van Nazianze*, Nijmegen Utrecht 1940.

Humbert z Romans, *O formaci kazatelů*, Praha 2016.

Mistrík J., *Štylistika*, Bratislava 1997.

Štraus F., *Slovník poetiky*, Bratislava 2007.

Vrablec J., *Najplnšia forma kázne*, Bratislava 1990.

Wilson W.T., *The Mysteries of Righteousness: The Literary Composition and Genre of the Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, Eugene 2013.

Vítek T., *Sedm mudrců a jejich výroky*, Praha 2010.





## L'esegesi di Cant 1,5-6 e il tema dell'*epektasis* in Gregorio di Nissa, con specifico riferimento al ruolo della grazia e del libero arbitrio<sup>1</sup>

The Exegesis of *Ct* 1:5-6 and the Theme of *Epēktasis* in Gregory of Nyssa,  
with Specific Reference to the Role of Grace and Free Will

Paola Marone<sup>2</sup>

---

**Abstract:** As Moreschini rightly pointed out (*Gregorio di Nissa, Omelie sul Cantico dei Cantici*, a cura di C. Moreschini, Roma 1996, p. 9), Gregory of Nyssa's *Homilies on the Song of Songs* "sono costruite sullo schema dell'*epektasis*", and it is no exaggeration to say that "esse vogliono rappresentare una serie di esperienze successive dell'anima la quale, dopo avere avuto un contatto, sia pure parziale, con lo sposo divino, approfondisce sempre di più il suo rapporto spirituale con lui". But above all about the exegesis of *Ct.* 1:5-6 (I am dark, but lovely, You daughters of Jerusalem, Like Kedar's tents, Like Solomon's curtains. Don't stare at me because I am dark, Because the sun has scorched me) the *epektasis* is placed in a wide-ranging context and takes on a new meaning in a soteriological perspective. Hence the purpose of the present study is to analyze specifically the *Homilies* 2 and 4, concerning the exegesis of *Ct.* 1:5-6, and to focus on all the theological topics (the gratuity of grace, the free acceptance of the gift of grace) with which Nyssen, now at the end of life, attributed the spiritual progress of the soul to the saving action of God, in accordance with what he had claimed, many years earlier, in *De virginitate* 12 ("In fact this likeness to the divine is not our work at all [...]; it is the great gift of God bestowed upon our nature at the very moment of our birth").

**Keywords:** Gregory of Nyssa; Homilies; Exegesis; *Ct* 1:5-6; *Epēktasis*

---

---

<sup>1</sup> Il presente lavoro è stato presentato al *13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa* che si è svolto a Roma dal 17 al 20 Settembre 2014 presso la Pontificia Università della Santa Croce.

<sup>2</sup> Dott.ssa Paola Marone – Cultore della Materia di Storia del Cristianesimo presso l'Università Sapienza di Roma e insegnante di Lettere di ruolo; e-mail: [paola.marone@posta.istruzione.it](mailto:paola.marone@posta.istruzione.it); ORCID: 0000-0002-9893-7234.

## 1. Introduzione

Tutto il complesso delle *Homiliae in Canticum Canticorum* di Gregorio “è costruito sullo schema dell’*epektasis*”<sup>3</sup>, ma soprattutto a proposito di *Cant* 1:5-6 (“Sono nera e bella, o figlie di Gerusalemme, come le tende di Kedar, come le pelli di Salomone. Non guardatemi perché sono stata fatta nera, se il sole mi guardò di traverso”) l’*epektasis* è inserita in un contesto di ampio respiro e assume un significato compiuto in una prospettiva soteriologica. Dunque, con il presente lavoro, si vuole portare l’attenzione specificatamente sulle *Homiliae* 2 e 4 che sono dedicate appunto all’interpretazione di *Cant* 1,5-6 e si vogliono mettere a fuoco le argomentazioni con le quali il Nisseno, ormai alla fine della sua vita, attribuì il progresso spirituale dell’anima all’azione salvifica di Dio, senza negare l’apporto del libero arbitrio.

---

<sup>3</sup> Gregorio di Nissa, *Omelia sul Cantico dei Cantici*, ed. C. Moreschini, Roma 1996, Intr. 9. Sull’*Epektasis*, ovvero sul processo di avvicinamento dell’anima a Dio, che Gregorio mutuò da Phil 3,12-14, cf. A. Lévy, *Aux confins du créé et de l’incrée: les dimensions de l’épectase chez Grégoire de Nysse*, RSPT 84 (2000) p. 247-274; L. Karfiková, *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes und der unendliche Weg des Menschen nach Gregor von Nyssa*, “Sacris Erudiri” 40 (2001) p. 47-81; K. Rombs, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Doctrine of Epektasis: Some Logical Implications*, SP 37 (2001) p. 288-293; G. Ferro Garel, *Gregorio di Nissa. L’esperienza mistica, il simbolismo, il progresso spirituale*, Torino 2004; T. Alexopoulos, *Das unendliche Sichausstrecken (Epektasis) zum Guten bei Gregor von Nyssa und Plotin. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung*, ZACH 10 (2007) p. 302-312; K. Robb-Dover, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Perpetual Progress*, “Theology Today” 65 (2008) p. 213-225; S.E. Lewis, *Contestation and Epektasis in the Discussion on Sin*, “Analecta Hermeneutica” 4 (2012) p. 1-33; L. Petcu, *The Doctrine of Epektasis. One of the Major Contributions of Saint Gregory of Nyssa to the History of Thinking*, “Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia” 73/2 (2017) p. 771-782. Inoltre sul tema dell’*Epektasis* sviluppato precedentemente da Origene cf. I. Ramelli, *Apokatastasis and Epektasis in Cant. and Origen*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 312-339; G. Lettieri, *Progresso*, in: *Origene. Dizionario: la cultura, il pensiero, le opere*, ed. A. Monaci Castagno, Roma 2000, p. 379-392.



## 2. La sposa del Cantico come metafora dell'anima

Se in generale Gregorio considerava il *Cantico dei Cantici* come un testo paradigmatico per accedere alla “conoscenza di Dio”<sup>4</sup>, in particolare riflettendo su *Cant* 1,5-6 ebbe modo di mettere in chiaro che le caratteristiche esteriori della sposa si dovevano intendere in modo figurato<sup>5</sup>. Era evidente per lui che la sposa, che si incontra in quel contesto biblico, riferiva di essere stata prima “nera [...] come le tende di Kedar” (μέλαινα [...] ὡς σκηνώματα Κηδάρ) e poi “bella [...] come le pelli di Salomone” (καλή [...] ὡς δέρρεις Σολομώντος), per incoraggiare le sue compagne, che a causa dei peccati erano abitate dalla “potenza della tenebra”, a non disperare di poter diventare un giorno risplendenti della luce di Dio. Dunque essa avrebbe detto: “Non meravigliatevi, se mi ha amato la rettitudine, ma meravigliatevi perché tale rettitudine mi ha fatto bella con il suo amore”, per fare sapere che se per il suo comportamento era diventata nera come la

<sup>4</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, ed. H. Langerbeck, GNO VI, Leiden 1960, p. 44: “πάλιν πρόκειται ἡμῖν τὸ Ἄισμα τῶν Ἀισμάτων εἰς πᾶσαν φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ θεογνωσίας ὑφήγησιν”.

<sup>5</sup> Sull'esegesi biblica che caratterizza le *Homiliae in Canticum Canticorum* del Nisseno cf. G.I. Gargano, *La teoria di Gregorio di Nissa sul Cantico dei Cantici*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 216, Roma 1981; F. Dünzl, *Gregor von Nyssa's Homilien zum Canticum auf dem Hintergrund seiner Vita Moysis*, *VigCh* 44 (1990) p. 371-381; R.A. Norris, *The Soul Takes Flight: Gregory of Nyssa and the Songs of Songs*, *ATR* 80 (1998) p. 517-532; A. Bonato, *La conoscenza mistica nelle Omelie sul Cantico di Gregorio di Nissa*, “*Teologia*” 30 (2005) p. 49-74; C. Izquierdo Urbina, *La simbologia ecclesial en las Homilias sobre el Cantar de los Cantares, de Gregorio de Nisa*, “*Anales de Teologia*” 14 (2012) p. 99-111; M. Simonetti, *Gregorio di Nissa interprete del Cantico dei Cantici*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 137-154. Inoltre sull'esegesi del Cantico dei Cantici proposta precedentemente da Origene cf. M.I. Danieli, *Origene lettore del Cantico*, “*Nicolaus: Rivista di Teologia Ecumenica-Patristica*” 35/2 (2008) p. 99-114; M.I. Danieli, *Alle radici della lettura cristiana del Cantico: Origene*, “*Archivio Teologico Torinese*” 15/1 (2009) p. 9-28; G. Lettieri, *Il corpo di Dio. La mistica erotica del “Cantico dei Cantici” dal “Vangelo di Giovanni” ad Agostino*, in: *Il Cantico dei Cantici nel Medioevo*, ed. R.E. Guglielmetti, Firenze 2008, p. 3-90; G. Lettieri, *Origene interprete del “Cantico dei Cantici”: la risoluzione mistica della metafisica valentiniana*, Milano 2001; V. Limone, *Origene esegeta e predicatore: un confronto tra le “Omelie” e il “Commento al Cantico dei Cantici”*, “*Latinitas*” 2/2 (2014) p. 25-42.

tenebra, Cristo con la sua bellezza aveva fatto scomparire quella bruttura, “trasferendo su di sé la sozzura dei suoi peccati”<sup>6</sup>.

Nella prospettiva di Gregorio, “la rettitudine” (cf. *Cant.* 1,4) che aveva mutato l’aspetto tenebroso della sposa “nella forma della bellezza”, coincideva con Cristo che, attraverso l’incarnazione (cf. *Lc.* 5,32) e il battesimo (cf. *Phil.* 2,15), aveva reso l’umanità “peccatrice e scura” “lumino-  
sa e degna di essere amata” (cf. *Rom.* 5,8)<sup>7</sup>. Analogamente al *Ps.* 91,15 che definisce il Signore “retto” (εὐθὺς), il *Cantico dei Cantici* parlava di “rettitudine” (εὐθύτητα) (cf. *Cant.* 1,4), perché per mezzo della grazia di Dio “tutto quello che è storto viene corretto” (ὅ ἅπαν τὸ σκολιὸν πρὸς τὸ ὀρθὸν ἀπευθύνεται)<sup>8</sup>. Secondo il nostro autore, infatti, “la sposa era passata dall’errore alla verità”, quando Cristo con il suo amore la aveva trasformata in “abitazione della luce” e la aveva resa partecipe dello splendore divino, senza che lei conservasse alcuna traccia della sua precedente forma oscura, proprio come le cose annerite dall’oscurità della notte di giorno non conservano alcuna traccia della tenebra<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 46: “μη θαυμάσητε γάρ φησι, ὅτι ἐμὲ ἢ εὐθύτης ἠγάπησεν, ἀλλ’ ὅτι μέλαιναν οὖσαν ἐξ ἁμαρτίας καὶ προσφκειωμένην τῷ ζόφῳ διὰ τῶν ἔργων καλὴν διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης ἐποίησε τὸ ἴδιον κάλλος πρὸς τὸ ἐμὸν αἴσχος ἀνταλλαζόμενος. μεταθεις γὰρ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τὸν τῶν ἐμῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ῥύπον μετέδωκέ μοι τῆς ἑαυτοῦ καθαρότητος κοινωνόν με τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ κάλλους ἀπεργασάμενος, ὃς πρῶτον ἐποίησεν ἐξ εἰδεχθοῦς ἐρασμίαν καὶ οὕτως ἠγάπησεν”.

<sup>7</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 48-49: “ταῦτα καὶ πρὸς τὸν Τιμόθεον, ὡς αὕτη πρὸς τὰς νεάνιδας, λέγει ἢ τοῦ Χριστοῦ νύμφη, ὁ Παῦλος, ὁ λαμπρὸς ἐκ μέλανος μετὰ ταῦτα γενόμενος ὅτι καλὸς ἤξιώθη καὶ αὐτὸς γενέσθαι τὸ πρότερον βλάσφημος ὢν καὶ διώκτης καὶ ὑβριστής καὶ μέλας καὶ ὅτι Χριστὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἦλθε λαμπροὺς ποιῆσαι τοὺς μέλανας, οὐ δικαίους πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καλῶν ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν, οὓς τῷ λουτρῷ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λάμπειν ὡς φωστῆρας ἐποίησε τὸ ζοφῶδες αὐτῶν εἶδος ἀποκλύσας τῷ ὕδατι”. Per l’interpretazione di questo passo si veda: L. Steven, *Mixture, Beauty, and the Incarnation in Gregory’s In Canticum Canticorum*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 508-516.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* I, GNO VI 42.

<sup>9</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 48: “τούτοις μοι δοκεῖ τοῖς νοήμασιν ὁ μέγας Παῦλος προσεχέστερον ἐν τῷ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους φιλοχωρηῆσαι λόγῳ, ἐν οἷς συνίστησι τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν περὶ ἡμᾶς ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἁμαρτωλοὺς ὄντας ἡμᾶς καὶ μέλανας φωτοειδεῖς τε καὶ ἐρασμίους διὰ τοῦ ἐπιλάμψαι τὴν χάριν ἐποίησεν. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν νυκτὶ πάντα τῷ ἐπικρατοῦντι συμμελαινεται ζόφῳ, κἂν λαμπρὰ κατὰ φύσιν ὄντα τύχη, φωτὸς δὲ ἐπιλαβόντος οὐ παραμένει τοῖς ἐν τῷ ζόφῳ σκοτισθεῖσιν ἢ πρὸς τὸ σκότος

D'altra parte, perché nessuno credesse che la sposa fosse stata "plasmata con un aspetto tenebroso dalle mani luminose di Dio", ovvero che la sposa fosse stata "fatta nera per natura (ἐκ φύσεως)", il Nisseno sottolineava che lei stessa aveva specificato di non essere stata creata nera, ma di essere diventata in quel modo dopo che "il sole" la aveva "guardata di traverso" (παρέβλεψε)<sup>10</sup>. Emergeva così che lei, in quanto creatura di Dio, inizialmente era "a immagine della vera luce [...], risplendente per la sua somiglianza con la bellezza originaria" e, dopo avere ceduto alla "tentazione" del peccato, aveva perso il suo aspetto "rigoglioso e fiorente" ed era diventata nera<sup>11</sup>.

Inoltre il Nisseno faceva notare anche che la sposa aveva affermato di essere "diventata nera" per "non avere guardato" la sua "vigna" (cf. *Cant* 1,6), perché lei a un certo punto aveva smesso di conservare le cose buone che Dio le aveva dato in eredità<sup>12</sup>, vale a dire aveva deciso, proprio come aveva fatto Adamo, di non custodire più "il Paradiso". Nella "vigna" (ἀμπελώνα) di *Cant* 1,6, infatti, poteva essere visto "il Paradiso" (ταῦτὸν δὲ χρῆ νοεῖν τῷ παραδείσῳ) insieme "all'immortalità (ἀθανασία), [...] all'assimilazione a Dio (πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ὁμοίωσις) e all'estraneità a ogni

---

ὁμοίωσις, οὕτω μετατεθείσης τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ ἡ σκοτεινὴ τοῦ βίου μορφή πρὸς τὴν φωτεινὴν χάριν συμμεταβάλλεται". A proposito della cristologia cf. L.F. Mateo-Seco, *La Cristologia del In Canticum Canticorum de Gregorio de Nisa*, in: *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der christlichen Spätantike*, ed. H.R. Drobner – C. Klock, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 12, Leiden – Boston 1990, p. 173-190.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 50: "οὐ γὰρ ἐκ φύσεώς εἰμι μεμελανωμένη, ἀλλ' ἐπίσακτόν μοι τὸ τοιοῦτον αἴσχος ἐγένετο τοῦ ἡλίου πρὸς τὸ μέλαν ἐκ λαμπροῦ τὴν μορφήν μεταχρώσαντος. Ὁ ἥλιος γάρ, φησί, παρέβλεψέ με".

<sup>11</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 51: "οὐκοῦν τοῦτο παρὰ τῆς διδασκάλου τὸ δόγμα μανθάνομεν, ὅτι γέγονε μὲν ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ φωτὸς ἀπεικόνισμα πόρρω τῶν σκοτεινῶν χαρακτήρων τῆ τοῦ ἀρχετύπου κάλλους ὁμοίωτητι στίλβουσα, ὁ δὲ πειρασμὸς τὸν φλογώδη καύσωνα δι' ἀπάτης ἐπιβαλὼν ἀπαλὴν ἔτι καὶ ἄρριζον τὴν πρότην βλάστην κατέλαβε καί, πρὶν ἔξιν τινα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ κτήσασθαι καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν λογισμῶν γεωργίας δοῦναι ταῖς ρίζαις τόπον ἐπὶ τὸ βάθος, εὐθύς διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς ἀποξηράνας τὸ γλοερὸν τε καὶ εὐθαλὲς εἶδος διὰ τῆς καύσεως μέλαν ἐποίησεν".

<sup>12</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 59: "Πῶς ἡμαυρώθη τὸ χρυσίον, ἡλλοιώθη τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ ἀγαθόν; πῶς ἐγένετο μέλαινα ἡ τῷ ἀληθινῷ φωτὶ τὰ πρῶτα συναλαμπουσα; πάντα ταῦτα ἐγένετό μοι, φησί, ὅτι τὸν ἀμπελώνα τὸν ἕμὸν οὐκ ἐφύλαξα". Sulla figura di Adamo cf. J. Vives, *El pecado original en S. Gregorio de Nisa*, "Estudios Ecclesiasticos" 45 (1970) p. 203-235; M.M. Bergadá, *En torno a la antropología de Gregorio de Nyssa*, *PeM* 16 (1995) p. 67-72.

male (παντὸς κακοῦ ἀλλοτριώσις)”<sup>13</sup>. Dunque nel momento in cui la sposa aveva smesso di condurre una vita virtuosa, si era rivestita dell’aspetto scuro in quella parte del corpo che la *Genesi* definisce la “tunica di pelle” (cf. *Gen.* 3,21)<sup>14</sup>.

Tutto questo, secondo Gregorio, voleva dire che la sposa originariamente “brillava grazie alla sua somiglianza con il bene immacolato”, e successivamente era diventata nera a causa del peccato, cioè a causa della “trascuratezza” con cui aveva custodito il Paradiso<sup>15</sup>. Ma voleva dire anche che Dio la aveva riportata alla bellezza iniziale e le aveva fatto riscoprire quella che era la sua condizione immacolata<sup>16</sup>, come gli esperti saggiatori fanno ritrovare lo splendore all’ “oro adulterato” (τοῦ μελανθέντος χρυσοῦ)<sup>17</sup>.

Ecco allora che nella trasformazione dall’oscurità allo splendore esemplificata nel *Cantico dei Cantici* si doveva leggere la purificazione spirituale dell’anima<sup>18</sup>. Come la sposa anche l’anima sarebbe stata creata luminosa dalle mani luminose di Dio e a immagine di Dio<sup>19</sup>. La situazione iniziale dell’anima sarebbe stata appunto quella di essere una rappresentazione della vera luce, risplendente per la sua somiglianza con la bellezza archetipale<sup>20</sup>. D’altra parte l’anima come la sposa dopo essere diventata “nera”

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 57.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 57. Le “tuniche di pelle” di cui si sarebbero rivestiti Adamo ed Eva dopo il peccato originale, avevano secondo il Nisseno una valenza passionale, e dunque testimoniavano l’inclinazione al male che sarebbe subentrata nell’uomo dopo il peccato. Cf. J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique. Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1954, p. 84 ss.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI,60.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI,60.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* IV, GNO VI 101. Sul passaggio dall’oscurità alla luce cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 48; IV, GNO VI 118; cf. anche A. Meis – A. Castellano – J.F. Pinilla, *El dinamismo del encuentro entre Dios y el hombre en los comentarios al Cantar de los Cantares de Origenes, Gregorio de Nisa y Juan de la Cruz*, Santiago 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 44.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 51. Sull’anima creata a immagine di Dio, e dunque predisposta a partecipare della divinità, cf. J.T. Muckle, *The Doctrine of St. Gregory of Nyssa on Man as the Image of God*, “*Medieval Studies*” 7 (1945) p. 55-84; R. Leys, *L’image de Dieu chez S. Grégoire de Nysse*, Bruxelles 1951; E. Corsini, *Plerome humain et plerome cosmique chez Grégoire de Nysse*, in: *Actes du colloque de Chevetogne*, ed. M. Harl, Leiden 1971, p. 111-126; R. Eklund, *Blessed Are the Image-Bearers: Gregory of Nyssa and the Beatitudes*, *ATR* 99/4 (2017) p. 729-740.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenens, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 51.

(cf. *Cant* 1,5) per il peccato (cf. *Mc* 4,6; *Mt* 13,6) sarebbe tornata “bella” (cf. *Cant* 1,5) riscoprendo la sua forma originaria<sup>21</sup>.

Di conseguenza gli aggettivi “nera” (μέλαινα) e “bella” (καλή) di *Cant* 1,5, che riguardavano rispettivamente il momento in cui il sole aveva annerito la sposa dall'esterno, guardandola di traverso<sup>22</sup>, e il momento in cui la grazia di Dio aveva illuminato la sposa dall'interno, facendola diventare abitazione della luce<sup>23</sup>, dovevano essere riferiti a due fasi diverse dell'ascesa spirituale dell'anima. Proprio queste due fasi diverse, evidentemente collegabili alla creazione secondo l'immagine del primo Adamo e alla creazione secondo la distinzione dei sessi del secondo Adamo<sup>24</sup>, segnavano l'inizio e la fine dell'*epektasis*, all'interno della quale ogni singolo progresso sarebbe stato caratterizzato da un diverso grado di luminosità, come nei processi di lavorazione dell'oro.

Dunque l'anima, creata in principio a immagine della vera luce<sup>25</sup>, avrebbe riflesso la luce di Dio, finché non fosse sopraggiunta un'alterazione, cioè finché il corpo estraneo “del peccato” (τῆς κακίας) non avesse viziato la capacità di riflettere la luce di Dio<sup>26</sup>. Certamente un'anima spiritualmente nera era innaturale e doveva essere illuminata, vale a dire necessitava di ritornare alla bellezza incontaminata e di essere completamente liberata dal male. Comunque a Gregorio non interessava tanto il peccato che aveva annerito l'anima, quanto l'amore di Cristo che la aveva purificata e la aveva resa nuovamente bella. In tale senso egli non dedicò particolare attenzione ai motivi che avevano portato la sposa a essere nera, ma preferì concentrarsi sul momento

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 47. Sulla bellezza riconquistata dalla sposa cf. M. Brugarolas, *Beauty and the Presence of God in the Soul: Gregory of Nyssa's Commentary on Ct 5.2*, in: *The Beauty of God's Presence in the Fathers of the Church. The Proceedings of the Eighth International Patristic Conference, Maynooth 2012*, ed. J.E. Rutherford, Dublin 2014, p. 128-149.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *supra* nota 10.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *supra* nota 9.

<sup>24</sup> Sul ruolo che riveste la doppia creazione nell'opera di Gregorio cf. U. Bianchi, *Presupposti platonici e dualistici nell'antropogonia di Gregorio di Nissa*, in: *La doppia creazione dell'uomo negli alessandrini, nei cappadoci e nella gnosi*, ed. U. Bianchi, Roma 1978, p. 83-116.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *supra* nota 11.

<sup>26</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* IV, GNO VI 100: “χρυσῆς ἦν τὸ κατ' ἀρχὰς ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις καὶ λάμπουσα τῇ πρὸς τὸ ἀκίρατον ἀγαθὸν ὁμοιότητι, ἀλλὰ δύσχρους καὶ μέλαινα μετὰ τοῦτο τῇ ἐπιμιξίᾳ τῆς κακίας ἐγένετο, καθὼς ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις τοῦ Ἄϊσματος τῆς νόμφης ἠκούσαμεν ὅτι μέλαιναν αὐτὴν ἐποίησεν ἡ τῆς φυλακῆς τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος ὀλιγωρία”.

dell'illuminazione e sul ruolo di primo piano giocato da Dio nella riconquista della bellezza, convinto che la sposa si fosse “avvicinata alla bellezza archetipale” (πλησιάσασα δὲ τῷ ἀρχετύπῳ κάλλει) e fosse “divenuta bella” (αὐτὴ καλὴ γέγονας)<sup>27</sup>, conformandosi a mo' di uno specchio con quella bellezza, solo dopo avere ricevuto il dono della luce della grazia.

### 3. Alcune implicazioni teologiche

#### 3.1. La gratuità della grazia

Se è vero che il Nisseno percepì la trasformazione della sposa dal buio alla luce come una metafora della trasformazione dell'anima dal peccato alla salvezza<sup>28</sup>, è vero anche che proprio mentre coglieva l'amore di Cristo nella riconquista dello splendore della sposa<sup>29</sup>, non faceva altro che applicare l'antinomia luce/tenebre presente nel *Cantico dei Cantici* alla grazia che era entrata nel mondo<sup>30</sup> e aveva reso possibile un incontro tra Dio e le sue creature<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* IV, GNO VI 103-104. Sul tema della bellezza cf. D. Iozzia, *Il paradosso della bellezza divina: Gregorio di Nissa, In Cant VI, 191, 7-9, “Orpheus”* 28 (2007) p. 100-115.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 60.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* IV, GNO VI 101. Sul tema della luce cf. G. Maspero, *L'arché alla luce del telos e la struttura trinitaria del pensiero di Gregorio di Nissa, “Path”* 8 (2009) p. 317-332.

<sup>30</sup> Sulla centralità che assume il dono della grazia nelle *Homiliae in Canticum Cantorum* di Gregorio cf. M. Canévet, *La perception de la presence de Dieu. A propos d'une presence la XI<sup>e</sup> Homelie sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, in: *Epektasis, Mélange patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. J. Fontaine – C. Kannengiesser, Paris 1972, p. 443-454; V.E.F. Harrison, *Grace and Freedom according to Gregory of Nyssa*, Lewiston – New York 1992; A. Meis, *La paradoja del hombre, según Gregorio de Nisa, “Teología”* 31 (1994) p. 27-48; A. Meis, *Die Verborgenheit Gottes in den Kommentaren zum Hohenlied in Gregor von Nyssa und Dionysius Areopagita, “Ephemeridis Theologicae Lovainenses”* 77 (2001) p. 73-107; C. Simonelli, *Conformati dalla grazia dello Spirito Santo (Gregorio di Nissa, In Cant VII), “Teologia”* 1 (2005) p. 75-91; e in particolare sul ruolo che assume il dono della grazia nell'esegesi di Cant. 1, 5 cf. M.S.M. Scott, *Shades of Grace: Origen and Gregory of Nyssa's Soteriological Exegesis of the Black and Beautiful Bride in Song of Songs 1:5, “Theological Review”* 99 (2006) p. 65-83.

<sup>31</sup> Sulla conoscenza che l'uomo può avere di Dio cf. I. Gargano, *Sull'apofatismo di Gregorio di Nissa, “Credere Oggi”* 12 (1992) p. 61-71.

Secondo Gregorio allora l'illuminazione dell'anima aveva origine da Cristo che aveva assunto i peccati dell'umanità. La sposa infatti riconosceva di essere stata amata dalla rettitudine e di avere ritrovato la bellezza grazie all'essere stata amata dalla rettitudine<sup>32</sup>, e sapeva di risplendere di una bellezza che non proveniva da lei, ma che era un dono di Cristo. “Non meravigliatevi”, non a caso diceva, “se mi ha amato la rettitudine; meravigliatevi, invece, perché tale rettitudine mi ha fatto bella con il suo amore” (μη θαυμάσητε γάρ φησι, ὅτι ἐμὲ ἡ εὐθύτης ἠγάπησεν)<sup>33</sup>.

D'altra parte Gregorio era convinto che la dottrina dell'*epektasis*, come illuminazione dell'anima annerita dal peccato, potesse essere individuata nel passaggio dall'oscurità delle “tende di Kedar” allo splendore delle “pelli di Salomone” (cf. *Cant* 1,5), proprio perché “Paolo aveva detto che Cristo era entrato nel mondo per illuminare coloro che erano scuri” (cf. *Rom* 5,8)<sup>34</sup>, e perché il Nuovo Testamento insegnava che l'incarnazione aveva permesso di partecipare alla luce di Dio (cf. *Lc* 5,32) come succedeva prima del peccato (cf. *Phil* 2,15)<sup>35</sup>. Dunque per Gregorio la grazia di Dio che si era manifestata nel mondo come luce e doveva comportare il brillare di Dio nell'interiorità dell'anima, non era solo la causa efficiente della trasformazione, ma era anche l'esito a cui tale trasformazione tendeva<sup>36</sup>.

Certamente l'illuminazione dell'anima, che aveva inaugurato una nuova figliolanza, “da figli delle tenebre a figli della luce”<sup>37</sup> e consisteva fon-

<sup>32</sup> Come ha rilevato Daniélou (*Platonisme*, p. 230-231), la purificazione secondo il Nisseno consisteva principalmente nel dono della grazia che porta l'anima a orientarsi verso la fonte divina (“Il n'y a pas là solitude de l'âme, mais dégagelement du sensible pour se tourner vers Dieu, non pour rester en soi”).

<sup>33</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 46.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *supra* nota 7.

<sup>35</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 48-49: “λέγει ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ νύμφη, ὁ Παῦλος, ὁ λαμπρὸς ἐκ μέλανος μετὰ ταῦτα γενόμενος ὅτι καλὸς ἤξιώθη καὶ αὐτὸς γενέσθαι τὸ πρότερον βλάσφημος ὢν καὶ διώκτης καὶ ὕβριστής καὶ μέλας καὶ ὅτι Χριστὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἦλθε λαμπροὺς ποιῆσαι τοὺς μέλανας, οὐ δικαίους πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καλῶν ἀλλὰ ἀμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν, οὓς τῷ λουτρῷ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λάμπειν ὡς φωστῆρας ἐποίησε τὸ ζοφῶδες αὐτῶν εἶδος ἀποκλύσας τῷ ὕδατι”. Sul tema dell'incarnazione cf. O. Sferlea, *À Propos d'une Théologie de l'Incarnation du Dieu infini chez Grégoire de Nysse*, *EThL* 90 (2014) p. 453-483. Cf. anche *supra* nota 5.

<sup>36</sup> Questo però non significava che la conoscenza di Cristo fosse strumentale alla conoscenza di Dio, ma piuttosto che le varie tappe della crescita spirituale fossero il progressivo manifestarsi della partecipazione alla vita divina. A tale proposito cf. Ferro Garel, *Gregorio di Nissa*, p. 68.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 52; cf. anche Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* IV, GNO VI 118.

damentalmente nella conversione dell'anima verso il bene assoluto, doveva essere soprattutto effetto di irresistibile attrazione ontologica. "Poiché ogni natura attira a sé quello che le è affine e l'uomo è affine, in un modo o nell'altro, a Dio, in quanto reca dentro di sé l'imitazione dell'archetipo"<sup>38</sup>, era assolutamente necessario che l'anima fosse attratta da Dio. Del resto Gregorio vedeva l'*epektasis* come un ritorno all'archetipo divino caratterizzato dalla perfetta identità tra lo stato iniziale e lo stato finale del percorso spirituale. E in merito allo specifico passo di *Cant* 1,5-6 sottolineava che nel momento in cui Dio aveva illuminato la sposa, non aveva creato una nuova bellezza, ma aveva sanato la deformità, ovvero che "Dio, che tutto crea nella sua sapienza", non aveva escogitato "per la sposa una nuova, quale che fosse, bellezza che prima non esisteva", ma aveva ricondotto "la sposa alla grazia originaria, cancellando [...] la parte di colei che era divenuta nera per il male"<sup>39</sup>.

Ecco allora che partendo da questi presupposti Gregorio arrivò a collegare l'illuminazione dell'anima, che trovava la sua sorgente in Cristo, al tema dell'immagine<sup>40</sup>. Dal suo punto di vista l'anima creata a immagine di Dio attraverso il battesimo andava a riacquistare la somiglianza con il Creatore che il peccato aveva compromesso<sup>41</sup>. Come ha rilevato Norris "to Gregory this signifies that the human being participates in the divine way of being, thus

<sup>38</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *De Anima et Resurrectione*, ed. A. Spira, GNO 3/3, Leiden 2014, p. 71. Sul tema dell'attrazione ontologica cf. B. Vanden Auweele, *L'Écriture sous le mode du désir. Réflexions sur le statut de l'Écriture dans les Homélie sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, in: *Grégoire de Nysse: la Bible dans la construction de son discours. Actes du colloque de Paris, 9-10 Février 2007*, ed. M. Cassin – H. Grelier, Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 184, Paris 2008, p. 275-283.

<sup>39</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* IV, GNO VI 100-101: "ἡς θεραπεύων τὴν δυσμορφίαν ὁ πάντα ἐν σοφίᾳ τεχνιτεύων θεὸς οὐ καινόν τι κάλλος ἐπ' αὐτῆς μηχανᾶται ὃ μὴ πρότερον ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην ἐπανάγει χάριν δι' ἀναλύσεως τὴν τῷ κακῷ μελανθεῖσαν μεταχωνεύων πρὸς τὸ ἀκήρατον".

<sup>40</sup> La trasformazione dell'anima da una somiglianza a un'altra era presentata dal Nisseno come un'azione di Dio. Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 48; cf. anche J.M. Moraga Esquivel, *El misterio de Dios: su comunicación gratuita según In Canticum Canticorum de San Gregorio de Nisa*, "Veritas. Revista de Filosofía y Teología" 16 (2007) p. 109-127. Sull'anima creata a immagine di Dio, e dunque predisposta a partecipare della divinità, cf. supra nota 19.

<sup>41</sup> Commentando *Cant*. 5,3, Gregorio (*In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* XI, GNO VI 327-328) affermava esplicitamente che è il battesimo a rimuovere la tunica di pelle sovrappiunta dopo il peccato. A proposito della funzione santificatrice dell'uomo purificato cf. R. Gillet, *L'homme divinisateur cosmique dans la pensée de Saint Grégoire de Nysse*, SP 6 (1962) p. 62-83. Inoltre sulla teologia battesimale che il Nisseno formulò a partire



imitating that way of being at the level of the creature. To be “after the image [...] of God” means, then, to be possessed of self-determination (and the capacity for choice that that presupposes). It means to enjoy an immortality that is a participation in the eternity of God”<sup>42</sup>. Ma non dobbiamo dimenticare che essere a immagine di Dio significava per il nostro autore beneficiare di tutti i doni della grazia che avevano permesso alla sposa di diventare “abitazione della luce del vero Salomone” (φωτὸς οἰκητήριον γίνεται τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Σολομῶντος)<sup>43</sup>, e quindi anche di godere del dono del libero arbitrio, che tra i molti beni che scaturivano dall’essere stata creata a imitazione della natura divina era sicuramente quello più rilevante.

### 3.2. La libera accettazione del dono della grazia

Gregorio credeva che la forza del male non fosse così potente da sovravanzare la forza del bene. Se Dio era per natura infinito e il male era per natura finito, la creatura non poteva permanere nel male, ma doveva necessariamente avvicinarsi al bene infinito di Dio<sup>44</sup>. Del resto nell’*Homilia 2 in Canticum Canticorum* diceva che il buio, che aveva oscurato la sposa era stato vinto dalla grazia luminosa di Dio senza lasciare alcuna traccia, come tutte le cose che “diventano nere insieme con l’oscurità, [...] quando sopraggiunge il giorno, non conservano più la somiglianza con la tenebra”<sup>45</sup>. In altri termini Gregorio riteneva che il peccato, che pure a un certo punto si era manifestato, non avesse distrutto il libero arbitrio di cui la sposa era dotata al momento della creazione e che la volontà della sposa

---

dall’esegesi di *Cant* 1,5-6 cf. A. Cortesi, *Le Omelie sul Cantico dei Cantici di Gregorio di Nissa. Proposta di un itinerario di vita battesimale*, SEA 70, Roma 2000, p. 113-114.

<sup>42</sup> R.A. Norris, *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Song of Songs*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta 2012, p. XXVII.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 49-50. Sul tema dell’inabitazione cf. Daniélou, *Platonisme*, p. 267-273.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* V, GNO VI 155-156. Comunque, secondo il Nisseno, il male non aveva una sua realtà effettiva, ma era soltanto l’assenza del bene. Sugli echi del *summum bonum* neoplatonico presenti nelle opere del Nisseno cf. Daniélou, *Platonisme*, p. 191-192.

<sup>45</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 48: “ὅσπερ γὰρ ἐν νυκτὶ πάντα τῷ ἐπικρατοῦντι συμμελαίνεται ζόφῳ, κἄν λαμπρὰ κατὰ φύσιν ὄντα τύχη, φωτὸς δὲ ἐπιλαβόντος οὐ παραμένει τοῖς ἐν τῷ ζόφῳ σκοτισθεῖσιν ἢ πρὸς τὸ σκότος ὁμοίωσις, οὕτω μετατεθείσης τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ ἡ σκοτεινὴ τοῦ βίου μορφή πρὸς τὴν φωτεινὴν χάριν συµμεταβάλλεται”.

avesse avuto uno spazio nell'ascesi che la aveva condotta presso Dio<sup>46</sup>. Perciò faceva notare che la libertà dell'anima scaturiva dal momento della creazione e l'accoglienza volontaria della grazia aveva "diviso in due parti la nostra natura, ponendola in relazione a quello che ci è amico e a quello che ci è nemico" (ἡ δὲ τῆς προαιρέσεως διαφορὰ πρὸς τὸ φίλιόν τε καὶ πολέμιον τὴν φύσιν διέσχισεν)<sup>47</sup>.

È noto che per il Niseno mentre gli esseri inanimati o irrazionali erano condotti da una volontà estranea, gli uomini potevano decidere se farsi o meno condurre dalla grazia alla rivelazione salvifica di un Dio buono e giusto<sup>48</sup>. "Tutto – diceva il nostro autore a proposito di *Cant* 1,5-6 – avvenne per mezzo di Dio [...] Dio creò ogni cosa nella sapienza (cf. *Ps* 103,24) e dotò la natura razionale del libero arbitrio (τὴν αὐτεξούσιον χάριν), [...] affinché il bene non fosse costretto e involontario, ma fosse una retta azione voluta dalla libera scelta (προαιρέσεως)"<sup>49</sup>. Così si capiva in quale senso Dio, che aveva donato agli uomini una mente a immagine della sua, potesse dire alla sposa che si era convertita con il suo libero determinarsi: "Avvicinandoti alla mia luce ormai sei stata resa bella e, grazie al tuo avvicinarti a me, hai attirato nel tuo intimo la partecipazione alla mia bellezza"<sup>50</sup>. Doveva essere come uno

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 67. Sul libero arbitrio cf. J. Gaith, *La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1953; T. Di Stefano, *Dialettica d'immagine e libertà secondo Gregorio di Nissa, Collana di studi filosofici Università di Perugia*, Perugia 1975; G. Dal Toso, *La nozione di proairesis in Gregorio di Nissa. Analisi semiotico-linguistica e prospettive antropologiche*, Patrologia. Beiträge zum Studium der Kirchenväter 5, Frankfurt am Main 1998, p. 303-306; B. Neil, *Divine Providence and Free Will in Gregory of Nyssa and His Theological Milieu*, "Phronèma" 27 (2012) p. 35-51.

<sup>47</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 56. Cf. Simonelli, *Conformati dalla grazia*, p. 75-91.

<sup>48</sup> A proposito dell'accoglienza volontaria della rivelazione salvifica di Dio cf. Gregorius Nyssenus, *Oratio Catechetica*, ed. E. Mühlberg, GNO 3/4, Leiden 1996, p. 20.

<sup>49</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* II, GNO VI 55: "(Πάντα γάρ, φησί, δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδέν· ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ πάντα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, καλὰ λίαν ἐστὶ. πάντα γάρ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἐποίησεν), ἔδωκε δὲ τῇ λογικῇ φύσει τὴν αὐτεξούσιον χάριν καὶ προσέθηκε δύναμιν εὐρετικὴν τῶν καταθυμίων, ὡς ἂν τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν χώραν ἔχοι καὶ μὴ καταναγκασμένον εἶναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀκούσιον, ἀλλὰ κατὸρ θωμά προαιρέσεως γένοιτο".

<sup>50</sup> Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Cantorum Homiliae* IV, GNO VI 104: "ἐπειδὴ τοῖνον κατὰ νότου τὴν κακίαν ποιησαμένη ἢ κεκαθαρμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ψυχὴ τὸν ἡλιακὸν ἐν ἑαυτῇ κύκλον ἐδέξατο καὶ τῷ ὀφθέντι ἐν αὐτῇ φωτὶ συνεξέλαμψε, διὰ τοῦτο φησι πρὸς αὐτὴν ὁ λόγος, ὅτι γέγονας ἤδη καλὴ πλησιάσασα τῷ ἐμῷ φωτὶ διὰ τοῦ προσεγγισμοῦ τὴν κοινωνίαν ἐφέλκυσσάμενη τοῦ κάλλους". Sul sinergismo cf. E. Mühlberg, *Synergism in Gregory of Nyssa*, ZNW 68 (1977) p. 93-122; D.C. Abel, *The*

scambio di doni, governato dalla grazia, dove l'anima era chiamata a corrispondere al libero dono di Dio, e vi doveva corrispondere necessariamente con la libertà<sup>51</sup>.

In sostanza il passaggio dalle tenebre alla luce, che aveva reso la sposa conforme all'immagine di Dio, sarebbe stato frutto di una libera scelta, che poteva essere incline o meno al bene. “Questa – si legge nell'*Homilia 4 in Canticum Canticorum* – è la condizione della nostra scelta, rivestirci di una figura conforme a quella realtà che si sia voluta assumere secondo il nostro arbitrio”<sup>52</sup>. Tuttavia l'anima per Gregorio al momento della creazione era rivolta naturalmente verso il bene, ma nel corso dell'esistenza poteva dirigersi verso il male, trasformando la propria innata disposizione in un attaccamento alle cose terrene, oppure poteva rimanere vicina a Dio, che ne configurava la disposizione (σχέσις), ancora prima che manifestasse un qualsiasi desiderio di trascendenza. In questo senso il passaggio dalle tenebre alla luce era legato alla scelta individuale dell'anima, nella misura in cui questa risentiva dell'intensità del desiderio di Dio, fino a entrare in relazione con l'Essere e godere della pienezza del desiderio di Dio<sup>53</sup>.

Alla base di tutto questo c'era sempre la dottrina della doppia creazione<sup>54</sup>, ossia del primo Adamo creato a immagine di Dio come una creatura perfetta, identificabile con la sposa appena creata e dotata di una libertà assoluta, e del secondo Adamo creato imperfetto, diviso in se stesso tra maschio e femmina, identificabile con la sposa annerita dal peccato e dotata di un grado inferiore di libertà. E se per Gregorio la pienezza del dono era quella della prima crea-

---

*Doctrine of Synergism in Gregory of Nyssa's De instituto christiano*, “Thomist” 45 (1981) p. 430-448.

<sup>51</sup> L'importanza della libertà era ribadita dal fatto che “Dio diviene per noi di volta in volta tale, quale noi stessi ci mostriamo a lui con la nostra libera scelta [...] Diviene buono con i buoni” (cf. *Gregorius Nyssenus, In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae IX, GNO VI 213*). A Tale proposito cf. Dal Toso, *La nozione di proairesis*, p. 303-306.

<sup>52</sup> *Gregorius Nyssenus, In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae IV, GNO VI 104*: “οὐτω τοῖνυν ἐχούσης ἡμῶν τῆς προαιρέσεως, ὡς κατ'ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ὅπερ ἂν ἐθέλη τούτω συσχηματίζεσθαι [...]”.

<sup>53</sup> Sul tema della disposizione dell'anima cf. I. Vigorelli, *Ontology and Existence: Schésis of the Soul in Gregory of Nyssa's In Canticum canticorum*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspéro – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 527-538; I. Vigorelli, *La relazione: Dio e l'uomo. Schesis e antropologia trinitaria in Gregorio di Nissa*, Roma 2021.

<sup>54</sup> Sulla doppia creazione cf. *supra* nota 24.

zione, il dispiegarsi del libero arbitrio doveva contribuire a riportare l'anima al suo stato originario attraverso un processo infinito di avvicinamento a Dio mosso dal desiderio di procedere dal non-essere all'essere<sup>55</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusione

Come abbiamo potuto vedere, Gregorio individuò nel *Cantico dei Cantici* una verità teologica che andava ben oltre la trama narrativa del testo biblico. Il rapporto sponsale diventò nelle sue *Homiliae* un'allegoria del rapporto tra Cristo e l'anima, e in particolare il passo di *Cant.* 1,5-6 assunse una valenza soteriologica a proposito della grazia divina che si manifesta gratuitamente nella vita dell'anima e la sostiene nel suo progresso spirituale. Del resto l'*epektasis*, secondo il Nisseno, non era altro che il ritorno dell'anima, purificata dalle proprie colpe, alla condizione originaria<sup>56</sup>. In questa prospettiva l'anima sarebbe stata creata da Dio a sua immagine e somiglianza, come la più perfetta delle creature, ma dopo essersi abbandonata di sua spontanea volontà al peccato, avrebbe assunto nella "tunica di pelle" (cf. *Gen.* 3,21) l'inclinazione alla passione, e solo dopo vari stadi di purificazione avrebbe potuto recuperare l'immagine di Dio<sup>57</sup>.

Partendo dall'esegesi di *Cant.* 1,5-6, Gregorio si adoperò per mostrare nell'ascesa dell'anima verso Dio sia i limiti della condizione umana che la generosità divina. In tale senso mise in evidenza che il male poteva indurre l'anima a non prendersi più cura delle cose spirituali, e ammise che solo l'amore di Cristo poteva riportarla alla sua dignità originaria. Inoltre si soffermò sul divenire bella dell'anima, sulla sua purificazione dal male, sul suo essere virtuosa in seguito all'avvicinamento alla bellezza archetipale. Per lui il fine dell'anima era quello di partecipare allo splendore di Dio, e questo fine lo avrebbe potuto raggiungere attraverso l'atto gratuito dell'illuminazione.

<sup>55</sup> Sulla tensione escatologica che era alla base dell'avvicinamento dell'anima a Dio cf. *Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Eschatology*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, *Studia Patristica* 101, Leuven 2021.

<sup>56</sup> Sull'apocatastasi cf. G. Maspero, *Lo schema dell'Exitus-Reditus e l'Apocatastasi in Gregorio di Nissa*, "Annales Theologici" 18 (2004) p. 85-110.

<sup>57</sup> Considerando l'inclinazione alla passione non come un prodotto della creazione, ma come il risultato del peccato, il Nisseno auspicava che i cristiani attraverso l'ascesi scoprissero quella condizione di immaterialità che si realizzerà dopo la morte, quando si tornerà a essere a immagine di Dio. A tale proposito cf. M. Alexandre, *Protologie et eschatologie chez Grégoire de Nysse*, SPM 12 (1981) p. 122-169.

Dunque il Nisseno si mostrò molto sensibile alla necessità dell'intervento della grazia, ma non negò che anche il libero arbitrio avesse uno spazio nell'ascesa verso Dio e che la presenza del male fosse decisamente sovrastata dall'illimitata esistenza del bene. Per questo delineò chiaramente la sinergia che nella santificazione si doveva realizzare tra Dio e l'anima e vide la salvezza come un'inesauribile fruizione del dono con cui la creatura riusciva a oltrepassare i limiti della natura umana.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Gregorius Nyssenus, *In Canticum Canticorum Homiliae*, ed. H. Langerbeck, GNO VI, Leiden 1960, tr. Gregorio di Nissa, *Omellie sul Cantico dei Cantici*, ed. C. Morechini, Roma 1996.
- Gregorius Nyssenus, *De Anima et Resurrectione*, ed. A. Spira, GNO 3/3, Leiden 2014.
- Gregorius Nyssenus, *Oratio Catechetica*, ed. E. Mühlenberg, GNO 3/4, Leiden 1996.

### Studies

- Abel D.C., *The Doctrine of Synergism in Gregory of Nyssa's De instituto christiano*, "Thomist" 45 (1981) p. 430-448.
- Alexandre M., *Protologie et eschatologie chez Grégoire de Nysse*, "Studia Patristica Mediolanensia" 12 (1981) p. 122-169.
- Alexopoulos T., *Das unendliche Sichausstrecken (Epektasis) zum Guten bei Gregor von Nyssa und Plotin. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung*, "Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum" 10 (2007) p. 302-312.
- Bergadá M.M., *En torno a la antropología de Gregorio de Nyssa*, "Patristica et Mediaevalia" 16 (1995) p. 67-72.
- Bianchi U., *Presupposti platonici e dualistici nell'antropogonia di Gregorio di Nissa*, in: *La doppia creazione dell'uomo negli alessandrini, nei cappadoci e nella gnosi*, ed. U. Bianchi, Roma 1978, p. 83-116.
- Bonato A., *La conoscenza mistica nelle Omellie sul Cantico di Gregorio di Nissa*, "Teologia" 30 (2005) p. 49-74.
- Brugarolas M., *Beauty and the Presence of God in the Soul: Gregory of Nyssa's Commentary on Ct 5.2*, in: *The Beauty of God's Presence in the Fathers of the Church. The Proceedings of the Eighth International Patristic Conference, Maynooth 2012*, ed. J.E. Rutherford, Dublin 2014, p. 128-149.
- Canévet M., *La perception de la présence de Dieu. A propos d'une présence la XI<sup>e</sup> Homélie sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, in: *Epektasis, Mélange patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. J. Fontaine – C. Kannengiesser, Paris 1972, p. 443-454.

- Corsini E., *Plerome humain et plerome cosmique chez Grégoire de Nysse*, in: *Actes du colloque de Chevetogne*, ed. M. Harl, Leiden 1971, p. 111-126.
- Cortesi A., *Le Omelie sul Cantico dei Cantici di Gregorio di Nissa. Proposta di un itinerario di vita battesimale*, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 70, Roma 2000.
- Dal Toso G., *La nozione di proairesis in Gregorio di Nissa. Analisi semiotico-linguistica e prospettive antropologiche*, *Patrologia. Beiträge zum Studium der Kirchenväter* 5, Frankfurt am Main 1998.
- Danieli M.I., *Alle radici della lettura cristiana del Cantico: Origene*, "Archivio Teologico Torinese" 15/1 (2009) p. 9-28.
- Danieli M.I., *Origene lettore del Cantico*, "Nicolaus: Rivista di Teologia Ecumenica-Patristica" 35/2 (2008) p. 99-114.
- Daniélou J., *Platonisme et théologie mystique. Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1954.
- Di Stefano T., *Dialettica d'immagine e libertà secondo Gregorio di Nissa*, Collana di studi filosofici Università di Perugia, Perugia 1975.
- Dünzl F., *Gregor von Nyssa's Homilien zum Canticum auf dem Hintergrund seiner Vita Moysis*, "Vigiliae Christianae" 44 (1990) p. 371-381.
- Eklund R., *Blessed Are the Image-Bearers: Gregory of Nyssa and the Beatitudes*, "Anglican Theological Review" 99/4 (2017) p. 729-740.
- Ferro Garel G., *Gregorio di Nissa. L'esperienza mistica, il simbolismo, il progresso spirituale*, Torino 2004.
- Gaith J., *La conception de la liberté chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris 1953.
- Gargano G.I., *La teoria di Gregorio di Nissa sul Cantico dei Cantici*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 216, Roma 1981.
- Gargano I., *Sull'apofatismo di Gregorio di Nissa*, "Credere Oggi" 12 (1992) p. 61-71.
- Gillet R., *L'homme divinisateur cosmique dans la pensée de Saint Grégoire de Nysse*, "Studia Patristica" 6 (1962) p. 62-83.
- Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Eschatology*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, *Studia Patristica* 101, Leuven 2021.
- Harrison V.E.F., *Grace and Freedom according to Gregory of Nyssa*, Lewiston – New York 1992.
- Iozzia D., *Il paradosso della bellezza divina: Gregorio di Nissa, In Cant VI, 191, 7-9*, "Orpheus" 28 (2007) p. 100-115.
- Izquierdo Urbina C., *La simbologia ecclesial en las Homilias sobre el Cantar de los Cantares, de Gregorio de Nisa*, "Anales de Teologia" 14 (2012) p. 99-111.
- Karříková L., *Die Unendlichkeit Gottes und der unendliche Weg des Menschen nach Gregor von Nyssa*, "Sacris Erudiri" 40 (2001) p. 47-81.
- Lettieri G., *Il corpo di Dio. La mistica erotica del "Cantico dei Cantici" dal "Vangelo di Giovanni" ad Agostino*, in: *Il Cantico dei Cantici nel Medioevo*, ed. R.E. Guglielmetti, Firenze 2008, p. 3-90.

- Lettieri G., *Origene interprete del "Cantico dei Cantici": la risoluzione mistica della metafisica valentiniana*, Milano 2001.
- Lettieri G., *Progresso*, in: *Origene. Dizionario: la cultura, il pensiero, le opere*, ed. A. Monaci Castagno, Roma 2000, p. 379-392.
- Lévy A., *Aux confins du créé et de l'incrédé: les dimensions de l'épektase chez Grégoire de Nysse*, "Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques" 84 (2000) p. 247-274.
- Lewis S.E., *Contestation and Epektasis in the Discussion on Sin*, "Analecta Hermeneutica" 4 (2012) p. 1-33.
- Leys R., *L'image de Dieu chez S. Grégoire de Nysse*, Bruxelles 1951.
- Limone V., *Origene esegeta e predicatore: un confronto tra le "Omelie" e il "Commento al Cantico dei Cantici"*, "Latinitas" 2/2 (2014) p. 25-42.
- Maspero G., *L'arché alla luce del telos e la struttura trinitaria del pensiero di Gregorio di Nissa*, "Path" 8 (2009) p. 317-332.
- Maspero G., *Lo schema dell'Exitus-Reditus e l'Apocatastasi in Gregorio di Nissa*, "Annales Theologici" 18 (2004) p. 85-110.
- Mateo-Seco L.F., "La Cristología del *In Canticum Canticorum* de Gregorio de Nisa", in: *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der christlichen Spätantike*, ed. H.R. Drobner – C. Klock, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 12, Leiden – Boston 1990, p. 173-190.
- Meis A. – Castellano A. – Pinilla J.F., *El dinamismo del encuentro entre Dios y el hombre en los comentarios al Cantar de los Cantares de Orígenes, Gregorio de Nisa y Juan de la Cruz*, Santiago 2000.
- Meis A., *Die Verborgenheit Gottes in den Kommentaren zum Hohenlied in Gregor von Nyssa und Dionysius Areopagita*, "Ephemeridis Theologicae Lovainenses" 77 (2001) p. 73-107.
- Meis A., *La paradoja del hombre, según Gregorio de Nisa*, "Teología" 31 (1994) p. 27-48.
- Moraga Esquivel J.M., *El misterio de Dios: su comunicación gratuita según In Canticum Canticorum de San Gregorio de Nisa*, "Veritas. Revista de Filosofía y Teología" 16 (2007) p. 109-127.
- Muckle J.T., *The Doctrine of St. Gregory of Nyssa on Man as the Image of God*, "Mediaeval Studies" 7 (1945) p. 55-84.
- Mühlenburg E., *Synergism in Gregory of Nyssa*, "Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche" 68 (1977) p. 93-122.
- Neil B., *Divine Providence and Free Will in Gregory of Nyssa and His Theological Milieu*, "Phronèma" 27 (2012) p. 35-51.
- Norris R.A., *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on the Song of Songs*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta 2012.
- Norris R.A., *The Soul Takes Flight: Gregory of Nyssa and the Songs of Songs*, "Anglican Theological Review" 80 (1998) p. 517-532.
- Petcu L., *The Doctrine of Epektasis. One of the Major Contributions of Saint Gregory of Nyssa to the History of Thinking*, "Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia" 73/2 (2017) p. 771-782.

- Ramelli I., *Apokatastasis and Epektasis in Cant. and Origen*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 312-339.
- Robb-Dover K., *Gregory of Nyssa's Perpetual Progress*, "Theology Today" 65 (2008) p. 213-225.
- Rombs K., *Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of Epektasis: Some Logical Implications*, "Studia Patristica" 37 (2001) p. 288-293.
- Scott M.S.M., *Shades of Grace: Origen and Gregory of Nyssa's Soteriological Exegesis of the Black and Beautiful Bride in Song of Songs 1:5*, "Theological Review" 99 (2006) p. 65-83.
- Sferlea O., *À Propos d'une Théologie de l'Incarnation du Dieu infini chez Grégoire de Nysse*, "Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses" 90 (2014) p. 453-483.
- Simonelli C., *Conformati dalla grazia dello Spirito Santo (Gregorio di Nissa, In Cant VII)*, "Teologia" 1 (2005) p. 75-91.
- Simonetti M., *Gregorio di Nissa interprete del Cantico dei Cantici*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 137-154.
- Steven L., *Mixture, Beauty, and the Incarnation in Gregory's In Canticum Canticorum*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 508-516.
- Vanden Auweele B., *L'Écriture sous le mode du désir. Réflexions sur le statut de l'Écriture dans les Homélie sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, in: *Grégoire de Nysse: la Bible dans la construction de son discours. Actes du colloque de Paris, 9-10 Février 2007*, ed. M. Cassin – H. Grelier, Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 184, Paris 2008, p. 275-283.
- Vigorelli I., *La relazione: Dio e l'uomo. Schesis e antropologia trinitaria in Gregorio di Nissa*, Roma 2021.
- Vigorelli I., *Ontology and Existence: Schésis of the Soul in Gregory of Nyssa's In Canticum canticorum*, in: *Gregory of Nyssa: In Canticum Canticorum: Analytical and Supporting Studies. Proceedings of the 13th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Rome, 17-20 September 2014)*, ed. G. Maspero – M. Brugarolas – I. Vigorelli, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 150, Leiden – Boston 2018, p. 527-538.
- Vives J., *El pecado original en S. Gregorio de Nisa*, "Estudios Ecclesiasticos" 45 (1970) p. 203-235.





## „Najbardziej elokwentni z Ojców” a metoda przepowiadania w Kościele przełomu IV i V wieku

‘The most Eloquent of the Fathers’: The Method of Preaching  
in the Church at the Turn of the 4th and 5th Centuries

Ks. Jarosław Nowaszczuk<sup>1</sup>

---

**Abstract:** Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom were recognized by posterity as the greatest preachers of the Church in the East. The purpose of the present article is to show that they differed in the way of preparing the texts of public speeches, which implies the need for a separate approach to their output. Both Fathers wrote at a time when rhetoric was used more for entertainment than for the transmission of knowledge, and sophists, known for their oratory proficiency, were considered corrupt and depraved. Over the course of one generation, this led the Church to reject the rhetorical workshop in favor of a genre that is more accessible in terms of form and language – the homily.

**Keywords:** rhetoric; homily; Gregory of Nazianzus; John Chrysostom; ancient preaching

---

We wprowadzeniu do pism Grzegorza z Nazjanzu Jacques de Billy uznaje patriarchę Konstantynopola za wręcz niedościgły wzór w dziedzinie krasomówstwa i to zarówno dla twórców greckich, jak i łacińskich<sup>2</sup>. Podobną opinię wyraził już wcześniej szwajcarski jezuita Joseph Anton Weissenbach, stwierdzając, że teolog był w najwyższym stopniu elokwentny (*eloquentissimum esse Gregorium*)<sup>3</sup>. Tym poglądom przyświadcza John

---

<sup>1</sup> Ks. dr hab. Jarosław Nowaszczuk, profesor nadzwyczajny w Instytucie Literatury i Nowych Mediów oraz Instytucie Nauk Teologicznych Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego; e-mail: jaroslaw.nowaszczuk@usz.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-4584-5184.

<sup>2</sup> J. Billius, *Reverendissimo in Christo Patri ac Domino D. Carolo Lotharingo Cardinali*, PG 35, 327.

<sup>3</sup> J. Weissenbach, *De Eloquentia Patrum libri XIII*, t. 3, Augustae Vindelicorum 1775, s. 97.

Warner, opisując go jako „najwymowniejszego z Ojców” (*disertissimus Patrum*)<sup>4</sup>. Źródła tradycji takiego opisywania biegłości retorycznej biskupa należy zapewne upatrywać w stwierdzeniu świętego Hieronima, który przydaje mu miano *vir eloquentissimus*, oraz w biogramie „Księgi Suda”, gdzie nazwano go ἀνὴρ ἐλλογιμώτατος<sup>5</sup>. Co interesujące, Grzegorz nie był jedynym z pisarzy greckich, którego przedstawiano w podobny sposób. Uczeni na przestrzeni wieków te same afirmatywne określenia odnosili bowiem także do Jana Chryzostoma. Na potwierdzenie można przywołać choćby opinie Georga Horna, Johannes Josepha Hippera czy Richarda Montagu<sup>6</sup>. Ponieważ różnica wieku pomiędzy oboma biskupami to zaledwie kilkanaście lat, można przyjąć, że za ich sprawą schyłek IV i pierwsze lata V wieku to w Kościele czas wyjątkowy co do przepowiadania. Celem obecnego studium jest zatem przedstawienie metodyki kaznodziejstwa, jaką kierowali się obaj doktorzy, biorąc pod uwagę nie tylko koncepcje najnowsze, lecz – ze względu na kierunki prowadzonych badań – także ustalenia uczonych epoki nowożytnej. W dalszej perspektywie studium ma prowadzić do potwierdzenia tezy, iż na przestrzeni zaledwie jednego pokolenia na Wschodzie nastąpiła istotna zmiana w sposobie głoszenia Ewangelii.

## 1. Mistrzostwo retoryczne

Reguły, jakimi kierowali się Grzegorz Teolog i Jan Chryzostom w swym przepowiadaniu, stanowiły w jakimś stopniu pochodną ogólnego poziomu krasomówstwa i jego wynaturzeń. Dość wspomnieć, że w ich czasach retoryka i dziedziny jej pokrewne należały do podstawowych przedmiotów wykładanych na różnych etapach kształcenia. Sami Ojcowie studiowali na cenionych uczelniach, co implikuje, że byli dobrze obeznani przede wszystkim w tej sferze wiedzy, która stanowiła dziedzictwo pogańskiej kultury. Mówiąc o dorobku Grzegorza Teologa, zwraca na to uwagę

---

<sup>4</sup> J. Warner, *Ecclesiae primitivae clericus: cuius gradus, educatio, tonsura, chorus, vita communis, vota, hierarchia, exponuntur*, b.m.w. 1686, s. 100.

<sup>5</sup> Hieronymus, *De viris illustribus* 117, PL 23, 707; Suidas, *Lexicon*, t. 1, cz. 1, Halis et Brunsvigae 1853, k. 1142.

<sup>6</sup> G. Hornius, *Historia Ecclesiastica et politica*, Lugduni Batavorum 1671, s. 103; J.J. Hipper, *Gloriosae laudes duodecim Apostolorum*, Vetero-Pragae 1747, s. 22; R. Montacutius, *Apparatus ad origines Ecclesiasticas*, Oxoniae 1635, s. 100.

dziewiętnastowieczny badacz Albert Jahn, relacjonując zresztą ustalenia żyjącego trzy wieki wcześniej uczonego Eliasza, metropolity z Krety:

Jakkolwiek bowiem święty Grzegorz jako mówca był teologiem w orzekaniu o rzeczywistości, zwykł korzystać jednak z retorycznego sposobu mówienia, współzawodnicząc z sofistami swoich czasów Libaniosem, Himeriosem, Proairesiosem. Oczywiście więc, że ten, kto jego *Mowy* chce poprawnie wyjaśniać, musi posiadać głębszą znajomość i retorycznych zasad i attyckiego stylu wyrażania się<sup>7</sup>.

Krótką notą uświadamia, że przyszły patriarcha miał styczność z Libaniosem, jednym z najwybitniejszych mówców epoki<sup>8</sup>. Potwierdza to zresztą list zawarty w zbiorze epistolarnym świętego, w którym matka Grzegorza pisze bezpośrednio do sławnego sofisty<sup>9</sup>. Był on zresztą także nauczycielem Jana Chryzostoma<sup>10</sup>. Dwaj inni podani z imienia uczeni są również znani z historii krasomówstwa. Nie kwestionuje się na ogół, że pochodzący z Armenii Proairesios, a właściwie Paruyr Haykazn<sup>11</sup>, oraz neoplatonik Himerios byli nauczycielami Grzegorza z Nazjanzu i przybyłego na studia w tym samym czasie Bazylego<sup>12</sup>. Jak ustalił Jan Maria Szymusiak, to przekonanie opiera się na informacjach zawartych w dziele historycznym Sokratesa Scholastyka<sup>13</sup>. Polski badacz sam konstatuje, że grono uczonych, z którymi zetknął się Grzegorz, było o wiele szersze<sup>14</sup>. Co

---

<sup>7</sup> A. Iahnus, *Praefatio*, w: Elias Metropolitae Cretae, *Commentarii in S. Gregorii Nazianzeni Orationes XIX*, opr. A. Iahnus, PG 36, 751-752 (tł. własne).

<sup>8</sup> Obszerny życiorys uczonego, uwzględniający jego kontakty z Kapadoczczykami znajduje się w książce: G.R. Sievers, *Das Leben des Libanius*, Berlin 1868. W ostatnim dziesięcioleciu ukazały się monografie poświęcone sofście. Zob. R. Criore, *Libanius the Sophist. Rhetoric, Reality and Religion in the Fourth Century*, b.m.w. 2013; L. Van Hoof, *Libanius. A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Epistola* 236.

<sup>10</sup> Ch. Anthon, *A Manual of Greek Literature*, New York 1853, s. 543.

<sup>11</sup> Y. Suvaryan – V. Mirzoyan – R. Hayrapetyan, *Public Administration: Theory and History*, Yerevan 2014, s. 291.

<sup>12</sup> F. Hofmann, *Kritische Studien im römischen Rechte*, Wien 1885, s. 31; K.I. Amantos – K. Johnstone – C.A. Trypanis, *Prologomena to the History of the Byzantine Empire*, Chicago 1969, s. 153; A. Momigliano, *Ottavo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Roma 1987, s. 208; *Grzegorz z Nazjanzu*, w: *Nowy słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa*, red. M. Starowieyski – J.M. Szymusiak, Poznań 2018, s. 406.

<sup>13</sup> J.M. Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, Poznań 1965, s. 50.

<sup>14</sup> Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, s. 48-51.

istotne, trzech wspomniani retorzy, których Georg Gottfried Keuffel włącza do grona sławnych sofistów, są znani w historii literatury jako przedstawiciele wspomnianego w cytacie, wyrafinowanego stylu attyckiego<sup>15</sup>. Albert Jahn dorzuca ponadto, iż Grzegorz współzawodniczył z nimi, co wskazuje na doskonale opanowanie warsztatu retorycznego. Nic więc dziwnego, że zyskał z czasem miano chrześcijańskiego Demostenesa<sup>16</sup>.

W wielu miejscach biskup Nazjanzu wyraża podziw dla daru mowy i elokwencji, a nawet sławi ją wierszem<sup>17</sup>. Prowadzi czytelnika do przekonania, że wsłaniałość sztuki oratorskiej bierze się z tego, iż sam Chrystus jest Słowem dającym życie (βίότιο σὼν λόγος)<sup>18</sup>. Ostatecznie Grzegorz w jednym z wystąpień nie pozostawia wątpliwości, jakie znaczenie miało dla niego krasomówstwo:

Inne bowiem rzeczy oddałem tym, którzy ich pragnęli, bogactwo, szlachectwo, sławę, wpływy i te rzeczy, które są w ziemskim obiegu i dają radość przelotną jak we śnie. Wyłącznie natomiast upodobałem sobie wymowę. I nie skarżę się na trudy przebyte na lądzie i na morzu, poprzez które do niej doszedłem. Obym osiągnął i ja, i wszyscy moi przyjaciele sławę krasomówstwa. Ten zawód ukochałem i nadal kocham jako rzecz pierwszą po tym, co w ogóle jest pierwsze, to jest po rzeczach Bożych i po nadziejach wybiegających poza granice tego, co jest widoczne<sup>19</sup>.

Tezy wyrażone przez samego patriarchę prowadzą do wniosku, który został wyrażony wprost przez cytowanego już Alberta Jahna. Aby zatem poddawać analizie *Mowy Grzegorza Teologa*, trzeba zastosować warsztat retoryczny i znać się na stylu attyckim języka greckiego. Nic więc dziwnego, że badania dorobku biskupa dotyczyły wielokrotnie zagadnień obu tych sfer. Wskazywano zatem na elementy znajomości teorii sławnych teoretyków dyscypliny, jak Hermogenes czy Arystydes, wyszczególniano też elementy imitacji tekstów Demostenesa<sup>20</sup>. Erazm z Rotterdamu wskazywał,

<sup>15</sup> G.G. Keuffel, *Historia originis ac progressus scholarum inter Christianos*, Helmstadium 1743, s. 111.

<sup>16</sup> Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, s. 46-47.

<sup>17</sup> Por. *Eloquentiae laus*, w: *Index analyticus*, PG 38, 1241; Gregorius Nazianzenus, *V. Nicobuli patris ad filium* 164-243, PG 37, 1533-1539.

<sup>18</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *V. Nicobuli patris ad filium* 265-266, PG 37, 1540.

<sup>19</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 4, 100, SCh 309, s. 248, tł. zbiorowe, *Święty Grzegorz z Nazjanzu. Mowy wybrane*, Warszawa 1967, s. 102.

<sup>20</sup> A. Iahnus, *Praefatio*, PG 36, 751-752.

że wypowiedzi Grzegorza często zbudowane są na izokratejskim modelu frazowania<sup>21</sup>. Późniejsi badacze – jak wynika z relacji Jana Marii Szymusiaka – dokonywali rozbioru wybranych mów, wyszczególniając w nich elementy przewidziane w strukturze przez prawidła dyspozycji<sup>22</sup>. Polscy badacze ubiegłego wieku skupiali się w poszukiwaniach na kwestii wykorzystania przez biskupa klasycznego okresu retorycznego oraz na recepcji jego twórczości<sup>23</sup>. Patrolodzy bliżsi w czasie, zwłaszcza w publikacjach po 2000 roku, skupiają się raczej na myśli teologicznej niż walorach języka w pisarstwie patriarchy, o czym przekonuje przegląd tematów zawartych w obszernych spisach bibliograficznych monografii Andrew Hofera i Gabrielle Thomas<sup>24</sup>.

Głębokie zakorzenie twórczości Grzegorza Teologa w retoryce, wynikające zresztą z jego świadomego wyboru, sprawia, że w obszernym dorobku biskupa pisma w rodzaju *tractatus populares* są zupełną rzadkością. Przywoływany już komentator i wydawca dzieł patriarchy Jacques de Billy stwierdza:

Mamy tylko tę jedną homilię Grzegorza, w której wyjaśnia tekst ewangeliczny językiem kaznodziejskim. Oby pozostawił nam więcej pisemnych świadectw swoich zdolności o podobnej treści, czy raczej bardziej ściśle – oby do nas

---

<sup>21</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Illustriss. Principi ad Domino D. Georgio Saxonie Duci, w: Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, t. 9, red. P.S. Allen – H.W. Garrod, Oxonii 1938, s. 267.

<sup>22</sup> Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, s. 44-45. Autor przedstawia również schemat układu treści opracowany przez Henri-Irénéé Marrou dla mowy 43 poświęconej przez Grzegorza Bazylemu, zob. Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, s. 44-45.

<sup>23</sup> Zob. J. Sajdak, *De Gregorio Nazianzeno poetarum Christianorum fonte*, Kraków 1917; J. Sajdak, *De Gregorio Nazianzeno posteriorum rhetorum, grammaticorum, lexicographorum fonte I*, „Eos” 16 (1910) s. 94-99; J. Sajdak, *De Gregorio Nazianzeno posteriorum rhetorum, grammaticorum, lexicographorum fonte II*, „Eos” 18 (1912) s. 1-30; J. Sajdak, *Die Scholiasten der Reden des Gregor von Nazianz*, „Byzantinische Zeitschrift” 30 (1930) s. 268-274; J. Sajdak, *Quaestiones Nazianzenicae I*, „Eos” 15 (1909) s. 18-48; T. Sinko, *De traditione Orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni pars prima*, Kraków 1917; T. Sinko, *De traditione Orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni. Pars secunda: de traditione indirecta*, Kraków 1921; L. Sternbach, *De Gregorio Nazianzeno Homeri interprete*, w: *Stromata in honorem Casimiri Morawski*, Cracoviae 1908, s. 171-178.

<sup>24</sup> Zob. A. Hofer, *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianus*, Oxford 2013, s. 232-248; G. Thomas, *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianus*, Cambridge 2019, s. 162-189.

dotarły. Jest bowiem wręcz nieprawdopodobne, że z tyłu i tak wspaniałych kazań do ludu polecił spisać jedynie to<sup>25</sup>.

Opinia francuskiego uczonego dotyczy homilii, która w wydaniach renesansowych ma numer 36, a w późniejszych – 37. Grzegorz wiersz za wierszem komentuje w niej fragment z Ewangelii według świętego Mateusza (Mt 19,1-12), włączając w ten wywód partie dotyczące osobnych kwestii jak małżeństwo czy dziewictwo<sup>26</sup>. Zgodnie z tym, co podaje Jan Maria Szymusiak, wystąpienie miało miejsce w styczniu 381 roku w obecności cesarza Teodozjusza<sup>27</sup>. Co interesujące, na przestrzeni kilkuset lat nikt nie zakwestionował twierdzenia Billy’ego. Także polski wydawca tłumaczenia tekstu nadał mu tytuł „homilia”, czego nie robi w żadnym innym wypadku<sup>28</sup>. Leslie Brubaker natomiast w tytule monografii z przełomu milenium nie dokonuje już podobnych rozróżnień, wszystkie publiczne wystąpienia biskupa nazywając homiliami<sup>29</sup>. Podobny sposób opisu λόγοι znajduje potwierdzenie także w innych, bliższych w czasie opracowaniach<sup>30</sup>.

Nowożytni uczeni byli zgodni co do tego, że poza homilią 37 istniały zapewne inne teksty przygotowane na potrzeby przepowiadania, w których patriarcha dystansował się od warsztatu retorycznego i przemawiał do ludu językiem potocznym (*promiscue*), jak ujmuje to Weissenbach, czy też – odwołując się z kolei do opinii Jacquesa Paula Migne’a – serdecznie (*familiariter*)<sup>31</sup>. Homilie te jednak nie przetrwały próby czasu, co rodzi pytania o przyczyny takiego stanu rzeczy oraz o to, dlaczego jedna z nich uniknęła losu pozostałych. Badacze nie znaleźli odpowiedzi na te kwestie, poprzestając na przekonaniu, że pism popularnych było więcej, lecz

---

<sup>25</sup> J. Billius, *Argumentum*, w: *Operum Gregorii Nazianeni Tomi Tres*, Basileae 1571, s. 572 (tł. własne).

<sup>26</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio 37*, 1-24, SCh 318, 270-318.

<sup>27</sup> Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, s. 368.

<sup>28</sup> Szymusiak, *Grzegorz Teolog*, s. 368.

<sup>29</sup> L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Zob. J.W. Watt, *Syriac*, w: *A Companion to Late Antique Literature*, red. S. McGill – E.J. Watts, b.m.w. 2018, s. 58; J. Tannous, *You Are What You Read: Qenneshre and the Miaphysite Church in the Seventh Century*, w: *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East*, red. Ph. Wood, Oxford 2013, s. 99; Ch.A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, Oxford 2008, s. 321.

<sup>31</sup> J. Weissenbach, *De eloquentia Patrum libri XIII*, s. 116; J.P. Migne, *Monitum in Orationem 37*, PG 36, 279-280.

nie dotarły w odpisach do epoki druku<sup>32</sup>. Fakt istnienia tego rodzaju kazań zdaje się potwierdzać opinia wyrażona przez samego biskupa w komentarzu do Pawłowego „karmiłem was mlekiem” (1Kor 3,2), gdzie pisze, iż bywają ludzie, którzy nie osiągnęli jeszcze poziomu wiary pozwalającego na przyjęcie całości chrześcijańskiej doktryny. Takim należy podawać nauki prostsze i bardziej przystępne<sup>33</sup>. W przeciwnym razie zostają przytłoczeni i upadają na drodze wewnętrznego rozwoju. Są i tacy – kontynuuje Grzegorz – którzy osiągnęli już pewien stopień doskonałości i wymagają czegoś więcej. Jeśli podaje się im proste rzeczy, znoszą to z przykrością. Ostatecznie zatem dochodzi do wniosku, iż nauczanie musi być dobrane do poziomu duchowego słuchaczy<sup>34</sup>.

## 2. Rozterki chrześcijańskiego Demostenesa

Oddanie sztuce retorycznej i mistrzostwo w stosowaniu jej warsztatu nie uczyniły Grzegorza bezkrytycznym wobec różnych postaci degeneracji krasomówstwa. Podobnie jak w wiekach poprzedzających patriarchę, tak i w jego czasach podnosiły się bowiem głosy niezadowolenia nie tyle z samej dyscypliny, co z sofistów, najbardziej znanych jej przedstawicieli. Echa toczącej się u schyłku antyku dyskusji można odnaleźć w tekście życiorysu biskupa Nazjanzu opracowanym przez Grzegorza Prezbitera. Autor podkreśla tam, że nie przymiłał się on słuchaczom, lecz motywował ich do prowadzenia życia pełnego doskonałości<sup>35</sup>. W tym samym passusie o samej retoryce zostaje powiedziane, iż „pochlebstwem kradnie ona życzliwość jak handlarze swoim zachwalaniem”<sup>36</sup>.

Elementy krytycznego spojrzenia na sofistów odnaleźć można w pismach samego Grzegorza. Wychodząc na przykład od stwierdzenia, że w przepowiadaniu trudno kogoś porównać z Bazylim Wielkim, zaraz dodaje, iż obyczaje biskupa Kapadocji daleko odbiegały od stylu życia rektorów<sup>37</sup>. Jak uświadamia w innym miejscu, błędy w podejściu do sztuki

<sup>32</sup> J.P. Migne, *Monitum in Orationem* 37, PG 36, 280-282.

<sup>33</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 2, 45, SCh 247, 148.

<sup>34</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 2, 45, SCh 247, 148.

<sup>35</sup> Gregorius Presbyter, *Vita S. Patris nostri Gregorii Theologi, Episcopi Nazianzeni*, PG 35, 288.

<sup>36</sup> Gregorius Presbyter, *Vita S. Patris nostri Gregorii Theologi, Episcopi Nazianzeni*, PG 35, 288.

<sup>37</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 43, 23, SCh 384, 174.

wymowy dotykały nie tylko pogan, lecz także głosiciele chrześcijan. Patriarcha zestawia z nimi siebie samego i stwierdza, że nie należy do grupy tych, którzy kupczą słowem prawdy i – jak to ujmuje – „mieszają wodę z winem”<sup>38</sup>, czy też – zgodnie z przekładami niektórych łacinników – „fałszują prawdę”<sup>39</sup>. Spozstrzega również, że tego rodzaju mówcy cieszą się popularnością, jakkolwiek działają na szkodę słuchaczy<sup>40</sup>. Surowo ocenia ich postawę i uznaje, iż wyzbyci są z elementarnej wiedzy oraz umiejętności mówienia, jakkolwiek uchodzą za wziętych filozofów czy gramatyków<sup>41</sup>. W innym miejscu z kolei uznaje za objaw głupoty zaciemnianie prawdy przez środki sztuki wymowy<sup>42</sup>. Jest krytyczny wobec sofistów do tego stopnia, że komentując wiersz Mt 4,6, nazywa diabła nie inaczej tylko „sofistą występku”<sup>43</sup>. Ostatecznie kieruje do badaczy pism, uczonych i znawców retoryki apel, by byli powściągliwi w swym zaufaniu do słów i nie uznawali się za przesadnie mądrych. Aby także za wszelką cenę nie chcieli w każdej rzeczy zwyciężać, zwłaszcza niegodziwie, lecz by znosili w prostocie ducha fakt, że niekiedy nie mają racji. Cały wywód kończy zachętą, by to, co mówią, oddali Słowu czyli Chrystusowi<sup>44</sup>.

Opinie dotyczące sofistów i krytyka sposobu, w jaki wykorzystywali zdobyte wykształcenie, uświadamia, że w czasach Grzegorza z Nazjanzu retoryka zaczęła stanowić przeszkodę w głoszeniu Ewangelii. Rozpoznawalne korzystanie z reguł dyscypliny zaczęło być dla słuchaczy podejrzane. Te spostrzeżenia zdaje się potwierdzać sam patriarcha w mowie pogrzebowej, jaką przygotował dla zmarłej siostry Gorgonii. Pokażny fragment na wstępie poświęca nie samej zmarłej, lecz kwestii prawdy w publicznym wystąpieniu<sup>45</sup>. W poczuciu słuchaczy – uświadamia tekst – panegiryk, zwłaszcza pochwała kogoś z rodziny, zakłada, że pojawią się informacje sfalszowane. Biskup zdaje się zatem usprawiedliwiać, iż wygłosi pochwałę siostry i, jak podkreśla, przedstawi wszystko zgodnie z prawdą. Co więcej, zaraz w kolejnym punkcie stwierdza, że rezygnuje z wyrafinowanego języka i stylu, naśladowując prostotę, którą w życiu kierowała się zmarła<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 2, 46, SCh 247, 150.

<sup>39</sup> Zob. Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 2, 46, PG 35, 453, przyp 55.

<sup>40</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 2, 46, SCh 247, 150.

<sup>41</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 36, 12, SCh 318, 266.

<sup>42</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 4, 94, SCh 309, 236.

<sup>43</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 40, 10, PG 36, 372.

<sup>44</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 19, 10, PG 35, 1053.

<sup>45</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 8, 1-2, SCh 405, 246-251.

<sup>46</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 8m 3, SCh 405, 250-253.



W tym wypadku retoryka nie była dla niego zatem wsparciem, lecz wręcz przeciwnie, stanowiła balast. Wywód uświadamia także, że laudacyjny *ἐπιταφίος λόγος*, który miał w świecie greckim dawną tradycję, postrzegano u końca IV wieku jako okolicznościową formę literacką, a nie sposób na opowiedzenie prawdy o zmarłym<sup>47</sup>.

### 3. Przełom homiletyczny

Wnioski płynące z analizy pism Grzegorza Teologa znajdują potwierdzenie w twórczości Jana Chryzostoma. Odnosząc się do realiów swojej epoki, mówi w jednej z homilii o nadzwyczajnym skupieniu ludzi zgromadzonych w teatrze, by słuchać muzyki, lub – co istotne dla obecnego wywodu – występu retora<sup>48</sup>. Tego ostatniego wymienia zresztą w jednej grupie z trębaczem i atletą<sup>49</sup>. Można zatem pokusić się o stwierdzenie, że w czasach konstantynopolikańskich doktorów wystąpienia mówców nie służyły przekazywaniu wiedzy o życiu, lecz bawieniu publiczności.

Pisma Chryzostoma przekonują, że z biegiem czasu kontrast pomiędzy chrześcijańskim przepowiadaniem a sofistycznym krasomówstwem stawał się coraz bardziej widoczny. Patriarcha bardzo mocno uwydatnia opozycję pomiędzy retorami a głosicielami Ewangelii. W jednym z kazań o Łazarzu stwierdza, że ci pierwsi nie szukają dobra wspólnego, lecz poklasku. I nawet jeśli mogą powiedzieć coś przynoszącego korzyść, czynią to zawile i niejasno<sup>50</sup>. W *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles* uznaje z kolei retorykę za narzędzie ucisku społecznego, które podobnie jak monarchie i dawne formy władzy odrzucono wraz z nadejściem Chrystusa, gdy ludzie zostali oswobodzeni z hegemonii mówców, a głoszenie stało się powszechne, dostępne i niosące pokój. Sama sztuka wymowy popada zaś w niepamięć<sup>51</sup>. W innym miejscu tego samego dzieła uznaje retorów i sofistów za przeciwników rodzącego się chrześcijaństwa<sup>52</sup>. Jeszcze gdzie indziej uświadamia,

---

<sup>47</sup> Klasyczną postać tego rodzaju wystąpień omówiono w monografii: K. Prinz, *Epitaphios Logos. Struktur, Funktion und Bedeutung der Bestattungsreden im Athen des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt a/Main 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Joannem homiliae* 1, 1, PG 59, 23-25.

<sup>49</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Joannem homiliae* 1, 1, PG 59, 23-25.

<sup>50</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Conciones VII de Lazaro* 3, 3, PG 48, 994.

<sup>51</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles* 6, PG 48, 821.

<sup>52</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles* 13, PG 48, 831.

że pomimo, iż byli niezwycczeni w mowie i cieszyli się sławą, ośmieszyli się, angażując w antagonizm z wyznawcami Chrystusa<sup>53</sup>.

W dziele *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* Jan Chryzostom wprowadza nowego rodzaju przeciwstawienie. Jego zdaniem istnieje opozycja pomiędzy wykształceniem krasomówczym a dobrym życiem. Młodzi ludzie – zarzuca – posyłani do sofistów uczą się raczej występku niż umiejętności i tracą prawość postępowania. Patriarcha nie zamierza wyrugować ćwiczeń wymowy, ale nie godzi się także na nie, o ile mają przynieść szkodę duszy<sup>54</sup>. Jak stwierdza, brak elokwencji nie przynosi specjalnej ujmę człowiekowi. Przeciwnie zaś, cięty język nic nie znaczy, jeśli sam mówca zostanie zdeprawowany<sup>55</sup>. Ocena kształcenia młodzieży jest bliska temu, co Grzegorz z Nazjanzu przekazał już wcześniej o sofistach w mowie poświęconej Bazylemu Wielkiemu. Jak wspominał, młodych ludzi w Atenach ogarniała – jak wyraża tłumacz – „sofistomania” (Σοφιστομανοῦσιν)<sup>56</sup>. Starsi i zasiedziali studenci za wszelką cenę starali się podporządkować sobie nowo przybyłych do Aten, stosując przy tym różne praktyki manipulacyjne i dziwaczne obrzędy, a wszystko po to, by ci stali się kolejnymi uczniami sofistów, którym mieli przysporzyć majątku<sup>57</sup>. Sam Jan Chryzostom dochodzi do wniosku, iż niegodziwość połączona z umiejętnością przemawiania jest o wiele gorsza niż brak wiedzy<sup>58</sup>. Biegłości w mowie – dodaje – musi nieodłącznie towarzyszyć uczciwe postępowanie, podczas gdy to ostatnie może obejść się bez specjalnych kwalifikacji krasomówczych<sup>59</sup>.

Spostrzeżenia, jakie poczynił patriarcha, prowadzą go ostatecznie do ukazania nowego ideału głosicieli, dla których przykładem są Apostołowie i prorocy. Jak podkreśla, oni postępowali inaczej niż retorzy. Jako nauczyciele całego zamieszkałego świata usiłowali bowiem wszystko przekazać

---

<sup>53</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *De S. Babyla contra Julianum et Gentiles* 11, SCh 362, 104.

<sup>54</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3, 11, PG 47, 367.

<sup>55</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3, 11, PG 47, 367.

<sup>56</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 43, 15, SCh 384, 150, tł. *Święty Grzegorz z Nazjanzu*, s. 485.

<sup>57</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 43, 15-16, SCh 384, 148-157.

<sup>58</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3, 11, PG 47, 367.

<sup>59</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3, 11, PG 47, 367.

jasno i zrozumiale. W takim podejściu zdaniem biskupa miało spełnić się proroctwo Jeremiasza powtórzone przez Jana Apostoła o powszechnym poznaniu Boga (Jr 31,34; J 6,45)<sup>60</sup>. Chryzostom przywołuje ponadto passus z Pierwszego Listu do Koryntian, gdzie Paweł podkreśla, iż jego głoszenie dalekie jest od wyszukanego języka i mądrości ludzkiej (1Kor 2,1-5)<sup>61</sup>. Wszystko to prowadzi duchownego do wniosku, że prawdziwą mądrością i wykształceniem retorycznym jest bojaźń Boża<sup>62</sup>.

Jedną z przyczyn odstąpienia Jana Chryzostoma od korzystania z warsztatu sztuki wymowy było bez wątpienia zdyskredytowanie retoryki przez sofistów uchodzących za najwybitniejszych znawców tej dyscypliny. Za znaczące w tym procesie trzeba uznać także racje duszpasterskie, które za centrum działalności homiletycznej patriarchy uznaje Robert Carter i cała grupa badaczy wymieniona przez Wong Sang Lee, włączając w to Frances Young, Andrew Purvesa, Wendy Mayer, Pauline Allen i innych<sup>63</sup>. W żadnym razie postawa biskupa nie wynikała z braku obycia w sztuce krasomówczej. Przeszedł bowiem „pogańską” edukację, w której retoryka zajmowała poczesne miejsce, podkreślają zgodnie dzisiejsi badacze<sup>64</sup>. Nic więc dziwnego, że Chryzostom jako człowiek świetnie wykształcony choćby ze swym nauczycielem sofistą Libaniosem miał kontakt przez całe życie, co potwierdzają listy obu pisarzy. Co więcej, jak przekonuje monografia Thomasa E. Ameringera, patriarcha z łatwością korzystał z warsztatu retorycznego w obrębie pism panegirycznych<sup>65</sup>. Obfitość środków stylu wyszczególnionych w jego dorobku przez autorkę pracy *Saint John Chrysostom's Homilies on the Statues* prowadzi Jana Iluka do następującego, niepozbawionego podziwu stwierdzenia:

<sup>60</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Conciones VII de Lazaro* 3, 3, PG 48, 994-995.

<sup>61</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Conciones VII de Lazaro* 3, 3, PG 48, 994-995.

<sup>62</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3, 12, PG 47, 368: „[...] ἡ [...] σοφία καὶ ἡ [...] παιδείσις οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἡ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ φόβος”.

<sup>63</sup> R. Carter, *The Future of Chrysostom Studies. Theology and Nachleben*, w: *Symposium. Studies on St. John Chrysostom*, red. P.C. Christos, Thessaloniki 1973, s. 129; W.S. Lee, *Pastoral Leadership. A Case Study, including Reference to John Chrysostom*, Eugene Oregon 2015, s. 130.

<sup>64</sup> W. Mayer – P. Allen, *John Chrysostom*, London – New York 2000, s. 27-28; H. Amirav, *Rhetoric and Tradition: John Chrysostom on Noah and the Flood*, Louvain 2003, s. 11; D. Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy. The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching*, Oxford 2014, s. 18-19.

<sup>65</sup> Th.E. Ameringer, *The Stylistic Influence the Second Sophistic on the Panegyric Sermons of St. John Chrysostom. A Study in Greek Rhetoric*, Washington 1921.

Okazało się, że wszyscy, którzy w 387 r. w Starym Kościele wysłuchali owych kazań, mogli się także zapoznać z wybornym przewodnikiem klasycznej retoryki. Według M.A. Burns, antiocheński kapłan modelował swoje racje blisko pięćdziesięcioma figurami retorycznymi, których użył ponad 6000 razy w różnych partiach 21 kazań. Nie ma lepszego dowodu trwania w kręgu wpływów późnoantycznych sofistów<sup>66</sup>.

Niekwestionowane zakorzenienie pisarstwa Jan Chryzostoma w kraśmówstwie skłania wielu badaczy do analiz jego dorobku w sferze języka, stylu, układu treści oraz innych walorów formalnych utworów<sup>67</sup>. W kościelnym przepowiadaniu sięgnął jednak ostatecznie po prostszy i bardziej

<sup>66</sup> J. Iluk, *Święty Jan Chryzostom i jego epoka*, w: *O godnym życiu we wspólnocie. Antologia aforyzmów i didaskaliów św. Jana Chryzostoma*, Gdańsk 2015, s. 14-15.

<sup>67</sup> Zob. H.M. Hubbel, *Chrysostom and rhetoric*, „Classical Philology” 19 (1924) s. 261-276; M.A. Burns, *Saint John Chrysostom's Homilies on the Statues: A study of their rhetorical qualities and form*, Washington 1930; M. Heath, *John Chrysostom, rhetoric and Galatians*, „Biblical Interpretation” 12 (2004) s. 369-400; H. Amirav, *The rhetorical expression of exegesis: The case of John Chrysostom*, w: *Giovanni Crisostomo, Oriente e Occidente tra IV e V secolo*, Roma 2005, s. 221-227; C. Bosinis, *Faidros 243e-247a ste retorike tu Ioannes tu Chrysostomu [...]*, (oryg. *Φαῖδρος 243e-247a στη ρητορική του Ιωάννη του Χρυσόστομου [...]*) „Theologia” 77 (2006) s. 659-695; C. Bosinis, *Two platonian images of the rhetoric of John Chrysostom: 'The wings of love' and 'the charioteer of the soul'*, w: *Studia Patristica, Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003*, t. 41: *Orientalia, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, The Cappadocians, Chrysostom*, red. F. Young – M. Edwards – P. Parvis, Leuven – Paris – Dudley 2006, s. 433-438; C. Bosinis, *What does Paganism Mean for a Church Father? An Inquiry into the Use the Term εἰδωλολατρεία in the Rhetoric of John Chrysostom*, w: *Studia Patristica, Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003*, t. 41: *Orientalia, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, The Cappadocians, Chrysostom*, red. F. Young – M. Edwards – P. Parvis, Leuven – Paris – Dudley 2006, s. 243-248; J. Szwed-Kostecka, *Panegyryki św. Jana Chryzostoma De laudibus Sancti Pauli – kwestia struktury*, „Źródła Humanistyki Europejskiej” 6 (2013) s. 191-208; R.J. Laird, *Images of this present life in the rhetoric of John Chrysostom*, „Scrinium” 11 (2015) s. 78-86; M. Caruso, *Hagiographic Style of the Vita Spyridonis between Rhetoric and Exegetical Tradition: Analogies between John Chrysostom's Homilies and the Work of Theodore of Paphos*, w: *Studia Patristica, Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003*, t. 41: *Orientalia, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, The Cappadocians, Chrysostom*, red. F. Young – M. Edwards – P. Parvis, Leuven – Paris – Dudley 2006, s. 103-110; L. Lugaresi, *Rhetoric against the Theatre and Theatre by Means of Rhetoric in John Chrysostom*, w: *Rhetorical Strategies in Late Antiquity. Images. Metatexts and Interpretations*, red. A.J. Quiroga Puertas, Leiden – Boston 2017, s. 117-148; Z. Latawiec, *The rhetorical structure of John Chrysostom's seventh*

przystępny sposób mówienia, na co w IX wieku zwraca uwagę Focjusz w dziele *Biblioteka* po przeczytaniu partii tekstów patriarchy dotyczących Księgi Rodzaju, Dziejów Apostolskich i Księgi Psalmów:

Należy tu zaznaczyć, że chociaż tytuł książki brzmi *Mowy* (taki znalazłem w egzemplarzach, które przeczytałem), są one bardzo podobne do homilii, gdyż – oprócz innych po temu racji – autor często w wielu miejscach, zwraca się do słuchających, jak gdyby miał ich przed sobą, zadaje pytania, odpowiada, obiecuje. Mowa posiadająca inną niż homilia strukturę może zawierać te same figury, a ciągłe i stałe ich stosowanie bez jakiegokolwiek zasady w układzie sprawia, że mowy są homiliami<sup>68</sup>.

Zgodnie z wyjaśnieniem autora w okresie działalności Jana Chryzostoma homilia była już w jakiejś mierze znana i upowszechniona, co nie zaskakuje, biorąc pod uwagę wcześniejszy dorobek patrystyczny, choćby twórczość Orygenesa. Komentator wskazuje natomiast na niejednoznaczność nomenklatury, jaka panowała jeszcze w jego czasach w zachowanych odpisach dzieła. Warto zaznaczyć, że dyskusja dotycząca form przepowiadania miała miejsce także na antycznym Zachodzie. Augustyn z Hippony, rozpoczynając komentarz do Ps 118, zaznacza, iż będzie posługiwał się gatunkiem stosowanym w przemowach do ludu, które Grecy określają homiliami<sup>69</sup>. Jak uściśla nieco później Izydor z Sewilli, formy takie noszą łacińską nazwę *verbum*. Odróżnia ten rodzaj publicznych wystąpień od mowy i traktatu<sup>70</sup>. Homilie – twierdzi – wygłaszano do pospolitego ludu i są w nich bezpośrednio zwroty do słuchaczy<sup>71</sup>. Takie rozumienie gatunku utrwaliło się na przestrzeni czasu. W renesansowej edycji znany jest zbiór kazań Ojców Kościoła opracowany w średniowieczu przez Alkuina, zgod-

---

*homily on Galatians in relation to the Kenosis Hymn*, „Classica Cracoviensia” 20 (2017) s. 55-70.

<sup>68</sup> Photius, *Bibliotheca* 172-174, t. 1, ed. I. Bekkerus, Berolini 1824, s. 118, tł. O. Jurowicz, Focjusz, *Biblioteka*, t. 2, Warszawa 1988, s. 52.

<sup>69</sup> Augustinus Hipponensis, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 118, proemium, CCL 40, 1665. Jak przekonuje Marian Strankowski, Augustyn w swej refleksji nad przepowiadaniem skupiał się nie tyle na formie, co na jego prawowierności i merytoryce. Zob. M. Strankowski, *Zagrożenia w przepowiadaniu Słowa Bożego w świetle Enarrationes in Psalmos św. Augustyna*, VoxP 60 (2013) s. 289-314.

<sup>70</sup> Isidorus Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX* 6, 8, ed. W.M. Lindsay, OCT Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis, Oxonii 1911, s. 227.

<sup>71</sup> Isidorus Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX* 6, 8, ed. W.M. Lindsay, s. 227.

nie z tym, co odnotowuje wydawca dzieła na stronie tytułowej. Kolekcja nosi tytuł *Homilie to znaczy mowy albo kazania do ludu*<sup>72</sup>.

Przywołany komentarz Focjusza wpłynął w dużym stopniu na średniowieczne i renesansowe rozumienie homilii. Dla kolejnych pokoleń to właśnie twórczość Jana Chryzostoma była punktem odniesienia dla oceny całego dorobku parenetyczno-egzegetycznego. Jest to dobrze widoczne w nowożytnych opisach słownikowych. Pojawiają się w nich stałe treści mówiące o tym, że homilie to serdeczne rozważania (*familiares collationes*) zakorzenione w zwyczaju wymiany zdań w świątyniach pomiędzy przełożonym a ludem; że zasadnicze wyznaczniki tej formy przedstawił Focjusz w oparciu o pisma Jana Chryzostoma, a Augustyn nazwał ten rodzaj głoszenia *tractatus populares*<sup>73</sup>. Mniej podkreślano natomiast biblijne zakorzenienie homilii, które daje się dostrzec u Chryzostoma, co z kolei zostało uwydatnione w opisie gatunku przedłożonym na Drugim Soborze Watykańskim<sup>74</sup>.

#### 4. Konkluzja

Ostatnie ćwierćwiecze IV wieku trzeba uznać za czas wyjątkowy w dziejach przepowiadania na Wschodzie, a wszystko za sprawą dwóch wybitnych biskupów i patriarchów stolicy w Konstantynopolu, Grzegorza z Nazjanzu i Jana Chryzostoma. Otrzymali świetne wykształcenie retoryczne zgodnie ze zwyczajami swych czasów. Obaj mieli nadzwyczajne zdolności krasomówcze i obaj także wyróżnili się jako teologowie i święci. Każdy z nich jest jednak przedstawicielem innej tradycji w podejściu do publicznych wystąpień. Grzegorz okazał się wierny przejętej ze świata antyku retoryce pomimo świadomości, iż sofisci, nauczyciele tej dyscypliny, byli krytykowani za swą sprzedajność i niemoralne postępowanie. Pozostawił po sobie zatem zaledwie jedno wystąpienie w typie *tractatus populares* i bogaty dorobek, którego

---

<sup>72</sup> *Homiliae, hoc est, sermones sive conciones ad populum*, ed. Alcuinus, Coloniae 1539.

<sup>73</sup> *Homiliae*, w: C. Du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, t. 2, cz. 1, Francofurti ad Moenum 1710, k. 847-848; *Homiliae*, w: J.A. Schmidius, *Lexicon Ecclesiasticum*, Helmstadii 1712, s. 44; *Homiliae*, w: A. Rechenbergius, *Hierolexicon Reale, hoc est Biblico-Theologicum et Historico-Ecclesiasticum*, Lipsiae et Francofurti 1714, s. 721-722; J.N. Funcius, *De inerti ac decrepita Latinae linguae senectute commentarius*, Lemgoviae 1750, s. 349.

<sup>74</sup> Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucja o liturgii świętej* § 24 oraz § 52, w: *Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje*, Poznań 2022, s. 55, 61.

analizy wymagają od badaczy opanowania warsztatu retorycznego. Domeną Jana Chryzostoma stała się z kolei homilia, którą jako gatunek upowszechnił i uszlachetnił. Na bazie analizy dorobku biskupa dokonanej przez Focjusza wyodrębniono zasadnicze wyróżniki tej formy przepowiadania. Podobnie jak Grzegorz sam Chryzostom był krytyczny wobec postępowania sofistów i ich stosunku do prawdy. Co więcej, postrzegał retorykę jako narzędzie ucisku, niesprawiedliwości i deprawacji młodzieży, jakkolwiek bardziej istotną racją odstąpienia przez niego od klasycznego opracowania publicznych wystąpień było zapewne głębokie umiłowanie Biblii i racje duszpasterskie. Ostatecznie zatem można pokusić się o stwierdzenie, że na Wschodzie za sprawą dwu wybitnych głosicieli kościelne przepowiadanie doznało prawdziwego rozkwitu, a poprzez odejście od zasad retoryki jako nowy model głoszenia wyodrębniła i upowszechniła się homilia.

## Bibliografia

### Źródła

- Augustinus Hipponensis, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, CCL 40, ed. E. Dekkers – J. Fraipont, Tournhout 1956.
- Erasmus Desiderius, *Illustriss. Principi ad Domino D. Georgio Saxonie Duci*, w: *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, t. 9, red. P.S. Allen – H.W. Garrod, Oxonii 1938, s. 266-268.
- Gregorius Presbyter, *Vita S. Patris nostri Gregorii Theologi, Episcopi Nazianzeni*, PG 35, 243-304.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Carmina*, PG 37, 397-38, 130.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Epistolae*, PG 37, 21-388.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Orationes*, PG 35, 395-36, 664; SCh 309, 318, 384, 405, Paris 1982-1995.
- Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae*, PG 47, 319-386.
- Ioannes Chrysostomus, *De S. Babyla contra Julianum et Gentiles*, SCh 362, Paris 1990.
- Ioannes Chrysostomus., *In Joannem homiliae*, PG 59, 23-482.
- Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Conciones VII de Lazaro*, PG 48, 963-1054.
- Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles*, PG 48, 813-838.
- Hieronymus Eusebius Stridonensis, *De viris illustribus*, PL 23, 601-720.
- Isidorus Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. W.M. Lindsay, OCT Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis, Oxonii 1911.
- Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucja o liturgii świętej*, w: *Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje*, Poznań 2022, s. 48-78.

Photius, *Bibliotheca*, t. 1, ed. I. Bekkerus, Berolini 1824, tł. O. Jurewicz, Focjusz, *Biblioteka*, t. 2, Warszawa 1988.

Suidas, *Lexicon*, t. 1, cz. 1, Halis et Brunsvigae 1853.

### Opracowania

Amantos K.I. – Johnstone K. – Trypanis C.A., *Prologomena to the History of the Byzantine Empire*, Chicago 1969.

Ameringer T.E., *The Stylistic Influence the Second Sophistic on the Panegyric Sermons of St. John Chrysostom. A Study in Greek Rhetoric*, Washington 1921.

Amirav H., *Rhetoric and Tradition: John Chrysostom on Noah and the Flood*, Louvain 2003.

Amirav H., *The rhetorical expression of exegesis: The case of John Chrysostom*, w: *Giovanni Crisostomo, Oriente e Occidente tra IV e V secolo*, Roma 2005, s. 221-227.

Anthon C., *A Manual of Greek Literature*, New York 1853.

Beeley C.A., *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, Oxford 2008.

Billius J., *Argumentum*, w: *Operum Gregorii Nazianeni Tomi Tres*, Basileae 1571, s. 572.

Billius J., *Reverendissimo in Christo Patri ac Domino D. Carolo Lotharingo Cardinali*, PG 35, 315-330.

Bosinis C., *Faidros 243e-247a ste retorike tu Ioannes tu Chrysostomu*, (oryg. Φαῖδρος 243e-247a στη ρητορική του Ιωάννης του Χρυσοστόμου) „Theologia” 77 (2006) s. 659-695.

Bosinis C., *Two platonic images of the rhetoric of John Chrysostom: ‘The wings of love’ and ‘the charioteer of the soul’*, w: *Studia Patristica. Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003*, t. 41, *Orientalia, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, The Cappadocians, Chrysostom*, red. F. Young, M. Edwards, P. Parvis, Leuven–Paris–Dudley 2006, s. 433-438.

Bosinis C., *What does Paganism Mean for a Church Father? An Inquiry into the Use the Term ειδωλολατρεία in the Rhetoric of John Chrysostom*, w: *Studia Patristica, Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003*, t. 41: *Orientalia, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, The Cappadocians, Chrysostom*, red. F. Young – M. Edwards – P. Parvis, Leuven – Paris – Dudley 2006, s. 243-248.

Brubaker L., *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge 1999.

Burns M.A., *Saint John Chrysostom’s Homilies on the Statues: A study of their rhetorical qualities and form*, Washington 1930.

Carter R., *The Future of Chrysostom Studies. Theology and Nachleben*, w: *Symposium. Studies on St. John Chrysostom*, red. P.C. Christos, Thessaloniki 1973, s. 129-136.

Caruso M., *Hagiographic Style of the Vita Spyridonis between Rhetoric and Exegetical Tradition: Analogies between John Chrysostom’s Homilies and the Work of*



- Theodore of Paphos*, w: *Studia Patristica, Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003*, t. 41: *Orientalia, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, The Cappadocians, Chrysostom*, red. F. Young – M. Edwards – P. Parvis, Leuven – Paris – Dudley 2006, s. 103-110.
- Criboire R., *Libanius the Sophist. Rhetoric, Reality and Religion in the Fourth Century*, b.m.w. 2013.
- Funccius J.N., *De inerti ac decrepita Latinae linguae senectute commentarius*, Lemgoviae 1750.
- Grzegorz z Nazjanzu, w: *Nowy słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa*, red. M. Starowieyski – J.M. Szymusiak, Poznań 2018, s. 406-413.
- Heath M., *John Chrysostom, rhetoric and Galatians*, „Biblical Interpretation” 12 (2004) s. 369-400.
- Hipper J.J., *Gloriosae laudes duodecim Apostolorum*, Vetero-Pragae 1747.
- Hofer A., *Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Oxford 2013.
- Hofmann F., *Kritische Studien im römischen Rechte*, Wien 1885.
- Homiliae*, w: C. Du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, t. 2, cz. 1, Francofurti ad Moenum 1710, k. 847-848.
- Homiliae*, w: A. Rechenbergius, *Hierolexicon Reale, hoc est Biblico-Theologicum et Historico-Ecclesiasticum*, Lipsiae et Francofurti 1714, s. 721-722.
- Homiliae*, w: J.A. Schmidius, *Lexicon Ecclesiasticum*, Helmstadii 1712, s. 44.
- Homiliae, hoc est, sermones sive conciones ad populum*, ed. Alcuinus, Coloniae 1539.
- Hoof Van L., *Libanius. A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge 2014.
- Hornius G., *Historia Ecclesiastica et politica*, Lugduni Batavorum 1671.
- Hubbel H.M., *Chrysostom and rhetoric*, „Classical Philology” 19 (1924) s. 261-276.
- Iahnus [Jahn] A., *Praefatio*, w: Elias Metropolitae Cretae, *Commentarii in S. Gregorii Nazianzeni Orationes XIX*, opr. A. Iahnus, PG 36, 745-756.
- Iluk J., *Święty Jan Chryzostom i jego epoka*, w: *O godnym życiu we wspólnocie. Antologia aforyzmów i didaskaliów św. Jana Chryzostoma*, Gdańsk 2015, s. 7-23.
- Index analyticus*, PG 38, 1221-1292.
- Keuffel G.G., *Historia originis ac progressus scholarum inter Christianos*, Helmstadium 1743.
- Laird R.J., *Images of this present life in the rhetoric of John Chrysostom*, „Scriinium” 11 (2015) s. 78-86.
- Latawiec Z., *The rhetorical structure of John Chrysostom's seventh homily on Galatians in relation to the Kenosis Hymn*, „Classica Cracoviensia” 20 (2017) s. 55-70.
- Won Sang L., *Pastoral Leadership. A Case Study, including Reference to John Chrysostom*, Eugene Oregon 2015.
- Lugaresi L., *Rhetoric against the Theatre and Theatre by Means of Rhetoric in John Chrysostom*, w: *Rhetorical Strategies in Late Antiquity. Images. Metatexts and Interpretations*, red. A.J. Quiroga Puertas, Leiden – Boston 2017, s. 117-148.
- Mayer W. – Allen P., *John Chrysostom*, London – New York 2000.

- Migne J.P., *Monitum in Orationem 37*, PG 36, 279-282.
- Momigliano A., *Ottavo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Roma 1987.
- Montacutius R., *Apparatus ad origines Ecclesiasticas*, Oxoniae 1635.
- Prinz K., *Epitaphios Logos. Struktur, Funktion und Bedeutung der Bestattungsreden im Athen des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt a/Main 1997.
- Rylaarsdam D., *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy. The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching*, Oxford 2014.
- Sajdak J., *De Gregorio Nazianzeno poetarum Christianorum fonte*, Kraków 1917.
- Sajdak J., *De Gregorio Nazianzeno posteriorum rhetorum, grammaticorum, lexicographorum fonte I*, „Eos” 16 (1910) s. 94-99.
- Sajdak J., *De Gregorio Nazianzeno posteriorum rhetorum, grammaticorum, lexicographorum fonte II*, „Eos” 18 (1912) s. 1-30.
- Sajdak J., *Die Scholiasten zu den Reden Gregors von Nazianz*, „Byzantinische Zeitschrift” 30 (1930) s. 268-274.
- Sajdak J., *Quaestiones Nazianzenicae I*, „Eos” 15 (1909) s. 18-48.
- Sievers G.R., *Das Leben des Libanius*, Berlin 1868.
- Sinko T., *De traditione Orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni. Pars prima*, Kraków 1917.
- Sinko T., *De traditione Orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni. Pars secunda: de traditione indirecta*, Kraków 1921.
- Sternbach L., *De Gregorio Nazianzeno Homeri interprete*, w: *Stromata in honorem Casimiri Morawski*, Cracoviae 1908.
- Strankowski M., *Zagrożenia w przepowiadaniu Słowa Bożego w świetle Enarrationes in Psalmos św. Augustyna*, „Vox Patrum” 60 (2013) s. 289-314.
- Suvaryan Y. – Mirzoyan V. – Hayrapetyan R., *Public Administration: Theory and History*, Yerevan 2014.
- Szwed-Kostecka J., *Panegyryki św. Jana Chryzostoma De laudibus Sancti Pauli – kwestia struktury*, „Źródła Humanistyki Europejskiej” 6 (2013) s. 191-208.
- Szymusiak J.M., *Grzegorz Teolog*, Poznań 1965.
- Tannous J., *You Are What You Read: Qenneshre and the Miaphysite Church in the Seventh Century*, w: *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East*, red. Ph. Wood, Oxford 2013, s. 83-102.
- Thomas G., *The Image of God in the Theology of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge 2019.
- Warner J., *Ecclesiae primitivae clericus: cuius gradus, educatio, tonsura, chorus, vita communis, vota, hierarchia, exponuntur*, b.m.w. 1686.
- Watt J.W., *Syriac*, w: *A Companion to Late Antique Literature*, red. S. McGill – E.J. Watts, b.m.w. 2018.
- Weissenbach J., *De eloquentia Patrum libri XIII*, Augustae Vindelicorum 1775.



# John Chrysostom ‘On the Incomprehensible Nature of God’ – The Simpler Way of Presenting Complex Theological and Philosophical Issues

Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska<sup>1</sup>

---

**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to indicate how, that is, with the help of which means, Chrysostom in his five homilies *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God* introduces his community in Antioch to the intricacies of the dispute with the Anomoeans, as far as the possibility of knowing God and his essence are concerned. The main differences between those texts and other fundamental polemical sources with Eunomius will also be taken under consideration. John uses both biblical and philosophical terms to underline the negative aspect of theology and his five homilies are not so theologically and philosophically sophisticated as Basil’s or Gregory’s texts, unlike even Gregory of Nazianzus, whose *Orations*, have a similar overall message. John uses methods adequate to accomplish his goal, which is to preserve the orthodox concept and unify the Antiochian Church.

**Keywords:** John Chrysostom; Anomoeans; incomprehensibility of God; Eunomius

---

The homilies analysed in this article came to light due to specific polemical circumstances with the Anomoeans, an important element being the dispute about the possibility of knowing God and his essence. As part of this dispute, five important orthodox texts have survived through to our times<sup>2</sup>, of which these homilies are the least known<sup>3</sup>. This is quite surprising, as

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr hab. Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska, Adjunct at the Interdisciplinary Research Centre of the University of Warsaw „Identity – Dialogue – Security”, University of Warsaw, Poland; email: k.kochanczyk-b@uw.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-4510-6111.

<sup>2</sup> These are: Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium*, Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, Gregorius Nyssenus, *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*, Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Orationes*, Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura*.

<sup>3</sup> This is evidenced by the number of bibliographic items related to the individual works of these authors.

John's nickname, Chrysostom, indicates that he was familiar for his wonderful speeches and preaching; his pastoral zeal was also famous.

The purpose of this paper is to indicate how, or, by the help of what means, Chrysostom introduced his community in Antioch to the intricacies of the dispute with the Anomoeans in addition to, how and why this text differs from other sources on the same theme.

## 1. Polemic with the Anomoeans

The first writing of the Anomoeans was Aetius' *Syntagmation* but the most important of these texts was Eunomius' *Apology* (*Liber apologeticus*). Basil responded to it with his *Against Eunomium* (*Adversus Eunomium*), to which Eunomius' *Apologia apologiae* was a response and, in turn, Gregory of Nyssa wrote his *Against Eunomium* (*Contra Eunomium*)<sup>4</sup> which was the core of the polemic. In addition to the above-mentioned works, we have the *Expositio fidei*, which is the explanation of the confession of faith of Eunomius and, the *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii*, which is the rejection of this confession by Gregory of Nyssa. Of the writings mentioned here, only the *Apologia apologiae* of Eunomium has not survived, but we are aware of it from long passages quoted faithfully, it seems, by Gregory of Nyssa in his *Contra Eunomium*.

Other Church Fathers that joined the polemics with Eunomius were, Gregory of Nazianzus, who wrote *Adversus Eunomianos* (*Orat. 27 that is First Theological Speech*) and, John Chrysostom with his *De incomprehensibili dei natura* (*Contra Anomoeos homiliae 1-5*). There were also other polemical works by Apollinarius, Didymus the Blind, Theodore of Mopuestia and Theodoret of Cyrus but they have not survived.

The key topics of this discussion were, on the one hand, the Trinitarian debate in which orthodox authors tried to defend the equality of three divine persons<sup>5</sup> and, the problem of the possibility of knowing

<sup>4</sup> More about the history of the controversy: M. Przyszychowska, *Historia sporu eunomiańskiego*, in: *Eunomiusz i jego adwersarze*, v. 1, ed. K. Kochańczyk-Bonińska – M. Przyszychowska – T. Stępień, Warszawa 2021, p. 15-49; T.A. Kopecek, *A history of neo-arianism*, Cambridge 1979.

<sup>5</sup> These issues have already been extensively researched and described by such excellent researchers as e.g. R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford 2000; S.M. Hildebrand, *A Reconsideration of the Development of Basil's Trinitarian Theology. The Dating of Ep. 9 and Contra Eunomium*, *VigCh* 59 (2004) p. 393-406; G. Maspero, *Trinity and Man. Gregory of Nyssa "Ad Ablabium"*, Leiden – Boston 2007; A. Mer-

God<sup>6</sup>, initiated by Eunomius. The second one grew into a separate concern and was not only deeply rooted in various philosophical traditions, but also surrounded by side themes, for example, the issue of the nature of language<sup>7</sup> and God's simplicity<sup>8</sup>. The polemic with the Anomoeans was the most important, the key stage of the Trinitarian dispute, the result of which was the final defence, and clarification of, the Nicene creed. The Anomoeans doctrine occurred after AD 350, when Aetius and Eunomius began to play an important role in the life of the Church, and lost its importance after the death of Eunomius around 394: over these forty years, as Marta Przyszychowska underlines, a debate took place on an unprecedented, substantive level, conducted using proven philosophical methods<sup>9</sup>. Eunomius in his *Apology*, in order to demonstrate the inequality of the Father and the Son, proposed two ways/methods of acquiring knowledge about God: first from the substance to the activity; and, the second, from the activity to the substance. Following Aetius, he believed that the names given to the Father ('unbegotten' – ἀγέννητος) and the Son ('begotten' – γέννημα) expressed their substance<sup>10</sup> and, from this assumption he derives the inequality of the divine persons. The defence of the

---

edith, *Studies in the Contra Eunomium of Gregory or Nyssa*, Oxford 1972; Ch.A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God. In Your Light We Shall See Light*, Oxford 2008; J. Zachhuber, *The Rise of Christian Theology and the End of Ancient Metaphysic. Patristic Philosophy from the Cappadocian Fathers to John of Damascus*, Oxford 2020, p. 32-71; J.T. Lienhard, *Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of 'One Hypostasis'*, in: *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. S.T. Davis et al., Oxford 2000, p. 99-121; J.C. Larchet, *La théologie des énergies divines. Des origines à saint Jean Damascène*, Paris 2010.

<sup>6</sup> For more detailed studies on the topic, see e.g.: T. Stepień – K. Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God, Known in His Activities. Incomprehensibility of God during the Trinitarian Controversy of the 4th Century*, Berlin 2018; D. Carabine, *The Unknown God. Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena*, Eugene 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Publications devoted to these issues are, for example: M. Del Cogliano, *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, Leiden – Boston 2010; D.G. Robertson, *A Patristic Theory of Proper Names*, "Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie" 84 (2002) p. 1-19; M.R. Barnes, *The Background and Use of Eunomius' Causal Language*, in: *Arianism after Arius*, ed. M.R. Barnes – D.H. Williams, Edinburgh 1993, p. 217-236; D. Birjukov, *Strategies of Naming in the Polemic between Eunomius and Basil of Caesarea in the Context of the Philosophical Tradition of Antiquity*, "Scrinium" 4 (2008) p. 104-121.

<sup>8</sup> For an excellent publication on this subject, see: A. Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Przyszychowska, *Historia sporu eunomiańskiego*, p.19.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Eunomius, *Liber Apologeticus* 12, 7-9.

incomprehensibility of God's substance was therefore not only a matter of proper epistemology, but also an apology for orthodox trinitology. As a consequence, the incomprehensibility of God was strong and a clear sign of being Orthodox at John's times.

## 2. The Historical Background of the Homilies

John Chrysostom wrote twelve homilies against the Anomoeans<sup>11</sup>, which can be divided into two series. The first five, which deal with God's incomprehensibility (and are our subject), were preached when he was a priest in Antioch 386-387<sup>12</sup> when the local community was divided. These homilies are very early as John became a priest in 386. In 379, Bishop Meletius managed to overcome schism and made an agreement with Paulinus, who supported the Anomoeans, although it was broken two years later after his death by the consecration of Bishop Flavian (381). The conflicts were vital to the Antioch community and in the same church, protagonists of both fractions could be found. It was in this permanent conflict, John preached one of his first homilies and the heretics were not only present in the church but also challenged him to do battle with them<sup>13</sup>. In fact, at that time, Antioch was really a cosmopolitan centre, in which pluralism was much stronger than the two Christian groups (heterodox and orthodox): there were also active Pagan and Jewish communities. Both of the latter also claimed Chrysostom's attention<sup>14</sup>.

## 3. The purpose and the topic of the homilies

John says explicitly that the purpose of his homilies is apologetic. His aim is the defence of true faith against the erroneous teachings of heretics, which in this case, concerns the possibility of knowing God's substance.

---

<sup>11</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* (I-V), ed. A.-M. Malingrey, SCh 28 bis, Paris 1970; (VI-XII), PG 48, 747-812, tr. P.W. Harkins, St. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, Washington 1984, p. 51-307.

<sup>12</sup> J. Daniélou, *Introduction*, in: *Jean Chrysostome sur l'incomprehensibilite de Dieu*, ed. A.-M. Malingrey, SCh 28 bis, Paris 1970, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 340-345.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. P.W. Harkins, *Introduction*, in: St. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, tr. P.W. Harkins, Washington 1984, p. 22.

“The time I spend on these arguments will both increase your knowledge about the Anomoeans and will make my prize of victory over those heretics a brighter one”<sup>15</sup>. The teaching presented by John is consistent with the main theses of other orthodox authors, especially those who also opposed the views of Eunomius. These are: the belief that the divine essence is incomprehensible<sup>16</sup> not only for people but also for angels and biblical heroes<sup>17</sup>; furthermore, not only divine essence but also divine economy, is inaccessible for people<sup>18</sup>, the same is with the essence of created world<sup>19</sup>. Like others, John claims that pretending that somebody knows God’s essence is madness and blasphemy<sup>20</sup> and has to deal with accusations of worshipping God that he does not know<sup>21</sup>. Undoubtedly, the key to all orthodox writers is to defend the thesis that God’s substance is completely unknowable. After all, no one has ever seen God<sup>22</sup>.

Paul said this because on the one hand he knows that God exists, whereas, on the other, he does not know what God is in his essence. He knows that God is wise but he does not know how great his wisdom is. He knows that God is great but he does not know how or what his greatness is. He also knows that God is everywhere present but he does not know how this is so. He knows that God provides for all things and that he preserves and governs them to perfection. But he does not know the way in which God does all these things. Therefore, he said: ‘Our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect’<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* IV 8-10, tr. Harkins, p. 115.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e.g. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* I 14; Gregorius Nazianzenus, *De filio, Oratio* 30, 17; Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 251-275; IV 302-309; III 53-59.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. e.g. Gregorius Nazianzenus, *De theologia, Oratio* 28, 17-20; Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* IV 302-309; III 53-59.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. e.g. Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Adversus Eunomianos, Oratio* 27, 3; Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 280-281.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. e.g. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* III 6; Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* III 473-480; III 194-196.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gregorius Nazianzenus, *De dogmate et constitutione Episcoporum, Oratio* 20, 11; Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 371-373.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. e.g. Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistula* 235, 2; Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium* III 1, 103-105.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* IV 159-233; Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 393-394.

<sup>23</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 290-301, tr. Harkins, p. 65.

Here John follows the arguments of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, based on the distinction between substance and activity in God<sup>24</sup>. It is through God's action in the world that we are able to know Him but, His substance remains inaccessible and unknowable. John's argumentation is therefore very simplified compared to the in-depth analysis of Gregory, who denies the possibility of knowing the substance of God from his activities<sup>25</sup>.

He also indicates that the belief that it is impossible to know God's substance, is common to Christians and Greek philosophers:

But why do I speak of the divine Scriptures when the absurdity of the Anomoeans is so obvious and their iniquity is so excessive that not even the pagans, who had wandered so far from the truth, ever tried to say anything like this? For no pagan ever dared to set down a definition of the divine essence or to encompass it with a name. And why do I speak of the divine essence? In their speculations on the nature of incorporeal beings, the Greeks did not set down a complete definition of this nature but gave an obscure statement and description rather than a definition<sup>26</sup>.

John does not go into details or analyses the views of individual schools, although it is clearly visible that it is inspired by scepticism in this matter:

So it is that all the fraud of the Anomoeans is refuted from these texts. When we do not know the essence itself, not that it is but what it is, it would be the height of folly to give it a name. Besides, even if it were clear and known, it would not be safe for us, of ourselves and by ourselves, to give a name or title to the essence of the master<sup>27</sup>.

In these words, we can hear Pyrrho's views, who, according to Aristotle, not only denied the possibility of knowing anything but, also advised against speaking about things we do not know<sup>28</sup>.

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Stępień – Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God*, p. 119-142.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Stępień – Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God*, p. 174-193.

<sup>26</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 357-365, tr. Harkins, p. 153.

<sup>27</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 334-339, tr. Harkins, p. 152.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 14, 18, 1-5.



Moreover, for Chrysostom, God is unknowable not only to man but also to prophets and angels<sup>29</sup>:

Let us call upon him, then, as the ineffable God who is beyond our intelligence, invisible, incomprehensible, who transcends the power of mortal words. Let us call on him as the God who is inscrutable to the angels, unseen by the Seraphim, inconceivable to the Cherubim, invisible to the principalities, to the powers, and to the virtues, in fact, to all creatures without qualification, because he is known only by the Son and the Spirit<sup>30</sup>.

Although the angels do not know the essence of God, they are intermediators between transcendent God and human beings (like in Judaism<sup>31</sup>) and emphasise the incomprehensibility of the Creator<sup>32</sup>. According to Chrysostom, God wants to be known by His creation but everything that was revealed to us about Him is very distant from the true knowledge about His nature<sup>33</sup>.

Moreover, like the other authors, he points to limitations in human cognition that also apply to the terrestrial reality<sup>34</sup>. Human beings are unable to know even the material word<sup>35</sup> and their own soul<sup>36</sup>, so how can they comprehend angels<sup>37</sup> or, the reality that is above him<sup>38</sup>. In John's view, we can observe the lack of trust in human cognition, typical of authors from the latter half of the 4th century<sup>39</sup>, which is, according to J. Daniélou, a common place between pagan and Christian philosophy in the late Antiquity<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 302-327.

<sup>30</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* III 53-59, tr. Harkins, p. 97.

<sup>31</sup> John also tried to provide pastoral care to the followers of Judaism living in the city. Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* II, 9-20.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* II 276-283; III 338-342.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Stępień – Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God*, p. 224.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. e.g. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* I 14, 1-3; Gregorius Nysenus, *Contra Eunomium* II 138, 2-11; Gregorius Nazianzenus, *De filio*, *Oratio* 30, 17.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* II 473-480.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 259-283.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* III 194-196.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 249-266.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Stępień – Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God*, p. 220.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique*, Paris 1953, p 131.

#### 4. How Chrysostom protects the faithful of Antioch from the error of the Anomoeans?

In order to achieve the assumed goal, John uses homiletic methods. First of all, he refers to biblical examples and characters, as well as biblical metaphors because the Holy Scriptures are a common authority, for heretics and orthodox, who listen to his speeches.

Thus, the first in the series of homilies begins with an outline of the situation of the community. Referring to the evangelical image of the good shepherd, he distributes roles in the community. The heretic is called a wolf; the community, sheep; and, the bishop is presented as the shepherd. John introduces himself as a dog fighting a wolf to protect the flock. He purposely quotes St. Paul to indicate that the key to Christianity is not full knowledge but great love<sup>41</sup> and, he calls this apostle to reassure his listeners that even this saint did not know the divine substance, which he himself confessed with the words: "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known"<sup>42</sup>. Among the other biblical figures mentioned by Chrysostom in his preaching are Adam<sup>43</sup> and Zachariah<sup>44</sup>.

In his teaching, John Chrysostom tries to use simple examples and refer to experiences common to people such as the limitations of cognition which are natural for humans<sup>45</sup>. He points out that everyone is aware of this, so those who think that they have all the knowledge should be considered madmen, not someone better<sup>46</sup> for it is nothing but madness to believe that you can know the substance of God<sup>47</sup>. Such madness, or even blasphemy, does not harm God but its author<sup>48</sup>. In order for ordinary listeners to understand the absurdity of heretical views<sup>49</sup>, he uses simple models:

How great is the distance between the knowledge which is going to be given to us and the knowledge which we now have? How great is the distance be-

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 32-57.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Cor. 13:12.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 22; IX 5.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* VI 32.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 155-157.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 168-170.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 188-190.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* III 32-41.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 190-195.

tween a complete and perfect man and an infant at the breast? For that is the degree of superiority of the knowledge to come in comparison to our present knowledge<sup>50</sup>.

Chrysostom deliberately uses pictorial language to provide better reception, for example, he writes at the beginning of his fifth speech about day and night and, as the editor of the English translation points out, night and sleep, which keep individuals from going beyond the measure of their strength, are used in other Chrysostom's treatises<sup>51</sup>. The preacher's words seem to reach everyone, even the simplest of minds:

[...] for the distance between God and man is as great as the distance between the potter and the clay. Rather the distance is not merely as great but much greater. The potter and the clay are of one and the same substance. It is just as Job said: 'I admit it as for those who dwell in houses of clay because we are ourselves formed from the same clay'<sup>52</sup>.

Other times John uses, common to everybody, the sensual experience of perceiving light in order to make his thesis more convincing:

Yet they did not see the pure light itself nor the pure essence itself. What they saw was a condescension accommodated to their nature. What is this condescension? God condescends whenever He is not seen as He is, but in the way one incapable of beholding Him is able to look upon Him. In this way God reveals Himself by accommodating what reveals to the weakness of vision of those who behold Him<sup>53</sup>.

It can also be observed that in the following speeches, John grades the difficulty and introduces more complicated issues, as if making the audience familiar with the topic. He addresses the most important objection of the Anomoeans that Christians do not know the One they worship<sup>54</sup>, an-

---

<sup>50</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 120-123, tr. Harkins, p. 56.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 20-24.

<sup>52</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* II 336-341, tr. Harkins, p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* III 162-166, tr. Harkins, p. 101.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 366-429.

swering it only in the fifth speech. He describes God as a spirit and returns to the biblical arguments quoted in previous homilies. He clearly grades the difficulty by leading the audience by the hand.

John is not afraid of various expressions of negation<sup>55</sup>, referring to terms used both by Neoplatonists<sup>56</sup> and those found in the Bible<sup>57</sup>; he also takes care to explain the meaning of the words used:

He did not say: ‘Who dwells in incomprehensible light, (ἀκατάλητος)’ but: ‘an unapproachable (ἀπρόσιτος) light’, and this is much stronger than ‘incomprehensible’. A thing is said to be incomprehensible when those who seek after it fail to comprehend it, even after they have searched and sought to understand it. A thing is unapproachable which, from the start, cannot be investigated nor can anyone come near to it. We call the sea incomprehensible because, even when divers lower themselves into its waters and go down to a great depth, they cannot find the bottom. We call that thing unapproachable which, from the start, cannot be searched out or investigated<sup>58</sup>.

The catalogue of terms used by him, created mainly with the use of *alpha privativum*, is wide and, their origin and context of use should be analyzed in a separate, dedicated paper. Chrysostom uses both biblical and philosophical terms (from Philo and Clement of Alexandria) to underline the negative aspect in theology but, although he does use the language of negative theology, he doesn’t formulate his own theory of names. Contrary to Basil and Gregory, he fights with the Anomoeans arguments without resorting to a complicated theory of language that would be too sophisticated for homiletic usage<sup>59</sup>. Of course, as befits Chrysostom, the text is written in a beautiful language, using direct phrases to listeners and rhetorical figures like oxymorons, for example, when he calls, stupidity for God (in the eyes of the world), “the most rational madness”<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Daniélou, *Introduction*, p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Daniélou, *Introduction*, p. 19.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Daniélou, *Introduction*, p. 18-20.

<sup>58</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* III 124-133, tr. Har-kins, p. 100.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Del Cogliano, *Basil of Caesarea’s Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, p. 153-260.

<sup>60</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* II 66.

## 5. The uniqueness of John's homily compared to other anti-Eunomian texts

Although the content of John's homily is in line with the rest of the texts against the Anomoeans heresies of this epoch, as has been mentioned above, several differences can be identified, starting with the question of form. All these texts are apologetical but have different recipients. The listeners present at the Antiochian church were supporters of both Christian factions and this is already peculiar to John's work compared to other polemical writings because they addressed both the Heterodox and the Orthodox hence why they are more balanced. He does not speak out against specific people and tries to be moderate, even mild<sup>61</sup>, condemning erroneous teaching and deeds, not the people themselves, however, in practice, his message is not always so delicate: he calls the Anomoeans unbelieving and infidel and explains later that he is referring to their deeds<sup>62</sup>. He treats them like the sick in need of healing<sup>63</sup>. On the one hand, he accuses the Anomoeans of contradictions and lack of modesty, and these come from the devil<sup>64</sup>, and on the other, at the end of the first homily, he calls for peace<sup>65</sup>.

John prepared homilies in which he identifies the problems of his community and tries to solve it in order to protect his flock from the heresy of the Anomoeans, that is, the one particular aspect which is their belief that they have knowledge of God's essence. For comparison, Basil and Gregory formulate treatises in which they analyse, point after point, every Eunomian thesis, even quoting them: these are *refutatio* like *Contra Celsum*. The closest, in terms of form, are the *Theological Orations* of Gregory of Nazians although they are also more theologically sophisticated and, the accent is slightly different because, as far as the incomprehensibility of God is concerned for Gregory, the moral aspect is the key to getting to know God – a virtuous life is a necessary condition for practising theology<sup>66</sup>.

We have already indicated some differences in the scope of the matters raised which concern the choice of only one issue (the unknowable

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 351.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* II 1-2.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* III 338-352.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* V 483-487.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Joannes Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura* I 424-428.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Stępień – Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God*, p. 213.

of God). The defence of orthodoxy in this regard is done mainly through references to the Bible and simple examples, not through theological and philosophical subtleties. John uses clear metaphors and explanations; unequivocal borders between what is orthodox and, what is vain knowledge of the Anomoeans. What should be also mentioned, although these are apologetical homilies, are that they have a conciliatory and encouraging character. John presents a more pastoral attitude but it does not mean that Chrysostom was not aware of all the nuances of the controversy. Despite those differences in form, J. Daniélou points out that John Chrysostom most likely knew the *Adversus Eunomium* of Basil the Great<sup>67</sup>. On the contrary, we find much proof that he deliberately simplified his teaching, for example, omitting philosophical background<sup>68</sup>. Additionally, John Chrysostom implements not only the thoughts of Gregory and Basil (main opponents of Eunomius), but includes his own interpretations as well<sup>69</sup>.

## 6. Conclusions

As I have shown, John Chrysostom concentrated his polemic with the Anomoeans on one of the key problems of the theological debate – the incomprehensibility of God. John addressed his apologetical homilies to the community which was composed of both the orthodox and the Anomoeans. His aim is to preserve the orthodox concept and unify the Antiochian church. He uses the common source, that is, the Bible, both from the Old and New Testament, as well as universal experience, to underline that both people and angels cannot get knowledge about the essence of God but, they do not need it to love and worship Him. Contrary to Basil and Gregory, he fights the Anomoeans arguments without a complicated theory of language that would be too sophisticated for homiletic usage. He establishes clear borders between what is orthodox and what is vain knowledge of the Anomoeans. In his five homilies he guides the audience from simpler to more complicated issues, as if by the hand.

---

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Daniélou, *Introduction*, p. 16.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Stępień – Kochańczyk-Bonińska, *Unknown God*, p. 219.

<sup>69</sup> Daniélou, *Introduction*, p. 25.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Basilii Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium*, ed. B. Sesboüé, SCh 299, 305, Paris 1982-1983.
- Eunomius, *Liber apologeticus*, ed. R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The extant works*, Oxford 1987, p. 34-74.
- Eunomius, *Expositio fidei*, ed. R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The extant works*, Oxford 1987, p. 150-158.
- Eunomius, *Fragmenta*, ed. R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius. The extant works*, Oxford 1987, p. 176-178.
- Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, ed. K. Mras, Eusebius Werke, v. 8: *Die Praeparatio evangelica*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 43/1-2, Berlin 1954, p. 3-613; 3-426.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Adversus Eunomianos (orat. 27)*, ed. J. Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz. Die fünf theologischen Reden*, Düsseldorf 1963, p. 38-60.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *De dogmate et constitutione Episcoporum (orat. 20)*, PG 35, 1065-1080.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *De filio (orat. 30)*, ed. J. Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz. Die fünf theologischen Reden*, Düsseldorf 1963, p. 170-216.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus, *De theologia (orat. 28)*, ed. J. Barbel, *Gregor von Nazianz. Die fünf theologischen Reden*, Düsseldorf 1963, p. 62-126.
- Gregorius Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, ed. W. Jaeger, in: *Gregorii Nysseni opera*, v. 1/1 and 2/2, Leiden 1960, p. 3-409; 3-311.
- Gregorius Nyssenus, *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii*, ed. W. Jaeger, in: *Gregorii Nysseni opera*, v. 2/2, Leiden 1960, p. 312-410.
- Joannas Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura (I-V)*, ed. A.-M. Malingrey, SCh 28 bis, Paris 1970, tr. P.W. Harkins, St. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, Washington 1984, p. 51-163.
- Joannas Chrysostomos, *De incomprehensibili Dei natura (VI-XII)*, PG 48, 747-812; tr. P.W. Harkins, St. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, Washington 1984, p. 164-307.

### Studies

- Barnes M.R., *The Background and Use of Eunomius' Causal Language*, in: *Arianism after Arius*, ed. M.R. Barnes – D.H. Williams, Edinburgh 1993, p. 217-236.
- Beeley Ch.A., *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God. In Your Light We Shall See Light*, Oxford 2008.
- Birjukov D., *Strategies of Naming in the Polemic between Eunomius and Basil of Caesarea in the Context of the Philosophical Tradition of Antiquity*, "Scrinium" 4 (2008) p. 104-121.

- Carabine D., *The Unknown God. Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena*, Eugene 1995.
- Daniélou J., *Introduction*, in: Jean Chrysostome, *Sur l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu*, SCh 28 bis, Paris 1970, p. 9-89.
- Daniélou J., *Platonism et théologie mystique*, Paris 1953.
- Del Cogliano M., *Basil of Caesarea's Anti-Eunomian Theory of Names*, Leiden – Boston 2010.
- Hanson R.P.C., *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian Controversy, 318–381*, Grand Rapids 2005.
- Harkins P.W., *Introduction*, in: St. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, Washington 1984, p. 3-47.
- Hildebrand S.M., *A Reconsideration of the Development of Basil's Trinitarian Theology. The Dating of 'Ep. 9' and 'Contra Eunomium'*, "Vigiliae Christianae" 59 (2004) p. 393-406.
- Kopecek T.A., *A history of neo-arianism*, Cambridge 1979.
- Lienhard T.J., *Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of 'One Hypostasis'*, in: *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. S.T. Davis et al., Oxford, 2000, p. 99-121.
- Maspero G., *Trinity and Man. Gregory of Nyssa "Ad Ablabium"*, Leiden – Boston 2007.
- Meredith A., *Studies in the Contra Eunomium of Gregory or Nyssa*, Oxford 1972.
- Przyszychowska M., *Historia sporu eunomiańskiego*, in: *Eunomiusz i jego adwersarze*, v. 1, ed. K. Kochańczyk-Bonińska – M. Przyszychowska – T. Stępień, v. 1, Warszawa 2021, p. 15-49.
- Radde-Gallwitz A., *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity*, Oxford 2009.
- Robertson D.G., *A Patristic Theory of Proper Names*, "Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie" 84 (2002) p. 1-19.
- Stępień T. – Kochańczyk-Bonińska K., *Unknown God, Known in His Activities Incomprehensibility of God during the Trinitarian Controversy of the 4th Century*, Berlin 2018.
- Vaggione R.P., *General Introduction*, in: Eunomius, *The extant works*, Oxford, 1987, p. XII-XVII.
- Zachhuber J., *The Rise of Christian Theology and the End of Ancient Metaphysic. Patristic Philosophy from the Cappadocian Fathers to John of Damascus*, Oxford 2020.





# La emoción de la alegría en los *Escolios a los salmos* de Evagrio Póntico

## The Emotion of Joy in Evagrius of Pontus' *Scholia to the Psalms*

Rubén Peretó Rivas<sup>1</sup>

---

**Abstract:** In this paper I propose to analyse Evagrius Ponticus' treatment of emotions, especially happiness, in his *Scholia to the Psalms*. First, I will contextualise Evagrius' work, which has just been published, with its own characteristics, both in terms of literary genre and in terms of the type of Evagrian exegesis. Then, the place of emotions in the text will be discussed, with particular emphasis on joy, on the basis of the analysis of all the occurrences of that concept in the *Scholia*. As a result, it is observed that Evagrius' hermeneutic of the Psalms, at least in the case of joy, is fundamentally allegorical, which would make impossible the existence of joy in man in its classical sense, since it could only be experienced as the reaction to the possession of a spiritual good, which is gnosis or knowledge of God. In this way, the *Scholia to the Psalms* support the spiritualistic interpretation of Evagrius' doctrine.

**Keywords:** Evagrius Ponticus; Patristic exegesis; Emotions; Happiness

---

### 1. Los *Escolios a los salmos* de Evagrio Póntico. Género y características

A fines de 2021 fueron finalmente publicados los *Escolios a los salmos* de Evagrio Póntico, a partir de un arduo trabajo que a lo largo de muchos años desarrollaron Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, Paul Géhin y Matthieu Cassin. La obra, en dos gruesos volúmenes, apareció en la colección *Sources Chrè-*

---

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Rubén Peretó Rivas – Universidad Nacional de Cuyo – CONICET, Mendoza. Profesor Ordinario. Centro de Estudios Filosóficos Medievales, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Argentina; email: ruben.peretorivas@fulbrightmail.org; ORCID: 0000-0002-7960-1129.

*tiennes* y constituye el comentario exegético más importante de Evagrio<sup>2</sup>. El texto había sido atribuido a Orígenes, y con esa autoría aparece en el tomo 12 de la *Patrologia Graeca* pero, merced al trabajo minucioso de Hans Urs von Balthasar y de Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, pudo ser restituido a su verdadero autor hace ya algunas décadas. Finalmente, contamos ya con la edición crítica cuidadosamente preparada.

Evagrio utiliza para su comentario un género literario que le era muy familiar: el de los escolios, semejantes a las *kephalaia* que había utilizado en varias ocasiones anteriormente<sup>3</sup>. Se trata de textos o párrafos breves y discontinuos, a veces de no más de una o dos líneas, en los que expresa su interpretación de los versículos de cada salmo. Esta característica propia del género implica ciertos límites puesto que el pensamiento que se quiere transmitir es escasamente desarrollado siendo el lector, o el oyente, quien debe completarlo. Evagrio escribe al respecto: “Pienso que este versículo contiene una gran y profunda contemplación; quien quiera explicarla irá más allá de la regla de los escolios”<sup>4</sup>. La reserva que señala es con respecto a completar o explicar públicamente o por escrito, una idea que sólo está destinada a aquellos que han tenido algún tipo de iniciación que los hace capaces de profundizar en el significado de esas pocas palabras. Evagrio no hace más que seguir la práctica de varios autores con los que se formó. Clemente de Alejandría afirma en numerosos pasajes de su obra la existencia de doctrinas que no volcará sobre el papel. En los capítulos introductorios de *Stromateis* I escribe:

Hay cosas que, escogiendo de lo conocido, tengo que pasar por alto voluntariamente, ya que tengo miedo de poner por escrito incluso aquello que reservamos al hablar, y no por envidia, pues no sería lícito, sino por respeto para quienes las lean, no sea que se precipiten a ellas de manera infundada, y venga a suceder que tendamos una espada al niño, como afirman los que gustan de proverbios<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia in Psalmos*, ed. M.-J. Rondeau – P. Géhin – M. Cassin, SCH 614-615, Paris 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Un completo y analítico estudio sobre este género literario puede verse en: J. Kalvesmaki, *Evagrius in the Byzantine Genre of Chapters*, in: *Evagrius and his Legacy*, ed. J. Kalvesmaki – R. Darling Young, Notre Dame 2016, p. 257-287.

<sup>4</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 5 ad Ps. 88,9. La traducción de todos los textos patristicos, con excepción de *Stromata* I, pertenecen al autor del artículo.

<sup>5</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* I 1, 14, 3.

Revelar completamente una doctrina espiritual puede provocar un daño para aquellos que no están preparados para recibirla puesto que podrían *tropezar* y hacerse una enorme herida como la que se haría un niño con un arma de filo.

En ese mismo párrafo de los *Stromateis*, Clemente hace referencia al método que utiliza en su escrito y que es instrumental a su cometido de dejar ocultos ciertos aspectos de su doctrina: “Para soslayar la debilidad de mi memoria, también me he procurado un saludable remedio mnemotécnico: la forma de exposición mediante resúmenes (κεφαλαίων) [...]”<sup>6</sup>. Se refiere a las *kephálaia*, que eran pequeños capítulos o frases que servían para oscurecer las enseñanzas a aquellos que no estaban avanzados en el conocimiento y que, además, eran la base para su explicación oral. Se trataba de un modo de privilegiar la oralidad por sobre el escrito, en tanto se adaptaban mejor para ser memorizadas por el discípulo y servían de disparadores de preguntas y diálogo con el maestro<sup>7</sup>.

Lo que en un comienzo Clemente consideraba un consejo contenido en los Evangelios, más adelante lo entendió como una prohibición: “Está prohibido comunicar a los perros las cosas santas, en tanto ellos son bestias salvajes”<sup>8</sup>. Y la violación de este mandato poseía consecuencias graves, tal como las describe en *Stromateis* V comentando un pasaje del Éxodo:

‘Si alguno cava un pozo’, dice la Escritura, ‘y no lo cubre, y allí cae un toro o un asno, el dueño del pozo pagará una indemnización en plata [...]’ De este modo, el dueño del pozo, que es el gnóstico, será penado con una multa, dice el texto, es decir, será responsable de aquel que haya tropezado, ya que solamente estaba preparado para una palabra atenuada [...]”<sup>9</sup>.

Clemente consideraba en este caso que quienes están en posesión de las enseñanzas secretas – los gnósticos – y cuya misión fundamental consiste en enseñar, deben tener particular cuidado acerca de qué es lo que

<sup>6</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* I 14, 2.

<sup>7</sup> D. Brakke, *Mystery and Secrecy in the Egyptian Desert: Esotericism and Evagrius of Pontus*, in: *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas and Practices*, ed. C.H. Bull – L. Ingeborg Lied – T.D. Turner, Leiden – Boston 2012, p. 212-213. Cfr. también R.P.C. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, London 1954, p. 53-90.

<sup>8</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* II 2, 7, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* V 8, 53, 5-54, 4.

enseñan y a quién se lo enseñan, porque muchos discípulos son solamente capaces de recibir una versión morigerada de esa doctrina<sup>10</sup>.

San Basilio, tan cercano a Evagrio, admitía también la existencia de doctrinas no reveladas pero que, sin embargo, poseían una importancia fundamental: “Entre las doctrinas y las proclamaciones observadas en la Iglesia, algunas provienen de la enseñanza escrita, y otras se las ha recogido, transmitidas secretamente, de la tradición apostólica. [...] todas tienen la misma fuerza en relación con la piedad [...]”<sup>11</sup>. El acento es puesto en la importancia de las doctrinas no escritas, en primer lugar, por su origen apostólico y, también, por la necesidad de preservarlas de su vulgarización. Por eso escribía un poco más adelante:

Los Apóstoles y los Padres, que han dispuesto desde el comienzo todo lo que concierne a las Iglesias, conservaron también los misterios, con discreción y silencio, en su carácter sagrado, porque aquello que llega a oídos del vulgo ya no es más un misterio. Este es el motivo de la tradición de las cosas no escritas: impedir que, a falta de protección seria, el alto conocimiento de las doctrinas se convierta, por la rutina, en un objeto de desprecio de las masas<sup>12</sup>.

Orígenes hace recaer la responsabilidad del secreto no tanto en quien se debía formar cuanto en quien enseñaba. Al comentar la palabra *φῆμιός*, explica:

Esta palabra se puede traducir por sobriedad de la boca. Aquel que haya podido contemplar el misterio de Cristo y del Espíritu Santo, y que haya visto o comprendido aquello *que no le está permitido a los hombres hablar* (II Cor. 12,4), deberá tener la sobriedad en sus labios y saber a quién, cuándo y cómo hay que hablar de los misterios divinos<sup>13</sup>.

La decisión de exponer o no los misterios a un cierto auditorio quedaba reservada a la prudencia o sobriedad del maestro. Era él quien debía sopesar la capacidad o preparación de sus discípulos para recibir los secretos, y era esta una tarea que encerraba una pesada responsabilidad. Develar lo

<sup>10</sup> Sobre las doctrinas secretas en Clemente puede verse E.L.Fortin, *Clement of Alexandria and the Esoteric Tradition*, in: *Studia Patristica: Classica, philosophica et ethica, theologica, Augustiniana, post-patristica*, v. 9/3, ed. F.L. Cross, Berlin 1966, p. 41-56.

<sup>11</sup> Basilius Magnus, *De Spiritu Sancto* XXVII 66, 188A

<sup>12</sup> Basilius Magnus, *De Spiritu Sancto* XXVII 66, 188A.

<sup>13</sup> Orígenes Alexandrinus, *Adnotationes in Numeros* 27, 12, 11.

oculto a quienes no eran dignos de ello “[...] sería una impiedad que implica una traición de los oráculos secretos de la sabiduría de Dios, de acuerdo a la hermosa sentencia: ‘La sabiduría no entrará en un alma perversa; no entrará en un cuerpo deudor del pecado’ (Sab. 1,4)”<sup>14</sup>.

Es este el criterio que siguió Evagrio en varias de sus obras y también en los escolios a los salmos que, en su gran mayoría, son frases muy breves, integradas por un vocabulario en el que aparecen una y otra vez los conceptos propios de su sistema teológico y espiritual, cuyo significado solo podía ser completamente descifrado por aquellos que estuvieran iniciados en su doctrina<sup>15</sup>.

## 2. La exégesis de Evagrio Póntico. Características

La característica que distingue de modo principal la labor exegetica de Evagrio de otros autores contemporáneos es que la Escritura es presentada como un movimiento de la historia personal de cada hombre a través de los tres estadios propios de su sistema, que él denomina *práctica* y *gnóstica*, la cual, a su vez, se divide en *física* y *teológica*<sup>16</sup>. Ellos se corresponden con las tres etapas del progreso espiritual. La primera de ellas, la *práctica* (πρᾶξις o πρακτική) es un proceso interior que, por la observancia de los mandamientos divinos, el ejercicio de las virtudes, la lucha contra los pensamientos malvados y contra los demonios que los inspiran, conduce al dominio de las pasiones, es decir, a la *apátheia*. De este modo se logra la purificación del alma, sobre todo en sus partes inferiores – concupiscible e irascible – a las que re-orienta hacia un funcionamiento normal conforme a su naturaleza original.

La segunda etapa es la *physiké*. Mientras que los hombres pueden acceder al conocimiento (γνώσις), los demonios, por el contrario, se caracterizan por su rechazo de la ciencia y su ignorancia (ἀγνώσις y ἀγνοια). El órgano del conocimiento es el intelecto (νοῦς), y al ser purificado queda liberado de las adherencias del mundo sensible, lo cual le permite vivir en el inteligible y ejercer sin sujeciones su actividad propia de conocimiento, la cual es su vocación natural.

<sup>14</sup> Origenes Alexandrinus, *Contra Celsus* V 29.

<sup>15</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Gnosticus* 50: “Teniendo la mirada constantemente dirigida hacia el arquetipo, esfuérzate por dibujar las imágenes (εἰκόνας) sin olvidar nada de aquellos que contribuye a recuperar a aquel que ha caído”.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. L. Dysinger, *Psalmody and Prayer in the Writings of Evagrius Ponticus*, Oxford 2005, p. 64.

Este primer grado de la vida gnóstica tiene como objetivo la “ciencia verdadera de los seres”, es decir, alcanzar la naturaleza profunda de las criaturas en su relación con el Logos. Se trata de comprender los principios explicativos de todas las cosas, los cuales se designan con el término estoico de λόγοι. Todo conocimiento posee dos aspectos: el de los objetos mismos (πράγματα) y el de sus razones (λόγοι). La naturaleza es vista entonces como un gran libro en el cual se descubre la acción multiforme de Dios como creador, sabio, providente y juez.

En el término del proceso espiritual, y tercera etapa, se sitúa la *ciencia de Dios* o teología. La expresión γνῶσις τοῦ Θεοῦ (“conocimiento de Dios”) es muy frecuente en los escritos de Evagrio, quien la identifica con la Tierra Prometida, que aparece con tanta frecuencia en los salmos, y con el Reino de Dios tal como aparece en los evangelios. Se trata de una ciencia ilimitada, que sobrepasa el conocimiento o la contemplación de las naturalezas segundas o seres físicos. Escribe Evagrio: “No hay límite a su grandeza: La contemplación de todos los seres es limitada; la ciencia de la sola santa Trinidad es sin límites, porque ella es la sabiduría esencial”<sup>17</sup>. Es un abismo en el que Dios se envuelve como con un manto y designa la “incomprehensibilidad de la ciencia de Dios”<sup>18</sup>.

Es, entonces, en relación a este camino en tres etapas que Evagrio realiza su interpretación de las Escrituras y, de modo particular, de los salmos. Paul Géhin destaca esta característica y distingue entre la interpretación evagriana de cada palabra en particular, que generalmente toma la forma de definiciones alegóricas, y una exégesis más variada en frases más extensas<sup>19</sup>. En los *Escolios a los salmos*, las definiciones simbólicas de las palabras son muy frecuentes y, en ocasiones, sus escolios se asemejan a glosarios que contienen listas de términos bíblicos y sus “traducciones” espirituales. En el caso de frases más extensas, en cambio, a veces parafrasea el texto, dejándolo muy parecido al original por lo que la interpretación que ofrece es bastante obvia. En otros escolios, su exégesis consiste en silogismos lógicos, en un texto bíblico paralelo o una cita tomada de las Escrituras o de alguna de su obra o de otros autores. Un cuarto método consiste en escolios que contienen proverbios compuestos por el mismo Evagrio y modelados según la sabiduría bíblica. Finalmente, el último método

<sup>17</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 2 ad Ps. 144,3.

<sup>18</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 5 ad Ps. 103,6.

<sup>19</sup> P. Géhin, *Introduction*, in: Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia ad Proverbios*, SCh 340, Paris 1987, p. 15-16.

consiste en una frase tipo “pregunta-respuesta” en la que resuelve o insinúa la solución del enigma que ha propuesto<sup>20</sup>.

De esta manera entonces, y tal como señala Rowan Williams, la exégesis de Evagrio invita a que el lector se identifique en la Escritura a fin de re-apropiarse de lo que es y de lo que puede llegar a ser. El texto que Evagrio lee exige un cambio en cada uno que lo lee, y que está indicado en ese mismo texto. Se trata de una lectura “dramática” que implica que la apropiación de la historia por parte del lector no es una relación estática de confrontación con imágenes de la virtud o del vicio, o con un cuadro que ya ha sido completamente acabado, sino un trabajo activo a través del movimiento de la historia en el presente<sup>21</sup>.

En el caso de los salmos, si bien Evagrio comenta cada uno de ellos, no todos los versículos reciben la atención del comentarista. Y el criterio que a primera instancia parece ser el adoptado es la capacidad que tiene el versículo de recibir una interpretación alegórica. Para Evagrio, los acontecimientos históricos que rodean o aparecen en los salmos no poseen demasiada importancia; son acontecimientos que sólo ocurrieron una vez. La historia que a él le interesa es una historia espiritual que trasciende el tiempo y que consiste en la historia del hombre interior y de la aventura cósmica de las naturalezas racionales<sup>22</sup>. El siguiente ejemplo es suficientemente ilustrativo:

“Él [Dios] cambia el mar en tierra seca”: “No se dice ‘el que cambió’, sino ‘el que cambia’. Porque en la historia, ese hecho se produjo solamente una vez, pero en el pensamiento ocurre siempre, cuando Dios hace pasar a la virtud y a la ciencia a las almas agitadas por el amargo oleaje de esta vida y sacudidas por los vientos de las enseñanzas”<sup>23</sup>.

### 3. La emoción de la alegría en los *Escolios a los salmos*

Evagrio otorga a las emociones un importante papel en el viaje que el hombre, “sacudido por el amargo oleaje de esta vida”, debe atravesar. Él fue el primer autor en elaborar el listado de los ocho *logismoi* o pensamien-

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Dysinger, *Psalmody and Prayer*, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. R. Williams, *On Christian Theology*, Oxford 2000, p. 44-59.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Introduction*, in: Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia in Psalmos*, ed. M.-J. Rondeau – P. Géhin – M. Cassin, SCh 614-615, Paris 2021, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 3, ad Ps. 65,6.

tos malvados, que luego pasaron a ser, en el ámbito latino, los siete pecados capitales, y entre ellos aparecen varios que se manifiestan fundamentalmente como emociones, por ejemplo, la tristeza, la acedia o la cólera. El libro de los salmos, por otro lado, ocupa un lugar de preeminencia no sólo por haber sido el más conocido por los autores medievales sino porque, entre los que integran las Sagradas Escrituras, es en el que afloran de un modo más claro y evidente las emociones: el arrepentimiento del rey David en el salmo 50, la tristeza en el salmo 42 o la nostalgia en el salmo 136, son ejemplos ampliamente conocidos y que la liturgia judía y cristiana ha hecho encarnar en el alma de sus fieles.

A fin de restringir el objeto de estudio de este artículo, me centraré en el análisis que Evagrio propone de un complejo de emociones que confluyen en lo que denominamos “alegría”.

La alegría es una emoción propia del hombre y aparece con frecuencia en las Escrituras, ya sea que se trate de la alegría individual o colectiva. Están los hombres que expresan su alegría vivida en el presente o que la han experimentado en el pasado, o bien, los que la anhelan para un futuro una vez que haya pasado alguna desgracia. Pueden ser judíos o paganos, justos o malvados, ricos y pobres.

La alegría aparece en hombres de distintos rangos y funciones sociales, como el rey (Ps 21,2.7; 45,9.1), y aparece también en el justo, que se alegra por la poderosa intervención de Dios, que lo salva (Ps 9,3.15; 31,8; 35,9; 43,4; 58,11; 64,11; 86,4; 109,28). Esa alegría se experimenta en el corazón (Ps 4,8; 16,9; 119,14.16; 104,15), o en el alma (Ps 94,19).

Colectivamente, el pueblo de Israel se alegra porque fue sacado de la tierra de Egipto (Ps 66,6; 105,43), los navegantes porque son salvados de olas tumultuosas (Ps 107,30) y los que regresan a la patria después de años de exilio (Ps 126,3). Con motivo de una fiesta de bodas, se alegran las doncellas (Ps 45,16) y a causa de los juicios justos del Señor, se alegra Sión y las hijas de Judá (Ps 97,8). Y también los impíos se alegran (Ps 35,15.26; 89,43; 94,3).

La alegría, en el salterio, se asocia de modo particular al culto. En el nombre de Yahvé se alegra el pueblo que sabe aclamarlo (Ps 89,7) y que se reúne para oír y recordar su palabra (Ps 50,7; 81,9.12; 85,9; 111,4), y para cumplir los votos y promesas (Ps 22,4.23; 23,26; 35,18; 40,10-11; 107,32). Pero el culto se ordena a la liturgia celestial, y la comunidad de los santos se alegra también en el cielo (Ps 89,6; 103,20-21; 148,2; 29,1)<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>24</sup> Sobre el tema de la alegría en el salterio, cf. M. Talamé, *Aclamen al Señor con alegría. La alegría en el salterio*, Buenos Aires 2007.



Evagrio, en sus *Escolios a los salmos*, utiliza cuatro términos para distinguir sendas emociones: εὐφραίνω (deleitar/se, regocijar/se), ἀγάλλω (exultar, celebrar), χαρά (gozo, regocijo) y εὐθυμία (de ánimo alegre, alegría). En general, son utilizados de modo indistinto como si, para el exégeta, no hubiera diferencia entre ellos. En los siguientes dos casos, sin embargo, muestra los matices que, a su criterio, los distinguen.

En primer lugar, Evagrio marca una distinción entre exultación y gozo, según la cual éste sería una especie de aquella. Escribe en el escolio al salmo 50,10: “La exultación (ἀγαλλιᾶσις) es el gozo (χαρὰ) por el bien”<sup>25</sup>. Y al comentar el versículo 43 del salmo 104, que dice: “Él hizo salir a su pueblo en la exultación y a sus elegidos entre gritos de regocijo”, escribe Evagrio: “Si el pueblo sale en la exultación (ἀγαλλιᾶσει) y sus elegidos en el regocijo (εὐφροσύνη), el regocijo vale más que la exultación, porque también los elegidos valen más que el pueblo”<sup>26</sup>. A partir del texto del salmo, Evagrio construye un silogismo que le permite establecer una jerarquía entre el regocijo y la exultación, según la cual la primera es más importante que la segunda. Mientras que la exultación tendría un carácter más general o universal, puesto que de ella participa todo el pueblo, el regocijo, en cambio, se reserva para los elegidos, un grupo más pequeño. Este tipo de distinción aparece de un modo análogo en el siguiente escolio: “Que Jacob exulte y que Israel se goce: y el práctico exulta (ἀγαλλιᾶται) cuando adquiere la impassibilidad, y el gnóstico se regocija (εὐφραίνεται) cuando ha sido juzgado digno de la contemplación”<sup>27</sup>.

Siguiendo a Filón de Alejandría y a Orígenes, Evagrio considera que el cambio del nombre de Jacob por Israel corresponde a un cambio de estado: el nombre antiguo está ligado a la práctica de la virtud y el nuevo a la visión de Dios, y esa distinción de estados espirituales se corresponde con una distinción entre las expresiones de los mismo. La expresión de la *apátheia* o impassibilidad, es decir, el término de la vida práctica que habilita el paso a la vida gnóstica, es la exultación. Y a su vez, cuando el gnóstico, una vez superada la contemplación de las naturalezas segundas, puede ya contemplar las naturalezas primeras y acceder al tercer estadio de la vida espiritual, experimenta el regocijo. Haciendo referencia al comentario al salmo 104, se trata de las experiencias emocionales que distingue al pueblo de los elegidos.

<sup>25</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 4 ad Ps. 50,10.

<sup>26</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 22 ad Ps. 104,43.

<sup>27</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 22 ad Ps 13,7.

Sin embargo, estas distinciones que hace Evagrio se mantienen en un plano semántico pues no explicita cuáles son las características fenoménicas que distinguen a la exultación de la alegría; es decir, de qué modo se experimentan y se manifiestan por parte del sujeto que es afectado por ellas. Es este, justamente, el límite que encuentra el lector, y que el autor quiso establecer conscientemente, cuando se enfrenta con los *kephalaia* pertenecientes al género del que hablamos más arriba: se trata de pocas palabras que revelan sólo una pequeña parte de la doctrina y ocultan el resto a los ojos profanos. Como el mismo Evagrio escribe en otra parte: “aquellos que hayan sido tentados por este demonio entenderán lo que digo”<sup>28</sup>. Él no encuentra pertinente extenderse en describir los estados anímicos del que está exultante y del que se regocija pues, a los efectos de la redacción de su comentario, no es necesario toda vez que los lectores aptos para acceder a sus enseñanzas sabrán de qué está hablando.

En el segundo caso, la distinción no viene por la comparación entre dos términos, sino que Evagrio elabora la definición de uno de ellos. Al comentar el versículo 79 del salmo 118, escribe: “La alegría (εὐθυμία) es la impasibilidad del alma que surge de los mandamientos de Dios y de las doctrinas verdaderas”<sup>29</sup>. Y, en el esolio al salmo 48,1 escribe: “La alegría (εὐθυμία) es la impasibilidad del alma racional”<sup>30</sup>. En ambos casos las definiciones coinciden aunque en la primera es más completa. El ánimo alegre o simplemente la alegría es el resultado de haber alcanzado la *apatheia* (ἀπάθεια) o impasibilidad, lo que sucede en la etapa final de la vía práctica. Se trata éste de un concepto que Evagrio elabora cuidadosamente. El πάθος es un apartarse del alma de Dios, contrario a su naturaleza y, por eso mismo, es vicioso e irracional<sup>31</sup>. La *apatheia*, consecuentemente, es el dominio o control de las pasiones por parte de la razón. Afirma Evagrio que “el asceta práctico es aquel que ha adquirido el des-apasionamiento de la parte pasional de su alma”<sup>32</sup>. Y también que “[la *apatheia* es] un estado de tranquilidad del alma racional, que la conduce a la mansedumbre y al control de sí”<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Antirrheticus* II 55.

<sup>29</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 171 ad Ps 118,79.

<sup>30</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 1 ad Ps 48,1.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. M. Tobon, *The Health of the Soul: Apatheia in Evagrius Ponticus*, in: *Tertullian to Tyconius, Egypt before Nicaea, Athanasius and his Opponents*, ed. J. Baun et al., *Studia Patristica* 46, Leuven 2010, p. 189.

<sup>32</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Gnosticus* II.

<sup>33</sup> J. Muyldermans, *Evagrio Póntico. Skemmata*, “Le Muséon. Revue d’Études Orientales” 44 (1931) p. 37-68.

Se trata de un “muro protector” que rodea al alma impidiendo que ingresen en ella los pensamientos malvados, o *logismoï*, que son quienes movilizan las pasiones. Dice en sus escolios al libro de los Proverbios: “la muralla designa a la impassibilidad y a la ciencia de Dios, la única capaz de proteger a la naturaleza racional”<sup>34</sup>. El hombre solamente podrá actuar de acuerdo a su naturaleza si está protegido por las murallas de la *apátheia*. Y en la *Kephalaia gnóstica* escribe: “El muro espiritual es la impassibilidad del alma racional, la que la protege de los demonios”<sup>35</sup>. La *apatheia*, en última instancia, es el estado del alma saludable<sup>36</sup>.

En el caso de los *Escolios a los salmos*, entonces, Evagrio no solo agrega una característica más a la *apatheia* sino que es ella la que provoca una de las emociones más importantes: la alegría. O, dicho de otra manera, la alegría es signo de que el hombre ha alcanzado la *apatheia*, el primero de los grados de perfección en la escala ascendente hacia la *theología*.

La alegría aparece relacionada con sus manifestaciones. Al comentar el salmo 46,7, Evagrio explica que corresponde a aquellos que están alegres cantar un salmo<sup>37</sup>, algo similar a lo que había dicho algunas páginas antes: “Que aquel que ha recibido un beneficio cante, y el que está alegre (εὐθυμῶν) que entone un salmo”<sup>38</sup>. La salmodia, entonces, es propia de la alegría teniendo en cuenta, sin embargo, que se trata de la alegría que surge como fruto de la *apatheia*, como la coronación de la primera etapa del camino de perfección espiritual.

Es este matiz el que caracteriza al tipo de emociones que estamos estudiando en el pensamiento de Evagrio. El escolio al salmo 118 que vimos vimos más arriba se completa de este modo:

Así como cantar un salmo es lo propio de aquellos que están alegres [...], así también cantar un himno es lo propio de aquellos que contemplan las razones de los juicios [...]. La alegría (εὐθυμία) es la impassibilidad del alma que surge de los mandamientos de Dios y de las doctrinas verdaderas, pero

<sup>34</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia ad Proverbios* 343.

<sup>35</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Képhalaia Gnostica*, ed. A. Guillaumont, *Patrologia Orientalis* 28, Turnhout 1985, p. 211.

<sup>36</sup> Sobre este tema puede verse también R. Peretó Rivas, *La presencia de Clemente de Alejandría en los discípulos de Evagrio Póntico*, “Isidorianum” 31/1 (2022) p. 175-188.

<sup>37</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 4 ad Ps 46,7.

<sup>38</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 4 ad Ps 12,6.

el himno es un canto de gloria acompañado de la estupefacción (δοξολογία μετ' ἐκπλήξεως) frente a la contemplación de las cosas producidas por Dios<sup>39</sup>.

Evagrio marca una distinción en las causas que provocan la alegría, ya que ésta se manifiesta en el salmo, pero no en el himno. Se trata de una diferencia de grado entre ambos; mientras que los salmos se relacionan con la práctica y la impassibilidad, los segundos lo hacen con la contemplación física. Los primeros son propios de los hombres, mientras que los segundos lo son de los ángeles o de los hombres que han casi alcanzado el estado angélico. La εὐθυμία provoca la erupción del alma que se manifiesta en la salmodia, característica del hombre práctico que ha vencido las pasiones, y se distingue del himno que es propio de los ángeles o de los hombres que han alcanzado un alto grado de perfección. En cambio, el himno es una estupefacción delante de las maravillas de Dios.

Evagrio, entonces, asocia la alegría con el estado espiritual al que se arriba luego de haber alcanzado la *apatheia*, es decir, el estadio de la ciencia o de la gnosis, y que se caracteriza por la contemplación de las naturalezas segundas. Son numerosos los escolios en los que aparece esta afirmación: “La ciencia se manifiesta con la exultación (ἀγαλλιᾶσεως) y el gozo (χαρᾶς)”<sup>40</sup>; “Todos los que se regocijan (εὐφραίνόμενοι) con la ciencia habitan en la sabiduría y todos los que habitan en la sabiduría [...] se regocijan (εὐφραίνονται) de la ciencia”<sup>41</sup> y, al comentar el versículo del salmo 22 que dice: “Tu vara y tu bastón me reconfortan”, Evagrio escribe: “Así como la vara corrige, así también la práctica aprende a moderar las pasiones; así como el bastón reposa, así también la ciencia regocija (εὐφραίνει)”<sup>42</sup> (22,4; 436).

Todos los escolios que se han repasado relacionados con el tema objeto de este trabajo, evidencian una interpretación exclusivamente alegórica de los salmos y sin ninguna referencia a algún tipo de hermenéutica más cercana a un sentido literal. Otros ejemplos que podrían citarse abundarían en el mismo sentido. Escribe Evagrio: “El trigo, el vino y el aceite multiplican los pecados, pero el regocijo (εὐφραίνει) de Dios regocija a los justos”<sup>43</sup>, y más adelante: “El corazón del justo no se regocija (εὐφραίνεται) en los

<sup>39</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 79 ad Ps. 118,171.

<sup>40</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 6 ad Ps 29,6.

<sup>41</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 3 ad Ps 86,7.

<sup>42</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 3 ad Ps 22,4.

<sup>43</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 7 ad Ps 4,8.

alimentos y en las bebidas, sino en la justicia, la ciencia y la sabiduría”<sup>44</sup>. En ambos casos, se marca enfáticamente la separación o incluso antagonismo que existe entre la emoción del regocijo y los objetos materiales más elementales y necesarios para la vida, tales como son la comida y la bebida, y esta oposición es manifestada a través de una hermenéutica alegórica.

#### 4. Conclusión

El repaso por los escolios a los salmos relacionados con la alegría da cuenta que Evagrio les otorga una interpretación exclusivamente alegórica. Entendida de este modo la alegría y sus emociones derivadas, se habilita la siguiente pregunta: ¿hasta qué punto se trata propiamente de emociones? El supuesto filosófico de buena parte de la antropología de Evagrio descansa en el estoicismo, corriente de pensamiento que desarrolló una elaborada teoría de las pasiones<sup>45</sup>. Las pasiones son “enfermedades del alma”, o reacciones del apetito sensible ante las representaciones de la realidad. Consecuentemente, para que aparezca una pasión o emoción, es necesaria la existencia de un objeto sensible, o de una representación del mismo, ante la cual reaccionar.

En el recorrido que se ha realizado aparece claro que la alegría sólo puede experimentarse a partir de la posesión de bienes espirituales que, por definición, no son objeto de los sentidos externos y, consecuentemente, no pueden despertar una emoción entendida en el sentido clásico que señalamos. Parecería que la hermenéutica evagriana de los salmos es hasta tal punto alegórica que imposibilitaría o negaría la existencia de algún tipo de alegría que surgiera de la posesión de un bien sensible. Ella sólo podría experimentarse como la reacción ante la posesión de un bien espiritual, que es la gnosis o conocimiento de Dios.

---

<sup>44</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia* 12 ad Ps 32,21.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. H. Attridge, *An “Emotional” Jesus and Stoic Tradition*, in: *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, ed. T. Rasmus – T. Engberg-Pedersen – I. Dunderberg, Grand Rapids 2010, p. 59-76. Sobre este tema, puede verse también A. Chaniotis, *Unveiling Emoticons: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emoticons in the Greek World*, Stuttgart 2012; R. Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: from Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, Oxford 2000; *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. J. Shivola – T. Engberg-Pedersen, Dordrecht 1998.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Basilii Magni, *De Spiritu Sancto*, ed. B. Pruche, SCh 17bis, Paris 1968.
- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* I, ed. M. Merino Rodríguez, Madrid 1996.
- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* II, ed. C. Mondésert, SCh 38, Paris 1954.
- Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata* V, ed. P. Voulet, SCh 278, Paris 1981.
- Evagrius Ponticus, *Antirrhétikos. Tratado de las réplicas*, ed. R. Peretó Rivas – J. Heiremans, Madrid 2021.
- Evagrius Ponticus, *Gnosticus*, ed. A. et C. Guillaumont, SCh 356, Paris 1989.
- Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia in Psalmos*, ed. M.-J. Rondeau – P. Géhin – M. Cassin, SCh 614-615, Paris 2021.
- Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia in Proverbios*, ed. P. Géhin, SCh 340, Paris 1987.
- Evagrius Ponticus, *Képhalaia Gnostica*, ed. A. Guillaumont, *Patrologia Orientalis* 28, Turnhout 1985.
- Origenes Alexandrinus, *Adnotationes in Numeros*, ed. L. Doutreleau, SCh 461, Paris 2001.
- Origenes Alexandrinus, *Contra Celsus*, ed. M. Borret, SCh 147, Paris 1969.

### Studies

- Attridge H., *An “Emotional” Jesus and Stoic Tradition*, in: *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, ed. T. Rasimus – T. Engberg-Pedersen – I. Dunderberg, Grand Rapids 2010, p. 59-76.
- Brakke D., *Mystery and Secrecy in the Egyptian Desert: Esotericism and Evagrius of Pontus*, in: *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas and Practices*, ed. C.H. Bull – L. Ingeborg Lied – T.D. Turner, Leiden – Boston 2012, p. 212-213.
- Chaniotis A., *Unveiling Emoticons: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emoticons in the Greek World*, Stuttgart 2012.
- Dysinger L., *Psalmody and Prayer in the Writings of Evagrius Ponticus*, Oxford 2005.
- Fortin E.L., *Clement of Alexandria and the Esoteric Tradition*, in: *Studia Patristica: Classica, philosophica et ethica, theologica, Augustiniana, post-patristica*, v. 9/3, ed. F.L. Cross, Berlin 1966, p. 41-56.
- Hanson R.P.C., *Origen’s Doctrine of Tradition*, London 1954.
- Kalvesmaki J., *Evagrius in the Byzantine Genre of Chapters*, in: *Evagrius and his Legacy*, ed. J. Kalvesmaki – R. Darling Young, Notre Dame 2016, p. 257-287.
- Muyldermans J., *Evagrio Póntico. Skemmata*, “Le Muséon. Revue d’Études Orientales” 44 (1931) p. 37-68.
- Peretó Rivas R., *La presencia de Clemente de Alejandría en los discípulos de Evagrius Póntico*, “Isidorianum” 31/1 (2022) p. 175-188.

- 
- Sorabji R., *Emotion and Peace of Mind: from Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, Oxford 2000.
- Talamé M., *Aclamen al Señor con alegría. La alegría en el salterio*, Buenos Aires 2007.
- The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. J. Shivola – T. Engberg-Pedersen, Dordrecht 1998.
- Tobon M., *The Health of the Soul: Apatheia in Evagrius Ponticus*, in: *Tertullian to Tyconius, Egypt before Nicaea, Athanasius and his Opponents*, ed. J. Baun et al., *Studia Patristica* 46, Leuven 2010.
- Williams R., *On Christian Theology*, Oxford 2000.







## Letter or Sermon? The Analysis of Augustine's *De Bono Viduitatis*<sup>1</sup>

Anabela Katreničová<sup>2</sup>

---

**Abstract:** St. Augustine's work *De bono viduitatis* written in 414 is not a treatise but a letter addressed to a widow issued from a noble Roman family named Juliana. She with her daughter and mother-in-law attempts to live the consecrated way of life. Under the strong influence of the ascetism and moralism of Pelagius, she begs Augustine to acquire the essential instructions for their devotion. Augustine in his answer proposes the original teaching on the widowhood based on the Holy Scripture, especially on the letters of apostle Paul, and encourages the women in their consecration to observe the goods of the widowhood. Nevertheless, St. Augustine does not write this letter only to Juliana. He desires that this letter will be spread to the other widows as well. The aim of our paper is to analyse the Augustine's letter to Juliana and focus our interest on the homiletical forms used by St. Augustine. Our argumentation is based on the analyse of this letter and on its comparison with Augustine's style of preaching. Examining the rhetoric elements used and known by St. Augustine as they are summarized in the Book Four of his treatise *On Christian Teaching* it enables us to present the style of Augustine – preacher and consequently to find some similarity and differences.

**Keywords:** Augustine; rhetoric; sermon; letter; widowhood

---

Augustine's work *The Excellence of Widowhood* (*De bono viduitatis*)<sup>3</sup> written in 414 was originally composed as a letter of exhortation and spir-

---

<sup>1</sup> The present paper has been prepared within the project VEGA (Slovak National Grant Agency) no. 1/0257/20 The conception of woman heroin in medieval exegetic literature.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Anabela Katreničová, Department of Classical Philology, Faculty of Arts, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia; e-mail: anabela.katrenicova@upjs.sk; ORCID: 0000-0002-9487-2285.

<sup>3</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 41, Wien 1900, tr. C.L. Cornish, Augustinus, *On the Good of Widowhood*, in: *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, v. 3, ed. P. Schaff, Buffalo 1887, p. 441-454.

itual direction to a rich widow Juliana who resided with her daughter and mother-in-law in Carthage. These three women, living as consecrated persons observing the continence, were under the influence of Pelagius and his teaching concerning ascetism and moralism. In this work Augustine responds to Juliana's insistent demand to give her and other women in the same condition some advice and guidelines. Therefore, is this letter dedicated not only to her, but through her to other women who could find the encouragement in this work. Due to the strong influence of rhetoric, we encounter the opus opened with the usual epistolary salutation containing not only numerous direct addresses to Juliana, to whom the letter was written, but also the admonitions to laity which form is very similar to the sermon. That is the reason, why we want to study this letter and compare it with Augustine's rhetoric style of homilies that is already well studied by several authors<sup>4</sup>. To do this, we firstly need to present the style of Augustine – preacher and then to apply the acquired material to this letter trying to find some similarities or/and differences if they exist. First of all, in this paper we will examine the rhetoric elements used and known by St. Augustine as they are summarized in the Book Four of his treatise *On Christian Teaching*. That probably will lead us to recognize the rhetorical passages in this letter, the measure of rhetorical and homiletical influence upon this letter, as well.

## 1. Rhetoric style presented in *De doctrina christiana*

Augustine's primary task as a Bishop was to interpret and teach the Word of God<sup>5</sup> and to defend the true doctrine of the Faith:

So, the interpreter and teacher of the divine scriptures, the defender of the true

---

<sup>4</sup> In this paper we quote some of them: R.J. Deferrari, *Augustine's method of composing and delivering sermons*, "American Journal of Philosophy" 43 (1922) p. 193-219; A.-M. La Bonnardière, *La prédication d'Augustine sur les Psaumes à Hippone*, AEPHE 86 (1977-1978) p. 337-341; M.-F. Berrouard, *Introduction aux homélies de saint Augustin sur l'Évangile de saint Jean*, Paris 2004; S.M. Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homilethics in Fourth-Century Christian Literature*, Atlanta 1991; M. Pontet, *L'exégèse de St. Augustin prédicateur*, Marseille 1944; in slovak language: M. Andoková, *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom*, Bratislava 2013.

<sup>5</sup> J.A. Sypert, *Redeeming Rhetoric: Augustine's Use of Rhetoric in His Preaching Ministry*, "Eleutheria" 4 (2015) p. 21.

faith and vanquisher of error, must communicate what is good and eradicate what is bad, and in the same process of speaking must win over the antagonistic, rouse the apathetic, and make clear to those who are not conversant with the matter under discussion what they should expect. When he finds them favourable, interested, and receptive, or has made them so by his own efforts, then there are other goals to be achieved, as the particular case demands. If listeners need information, there must be a presentation of the facts (if indeed this is really what is needed) to make the matter under discussion more familiar<sup>6</sup>.

He as a well-educated minister preaching for almost forty years (his career started in 391 when he became a presbyter)<sup>7</sup> uses common rhetorical elements to make Scripture clear to his audience. To recognize them we can use the rhetoric methodology as was written and presented in the book four of Augustine's work *On Christian Teaching (De doctrina christiana)*.

Augustine developed a distinctive style of preaching, that differs a lot from his style of writing<sup>8</sup>. As Sybert quotes: "It may be said that he wrote primarily for educated men. His preaching, however, was for the uneducated, common man on the street"<sup>9</sup>. To reach the less educated audience St. Augustine uses very often the illustrations that everybody could understand, exploiting the common language<sup>10</sup>, which was one of principle of

---

<sup>6</sup> Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4, 4, 6: "Debet igitur divinarum Scripturarum tractator et doctor, defensor rectae fidei ac debellator erroris, et bona docere et mala dedocere atque in hoc opere sermonis conciliare aversos, remissos erigere, nescientibus quid agatur quid exspectare debeant intimare. Ubi autem benevolos, intentos, dociles aut invenerit aut ipse fecerit, cetera peragenda sunt, sicut postulat causa. Si docendi sunt qui audiunt, narratione faciendum est, si tamen indigeat, ut res de qua agitur innotescat. Ut autem quae dubia sunt certa fiant, documentis adhibitis ratiocinandum est. Si vero qui audiunt movendi sunt potius quam docendi, ut in eo quod iam sciunt agendo non torpeant et rebus assensum quas veras esse fatentur accomodent, maioribus dicendi viribus opus est. Ibi obsecrationes et increpationes, concitationes et coercionem et quaecumque alia valent ad commovendos animos, sunt necessaria". Translation of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* used in this paper is made by R.P.H. Green, *On Christian Teaching*, New York 2008, p. 201-203.

<sup>7</sup> J. Van Oort, *Augustine, his sermons, and their significance*, "HTS Theologies Studies/Theological Studies" 65 (2009) p. 364.

<sup>8</sup> C. Conybeare, *Augustine's rhetoric in theory and practice*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, ed. M.J. Mac Donald, New York 2017, p. 351.

<sup>9</sup> Sybert, *Redeeming Rhetoric*, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> F. Van Der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, London 1961, p. 971.

Augustine's preaching method<sup>11</sup>. According to Augustine the goal of the preaching and teaching is to explain simply and clearly the biblical text, no matter the way and the manner of speaking:

Their expositors should not speak in such a way that they set themselves up as similar authorities, themselves in need of exposition, but should endeavour first and foremost in all their sermons to make themselves understood and to ensure, by means of the greatest possible clarity, that only the very slow fail to understand, and that the reason why anything that we say is not easily or quickly understood lies in the difficulty and complexity of the matters that we wish to explain and clarify, and not in our mode of expression<sup>12</sup>.

In the preaching it is not important the eloquence, but the clearness.

Concerning the rhetoric, Drobner considers, according the teaching of Augustine, this art as a common tool for everyone who relates a message without any intrinsic value. As he remarks, it can be used for any subject, right or wrong, good or bad<sup>13</sup>. "Rhetoric is used to give conviction both to truth and falsehood<sup>14</sup>". The orator has a liberty to choose content and aims of his speech and forms them applying the means of his art. The preacher is a servant of God words and he can preach only the truth in the love of God<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the Augustine's main duty in rhetoric theory, was to apply the communicating God's word to his audience<sup>16</sup> and to spread the Christian truth<sup>17</sup>. The Bible becomes the primary source of his thinking and arguments. The Scripture remained for Augustine the powerful Word of God and from God himself. The

<sup>11</sup> Conybeare, *Augustine's rhetoric in theory and practice*, p. 354.

<sup>12</sup> Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4, 8, 22: "Non ergo expositores eorum ita loqui debent, tamquam se ipsi exponendos simili auctoritate proponant, sed in omnibus sermonibus suis primitus ac maxime ut intellegantur elaborant, ea quantum possunt perspicuitate dicendi, ut aut multum tardus sit qui non intellegit, aut in rerum quas explicare atque ostendere volumus difficultate ac subtilitate, non in nostra locutione sit causa qua minus tardiusve quod dicimus possit intellegi", tr. Green, *On Christian Teaching*, p. 223.

<sup>13</sup> H.R. Drobner, "I would rather not be wearisome to you". *Saint Augustine's as preacher*, "Melita Theologica" 51 (2000) p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Drobner, "I would rather not be wearisome to you", p. 120-124.

<sup>16</sup> Sybert, *Redeeming Rhetoric: Augustine's Use of Rhetoric in His Preaching Ministry*, p. 25; Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 405.

<sup>17</sup> Conybeare, *Augustine's rhetoric in theory and practice*, p. 354.

rhetoric was also from God for purpose of employing the word of God to men's hearts<sup>18</sup>.

Formally, Augustine observes the famous Cicero's<sup>19</sup> dictum of three functions of speech, that should teach, delight and persuade or move<sup>20</sup>, but at this point he makes a "minor educational revolution"<sup>21</sup> because he relativizes the formal rules of rhetoric based on Quintilian<sup>22</sup> saying that all the rules are good and useful but not indispensable<sup>23</sup>. Augustine writes about it:

This is why instruction is a matter of necessity. People may either do or not do what they know must be done; but who could say that they must do something which they do not know they must do? The reason why moving people is not a matter of necessity is that is not always needed [...]. Nor is giving delight a matter of necessity, since when truths themselves, as they are revealed, do produce delight by virtue of being true<sup>24</sup>.

Augustine uses a new style, accurately characterized as *sermo humilis*<sup>25</sup>. In his preaching he wants to become after all the minister of the Word

---

<sup>18</sup> Sybert, *Redeeming Rhetoric*, p. 21; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, Berkeley – Los Angeles 2013, p. 155.

<sup>19</sup> Cicero, *Orator* 21, 69.

<sup>20</sup> Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4, 12, 27.

<sup>21</sup> Van Der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 406.

<sup>22</sup> Sybert, *Redeeming Rhetoric*, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Ch.S. Baldwin, *St. Augustine on Preaching (De doctrina christiana, IV)*, in: *The Rhetoric of St. Augustine of Hippo: De Doctrina Christiana and the Search for a Distinctly Christian Rhetoric*, ed. R.L. Enos – R. Thompson et al., Waco 2008, p. 187; C. Harrison, *The Rhetoric of Scripture and Preaching: Classical Decadence or Christian Aesthetic?*, in: *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, ed. G. Bonner – R. Dodaro – G. Lawless, London 2000, p. 217.

<sup>24</sup> Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4, 12, 28: "Ac per hoc docere necessitatis est. Possunt enim homines et agere et non agere quod sciunt. Quis autem dixerit eos agere debere quod nesciunt? Et ideo flectere necessitatis non est, quia non semper opus est, [...] Sed neque delectare necessitatis est, quandoquidem cum dicendo vera monstrantur (quod ad officium docendi pertinet), non eloquio agitur neque hoc attenditur, ut vel ipsa vel ipsum delectet eloquium, sed per seipsa, quoniam vera sunt, manifestata delectant", tr. Green, *On Christian Teaching*, p. 231.

<sup>25</sup> Van Oort, *Augustine, his sermons, and their significance*, p. 368; E. Auerbach, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter*, Bern 1958, p. 25-54.

who should follow the example of Christ, who humbled himself<sup>26</sup>. That is why Augustine does not care about the eloquence so much, because the true beauty of speech depends on the sincerity of the words:

What especially differentiates the grand style from the mixed style is that it is not so much embellished with verbal ornament as inflamed by heartfelt emotion. It has room for almost all those ornaments, but if they are not there they are not missed. It is borne along by its own momentum, and derives its beauty of expression, if indeed this emerges, from the power of its subject – matter, and not the pursuit of elegance. It is sufficiently equipped for its purpose if appropriate words follow not from a search for elaborate vocabulary but from the promptings of a passionate heart<sup>27</sup>.

The remarkable sign of the Augustine's sermons is intimacy<sup>28</sup>. "Augustine's style of preaching appears on a first reading to be pedestrian and casual. His manner is more temperate than Tertullian's or Cyprian's, less stylised than Chrysologus' and less elegant than Ambrose's. A small number of academics have realised that the informal style of Augustine's preaching is pregnant with theological significance"<sup>29</sup>. Van der Meer commented Augustine's style using the following words: "The average sermon of Augustine makes such a disorderly impression that his unpretentious manner seems almost to suggest downright carelessness [...]. He made his sermons deliberately art less, and at the same time showed positive genius in his strict observance of all artistic rules"<sup>30</sup>.

Augustine style has two aspects: the rhetorical and the theological. On the rhetorical side, his casual manner was the mark of his skills to wear his learning lightly. As Bernard says Augustine did not need to labour or draw

---

<sup>26</sup> M.-F. Berrouard, *Saint Augustin et le ministère de la prédication*, "Recherches Augustiniennes" 2 (1962) p. 480-481.

<sup>27</sup> Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4, 42: "Grande autem dicendi genus hoc maxime distat ab isto genere temperato, quod non tam verborum ornatibus comptum est, quam violentum animi affectibus. Nam capit etiam illa ornamenta paene omnia, sed ea si non habuerit, non requirit. Fertur quippe impetu suo et elocutionis pulchritudinem, si occurrerit, vi rerum rapit, non cura decoris assumit. Satis enim est ei propter quod agitur ut verba congruentia non oris eligantur industria, sed pectoris sequantur ardorem", tr. Green, *On Christian Teaching*, p. 251-253.

<sup>28</sup> P.T. Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching*, Minneapolis 2014, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching*, p. 17-18.

<sup>30</sup> Van Der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 418-419.

attention to his ability in rhetoric; neither was his use of rhetorical devices formulaic.

On the other hand, the theological component of his speeches is necessary to build a convincing case. His personal manner of sermon was deeply theological and based on a conviction that God loved and cared for those, who listened to him. In addition, “the warm colloquial style of Augustine also flowed from his doctrinal convictions about the centrality of the desirous heart. Warm words from God intended to inculcate love naturally demand a preacher to speak with heartfelt warmth”<sup>31</sup>.

The theological concerns were more important for St. Augustine than the whole rhetorical agenda. His sermons flowed from prior contemplation upon Scripture and created the relationality between God, preacher and listeners. It is well known that Augustine starts the preparation of his sermon by praying for himself and for his audience<sup>32</sup>. So, Augustine’s method of preaching required the opening of a preacher’s heart to God and a subsequent outpouring of the heart’s love to listeners<sup>33</sup>. As Van Der Meer said, Augustine “spoke from the fullness of his heart”<sup>34</sup> which could be well seen also in his letter to Juliana.

## 2. Letter to Juliana

Now, let us examine the Augustine’s work *The Excellence of Widowhood*. The mentioned work is divided into two parts by Augustine himself. In the first part of this letter, he intends to teach his readers what is necessary to know about the consecrated life. In the second part he wants to encourage them to persevere on the chosen path and in the imitation of Christ<sup>35</sup>.

St. Augustine dedicate this letter not only to Juliana, but with her help, to the wider audience. He writes:

If in reading this work of mine, you find that some matters treated therein do not concern you personally or your companions who are living with

<sup>31</sup> Sanlon, *Augustine’s Theology of Preaching*, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* 4, 15, 32.

<sup>33</sup> Sanlon, *Augustine’s Theology of Preaching*, p. 20.

<sup>34</sup> Van Der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 419.

<sup>35</sup> F.A. Doull, *A Contemporary Assessment Of St. Augustine’s On The Good Of Widowhood*, “Animus” 6 (2001) p. 35.

you in Christ, and that they are not exactly necessary for the guidance of your conduct, you should not regard them as superfluous for this reason. Although I have addressed this letter to you, it has not been my intention to write it for you alone; on the contrary, I have not overlooked the fact that it may also be helpful to others through you. Consequently, you may find in these pages advice that you never needed and that you do not need now, but if you perceive that others may benefit by it, you should be glad to have this book to lend them for their reading, that through your charity it may be helpful to others<sup>36</sup>.

The style of St. Augustine is personal. He addresses directly Juliana using the 2nd person singular of various verbs<sup>37</sup> as he does habitually and strikingly<sup>38</sup>; possessive pronoun your<sup>39</sup>, pronoun you<sup>40</sup>; and refers to the personal information about Juliana<sup>41</sup> and to her familiarity with the material. He addresses her some admonitions and orders concerning her own life. Although this letter alters between personal and impersonal style. In some parts of this letter Juliana becomes a kind of the personification of the state of widowhood<sup>42</sup>. In this case, the admonitions are very general and serve as the manner of persuading that should lead to the transformation of life, to the true interior conversion. In the way of admonition Augustine changes the style of his speech. He stops to address Juliana directly, nor indirectly. He uses the first person plural in every verb to make a sensation that he

---

<sup>36</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 1: "In quo sane opere nostro cum aliqua legeris ad tuam vel ad vestram, quae simul in Christo vivitis, personam minime pertinere nec admonitioni vitae vestrae proprie necessaria, non ideo debebis superflua iudicare. Istae quippe litterae quamvis ad te, non tamen tantummodo tibi scribendae fuerunt, sed ut aliis quoque per te prodessent, non utique a nobis neglegendum fuit. Quidquid ergo hic inveneris, quod vobis necessarium vel numquam fuerit vel iam non sit et tamen aliis esse perspexeris, nec habere te pigeat nec dare legendum, ut et tua caritas sit utilitas aliorum". Translation of Augustine's *De bono viduitatis* used in this paper is made by R. Kearney, *The Excellence of Widowhood*, in: *The Works of Saint Augustine (A Translation for the 21st Century)*, v. 1/9, New York 1999, p. 279-280.

<sup>37</sup> See (Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 4, 5), know (Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 4, 6); choose (Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 4, 6); condemn (Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 4, 6); rejoice (Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 4, 6).

<sup>38</sup> Conybeare, *Augustine's rhetoric in theory and practice*, p. 359.

<sup>39</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 3, 4; 4, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 8, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 14, 18.

<sup>42</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 16, 20.



is a part of all orders given not by him, but by God<sup>43</sup>. He, the bishop, as a shepherd of his herd becomes an example to imitate.

In addition, this Augustine's work, provides us the huge number of different rhetorical devices. Reading his books, we can occur the analogies, word pictures, similes or metaphors<sup>44</sup>. We find the gradations<sup>45</sup>, repetitions<sup>46</sup>, antithesis<sup>47</sup> as well, which is his favourite theological method<sup>48</sup>.

Augustine in this text observes the triple division of the speech. That is why in the letter to Juliana we can find all the rhetorical components used in the sermon as well: the teaching, delight and the persuasion. The teaching of Augustine does not consist on the human doctrine, nor on his own theory. Augustine is fully dependent on the Scripture and on the word of God himself. His only duty as a bishop and a shepherd who pays always attention to the pastoral dimension of the study and explanation of Scripture is to explain them<sup>49</sup>: "Consequently, I shall not presume to instruct you

<sup>43</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 17, 21.

<sup>44</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 8, 11: "sed melius nubere quam retro ire post satanam, id est ab excellenti illo virginalis vel vidualis castitatis proposito in posteriore respiciendo cadere et interire". In English translation: "but better to marry than to go back after Satan, that is, to fall away from that excellent purpose of virginal or widowed chastity, by looking back to things that are behind, and perish".

<sup>45</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 5, 7: "Sicut ergo bono melius et beato beatius, sic honesto honestius est, quod honestum voluit appellare". In English translation: "As, therefore, there is than good a better, and than blessed a more blessed, so is there than honest an honest, which he chose to call honest".

<sup>46</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 9, 12: "quae potest ergo capere, capiat et quae se non continet, nubat; quae non coepit, deliberet; quae aggressa est, perseveret; nulla adversario detur occasio, nulla Christo subtrahatur oblatio". In English translation: "therefore let her who can receive it, receive it; and let her, who contains not, marry; let her, who has not begun, deliberate; let her, who has undertaken it, persevere; let there be no occasion given unto the adversary, let there be no oblation withdrawn from Christ".

<sup>47</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 7, 10: "Cuius rei non concupiscentiam carnis, sed providentiam generationis fuisse causam illud ostendit, quod sicut sanctis viris habere plures uxores vivas, non ita etiam sanctis feminis licebat misceri maritis pluribus vivis; quoniam tanto essent turpiores, quanto magis appeterent, unde non essent fecundiores". In English translation: "And to the husbands was allowed the use of several wives living; and that the cause of this was not lust of the flesh, but forethought of begetting, is shown by the fact, that, as it was lawful for holy men to have several wives living, it was not likewise lawful for holy women to have intercourse with several husbands living; in that they would be by so much the baser, by how much the more they sought what would not add to their fruitfulness".

<sup>48</sup> Sypert, *Redeeming Rhetoric*, p. 29-31.

<sup>49</sup> Andoková, *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom*, p. 2.

except by presenting to you the words of that Teacher and enlarging upon them as the Lord shall inspire me<sup>50</sup>". In this work Augustine cites mainly the letters of Apostle Paul exploring them by the quotation of the Bible. Augustine's style of explication and teaching is very clear and pastoral at the same time. The Bible represents for him a great source of inspiration and the point of departure of his thinking<sup>51</sup>.

Augustine writes about essential things to observe. He explains the women the meaning of the Scriptures, and tries to make this dear with everyday examples. He explains a bible passage, using mainly other Bible texts as a commentary. In addition, the passages were repeated verse by verse, word by word. Some of the Scriptural passages were explained through paraphrases and comparisons<sup>52</sup>. The hermeneutical method used by Augustine, also known as interpretation according "scriptura per scripturam intellegi". This way of textual interpretation of the obscure or ambivalent places of texts using the other texts of the same author created in the time of Alexandrian philology and was used in the rabbinic exegesis as well<sup>53</sup>. The content of the letter as well as the content of the sermon is then thoroughly biblical<sup>54</sup>.

The role of every preacher is to teach the Word of God himself. The Christian education consists of the interpretation and explanation of the Word. Preaching should also serve to edify and to convert, but that should be the word of God. The preacher could only minister the Word and bring it to the men<sup>55</sup>. That is why Augustine writes in the second chapter of his letter to Juliane:

In every question that affects life and conduct, precept and exhortation are necessary, for through precept we learn what we ought to do and through exhortation we are prompted to do gladly what we have learned to be our obligation. Since this is true, what better instruction can I give you than that which we read in the Apostle. Holy Scripture has laid down a rule for instruction, namely, that we should not presume to rate ourselves more than we

---

<sup>50</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 1, 2: "Non sit ergo mihi aliud te docere nisi verba tibi Doctoris exponere et de iis quod Dominus dederit disputare", tr. Kearney, *The Excellence of Widowhood*, p. 280.

<sup>51</sup> Andoková, *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom*, p. 12.

<sup>52</sup> Van Oort, *Augustine, his sermons, and their significance*, p. 366.

<sup>53</sup> Andoková, *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom*, p. 36.

<sup>54</sup> Van Oort, *Augustine, his sermons, and their significance*, p. 367.

<sup>55</sup> Van Oort, *Augustine, his sermons, and their significance*, p. 368.

ought, but, as the Apostle himself says, we should rate ourselves according to moderation and according as God has apportioned to each one the measure of faith. Consequently, I shall not presume to instruct you except by presenting to you the words of that Teacher and enlarging upon them as the Lord shall inspire me<sup>56</sup>.

In this chapter we can see that Augustine, again, writes on “the internal teacher” – Christ that all ministers and hearers have to obey. There is no one but Christ who gives his word to the minister who is speaking and so spreading the God’s will<sup>57</sup>.

Rather than arguing directly from propositions or doctrines, Augustine typically invited his hearers to join him in an enquiry into the meaning of scripture. Augustine very often uses the questions to call attention<sup>58</sup> and to create the conversation, at least imaginary, between him and his audience and to make his sermon more vivid. Another reason is to create the illusion, that audience makes a part not only of his speaking, but also thinking and making the decisions. That is why Augustine’s style of writing and preaching could be identified as conversational preaching probing and exploring passages of Scripture in a way that it enlivened scripture and permitted a degree of topical doctrinal speaking. Arguments that could be seen difficult or hardly believed or accepted by his audience are supported by the examples<sup>59</sup>. The function of such examples is to create the absurd situation based on the teaching of Augustine’s opponents or contra arguments. Augustine by using the well-known persuasive speech technics tends to persuade those who listened to him and brings them to the knowledge about their error. It is very well seen in our studied work *The Excellence of Widowhood* in chapter 10, 13. Augustine presents there the absurd case of married woman who dedicated her life in continence to God, with permission of her husband. By this act she commits adultery with God, according bizarre meaning of some Augustine’s adversaries, as we can read:

Since those who renounce marriage for the sake of Christian perfection are said to choose the espousals of Christ, some persons argue thus: If a woman marries another man during the life of her husband she commits adultery, as

<sup>56</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 2, tr. Kearney, *The Excellence of Widowhood*, p. 280.

<sup>57</sup> Van Oort, *Augustine, his sermons, and their significance*, p. 369.

<sup>58</sup> Conybeare, *Augustine's rhetoric in theory and practice*, p. 353.

<sup>59</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 14, 17.

our Lord Himself has declared in the Gospel; therefore, the woman who has chosen to be united with Christ commits adultery, if she is married to a man, for Christ is always living and over Him death no longer has dominion. Such persons reason astutely, but they do not consider the absurd consequences of their argument. It is meritorious for a woman to make a vow of continence to Christ even while her husband is living, provided she has his consent, but, according to these casuists, no woman ought to do this, for she makes Christ Himself an adulterer by being espoused to Him during the life of her husband, the very thought of which is blasphemous<sup>60</sup>.

The chosen examples have at the same time a function of amusement which is very often in Augustine's writing attached with the irony. Irony is used mainly in the situations when Augustine wants to ease the declarations, deride his opponents or simply to mention the absurdity of their statements.

The purpose of the third part of each sermon should be dedicated to the persuasion. The main task of Augustine's speeches and writings is to bring people towards God. At this point St. Augustine acknowledges the power of the God's word that only is capable to impact the heart and conduct to the change of the life, to the interior conversion<sup>61</sup>.

---

<sup>60</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 10, 13: "Quia enim coniugium Christi dicuntur eligere quae christiana sanctitate non nubunt, hinc argumentantur quidam dicentes: Si viro suo vivo quae alteri nubit, adultera est, sicut ipse Dominus in Evangelio definiuit, vivo ergo Christo, cui mors ultra non dominatur, quae coniugium eius elegerat, si homini nubit, adultera est. Qui hoc dicunt, acute quidem moventur, sed parum attendunt hanc argumentationem quanta rerum sequatur absurditas. Cum enim laudabiliter etiam vivente viro ex eius consensu continentiam femina Christo voveat, iam secundum istorum rationem nulla hoc facere debet, ne ipsum Christum, quod sentire nefas est, adulterum faciat, cui vivente marito nubit", tr. Kearney, *The Excellence of Widowhood*, p. 293-294.

<sup>61</sup> Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis* 16, 20: "Proinde quoniam in exordio huius opusculi duo quaedam necessaria proposueram et exsequenda pollicitus eram, unum, quod ad doctrinam, alterum, quod ad exhortationem pertinet; et priori parti, ut potui, pro suscepto negotio non defui, ad exhortationem veniamus, ut quod bonum prudenter scitur etiam diligatur ardent. Qua in re prius illud admoneo, ut quantumcumque tibi inesse sentis piaie continentiae dilectionem beneficio Dei tribuas eique gratias agas, qui de Spiritu suo tibi tantum largitus est, ut eius in corde tuo caritate diffusa licitae rei licentiam tibi amor boni melioris auferret".

### 3. Conclusion

At the end of this paper, we can say that, from the formal side, Augustine's work *De bono viduitatis* is a letter, there is no doubt. Nevertheless, the personal letter addressed to one concrete person Juliana becomes the letter dedicated to the wider audience. The letter which is intensely influenced by the rhetoric to make it more vivid. Due to the strong guidance of rhetoric, we can see that it contains also the marks of the sermon, even the triple division of the speech – teaching, delighting and persuading. We can see also the use of the various rhetorical forms and devices what is a specification of the sermon. So, we can say, that Juliana converts to the personification of a consecrated widow and the personal letter becomes pastoral carrying the bishop's sermon to his herd.

### Bibliography

#### Sources

- Augustinus, *De bono viduitatis*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 41, Wien 1900, tr. R. Kearney, *The Excellence of Widowhood*, in: *The Works of Saint Augustine (A Translation for the 21st Century)*, v. 1/9, New York 1999.
- Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana*, ed. W.M. Green, CSEL 80, Wien 1963, tr. R.P.H. Green, *Saint Augustine. On Christian Teaching*, New York 2008.
- Cicero, *De oratore*, ed. E.W. Sutton – H. Rackham, London 1948.

#### Studies

- Andoková M., *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom*, Bratislava 2013.
- Auerbach E., *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter*, Bern 1958.
- Baldwin Ch.S., *St. Augustine on Preaching (De doctrina christiana, IV)*, in: *The Rhetoric of St. Augustine of Hippo: De Doctrina Christiana and the Search for a Distinctly Christian Rhetoric*, ed. R.L. Enos – R. Thompson et al., Waco 2008, p. 187-203.
- Berrouard M.-F., *Introduction aux homélies de saint Augustin sur l'Évangile de saint Jean*, Paris 2004.
- Berrouard M.-F., *Saint Augustin et le ministère de la prédication*, "Recherches Augustiniennes" 2 (1962) p. 447-501.
- Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Berkeley – Los Angeles 2013.

- Conybeare C., *Augustine's rhetoric in theory and practice*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, ed. M.J. Mac Donald, New York 2017, p. 351-363.
- Deferrari R.J., *Augustine's method of composing and delivering sermons*, "American Journal of Philosophy" 43 (1922) p. 193-219.
- Doull F.A., *A Contemporary Assessment Of St. Augustine's On The Good Of Widowhood*, "Animus" 6 (2001) p. 32-49.
- Drobner H.R., "I would rather not be wearisome to you". *Saint Augustine's as preacher*, "Melita Theologica" 51 (2000) p. 117-126.
- Harrison C., *The Rhetoric of Scripture and Preaching: Classical Decadence or Christian Aesthetic?*, in: *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, ed. G. Bonner – R. Dodaro – G. Lawless, London 2000, p. 214-230.
- La Bonnardière A.-M., *La prédication d'Augustine sur les Psaumes à Hippone*, AEPHE 86 (1977/1978) p. 337-341.
- Oberhelman S.M., *Rhetoric and Homilethics in Fourth-Century Christian Literature*, Atlanta 1991.
- Pontet M., *L'exégèse de St. Augustin prédicateur*, Marseille 1944.
- Sanlon P.T., *Augustine's Theology of Preaching*, Minneapolis 2014.
- Sypert J.A., *Redeeming Rhetoric: Augustine's Use of Rhetoric in His Preaching Ministry*, "Eleutheria" 4 (2015) p. 18-34.
- Van Der Meer F., *Augustine the Bishop*, London 1961.
- Van Oort J., *Augustine, his sermons, and their significance*, "HTS Theologische Studies/Theological Studies" 65 (2009) p. 363-372.



# On Christian Asylum in Augustine's *Sermones*<sup>1</sup>

Daniela Hrnčiarová<sup>2</sup>

---

**Abstract:** In the late 4th century, bishops utilized the so-called *ius intercessionis* right to intervene in order to help those in need, be they the persecuted, the accused or the convicted. These actions of a bishop were rooted foremost in the idea of mercy and it was also due to this right that a bishop became the one to decide about the granting of the right to asylum – a right which was gradually extended to Christian churches at the time. St. Augustine encounters the issue of Christian asylum as the bishop of Hippo Regius in Africa mainly in his preserved correspondence, but he talks about seeking sanctuary in Christian churches also in one of his sermons, specifically in *Sermo 302* delivered on the feast of St. Lawrence. This paper focuses on presenting the circumstances of a violent act in Hippo Regius and its implications to potentially sanctuary seeking in local Christian church, particularly on the ground of analysis of *post sermonem* to *Sermo 302*.

**Keywords:** St. Augustine; *Sermo 302*; sanctuary; ecclesiastical asylum

---

The beginnings of Christian asylum in late antiquity have been a subject of ongoing scholarly research. Much attention has been dedicated to the issue of the continuity and discontinuity of asylum in Christian and pagan churches and temples<sup>3</sup>. There are several theories aiming to identify the extent to which asylum provided by pagan temples was transformed to Christian churches; and whether and to what extent church asylum developed independently under the influence of consuetude or

---

<sup>1</sup> The present paper has been prepared within the project VEGA (Slovak National Grant Agency) No. 1/0801/20 and APVV-18-0333.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Daniela Hrnčiarová, Department of General History, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia; e-mail: daniela.hrnciarova@uniba.sk; ORCID: 0000-0002-5977-9253.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief overview of several approaches see: D. Hrnčiarová *Právo cirkevného azylu – otázka kontinuity a diskontinuity v neskorej antike. Stav súčasného bádania*, "Kultúrne dejiny" 11 (2020) p. 127-141.

perhaps other institutions of the Christian Church<sup>4</sup>. The elaborate system of state-guaranteed protection was developing over centuries in ancient Greece and in modified ways also during the Roman Empire<sup>5</sup>. However, it is difficult to posit a direct continuity between pagan and Christian practice of asylum beyond the most general religious sentiment of appreciation for the purity of holy places. Christian asylum differed from the pagan practice in that it was supposed to apply to all churches, not just to specifically designated sites<sup>6</sup>.

Roman law allowed bishops to intervene on behalf of those in need or those who were persecuted by applying the so-called *ius intercessionis*. Church officials acted above all based on compassion (*miser cordia*) and Christian charity (*caritas*), and to these, penance was added (*poenitentia*). For this reason, representatives of the church were ready to act also on behalf of criminals, mainly those sentenced to death. The church did not wish for their death but rather wanted them to reform. That is why the bishop's priority was to save such a criminal from physical death and offer him the possibility to atone for his sin, repent and so, eventually, achieve salvation<sup>7</sup>. In "fleeing to the church" (*ad ecclesiam confugere*) in the late 4th century, refugees would not have been guaranteed safety by the mere fact of being within the walls of a holy site. They had to seek out the bishop or his clergy, who had to intervene on behalf of sanctuary seekers with the responsible officials. There was no guarantee for success, it was usually a test of the degree of authority and diplomatic skill of the relevant clergyman<sup>8</sup>. Increased influence of an intercession on behalf of those in need also resulted from the fact that the position of bishops was, at the time, also occupied by rec-

<sup>4</sup> For a brief overview of supporters of individual theories and a critical depiction of strong points and weak points of these theories see Christian Traulsen, *Das sakrale Asyl in der Alten Welt*, Tübingen 2004, p. 293-300.

<sup>5</sup> Eilhard Schlesinger paid detailed attention to this phenomenon in ancient Greece (E. Schlesinger, *Griechische Asylie*, Giessen 1933), and Kent J. Rigsby (K. Rigsby, *Asyilia. Territorial Inviolability in Hellenistic World*, Berkley 1996). Richard Gamauf focused on a similar phenomenon in the Roman Empire during the Principate (R. Gamauf, *Ad statum licet confugere. Untersuchungen zum Asylrecht im römischen Prinzipat*, Frankfurt am Main – Berlin – Bern – New York – Paris – Wien 1999).

<sup>6</sup> C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, Berkley – Los Angeles 2005, p. 253.

<sup>7</sup> M. Babo, *Kirchenasyl – Kirchenhikesie. Zur Relevanz eines historischen Modells im Hinblick auf das Asylrecht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Münster 2003, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in the Late Antiquity Towards a Christian Empire*, Madison 1992, p. 146.



ognized figures with high moral credit who used their authority and influence in society<sup>9</sup>. Exercising *ius intercessionis* by a bishop is considered to be one of the important factors without which Christian asylum could not exist or would have been used in a different way.

It is not always clear from the sources whether sanctuary in a Christian church was sought in an effort to get the support of a church official or to have the protection of the four walls of a church. At that time, the help or appeal of a church representative did not necessarily go hand in hand with residing at a Christian church. The Council of Sardica (343) pronounced that help was to be offered to those who, suffering injustice or being condemned to exile or another penalty, appealed to the Church for help, which should not be refused and that intercession should be made. Although it is questionable whether the text of the canon<sup>10</sup> only covers intercession by the bishop or also refers to the protective effects of the Church building<sup>11</sup>. The connection of the church as a place where it was possible to request a bishop's intercession on one's behalf and its sacred nature was a gradual process. The sanctity and inviolability of the space of the Christian church also applied for pagan temples. If a pagan shrine was violated, a vindictive, punishing deity would act, while the Christian church referred to so-called *reverentia loci*, sacred reverence that people expressed towards this place<sup>12</sup>. The resolution of the council at Orange in 441 referred to *reverentia loci*, that is the respect paid to God's church, and the bishop's *intercessio* as the reason why those who sought sanctuary in the church should not be removed from there<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Babo, *Kirchenasyl – Kirchenhikesie*, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Serdica, canon 8, "Sed quoniam saepe contigit ut ad misericordiam ecclesiae confugiant qui iniuriam patiuntur et qui peccantes in exilium uel insulam damnantur aut certe quacumque sententiam excipiunt; subueniendum est et sine dubitatione petendum indulgentiam".

<sup>11</sup> J. Hallebeek, *Church Asylum in Late Antiquity, Concession by the Emperor or Competence of the Church?*, in: *Secundum Ius. Opstellen aan-geboden aan prof. mr. P.L. Nève (Rechtshistorische reeks van het Gerard Noodt Instituut; No. 49)*, ed. E.C. Coppens, Gerard Noodt Instituut 2005, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup> Ch. Traulsen, *Barmherzigkeit und Buße – Zur christlichen Gehalt des spätantiken Kirchenasyls*, „Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abt" 93 (2007) p. 140.

<sup>13</sup> Council of Orange, canon 5, "Eos qui ad ecclesiam confugerint tradi non oportere, sed loci reverentia et intercessione defendi. Si autem mancipia clericorum pro suis mancipiis ad ecclesiam confugientibus crediderit occupanda, per omnes ecclesias districtissima damnatione feriatur".

The writings of Augustine, bishop of Hyppo, became an important source of information about the late 4th and early 5th centuries. Thanks to his position as a high-ranking church official, his preserved works give us a unique opportunity to discover a bishop's activities in the quite turbulent period of the Roman Empire in northern Africa in late antiquity. We learn about the circumstances in which Augustine encountered asylum in Christian churches mainly from his preserved correspondence<sup>14</sup>. Augustine's letters<sup>15</sup> allow a partial reconstruction of who and in what circumstances sought sanctuary in the church or to what extent was a church official able to secure aid or provide protection. A number of authors over several decades conducted detailed analyses of Augustine's letters. Some of these scholars reacted<sup>16</sup> to the findings of their colleagues, while others focused more on working out their own, and in many respects, breakthrough theories about the use of church asylum in this transitory period<sup>17</sup>. A closer study of older works<sup>18</sup> could lead even to major reassessment of the original

<sup>14</sup> In addition to the provision of asylum in Christian churches, in his writings Augustine also discussed asylum in pagan temples, consistently using the term *asylum* for asylum in pagan shrines (Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* I 4, 34; II 29; V 17; Augustinus, *De consensu euangelistarum* I 12; Augustinus, *Contra Cresconium* II 13; Augustinus, *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* I). For the seeking sanctuary in a Christian church Augustine uses the variations of the verb *fugere*, *confugere*, or *refugere*. See G. Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext sakraler Zufluchtnahmen der Antike*, Frankfurt am Main 2003, p. 400-401. A brief overview of specific passages with the subject of provision of asylum in pagan temples is given by Jean Guadet in an encyclopaedia entry: J. Gaudemet, *Asylum*, AL I 491-493.

<sup>15</sup> Augustinus, *Ep.* 113-116; 151, 3; CSEL 34/2, 250/250A; 268; 1\*; 28\*.

<sup>16</sup> Here we should include above all the German author Gerhard Franke, who in his work closely analyzes several forms of providing refuge and gave a critical view of the interpretation of the opinions of several authors about Augustine's sources on church asylum. He also paid special attention to Augustine's correspondence. See Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext*, p. 354-370.

<sup>17</sup> This group includes French author Anne Ducloux, who mainly due to her meticulous work with Augustine's writings presented several, to this unquestioned and generally accepted theories about the functioning of church asylum in the late 4th and early 5th centuries. She dedicated a part of her work to analyzing Augustine's letters. See A. Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere. Naissance du droit d'asile dans les église (IV.e- milieu V.e p.)*, Paris 1994, p. 145-159 and 190-206.

<sup>18</sup> There is also an unorthodox approach to church asylum based on Augustine's correspondence by Hans Langenfeld in the 1970s. For him, a division line was drawn by the law of Emperor Theodosius II from the year 431. Langenfeld did not consider as real church asylums any cases documented before the release of this decree on asylum and

outcomes<sup>19</sup>. The discovery and publication of the so-called Divjak Collection of Augustine's letters gave the authors of newer works an advantage. To some of the published letters thus fragmentary information of the original correspondence was added<sup>20</sup>.

In addition to his letters, Augustine talked about sanctuary in Christian churches also in one of his sermons, specifically in *Sermo 302*<sup>21</sup>. This sermon belongs among the so-called *sermones de sanctis*, since it was delivered on the feast day of the Roman martyr, St. Lawrence<sup>22</sup> on August 10th, the day of his martyrdom. Originally, Augustine was not interested in the subject of martyrdom. The very popular veneration of the martyrs led him to address the topic. Augustine attempted to direct the enthusiasm of his flock related to the veneration of martyrs towards God and Christ. He wanted first and foremost to prevent the martyr cults replacing the worship of Christ, considering martyrdom to be an imitation of Christ and a testimony of love for Christ<sup>23</sup>.

---

he saw similarly the cases identified in Augustine's correspondence. Cf. H. Langenfeld, *Christianisierungspolitik und Sklavengesetzgebung der römischen Kaiser von Konstantin bis Theodosius II*, Bonn 1977, p. 172-189.

<sup>19</sup> After studying Langenfeld's work, German historian of antiquity, Martin Dreher, re-evaluated some of his statements related to the development of church asylum in late antiquity. See M. Dreher, *Die Ursprünge des Kirchenasyls und die Gesetzgebung Theodosius' II*, in: *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. H-U. Weimer, Berlin 2006, p. 154, n. 10. Cf. also D. Hrnčiarová, *Právo cirkevného azylu – otázka kontinuity a diskontinuity v neskorej antike. Stav súčasného bádania*, „Kultúrne dejiny” 11 (2020) p. 136.

<sup>20</sup> This involves a letter written by Augustine to his friend Classicianus. Only a fragment of the original letter remains (Augustinus, *Ep.* 250A). In Divjak's Collection, the complete letter was identified (Augustinus, *Ep.* 1\*). The letters deal with the issue whether armed soldiers could enter a Christian shrine in order to force to leave those perjurers who fled to the protection of the church in hope of escaping punishment. Anne Ducloux analyzed both letters closely (Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 196-201) as well as Gerhard Franke (Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext*, p. 364-367).

<sup>21</sup> The latest critical edition of this sermon, its translation and commentary was authored by B. Pietri, *Aureli Augusti Sermo CCCII. Testo, traduzione e commento*, Bologna 1998 and I refer to her text with Latin quotations since I did not have at my disposal an edition from which this sermon is usually cited. Cf. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Sermones selecti duoviginti*, ed. D.C. Lambot, Bruxeles 1950, p. 100-111.

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence (*Laurentius*) was one of the seven Roman deacons named by Pope Sixtus II, who became a victim of the persecution of Christians under the rule of Emperor Valerian in 268. Cf. Pietri, *Aureli Augusti Sermo CCCII*, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> A. Dupont, *Preacher of Grace. A Critical Reappraisal of Augustine's Doctrine of Grace in His Sermones ad Populum on Liturgical Feasts and During the Donatist Controversy*, Leiden 2014, p. 138.

The sermon delivered on the feast of St. Lawrence is not a typical sermon about the life and death of a martyr<sup>24</sup>. The theme of Christian non-violence is thus skillfully interwoven into Augustine's representation of Lawrence as a martyr who resisted unjust civil authorities by verbal, rather than physical, means<sup>25</sup>. The sermon was given shortly after the killing of an imperial official in August of 409/412<sup>26</sup>. Augustine's sermons are remarkably consistent in style and form, which makes them hard to date. Relatively few Augustinian sermons can be plausibly dated by means of persons or events mentioned in them. Augustine rarely alludes to living persons and hardly ever refers directly to the economic, political, cultural, or social situation<sup>27</sup>. On the other hand, many of the original sermons were cut down by medieval copyists, who were only interested in certain parts of them. They wanted to know about the theology of Augustine and not about the Africa of Augustine. They often found that many of these sermons were too full of local color to be of interest to persons who now read them many centuries later<sup>28</sup>.

In this sermon Augustine once again does not go into detail – he had no reason because the members of the community were familiar with what happened. An imperial clerk was murdered and his body was mutilated; in the sermon he is simply referred to as *miles*. Several historians have contemplated his identity and position. They reached the conclusion that most

---

<sup>24</sup> Concerning the feast day of St. Lawrence there are two more separate sermons preserved, Sermo 303 and 304 from a later date and Sermo 305A from an earlier period. See Augustinus, *Sermons (273 – 305A) on the Saints*, tr. E. Hill, WSA 3/8, New York 1994, p. 313-320, 324-334. Suzanne Poque describes the way in which Augustine of Hippo commemorated the feast days of martyrs. In the case of Lawrence and Sermon 303 she only has a brief note that there were no so-called *passiones martyrorum* that were to be read on the day of the martyr's death anniversary. As a possible reason, she writes that Lawrence as a Roman deacon was not considered an African martyr. See S. Poque, *Spectacles et festins offerts par Augustin d'Hippone pour les fêtes de martyrs*, "Pallas" 15 (1968) p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> Sermo 302, note 1, in: *Augustine political writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001, p. 273.

<sup>26</sup> J.C. Magalhães de Oliveira, *Le "Pouvoir de Peuple": Une émuete à Hippone au début du Ve siècle connue par le Sermon 302 de Saint Augustine pour la fête de Saint Laurent*, „Antiquité Tardive” 12 (2004) p. 310.

<sup>27</sup> H. Müller, *Preacher Augustine and His Congregation*, in: *A Companion of Augustine*, ed. M. Vessey – Sh. Reid, Oxford – Chichester 2012, p. 301.

<sup>28</sup> P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD*, Princeton 2012, p. 460.

probably, he was a clerk of the harbor authority *custos litorum*<sup>29</sup>. He carried out his activities at the harbor and he could have been responsible for the inadequate increase of import duty on goods that were sold at the market in Hippo Regius. That probably caused excessive increase of prices at the marketplace – increased fees financially harmed a number of tradesmen even to the point of ruining some of them<sup>30</sup>.

Júlio César Magalhães de Oliveira decided to closely analyze the reasons for the actions of Hippo residents that lead to violence, focusing above all on the social and political dimension of these events<sup>31</sup>. But the brevity of provided information and suggestions does not allow to reconstruct the events at Hippo Regius reliably and allows several possible interpretations. For us, these interpretations are interesting in the context of providing church asylum at the basilica in Hippo Regius. Before discussing who and under what circumstances could seek shelter at the Hippo church, we take a look at the text of the sermon.

The sermon consists of two parts. The first part, *Sermo 302*, was delivered on the feast day of St. Lawrence. The opening section deals with love for eternal life. Later, Augustine arrives at the delicate subject: the murder and lynching of the imperial official<sup>32</sup>. Based on Augustine's initial hesitation to address the committed crime, some historians assumed that some Christians may have been directly involved in the incident. This point of view should be supported by the fact that Augustine talks about the whole incident very carefully by which he tries to make the impression that Christians were innocent. But the repeated emphasis on the Christians' innocence may seem suspicious. He himself warns Christians not to take justice into their own hands<sup>33</sup>. Another hypothesis relates to the lack of action on

---

<sup>29</sup> R. Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées et res privata: l'aerarium impérial et son administration du IV<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Rome 1989, p. 287-288.

<sup>30</sup> *Augustine: Political Writing*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001, p. 273.

<sup>31</sup> Magalhães de Oliveira, *Le "Pouvoir de Peuple"*, p. 309-324.

<sup>32</sup> Edmund Hill offers a different explanation of the incongruity of the two parts. He writes that *Sermo 302* is divided into a section where Augustine preached on the superiority of heavenly over earthly desires (Sections 1 – 9). Sections 10 to 21, with the appendix of 22, seem definitely to come from another sermon, the beginning of which has been lost. Both sections, however, refer to Saint Lawrence, so both were definitely delivered on his feast day; so, they cannot have been given in the same year. See Augustinus, *Sermons (273 – 305A) on the Saints*, p. 311, n. 1.

<sup>33</sup> J.C. Magalhães de Oliveira, *Le "Pouvoir de Peuple"*, p. 311; A. Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 176-177; Pietri, *Aureli Augusti Sermo CCCII*, p. 250.

the part of Christians. Although they may have not participated directly in the murder, their inaction allowed it and they also did not prevent it<sup>34</sup>.

Anne Ducloux subjected the sermon to a thorough analysis. According to her, in his sermon Augustine suggests that there was certain formal investigation being carried out of the official who was overstepping his competence. But there are no details there about which authority carried it out or how far the investigation proceeded. It is possible, however, that the official was lynched before the conviction<sup>35</sup>. In his sermon, Augustine mentioned “a condemned criminal sentenced to death, with the sword hanging over him, even then no one is allowed to strike him except the person who holds the appropriate office”<sup>36</sup>. The French author presents a hypothesis that the accused official could have hidden in the church of Hippo and there apply for a bishop’s intervention. But she does not think that the official was sentenced for his actions and so his reason for seeking sanctuary could not have been his fear of punishment<sup>37</sup>. She considers it more probable that *custos litorum* hid in the church from the disgruntled crowd that got hold of him by violent force and lynched him<sup>38</sup>. Bruna Pietri similarly sides with the opinion that the imperial official sought sanctuary in the church of Hippo, was dragged out in a violent manner and then murdered<sup>39</sup>. Similarly is the event presented by Peter Brown when *populus* of Hippo dragged an imperial official out of the sanctuary in Augustine’s own basilica and lynched him<sup>40</sup>. Ducloux’s interpretation about the violation of ecclesiastical asylum is accepted also by J.C. Magalhães de Oliveira<sup>41</sup> and Brent D. Shaw<sup>42</sup>. But Gerhard Franke does not see in the whole sermon any convincing evidence of an imperial official seeking sanctuary in a Christian church<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext*, p. 347; Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 177.

<sup>35</sup> Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 176.

<sup>36</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo 302*, 13: “Considerate in ipsis ordinibus potestatum destinatum supplicio et damnatum cui gladius imminet non licere feriri nisi ab illo qui hoc militat”, tr. *Sermon 302 At the feast of St. Lawrence*, in: *Augustine political writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001, p. 114.

<sup>37</sup> Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 176.

<sup>38</sup> Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 180.

<sup>39</sup> Pietri, *Aureli Augusti Sermo CCCII*, p. 249-250.

<sup>40</sup> Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, p. 465.

<sup>41</sup> Magalhães de Oliveira, *Le “Pouvoir de Peuple”*, p. 317.

<sup>42</sup> B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence. African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine*, Cambridge 2011, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext*, p. 348.

One of the arguments based on which we could assume it happened so, is a mention about interventions in the sermon. Augustine expresses his view on a bishop's *ius intercessionis*. But he reveals the negative side of such an intercession while staying in a general context without detailing any specific cases<sup>44</sup>. J.C. Magalhães de Oliveira thinks that the inhabitants of Hippo expected Augustine to intervene with the authorities due to the imperial official's offences. He understands the term *potestas* as a higher judicial institution that could ban the imperial official from continuing to carry out his duties or inflict punishment<sup>45</sup>. Anne Ducloux claims that perhaps it was not about an intervention with the Roman authorities on behalf of one particular person. According to her, Augustine intervenes before the tragic escalation of the situation, he probably reproaches and warns the imperial official, but without success<sup>46</sup>. Franke proposes another possibility: due to his murder, the colleagues or subordinates of the imperial official may have feared a similar attack against themselves and could have sought sanctuary in the Christian church – even though Augustine does not mention such a group of people at all. Franke adds that the situation at Hippo, that is the consequences of malpractices for the population, obviously were not caused by the actions of a single individual. We can suppose that further subordinates of the killed official could have been afraid of being considered responsible and there was a threat of a similarly gruesome death<sup>47</sup>. Magalhães de Oliveira, just like Ducloux and Franke, refute the theory that the bishop's intervention was sought by those who participated in the official's murder<sup>48</sup>.

However, according to those agreeing with this theory, important arguments supporting the violation of church asylum are not directly in the text of the sermon but in its conclusion, the so-called *post sermonem* or *post tractatum*, separately titled *Sermo Morin Guelferbytanus 25*. Although these two parts (*Sermo 302* and *Post sermonem*) are traditionally presented

---

<sup>44</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo 302*, 17: “Quare it ad illam potestatem? Et quid quaerit episcopus cum illa potestate? Et tamen omnes nostis quia vestrae necessitates nos cogunt venire quo nolumus: observare, ante ostium stare, intransibus dignis et indignis expectare nuntiarum, vix aliquando admitti, ferre humilitates, rogare, aliquando impetrare, aliquando tristes abscedere”.

<sup>45</sup> Magalhães de Oliveira, *Le “Pouvoir de Peuple”*, p. 320.

<sup>46</sup> Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 179. See Augustinus, *Sermo 302*, 18: “Tamen fratres mei obsecro vos de potestatibus potest mihi dici: meneret illum et bone faceret. Et respondeo: ego monui sed non me audivit et ibi monui ubi tu non audisti”.

<sup>47</sup> Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext*, p. 349, n. 183.

<sup>48</sup> Magalhães de Oliveira, *Le “Pouvoir de Peuple”*, p. 320; Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 179; Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext*, p. 349.

together, it is not impossible that they do not, in fact, belong together<sup>49</sup>. The *Post sermonem* have been preserved only with a small number of sermons. It seems that, when Augustine actually did address the current problems of his church, he would do so not in the sermon itself but in a separate passage, usually labeled *Post tractatum* in the manuscript<sup>50</sup>. And it is just in this epilogue that Augustine talks about the seeking of sanctuary in Christian churches, that is, about ecclesiastical asylum.

In the *post sermonem* Augustine states that “the Church is a mother that provides sanctuary to those who seek it and that it is a refuge shared by everyone”<sup>51</sup>. In the very beginning, Augustine used the a phrase with the verb *confugere*. But it was not the usual phrase *ad ecclesiam confugere*, which has its analogy in Roman law: a portrait or a sculpture of an emperor provided certain protection (*ad imagines confugere*, *ad statuas confugere*)<sup>52</sup> and in late antiquity, it was possible to find shelter and help with powerful people (*ad patrocinia confugere*) or imperial authorities (*ad militiam confugere*)<sup>53</sup>. The use of the phrase *confugere ad munimentum matris ecclesiae* (seek refuge with mother church) is comparable with the decree of the afore-mentioned canon of the council at Sardica. There, some of the historians interpret *ecclesia* in the phrase *ad misericordiam ecclesiae confugiant* not as the building of the church but the institution<sup>54</sup>.

In *post sermonem*, Augustine depicts an atmosphere as if the situation was happening right in front of him. He talks about the crowd that worries the Church because it is hard to control but so far there is no evidence that things would be deteriorating<sup>55</sup>. And so there is a certain contradiction in

<sup>49</sup> A. Ducloux paid close attention to this issue and presents several opinions. But she herself believes that the two sections belong together. See Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 171, n. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Müller, *Preacher Augustine and His Congregation*, p. 301.

<sup>51</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo 302, 22 (post scriptum)*: “Fratres, eos qui confugiunt ad munimentum matris ecclesiae, propter ipsum omnium comune refugium nolite pigri et segnes frequentare matrem vestram et non recedere de ecclesia”, tr. *Postscript*, in: *Augustine political writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001, p. 118.

<sup>52</sup> R. Gamauf, *Ad statuas confugere in der frühen römischen Kaiserzeit*, in: *Das antike Asyl. Kultische Grundlagen, rechtliche Ausgestaltung und politische Funktion*, ed. M. Dreher, Köln 2003, p. 177-178.

<sup>53</sup> J. Derlien, *Asyl. Die religiöse und rechtliche Begründung der Flucht zu sakralen Orten in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, Marburg 2003, p. 343.

<sup>54</sup> Hallenbeck, *Church Asylum in Late Antiquity*, p. 165-166.

<sup>55</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo 302, 22 (post scriptum)*: “Sollicita est enim, ne quid indisciplinata multitudo audeat [...] nec credimus de illis, nec sic videmus”.



terms of time between the events mentioned in the sermon – of which Augustine speaks as if it was the past while he evaluates how the Christian community behaved – and the situation, which seems as if it was happening at the moment. This would support the idea that the epilogue may be a fragment of another sermon. If both events are related, then what is considered as the conclusion of the sermon was written earlier and due to the related content, it was added to it. Or, Augustine could have described a completely different event the historical context of which cannot be identified from the preserved fragment. Another apparent contradiction is the fact that in his sermon, Augustine castigates Christians for their possible part-taking in the killing of the imperial official. On the other hand, in the epilogue, Augustine blames them for their absence in the church, which allowed the entering of an uncontrollable crowd – and Christians should prevent that by their numerous presences<sup>56</sup>.

In this context, perhaps the sermon's epilogue can be seen as a confirmation of Augustine's reproach towards the Christian community who failed to act when they should have, as Christians, prevented violence<sup>57</sup>. Without connecting the epilogue with the rest of the sermon the text does not indicate that anyone sought sanctuary in the church in relation to the attack on and killing of the imperial official<sup>58</sup>. In the epilogue, Augustine further states that "if church protection will not be offered to the wrongdoers and the guilty, or if they should be removed from the church, there will be nowhere for the innocent and those who do good to hide"<sup>59</sup>. The apparently strong emphasis that Augustine puts on the providing of protection for a sinner allowed the proposal of theories according to which the murdered official or his persecutors too, that is the guilty ones, could seek sanctuary at the church in Hippo. However, as it has been shown earlier, the text of the sermon does not suggest these facts.

<sup>56</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo* 302, 22 (*post scriptum*): "sed ne quid indisciplinata multitudo audeat debetis frequentare matrem vestram: quia sicut dixi non unius aut duorum hoc est commune refugium. Et qui non habet causam timeat ne habeat".

<sup>57</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo* 302, 22 (*post scriptum*): "Tenete ista, ut sicut dixi, frequentia vestra non saevitia timeatur".

<sup>58</sup> Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 180; Franke, *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext*, p. 348.

<sup>59</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo* 302, 22 (*post scriptum*): "Sed si voluerimus discernere ut tollantur de ecclesia qui male, non erit ubi se abscondant qui bene faciunt; si voluerimus permittere ut hinc tollatur nocentes, non erit quo fugiant innocentes. Melius est ergo ut et nocentes in ecclesia muniantur quam innocentes de ecclesia rapiantur", tr. *Postscript*, in: *Augustine political writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001, p. 119.

Augustine refers to persons seeking sanctuary in the Christian church by the term *fugientes*. The Slovak language does not have a one-word term for this expression. Refugee does not fully capture the essence of the term in the context of ecclesiastical asylum. While the Slovak translation “*azylanti*” (asylum seekers) from the Latin *asylantes*, is more appropriate, Augustine distances himself from the term *asylum*<sup>60</sup>. He uses it to refer to the asylum of pagan temples, for example at the temple of Juno<sup>61</sup> at Troy or in connection with the asylum of Romulus<sup>62</sup> at Rome.

Augustine distinguishes “three categories of refugees: the unjust who flee from the presence of the just; the just who flee from the unjust; and the unjust who flee from the unjust”<sup>63</sup>.

Although Augustine this way defines the general principle of providing refuge, we cannot agree without reservations with Anne Ducloux’s opinion that this way he creates the theoretical basis for church asylum. Christian Traulsen believes that the Church did not intend to create an abstract principle of the inviolability of ecclesiastical asylum. It was every priest’s duty to help a person in need in the name of Christian charity. Traulsen rejects Ducloux’s effort at presenting Augustine as a theoretician of church asylum based on the analysis of Sermon 302’s epilogue. He thinks that Augustine reacts to a concrete current situation and based on it, he adapts also his own statements addressed to specific listeners. He presents arguments rooted in Christian faith, which can be applied in a specific case<sup>64</sup>. He assumes that for patristic authors the seeking of sanctuary in a church was not a theological issue but rather they were dealing with practical problems related to it. Individual mentions that can be connected with church asylum also in a theological context, are related to a specific situation, they are individual and random, mainly in the sermons and the letters<sup>65</sup>.

Augustine’s statement on *refugium commune* is missing one aspect which would become of key importance in the providing of church asylum later on.

<sup>60</sup> Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, p. 138-139.

<sup>61</sup> Augustinus, *De ciuitate Dei* I 4: “quin etiam Iunonis asylo custodes lecti”.

<sup>62</sup> Augustinus, *De ciuitate Dei* I 34: “Romulus et Remus asyllum constituisse perhibentur”.

<sup>63</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo* 302, 22 (*post scriptum*): “Tria sunt genera fugientium. Boni a bonis non fugiunt, soli iusti iustos non fugiunt, sed aut iniusti fugiunt iustos, aut iusti fugiunt iniustos, aut iniusti iniustos”, tr. *Postscript*, in: *Augustine political writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001, p. 119.

<sup>64</sup> Traulsen, *Das sakrale Asyl*, p. 299.

<sup>65</sup> Traulsen, *Barmherzigkeit und Buße*, p. 130.

And it is the holy nature of the space of the church. The *post sermonem* clearly suggests that protection for *fugientes* is not provided by the space of the church but rather by the community of Christians who, thanks to their presence and numbers, prevent the disruptors “to attempt anything against their mother that would end in humanity blaming them and God judging them”<sup>66</sup>. Sermon 302, and its conclusion, stays within the framework of Augustine’s actions when, in the spirit of compassion and Christian charity, he uses his authority and the dignity of his position to act to the benefit of those seeking sanctuary in a Christian church within *ius intercessionis*. But what helps is not necessarily the sacred character of the Christian church but a strong and determined Christian community. Both of these aspects in a major way aided the general respect for the Christian church and its protection what finally led to the state-approved and guaranteed church asylum.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Augustinus, *Epistulae*, CSEL 34/2, ed. A. Goldbacher, Wien 1898; CSEL 57, ed. A. Goldbacher, Wien 1911; CSEL 88, ed. J. Divjak, Wien 1981, tr. Augustinus, *Letters* 211-270, 1\*-29\* (*Epistulae*), WSA 2/4, New York 2005.
- Augustinus, *Sermons (273 – 305A) on the Saints*, WSA 3/8, ed. J.E. Rotelle, New York 1994, *Aureli Augusti Sermo CCCII. Testo, traduzione e commento*, ed. B. Pietri, Bologna 1998, tr. *Sermon 302. On the feast of St. Lawrence*, in: *Augustine: Political Writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001.
- Concilia Galliae a. 314 – a. 506*, CCL 148, ed. Ch. Munier, Turnholt 1963.
- Histoire des Concils d’après les documents originaux*, v. 2/2, ed. Ch. J. Hefele, Paris 1907.

### Studies

- Babo M., *Kirchenasyl – Kirchenhikesie. Relevanz eines historischen Modells im Hinblick auf das Asylrecht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Münster 2003.
- Brown P., *Power and Persuasion in the Late Antiquity Towards a Christian Empire*, Madison 1992.
- Brown P., *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD*, Princeton 2012.

---

<sup>66</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo* 302, 22 (*post scriptum*): “ut non audeat facere contra matrem [ecclesiam] unde et apud homines culpentur, et apud Deum habent iudicium”, tr. *Postscript*, in: *Augustine political writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins – R.J. Dorado, Cambridge 2001, p. 119.

- Delmaire R., *Largesses sacrées et res privata: l'aerarium impérial et son administration du IV<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Rome 1989.
- Derlien J., *Asyl. Die religiöse und rechtliche Begründung der Flucht zu sakralen Orten in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, Marburg 2003.
- Dreher M., *Die Ursprünge des Kirchenasyls und die Gesetzgebung Theodosius' II*, in: *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. H-U. Weimer, Berlin 2006, p. 150-174.
- Ducloux A., *Ad ecclesiam confugere. Naissance du droit d'asile dans les églises (IV<sup>e</sup>- milieu V<sup>e</sup> s.)*, Paris 1994.
- Dupont A., *Preacher of Grace. A Critical Reappraisal of Augustine's Doctrine of Grace in his Sermones ad Populum on Liturgical Feasts and During the Donatist Controversy*, Leiden 2014.
- Franke G., *Das Kirchenasyl im Kontext sakraler Zufluchtnahmen der Antike*, Frankfurt am Main 2003.
- Gaudemet J., *Asylum*, AL I, ed. C. Mayer, Basel 1986-1994, p. 490-493.
- Gamauf R., *Ad statuas confugere in der frühen römischen Kaiserzeit*, in: *Das antike Asyl. Kultische Grundlagen, rechtliche Ausgestaltung und politische Funktion*, ed. M. Dreher, Köln 2003, p. 177-202.
- Hallebeek J., *Church Asylum in Late Antiquity, Concession by the Emperor or Competence of the Church?*, in: *Secundum Ius. Opstellen aangeboden aan prof. mr. P.L. Nève*, ed. E.C. Coppens, Gerard Noodt Instituut 2005, p. 163-182.
- Hrnčiarová D., *Právo cirkevného azylu – otázka kontinuity a diskontinuity v neskorej antike. Stav súčasného bádania*. „Kultúrne dejiny” 11 (2020) p. 127-141.
- Langenfeld H., *Christianisierungspolitik und Sklavengesetzgebung der römischen Kaiser von Konstantin bis Theodosius II*, Bonn 1977.
- Magalhães de Oliveira J.C., *Le "Pouvoir de Peuple": Une émue à Hippone au début du Ve siècle connue par le Sermon 302 de Saint Augustine pour la fête de Saint Laurent*, „Antiquité Tardive” 12 (2004) p. 309-324.
- Müller H., *Preacher Augustine and His Congregation*, in: *A Companion of Augustine*, ed. M. Vessey – Sh. Reid, Oxford – Chichester 2012, p. 297-309.
- Poque S., *Spectacles et festins offerts par Augustin d'Hippone pour les fêtes de martyrs, "Pallas"* 15 (1968) p. 103-125.
- Rapp C., *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, Berkley – Los Angeles 2005.
- Traulsen Ch., *Das sakrale Asyl in der Alten Welt*, Tübingen 2004.
- Traulsen Ch., *Barmherzigkeit und Buße – Zur christlichen Gehalt des spätantiken Kirchenasyls*, „Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abt.” 93 (2007) p. 128-153.



## Persuasive Function of Sound Figures in Augustine's Homilies on the Psalms of Ascents and Their Translation into Modern Languages<sup>1</sup>

Marcela Andoková<sup>2</sup>, Róbert Horka<sup>3</sup>

---

**Abstract:** Augustine's sermons and exegetical homilies have been recently studied by modern scholars not only from the point of view of their contents but also their rhetorical form. This is true especially in those cases where we deal with authentic speeches reflecting the language culture of his audience. One of the most characteristic features of Augustine's homiletic style is antithetic parallelism which occurs frequently in his homilies on Psalms and results from the author's own way of thinking. Here we do not deal that much with the biblical parallelism of thought, present in the Hebrew poetry, particularly in Psalms, prophetic speeches, etc., but rather with that which was introduced in Greek by Gorgias, i.e., parallelism of words and sentence structure (*parallelismus membrorum*). Antithetic parallelism is often accompanied by rhyme (Gr. *homoioteleuton*) or by assonance. This phenomenon might be observed already in Indo-European poetics but in the rhetorical context of Augustine's anti-Donatist preaching it serves quite different purposes. By using these and other sound figures (like alliteration, repetition, anaphora, epiphora, etc.) the bishop of Hippo wants not only to please his audience but also to instruct them and, first and foremost, persuade them to return to the Catholic church. Does he use these figures spontaneously imitating the folk culture of his audience, or is he constantly aware of their persuasive force? These and other related questions have already captured attention of several Augustinian scholars of the last decades, so in the present paper we would like to contribute to this foregoing discussion focusing mostly on the persuasive aspect of selected sound figures occurring in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 119-133. Moreover, our aim is to show to which extent they were a part of bishop's thoroughly

---

<sup>1</sup> The present paper was prepared within the project VEGA 1/0801/20 "Formal and content analysis of the spoken Latin language in Late Antiquity against the background of Augustine's preaching activity".

<sup>2</sup> Marcela Andoková, Assoc.-prof. Dr Marcela Andoková, Department of Classical Languages, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia; e-mail: marcela.andokova@uniba.sk; ORCID: 0000-0001-8551-792X.

<sup>3</sup> Róbert Horka, Assoc.-prof. Dr Róbert Horka, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia; e-mail: robert.horka@uniba.sk; ORCID: 0000-0001-5663-4529.

considered plan of his homilies, and finally we would like to point out the importance of preserving at least some of these figures in modern translations of Augustine's homilies.

**Keywords:** Augustine of Hippo; preaching activity; *Enarrationes in Psalmos*; sound figures; *delectation*; persuasive function

From Augustine's own testimony we learn that his primary concern was not only that his believers understand the Christian truth but also that they willingly accept it and adhere to it with all their hearts. He was clearly aware of the fact that God's word is bitter like unripe fruit to those who oppose it. Therefore, in explaining the Scriptures he was seeking such ways of communication that his arguments were not only strong and convincing but also pleasant to listen to and easy to remember:

God's word is your opponent as long as you have not come to terms with it. You reach an agreement with it from the point where you begin to take delight in doing what the word commands you; from that moment the word that was your adversary becomes your friend<sup>4</sup>.

So in Augustine's sermons the *delectatio* does not have merely an entertaining function but rather it serves didactic purposes<sup>5</sup>.

Our starting point in this article in terms of our focus is thus not primarily their content, but their form. However, this aspect of them has not received much attention in scholarly discourse since the 20th century, with some exceptions such as Christine Mohrmann<sup>6</sup> and George Lawless<sup>7</sup> in particular. In the Slovak academic environment, some of our works could

---

<sup>4</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 129, 3: "Est enim sermo Dei aduersarius tuus quamdiu cum illo non concordas. Concordas autem cum coeperit te delectare facere quod dicit sermo Dei. Iam qui erat aduersarius, fit amicus", tr. The Works of Saint Augustine 3/19-20, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> See Cicero, *Orator* 21, 69 in Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* IV 12, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ch. Mohrmann, *Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustin. I. Einführung, Lexikologie, Wortbildung*, Nijmegen 1932; Ch. Mohrmann, *Saint Augustin prédicateur*, "La Maison-Dieu" 39 (1954) p. 83-96.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine's Use of Rhetoric in His Interpretation of John 21*, 19-23, *AugSt* 23 (1992) p. 53-67; G. Lawless, *The Man Born Blind: Augustine's Tractate 44 on John 9*, *AugSt* 27/2 (1996) p. 61-79; G. Lawless, *Listening to Augustine: Tractate 44 on John 9*, *AugSt* 28/1 (1997) p. 51-66; G. Lawless, *The Wedding at Cana: Augustine on the Gospel according to John, Tractates 8 and 9*, *AugSt* 28/2 (1997) p. 35-80; G. Lawless,

be added to them<sup>8</sup>. In spite of the lack of interest in the subject, it was precisely the formal aspect of Augustine's speeches that attracted his audience. In doing so he might have already been inspired by bishop Ambrose of Milan, who, shortly before Augustine's baptism, had been accused by state officials of bewitching people with his hymns<sup>9</sup>. So were for the people of Africa Augustine's sermons. It seems to us, therefore, that when translating Augustine's sermons into vernacular languages, this aspect of his homiletic work must be taken into account. So in our paper we would like to draw particular attention to some rhetorical elements which, in our view, Augustine himself considered important and which should not therefore be overlooked in translation. Before analyzing some key rhetorical figures, however, we would like to point to some important aspects of Augustine's sermons.

His style was so exceptional that Possidius considered it to be Augustine's unique quality, as he describes it in his biography, *Vita Augustini*:

In private and in public, at home and in the church Augustine was preaching and teaching the word of salvation [...]. He did so in carefully wrought books and in extemporaneous addresses and to the utter admiration and praise of Christians, who did not remain silent about all this but noised it abroad wherever they could<sup>10</sup>.

---

“*Infirmior sexus... fortior affectus*” Augustine's *Jo. ev. tr. 121, 1-3: Mary Magdalene*, *AugSt* 34/1 (2003) p. 107-118.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. Andoková, *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom* [*The Art of Rhetoric in Augustine's Psalms of Degrees*], Bratislava 2013; M. Andoková, *Úskalia prekladu rétorického aparátu z diel sv. Augustína do slovenského prekladového textu* [*Difficulties in the translation of rhetorical apparatus of St. Augustine's works into the Slovak language*], *Sambucus* 3, Trnava 2008, p. 74-85; R. Horka, *Možnosti prekladu aliterácie, anafory, epifory, polysyndetonu a asyndetonu v Komentári Aurelia Augustína k Jánovmu evanjeliu* [*Translation possibilities of alliteration, anaphora, epiphora, polysyndeton and asyndeton in Aurelius Augustine's Commentary on the Gospel of John*], *Sambucus* 3, Trnava 2008, p. 65-73.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ambrosius, *Ep. 75, 34*: “Hymnorum quoque meorum carminibus deceptum populum ferunt. Plane nec hoc abnuo. Grande carmen istud est, quo nihil potentius”.

<sup>10</sup> Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 7, 1: “Et docebat ac praedicabat ille priuatim et publice, in domo et in ecclesia, salutis uerbum cum omni fiducia. [...] et repentinis sermonibus, ineffabiliter admirantibus Christianis et collaudantibus, et hoc ipsum ubi poterant non tacentibus, sed diffamantibus”, tr. J.E. Rotelle, *The Life of Saint Augustine by Possidius of Calama*, p. 51.

And so, Augustine's homilies are unique not only in terms of what they say but also in terms of their formal properties. In fact, they were so attractive for their listeners that they would not wait for the bishop of Hippo to provide them with authorized written versions of his sermons but, according to Possidius, they convinced Augustine to allow a stenographer at the church to record authentically the preacher's sermons directly: "Even the heretics joined the Catholics in listening to him with great enthusiasm, and anyone who wished and had the means could have his words taken down by stenographers"<sup>11</sup>. In this way, some of Augustine's homilies circulated even without his knowledge and certainly without his authorization<sup>12</sup>. George Lawless makes the same claim about the sermons that the bishop kept in his library:

Augustine had planned to revise the huge corpus of his preaching, but terminal illness and death prevented him from carrying out this project. Consequently, we possess the tractates in a version which closely approximates their original delivery, while allowing for the mistakes of stenographers, copyists and editors at various stages of their transmission through the centuries<sup>13</sup>.

It means that majority of Augustine's homilies represent a most reliable record of how people spoke in real life at the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries, certainly so in the Latin part of Roman Africa<sup>14</sup>. It is so because Augustine consciously and purposefully adapted his style of speech to that of his listeners as much as possible. This allows us to claim that what we find in his homilies is very close to the vernacular spoken at the time<sup>15</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 7, 3: "Ipsi quoque haeretici concurrentes cum catholicis ingenti ardore audiebant et, quisquis, ut uoluit et potuit, notarios adhibentes, ea quae dicebantur excepta describentes", tr. Rotelle, p. 51. Augustine often refers to the work of these *notarii*. The method of shorthand was introduced in ancient Rome already by Cicero's freedman and secretary M. Tullius Tiro (hence the term "Tironian notes"). We can read Augustine's sermons today in practically identical version thanks to the stenographers who recorded Augustine's homilies on the go, as he was delivering them. See e.g. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* II 26, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. L. Mechlinski, *Der modus proferendi in Augustini sermones ad populum*, Paderborn 2004, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> G. Lawless, *Listening to Augustine: Tractate 44 on Jhn 9*, AugSt 28/1 (1997) p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. M. Banniard, *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IV<sup>e</sup> au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle en Occident latin*, Paris 1992, p. 83.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. P. Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching*, Minneapolis 2014, p. 9-10.



For purposes of the deliverance of homilies, Augustine strictly insists on clear and comprehensible expression<sup>16</sup> which in practice means adapting his style to the needs and tastes of the common people of his time. Vocabulary, syntax, sentence structure, figurative speech and many other features of the spoken style, mainly parataxis and antithetical parallelism<sup>17</sup> accompanied by rhyme have their origin above all in the Scripture<sup>18</sup> and folk culture of the time<sup>19</sup>. Numerous gradations, repetitions<sup>20</sup>, alliterations, assonances and word plays<sup>21</sup>, that go hand in hand with the contemporary trend of spoken Latin, surely suited very well to Augustine's mostly common audience<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e.g. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* IV 10, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Antithetical parallelism constitutes one of the most characteristic features of Augustine's homiletic style and can be observed practically in all his sermons. In fact, it results, first and foremost, from author's own way of thinking. Here we do not deal with the biblical parallelism of thought (cf. W.G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew poetry: A guide to its techniques*, Sheffield 1995, p. 114-159) typical of the Hebrew poetry (especially in the Psalter; cf. C.S. Lewis, *Úvahy nad žalmy* [*Reflections on the Psalms*], Prague 1999, p. 7), prophetic speeches or in Jesus's *logia*, but rather it is a parallelism introduced in Greek by Gorgias, i.e. *parallelismus membrorum* (cf. E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, v. 2, Darnstadt 1958, p. 617).

<sup>18</sup> Augustine justifies the use of stylistic figures in his homilies based on the parallels with the biblical text in which these figures can be observed. Theoretical grounds for such an approach are provided in his *De doctrina christiana* where on the examples of the eloquence of some prophets, apostles or eventually church fathers (cf. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* IV 7, 15; 7, 11-12; IV 21, 46-47) he demonstrates that these figures play their significant role also in the speeches of Christian authors and preachers. Such an embellished speech can be, in fact, the source of pleasure (*delectatio*) also among the uneducated ones, moreover they can even be sometimes moved by it. See Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* IV 7, 13.

<sup>19</sup> See more closely e.g. E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, v. 2, p. 616-631; Ch. Mohrmann, *Saint Augustin écrivain*, Roma 1961, p. 258; S.M. Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics*, Atlanta 1991, p. 102-120.

<sup>20</sup> Augustine mentions the importance of repeating same things again and again on several occasions, e.g. in *Sermo* 125, 1, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 25 (2), 5. As his listeners are mostly simple and ordinary people without intellectual background, the preacher feels the need to repeat certain things *ad infinitum*. Cf. Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 121, 8. See also F. Van der Meer, *Saint Augustin pasteur d'âmes*, Utrecht 1959, p. 219.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 5: "[...] ille accepta sagitta in corde, accedentibus etiam carbonibus desolatoriis, desolatur in illo terrena cogitatio. Quid est enim: desolatur? Ad desolationem perducitur".

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Andoková, *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína*, p. 131-132.

That is why while translating these texts into Slovak, the idea occurred to us that it may be fitting to increase the authenticity of the text by having a trained orator voice and record these translations not only due to the popularity of audio books with our current readers but also because today's listeners – although not having the capturing personality of the bishop himself in front of them – would have the opportunity to hear the same as the listeners in Hippo Regius, the bishop's seat town, or in Carthage, the capital of Roman Africa or other places where Augustine's friends would invite him to speak. After consulting with colleagues who similarly considered this an interesting and beneficial proposal, we needed to apply a quite new and a little less traditional approach to translation, which can also be inspirational for translators into other modern languages and the basic features of which we want to present in this article.

Even a quick skim through Augustine's sermons reveals that they are literally full of rhetoric figures. Naturally, so are the speeches and homilies of other ancient authors. But when the bishop of Hippo spoke to ordinary people, among the stylistic and speech patterns he surely had to look for those that were characteristic of the style of the Bible and folk prose of his time, such as parallelism, antithesis, rhyme, alliteration and paronomasia<sup>23</sup>. These figures are an expression of rhythm that is simultaneously the rhythm of thought and sound, idea and word. This rhythm is typical of proverbs, lullabies, folk *cantilenas*, ritual and magic formulas, litanies and incantations<sup>24</sup>.

The bishop focused mainly on those figures that were listener-friendly. The reason is simple – Augustine's speeches had to be vivid to prevent the listeners from getting bored during the almost hour-long, or even longer, sermons<sup>25</sup> and to aid them in taking away the moral in concise quotes that were easy to remember<sup>26</sup>. In our analysis of these devices, for illustration we have chosen *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119 from the collection of Augustine's exegetical homilies on Psalms of Ascents, that is Psalms 119-133<sup>27</sup>, which

<sup>23</sup> Cf. H. Müller, *Preacher: Augustine and his Congregation*, Chichester 2012, p. 307.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Andoková, *Rečnicke umenie sv. Augustína*, p. 133.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Andoková, *Rečnicke umenie sv. Augustína*, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Paris 1958, p. 534.

<sup>27</sup> In this paper, we adhere to the numbering of Psalms according to the Septuagint (LXX) and use the Latin critical edition of these homilies CSEL 95/3, ed. F. Gori, Wien 2001. In the case of English translation, we refer to the edition WSA 3/19, ed. B. Ramsey, New York 2003. Slovak translations of selected segments of these homilies come from the authors of this paper; some passages had been published in Slovak translation in the

the bishop of Hippo delivered to his Christian audience in his episcopal see probably in the winter of 407/408<sup>28</sup>. These were listeners that he knew well and so he could speak in a very relaxed and spontaneous way, as if he were conversing with them.

And that is the first of figures of speech. In nearly all of his homilies, the first thing we notice is the direct speech that he used to set up a virtual dialogue with his listeners<sup>29</sup>. Simple and very brief two or three-word questions and similarly short replies<sup>30</sup> allowed him to quickly run through more or less clear verses of a psalm, which did not require detailed explanation. He applied this approach mostly when he was summarizing his previous speech since he apparently explained this sequence of psalms as connected episodes of ascent from the world to God. But most often, he used them to point out specific terms that he was planning to deal with in his upcoming homily in more detail, as we show in another publication<sup>31</sup>:

Ubi ascensurum?	Kde bude vystupovať?	Where will it take place?
In corde.	V srdci.	In the heart.
Unde ascensurum?	Odkiaľ bude vystupovať?	What is the starting point?
Ab humilitate,	Z pokory,	Humility,
id est a conualle plorationis.	čiže z údolia náreku.	the valley of weeping.
Quo ascensurum?	Kam bude vystupovať?	Whither is he to ascend?
Ad illud ineffabile quod	K realite, ktorú nemožno vy-	To a reality
cum dici non posset,	povedať slovami,	that cannot be put into words,
dictum est:	o ktorej platí výrok:	of which another psalm says:
In locum quem disposuit.	Na miesto, ktoré určil.	To the place God has appointed.

Both the questions and the responses are short so it all seems clear and uncomplicated. Moreover, according to a mention in *De doctrina christia-*

---

publication M. Andoková, *Rečnicke umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom*, Bratislava 2013. For interpretation of Augustine's Psalms of Ascent see e.g. G. McLarney, *St. Augustine's Interpretation of the Psalms of Ascent*, Washington 2014.

<sup>28</sup> On the dating of these homilies, which Augustine presented in parallel with the first *Tractates on the Gospel of John* (*Tractatus in Iohannis Euangelium* 1-16, CCL 36, ed. R. Willems, Turnhout 1954) see more closely M. Andoková – R. Horka, *The Chronology of Augustine's Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium 1-16 and Enarrationes in Psalmos 119-133*, *VoxP* 72 (2019) p. 149-170.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. M. Glowasky, *Rhetoric and Scripture in Augustine's Homiletic Strategy*, Leiden 2020, p. 129.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Lawless, *Listening to Augustine: Tractate 44 on John 9*, p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 2, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 501; Andoková, *Rečnicke umenie sv. Augustína*, p. 140.

na<sup>32</sup>, it was not necessarily only a virtual dialogue. Listeners, who became co-creators of the bishop's homily, would at times call out answers, react with applause, agree or disagree verbally or by simple gestures.

In addition to such dialogues, Augustine spiced up the most important parts of his speech by such figures that aided the memorization of major facts and all, even the simplest believers, were familiar with them from the folk culture. One example of such a device is a rhyming antithetic hypotaxis taken from Augustine's homily on Psalm 119: "Sic descendit ad te, ut maneret in se"<sup>33</sup>. The bishop of Hippo chose other rhetorical devices again to capture his listeners' attention when he noticed that they were losing interest. These were various word plays and striking sound constructions that appealed to the hearing of tired or distracted audiences and brought their attention back to the speech<sup>34</sup>. This is, for example, the way to understand a sentence interesting for its alternation of the phonemes Q and L together with the gradation of suspense by asyndeton peaking in the alliteration of VER-: "Quantumlibet illud dicam, quomodolibet exponam, qualibuscumque verbis versem"<sup>35</sup>. Of course, this was not common spoken usage but Augustine inserted such attention grabbers due to significant facts that the listeners were supposed to remember and so they were equipped with some repetitious figures, in this case, isochoric epiphora<sup>36</sup>: "Non intrat in cor eius in quo non est opus eius"<sup>37</sup>. Based on what we have pointed out we presume that if these figures were not only decorative but also functional, so much so that they form a fundamental structure of Augustine's speech, it would be fitting to preserve them in translations as well, since they represent a major element of Augustine's homilies, which – together with the contents – secured also the attractiveness for the ears of contemporary audiences. For this reason, in this paper we have decided to offer a selection of figures most frequently applied by Augustine and thus bring attention to possibilities of their translation that would sound as interesting as their Latin original.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana* IV 24, 53.

<sup>33</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. A. Verwilghen, *Rhétorique et prédication chez Augustin*, "Nouvelle Revue Théologique" 120 (1998) p. 245.

<sup>35</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 9.

<sup>36</sup> Also anaphora and epiphora are not sound figures in the proper sense, we include them in our analysis because their effect on listeners' ears was undoubtedly significant.

<sup>37</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 9.

And so, what kinds of rhetoric devices can we find in Augustine's homilies and how to translate them? For the purposes of this article, we focus on a single homily from the preacher's selected corpus of homilies on Psalms of Ascents, which we have already quoted previously. Moreover, we are choosing this approach in order to show the treasure trove of figures found even in a single homily.

Augustine needed to be very persuasive when explaining the Psalms of Ascents since he spoke about them in the period of culminating crisis with the Donatists. And it was these psalms, alternating with the tractates on the Gospel according to John that he chose to prove the Donatists wrong. His listeners were usually no intellectuals who would be capable of understanding, let alone reproducing, the bishop's thought process during the development of his exposition of biblical texts. Augustine himself grieves this fact in his first tractate of the Gospel according to John:

Thinking about what we have just heard in the reading from the apostle – that a *merely natural human being does not grasp what pertains to the spirit of God* (1Cor 2:14) – and reflecting further in the midst of this crowd of Your Graces<sup>38</sup>, it is inevitable that many will be merely natural, still not able to raise themselves to a spiritual understanding. Hence, I am very hesitant about how I might say what the Lord may give me to say, or how I might explain, within my limitations, what has just been read from the gospel: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (Jn 1:1). In fact, a merely natural human being does not grasp it<sup>39</sup>.

---

<sup>38</sup> The expression *caritas uestra* is quite frequent in Augustine's exegetical homilies and sermons. See e.g. Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 1, Augustinus, *In Ioannis epistulam ad Parthos tractatus* 9, 1. When addressing to his audience with these words, Augustine confirms their communion with the universal church, place of charity (*caritas*). See e.g. Augustinus, *De baptismo* III 16, 21: „Ipsa est enim caritas, quam non habent qui ab ecclesiae catholicae communione praecisi sunt [...]. Non autem habet Dei caritatem, qui ecclesiae non diligit unitatem, ac per hoc recte intellegitur dici non accipi nisi in catholica Spiritus Sanctus”.

<sup>39</sup> Augustinus, *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus* 1, 1: “Intuens quod modo audiuius ex lectione apostolica, quod *animalis homo non percipit ea quae sunt spiritus Dei*, et cogitans, in hac praesenti turba caritatis uestrae necesse esse ut multi sint animales, qui adhuc secundum carnem sapiant, nondum que se possint ad spiritalem intellectum erigere, haesito uehementer, quomodo, ut Dominus dederit, possim dicere, uel pro modulo meo explicare quod lectum est ex euangelio: *in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum*. Hoc enim animalis homo non percipit”, tr. WSA 1/12, p. 39.

These people needed a short slogan or catchphrase easy to remember and to use in their response to intrusive Donatists. The bishop of Hippo offered them such witty expressions in abundance. Most of them were formulated as antitheses and he arranged them with prosaic rhymes so his followers could learn them by heart quickly and easily<sup>40</sup>. These two figures appear in Augustine's homilies together very often. There are more than ten examples in the homily we are focusing on. We selected the most obvious ones here:

Qui sunt qui oderunt <b>pacem</b> ?	Kto sú tí, čo pokoj nenávidia?	Who are the ones who hate peace?
Qui conscindunt <b>unitatem</b> .	Tí, čo puto jednoty <b>ničia</b> .	Those who tear our unity apart.
Si enim pacem non odissent, in unitate mansissent <sup>40</sup> .	Keby pokoj milovali, Jednotu by zachovali.	If they had not hated peace, they would have stayed within that unity.
Nihil horum est in <b>se</b> , et omnia factus est pro <b>te</b> <sup>41</sup> .	Ničím z toho nebol v <b>sebe</b> , všetkým sa stal kvôli <b>tebe</b> .	In himself he is none of these things, but he became all of them for you.
Qui multum peccauerunt; et eo plus amaerunt <sup>42</sup> .	Ten, čo viac zla vykonal, o to väčšími miloval.	How many people have sinned great- ly, and loved all the more.

These particular examples required certain time to translate, however, we believe that it is worth playing around with these sentences so that we could create also in the target language similar prosaic rhymes, which would naturally lead the listener to remember such quotes, just like in the case of Augustine's listeners. When reading Augustine's *Enarrationes*, at first sight we notice that such antitheses and antithetical parallelisms are present on almost every page of the text and seem to compose a basic structure of Augustine's methods of speech. Although, according to A.-M. La Bonnardière, us modern readers may get somewhat distracted by such frequent use of antitheses<sup>44</sup>, the bishop's audience must have really liked his rhetoric style, which was a part of the

<sup>40</sup> Cf. G. Partoens, *Augustin als Prediger*, Tübingen 2014, p. 246.

<sup>41</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 9, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 508.

<sup>42</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 1, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 498.

<sup>43</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 5, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 503.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. A.-M. La Bonnardière, *Les deux vies – Marthe et Marie*, Paris 1986, p. 411.

culture at the time<sup>45</sup>. So Augustine's use of antitheses fulfilled above all a didactic function in an effort to help his listeners commit certain facts to memory. This is hardly surprising when we realize that the antithesis is generally considered a most enriching and important element of every literary genre and today even advertising uses it quite efficiently for its own objectives.

But we do not find prosaic rhyme in Augustine's homilies only in short, pointed antithetic sentences. Also a simple assonance of clauses in cola of complex sentence periods was present in his homilies almost at every step and often they were quite extensive<sup>46</sup>:

Incipiat proficere,  
incipiat uelle ascendere,  
uelle contemnere  
terrena, fragilia, temporalia,  
felicitatem saeculi  
pro nihilo habere,  
Deum solum cogitare,  
lucris non gaudere,  
damnis non contabescere,  
omnia etiam sua uelle uen-  
dere –  
et pauperibus tribuere,  
et sequi Christum;  
uideamus quemadmodum  
patiatur  
linguas detrahentium  
et multa contradicentium,  
et quod est grauius,  
quasi consulendo a salute  
auertentium.

Keď už začne napredovať,  
keď začne chcieť vystupovať,  
chcieť sa vyvarovať  
vecí zemských, krehkých,  
časných, svetskej sláve  
neholdovať,  
len o Bohu meditovať,  
zo zisku sa neradovať,  
o straty sa nestrachovať,  
keď bude chcieť všetko svoje  
predať,  
chudobným to podarovať,  
a tak Krista nasledovať,  
uvidíme, ako s ním potom zatočí  
jazyk tých, čo znechucujú,  
stále v niečom odporujú,  
a čo je ešte horšie,  
akoby nám radili,  
no od spásy odradzujú.

Let anyone begin to move forward, begin to want to make the ascent, begin to scorn earthly, perishable, temporal things and to set little store by the prosperity this world offers; let such a one begin to think of God alone, disdain to gloat over his gains or lament his losses; let him even resolve to sell all he owns, give the proceeds to the poor, and follow Christ. What happens? Let us see how he has to put up with the talk of people who try to pull him back, and – what is worse – attempt to turn him away from salvation as though they had his best interests at heart.

This example brings us to a clear realization that Augustine's words decorated by certain stylistic ornaments are not only enjoyable to read or listen to, but in this attractive form they also possess greater ability to convince. In terms of stylistic devices, there is a certain parallelism while individual sentence sections are arranged asyndetically in the first part; in the second, on the contrary, polysyndetically, which gives the speech even more of a gra-

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* XI 18.

<sup>46</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 3, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 501.

dating character emphasized by the orator's regular repetition of particular expressions (*uelle*). At the same time, we observe an internal rhythm of homoioteleuton<sup>47</sup> (-ERE / -IVM), which is not, however, used only for its own sake and we see that the orator does not apply it systematically. His speech is spontaneous and he does not care too much whether at the end, *cogitare* rhymes with *gaudere*; the rhyme is more of a natural consequence of skillful and unrehearsed speech rather than something intentional and artificial. The bishop simply wanted to attract his audience's attention and he played with them like a common storyteller (*mimus*) would. After all, he casts himself in that role in one of his psalm commentaries, saying:

Suppose then I'm a pop singer – what more could I sing to you? Here you are – I have brought a harp; it has ten strings. You were singing this yourselves a little earlier on, before I began to speak. You were my chorus. You were singing, weren't you, earlier on: "O God, I will sing you a new song, on a harp of ten strings I will play to you" (Ps 143:9)? Now I am strumming these ten strings. Why is the sound of God's harp sour? Let us all play the ten-stringed harp. I am not singing you something that you are not meant to do<sup>48</sup>.

Augustine also often used iterative verbal figures such as anaphora, epiphora, more than once even epanastrophe and anadiplosis since these frequently appear in spoken language and can achieve pleasant effect in the ears of listeners<sup>49</sup>. The bishop of Hippo used these mainly when he described a complicated thought process and wanted his listeners not to get

<sup>47</sup> On the usage of *homoioteleuton* see e.g. Quintilianus, *Institutio oratoria* IX 3, 77.

<sup>48</sup> Augustinus, *Sermo* 9, 6: "Putate me cytharoedum esse, quid uobis possem amplius canere? Ecce psalterium fero, decem chordas habet. Hoc uos paulo ante cantastis, antequam inciperem loqui. Chorus meus uos fuistis. Nonne uos paulo ante cantastis: Deus canticum nouum cantabo tibi, in psalterio decem chordarum psallam tibi? Ipsas decem chordas modo percutio. Quare amara est uox psalterii Dei? Psallamus omnes in psalterio decem chordarum. Non hoc uobis canto quod uos non faciatis. Decalogus enim legis decem praecepta habet", tr. WSA 3/1, p. 264. Augustine certainly did not feel out of place in this role of preacher-mime, on the contrary – his interest in the theatre is apparent here. He clearly realizes to which extent his audience are attracted by mime theatre and other forms of cheap street entertainment. To this topic see e.g. Andoková, *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína*, p. 126-130; M. Andoková, *Demus pro spectaculis spectacula. The role of delectatio in Augustine's preaching activity*, "Systasis" 32 (2018) p. 65-80 (especially p. 72).

<sup>49</sup> That is why we have decided to include these figures into our analysis although they are not sound figures in the proper sense.



lost in it. The use of identical expressions allowed him to focus the listeners' attention on things that were changing in the monotonous statements, pointing out importance. And so due to the functionality of these figures in speech we recommend them to be kept also in the translation and not to substitute synonyms. Again, we point out only two out of the eight that we found in the chosen homily. In the first case, there are two epiphoras, the second case is epanastrophe<sup>50</sup>:

Hinc ergo <b>ascendendum</b> est,	Odtiaľ treba <b>vystupovať</b>	He is the starting point of your ascent
illuc <b>ascendendum</b> ;	až tam treba <b>vystupovať</b> .	and the goal of your ascent;
ab exemplo <b>ipsius</b> ,	Od <b>jeho</b> zviditeľnenia	you climb from his example
ad diuinitatem <b>ipsius</b> .	až k <b>jeho</b> božstvu.	to his divinity.
<b>Vterque</b> ex semine <b>Abrahae</b> ,	<b>Obaja</b> sú synmi <b>Abraháma</b> ,	Both were Abraham's offspring,
sed non <b>uterque</b> heres <b>Abrahae</b> .	<b>obaja</b> nie sú dedičmi <b>Abraháma</b> .	but they were not both Abraham's heirs.

Alliteration is a sound figure used by Augustine frequently to refresh his sermon. In order to achieve bigger effect, the bishop of Hippo very often combined it with the previous figures of speech: anaphora, epiphora and anadiplosis. In his analysis of oratory figures of speech in *Tractate 44* of Augustine's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, George Lawless also points out two-part alliterations as rhetoric devices. However, it appears to us that two subsequent words starting with the same letter is not something necessarily intentional by the author and they can appear by pure coincidence. And so we do not consider such cases as alliterations. But it is not the case with three- or four-word alliterations. When the audience heard several words starting with the identical phoneme, or a word play such as: "infantem lac factum" where Augustine plays with the assonance of the syllables *lac-fac-fan-*, they started paying attention and the preacher could then explain didactically significant facts. Even the expectation of such word plays kept the audience's attention during the whole homily. This is why it is desirable to include these attention grabbers in the translation too as functional and important elements. We again show several examples with suggestions for their possible translations:

<sup>50</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 1.7, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 498, 506.

<sup>51</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 2, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 500.

<sup>52</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 5, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 503.

<sup>53</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 7, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 505.

<b>D alliteration, 5x:</b>	<b>Z and D alliteration, 6x</b>	<b>D alliteration, 3x</b>
Ergo Dando lac Descendit ad paruulos, et quia Descendit, Descendentem Dedit <sup>50</sup> .	Zostúpil, aby Deťom Daroval mlieko. Zostúpil, aby Daroval toho, čo Zostúpil.	He descended to little ones to give them milk, and because he descended, he gave them the one who descended.
<b>A and E alliteration, 6x:</b>	<b>V alliteration, 6x:</b>	<b>No alliteration</b>
Carbones Autem quando Accenduntur, Antequam Accenderentur, Exstincti Erant <sup>51</sup> .	Veď Vždy keď uhlíky Vzbĺknu, predtým, než Vzbĺknu, Vyzerajú Vyhasnuté.	But live coals were once extinct, dead, before they were kindled.
<b>K alliteration, 5x</b>	<b>P and S alliteration, 5x</b>	<b>P and S alliteration, 5x</b>
Quia Canticum Graduum Coepit Cantare <sup>52</sup> .	Pretože Stupňovú Pieseň Pustil Sa Spievať.	... for he is beginning to sing the song of ascents.

Our proposed translations clearly show that we did not adhere strictly to the same alliteration as the one appeared in the original text, and it also does not have to be present in the same words. Nor does it necessarily have to be the very same type of alliteration. Paronomasia and polyptoton can also be used, or another figure of similar sound. It is simply sufficient to hint that at this place, there is a figure in the original and to maintain it also in the translation in order to achieve the desired effect made by Augustine's homily at whichever part of it. We could similarly go on with examples of already mentioned polyptotons and paronomasias but we believe that the given examples are sufficient for illustrating our approach to the translation of Augustine's homilies.

Before concluding our article, there is one more detail to point out after partially referring to it earlier. Augustine usually did not use figures of speech individually. As an excellent orator, he knew that if he brings several of them together, their astounding effect on his audience will not just add up but intensify several times over. That is why at times we see also an elaborate figure that he did not create on the spot, rather he memorized it as a nursery rhyme. Because it is inconceivable that he would create such *deliciae* directly during his sermon. But if they were meant for easy retaining by commoners, it is obvious that they would be easy to remember for the orator with such phenomenal memory as the bishop of Hippo had. These sections are then for the method of translation that we propose, the toughest challenge. But it is truly worth going the extra mile for them even if we

might not always succeed. We chose from the given homily a combination of antithesis, homoiooteleuton and a pair of alliterations<sup>54</sup>:

Si iuSti eSSetis, inter paleam Grana Gemere <b>tis</b> .	Keby Ste Sa Spravodlivo Sprá <b>vali</b> , Sťa Semienka medzi PLevami by ste PLak <b>ali</b> .	If you were righteous you would be genuine wheat.
--	--	---

We believe that by applying such a method of translating Augustine's homilies we can show not only the content of his sermons but also their formal attractiveness, which made such an impression not only on Possidius but on all who enjoyed the privilege of hearing them live. But for Augustine this *dulcedo* in the homilies does not only have an esthetic value and so it is not purely in the *delectatio* sphere, rather the bishop uses it to pursue clear didactic and persuasive goals: educate the believers about fundamental truths of faith and convince them to take them to heart, as well as bring the lost souls back to the bosom of the Catholic church. Moreover, this function of *delectatio* in sermons can aid the listeners in remembering more easily the communicated message and to those who are familiar with the content of the homily, it can help continue paying attention thanks to the beauty contained in the speech itself. For Augustine, one of the most notable devices for achieving these goals was the introduction of sound figures that were easy to detect in his speech and that helped the listeners to retain the message. That is the reason why we consider them an inherent element of his homilies and we find it important to capture them to the maximum possible degree in their translations into other languages not only in their written form but also, possibly, in their audio versions.

Finally, by these few examples of how the rhetorical figures present in Augustine's homilies can be translated into modern languages, we wanted to show that their formal aspect deserves no less attention of translators and interpreters than their content. For if Augustine himself was so concerned with the formal aspect of his sermons, alongside with their content he clearly demonstrated the importance he attached to it. Therefore, we believe that this aspect should not be neglected in translation. In order to achieve this goal, we have offered in this article one possible way of how to approach sound figures when translating them into our own language. Furthermore, our analysis has shown that so far their presence in Augustine's homilies

<sup>54</sup> Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 119, 9, tr. WSA 3/19, p. 508.

has not been reflected enough in the modern translations. Attention paid to sound figures can thus bring the translation of Augustine's homilies closer to their original. We are convinced that if the translation of Augustine's homilies ignores these intentionally inserted embellishments, it cannot fully convey Augustine's message to his hearers.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Ambrosius, *Epistulae*, CSEL 82, ed. M. Zelzer, Wien 1982.
- Augustinus, *De baptismo*, CSEL 51, ed. M. Petschenig, Wien 1908, p. 145-375.
- Augustinus, *De ciuitate Dei libri XXII*, CCL 47-48, eds. B. Dombart – A. Kalb, Turnhout 1955.
- Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana libri IV*, CCL 32, ed. J. Martin, Turnhout 1962, tr. *Teaching christianity*, ed. J.E. Rotelle, The Works of Saint Augustine 1/11, New York 1996.
- Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, CCL 38-40, ed. E. Dekkers – J. Fraipont, Turnhout 1956; *En. in Ps.* 119-133, CSEL 95/3, ed. F. Gori, Wien 2001, tr. *Expositions of the Psalms*, ed. B. Ramsey, The Works of Saint Augustine 3/19-20, New York 2003-2004.
- Augustinus, *In Iohannis epistulam ad Parthos tractatus – Homélie sur la première épître de saint Jean*, BA 76, ed. D. Dideberg, tr. J. Lemouzy, Paris 2008.
- Augustinus, *In Iohannis Euangelium tractatus*, CCL 36, ed. R. Willems, Turnhout 1954, tr. *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1-40*, ed. A.D. Fitzgerald, The Works of Saint Augustine 1/12, New York 2009.
- Augustinus, *Sermones*, CCL 41, ed. C. Lambot, Turnhout 1961, tr. *Sermons*, ed. J.E. Rotelle, WSA 3/1-2, New York 1990.
- Cicero, *Orator*, in: *M. Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia*, v. 5, ed. P. Reis, Leipzig 1932.
- Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, in: *Possidius – Vita Augustini*, ed. F. Schöningh, Paderborn – Zürich 2005, p. 26-108, tr. *The Life of Saint Augustine by Possidius Bishop of Calama*, The Augustinian Series 1, ed. J.E. Rotelle, Villanova 1988.
- Quintilianus, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. L. Radermacher – V. Buchheit, Leipzig 1971.

### Studies

- Andoková M., *Demus pro spectaculis spectacula. The role of delectatio in Augustine's preaching activity*, "Systasis" 32 (2018) p. 65-80.

- Andoková M., *Rečnické umenie sv. Augustína v kázňach k stupňovým žalmom*, Bratislava 2013.
- Andoková M., *Úskalia prekladu rétorického aparátu z diel sv. Augustína do slovenského prekladového textu [Difficulties in the translation of rhetorical apparatus of St. Augustine's works into the Slovak language]*, Sambucus 3, Trnava 2008, p. 74-85.
- Andoková M. – Horka R., *The Chronology of Augustine's Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium 1-16 and Enarrationes in psalmos 119-133*, "Vox Patrum" 72 (2019) p. 149-170.
- Banniard M., *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IV<sup>e</sup> au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle en Occident latin*, Paris 1992.
- Glowasky M., *Rhetoric and Scripture in Augustine's Homiletic Strategy*, Leiden 2020.
- Horka, R., *Možnosti prekladu aliterácie, anafory, epify, polysyndetonu a asyndetonu v Komentári Aurelia Augustína k Jánovmu evanjeliu [Translation possibilities of alliteration, anaphora, epiphora, polysyndeton and asyndeton in Aurelius Augustine's Commentary on the Gospel of John]*, Sambucus 3, Trnava 2008, p. 65-73.
- La Bonnardière A.-M., *Les deux vies – Marthe et Marie*, in: *Bible de Tous les Temps 3 – Saint Augustin et la Bible*, ed. A.-M. La Bonnardière, Paris 1986, p. 411-425.
- Lausberg, H., *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric. A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. D.E. Orton – R.D. Anderson, Leiden – Boston – Koln 1998.
- Lawless G., *Augustine's Use of Rhetoric in His Interpretation of John 21, 19-23*, "Augustinian Studies" 23 (1992) p. 53-67.
- Lawless G., *The Man Born Blind: Augustine's Tractate 44 on John 9*, "Augustinian Studies" 27/2 (1996) p. 61-79.
- Lawless G., *Listening to Augustine: Tractate 44 on John 9*, "Augustinian Studies" 28/1 (1997) p. 51-66.
- Lawless G., *The Wedding at Cana: Augustine on the Gospel according to John, Tractates 8 and 9*, "Augustinian Studies" 28/2 (1997) p. 35-80.
- Lawless G., *"Infirmior sexus... fortior affectus" Augustine's Jo. ev. tr. 121,1-3: Mary Magdalene*, "Augustinian Studies" 34/1 (2003) p. 107-118.
- Lewis C.S., *Úvahy nad žalmy (Reflections on the Psalms)*, Prague 1999.
- Marrou H.-I., *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Paris 1958.
- McLarney G., *St. Augustine's Interpretation of the Psalms of Ascent*, Washington 2014.
- Mechlinski L., *Der modus proferendi in Augustins sermones ad populum*, Paderborn 2004.
- Mohrmann Ch., *Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustin. I. Einführung, Lexikologie, Wortbildung*, Nijmegen 1932.
- Mohrmann Ch., *Saint Augustin écrivain*, in: *Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, v. 2/3, Roma 1961, p. 247-275.
- Mohrmann Ch., *Saint Augustin prédicateur*, "La Maison-Dieu" 39 (1954) p. 83-96.
- Müller H., *Preacher: Augustine and his Congregation*, in: *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. M. Vessey, Chichester 2012, p. 297-309.

- Norden E., *Die antike Kunstprosa II (Vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance)*, Darmstadt 1958.
- Oberhelman S.M., *Rhetoric and Homiletics in Fourth-Century Christian Literature*, American Philological Association 26, Atlanta 1991.
- Partoens G., *Augustin als Prediger*, in: *Augustin Handbuch*, ed. W. Dreccoll, Tübingen 2014, p. 242-246.
- Sanlon P.T., *Augustine's Theology of Preaching*, Minneapolis 2014.
- Van der Meer F., *Saint Augustin, pasteur d'âmes*, v. 1-2, Utrecht 1959.
- Verwilghen A., *Rhétorique et prédication chez Augustin*, "Nouvelle Revue Théologique" 120 (1998) p. 233-248.
- Watson W.G.E., *Classical Hebrew poetry: A guide to its techniques*, Sheffield 1995.



## *Pharisaicus hydrops*. Łk 14,2-4 w przepowiadaniu Piotra Chryzologa

*Pharisaicus Hydrops*. Luke 14:2-4 in the Preaching of Peter Chrysologus

Mieczysław C. Paczkowski OFM<sup>1</sup>

---

**Abstract:** The biblical texts indubitably shaped the content of the sermons of Peter Chrysologus. He delivered sermons on the Gospel of St. Luke. The lecture on the healing of the man with dropsy (Luke 14:2-4) appears in *Sermo* 99 bis. The homily has a polemical resonance, but it concerns the situation described in the evangelic text. It is elaborated under a rhetorical and theological aspect. The bishop of Ravenna emphasized the symbolic and moral value of illness. The preacher used the appropriate means to arouse the desired response from the audience and to transmit the spiritual and moral teaching. The homily in question, like other speeches, abandoned rhetorical figures and realistic comparisons.

**Keywords:** Patristic preaching; Gospel of Luke; Peter Chrysologus; the miracle of healings (Luke 14:2-4); dropsy topic

---

Ewangelia św. Łukasza była tekstem komentowanym i przywoływanym przez kaznodziejów pierwszych wieków Kościoła. W tym opracowaniu chcemy zwrócić uwagę na refleksję Piotra Chryzologa, biskupa Rawenny. Autor ten niejednokrotnie sięgał po trzecią Ewangelię, eksponując nauczanie Zbawiciela, ale także cuda przez Niego dokonane. Dostrzec tu można stałe elementy przepowiadania w epoce patrystycznej. Homilie Chryzologa są osadzone w kontekście interpretacji patrystycznej o charakterze moralnym i teologicznym. W jego homilii na temat perykopy Łk 14,2-4 (tj. *Sermo* 99bis)<sup>2</sup> można

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr hab. Mieczysław Celestyn Paczkowski OFM, prof. UMK, pracownik Katedry Teologii Historycznej na Wydziale Teologicznym Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu; e-mail: celestyn@umk.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-4045-2314.

<sup>2</sup> To kazanie należy do tzw. kolekcji feliciańskiej (*Collectio Felicianiana*) i jest przypisywane biskupowi Rawenny z 14 innymi. Por. A. Olivar, *Los sermones de san Pedro Crisólogo. Estudio crítico*, Montserrat 1962, s. 301-384, 447-495.

wyodrębnić szereg interesujących zagadnień. Biskup Rawenny analizuje opowiadanie ewangeliczne o uleczeniu człowieka cierpiącego na puchlinę wodną w krótki i treściwy sposób, lecz w wyszukanej pod względem oratorskim formie. Badaną kwestią są walory retoryczne, parenetyczne i teologiczne wybranej homilii Piotra Chryzologa w odniesieniu do charakterystycznych wątków jego dorobku kaznodziejskiego. W ten sposób postaramy się odpowiedzieć na pytanie, jak biskup Rawenny komentował tekst ewangeliczny w kontekście przepowiadania i standardów klasycznej sztuki oratorskiej.

### 1. *Background* homilii Piotra Chryzologa o Ewangelii św. Łukasza

Wśród autorów IV-V wieku Piotr Chryzolog jest wyrazistym przykładem hierarchy przepelnionego uważną troską o powierzoną sobie wspólnotę. Niewątpliwy dowód tego stanowi jego spuścizna homiletyczna. To fakt na wskroś zrozumiały, bo przecież działalność biskupów w okresie patrystycznym wyrażała się głównie przez przepowiadanie, gdzie ważne miejsce zajmowała Ewangelia św. Łukasza. Ta księga nowotestamentalna podkreślała zarówno pełne człowieczeństwo Zbawiciela, jak również Jego boską godność<sup>3</sup>. Na kartach tej części dzieła Łukasowego czytelnik stykał się z wyrazistym obrazem Jezusa jako tego, który „przeszedł, dobrze czyniąc” (por. Dz 10,38). Trzecia Ewangelia dostarczała ważnych świadectw na ten temat i pozwalała je analizować nie tylko w aspekcie egzegetycznym, lecz również duchowym i praktycznym. Na kaznodziejstwo biskupa Rawenny warto spojrzeć z takiej właśnie perspektywy. Wiadomo przecież, jak ważna dla Ojców Kościoła pierwszych wieków była egzegeza homiletyczna. W kaznodziejstwie Chryzologa można dostrzec linie rozwoju interpretacji tekstu trzeciej Ewangelii i punkty styczności z wcześniejszą tradycją egzegetyczną.

Ojcowie greccy raczej rzadziej zajmowali się Ewangelią św. Łukasza niż kręgi pisarzy łacińskich<sup>4</sup>. Ich uwagę skupiły Ewangelie Ma-

---

<sup>3</sup> W tej perspektywie interpretowano tytuły nadane Chrystusowi przez św. Łukasza: „Syn Boży” (por. Łk 1,35; 4,9.41; 8,28; 22,70; Dz 9,20), „Syn Najwyższego” (por. Łk 1,32; 8,28), „Zbawca” (por. Łk 2,11; Dz 5,31; 13,23). Por. M.C. Paczkowski, *Łk 14,2-4 w egzegezie patrystycznej*, BPTH 13/4 (2020) s. 422. W tej publikacji autor często korzysta z tego studium.

<sup>4</sup> Zdaniem Euzebiusza z Cezarei trzeci ewangelista, uważał „za konieczne usunąć podania wątpliwej wartości”, (*HE* III 24, 15). Por. A. Loveday, *Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface Writing*, „*Novum Testamentum*” 28/1 (1986) s. 48-74.



teuszowa<sup>5</sup> i Janowa<sup>6</sup>. Trzecią Ewangelię komentowano jednak częściej niż Markową<sup>7</sup>.

Nie było wątpliwości co do kanoniczności dzieła Łukasowego<sup>8</sup>. Od II wieku pojawiają się zapisy odnoszące się do biografii Łukasza<sup>9</sup> i pism kanonicznych jego autorstwa<sup>10</sup>. To na ogół heretycy odrzucali i manipulowali tekstami przypisywanymi temu ewangeliście<sup>11</sup>.

Najstarszy komentarz do Ewangelii św. Łukasza stanowią homilie Orygenes<sup>12</sup>. Aleksandryczyk wydobywał z sensu dosłownego tekstu Ewangelii nauczanie duchowe, bez stosowania alegorii<sup>13</sup>. Dokonania egzegezy aleksandryjskiej były znane w środowisku łacińskim, choć epoka Chryzologa była okresem, w którym jej najwybitniejszy przedstawiciel był

---

<sup>5</sup> L. Algesi, *Il Vangelo di S. Matteo*, w: *Introduzione alla Bibbia*, t. 4: *I Vangeli*, ed. L. Moraldi – S. Lyonnet, Torino 1960, s. 159: „Ewangelia Mateusza jest Ewangelią starożytnego Kościoła [...]. To właśnie ona w sposób najrozleglejszy i najgłębszy wpłynęła na życie i na pisma [tamtego okresu]”. Tekst trzeciej Ewangelii jest przywoływany przez autorów starożytnych o połowę mniej niż Ewangelia Mateuszowa. Por. F.D. Farnell, *The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church: The Testimony to the Priority of Matthew's Gospel*, „The Master's Seminary Journal” 10/1 (1999) s. 53-86.

<sup>6</sup> Zob. *John Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, red. B.A. Stewart – M.A. Thomas, Grand Rapids 2018, s. xxii-xxxii.

<sup>7</sup> Odnośnie do kwestii interpretacji drugiej Ewangelii w Kościele starożytnym, por. M.C. Paczkowski, *Mk 1,1-13 w egzegezie homiletycznej św. Hieronima ze Strydonu*, BPTH 7/2 (2014) s. 52-60.

<sup>8</sup> Już w połowie II wieku uważa się Łukasza za autora Ewangelii i Dziejów Apostolskich. Na temat interpretacji trzeciej Ewangelii w Kościele starożytnym, por. A.A. Just, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, t. 3: *Luke*, Downers Grove 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Niepoślednią rolę odgrywała tradycja apokryficzna. Por. S.J. Voicu, *Luca Evangelista (negli apocrifi)*, NDPAC II 2927.

<sup>10</sup> Zob. A. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period Before Irenaeus*, Tübingen 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Tertulian mocno krytykował Marcjona za odrzucenie trzech Ewangelii i „ocenzurowanie” dzieła Łukasowego. Por. Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* IV 2, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Na 39 z nich aż 33 dotyczą pierwszych czterech rozdziałów Ewangelii. Rozważania te stanowiły część obszerniejszego komentarza obejmującego cały tekst ewangeliczny. Być może było to ponad 150 homilii wygłoszonych w Cezarei Nadmorskiej w Palestynie. Homilie spisano i przechowywano w tamtejszej bibliotece. Por. *Introduction*, w: Origenes, *Fragments in Lucam in catenis*, ed. H. Crouzel – F. Fournier – P. Perichon, SCh 87, Paris 1962, s. 87-88. Zob. również: Just, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, s. xxii-xxiii.

<sup>13</sup> Por. M. Simonetti, *Między dosłownością a alegorią. Przyczynek do historii egzegezy patrystycznej*, tł. T. Skibiński, Myśl Teologiczna 26, Kraków 2000, s. 93.

uważany za inspiratora niektórych błędów doktrynalnych, głównie o zabarwieniu subordynacjonistycznym.

Teksty homilii Orygenesusa miał do dyspozycji św. Ambroży z Mediolanu. Hieronim ze Strydonu widział tam ewidentne wątki Orygenesowe i wypowiadał się krytycznie o tych kazaniach biskupa Mediolanu<sup>14</sup>. Sam Strydończyk nieco później przełożył z greckiego oryginalną wersję tych homilii na język łaciński<sup>15</sup>.

W opinii Ambrożego z Mediolanu dzieło Łukaszowe „jest raczej opowiadaniem zdarzeń niż podawaniem nakazów”<sup>16</sup>. W myśl tej zasady mediolański biskup daje przykład systematycznej egzegezy perykop biblijnych, posiłkując się istniejącymi materiałami<sup>17</sup>. Homilie miały wyraźny cel pastoralny, a Mediolańczyk przychodził płynnie od interpretacji historycznej do lektury moralnej i duchowej, stosując również alegorię<sup>18</sup>. Chryzolog był niewątpliwie pod wpływem homiletyki św. Ambrożego z Mediolanu. Wygłaszał on przecież kazania nawiązujące do rozlicznych wątków biblijnych, formułując swoje myśli w zwartych i wyrazistych łacińskich frazach<sup>19</sup>.

Echa aktywności egzegetycznej Hieronima ze Strydonu nie były bez znaczenia dla autorów łacińskich w V wieku<sup>20</sup>. Pozostaje jednak faktem, że Chryzolog posługiwał się tłumaczeniem Pisma Świętego zwanym *Vetus*

---

<sup>14</sup> Wiadomo, że chodziło właśnie o Ambrożego, mimo że Hieronim nie podaje jego imienia. Zob. *Prologus in homilia Origenis super Lucam evangelistam* 1, 16. Powody tego typu nastawienia nie są jednoznaczne. Tę kwestię omawia: S.B. Griffith, *Ambrose the Appropriator. Borrowed texts in a new context in the Commentary on Luke*, w: *Commentaries, Catenaes and Biblical Tradition*, red. H.A.G. Houghton, Texts and Studies 3/13, Piscataway 2016, s. 224-225.

<sup>15</sup> To właśnie w tej wersji zachowała się część komentarza Adamancjusza, który w ten sposób uniknął zniszczenia za rządów Justyniana. Cykl homilii Ambrożego powstał dziesięć lat wcześniej (377-378) niż to tłumaczenie. To zresztą jedyny komentarz ambrożyjski do Nowego Testamentu, który się zachował.

<sup>16</sup> Ambrosius, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*, prolog 7.

<sup>17</sup> Zob. T. Graumann, *Christus interpret. Die Einheit von Auslegung und Verkündigung in der Lukaserklärung des Ambrosius von Mailand*, Berlin – New York 1994; Griffith, *Ambrose the Appropriator*, s. 199-225.

<sup>18</sup> Por. Paczkowski, *Lk 14,2-4 w egzegezie patrystycznej*, s. 427.

<sup>19</sup> Por. A. Olivar, *La predicación cristiana antigua*, Sección de teología y filosofía 189, Barcelona 1991, s. 298-299.

<sup>20</sup> Staranna analiza tekstu pozwoliła stwierdzić św. Hieronimowi, że Łukasz to „lekarz antiocheński, a [...] Ewangelię napisał tak, jak słyszał” (Hieronimus, *De viris illustribus* 7).

*Itala*<sup>21</sup>. Wersja Hieronimowa Biblii łacińskiej nie rozpowszechniła się lawinowo i być może tego tłumaczenia nasz kaznodzieja nie znał. W końcu Hieronim zmarł zaledwie ponad trzy dekady przed Piotrem. Strydończyk nie tylko krytykował cudzą egzegezę, czego przykładem jest jego stosunek do homilii ambrojańskich o Ewangelii Łukaszej, ale w swoich refleksjach sięgał niewątpliwie po te same tematy, które były przedmiotem refleksji kaznodziejów ówczesnej epoki<sup>22</sup>. Kazania Chryzologa przekazywały wyraziste przesłanie parenetyczne, Hieronim zaś niektóre kwestie traktował na sposób erudycyjny i naukowy. Dbął także o swoją reputację jako znawcy Biblii.

Tekstem trzeciej Ewangelii zainteresował się Cyryl Aleksandryjski<sup>23</sup>, który wydaje się być kontynuatorem Orygenesza<sup>24</sup>. Dla metropolity Egiptu było oczywiste, że Ewangelia przekazuje kluczowe zagadnienia doktrynalne, głównie w odniesieniu do osoby i dzieła Jezusa Chrystusa<sup>25</sup>. Piotr Chryzolog z całą świadomością przejął wzory egzegetyczne tradycji aleksandryjskiej<sup>26</sup>.

---

<sup>21</sup> Por. D. Kasprzak, *Zasady wyjaśniania Pisma Świętego w kazaniach egzegetycznych św. Piotra Chryzologa*, w: *Wokół Biblii*, red. T. Jelonek, Kraków 2008, s. 33.

<sup>22</sup> Punkty styczności można znaleźć także z refleksją Piotra Chryzologa np. odnośnie do przypowieści o synu marnotrawnym. Chryzolog poświęcił tej przypowieści aż pięć kazań. To niejako ilustracja metodologii praktykowanej w owym czasie przez interpretatorów Pisma Świętego. Hieronim komentuje perykopę werset po wersecie. Daje się zauważyć jednak, że refleksje biskupa Rawenny są bardziej rozbudowane, choć Strydończyk bardziej dopracował swoją egzegezę i w niektórych przypadkach przedstawiał alternatywne interpretacje. Por. J.P.K. Kritzinger, *The Interpretation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son by Two Latin Patristic Authors, St Jerome and St Peter Chrysologus*, „Bogoslovnivestnik” 81/2 (2021) s. 299-308.

<sup>23</sup> W oryginale greckim pozostały tylko trzy homilie i fragmenty w katenach. Jednak wersja syryjska z VI lub VII wieku zawiera 156 homilii. Ze względu na polemikę z Nestoriuszem i jego zwolennikami homilie są datowane na koniec 430 roku. Por. J. Quasten, *Patrologia*, t. 2, s. 125.

<sup>24</sup> To dzieło o okazałych rozmiarach, podzielone na dziewięć ksiąg. Por. Just, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, s. xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>25</sup> Zob. Peretto, *Luca*, k. 2924.

<sup>26</sup> W swoich homiliach Piotr Chryzolog najpierw nawiązywał do dosłownego znaczenia tekstu, cytując poszczególne wersety i dosłowne wyrażenia z analizowanej perykopy. Zwracał również uwagę na ważne słowa tekstu biblijnego. Następnie pogłębiał znaczenie tekstu, stosując egzegezę duchową. Regułą stanowiły także odwołania do znaczenia moralnego i ekshortacje. Por. A. Olivar, *Els principis exegetics de sant Pere Crisòleg*, w: *Miscellanea biblica B. Ubach*, red. R.M. Diaz, Scripta et documenta 1, Montserrat 1953, s. 414; A. Bizzozero, *Peter Chrysologus*, w: *Preaching in the Patri-*

Wśród autorów łacińskich także św. Augustyn wskazywał na niektóre ważne aspekty w tekście Ewangelii Łukaszej. Hipponczyk jednak odwoływał się do trzeciej Ewangelii w tych punktach, gdzie tematyka tej księgi biblijnej nawiązywała do Ewangelii Mateuszowej<sup>27</sup>. Przywoływał również epizody opisane wyłącznie przez ewangelistę Łukasza<sup>28</sup>.

Ten krótki *excursus* dotyczący interpretacji trzeciej Ewangelii pozwoli lepiej uwydatnić szczególne rysy kaznodziejstwa biskupa Rawenny. W sylwetce Piotra Chryzologa przegląda się cała epoka<sup>29</sup>. Jego biografia nie obfituje w materiał faktograficzny<sup>30</sup>, za to działalność kaznodziejska jest szeroko udokumentowana<sup>31</sup>.

Swoje kazania Piotr Chryzolog wygłaszał do wykształconej elity bardzo ważnego ośrodka miejskiego i do ludzi prostych. Nie dziwi więc fakt, że w homiliach nie brakuje porównań zaczerpniętych z życia dworskiego i wojskowego oraz odwołujących się do codzienności zwykłych ludzi.

---

*stic Era: Sermons, Preachers, and Audiences in the Latin West*, red. A. Dupont, Leiden 2018, s. 420.

<sup>27</sup> Chodzi o drugą księgę *Quaestiones Evangeliorum*.

<sup>28</sup> Por. np. Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermo* 99 (Łk 7,11-17), *Sermo* 100 (Łk 9,57-62), *Sermo* 101 (Łk 10,2-6).

<sup>29</sup> Odnośnie do kontekstu historycznego, por. D. Kasprzak, *Duszpasterze V wieku. Studium porównawcze myśli pasterskiej św. Piotra Chryzologa i Sylwiana z Marsylii*, Kraków 2008, s. 13-51.

<sup>30</sup> Chryzolog urodził ok. 380 roku w Imoli. Metropolita Rawenny został pomiędzy 425-429. Konsekracji nowego biskupa Rawenny dokonał w Rzymie Sykstus III. Ten papież miał wysłuchać pierwszego kazania Piotra. Chryzolog zmarł pomiędzy 449 a 458 rokiem (taką właśnie datę nosi list papieża Leona Wielkiego skierowany do następcy – Neona). Por. *Nowy słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa*, red. M. Starowieyski – J.M. Szymusiak, Poznań 2022, s. 809; J. Quasten, *Patrologia*, t. 3, Casale Monferrato 1983, s. 544-545; V. Zangara, *San Pietro Crisologo*, w: *Introduzione ai Padri della Chiesa. Secoli IV e V*, red. G. Bosio – D. Dal Covolo – M. Maritano, Torino 1995, s. 236-249.

<sup>31</sup> Za autentyczne uznaje się 168 jego kazań, z dołączeniem do tej liczby 15 dodatkowych homilii. O Piotrze Chryzologu jako homilecie pisano niejednokrotnie. Podstawowe studium stanowi praca: G. Boehmer, *Petrus Chrysologus, Erzbischof von Ravenna als Prediger*, Paderborn 1919. W wielu punktach praca ta do dziś zachowuje swą wartość. Por. również: L. Baldisseri, *S. Pier Crisologo, arcivescovo di Ravenna*, Imola 1921; J.H. Baxter, *The homilies of St. Peter Chrysologus*, JTS 22 (1921) s. 250-258; U. Moricca, *Storia della letteratura latina cristiana*, t. 3/1, Torino 1932, s. 993-994, 1011-1123; G. Del Ton, *De s. Petri Chrysologi eloquentia*, „Latinitas” 6 (1958) s. 177-189; A. Olivar, *Los sermones de san Pedro Crisólogo*, Montserrat 1962 (to dzieło ma znaczenie podstawowe); E. Paganotto, *L'apporto dei sermoni di S. Pier Crisologo alla storia della cura pastorale a Ravenna nel secolo V*, Roma 1969 (praca doktorska na Papieskim Uniwersytecie „Gregorianum”); C. Scimè, *L'esegesi di san Pietro Crisologo sui Salmi*, Roma 1992.

Sama sceneria zresztą wpływała na formę kazań przepelnionych „elokwencją najwyższej próby, ugruntowaną i przekonującą”<sup>32</sup>. Kazanie biskupa było wydarzeniem i „widowiskiem” już samo w sobie, oprócz tego, że stanowiło swoiście pojęty akt oficjalny.

W dużej mierze homilie naszego autora kształtowały perykopy biblijne, odczytywane podczas liturgii<sup>33</sup> i podporządkowane strukturze roku kościelnego<sup>34</sup>. Słowa tekstów natchnionych były najsilniejszym i ostatecznym argumentem, tak w rozważaniach teologicznych<sup>35</sup>, jak i w codziennych życiowych postawach<sup>36</sup>. Zdaniem Chryzologa to, co liturgicznie i duchowo odnosi się do poszczególnych chrześcijan, jest równocześnie odzwierciedleniem powszechnych losów ludzi Kościoła<sup>37</sup>. Kazania egzegetyczne biskupa Rawenny skupiały się na Nowym Testamencie, głównie na Ewangeliach<sup>38</sup>. Każde wystąpienie liturgiczne stanowiło w sobie odrębną całość i było niejednokrotnie znakomitą adhortacją dotyczącą różnorodnej tematyki<sup>39</sup>. U Piotra Chryzologa czytania biblijne były przytaczane dosłownie, poprzez dzielenie ich na poszczególne frazy. To dosyć powszechny sposób wykorzystania Biblii w przepowiadaniu.

Wielokrotnie podkreślano charakter literacki i retoryczny przepowiadania Chryzologa. Poprzez odpowiednio dobrane słownictwo starał się on rozbudzić w słuchaczach właściwe uczucia i postawy. Mowy Chryzologa

---

<sup>32</sup> Por. Moricca, *Storia della letteratura latina cristiana*, s. 1021. O Piotrze Chryzologu nie wspomina ani słowem miarodajna skądinąd pozycja: M. Cytowska – H. Szelest, *Literatura rzymska. Okres cesarstwa. Autorzy chrześcijańscy*, Warszawa 1994.

<sup>33</sup> Kazania biskupa Rawenny opierają się w dużej mierze na wątkach ewangelicznych, chociaż ich autor czerpie również z listów Pawłowych, psalmów lub posługuje się motywami hagiograficznymi. Niektórym fragmentom biblijnym biskup Rawenny poświęcił więcej niż jedno kazanie. Por. E. Lodi, *L'esegesi biblica nei testi rituali dei sermoni di S. Pier Crisologo*, w: *L'esegesi nei Padri latini. Dalle origini a Gregorio Magno, XXVIII Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana*, t. 2, Roma 2000, s. 617-653.

<sup>34</sup> Por. F. Sottocornola, *L'anno liturgico nei sermoni di Pietro Crisologo. Ricerca storico-critica Sulla liturgia di Ravenna antica*, Cesena 1973.

<sup>35</sup> Obszerniej w kwestii duszpasterskiego wyjaśniania Biblii przez Chryzologa, zob. D. Kasprzak, *Egzegetyczno-katechetyczne zastosowanie Biblii w homiliach św. Piotra Chryzologa*, w: *Biblia w kulturze świata. Biblia – Ojcowie Kościoła*, red. T. Jelonek, Kraków 2008, s. 137-158.

<sup>36</sup> Por. Olivar, *La predicación cristiana antigua*, s. 5, 575-576; Olivar, *Els principis exegetics*, s. 413-418.

<sup>37</sup> Por. np. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermones* 8; 21, 2.

<sup>38</sup> Zob. Olivar, *Els principis exegetics*, s. 420-421.

<sup>39</sup> Por. D.V. Meconi, *Peter Chrysologus*, London – New York 2021, s. 15-19.

były względnie krótkie<sup>40</sup>. Nie znaczy to jednak, że mówca rezygnował ze słownej ornamentyki. Mimo że Chryzolog deklarował potrzebę mówienia w sposób prosty, dostosowany do poziomu mniej wykształconych słuchaczy<sup>41</sup>, to jednak nie zawsze stosował tę zasadę. Nie brakuje kazań, w których poszczególne zdania są przepelnione „klasycyzmami łacińskimi”, przez co ich sens mógł „wydawać się słuchaczom trudny w percepcji”<sup>42</sup>. Homilie obfitowały w asonanse, antytezy, powtórzenia, różnorodne figury stylistyczne<sup>43</sup>, przykłady zaczerpnięte z codziennego życia, anafory i paronomazje<sup>44</sup>.

Kazania biskupa Rawenny to świadectwo żywego zainteresowania sprawami doktrynalnymi i teologicznymi<sup>45</sup>, przede wszystkim chrystologicznymi<sup>46</sup>. Niepoślednią rolę w jego kazaniach odgrywa problem Kościoła, który jest omawiany w wielu aspektach. Innymi kwestiami są łaska, życie chrześcijańskie<sup>47</sup> i uznanie prymatu biskupa Rzymu<sup>48</sup>. Chryzolog musiał walczyć z pozostałościami pogaństwa i polemizował z Żydami osiadłymi w Rawennie. Jego postać reprezentuje „nastawienie pastoralne episkopatu ówczesnego Kościoła podległego wpływowi cesarza bizantyjskiego”<sup>49</sup>. Jak inni biskupi w tamtym czasie cieszył się poważaniem ze względu na sta-

---

<sup>40</sup> Każda z homilii trwała przeciętnie od kwadransa do dwudziestu minut. Zob. Meconi, *Peter Chrysologus*, s. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Por. Kasprzak, *Duszpasterze V wieku*, s. 66, przyp. 102.

<sup>42</sup> Kasprzak, *Duszpasterze V wieku*, s. 67.

<sup>43</sup> Na początku *Sermo* 99bis nie brak np. anadiplozy: „[...] quasi nescius manducabat. Manducabat plane” (Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 1, tekst według: *Opere di san Pietro Crisologo*, t. 2, ed. G. Banterle (OSPC), s. 266.

<sup>44</sup> Por. Bizzozero, *Peter Chrysologus*, s. 412.

<sup>45</sup> Warto zwrócić uwagę na doktrynę maryjną biskupa Rawenny. Zob. B. Kochaniec, *La Vergine Maria nei sermoni di san Pietro Crisologo*, Roma 1998.

<sup>46</sup> Kwestie chrystologiczne są szczególnie widoczne w *Sermones* 23-24, 60, 57, 84, 88 i 142. Por. R. Benericetti, *Il Cristo nei sermoni di S. Pier Crisologo*, *Studia Ravennatensia* 6, Cesena 1995; Meconi, *Peter Chrysologus*, s. 12-13, 19, 34. W tym kontekście warto przypomnieć, że jedyny zachowany list Chryzologa napisano do Eutycha, gdy ten został potępiony przez Flawiana, metropolitę Konstantynopola. Troską biskupa Rawenny było odciążenie adresata od przekonań monofizyckich, kierując do niego słowa pełne „smutku i troski” (*tristis legi tristes litteras*). Por. *Epistola XXV (Petri Chrysologi Episcopi Ravennatis ad Eutychem Presbyterum)*, PL 54, 775.

<sup>47</sup> Por. np. F. Michalcik, *Doctrina moralis S. Petri Chrysologi*, Rzym 1969 (praca doktorska na Papieskim Uniwersytecie Laterańskim).

<sup>48</sup> Ten problem był szczególnie odczuwalny w Rawennie, gdzie egzarcha reprezentujący cesarza nie zawsze rozróżniał kwestie religijne od polityki.

<sup>49</sup> B. Studer, *Pietro Crisologo*, NDPAC III 4083.

nowisko i świętość życia. Dodać należy, że Piotr Chryzolog jawi się jako człowiek wielkiej pobożności, dobry pasterz, prowadzący swoją wspólnotę ku Bogu szczerze, sumiennie i po ojcowsku.

## 2. Refleksja Chryzologa na temat Łk 14,2-4

Trzeci ewangelista opisuje Syna Bożego jako lekarza zbawiciela uwalniającego z grzechów, ale także tego, który leczy dolegliwości cielesne człowieka<sup>50</sup>. Mimo faktu, że sztuka leczenia była jedną z najbardziej cenionych umiejętności, na wyobraźnię ludzi antyku najbardziej działały niezwykle wydarzenia i cudowne uzdrowienia. Ekspozowanie cudów uzdrowień dokonywanych przez Jezusa Chrystusa było więc stałym elementem w literaturze wczesnego Kościoła<sup>51</sup>. Refleksje Piotra Chryzologa odnośnie do Łk 14,2-4 są w tym właśnie nurcie<sup>52</sup>. U biskupa Rawenny w tej kwestii daje się zauważyć podkreślenie jedności teologicznego znaczenia orędzia Ewangelii<sup>53</sup>. Chociaż biskup Rawenny nie miał tak szerokich zainteresowań egzegetycznych jak Ambroży, Hieronim, czy Augustyn, to jednak czuł się zobowiązany, by w najwyższym stopniu uszanować tekst biblijny. To tekst ewangeliczny determinował treść dyskursu i nadawał moc argumentom kaznodziei. Przy tekstach narracyjnych nie zawsze było możliwe rozwinięcie elokwencji i popisywanie się sztuką oratorską. Mimo to Chryzolog śledzi krok po kroku tekst ewangeliczny, ale po *narratio* następują dygresje i eksplozja elokwencji, ograniczone jednak zasadami retoryki.

Mówca raweński przyjął za oczywiste to, że trzeci ewangelista stosuje specjalistyczne określenie medyczne *ὕδρωπικός*<sup>54</sup>. Uważano

---

<sup>50</sup> Por. B. Widła, *Zdrowie, zdrowy*, w: B. Widła, *Słownik antropologii Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 2003, s. 331.

<sup>51</sup> Zob. G.L. Bloomquist, *Patristic Reception of a Lukan Healing Account. A Contribution to a Socio-Rhetorical Response to Willi Braun's Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14*, w: *Healing in Religion and Society, from Hippocrates to the Puritans*, red. K. Coyle – S.C. Muir, Lewiston 1999, s. 105-134.

<sup>52</sup> Por. Paczkowski, *Łk 14,2-4 w egzegezie patrystycznej*, s. 441-443.

<sup>53</sup> Zob. Olivar, *Els principis exegetics*, s. 418.

<sup>54</sup> M.D. Grmek, *Historia chorób u zarania cywilizacji zachodniej*, tł. A.B. Matysiak, Warszawa 2002, s. 64-65: „Dla współczesnego lekarza puchlina wodna nie jest chorobą, lecz objawem [...]. Termin [...] *hydrops* oznacza prawdopodobnie znaczne wysięki w jamach oraz wzdęcia brzucha”.

tę chorobę za śmiertelną<sup>55</sup>. Genezę wodnej puchliny identyfikowano w różny sposób. W epoce klasycznej lekarze wskazywali na racjonalne przyczyny tej choroby<sup>56</sup>. Istniało jednak przekonanie, iż była ona skutkiem popełnionego zła. Ujmowano tę patologię chorobową w ramy rozważań etycznych<sup>57</sup>. Metaforyczne postrzeganie i ocenianie puchliny wodnej<sup>58</sup> pojawiło się w literaturze judeochrześcijańskiej<sup>59</sup>. Jednak już Józef Flawiusz wspominał, że król Herod Wielki cierpiał na wodną puchlinę<sup>60</sup>. Ta choroba była karą za popełnione przez niego nieprawości. Zdeformowane ciało było symbolem grzesznego życia<sup>61</sup>. Apokryficzne Dzieje św. Pawła opowiadają o uzdrowieniu człowieka chorego na puchlinę wodną<sup>62</sup>. Wspomniane wątki wskazują na jednoznaczny pogląd na tę chorobę.

We wstępie do swojej homilii na temat Łk 14,1-2 Piotr Chryzolog zaznacza, że analizowany fragment Ewangelii skłania do mówienia przeciwko faryzeuszom „nie z upodobania, ale z bólem; nie z powodu uprze-

<sup>55</sup> Wodną puchlinę opisał Hipokrates, tak właśnie kwalifikując tę chorobę. Dał temu wyraz również św. Augustyn z Hippony (por. *Sermo Guelf.* 12, 3). Por. L.A. Gosbell, „*The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame*”. *Physical and Sensory Disability in the Gospels of the New Testament*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 469, Tübingen 2018, s. 80.

<sup>56</sup> Opis choroby zawdzięczamy rzymskiemu lekarzowi Korneliuszowi Celsusowi (25 rok przed Chrystusem-50 rok po Chrystusie), por. Aulus Cornelius Celsus, *De medicina* III 21, 15.

<sup>57</sup> Przykłady podają: S.L. Love, *The Man with Dropsy*, „Leaven” 6/3 (1998) s. 139-140; C. Hartsock, *The Healing of the Man with Dropsy (Luke 14:1-6) and the Lukan Landscape*, „Biblical Interpretation” 21 (2013) s. 349-352; Gosbell, „*The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame*”, s. 80-81.

<sup>58</sup> Sugeruje się, że uzdrowienie opisane w Łk 14,2-4 dotyczyło człowieka uważanego za nieczystego i zmarginalizowanego przez społeczność, a więc kogoś wliczanego do grupy „biednych, kalekich, chromych i ślepych”. Por. Love, *The Man with Dropsy*, s. 137.

<sup>59</sup> Już w judaizmie upatrywano jej przyczyny w sferze uchybień moralnych. Zob. D. Nowak, *Uzdrowienie w szabat człowieka chorego na puchlinę wodną jako creatio continua (Łk 14,1-6)*, SSHT 44/1 (2011) s. 20-21.

<sup>60</sup> Zob. *Antiquitates Judaicae* 17, 6. 5. Podobną informację przekazuje Euzebiusz z Cezarei, *HE* I 8, 9.

<sup>61</sup> Papiasz podaje, że Judasz miał potwornie się roztyć, jego ciało nabrzmiało od ropy i zjadała je robactwo. Por. *Expositio*, fragm. III.

<sup>62</sup> Tekst jest niekompletny, w tym również prawdopodobny opis dolegliwości tego człowieka. Syn uzdrowionego znieawidził Apostoła i chciał go pozbawić życia. Niecny potomek popadł więc w cięższą chorobę niż jego ojciec. Por. *Acta Pauli* 4.



dzeń wywołanych nienawiścią, ale przez umiłowanie prawdy”<sup>63</sup>. Ma się nieodparte wrażenie, że we wstępie poprzedzającym mowę (*exordium*) autor tłumaczy się ze słów, które będzie musiał wypowiedzieć, i z ostrego tonu swoich sformułowań. *Exordium* ma lakoniczny, ale sugestywny charakter<sup>64</sup>. Chryzolog postępuje jak człowiek bardzo ostrożny, starający się nie urazić niczyjej wrażliwości. Zadaniem mówcy było przygotowanie słuchacza do odbioru treści, skupienie jego uwagi i zaskarwienie sobie jego sympatii (*captatio benevolentiae*)<sup>65</sup>. W przypadku początku *Sermo* 99bis ujawnia się szacunek biskupa dla prawdy i samych słuchających. Od razu jednak mówca wpada w ton polemiczny<sup>66</sup>. W mowach tego typu standardem było wyliczanie całych serii zarzutów o charakterze retorycznym, mających na celu potępienie i zdyskredytowanie przeciwnika. To doprowadziło naszego autora do sformułowania niezwykle wymownego, sugestywnego zbioru porównań o bardzo wyraźnym, silnie oddziałującym profilu i retorycznym charakterze. Należy podkreślić, że kazania, kierowane do dużych grup ludzi miały ustalone formy i reguły, w których figury retoryczne i wybrane toposy odgrywały znaczącą, jeśli nie fundamentalną rolę<sup>67</sup>. Miały one charakter nie tyle komunikacyjny, co przede wszystkim perswazyjny. Ich istotą jest przekonanie, zachęta do przyjęcia jakiejś tezy. W sztuce kaznodziejskiej łączono elementy intelektualne, moralne oraz emocjonalne, mające wywołać efekt apelu, nakłonić do czegoś lub przekonać w sposób „obrazowy”, tj. bardziej sugestywny.

Uwydatniana przez Chryzologa *enarratio* to kolejne wersety analizowanej perykopy, a także ich mniejsze części lub pojedyncze wyrażenia. Te ostatnie traktowane są niemal jak pojedyncze sentencje. Są one jednak analizowane w kontekście całego fragmentu ewangelicznego. Osnowę całej homilii stanowią serie paralelizmów antytetycznych. Składają się one z różnych elementów dobieranych tematycznie. Ich charakter jest uwarunkowany wyrażeniami omawianej przez kaznodzieję perykopy. Nie brakuje

<sup>63</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 1, OSPC 2, s. 266: „Contra phariseos loqui nos hodie non studio, sed dolore, non odii praeiudicio, sed veritatis instinctu”. W artykule odwołujemy się do tłumaczenia własnego.

<sup>64</sup> Odnośnie do tej problematyki, por. A. Olivar, *Les exordes des sermons de saint Pierre Chrysologue*, RBen 104 (1994) s. 85-105.

<sup>65</sup> Por. M. Korolko, *Sztuka retoryki. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, Warszawa 1998, s. 83-87.

<sup>66</sup> Analizę techniczną tej formy oratorskiej przedstawia: A. Quacquarelli, *Retorica*, NDPAC III 4502-4503.

<sup>67</sup> Na różnorodność figur retorycznych w homiletyce biskupa Rawenny wskazuje: Kasprzak, *Duszpasterze V wieku*, s. 66-67.

dygresji czy przerywania toku mowy, by zwracać się bezpośrednio do słuchających (*interpelatio*). Mówca ponadto nadawał swej wypowiedzi dynamikę poprzez stosowanie zmiennego rytmu metryczno-akcentowego<sup>68</sup>.

Chryzolog wskazuje od razu, że uczta urządzona przez faryzeusza<sup>69</sup> była swoistym przeciwieństwem posiłków utożsamianych z gestami gościnności, przyjaźni i bezinteresowności. Zbawiciela przyjęto „z uczuciem zawiści, nie w duchu życzliwości. „Wszedł», mówi [ewangelista], «do domu»”<sup>70</sup>. Kaznodzieja opisuje niejako atmosferę niechęci otaczającą Chrystusa<sup>71</sup>. „W domu był podstęp, w pozdrowieniu pułapka<sup>72</sup>, w byciu przy stole sidło, w potrawach było oszustwo, w chlebie miecz<sup>73</sup>, w kielichu trucizna<sup>74</sup>, we wzajemnym przebywaniu śmiertelne łoże, w rozmowie pojmanie”<sup>75</sup>. W tym fragmencie obrazu o charakterze paradoksalnym i niekiedy osobliwym mogły mieć większą moc oddziaływania. Wywołany przez nie efekt psychologiczny był silniejszy, przez co tezy mówcy były szybciej i łatwiej przyswajane. Na końcu kaznodzieja wypowiada słowa pozostające w zawieszeniu, niejako na modłę pytania retorycznego: „Jeśli taki jest stół faryzeuszy, jakaż może być ich szkoła?”<sup>76</sup>. Zwiększa to efekt jego wypowiedzi. Chryzolog stosował starannie dobierane antytezy, aby swoją przemowę uczynić obiektywnym dyskursem. Chciał najwyraźniej uniknąć

<sup>68</sup> Ten sposób redagowania i wygłaszania mów był wspólny dla najlepszych chrześcijańskich pisarzy łacińskich poprzedzających Chryzologa, jak np. św. Hilary z Poitiers, św. Ambroży z Mediolanu, św. Zenon z Werony, Symmach czy św. Augustyn z Hippony.

<sup>69</sup> Trzy kazania dotyczą posiłku Chrystusa w domu faryzeusza (por. *Sermones* 93, 94 i 95). Stanowią one kontynuację, jak można wywnioskować z początku homilii 94 i 95 oraz zakończenia (por. *Sermones* 93 i 94).

<sup>70</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Dosł. „Spiritu insidiantum, non humanitatis affectu” (OSPC 2, s. 266).

<sup>72</sup> W podobnym tonie zostały opisane polemiki w *Sermo* 32, 2.

<sup>73</sup> Chleb stanowił podstawę pożywienia. Łamanie się chlebem symbolizowało przyjaźń, wspólnotę i jedność tych, którzy spożywali ten sam chleb. U Chryzologa symbolika eucharystyczna dotycząca chleba jest szczególnie wyeksponowana. Kaznodzieja z Rawenny wskazywał na przykład, że każdy spożywający „boski chleb” nie straci sił, a kto „żywi się Bogiem”, nie umiera (por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 166, 6). Chrystus jest niebiańskim chlebem, który daje życie (por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 55, 4-5; 170, 8; 174, 8) i jest nadprzyrodzonym pokarmem (Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 67, 7; 71, 7; 140ter, 3; 146, 6).

<sup>74</sup> Chryzolog stosuje metonimię (*calix* zamiast *vinum*). Wzmianka o tym produkcie ma także swoje znaczenie. Wino przecież było uważane nie tylko za napój, lecz także lekarstwo. Starożytni medycy mieszały je z ziołami.

<sup>75</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 1.

nieporozumień i wyeliminować uprzedzenia mogące pojawić się u mniej wyrobionych i niewykształconych słuchaczy.

Zaraz potem Chryzolog nawiązuje do wyrażenia ewangelicznego, wskazując ponownie, że tekst mówi o uczcie. Temu określeniu przypisuje metafory o wydzwisku ściśle negatywnym<sup>77</sup>. Styl biskupa Rawenny czasami wydawać się może przesadny w sformułowaniach czy w nagromadzeniu porównań<sup>78</sup>, co widać także w tym fragmencie jego homilii. Kaznodzieja spotęgował efekt przez nagromadzenie wyrazistych określeń<sup>79</sup>. Rodzi się pytanie, czy te wszystkie porównania zaczerpnięte ze sfery kulinarnej są przywoływane wyłącznie dla czystego efektu oratorskiego. Z pewnością były to kwestie znane słuchaczom, więc mówca do nich nawiązuje, by być lepiej rozumianym. Z tak opisanym otoczeniem kontrastuje postawa Zbawiciela, pokornego baranka:

W tym miejscu Baranek Boży, który nie miał być prowadzony na pastwisko, ale zabity; spożywał wszystko, jakby tego nie wiedząc. Niewątpliwie [...] [Chrystus] spożywał [uczczę] nie w niewiedzy, lecz [raczej po to], aby przynajmniej dzięki Jego przebywaniu, przyjemności spożywania wspólnego posiłku, mogło zostać skruszone okrucieństwo, uspokojony gniew, stłumiona zawiść. Dzięki mocy jego łaskowości<sup>80</sup> ludzie na nowo stawali się takowymi, odyskiwali uczucia miłości, doświadczali sympatii, przyjmowali Ojca, rozpoznawali dobrodziejstwa, uznawali cuda, umiłowali uzdrowienia, prosili, a nie domagali się powrotu do zdrowia<sup>81</sup>.

To według Chryzologa sens uczy Chrystusa – uzdrawianie niegodziwości i uwalnianie od zła<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> Nazywa ową ucztę „piekarnikiem niegodziwości” i „kuchnią złości”: „Si tamen illud mensam dici fas est, quo erat totum caminum sceleris, coquina malitiae” (OSPC 2, s. 266).

<sup>78</sup> Por. Kasprzak, *Duszpasterze V wieku*, s. 68 z przypisami.

<sup>79</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 1: „Tam był płomień zawiści, gotował się gniew, przygotowywano przyprawę udawania i rozkładano wszystkie potrawy oskarżeń („flammabatur invidia, coquebatur ira, condiebatur simulatio, et criminationum tota fercula parabantur”). W *Sermo* 71, 7 Chryzolog porównuje piekło do rozgrzanego pieca.

<sup>80</sup> Chrystus „uzdrowiał mocą (*virtuti curat*)” (Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 47, 1, OSPC 1, s. 326).

<sup>81</sup> *Sermo* 99bis, 1, OSPC 2, s. 266: „Manducabat plane [...], ut ipsa con vivandi gratia frangeretur feritas, sed aretur ira, extingueretur invidia, et humanitate ipsa homines in hominem iam redirent, caperent affectum, sentirent gratiam reciperent parentem, beneficia probarent, agnoscerent virtutes, amarent curationes, expeterent, non inpetarent sanitates”.

<sup>82</sup> Podobny typ egzegezy prezentuje Cyryl Aleksandryjski. Wskazywał on na to, że Chrystus, uzdrawiając chorego na puchlinę wodną, pokonał „pułapki Żydów”. Sam

Egzegezę początkowego wersetu analizowanej perykopy biskup Rawenny uzupełnia o rozważania na temat urzędu faryzeusza (*caput*) i chorego, który się pojawił (*hydropicus*). Dokonuje przy tym retorycznego zestawienia dwóch typów słabości: cielesnej i moralnej. „Pobożna lektura stawia pośrodku chorobę puchliny wodnej, czyli samego przywódcę faryzeuszów”<sup>83</sup>, uogólnia kaznodzieja. Nazywa go „księciem chorobliwej przypadłości, nauczycielem choroby, głową zarazy”<sup>84</sup>. Wcześniej biskup Rawenny wyjaśnił, jak przebiega rozwój owej choroby duchowej<sup>85</sup>: „W przywódcy była choroba (*in capite morbus erat*), która poprzez najgłębsze [warstwy] szpiku, poprzez nieznanne wnętrzości [i arterie] żył, biegła i docierała do wszystkich członków, a przez swój rozwój wylewała się i rozciągała skórę. W ten sposób opanowywała całe ciało i zmieniała [je] niejako w pojemnik pełen cieczy”<sup>86</sup>. Mówiąc o tej specyficznej dolegliwości (*hydropis luem*), kaznodzieja używa szeregu synonimów: *morbus – pestilentia – malum – aegritudo*<sup>87</sup>.

Obok procesu ukazującego rozwój choroby w organizmie Chryzolog wskazał, że wspomniana przez ewangelistę dolegliwość (*hydropsia*) polegała gromadzeniu się nadmiernej ilości płynu w tkankach ciała i między narządami, co objawia się występowaniem obrzęków<sup>88</sup>. Puchlinę wodną diagnozowano na podstawie wyglądu człowieka chorobliwie

---

człowiek dotknięty chorobą nie prosił o uzdrowienie z powodu szabatu. Gdy się jednak pojawił przed Panem, został uzdrowiony. Gdy więc w perspektywie jest wielkie dobro, nie trzeba dbać o opinię nierozumnych, twierdził metropolita Egiptu. Por. Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Commentarii in Lucam* 101 (passim).

<sup>83</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 2: „Sed ipsius hydropis luem, ipsum principem pharisaeorum sancta lectio iam producat in medium”.

<sup>84</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 2. Określenie *pestilentiaecaput* przypomina sławniejsze wyrażenie *cathedra pestilentiae* (Ps 1,1), przywoływane przez autorów łacińskich, w tym Ambrozjastra. Na temat interpretacji Ps 1,1, zob. S. Lunn–Rockcliffe, *Bishops on the Chair of Pestilence. Ambrosiaster's Polemical Exegesis of Ps. 1.1*, JECS 19 (2011) s. 79-99.

<sup>85</sup> Ambroży z Mediolanu wyjaśniał, że „na pierwszym miejscu dlatego jest ukazane uzdrowienie chorego na puchlinę, iż nadmierne wzdęcie ciała utrudniało działanie duszy i przygaszało żar Ducha” (Ambrosius, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* VII 18).

<sup>86</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 2.

<sup>87</sup> Zob. przede wszystkim: Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 4, OSPC 2, s. 268. Na temat roli synonimów, por. H. Lausberg, *Retoryka literacka. Podstawy wiedzy o literaturze*, tł. A. Gorzkowski, Bydgoszcz 2002, s. 368.

<sup>88</sup> Dolegliwość nazywano również puchliną podskórną czy brzuszna. „Stanowi ona [zawsze] zaawansowane stadium choroby” (B. Pawlaczyk, *Kazuistyka medyczna*, w: *Bi-blia a medycyna*, red. B. Pawlaczyk, Poznań 2007, s. 111).

otyłego<sup>89</sup>, co było spowodowane nadmierną obecnością substancji płynnych w ciele<sup>90</sup>. To z tego względu traktowano wodną puchlinę jako deformację ciała<sup>91</sup>. Kaznodzieja podkreślał, że ratunek może przyjść tylko przez działanie boskiego zbawcy. Dzięki inwencji retorycznej św. Piotra Chryzologa ma się tu do czynienia z przełożeniem tego, co znajduje się w sferze rozumu (wiedza medyczna), na wskazania religijne.

W kazaniu Chryzologa widać nagromadzenie argumentów, określeń synonimicznych lub zwrotów czy wręcz tautologii (*expolitio*)<sup>92</sup>. Te zabiegi oratorskie pełnią rolę argumentacyjną. Szereg słów wzmacniających znaczenie danej kwestii wpływał na opinię słuchających, z racji tego, że użyte wyrażenia oddziaływały nie tylko na sferę intelektu, ale również emocji. Mnogość dowodów czy rozległość tematu sprawiały, że odbiorca był przekonany o kompetencji lub wiarygodności mówcy.

Na „posiłku niegodziwości” Chrystus „nie był obecny po to, by świętować, lecz uzdrawiać”<sup>93</sup>. Piotr Chryzolog dostrzegał znaczenie każdego wyrażenia biblijnego. By ściślej wyjaśnić sens sceny, powraca do wcześniejszych motywów i zastanawia się:

Dlaczego „przed Nim”, a nie „przed nimi”? To dlatego, że tam dostrzegł to, czego oni opanowani przez chorobę nie widzieli<sup>94</sup>. Przed Panem pojawiła się cała spuchlizna faryzejska: było przed Nim pijane pragnienie, żarłoczny głód, woda, która wysusza. Było przed Nim całkowite wyobrażenie serca faryzejskiego, wypełnionego chorobą, bez cnót, przepelnionego złem, zupełnie pozbawionego mądrości. To był człowiek chory na wodną puchlinę, który stał przed Panem<sup>95</sup>.

---

<sup>89</sup> W powszechnym przekonaniu puchlina wodna zmieniała proporcje ciała, tworzyła groteskową masę. Por. C. Timmerman, *Chronic Illness and Disease History*, w: *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Medicine*, ed. M. Jackson, Oxford 2011, s. 393.

<sup>90</sup> Źródłem tej patologii doszukiwano się w wątrobie mającej rozprzodzać wodę zamiast krwi. Por. G. Vigarello, *Historia otyłości. Od średniowiecza do XX wieku*, Warszawa 2012, s. 37-39.

<sup>91</sup> Arnobiusz mówił o wypełnionych wodą obrzmiałych członkach ciała z powodu „szkodliwych humorów”. Por. Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* I 50.

<sup>92</sup> Na temat tautologii, zob. Lausberg, *Retoryka literacka*, s. 600.

<sup>93</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 2.

<sup>94</sup> O niewierze Żydów wobec Chrystusa, por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 131, 4-6.

<sup>95</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 3. Św. Augustyn z Hippony z puchliną wodną utożsamiał błędy doktrynalne. Por. *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* II 1, 1.

Medyczne aspekty choroby stają się tylko pretekstem do przypisania przywódcy faryzeuszy wad moralnych, przenosząc postać dotkniętą słabością ze sfery „fizjologicznej” w przestrzeń retoryczną, etyczną i teologiczną. Wyliczone przez kaznodzieję cechy stanowiące podstawowe elementy charakteryzujące prototypową figurę człowieka dotkniętego wodną puchliną zyskują wymiar symboliczny lub alegoryczny. Biskup Rawenny niejako przenosi wady moralne, łączone ze zjawiskami chorobowymi, na faryzeuszy potrzebujących duchowego uzdrowienia. Zastosowana przez niego seria oksymoronów dobrze ilustruje tę wizję. Chryzolog w końcu sugeruje jednoznaczną konkluzję, że choroba miała swe przyczyny w nieuporządkowaniu moralnym. Ten *topos* stosowano już w literaturze klasycznej. Można więc przypuszczać, że niektóre przykłady z etyki starożytnej były znane łacińskim autorom późnej starożytności<sup>96</sup>.

Pod względem retorycznym fragment ten stanowi zamkniętą, niezwykle obrazową całość. Dzięki zbudowaniu sceny na antynomicznym przeciwstawieniu dwóch postaci reprezentujących odmienne nastawienie i wzorce: czyniącego dobro Chrystusa oraz zamkniętego na nie faryzeusza. W ten sposób przekaz staje się niezwykle obrazowy i konkretny. To przecież proste wyobrażenia najsilniej przemawiały do zbiorowej wyobraźni.

Kaznodzieja wskazuje następnie, że mimo iż żadne pytanie nie padło, tekst ewangeliczny mówi, że Chrystus „odpowiedział”. Nad tym zastanawia się nasz autor. Konstatuje więc, że „lekarz odpowiedział na chorobę, ponieważ chory nie szukał lekarza. Dlatego mówi do nauczycieli Prawa<sup>97</sup>, do faryzeuszów, w których był początek zła, przyczyna choroby, moc zakażenia”<sup>98</sup>.

Oskarżenia, które pasterz z Rawenny kieruje przeciwko Żydom reprezentowanym przez przywódcę faryzeuszów, były znane chrześcijańskim mówcom i szeroko stosowane. Ma się więc do czynienia nie tyle z inwektywami, lecz ze środkami oratorskimi należącymi do topiki retorycznej.

<sup>96</sup> *Topos* chciwych jako trapionych przez chorobę znany był w literaturze klasycznej i patrystycznej. O wodnej puchlinie w wymiarze duchowym (*hydropsis corde*) mówił św. Augustyn, nawiązując do przywiązania do bogactwa (por. Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermo* 177, 6) oraz wady skąpstwa (por. Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermo* 63A, 2). Grzegorz Wielki krytykował tę przywarę, wskazując na konieczność nawrócenia (Gregorius Magnus, *Homiliae XL in Evangelia* XXV 10; XXXII 2).

<sup>97</sup> Chryzolog twierdził, że przyjście Chrystusa miało na celu oddalenie Żydów od łamania boskiego Prawa (por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 151, 4).

<sup>98</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 4.

W rzeczywistości bowiem chory to faryzeusz, odrzucający prawdę i świadectwa dotyczące Zbawiciela. W konfrontacji z ucztą przygotowaną przez Zbawiciela (uzdrowienia i cuda) „przeciwnik prawdy”<sup>99</sup> powinien przejrzeć na oczy i dostrzec znaczenie nauczania i działania Chrystusa Pana<sup>100</sup>. Kolejny raz wyczuwa się tutaj polemikę podejmowaną z Żydami, których biskup Rawenny identyfikuje z faryzeuszami potrzebującymi uleczenia<sup>101</sup>.

Chryzolog przenosi punkt ciężkości z choroby cielesnej na stan ducha<sup>102</sup>. Duchowe zło ogarnęło faryzeuszów. W starożytny literaturze chrześcijańskiej był to powszechnie wykorzystywany model literacki. Bazowano na Nowym Testamencie, który odmalował faryzeizm w niekorzystnym świetle<sup>103</sup>. Autorzy tamtego okresu opisywali zachowania faryzejskie, informując jednak o tym, jak patrzono na nie z punktu widzenia Ewangelii. Miało to miejsce w czasie, gdy faryzeusze już zniknęli ze sceny historii. W tych opisach widać wyraźne tendencje antyjudaistyczne i cele apologetyczne. Stąd więc te długo utrzymujące się antyfaryzejskie schematy, tak jak w przypadku Piotra Chryzologa.

Ten, który stworzył szabat, pyta, co jest dozwolone [tego dnia]. Ten, który dał nakaz, zadaje to pytanie, jakby nie wiedział o tym, co zostało polecone<sup>104</sup>. Pyta nie dlatego, że nie wiedział, lecz jako mistrz. Pytał jak nauczyciel, zasięgał opinii jak Pan, bada jak Bóg: jakie były korzyści z nauczania uczniów, posłuszeństwo [i] karność wśród sług<sup>105</sup>.

---

<sup>99</sup> Biskup Rawenny jednoznacznie wskazuje, że to faryzeusze przedkładali tradycje ludzkie nad rozporządzenia pochodzące od Boga. Por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 44, 6.

<sup>100</sup> Sensem uczyty z udziałem Zbawiciela było to, by nie tylko nasycić ciało, ale służyć ludziom i uzdrawiać chorych. Por. *Opere di San Pietro Crisologo*, t. 2: *Sermoni [63-124]*, s. 266-267, przyp. 1.

<sup>101</sup> Analizowane kazanie przypisywano św. Augustynowi, dając mu znaczący tytuł: *Sermo contra phariseos*. Zob. A. Mai, *Novae Patrum Bibliothecae*, t. 1, Romae 1852, s. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Ewagriusz z Pontu dostrzegał w puchlinie wodnej metaforę jednej z zabójczych dla mnicha wad. Por. *Capitula* XXXIII 16.

<sup>103</sup> Przedstawianie w Ewangeliach faryzeuszów jako głównych przeciwników Chrystusa mogło wynikać z faktu, że napisano je w czasie ostatniego trzydziestolecia I wieku, a przedstawione dyskusje często odzwierciedlają kontrowersje, wobec których stawał rodzący się Kościół.

<sup>104</sup> OSPC 2, s. 268: „Auctor sabbati sabbato quid liceret interrogat; et ipse qui iusserat, quasi nesciens quid iusserit”.

<sup>105</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 4.

Kolejny fragment homilii ogniskuje się wokół pytania, czy można uzdrawiać w szabat (*licet sabbato curare?*). Ciekawe jest stosowanie anafory<sup>106</sup> w stosunku do Łk 14,3. Kaznodzieja przywołuje część tego wersetu na początku kolejnych części swojej mowy<sup>107</sup>. Chryzolog rozumuje następująco: „[Bóg] zakazał grzechu podczas szabat, a nie uzdrawiania. [On] nie pozwala na czynienie zła, zabronił tego, by zło czynić, a nie dobro, wykluczył troskę o ciało z powodu zbytku, ale nie by [je] leczyć. Zabronił ludzkich służebnych prac, ale nie tych dotyczących dzieł dobroci Bożej<sup>108</sup>. Uczynił ten dzień świętym, aby w nim człowiek, wyrwany ze spraw ziemskich<sup>109</sup>, zwracał się tylko ku Bogu i ku sobie samemu”<sup>110</sup>.

Nakazy Prawa mają wydźwięk pozytywny. Zbawiciel, jak przypominał kaznodzieja, czynił wszystko zgodnie z zasadą, że człowiek i jego dobro są na pierwszym miejscu. Gdy sytuacja jest odwrotna, tam nie ma ducha Ewangelii, ponieważ egoizm bierze górę nad dobrem bliźniego.

W swoim zaślepieniu ludzie mogą stawiać opór terapeutycznemu działaniu Syna Bożego. On jednak, jak „troskliwy lekarz uzdrawia nawet chorego, który tego nie chce”<sup>111</sup>. Tak więc „wszelki ból opuszcza od razu tego, kogo Chrystus bierze za rękę. Bóg stanął przy człowieku, a choroba od razu od niego odeszła. Dlatego ten, kto nie chce być pochwyconym przez Pana, chce być w nocy wszelkiej choroby<sup>112</sup>. Oto dlaczego prorok opiewa to, że został ujęty [za rękę] przez Pana: Tyś ujął moją prawicę; prowadzisz mnie według swojej rady i przyjmujesz mię na koniec do chwały (Ps 73,23b-24)”<sup>113</sup>. To jedyny, obok Ewangelii Łukaszej, fragment tek-

<sup>106</sup> Ta sama figura retoryczna pojawia się także w *Sermo* 99 bis, 3 (powtórzenia czasownika *stabat*).

<sup>107</sup> Zob. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 4-5 (passim).

<sup>108</sup> Biskup Rawenny podkreślał, że szabat był dniem odpoczynku od ludzkiego trudu, Nakazał go Bóg, aby człowiek zatroszczył się o swoje zbawienie. Por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 105, 9. Zob. również: Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 139, 7.

<sup>109</sup> Według Tertuliana w dzień Pański należy oddalić od siebie niepokój, troski i codzienne zajęcia, by nie dawać okazji diabłu. Por. Tertullianus, *De oratione* 22, 2.

<sup>110</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 4. Ze względu na zmartwychwstanie Chrystusa Pana szabat ustępuje niedzieli. Por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 77, 3.

<sup>111</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 5.

<sup>112</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 5, OSPC 2, s. 268: „Accessit ad hominem Deus, et morbus ab homine mox recessit. Unde qui a Domino teneri non vult, ab omni aegritudine vult teneri”.

<sup>113</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 5. Werset psalmu to jedyny, obok Ewangelii Łukasza fragment tekstu biblijnego cytowany w analizowanej homilii.



stu biblijnego cytowany w analizowanej homilii. „Ujęcie za rękę” przez Zbawiciela ma znaczenie ogólniejsze i stanowi zbawczy gest.

Fakt uzdrowienia wskazuje nie tyle na obalenie zasad szabatu, ale że ten dzień staje się hołdem dla jego Stwórcy<sup>114</sup>. Kaznodzieja boleje jednak nad tym, że faryzeusze nie chcieli uznać „litości Bożej (*Dei pietatem*)”<sup>115</sup>. W kwestii Prawa Mojżeszowego chodziło zawsze o odkrywanie w sposób najbardziej czytelny woli Stwórcy wobec człowieka. Także przy innych okazjach biskup Rawenny sięgał po repertorium środków polemicznych i rozwijał wątki antyjudaistyczne podejmowane przez innych pisarzy. Niewątpliwie świadczy to o fakcie, że na jego stosunek do judaizmu rzutowała kwestia odrzucenia Chrystusa i Jego przesłania. Potwierdzają to reminiscencje ewangeliczne<sup>116</sup>. W świetle nauczania Chrystusa, a w tym przypadku dokonanego cudu, kaznodzieja wskazuje, że istnieją niepodważalne motywacje miłosierdzia i współczucia, przed którymi Prawo ustępuje.

W nawiązaniu do Łk 14,3<sup>117</sup> Chryzolog wskazuje, że „faryzeusze milczeli, jak [drapieżne] zwierzęta, które czyhają na zdobycz. Milczeli zmartwieni z powodu winy, a nie dlatego, że dokonano uzdrowienia. Kto widzi rzecz uważaną za niewłaściwą i milczy, przez samo milczenie oskarża. Przyjaciel z kolei zastawia się, jak nie dopuścić do popełnienia winy, nie zaś by ją znowu oglądać”<sup>118</sup>.

Powodem było przeświadczenie, że faryzeusze mogą na czymś przylapać Zbawiciela. Kaznodzieja raweński rozwija tę myśl następująco: „[Faryzeusze] milczeli, aby Bóg stał się winnym, cnota stała się występkiem, zbawienie oszczerstwem, a doskonały przykład przebaczenia oskarżeniem. Tak widzi oko zranione ostrzem zawiści, tak oskarża nieprzyjaciel Boga, przeciwnik prawdy”<sup>119</sup>.

---

<sup>114</sup> W innym miejscu kaznodzieja wskazuje, że Chrystus nie obala szabatu, lecz nadaje mu blask. Por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 75, 2.

<sup>115</sup> Por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 6.

<sup>116</sup> Por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 37.

<sup>117</sup> „[Rzekł im:] «Czy wolno w szabat uzdrawiać, czy też nie?» Lecz oni milczeli”.

<sup>118</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 5.

<sup>119</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 5, OSPC 2, s. 268: „[Pharisaei] tacebant, ut esset in culpa Deus, virtus in crimine, in calumnia salus, in accusatione totum veniae documentum. Sic videt oculus invidiae, iaculo vulneratus; sic accusat hostis dei, veritatis inimicus”. W przeciwieństwie do nastawienia faryzeuszów, u wierzących „autorytet Ewangelii przywraca żywotność umysłu i zachęca do działania” (Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 115, 1).

*Recapitulatio* homilii rozpoczyna się od pytania<sup>120</sup>, by następnie ukazać cud Zbawiciela w kontekście znaczenia szabatu. Biskup Rawenny tak oto podsumowuje kluczową kwestię:

Gdyby Chrystus nie uzdrowił w szabat chorego na wodną puchlinę, zniósłby wartość szabatu<sup>121</sup>, lecz [tenże dzień] złożył hołd swemu Stwórcy, przez którego wolę został przeznaczony do tego, aby znienawidzić winę i dokonywać uzdrowień. Ponieważ jednak faryzeusze nie byli w stanie uznać dobroci Bożej okazywanej ludziom, zostali odesłani pod jarzmo<sup>122</sup>, aby nauczyć się od istot pozbawionych rozumu. W godnym pożałowania stanie w którym się znajdowali, nie mieli rozeznania, którego tak wiele razy i w sposób nieodparty im udzielano poprzez cuda Chrystusa<sup>123</sup>.

Faryzeusze, niemający zewnętrznych objawów wodnej puchliny, są bardziej dotknięci chorobą, bo ma ona wymiar duchowy. W opinii kaznodziei faryzeusze uznający się ze znawców Prawa i nauczycieli zostają zredukowani do pośledniej roli, nosząc z własnej woli jarzmo. Choroba poza wymiarem stricte medycznym i moralnym zostaje wpisana w trójstopniową antynomię: Chrystus – dobro – uzdrowienie kontra faryzeusze – nieprawość – choroba, zyskując tym samym wymiar religijny i teologiczny, stając się jednocześnie elementem chrześcijańskiej dialektyki i retoryki. Do pewnego stopnia analizowane kazanie różni się od innych mów biskupa Ravenny. On sam dobrze sytuuje się w tradycji, która od Minucjusza Feliksa przez Cypriana dochodzi do Laktancjusza i dalej, by starać się w wygłaszanych mowach jeśli nie o wypowiedzi najwyższych lotów, to przynajmniej o *dignitas* w formie.

<sup>120</sup> OSPC 2, s. 270: „Quid plura, fratres?”.

<sup>121</sup> OSPC 2, s. 270: „Si Christus pro sabbato tunc non fecisset hydropici curam, vim sabbati sustulisset”.

<sup>122</sup> Nawiązanie do Łk 14,5. Piotr Chryzolog nazywał Żydów narodem poddanym Prawu (por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 5, 7). Staranie o najdrobniejsze szczegóły Prawa Mojżeszowego sprawiają, że wpadli oni w sidła legalizmu (por. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 106, 4).

<sup>123</sup> Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 6, OSPC 2, s. 270: „Verum quia pharisaei in hominibus Dei pietatem sapere nesciebant, ad iumenta mittuntur, ut caperent ab insipientibus sensum, qui virtutibus Christi ingestum sibi totiens et taliter intellectum miserabiles non tenebant”. U św. Augustyna jarzmo zostaje wspomniane w podobnym kontekście. Ponadto Hipponczyk klasyfikuje właśnie tak słabość pochylonej kobiety uzdrowionej w szabat (Łk 13,10-17). Por. Augustinus, *Quaestiones Evangeliorum (in Lucam)* II 29 (lb. XIV 2, 5; XIII 41-46).

Przy stosowaniu metafor, nagromadzeniu określeń i odwoływaniu się do specyficznej terminologii widać bogactwo zasobu leksykalnego autora. Mówca przechodzi od jednego porównania do drugiego, koncentrując się przez chwilę na jednym temacie. Świadczy to o zadziwiającej elokwencji, bogatym słownictwie i umiejętności operowania licznymi skojarzeniami.

\*\*\*

W *Sermo* 99bis Piotra Chryzologa kontrastowe zestawienia i antytezy tworzą na podstawie narracji ewangelicznej niejako dwa poziomy. To cecha charakterystyczna analizowanej homilii. Jest więc choroba cielesna i choroba duchowa. Stan człowieka chorego na wodną puchlinę zostaje porównany z faryzeuszem o „chorej” duszy. Podobnie opisywane są objawy chorobowe *hydropsis*. Te fizyczne odwołują do wad moralnych.

W tym kontekście przedstawione jest działanie Chrystusa leczącego ciała i dusze. Jednocześnie ukazana jest postawa chorego na wodną puchlinę i pozbawionych wiary faryzeuszów. Według podwójnej optyki postrzegany jest także szabat i nakaz odpoczynku w ten dzień. Chrystus, który jest „Panem szabatu”, okazuje człowiekowi litość i miłosierdzie. Nieszczere przyjęcie Zbawiciela na uczenie, która staje się odwrotnością gościnności, życzliwości i serdeczności, zestawione jest z Jego łagodnością i dobrocią. Faryzeusze odrzucili zbawcze nauki, stając się jak nierozumne zwierzęta. Przy tworzeniu licznych porównań, kumulowaniu antytez i stosowaniu innych środków stylistycznych dostrzec można także ironię kaznodziei. Repertorium leksykalne kaznodziei z Rawenny poświadcza fakt, że niektóre wyrażenia biblijne stały się już w V wieku określeniami technicznymi<sup>124</sup>.

Dla Piotra Chryzologa faryzeusz to wzorzec topicznego adwersarza, który stawał się figurą dyskursu, której zadaniem było kształtowanie właściwej postawy, wskazywanie na błędy, a więc na to, co niepożądane i niewłaściwe. Przeciwnik Chrystusa, jako Jego zaprzeczenie, musi być więc dotknięty chorobą i patologicznymi cechami. Reprezentują one nie tylko zło i grzech, ale i deprecjonują jego postawę religijną polegającą na odrzuceniu Zbawiciela i Jego przesłania.

Omówione *Sermo* 99bis ukazuje biskupa Rawenny jako wybitnego kaznodzieję i twórcę literatury. Nawet w niezbyt długiej homilii, poprzez zabiegi oratorskie, uzyskał on efekt ozdobności tekstu i wydobyl jego obrazowość, starając się przy tym o pełniejsze przekazanie treści opowia-

<sup>124</sup> Np. *legisperitos*. Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 99bis, 4, OSPC 2, s. 268.

dania ewangelicznego. Nic dziwnego, że Chryzolog znalazł tak wielu miłośników swego kunsztu oratorskiego. Przyczynił się do ugruntowania i rozwoju terminologii egzegetycznej i homiletycznej. Niewątpliwie jego kazanie było atrakcyjne dla przedstawicieli elity i wykształconych warstw społeczeństwa. Prości słuchacze z otoczki kaznodziejskiej retoryki mogli wyluskać ważne dla siebie treści. A po to przecież trudził się kaznodzieja, przemawiając „z obfitości serca” (por. Mt 12,35; Łk 6,45b).

## Bibliografia

### Źródła

- Ambrosius Mediolanensis, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, ed. G. Coppa, *Opera Omnia di Sant’Ambrogio*, t. 11-12, Milano – Roma 1978, tł. W. Szoldrski, Św. Ambroży, *Wykład Ewangelii według św. Łukasza*, PSP 1, Warszawa 1977.
- Apokryfy Nowego Testamentu*, red. M. Starowieyski, t. 2/1: *Apostołowie*, Kraków 2007.
- Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, ed. A. Reifferscheid, CSEL 4, Vienna 1875.
- Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermones*, ed. P. Bellini – L. Carrozzi – F. Cruciani, NBA 29-34, Roma 1983-1989.
- Aulus Cornelius Celsus, *De medicina*, ed. W.G. Spencer, Loeb Classical Library 292, Cambridge – London 1935.
- Cyrrillus Alexandrinus, *Commentarii in Lucam*, ed. R.M. Tonneau, CSCO 140, Louvain 1953.
- Eusebius Caesariensis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. E. Schwartz, GCS 9/2, Leipzig 1908, tł. A. Lisiecki, Euzebiusz z Cezarei, *Historia Kościelna*, POK 3, Poznań 1924.
- Evagrius Ponticus, *Capitula*, PG 40, 1263-1267.
- Gregorius Magnus, *Homiliae in evangelia*, ed. R. Étaix, CCL 141, Turnhout 1999, tł. A. Szaniawski, Grzegorz Wielki, *Homilie na Ewangelie*, Warszawa 1998.
- Hieronimus Stridonensis, *De viris illustribus*, ed. E.C. Richardson, Texte und Untersuchungen 14, Leipzig – Berlin 1896, tł. W. Szoldrski, Św Hieronim, *O znakomitych mężach, Eteria, Pielgrzymka do miejsc świętych*, PSP 6, Warszawa 1970.
- Hieronimus Stridonensis, *Expositio quattuor Evangeliorum*, PL 30, 531-590 A.
- Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, ed. A. Rousseau – L. Doutreleau – B. Hemmerdinger – Ch. Mercier, SCh 210-211, Paris 1974.
- Josephus Flavius, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, ed. H.S.J. Thackeray – R. Marcus – A.P. Wikgren, LCL 242, 490, 281, 365, 489, 410, 433, Cambridge – London 1998, tł. Z. Kubiak – J. Radożycki, Józef Flawiusz, *Dawne dzieje Izraela*, Poznań – Warszawa – Lublin 1962.
- Novae Patrum Bibliothecae*, t. 1, ed. A. Mai, Romae 1852.

- Origenes, *Fragmenta in Lucam in catenis*, ed. H. Crouzel – F. Fournier – P. Perichon, SCh 87, Paris 1962, s. 464-547, tł. S. Kalinkowski, Orygenes, *Fragmenty greckie o Ewangelii św. Łukasza*, PSP 36, Warszawa 1986, s. 147-180.
- Origenes, *Homiliae in Lucam*, ed. H. Crouzel – F. Fournier – P. Perichon, SCh 87, Paris 1962, tł. S. Kalinkowski, Orygenes, *Homilie o Ewangelii św. Łukasza*, PSP 36, Warszawa 1986.
- Papias Hierapolitanus, *Fragmenta*, ed. U.H.J. Körtner – M. Leutzsch, *Schriften des Urchristentums*, t. 3, Darmstadt 1998.
- Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermonum collectio a Felice episcopo parata, sermonibus extravagantibus adiectis*, ed. A. Olivar. CCL 24, 24A, 24B, Turnhout 1975-1982.
- Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermones*, ed. G. Banterle, *Opere di san Pietro Crisologo*, t. 2, Scrittori dell'area santambrosiana 2, Milano 1997.
- Petrus Chrysologus. *Epistola XXV (Petri Chrysologi Episcopi Ravennatis ad Eutychem Presbyterum)*, PL 54, 775-780.
- Pseudo Johannes Chrysostomus, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaem*, ed. J. van Banning, CCL 87B, Turnhout 1988.
- Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. A. Kroymann, CCL 1, Turnhout 1954, 441-726, tł. S. Ryznar, Tertulian, *Przeciw Marcjonowi*, PSP 58, Warszawa 1994.
- Tertullianus, *De oratione*, ed. E. Dekkers, CCL 1, Turnhout 1954, 256-274, tł. H. Pietras, *Odpowiedź na Słowo. Najstarsi mistrzowie chrześcijańskiej modlitwy*, red. H. Pietras, Kraków 1993, s. 31-57.

### Opracowania

- Algisi L., *Il Vangelo di S. Matteo*, w: *Introduzione alla Bibbia*, t. 4: *I Vangeli*, red. L. Moraldi – S. Lyonnet, Torino 1960.
- Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, t. 3: *Luke*, red. A. Just Jr., Downers Grove 2003.
- Benericetti R., *Il Cristo nei sermoni di S. Pier Crisologo*, *Studia Ravennatensia* 6, Cesena 1995.
- Biblia a medycyna*, red. B. Pawlaczyk, Poznań 2007.
- Bizzozero A., *Peter Chrysologus*, w: *Preachers, and Audiences in the Latin West*, red. A. Dupont, Leiden 2018, s. 403-429.
- Bloomquist G.L., *Patristic Reception of a Lukan Healing Account. A Contribution to a Socio-Rhetorical Response to Willi Braun's Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14*, w: *Healing in Religion and Society, from Hippocrates to the Puritans*, red. K. Coyle – S.C. Muir, Lewiston 1999, s. 105-134.
- Nuovo dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane*, t. 1-3, red. A. Di Berardino, Roma – Genova 2006-2010.
- Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, t. 2, ed. J.H. Hayes, Nashville 1999.
- Farnell F.D., *The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church: The Testimony to the Priority of Matthew's Gospel*, „The Master's Seminary Journal” 10/1 (1999) s. 53-86.

- Gosbell L.A., „*The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame*”. *Physical and Sensory Disability in the Gospels of the New Testament*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 469, Tübingen 2018.
- Graumann T., *Christus interpres. Die Einheit von Auslegung und Verkündigung in der Lukaserklärung des Ambrosius von Mailand*, PTS 41, Berlin – New York 1994.
- Griffith S.B., *Ambrose the Appropriator. Borrowed texts in a new context in the Commentary on Luke*, w: *Commentaries, Catenae and Biblical Tradition*, red. H.A.G. Houghton, Texts and Studies 3/13, Piscataway 2016, s. 199-225.
- Grmek M.D., *Historia chorób u zarania cywilizacji zachodniej*, tł. A.B. Matusiak, Warszawa 2002.
- Hartsock C., *The Healing of the Man with Dropsy (Luke 14:1-6) and the Lukan Landscape*, „*Biblical Interpretation*” 21 (2013) s. 341-354.
- John Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, red. B.A. Stewart – M.A. Thomas, Grand Rapids 2018.
- Kasprzak D., *Duszpasterze V wieku. Studium porównawcze myśli pasterskiej św. Piotra Chryzologa i Sylwiana z Marsylii*, Kraków 2008.
- Kasprzak D., *Egzegetyczno-katechetyczne zastosowanie Biblii w homiliach św. Piotra Chryzologa*, w: *Biblia w kulturze świata. Biblia – Ojcowie Kościoła*, red. T. Jelonek, Kraków 2008, s. 137-158.
- Kasprzak D., *Zasady wyjaśniania Pisma Świętego w kazaniach egzegetycznych św. Piotra Chryzologa*, w: *Wokół Biblii*, red. T. Jelonek, Kraków 2008, s. 31-50.
- Kochaniewicz B., *La Vergine Maria nei sermoni di san Pietro Crisologo*, Roma 1998.
- Korolko M., *Sztuka retoryki. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, Warszawa 1998.
- Kritzinger J.P.K., *The Interpretation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son by Two Latin Patristic Authors, St Jerome and St Peter Chrysologus*, „*Bogoslovnivestnik*” 81/2 (2021) s. 299-308.
- Lausberg H., *Retoryka literacka. Podstawy wiedzy o literaturze*, tł. A. Gorzkowski, Bydgoszcz 2002.
- Lodi E., *L'esegesi biblica nei testi rituali dei sermoni di S. Pier Crisologo*, w: *L'esegesi nei Padri latini. Dalle origini a Gregorio Magno, XXVIII Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana*, t. 2, Roma 2000, s. 617-653.
- Love S.L., *The Man with Dropsy*, „*Leaven*” 6/3 (1998) s. 136-141.
- Loveday A., *Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface Writing*, „*Novum Testamentum*” 28/1 (1986) s. 48-74.
- Lunn-Rockliffe S., *Bishops on the Chair of Pestilence. Ambrosiaster's Polemical Exegesis of Ps. 1.1*, „*Journal of Early Christian Studies*” 19 (2011) s. 79-99.
- Meconi D.V., *Peter Chrysologus*, London – New York 2021.
- Moraldi L. – Lyonnet S., *Introduzione alla Bibbia*, t. 4: *I Vangeli*, Torino 1960.
- Nowak D., *Uzdrowienie w szabat człowieka chorego na puchlinę wodną jako creatio continua (Łk 14,1-6)*, „*Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne*” 44/1 (2011) s. 16-29.

- Nowy słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa*, red. M. Starowieyski – J.M. Szymusiak, Poznań 2022.
- Olivar A., *Els principis exegètics de sant Pere Crisòleg*, w: *Miscellanea biblica B. Ubach*, red. R.M. Diaz, Scripta et documenta 1, Montserrat 1953, s. 413-438.
- Olivar A., *Los sermones de san Pedro Crisólogo. Estudio critico*, Montserrat 1962.
- Olivar A., *Les exordes des sermons de saint Pierre Chrysologue*, „Revue Bénédictine” 104 (1994) s. 85-105.
- Olivar A., *La predicación cristiana antigua*, Sección de teología y filosofía 189, Barcelona 1991, s. 298-299.
- Paczkowski M.C., *Łk 14,2-4 w egzegezie patrystycznej*, „Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia” 13/4 (2020) s. 421-449.
- Paczkowski M.C., *Mk 1,1-13 w egzegezie homiletycznej św. Hieronima ze Strydonu*, „Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia” 7/2 (2014) s. 52-60.
- Quasten J., *Patrologia. I Padri Greci. Dal Concilio di Nicea al Concilio di Calcedonia*, t. 2, ed. A. Di Berardino, Genova 2000.
- Quasten J., *Patrologia. I Padri latini (secoli IV-V)*, t. 3, ed. A. Di Berardino *et al.*, Casale Monferrato 1983.
- Scimè C., *L'esegesi di san Pietro Crisologo sui Salmi*, Roma 1992.
- Simonetti M., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, t. 1: *Matthew 1-13*, Downers Grove 2001.
- Simonetti M., *Między dosłownością a alegorią. Przyczynek do historii egzegezy patrystycznej*, tł. T. Skibiński, Myśl Teologiczna 26, Kraków 2000.
- Timmerman C., *Chronic Illness and Disease History*, w: *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Medicine*, red. M. Jackson, Oxford 2011.
- Vigarello G., *Historia otyłości. Od średniowiecza do XX wieku*, tł. A. Leyk, Warszawa 2012.
- Widła B., *Słownik antropologii Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 2003.







## Sermons as a Formation of Ethical Behavior of Man in the Second Half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Based on the Example of Sermons by Dominik Mokoš OFM (1718-1776)

Angela Škovierová<sup>1</sup>

---

**Abstract:** Dominik Mokoš (1718-22.12.1776) was a Franciscan monk and religious writer who also acted as preacher, vicar, teacher and chronicler in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in various regions of Slovakia (such as Nižná Šebastová, Stropkov, Kremnica, Pruské, Okoličné, Beckov) or as a missionary in various areas of Šariš, Spiš, Orava and Poland. He was one of the most prolific authors of homiletic literature in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Slovakia. In his Marian, Christmas and lenten preaching, we can identify intertextual references to the Bible, patristic, medieval and humanist religious literature. This study focuses on how these sources were used by Mokoš to draft his sermons and how he applied their moral tidings to the particular situations that the believers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were facing.

**Keywords:** Dominik Mokoš OFM; sermons; 18<sup>th</sup> century; morality; practical ethics

---

Alongside spiritual poetry, prayer and school play, homily (or sermon) was one of the basic genres of spiritual baroque literature. Although sermons in the native language that focused on explication of biblical text were a specific means of communication for Christian churches<sup>2</sup>, manuscripts and printed homilies still belong to underappreciated evidence of our spiritual culture.

Since the time of the apostles, preaching the gospel was one of the main commitments of bishops, but the Council of Trent (1545-1563) proclaimed

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr Angela Škovierová, assistant at the Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Foreign Languages of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia; email: angela.skovierova@uniba.sk; ORCID: 0000-0003-1522-9863.

<sup>2</sup> See E. Brtňáková, *Stredoveká scholastická kázeň*, Bratislava 2000.

spreading the Word of God a special duty to the monks and priests and also defined the form and content of the religious narrative<sup>3</sup>. For a simple baroque man, sermons were the only educational element (although only in oral form), that was delivered frequently and regularly<sup>4</sup>. During this period, which was also demanding socio-politically (Thirty Years' War, Turkish invasions, religious unrest), people started to turn to God once again and seek spiritual reinforcement in faith, regularly attending church and eagerly receiving God's Word.

Preachers became aware of their power as they directed their efforts on people's spiritual conversion. Appropriately worded sermon could affect whole crowds of people, therefore also the public opinion at the time. Already early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, preachers were gradually abandoning the so-called homilies that primarily interpreted the Gospels, or parts of them, but were often long and dull. Instead, they attempted to liven up their speeches in a variety of ways to attract the audience's interest and to keep their attention throughout the sermon. Thus they began to use various allegories, metaphors, unusual verbal twists and proverbs, folk language, or, conversely, a combination of the vernacular with Latin quotations inserted, and many other rhetorical figures. Engaging the audience was very important because only then could the sermons fulfill their primary function of influencing the minds and opinions of the recipients, educating the simple people, instilling the desirable moral principles, and helping the believers on their spiritual journey to salvation. The priest was not only trying to bring man closer to God, but also bring God closer to man. The theological function of homilies stood always first and foremost, but the literary and aesthetic efforts of the preachers and their desire for sermons' originality and extraordinariness began to appear very soon. The homilies had different form and function depending on the occasion. Sunday sermons were focused mostly on lecturing and persuasion – they were regular in frequency and interconnected, one linked to the next just like the Gospel readings during the liturgical year, and their educative character graduated. On the contrary, preaching on various other occasions, celebrations and special festivities, left much more space for the use of author's talent and creativity. In early modern times, so-called examples are still used, as a remnant of typical medieval homiletics. The term 'examplum' denotes a secular story used within a sermon to illustrate a preacher's point, revive the speech or catch

<sup>3</sup> See R. Zuber, *Osudy moravské církve v 18. století*, Praha 1987.

<sup>4</sup> See M. Sládek, *Malý svět jest člověk aneb výběr z české barokní prózy*, Praha 1995.

the attention of the audience. The examples could have ancient, medieval, renaissance or topical origins.

The Franciscans came to our region just a few years after the foundation and approval of their order (1223) and acted as religious shepherds and preachers; besides pastoral care for the townspeople, preaching was their focal point. Through their missionary activity and preaching they have been taking care of the lower classes of the population, but their primary task, as for any Catholic order, was to strengthen the Catholic Church<sup>5</sup>. Initially, they acted against the heretical movements, especially among urban poverty, and later, in co-operation with the Jesuits, they were the most effective at recatholization, quoting the usage of sermons as the most powerful weapon<sup>6</sup>. Especially during Counter-Reformation, these were often written in everyday language. The Franciscans' success was related to the fact that in their activity evangelism and catechism prevailed over contemplation, and they used the spoken word as a convincing means of influence. On the other hand, in many cases they were better prepared for their work than the diocesan clergy<sup>7</sup>.

One of the representatives of the Franciscan Order in Slovakia was Dominik Mokoš (1718-22 December 1776), a religious writer who also acted as preacher, vicar (representative of the superior), bursar, teacher of his brethren and laymen and chronicler in the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century in various regions (e.g. Nižná Šebastová, Stropkov, Kremnica, Pruské, Okoličné, Beckov), as a missionary in various regions of Šariš, Spiš, Orava and Poland. In 1738 he joined the Franciscan Order in Hlohovec and received the monastic name Dominik, but we do not know his real first name. He studied philosophy and theology probably in Okoličné and Szeged. He was ordained a priest in 1744. His main function was preaching – he was one of

---

<sup>5</sup> See K. Komorová, *Františkánska knižnica v Matici slovenskej [Franciscan Library in Matica slovenská]*, „Knižnice a informácie“ 32/3 (2000) p. 101-106; K. Komorová – H. Saktorová, *Die Franziskanerbibliotheken in der Buchkulturgeschichte in der Slowakei*, in: *Plaude turba paupercola: Franziskanischer Geist in Musik, Literatur und Kunst*, ed. L. Kačic, Bratislava 2004, p. 307-314.

<sup>6</sup> See M. Fórišová, *Náboženská literatúra a v zbierkach jezuitských knižnic na Slovensku*, in: *Slovenská latinská a cirkevnoslovenská náboženská tvorba 15.-19. storočia*, ed. J. Doruľa, Bratislava 2002, p. 212-228.

<sup>7</sup> See J. Kłoczowski, *Problem mendykantów i kaznodziejstwa w Polsce średniowiecznej*, in: *Ludzie, Kościół, wierzenia: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej*, Warszawa 2001, p. 146-147; W. Kowalski, *Małopolscy Franciszkanie – reformaci a konwersje na katolicyzm w dobie przedrozbiorowej*, in: *Ludzie, Kościół, wierzenia: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej*, ed. S.K. Kuczyński – W. Iwańczak, Warszawa 2001, p. 151-172.

the most prolific Slovak authors of homiletic literature in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1752-1774, six volumes of his Sunday, Christmas, eschatological and missionary homilies<sup>8</sup> were preserved under the name *Sermones panegyrico-morales*. His work can be studied from several aspects, as proved by not only Analysis I. (1758), Analysis II. (1758) and Analysis IV. (1749) volumes, from this collection of sermons from 1749-1758 but by other documents related to Mokoš's activity as a preacher, found in the Department of Literary Manuscripts of the Archive of Literature and Art in the Slovak National Library in Martin<sup>9</sup>.

Apart from the linguistic or literary analysis of Mokoš's sermons, their ethical and aesthetic dimension is no less interesting. The analysis Mokoš's homilies shows that this educated priest and skilful preacher, like many other preachers, was not rarely a compiler using biblical, ancient and medieval materials for his preaching. The sermons preserved under his name were a written basis for a live presentation of the author, thus reflecting the actual state of language in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. However, these are bilingual, Slovak-Latin documents, meaning that the basic Slovak text is enriched by Latin sequences, which consist mostly of individual quotations or groups of quotations drawn from different sources. Exactly these quotational passages grant the sermons their aesthetic dimension; on the other hand, they are a clue helping us trace what sources the author relied upon in forming his moral and ethical code, and what view of Christian morality and behaviour has Mokoš tried to mediate and instil in his listeners.

The potential of a multi-layered effect on the psyche of the believers gave the sermons a special position as a means of communication between the preacher and his auditorium. A good sermon was a response to the non-material desires of man, explaining to him the essence and rules of functioning of his inner world and society as a whole; the sermon could, if necessary, console, encourage, strengthen faith, give determination and courage to change one's life attitudes. The preacher would need to show his interest and knowledge of the subject as well as manifest the art of choosing the right examples and arguments. All the means of attracting the listeners had to be used, but it was inadmissible to overload their attention with references, hints and allusions to symbols, pictures, stories, reflections and

---

<sup>8</sup> See Mokoš, *Dominik*, in: *Slovenský biografický slovník*, IV 211.

<sup>9</sup> Archival research from the collection of manuscripts of historical libraries (RHKS) was elaborated by: Karin Šišmišová 19.11.2009. The used documents are marked as: 155 (personal assets of V.J. Gajdoš).

texts that they did not understand. It was also unacceptable for the preacher to suppress the message by flaunting his own education, eloquence and intellect. At first glance, it seems as if Mokoš violated almost all the rules above. The persuasive force of his sermons and the real possibility of influencing the individual layers of the baroque psyche can be explained by the fact that many features typical for medieval artistic methods have been transferred to the humanist and even baroque literature<sup>10</sup> Based on numerous quotes and references we can assume that Mokoš's homilies followed the pattern of scholastic medieval sermons.

Notes from Mokoš's lectures, accounts on sacraments, Ten Commandments, virtues, justice and fairness also support the claim of late scholastic (or so-called Scotist) influence on Mokoš's sermon creation and on his moral-philosophical attitudes. This is grounded in work of a medieval scholar John Duns Scotus from 1732 and compiled under the name *Theologiae moralis juxta mentem Ioannis Duns Scoti. Pars secunda*, which was found among Mokoš's manuscripts. We assume there was also a '*Pars prima*', consisting of lectures from the time around Mokoš's studies.

The extensive work (26 volumes) of the Franciscan monk of Scottish descent, a prominent representative of the late medieval scholasticism, a philosopher and theologian, Oxford University and Paris university professor John Duns Scotus (1265/1266, Duns, Scotland – 1308, Cologne) comprises of unfinished manuscripts, notes and lecture records that were originally probably not intended for publication. Even though Scotus's teaching, also known as Scotism<sup>11</sup> became part of the official Franciscan doctrine, the first edition of his complete works was only released in Lyon in 1639.

Already the title of the analysed volumes of Mokoš's sermons suggests what type of text is discussed or what he wanted to emulate; *Sermones panegyrico-morales*<sup>12</sup>. The medieval sermon synthetically linked Biblical statements. The theme could be explicitly or implicitly derived from the pericopes – selected parts of the Gospels and epistles read during the mass, or it could be any verse from the Scriptures or a section from a psalm.

<sup>10</sup> See J. Minárik, *Stredoveká literatúra: svetová – česká– slovenská*, Bratislava 1977.

<sup>11</sup> E. Kuřáková – A. Vidmanová, *Iohannes Duns Scotus, Slovník latinských spisovatelů*, p. 337-339.

<sup>12</sup> Manuscript in private possession. Photocopies are kept in the Linguistic institute of Ľudovít Štúr in Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, pressmark 39 a-d., I., II. and IV. volume, 211, 209 and 262 p.

Despite some formal requirements, it offered the author a relatively wide scope for adapting the topic<sup>13</sup>.

Since the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church has attributed undeniable authority to Patristic Literature – a summary of works of Christian church fathers, who developed the foundations of Church dogma, Christian theology and philosophy between 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century. During the Reformation, and especially at the beginning of the recatholicization, the contemplations of the church fathers related to the questions of practical philosophy, morality, ethics and apologia, gained a new dimension, with roots extending to the period of blossoming patristics in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition to the biblical pericopes and quotes, numerous passages in Mokoš's sermons are quoted from sources other than biblical books. The author of the homily used excerpts from the Holy Bible supplemented by several quotes from the works of church fathers as evidence or confirmation of the fact that the presented context relies on some higher authority. The source of these quotations are most frequently the biographies of saints and the writings of the great church writers (*patres ecclesiastici*) at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Catholic preachers quoted the Church Fathers also because the positions recorded in their works were confirmed the Church's accepted dogmas and supported the established liturgical practice. Among the most quoted patristic authors in Mokoš's sermons one finds Saint Augustine, Bede the Venerable, the apologist Origen, and one of the best speakers of his time, John Chrysostom, but also bishops Hilarius, Ambrose, Cyprian, Eusebius and Basil the Great – the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. From the representatives of the Eastern Church, Mokoš focused on the Byzantine monk and the author of the philosophical and dogmatic works, Saint John of Damascus, or the ascetic martyr, Peter of Damascus, the author of sermons, spiritual scripts and interpretations of the Gospel. Mokoš also quoted popes – Gregor the Great and Leo the Great. The excerpts from patristic literature have been largely complemented by the passages selected from saints' biographies, namely Jerome, Thaddaeus, Hippolytus and others. From the following period of early Middle Ages, he focused mainly on Anselm of Canterbury, Abelard, his contemporary and ideological competitor Bernard of Clairvaux, and the representative of the Franciscan order, Saint Bonaventure.

---

<sup>13</sup> Brtáňová, *Stredoveká scholastická kázeň*, p. 52-53; See E. Brtáňová, *Biblický text a stredoveká homiletická tvorba*, in: *Slovenská, latinská a cirkevnoslovenská náboženská tvorba 15.-19. storočia*, ed. J. Doruľa, Bratislava 2002, p. 107-113.

As mentioned above, Mokoš employs texts quoted from the works of the Church Fathers or from biographies of saints – sometimes these are longer passages, sentences or short paragraphs<sup>14</sup>, as evidence or confirmation that the presented sermon leans contextually on some higher authority. When he wants to support an idea, highlight a virtue or point out evil, the author includes parts of patristic or hagiographic literature. The character of Mokoš's recommendations corresponds with the teaching of the church and takes the form of annotated or translated quotes from the Bible or patristic literature.

As the time went on, some recommendations and thoughts, frequently used in homilies, led to such popularity due to their accuracy and brevity that they had become universally used without the need to translate them from Latin into vernacular (though some were translated).

Time and human experience of the Church fathers gave rise to sentences highlighting the phenomena and characteristics generally considered to be positive. Admittedly, the sentences also contained negative and immoral cases, which the preacher would condemn. These sentences often have a gnomic nature of briefly expressed wisdom, observed thought or status, a proverb or a saying... In the citations quoted the preacher usually uses them as a guide towards the right life and they usually hold the ethical intention of the homily<sup>15</sup>.

The short statements that Mokoš deploys to enrich his sermons include for example: *A soul that sins, dies*<sup>16</sup>; *Lord, do not hold this sin against them*<sup>17</sup> or a quote from the Gospel of St. John (10:11) *The good shepherd*

---

<sup>14</sup> See J. Kamieniecki, *Teksty biblijne i patrystyczne w XVI–XVII wiecznych polemikach religijnych*, „Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Slavica Wratislaviensia” 117 (2002) s. 131-135.

<sup>15</sup> In some, but not all, cases, the author of the sermon mentions the source of the used quote directly in the text (usually in the form of short linked sentences). In such a case, we paraphrase it in this study. The author also translates some of the quotes into the vernacular, while others are left untranslated. In this study, we present all (including our own) translations in brackets. The author's translations are often full of pleonasm and other stylistic means to attract the contemporary listener, but in this study, we consider them superfluous, and omit them in translations and paraphrases. Translations of biblical quotations into English (given in parentheses) are drawn from: <https://www.biblica.com/bible/> (accessed: 02.01.2019).

<sup>16</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 98: “Anima quae peccaverit ipsa morietur”.

<sup>17</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 28: “Domine ne statuas illis hoc peccatum”.

*lays down his life for his sheep*<sup>18</sup>, or the idea that Bede the Venerable took up from the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Gospel of John *How many evil ideas man accepts, that many stones he casts at Christ*<sup>19</sup>.

Based on the examined handwritten sermons it is palpable that Mokoš as a practical preacher, missionary, a scholar that was ‘doing the ground-work’ among the simple people considered ethics vastly important as part of practical philosophy that treats human behaviour and values, inquires into morale and human actions and norms. The word ethics comes from Greek ethos and translates to habit, opinion, character, mindset. Mokoš’s sermons were targeting these personality components of the audience’s character. His useful recommendations directly influenced a change in behaviour of the faithful.

The basic principle of his ethics and morals was the fact – based in John Duns Scotus’s teaching, that God must be loved; he then deduced all his other principles and recommendations. Only if the man opens to God, if he develops the ability to listen to his voice, which Scotus calls *potentia oboedientialis* (the ability of obedience); only when the man decides to hear God’s Revelation, the Word of God, and when he accepts it, then he can hear the message that will fill his life with light and hope and he’ll become truly free<sup>20</sup>. As mentioned above, the baroque man has intentionally turned to God and sought refuge in him. Mokoš reacted to the implied desire of man for God, using the allusion of Gregory the Great on Penitential Psalm (Psalm 6): *To whom shall we be entrusted, if not unto Christ? Houses shall be forsaken, and palaces shall collapse, and the cities shall be destroyed, and the towers shall fall, the earth and heaven shall disappear. But the word of the Lord shall stay forever; let us then stay with the one that stays forever.* Hold on to Christ, Mokoš says in his sermon using the words of the Gospel of St. John (15:7). He continues explaining, that we should

---

<sup>18</sup> Bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis. See Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 127. Comparison of verses localized by Mokoš shows deviations from the so-called Clementine Vulgate (Vulgata Clementina) named after Pope Clement VIII. and used until this day. Deviations may be due to the inconsistency of the verse and chapter labeling in various issues of the Vulgate conditional on respecting the context or the meaning of the text. See J.D. Douglas, *Nový biblický slovník* (New Bible Dictionary) p. 129.

<sup>19</sup> Quod malas cogitationes homo assumit quasi tot lapides in Christum mittit. See Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 219.

<sup>20</sup> See M. Chabada, *Zakotvenie etiky v prirodzenom zákone podľa Jána Dunsy Scota*, “Filozofia” 63/3 (2008) p. 240-251.



zealously search for Christ, for his promise is: *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you*<sup>21</sup>.

Scotus's ethics are based on free will, and he has elaborated on the theme of freedom and its relation to the will and intellect. He teaches that in freedom, as in all else that man is given, he must grow and improve. One moves between the tendency to the pleasant and the tendency to the righteous, between which one decides; but only if he chooses the good and justice, he acts well. In this respect Scotus follows Anselm of Canterbury, whose work and philosophy also belong to the basic inspirational sources of Dominik Mokoš. The will itself is blind, and so decision making necessarily requires reason, but for such a conditioned action we also bear full responsibility, as we are also responsible for the state of our conscience. Mokoš is trying to encourage the believers to maintain pure conscience and innocence, resulting in eternal reward in heaven – using the words of John Chrysostom: *Rejoice innocence, and exult! I tell you, rejoice, because you are intact among the ungodly deeds! In temptations you are growing, you rise in humility, you win in battle and in death you get the crown of immortal glory*<sup>22</sup>. According to Mokoš (referring to words of Gregory the Great) innocence also implies security, fearlessness and dauntlessness: *Innocence cannot fear. There is no bigger happiness for a simple heart than showing innocence to others, and one doesn't fear that anyone would cause him suffering*<sup>23</sup>. He adds another quote referring to Vespasian, the Roman Emperor, who has written about by the highly regarded Constantinopolitan preacher Xiphilinus<sup>24</sup>: *No one can commit harm to me or disgrace me because*

---

<sup>21</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 131: “Ubi mandatum est? Nisi in Christo? Deficient domus palatia corruent, destruentur civitates, turres evellentur, coelum, et terra transibunt, Verbum autem Domini manet in aeternum, maneamus ergo in eo, qui manet in aeternum and Si manseritis in me, et verba mea in vobis manserunt, quodcumque volueritis petetis et fiet vobis”.

<sup>22</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 45-46: „Gaude innocentia et exulta! Gaude inquam, quia ubique illaesa es ubique scelera! Si tentaris proscis, si humilioris exigeris, si pugnas vincis, si occideris, coronaris”.

<sup>23</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 46: “[...] nescit timere innocentia, nihil simplici corde felicius, quia quo innocentiam erga alios exhibet, nihil est quod ab aliis pati formidet”.

<sup>24</sup> Xiphilinus (2nd half of the 11th century) was the nephew of Constantinople Patriarch John VIII. and a distinguished preacher and author of the summary from the extensive work of Roman statesman of Greek origin Dio Cassius (155-235). See Xiphilinus Joannes, in: *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* 28 887.

*I do not do anything that could harm others*<sup>25</sup>. Mokoš starts another series of quotes about innocence, with a thought by the Flemish humanist philosopher and philologist Justus Lipsius, who tried to revive the ancient stoicism in a form compatible with Christianity: *Nothing in life is so carefree and unthreatened as innocence* and continues with the idea from Quintus Curtius Rufus's 6<sup>th</sup> book, who was Alexander the Great's chronicler: *Innocence itself brings security* and finally concludes with the statement of Saint Bonaventure, who suggests that innocence also means trying not to harm God, the neighbors or ourselves: *Innocence is the purity of soul, alien to all wrongdoing against God, ourselves and our neighbors*<sup>26</sup>.

The last sentence in the series we used shows that Dominik Mokoš was not only a theorist, but he also tried to provide the listener with practical advice on how to live a good Christian life. Morality and ethics are very closely linked and many times interchanged. Morality is a set of rules, requirements for human behavior in society. It bears human qualities, it contains a summary of all positive values and helps us avoid bad behavior. Mokoš, drawing from the Scripture reminds the audience first with the words of the Gospel of St. Matthew (22:39): *Love your neighbor as yourself*<sup>27</sup>, then uses a quote from St. Paul to the Romans (13:8): *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery', 'You shall not murder', 'You shall not steal', 'You shall not covet', and whatever other commands there may be, are summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'*<sup>28</sup>. Mokoš finally adds a quote from the book Ecclesiastes (25:1): *In three things I was beautified, and stood up beautiful both before God and men:*

<sup>25</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 46: "Nemo me iniuria afficet, aut contumelia potest, quia nihil ago, quod alios laedere possit".

<sup>26</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 42: "Nihil in vita securum, solidumque praeter innocentiam [...]. Securitatem affert innocentia and concludes with: Innocentia est animi puritas, omens iniuriae illationem Deo, sibi et proximo abhorrens".

<sup>27</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 160: "Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum".

<sup>28</sup> See Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 160-161: "Nemini quidquam debeat nisi, ut invicem diligatis qui cum diligit proximum suum legem implevit: nam non adulteralis, non occides, furaberis, non falsum testimonium dices, non concupisces atsi quod est aliud mandatum, in hoc verbo instauratur, diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum".

*the unity of brethren, the love of neighbors, a man and a wife that agree together*<sup>29</sup>.

Christian love, however, is to go beyond the limits of common human relations, and so Mokoš recalls the words of Christ from the Gospel of St. Matthew (5:44-45): (But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven)<sup>30</sup>. In another part, Mokoš adds: *Good indeed are those who persevere in goodness even among the bad*<sup>31</sup>.

Among practices that should uplift Christians and bring them closer to God was also fasting. Since one part of the rich sermon collection by Mokoš is especially aimed at fasting, we can find such explanations drawn from the work of Saint Augustine – *Sermones de tempore: One who does not fast during any other time, will be judged leniently, but who does not hold the 40-day fast will be punished*<sup>32</sup>. Fasting should teach a man to control his desires, whether mental or physical. Mokoš also talks about the virtue of self-control based on the 66<sup>th</sup> tract of John Chrysostom, which is an allusion to the Gospel St. John: *He who loves his soul in this world, does according to its desires but who hates their soul, does condone its harmful desires*<sup>33</sup>. He is well aware of and points out to the listener that evil must be suppressed at the very beginning, because even with seemingly inconspicuous mistakes, serious deficiencies in character may develop. He uses the words of Gregory the Great: *Whoever neglects to avoid the smallest sin, not suddenly, but gradually deteriorates*<sup>34</sup> and other church teachers, e.g. the Bishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church Gregor Bar Hebraeus

<sup>29</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 161: “In tribus placitum est Spiritui meo, quae sunt probata coram Deo, et hominibus, concordia fratrum et amor proximorum, et vir et mulier bene sibi consentientes”.

<sup>30</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 29: “Ego autem dico Vobis: diligite inimicos vest[r]os, benefacite his, qui oderunt vos, et orate pro persequentib[us] et calumniantib[us] vos, ut sitis filii Patris vestri qui in coelis est etc [...]”.

<sup>31</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 140: “Hi veraciter boni sunt, qui in bonitate inter malos persistent”.

<sup>32</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 156-157: “Alio tempore, qui non jejunat accipit indulgentiam, in quadragesima, qui non jejunat Sentiet poenam”.

<sup>33</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 160: “Amat anima in hoc mundo, qui desideria ejus in convenientia facit, odit autem, qui non cedit ei noxia concupiscentia”.

<sup>34</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 98: “Qui peccata minima devitare neglegit a statu iustitiae, non quidem repente, sed partitus totius cadit”.

(1226-1286)<sup>35</sup>: *If you do not prevent the growing evil, it will grow to infinite size*<sup>36</sup>; and finally, also quotes the Jesuit Giovanni Paolo Oliva (1680-1681) a prominent preacher and missionary<sup>37</sup>: *We have to protect ourselves not only from the injuries of this age, but also from blemishes, because little is needed for us to lose our lives*<sup>38</sup>.

The consequences of sin are, according to Mokoš, quite clear: *If the righteous turns from his righteousness, all his righteous deeds he has done will be forgotten*<sup>39</sup>. He utters this not mentioning the source from which he drew. He continues, however, with the words of John Chrysostom: *Naming the misfortunes are but dreams for the wise, but the real misfortune is to insult God*<sup>40</sup>, and adds his next quote: *Only one thing is heavy and worthy of fear – that is sin, other things are ordinary fables*<sup>41</sup> and concludes with the words by the same author: *No burden makes the human soul as heavy as sin*<sup>42</sup>. Mokoš found other statements on the same topic, hence continues with an allusion of St. Augustine on the 45<sup>th</sup> Psalm: *Among all human oppression, there is no bigger oppression than remorse*<sup>43</sup>, adds the statement of Spanish Basilian author Diego Niceno: *Sins inflict more suffering and torment than crosses, flogging and torture*<sup>44</sup> and concludes with the words of St. Bonaventure: *As decay takes away the beauty, color and taste of an apple, so does sin take away the beauty of life, the smell*

<sup>35</sup> Dominik Mokoš calls him Phito Hebraeus in his homilies.

<sup>36</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 96: “Ni malum crescens inhi-beas, crescit in immensam magnitudinem”.

<sup>37</sup> His six-volume work *Selecta Scripturae Loca Ethicae Commentationes* (1679) also points to his education and piety. See Giovanni Paolo Oliva, *Catholic Online*, in: <https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8707> (accessed: 02.01.2019).

<sup>38</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 98: “Cavendum est non a vul-neribus duntaxat Saeculi hujus, Sed a maculis quoque sufficit enim minus, ut moriari”.

<sup>39</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 192: “Si averterit se iustus a iustitia sua et fecerit iniquitatem, omnes iustitiae eius quas fecerat, non recordabuntur”.

<sup>40</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 192: “Calamitatum nomina sua philosophantis somnia vera autem calamitas est Deum offendere”.

<sup>41</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 192: “Una duxerat res gravis ac pertimescenda peccatum nempe: reliqua vero omnia mera fabula”.

<sup>42</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 192: “Nullo pondere gravis premitur anima, quam peccato”.

<sup>43</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 192: “Inter omnes tribulationes humanas, nulla est major tribulatio quam conscientia delictorum”.

<sup>44</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 192: “Magis bancinant et torquent vitia quorum cruces quam verbera quam tormenta”.

*of good reputation, the strength of mercy and the taste of heavenly glory from man's soul*<sup>45</sup>.

Mokoš mostly uses more consecutive statements of various church authorities, but sometimes he speaks very briefly and clearly: *There is no greater burden than sin*<sup>46</sup> and he also adds the characteristics of sinners: *The godless are like a rough sea that cannot rest*<sup>47</sup>.

If the warnings and colorful descriptions of what happens to the human soul, when one succumbs to sin and stays in it are not sufficient, Mokoš adds warnings: *Because those who do so [sin] will not reach the kingdom of God*<sup>48</sup> and cautions from the Book of Moses (26:15 and 17), reminding the faithful that sin can be followed by punishment: *and if you reject my decrees [...] I will set my face against you and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you and I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight*<sup>49</sup>. Finally, he includes a warning from the Gospel of St. Matthew (18:16), about the fate of those who do not listen to the Church's commands: If they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector<sup>50</sup>.

It seems, however, that Mokoš as a preacher also has enough of self-reflection and some of the statements he uses are also directed at the clergy. The following quote from the psalm (118:66) for example indicates

<sup>45</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 193: "Sicut putredo aufert pomo decorem colorem, odorem et saporem: Sic peccatum aufert animae decorem vitae, odorem famae, valorem gratiae et saporem gloriae".

<sup>46</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 192: "Peccato gravis non reperitur onus". In this case, Mokoš indicates in the sermon that this is a statement by an (unnamed) poet. In fact, it is an epigram of an Oxford Jesuit Nicolas Owen (1562-1606).

<sup>47</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 193: "Impii quasi mare feruens, quod quiescere non potest".

<sup>48</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 160: "Quoniam qui talia agunt, regnum Dei non possidebunt". Comparison of the verses localized by Mokoš shows deviations from the so-called Clementine Vulgate (Vulgata Clementina) named after Pope Clement VIII and used to this day. Deviations may be due to the inconsistency of the verse and chapter labeling in various issues of the Vulgate in attempt to respect the context or the meaning of the text. See J.D. Douglas, *Nový biblický slovník*, p. 129.

<sup>49</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 193: "Si spreveritis leges meas [...] ponam faciem meam contra vos [...] et fugietis nemine persequente and Dabo pavorem in cordibus eorum [...] terrebit eos Sonitus folii volantis". Actually the Book of Leviticus 26:36

<sup>50</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* I 156: "Si quis Eccl[es]iam non audierit, sit tibi sicut Ethnicus et publicanus".

humility before the assigned tasks psalm: *Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands*<sup>51</sup> and confirms the statement from the 37<sup>th</sup> Speech of St. Bernard, commenting on biblical proverbs: *The spiritual shepherd should have three attributes: goodness, discipline and art to preach; goodness attracts, discipline reprimands and the art of preaching educates*<sup>52</sup>. Goodness makes a [the cleric] popular, discipline worthy of following, and the art of preaching makes him a good teacher.

The quotations he used in the sermons were to lead people primarily to respect before God, obedience, humility, mercy and repentance. However, since the Franciscans were zealous promoters of Marian devotion, Mokoš also tried to bring people to the devotion of the Mother of God. His whole fourth volume of sermons is dedicated to issues around the topic. Virgin Mary was supposed to be a model of virtue for people and hence her descriptions are corresponding. A perfect instance is the following series of quotes. The medieval Christian theologian – canon regular of Abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris, Hugh, writes: *Beautiful inside, beautiful outside, inwardly [beautiful] in her heart, outwardly [beautiful] in her body, naturally wonderful, fair thanks to His divine grace* and Raymundus Jordanus, a French Augustinian hidden under his Latin nom de plume ‘Idiota’<sup>53</sup> adds: *You are truly the most beautiful, Virgin glorious, not only partly but in everything, and the stain of sin, whether mortal, hereditary, or genial you haven’t ever had, nor you do, and nor you will do*<sup>54</sup>. The Franciscans, in addition to being great admirers of the Virgin Mary, focused their attention on recatholization. And although in the collection of Mokoš’s sermons we

<sup>51</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 128: “Bonitatem et disciplinam, et scientiam doce me, quia mandatis tuis credidi”. Actually Psalm 119.

<sup>52</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* II 128-129: “Pastori tria congruunt: Bonitas, Disciplina et Scientia. Bonitas Attrahit, Disciplina corripit, scientia pascit, bonitas amabilem, disciplina imitabilem, scientia docibilem redit”.

<sup>53</sup> The pseudonym ‘Idiot’ is derived from the Greek word *idiōtēs*, which meant a private person, and in the city states of Greece, referred to men who were concerned only with their private affairs and avoided participation in public affairs. It is likely that the author used this name to indicate that he wanted to live in secret, simple life and without publicity. He lived and died in the French abbey of Selles-sur-Cher. He created his work around 1381. See Raymundus Jordanus, *Catholic Online*, in: <https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6028> (accessed: 29.01.2019).

<sup>54</sup> Dominik Mokoš, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* IV 12: “Pulchra intus, pulchra foris intus in corde foris in corpore, pulchra per naturam, pulchra per gratiam and Tota enim pulchra es Virgo glorissima, nec in parte, Sed in toto, et macula peccati, sive mortalis, sive originalis, sive venialis non est in te, nec unquam fierit, nec erit”.

find entire series of lenten and Marian preaching, sermons about the saints, or sermons presented during the Christmas period, there is no set of sermons dedicated especially to recatholization. However, intertextual links can be identified in individual sermons, indicating that their author actively engaged in the recatholization process in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We can sense a negative attitude towards Protestants from Mokoš's sermons. In specific controversial topics of both confessions, Mokoš argues with the ideas of Martin Luther and John Calvin and tries to refute them, as it was customary at the time, with Catholic works. Sometimes Mokoš uses very sharp words against the leading representatives of Protestantism, that seemed to undermine the proclamation of love for the neighbour or Christian ethics. However, it should not be forgotten that the understanding of ethics in the baroque period was not the same as today, and the behavior of the Protestant leadership was referred to as heretical by the Catholic Church. The church tried to avert the believers in any way – from what they believed to be delusions.

Dominik Mokoš preached in a period when faith and ethics were inseparable. The main sources of Christian ethics are testimonies from the books of the Old and New Testaments, along with the rich Christian tradition and magisterium of the Church<sup>55</sup>. As evidenced by the sources that Mokoš has relied upon, Christian ethics is based on Old Testament ethics, while God is the guarantor of justice. The good Christian behavior (ethics) that this preacher, missionary and zealous recatholizer tried to instil in the believers was to be realized in two planes; vertically expressing the relationship of a man to God and horizontally emphasizing justice in human relationships. All the quotations that the author has used are not merely a textual enrichment of the sermons of D. Mokoš. The preacher's moral belief corresponded to the Latin quotes chosen by the author. They are the bearers of ethical thoughts, while the Slovak text is essentially just their interconnection. The author translates and explains selected quotes in his sermons, and this is precisely what the use of specific quotations in specific situations helps to understand Mokoš's moral philosophy. Analyzed sermons reveal much about the preacher himself, about his education, temperament, moral conviction and the ability to approach the simple people, while the formal renditions of the sermons suggest that the author was rigorous, hardworking, disciplined, sometimes even fastidious, and he also had great demands on

---

<sup>55</sup> See H. Hrehová, *Kresťanská etika*, in: [http://www.uski.sk/frames\\_files/ran/2005/cl050111.htm](http://www.uski.sk/frames_files/ran/2005/cl050111.htm) (accessed: 24.04.2008).

the believers. He worked creatively with translations of original texts, often enriching them with various insertions and explanations, so that he could communicate with the teachings of the Church to his audience in an interesting way. His sermons are an example which very well shows the tools that the Catholic Church used to shape the believers.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Mokoš Dominik, *Sermones Panegyrico-morales* 1758 (Manuscript in private possession. Photocopies are kept in the Linguistic institute of Eudovít Štúr in Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, pressmark 39 a – d., I., II. and IV. volume, 211, 209 and 262 p.)
- Theologiae moralis juxta mentem Ioannis Duns Scoti. Pars secunda*, 576 p. (pressmark RHKS 378).

### Studies

- Bl. Ján Duns Scotus, in: <http://www.frantiskani.sk/kazatel/svati/1108.htm> (accessed: 02.01.2019).
- Brťáňová E., *Stredoveká scholastická kázeň*, Bratislava 2000.
- Brťáňová E., *Biblický text a stredoveká homiletická tvorba*, in: *Slovenská latinská a cirkevno-slovenská náboženská tvorba 15.-19. storočia*, ed. J. Doruľa, Bratislava 2002, p. 107-113.
- Didacus Nissenus, *CERL Thesaurus*, in: <https://data.cerl.org/thesaurus/cnp00607281> (accessed: 02.01.2019).
- Douglas J.D., *Nový biblický slovník*, Praha 1996.
- Fórišová M., *Náboženská literatúra v zbierkach jezuitských knižníc na Slovensku*, in: *Slovenská latinská a cirkevno-slovenská náboženská tvorba 15.-19. storočia*, ed. J. Doruľa, Bratislava 2002, p. 212-228.
- Giovanniho Paolo Oliva*, Catholic Online, in: <https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8707> (accessed: 02.01.2019).
- Hrehová H., *Kresťanská etika*, in: [http://www.uski.sk/frames\\_files/ran/2005/cl050111.html](http://www.uski.sk/frames_files/ran/2005/cl050111.html) (accessed: 02.01.2019).
- Chabada M., *Zakotvenie etiky v prirodzenom zákone podľa Jána Dunska Scota*, "Filozofia" 63/3 (2008) p. 240-251.
- Iohannes Duns Scotus*, in: *Slovník latinských spisovatelů*, ed. E. Kuřáková – A. Vidmanová, Praha 1984, p. 337-339.



- Kamieniecki J., *Teksty biblijne i patrystyczne w XVI-XVII wiecznych polemikach religijnych*, „Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Slavica Wratislaviensia” 117 (2002) s. 131-142.
- Kłoczowski J., *Problem mendykantów i kaznodziejstwa w Polsce średniowiecznej*, in: *Ludzie, Kościół, wierzenia: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej*, ed. S.K. Kuczyński – W. Iwańczak, Warszawa 2001, p. 146-147.
- Komorová K., *Františkánska knižnica v Matici slovenskej*, “Knižnice a informácie” 32/3 (2000) p. 101-106.
- Komorová K. – Saktorová H., *Die Franziskanerbibliotheken in der Buchkulturgeschichte in der Slowakei*, in: *Plaude turba pauperula: Franziskanischer Geist in Musik, Literatur und Kunst*, ed. L. Kačic, Bratislava 2004, p. 307-314.
- Kowalski W., *Małopolscy Franciszkanie – reformaci a konwersje na katolicyzm w dobie przedrozbiorowej*, in: *Ludzie, Kościół, wierzenia: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej*, Warszawa 2001, p. 151-172.
- Minárik J., *Stredoveká literatúra: svetová – česká – slovenská*, Bratislava 1977.
- Mokoš Dominik, in: *Slovenský biografický slovník (Slovak biographical dictionary)*, v. 4, Martin 1990, p. 211.
- Online Bible / Biblica – The International Bible Society*, in: <https://www.biblica.com/bible/> (accessed: 02.01.2019).
- Prikryl Ľ.V., *Mokoš Dominik*, in: <http://www.frantiskani.sk/nekr/12/mokos.html> (accessed: 13.04.2017).
- Sládek M., *Malý svět jest člověk aneb výbor z české barokní prózy*, Praha 1995.
- Xiphilinus Joannes*, in: *The Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Dictionary of Arts, sciences, Literature and General informations*, v. 28, London 1926, p. 887.
- Zuber R., *Osudy moravské církve v 18. Století*, Praha 1987.



# Recenzje





ISSN: 0860-9411  
eISSN: 2719-3586

**Marcela Andoková, *Čierna som a predsa krásna. Tyconiov výklad Piesne piesní 1, 5 (I am Black Yet Beautiful. Tyconius's Interpretation of Song 1:5)*, Iris, Bratislava 2020, pp. 226**

Ks. Marcin Wysocki, KUL – Lublin

In spite of the enormous potential for patristic research in Central and Eastern Europe, it is regrettable that the publications of scholars from this region rarely find their way into wider international audience, especially if they have been written in one of the national languages. It is therefore all the more important to promote valuable publications written by the young scholars from this part of the world and dedicated to the lesser-known authors, and Tyconius is certainly one of them.

The Slovak classical philologist and patristic scholar Marcela Andoková (born 1976 and currently working at the Comenius University in Bratislava) has been researching for many years in the field of Early Christian and patristic literature. Her primary focus is in the homiletic and exegetical works of Saint Augustine of Hippo to whom she dedicated also her first monograph *The Art of Rhetoric in Augustine's Psalms of Degrees* written in the Slovak language as well. In the presented book entitled *I am Black Yet Beautiful* Andoková turns her attention to one of Augustine's African predecessors, the Donatist lay theologian Tyconius whose seven mystic rules (*regulae mysticae*) of the biblical interpretation are resumed in the third book of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*.

Tyconius's *Liber regularum* is considered the oldest manual of biblical hermeneutics written by a Christian theologian in the Latin West. But until recently, its author has been mostly seen as a kind of enigmatic intellectual of the Donatist church and for centuries, his hermeneutical writing *Liber regularum* remained in the shadow of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. And yet, today an increasing number of experts underscore the importance of examining Tyconius's text as a primary source, independent of how it

was presented by his younger peer, Augustine, as it is pointed out in various parts of Andoková's monograph. The aim of her book was so to introduce this treatise by Tyconius to the Slovak academic community, mainly from the viewpoint of his understanding of the church based on his interpretation of the biblical verse of *Song* 1:5.

Three aspects of Tyconius's exegetical theory in particular make it an original contribution to Christian hermeneutics. Firstly, it is his ecclesiological conception of a spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures which reveals hidden meanings in biblical texts. These are the means used by the Holy Spirit to address specific Christian communities at specific times. Related is also Tyconius's theory of seven mystic rules, rooted in the very nature of divine Scriptures, as well as his theology built on a pneumatological basis. As it becomes clear from Andoková's analysis, Tyconius directs his reader's attention mainly to the manner, in which the Spirit reveals the nature and direction of the church through the Scriptures and so as a theologian and an exegete, he contributes to the discussion of the mysterious presence of evil in the church and the world itself.

Andoková's monograph is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter entitled "Book of Rules or the work of underestimated genius", Tyconius's personality and oeuvre are analyzed against the background of the Donatist church of which he was a member. The main emphasis is placed on the book *Liber regularum* itself. She examines it in the context of Tyconius's entire work and attempts to map the composition of seven rules as presented in his book. Its classical composition does not contradict either linear or concentric structures that can be both observed in this writing, as explained by Andoková (p. 32-37). Moreover, in this chapter she describes the way Tyconius interprets the Scriptures by means of seven mystic rules. He would never invent them as a subjective method of interpretation since their origin lies in the initiative of the Holy Spirit as the divine author of the Scriptures. The interpreter understands and uncovers these rules thanks to relevant hermeneutical tools, one of which is also Tyconius's *libellus regularis*.

These tools are basically terms borrowed from the traditional curriculum of rhetoric to which topic Andoková dedicated Chapter 2 of her book. Even despite a certain distance from the rules of profane eloquence, in the writing of his hermeneutical work Tyconius seems devoted to the long tradition of ancient rhetoric. The author's two-fold interest, theological as well as exegetical, justify the use of rhetoric in this work. The seven mystic rules are characteristic solely of the Bible and constitute a part of the

grammar acquired by the Spirit which reveals the divine truth in the Bible; or expressed in the words of Quintilian, these *Rules* are a form of sevenfold *ratio* or *regula loquendi*, inherent exclusively to the biblical message. Their closeness to Quintilian's term *regula* lies in their objectivity. On the other hand, a thorough analysis has shown that there is practically no literary dependence or similarity between the works of Quintilian and Tyconius's *Book of Rules*. Although the African theologian did borrow some key rhetorical terms from Quintilian, he often combines them with his own content.

The third and, at the same time, central chapter of the monograph, focuses on Tyconius's understanding of the bipartite nature (*corpus bipertitum*) of the church based on his interpretation of *Song* 1:5. The analysis of this topic, however, is preceded by introductory parts pointing to the importance and role the book of Song of Songs plays in the biblical canon and in the early Christian tradition with particular emphasis on the patristic interpretation of *Song* 1:5. Furthermore, Andoková highlights that it is his doctrine of the bipartite body of the Lord that probably inspired the bishop Augustine for further elaboration and deepening of this topic in his conception of the mixed church (*ecclesia permixta*). The consequences of Tyconius's and later of Augustine's biblical hermeneutics influenced the teaching of the church during the subsequent centuries of Christianity.

The influence of Tyconius on Augustine's homiletic oeuvre between 400-411 is also examined in Chapter 4 of the monograph. The bishop of Hippo, among other readers, referred to this Tyconius's work when selecting biblical citations and arguments in the time of his polemic with the Donatists. However, many scholars even today are surprised to see how reluctant he had been to use the work of this Donatist colleague, especially in the beginning of his episcopal career. He may have been disappointed by the fact that Tyconius remained a Donatist even after his excommunication from Donatus's party. Nevertheless, his was not a case of certain inconsistency of behaviour. Andoková presumes that it was probably easier for him to surrender to the suffering of persecution rather than accept that the Catholics, whose standpoint he advocated were so severe in their persecution of their brothers in faith. He believed that the church had two parts, one that is good and another, which is evil, and so just like wheat and chaff grow together until the harvest, identically, in his eyes, it probably would not have made sense to leave Donatus's party and join the Catholics. In his opinion, it was, instead, necessary to patiently tolerate bad Christians, whichever

side one was on, since God's mercy also gives time for penitence to everyone until the end.

By incorporating Tyconius's hermeneutical manual *Liber regularum* into his unfinished work *De doctrina christiana* the bishop of Hippo, more than anyone else, helped to preserve Tyconius's text itself as well as his memory for future generations, although the later reception of the *Liber regularum* was greatly influenced by a certain measure of liberty with which Augustine approached it. The final chapters of Book III of *De doctrina christiana* reveal that the bishop of Hippo left out some of the passages when summarizing Tyconius's work and instead, used his own examples, which he considered as more easily comprehensible when explaining Tyconius's rules. In several places he did not have problem to add his criticism of specific aspects of *Liber regularum* when he thought it important in terms of contemporary Christian orthodoxy. But the space he devoted to it together with his recommendation to students of the Scriptures reflect clearly that by including this treatise into his own exegetical work of key importance, Augustine wished to settle some of the debt he felt he owed to his senior Donatist colleague.

Since the North African hermeneutic tradition that culminates in Tyconius's *Liber regularum* is at least in Central European cultural milieu still a kind of *terra incognita*, the monograph of Marcela Andoková can be considered really beneficial for the history of Roman literature in the period of the late Roman Empire. At least partially it fills the *lacuna* when it comes to Latin literary heritage in North Africa of the first centuries of our era. The monograph is written carefully in terms of both its form and content. In addition, it is presented in a legibly language even though the treated topic is not at all simple. Thus the publication certainly has the potential to engage and educate anyone who will not be discouraged by the complexity of Tyconius's thoughts and discussed topics.

Finally, as Andoková states, by his position of a man standing at the threshold and hesitating about joining the Catholic Church, Tyconius becomes a precursor of many people living today, people who are familiar with the Gospels and approve of Christ's teachings and yet, they are unable to come to terms with the church being black and beautiful at the same time, as well as with the fact that at this time, only the head is perfect on the body of Christ's church, the head being Christ himself (p. 177).



**Kevin G. Grove, *Augustine on Memory*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology, Oxford University Press, New York 2021, pp. 266**

Fernando López-Arias, PUSC – Rome

“Dulcis Iesu memoria – O Jesus, memory of sweetness”, sings the Church in a hymn of the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The memory of Jesus is sweetness and softness for Christians. Remembering Jesus and remembering in Jesus is much more than a mental exercise: it is a way of uniting ourselves to Him and entering into communion with others. The sweetness of the memory of Christ was one of the themes dearest to Augustine of Hippo. Memory includes much of his philosophy of mind, for memory is not just a distinct faculty of the soul but the mind itself. In memory, “Ibi mihi et ipse occurro meque recolo” (*Confessions* 10, 8, 14) i.e., “And there I come to meet myself. I recall myself”.

Kevin G. Grove, a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross, is an assistant professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of *Augustine on Memory*, a work that treats this classic theme of Augustine from a new perspective and seeks to complete the classical vision that has been given on this subject so far. Indeed, while *Confessions* 10 and *Trinity* 9, 10, 11, and 14 have often been the main sources of Augustine’s classic studies of memory (from the psychological-pedagogical and anthropological-theological approaches respectively), the use of the *Sermons*, especially *Expositions of Psalms*, as primary sources in this study, is an important novelty of Grove’s work.

The author describes the book’s primary claim as follows: “memory is the heart of shared life in the whole Christ. Memory draws forward time-bound past grace and confession such that Christ is in some way acting in the present. Likewise, memory can draw backward traces of future Sabbath rest or the heavenly Jerusalem, traces given not from history but from grace” (p. 2). We are thus faced with a concept of memory that is not limited, as might be imagined, to the past, but is projected into the future. The human memory becomes a participation in the memory of Christ: “When the whole Christ remembers (and forgets), it does so only to become ever more that which it recalls: the image of God being renewed in human persons” (p. 3).

The book studies three aspects or, rather, stages of memory in Augustine: *The Beginning of Memory* (part 1, p. 23-82), *The Work of Memory* (part 2, p. 83-183) and *The End of Memory* (part 3, p. 185-226). The first part's fundamental source is, alongside his first works, the *Confessions*. The second part attempts to link, mainly through his *Sermons*, the two phases of memory: the beginning in the self and the end in the Trinity. The third part is primarily based on Augustine's reflections on the *Trinity*.

Part 1 is divided into two chapters that show the intimate link between the anthropological mediation of memory and Christ's salvific mediation. In chapter 1 (p. 25-56), Grove summarizes the earliest writings of the Bishop of Hippo spanning from 386 to 391. Through the analysis of some passages of chapters 7, 10 and 11 of the *Confessions*, he especially stresses the mediation role of memory: it works as a kind of bridge between soul and body, time and wisdom, the human meditation and Christ's salvific mediation. "Memory holds out great initial promise as the anthropological mediator that will make possible a coherent consciousness of mind and body" (p. 55). Human memory, no matter how ultimate it is, fails to coherently sustain a sense of self. In the second chapter (p. 57-82), Grove shows how in Augustine's preaching the self comes to be mediated by the *Christus totus*, ascended into Heaven as mediator, saving and transforming the failure pointed out in the first chapter. The insight about memory and Christ in the *Confessions* presents the *whole Christ* as a path to God. "Christ's mediation has made possible and sustained the shift from the individual to the whole Christ and is described by Augustine as transfiguration" (p. 82).

In the four chapters of the second part concerning *The Work of Memory*, the distance between the self of the early Augustine and the late contemplation of the Trinity is set forth. It is because they describe the daily exercise and dynamic activity of the *Christus totus*. Chapter 3 (p. 85-111) deals with the figure of Idithun, a name occurring in the first verse of three Psalms (39, 62 and 77), characterized as the 'leaping across psalmist'. This is an image of the body of Christ, who leaps all the way from the human to the divine, from the individual to the communal, and back while remembering, forgetting, speaking and keeping silent. In chapters 4 and 5 which form a diptych, the self reemerges as constituted in the whole, uncovering its Christological identity in the practice of remembering and forgetting together. In Chapter 4 (p. 112-140), Grove shifts from memory as exercise to memory as existence in the whole Christ. It explores remembering both backwards as well as forward in time, simultaneously participating in three temporal realms: past, present and future. Chapter 5 (p. 141-157) presents,

on the other hand, the work of forgetting. It moves from forgetting Christ to forgetting in Christ. As for remembering, oblivion develops an essential role in Christian life. It has a double dimension as well: forward (extension) and backward (distension). “Forgetting is the ongoing work of enabling the whole Christ, with respect to individual vocation and station, to continue on pilgrimage together” (p. 157). Finally, Grove discusses memory and the life of grace in Augustine in chapter 6 (p. 158-183). Remembering and forgetting form a binary construction that supplies language to hold together any number of oppositions in Christ. Grove revisits four central Augustinian binaries: lyre and psaltery (images of the life of the faithful configured to Christ from both ‘above’ and ‘below’), labor and rest, solitude and communion, and praising and groaning. Through these contrasting experiences, “members of Christ’s body learn together how to live the contradictions of human life not as the despair of distention but as hopeful extension into the fullness of grace” (p. 182).

The third part of the book, *The End of Memory*, comprises chapters 7 and 8, and discusses the intellectual and personal consequences of the work of memory. Chapter 7 (p. 187-212), connects the whole Christ as passing by through this world to the Trinity. The author reaches the conclusion of the importance of the Augustine’s preaching on memory in the intermediate period between the *Confessions* and the *Trinity* to understand his idea of memory in the last stage of his writing career. In fact, without the *Sermons*, one may reach the conclusion that memory is healed in Christ, but “how [this] precisely happens in Christ’s body – and how Augustine himself came to that realization – remains unexplained” (p. 212). The final chapter (8, p. 213-226) moves from the intellectual to the personal in memory. It rereads Psalm 50 throughout Augustine’s preaching and taking his death into account. In Augustine’s preaching, the *Miserere* psalm, in which memory and forgetfulness intertwine, was not only an instrument for self-examination of conscience but also a way to draw him and his congregants out of themselves and further into the whole Christ of which they were members. It is noteworthy that, according to Possidius’ *Life of Augustine*, this Psalm was pasted on the wall of his room when he was dying.

Probably the most important contribution of Grove’s book consists in connecting the anthropology of memory in Augustine’s early works, especially in the *Confessions*, with the theology of memory at the end of his life, as we read in the *Trinity*. Grove bridges this twenty-year gap through the study of the preaching of the Bishop of Hippo, showing how Augustine weaves a relationship between memory, grace, salvation, and the Christ’s

existence. The author employs a clear methodology which allows the reader to enter easily into the universe of the Bishop of Hippo. In particular, he engages four areas within Augustinian studies: memory, interiority, preaching, and Christology.

Augustine once preached to his community that it should progress *non memoria, sed vita*. In the end, memory is not just a matter of memorization. It configures one “to existence mediated by Christ and its communal fullness forever. The work of remembering of forgetting ends in becoming Christ together” (p. 226).

**Tatiana Krynicka, *Święty Mikołaj z Myr Licyjskich w świetle greckich i łacińskich źródeł starożytnych i średniowiecznych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2022, ss. 210**

Dominika Budzanowska-Weglenda, UKSW – Warszawa

Pani Tatiana Krynicka, profesor Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, znana w środowisku polskich patrologów m.in. z prac poświęconych Izydoro wi z Sewilli, tym razem w swojej najnowszej książce daje czytelnikom znakomite kompendium wiedzy o słynnym i zazwyczaj bardzo lubianym świętym – Mikołaju z Myr Licyjskich (w Polsce szczególnie obecnym w grudniowym kalendarzu) – ubogacone przekładami źródłowych tekstów greckich i łacińskich mówiących o nim, także pieśni z zapisem nutowym, który powstał do tego zbioru – muzyka do pieśni została specjalnie skomponowana przez Patryka Dopke, absolwenta Gdańskiej Akademii Muzycznej i organistę w Bazylice Mariackiej w Gdańsku.

Autorka rozpoczyna fragmentem kontakionu ku czci świętego w przekładzie o. Romana Piętki. Słusznie zauważa, jak wiele już napisano o św. Mikołaju, chociaż jego życiorys słabo jest znany. Autorka opracowania znakomicie wykorzystuje swój warsztat badawczy jako filolog, teolog, historyk. Przywołuje najistotniejsze źródła oraz teksty poświęcone świętemu (np. biografie, modlitwy, opisy cudów dokonanych za Jego wstawiennictwem), przypomina Mikołaja Pinarskiego i dzieje połączenia jego biografii z życiorysem świętego o tym samym imieniu, rozwój kultu, znaczenie podczas chrystianizowania ludów słowiańskich w IX wieku, zwłaszcza na Rusi, o także o jego

kulcie w Polsce, który rozpoczął się w XI stuleciu (za sprawą Rychyzy, żony Mieszka II). Wyjaśnia, jak na przestrzeni wieków osoba tego świętego coraz bardziej była łączona z opieką nad dziećmi. Nie pomija też ważnego kulturowo wątku nowoczesnego i zeświecczonego wizerunku św. Mikołaja przedstawianego jako czerwonego krasnoluda: „jowialnego, korpulentnego, otoczonego aureolą, którą tworzy wydobywający się z jego fajki dym, Santa Klaus” (s. 10). Tej amerykańskiej wizji autorka słusznie przeciwstawia to, w jaki sposób Kościół traktuje świętego, w tym przypomina najnowsze wydarzenia z wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej: „pozostaje on w swych relikwiach z mieszkańcami Kijowa, którzy za jego przyczyną zanoszą do Boga modlitwy o ocalenie, zwycięstwo, pokój” (s. 11).

W tym wstępie autorka poddaje krytyce wątki hagiograficzne w tekstach o św. Mikołaju i przypomina najstarsze teksty mu poświęcone, poczynawszy od noszącego tytuł *Cudowne uratowanie wojskowych dowódców przez naszego świętego ojca Mikołaja, biskupa Myr w Licji* (czyli *Praxis de stratelatis*) po chronologicznie następne żywoty (Michała Archimandryty, Symeona Metafrastesy, Jana Diakona), legendy (Jakuba de Voragine, Rodriga de Cerrato, Juana Gila de Zamora), teksty kaznodziejskie (arcybiskupa Konstantynopola Proklosa, biskupa Krety Andrzeja czy Peregryna z Opoła) i poetyckie (Pseudo-Romana Melodosa oraz anonimowych autorów). Prof. Krynicka następnie podaje biografię św. Mikołaja ustaloną na podstawie obecnie znanych wiadomości i z uwzględnieniem wyników prac komisji medyków L. Martiniego. Przedstawia także losy relikwii świętego, podając m.in. miejsca, w których obecnie się znajdują – w Polsce i na świecie. Ciekawe jest wyliczenie, komu święty patronuje, a wspiera on niezwykle różne grupy wiekowe, społeczne i zawodowe oraz zwierzęta. Autorka tę część wstępu ubogaca krótkimi fragmentami poetyckimi, m.in. Marii Konopnickiej i ukraińskiej poetki Mariany Kaczmar.

Druga i znacznie dłuższa część opracowania zawiera autorskie przekłady dawnych (starożytnych i średniowiecznych) źródeł o św. Mikołaju – najpierw w języku greckim, następnie w języku łacińskim. Słusznie jako pierwszy został podany chronologicznie najstarszy tekst pt. *Cudowne uratowanie wojskowych dowódców przez naszego świętego ojca Mikołaja, biskupa Myr w Licji*. Zarówno wstęp, jak i przekłady zawierają rzetelne i bogate przypisy z odniesieniami do stosownych opracowań, wydań tekstów oryginalnych, krótkimi tłumaczeniami zacytowanych fragmentów obcojęzycznych (np. w języku ukraińskim), podaniem krótkich biografii autorów przełożonych tekstów źródłowych, wyjaśnieniami trudniejszych pojęć, problemów translatorskich czy innymi objaśnieniami. Na końcu

autorka podała obfitą bibliografię – wydania źródeł oraz opracowań dotyczących opracowanego zagadnienia. Całość napisana jest poprawnym i pięknym językiem.

Recenzowane przeze mnie opracowanie oceniam wysoko i bardzo pozytywnie. Jest ważnym wkładem w badania nad źródłami o św. Mikołaju. Monografia ta przypomina życiorys św. Mikołaja i przybliży najdawniejsze dzieła mu poświęcone. Z pewnością zainteresuje teologów i humanistów, myślę, że szczególnie patologów, historyków wczesnego Kościoła, także literaturoznawców. Warto, by sięgnęli po nią również wszyscy, którzy cenią świętego z Myr i zechcą pogłębić o nim swoją wiedzę.

**Kasjodor, *Pisma wybrane (Studia o Kasjodorze)*, przekład z języka łacińskiego Dominika Budzanowska-Weglenda, ks. Krzysztof Burczak, ks. Jarosław Januszewski, ks. Lucjan Dyka, opracowanie ks. Marek Starowieyski, ks. Mikołaj Lohr, Wydawnictwo Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2022, ss. 362**

Ks. Mariusz Szram, KUL – Lublin

Kasjodor (ok. 485-580), reprezentujący schyłkowy okres łacińskojęzycznej patrystyki, jest jednym z tych wszechstronnie wykształconych humanistów wczesnochrześcijańskich, którzy najbardziej zasłużyli się dla rozwoju kultury europejskiej, szczególnie szkolnictwa, w średniowieczu. Najpierw pełnił wysokie stanowiska urzędnicze na dworze władców ostrogockich w Rawennie, a następnie zajął się działalnością naukową i pisarską w założonym przez siebie klasztorze Vivarium. Jego twórczość obejmuje dzieła historyczne, filozoficzne i egzegetyczne. Wprawdzie na język polski zostało przełożone jedno z pism historycznych Kasjodora w streszczeniu Jordanesa – *De origine actibusque Gothorum (O pochodzeniu i dziejach Gotów)*<sup>1</sup> oraz *Variarum libri XII (Różne pisma urzędowe)*<sup>2</sup>, to jednak wciąż nie ma polskiej wersji drugiego ważnego dzieła historycznego – *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita (Historia Kościoła złożona z trzech części)*

<sup>1</sup> Tł. E. Zwolski, *Kasjodor i Jordanes. Historia gocka, czyli scytyjska Europa*, Lublin 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Tł. A. Kołtunowska – R. Sawa, *Kasjodor Senator, Variae*, ŻMT 79, Kraków 2017.

ani głównego pisma egzegetycznego *Expositio Psalmorum* (Komentarz do Psalmów), wzorowanego na *Enarrationes in Psalmos* św. Augustyna. Cenną namiastką przekładu tekstu oryginalnego tego dzieła jest wnikliwa monografia Krzysztofa Burczaka, *Figury retoryczne i tropy w Psalmach na podstawie Expositio Psalmorum Kasjodora* (Lublin 2004). Należy więc z radością przyjąć interesująco skomponowaną monografię poświęconą uczonemu z Vivarium zawierającą przekład kilku mniejszych jego dzieł, przygotowaną pod redakcją nestora polskich patrologów, ks. Marka Starowieyskiego.

Tom otwiera syntetyczne ujęcie życia i twórczości Kasjodora (s. 11-38) pióra pomysłodawcy i redaktora książki. W tej wstępnej części wykorzystującej bogatą międzynarodową bibliografię autor pięknym eseistycznym językiem przedstawia organizację Vivarium i omawia działalność Kasjodora. Co do jej znaczenia i wpływu na późniejszą kulturę Europy ks. M. Starowieyski podkreśla szczególnie docenienie znaczenia kultury świeckiej dla teologii, zwłaszcza dla zrozumienia Pisma Świętego, oraz wypracowanie koncepcji chrześcijańskiego klasztoru-instytucji naukowo-kulturalnej (por. s. 27).

Szczegółowym rozwinięciem syntetycznej biografii Kasjodora pióra M. Starowieyskiego jest dalsza część książki zatytułowana *Studia o Kasjodorze*, na którą składa się 5 prac głównego – aczkolwiek zapomnianego – polskiego specjalisty zajmującego się twórczością założyciela Vivarium. Był nim nieżyjący już profesor metodologii nauk, logiki, teorii poznania i teodycei w Warmińskim Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym „Hosianum” w Olsztynie w latach 1958-1987, ks. Mikołaj Lohr (1913-1992), kapłan archidiecezji lwowskiej, doktor filozofii Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego. W tomie zebrano przedruki jego artykułów wydanych w latach 1964-1971 w periodyku „Studia Warmińskie”. Opracowania te zostały niesłusznie zapomniane, a zachowują naukową wartość, tak więc przypomnienie ich współczesnemu czytelnikowi zasługuje na uznanie. Publikacja zbiorcza tych tekstów jest także oddaniem sprawiedliwości i należnym upamiętnieniem samego ich autora, którego sylwetkę kapłańską i naukową przybliżyła w krótkim biografii ks. bp Jacek Jezierski (s. 193-197).

W pierwszym artykule ks. M. Lohr przedstawia genezę i charakter Vivarium. Akcentuje podkreślaną przez Kasjodora – w nawiązaniu do apologetyki II wieku (Justyn) i początków chrześcijańskiej tradycji aleksandryjskiej (Klemens, Orygenes) – potrzebę studium sztuk wyzwolonych do właściwego zrozumienia Pisma Świętego. Za jeden z głównych celów działalności Kasjodora w Vivarium ks. M. Lohr słusznie uznaje „wykazanie, że

sztuki wyzwolone i w ogóle nauki świeckie nie stoją w żadnej sprzeczności z naukami teologicznymi, przeciwnie są z nimi jak najbardziej powiązane i oddają im duże usługi” (s. 59). Właśnie tej kwestii, czyli stosunkowi Kasjodora do sztuk wyzwolonych, w szczególności do logiki, arytmetyki i muzyki, poświęcone są kolejne artykuły.

W tekście wprowadzającym w metodologię sztuk wyzwolonych (s. 63-108) ks. M. Lohr podkreśla, że określany tym mianem cykl nauk świeckich (*saeculares litterae*) obejmuje – według podziału Kasjodora wzorowanego na antycznych autorach greckich – grupę sztuk (*artes*: gramatyka, retoryka, dialektyka) i nauk (*disciplinae*: arytmetyka, muzyka, geometria, astronomia). Klasyfikacja ta przyczyniła się do późniejszego podziału sztuk wyzwolonych na *trivium* i *quadrivium*. Założyciel Vivarium akcentuje bliskie związki wszystkich sztuk wyzwolonych z naukami boskimi (*divinae litterae*) – wzięły one z nich swój początek i ułatwiają zrozumienie Pisma Świętego. Chociaż ks. M. Lohr nie nawiązuje do tego wątku, wydaje się, że Kasjodor kroczył tu wiernie po linii wyznaczonej przez apologetów greckich, począwszy od Justyna Męczennika i Klemensa Aleksandryjskiego<sup>3</sup>, a zwłaszcza nawiązywał do idei zawartych w skierowanym do młodych piśmie św. Bazylego Wielkiego o pożytku z czytania dzieł autorów pogańskich<sup>4</sup>.

Ks. M. Lohr omawia następnie Kasjodorowe rozumienie poszczególnych nauk. Szczególnie interesujące jest przedstawienie muzyki jako nauki matematycznej, ale także moralnej, oraz podkreślenie jej roli terapeutycznej (s. 109-126). Kasjodor dzielił muzykę na cztery zasadnicze działy: naukę o harmonii, rytmice i metryce, naukę o instrumentach muzycznych, naukę o symfoniach, czyli zgodnodźwiękach, i naukę o tonach. Obok muzyki wytwarzanej przez głos ludzki i wydobywanej z instrumentów, odbieranej za pomocą zmysłu słuchu, Kasjodor wyróżniał muzykę sfer niebieskich, nieuchwytną dla człowieka zmysłowo, ale poznawaną intelektualnie, oraz muzykę przejawiającą się w moralno-etycznej dziedzinie życia ludzkiego polegającą na harmonii zachodzącej między aktami człowieka i normami ustalonymi przez Boga. Podkreślał również, że muzyka ma działanie oczyszczające i uzdrawiające. Zapewne tematyka muzyczna była bliska samemu autorowi opracowania, który był wrażliwy na piękno muzyki i – jak

<sup>3</sup> Por. H. Chadwick, *Mysł wczesnochrześcijańska a tradycja klasyczna*, tł. P. Siejkowski, Poznań 2000; L. Łeszyk, *Literatura klasyczna w recepcji Klemensa z Aleksandrii*, „Littera Antiqua” 6 (2013) s. 37-65.

<sup>4</sup> Por. Święty Bazyli Wielki, *Do młodzieńców o korzyściach z czytania ksiąg pogańskich*, tł. R. Andrzejewski, „Vox Patrum” 57 (2012) s. 895-921.



relacjonuje autor jego biogramu, ks. bp Jacek Jezierski – „grał dla siebie na skrzypcach” (s. 195).

Z racji zainteresowań logiką, którą ks. M. Lohr wykładał przez wiele lat w Warmińskim Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym „Hosianum”, duży artykuł poświęcił on zagadnieniom logicznym w pismach Kasjodora, przede wszystkim w II księdze dzieła *Institutiones* oraz w *Komentarzu do Psalmów* (s. 127-163). Skupił się w nim przede wszystkim na wykładzie sylogistyki, którą Kasjodor uważał za najważniejszą część dialektyki, oraz na formach dowodzenia stosowanych w retoryce. Uznał jednak, że w wykładzie zagadnień logicznych założyciel Vivarium nie był szczególnie twórczy ani też nie omawiał tej problematyki w sposób wyczerpujący. Swą wiedzę o logice czerpał nie bezpośrednio z Arystotelesa i dzieł jego greckich komentatorów, ale z pism autorów łacińskich, którzy przekładali na łacinę i komentowali traktaty logiczne Stagiryty.

Przegląd zagadnień związanych ze sztukami wyzwolonymi w ujęciu Kasjodora zamyka artykuł poświęcony arytmetyce. Ks. M. Lohr zwraca w nim uwagę na podkreślanie przez Kasjodora pierwszeństwa arytmetyki przed innymi naukami matematycznymi. Omawia naturę i właściwości liczb w przekazie założyciela Vivarium, a także analizuje jego rozważania związane z rozpowszechnionym w późnym antyku i wczesnym chrześcijaństwie tematem symboliki liczb, w tym przypadku przyjmującej charakter teologiczny.

Omawiając wszystkie powyższe zagadnienia, ks. M. Lohr próbuje rekonstruować antyczną genezę jego poglądów. W rezultacie dochodzi do wniosku chyba nie do końca sprawiedliwego, że Kasjodor nie był oryginalny w sposobie prezentacji omawianych zagadnień, a jego rola miałaby się ograniczać przede wszystkim do przekazu następnym epokom spuścizny starożytnej.

Po wprowadzającej części publikacji następuje wybór *opera minora* Kasjodora reprezentujących różne tematy podejmowane w jego twórczości: egzegezę biblijną (*Krótkie wyjaśnienia do Apokalipsy św. Jana* w przekładzie Dominiki Budzanowskiej-Weglendy), antropologię (*O duszy* w przekładzie ks. Jarosława Januszewskiego) czy teorię muzyki (*Zasady muzyki* w tłumaczeniu ks. Lucjana Dyki). Ten zbiór pism uzupełnia wybór mądrościowych sentencji Kasjodora zaczerpniętych z dzieła *Variarum libri XII* w przekładzie ks. Krzysztofa Burczaka. Wszystkie teksty zostały przetłumaczone zrozumiałą i piękną polszczyzną oraz poprzedzone krótkimi wstępami znakomicie wprowadzającymi w treść i charakter dzieł Kasjodora.

Oryginalnym i godnym pochwałą zakończeniem omawianej publikacji jest wybrany przez redaktora książki, ks. M. Starowieyskiego, fragment powieści wybitnej pisarki katolickiej Hanny Malewskiej (*Przemija postać świata*, Warszawa 1972). Ukazuje on 90-letniego Kasjodora, który podsumowuje swoje życie i całą epokę kultury rzymskiej, chcąc przekazać średniowieczu stworzone w niej nieprzemijające dobra intelektualne. Ks. M. Starowieyski pragnie w ten sposób słusznie zwrócić uwagę, że także współcześnie „trzeba nam takich Kasjodorów, którzy przekażą europejską kulturę łacińską nowym czasom” (s. 322).

Książka została przygotowana do wydania bardzo rzetelnie. Pewne uzupełnienia można byłoby wprowadzić jedynie w spisie bibliografii dotyczącej Kasjodora. Wprawdzie redaktor publikacji zastrzegł się, że sporządzona przez niego bibliografia opracowań poświęconych założycielowi Vivarium, dołączona do rozdziału wprowadzającego w życie i twórczość Kasjodora, jest tylko wybiórcza (por. s. 35-38), ale warto było dodać do niej jeszcze kilka pozycji. W części obcojęzycznej powinna to być np. praca A.S. Christensen (*Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths: Studies in a Migration Myth*, Copenhagen 2002). W części polskojęzycznej, która kończy się na 2013 roku, wypadało zamieścić kilka najnowszych artykułów: Jacka Bramorskiego (*Teologiczne aspekty muzyki w ujęciu Flawiusza Aureliusza Kasjodora*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 69/12 (2021) s. 169-181), Anny Kołtunowskiej (*Wybrane listy Kasjodora (Variae, ks. I-V) – materiał dygresyjny jako narzędzie retoryczne*, „Człowiek w Kulturze” 31/1 (2021) s. 94-109) i Michała Kielinga (*Poglądy Kasjodora na temat sprawowania urzędów państwowych na podstawie XI i XII księgi Variae*, „Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne” 40 (2021) s. 47-64).

Recenzowany tom pism Kasjodora i studiów jemu poświęconych jest przykładem publikacji mądrze pomyślanej, oddającej sprawiedliwość zarówno ważnemu autorowi wczesnochrześcijańskiemu, jak i zapomnianemu polskiemu badaczowi, który poświęcił mu większą część swojego naukowego życia. Zredagowana w pomysłowy sposób przez ks. M. Starowieyskiego książka z jednej strony daje wgląd w twórczość Kasjodora, na podstawie własnych jego dzieł, z drugiej – przypominając i zbierając w jednym miejscu rozproszone wartościowe artykuły ks. M. Lohra, jest świadectwem wkładu polskiej patrologii w badania nad działalnością i myślą założyciela Vivarium oraz rolą, jaką odegrał w tworzeniu na bazie antyku podwalin średniowiecznej i nowożytnej europejskiej kultury chrześcijańskiej.

# Table of contents

## Articles

1. Clement of Alexandria's Homily *Quis Dives Salvetur?* and Its Pastoral Challenges for Alexandrian Christians – Jana Plátová ..... 7
2. Beatitudes in Juvenecus' Epic *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* – Philologically Analyzed and Poetically Translated – Viktor Wintner ..... 23
3. Gnomes of Gregory of Nazianzus as Part of Didactic Literature – an Inspirational Source of Homilies? – Adriána Ingrid Koželová, Ján Drengubiak..... 41
4. The Exegesis of Ct 1:5-6 and the Theme of *Epektasis* in Gregory of Nyssa, with Specific Reference to the Role of Grace and Free Will – Paola Marone ..... 55
5. 'The most Eloquent of the Fathers': The Method of Preaching in the Church at the Turn of the 4th and 5th Centuries – Rev. Jarosław Nowaszczuk ..... 73
6. John Chrysostom 'On the Incomprehensible Nature of God' – The Simpler Way of Presenting Complex Theological and Philosophical Issues – Karolina Kočańczyk-Bonińska..... 91
7. The Emotion of Joy in Evagrius of Pontus' *Scholia to the Psalms* – Rubén Peretó Rivas ..... 105
8. Letter or Sermon? The Analysis of Augustine's *De Bono Viduitatis* – Anabela Katreničová ..... 121

9. On Christian Asylum in Augustine's <i>Sermones</i> – Daniela Hrnčiarová .....	135
10. Persuasive Function of Sound Figures in Augustine's Homilies on the Psalms of Ascents and Their Translation into Modern Languages – Marcela Andoková, Róbert Horka .....	149
11. <i>Pharisaicus Hydrops</i> . Luke 14:2-4 in the Preaching of Peter Chrysologus – Mieczysław C. Paczkowski OFM.....	167
12. Sermons as a Formation of Ethical Behavior of Man in the Second Half of the 18 <sup>th</sup> Century, Based on the Example of Sermons by Dominik Mokoš OFM (1718-1776) – Angela Škovierová.....	193

## Reviews

13. Marcela Andoková, <i>Čierna som a predsa krásna. Tyconiov výklad Piesne piesní 1, 5 (I am Black Yet Beautiful. Tyconius's Interpretation of Song 1:5)</i> , Iris, Bratislava 2020, pp. 226 – Rev. Marcin Wysocki .....	213
14. Kevin G. Grove, <i>Augustine on Memory</i> , Oxford Studies in Historical Theology, Oxford University Press, New York 2021, pp. 266 – Fernando López-Arias.....	217
15. Tatiana Krynicka, <i>Święty Mikołaj z Myr Licyjskich w świetle greckich i łacińskich źródeł starożytnych i średniowiecznych</i> , Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2022, ss. 210 – Dominika Budzanowska-Weglenda .....	220
16. Kasjodor, <i>Pisma wybrane (Studia o Kasjodorze)</i> , przekład z języka łacińskiego Dominika Budzanowska-Weglenda, ks. Krzysztof Burczak, ks. Jarosław Januszewski, ks. Lucjan Dyka, opracowanie ks. Marek Starowieyski, ks. Mikołaj Lohr, Wydawnictwo Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2022, ss. 362 – Rev. Mariusz Szram .....	222

# Spis treści

## Artykuły

1. Clement of Alexandria's Homily *Quis Dives Salvetur?* and Its Pastoral Challenges for Alexandrian Christians – Jana Plátová ..... 7
2. Beatitudes in Juvenecus' Epic *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* – Philologically Analyzed and Poetically Translated – Viktor Wintner ..... 23
3. Gnomes of Gregory of Nazianzus as Part of Didactic Literature – an Inspirational Source of Homilies? – Adriána Ingrid Koželová, Ján Drengubiak..... 41
4. L'esegesi di Cant 1,5-6 e il tema dell'*epektasis* in Gregorio di Nissa, con specifico riferimento al ruolo della grazia e del libero arbitrio – Paola Marone..... 55
5. „Najbardziej elokwentni z Ojców” a metoda przepowiadania w Kościele przełomu IV i V wieku – Rev. Jarosław Nowaszczuk ..... 73
6. John Chrysostom 'On the Incomprehensible Nature of God' – The Simpler Way of Presenting Complex Theological and Philosophical Issues – Karolina Kočańczyk-Bonińska..... 91
7. La emoción de la alegría en los *Escolios a los salmos* de Evagrio Pónico – Rubén Peretó Rivas..... 105
8. Letter or Sermon? The Analysis of Augustine's *De Bono Viduitatis* – Anabela Katreničová ..... 121
9. On Christian Asylum in Augustine's *Sermones* – Daniela Hrnčiarová ..... 135

10. Persuasive Function of Sound Figures in Augustine's Homilies on the Psalms of Ascents and Their Translation into Modern Languages – Marcela Andoková, Róbert Horka ..... 149
11. *Pharisaicus hydrops*. Łk 14,2-4 w przepowiadaniu Piotra Chryzologa – Mieczysław C. Paczkowski OFM..... 167
12. Sermons as a Formation of Ethical Behavior of Man in the Second Half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Based on the Example of Sermons by Dominik Mokoš OFM (1718-1776) – Angela Škovierová..... 193

## Recenzje

13. Marcela Andoková, *Čierna som a predsa krásna. Tyconiov výklad Piesne piesní 1, 5 (I am Black Yet Beautiful. Tyconius's Interpretation of Song 1:5)*, Iris, Bratislava 2020, pp. 226 – Ks. Marcin Wysocki ..... 213
14. Kevin G. Grove, *Augustine on Memory*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology, Oxford University Press, New York 2021, pp. 266 – Fernando López-Arias..... 217
15. Tatiana Krynicka, *Święty Mikołaj z Myr Licyjskich w świetle greckich i łacińskich źródeł starożytnych i średniowiecznych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2022, ss. 210 – Dominika Budzanowska-Weglenda ..... 220
16. Kasjodor, *Pisma wybrane (Studia o Kasjodorze)*, przekład z języka łacińskiego Dominika Budzanowska-Weglenda, ks. Krzysztof Burczak, ks. Jarosław Januszewski, ks. Lucjan Dyka, opracowanie ks. Marek Starowieyski, ks. Mikołaj Lohr, Wydawnictwo Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2022, ss. 362 – Ks. Mariusz Szram..... 222