



References to Scripture in the Old Polish *History of the Three Kings*. Quotations, Allusions, Echoes

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Abstract: The article analyzes the references to Scripture in *Historyja trzech krolu* (History of the Three Kings), an Old Polish apocryphal work preserved in a copy from 1544. The references to the Bible are divided into quotations, allusions and echoes. Quotations were introduced either by reference to a particular location or author of the biblical text, or to an unspecified “prophet” or “evangelist.” Sometimes they were not signaled in any way. Then the quotation could only be identified by recognizing the passage to which it refers. Allusions to the Old and New Testaments mostly consisted of references to characters, places, and events, without quoting the text of Scripture itself. The featured echoes most often consisted of narrative parallelisms between the story of the Wise Men from the East and the first Church. References to Scripture in the apocryphal work served to emphasize typology and create parallelisms between biblical history and the story of the three kings. The text emphasizes the role of the Gentiles in salvation history while belittling the role of Israelites.

Keywords: Old Polish apocrypha, *History of the Three Kings*, three kings, biblical references, typology, quotations, allusions, echoes

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and Method of Research

The purpose of this article is to describe the references to the Old and New Testaments in *Historyja trzech krolu* (History of the Three Kings). The analysis is part of the trend of research on how Old Polish authors worked with sources. I will organize the material by referencing the rhetorical hierarchy of intertextual references presented by John Hollander (2018, 64), and methodologically developed by Christopher A. Beetham (2008, 15–36). So far, it has not been used in the analysis of medieval Polish-language texts. I will distinguish between quotations, allusions and echoes.¹ The unmistakable type of reference is quotation. It is an intentional, explicit, literal or near-literal citation of the content of another text. It can be signaled

¹ Biblical studies organized possible forms of intertextual references in various ways. Some scholars did not distinguish between allusions and echoes (Hays 1989), while others distinguished as many as five categories (Porter 2006). I consider the adopted division into quotations, allusions and echoes to be the most suitable for the apocryphal material I am working with and, at the same time, the most clearly methodologically outlined. My understanding of these terms is taken from Beetham (2008, 15–24).

by formal elements of the quotation: indicating the authorship, referring to the text from which the words are taken, or to the author of these words (Rojszczak-Robińska 2021). However, sometimes the quotation has no formal distinguishing features and is recognized only through familiarity with the quoted source. Another type of reference is allusion. I will understand it as a literary device used intentionally by the author, referring the recipient to a specific, identifiable source from which a certain element must be transferred to a new context to fully understand the correct message (Beetham 2008, 20). This device is less explicit than quotation. Echo is the last mode of reference, the most subtle of those discussed. It represents a reference, whether conscious or not, to a particular other text, the reading of which is not necessary to understand the message, but sheds new light on it. The line between allusion and echo can be difficult to grasp – I consider the importance of recognizing the reference for the understanding of the text to be its most important determinant. The correct reading of the text depends on catching the allusion, while noticing the echo enriches the interpretation, but does not determine it.

1.2. Subject of Research: *History of the Three Kings*

History of the Three Kings is a translation of John of Hildesheim's 1364 Latin work, *Historia Trium Regum*, which was popular in the Middle Ages and has been copied and translated many times (Kaliszuk 1999, 449), also in Poland (Piacentini 1997, 21). John of Hildesheim's work is said to be a synthesis of all the legends concerning the three kings (Kaliszuk 1999, 447). The text stands out from other biblical-apocryphal narratives. It mostly has the character of a hagiographic story with elements of exotic descriptions of distant lands. The work recounts the origin of the three kings and the gifts they brought to the infant Jesus, as well as the life and journey of the Wise Men, the mission of St. Thomas among the Gentiles, and the activities of St. Helena in the Holy Land and her contribution to finding various relics. The work ends with a description of the translation of the remains of the three kings to Cologne and praise of the city.

Apocryphal motifs appear in the text primarily in connection with the depiction of the Nativity of Jesus Christ and the bowing of the Wise Men. Traces of quasi-canonicity are also present in the descriptions of the Gentiles' wait for the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the star in the East – the text contains extensive references to rulers and events known from the Old Testament.

The Polish work can be found in the 1544 *Kodeks Wawrzyńca z Łaska* (Codex of Laurentius de Lasco), stored in the National Library of Poland under reference no. 3040 III. In addition to this work, two other Old Polish apocrypha are inscribed in the codex – the *Ewangelia Nikodema* (Gospel of Nicodemus), in two versions, and the *Sprawa chędogo o męce Pana Chrystusowej* (Comely Discours about the Passion of Lord Christ). The text under examination occupies leaves 153 *recto* to 260 *recto*

and is a copy of an earlier work. The work of the translator and copyist in the Middle Ages involved the creative processing and compilation of the texts he knew, the addition or removal of selected passages (Rojszczak-Robińska 2016, 19). Having access to the only surviving copy, and probably a copy from a copy, lest I get lost in terminology, and at the same time to emphasize the creative nature of the work, I will write about the author of *History of the Three Kings* without discerning what comes from the copyist and what comes from the translator, and how much of their work was reproductive and how much creative.

1.3. State of Research

Antoni Kalina was the first to write about the *Codex of Laurentius de Lasco*, focusing on the Polish language of the relic (Kalina 1879). *History of the Three Kings* was mentioned several times by Aleksander Brückner, each time criticizing the text – the language, the translation, and the way the copy was made: “The unknown translator transferred mechanically, word for word, the Latin text into Polish, with so little regard for the requirements and spirit of his own language that without comparing it with the Latin text it would be difficult to find sense and order in his Polish” (Brückner 1904b, 56). The researcher described the translation as “slavish, tarnished by numerous errors, sometimes caused by a misreading of the Latin manuscript and multiplied by a careless Polish copyist” (Brückner 1904a, 17). He also predicted that “the whole [...] will probably never be announced in print – whether due to the Polish language or due to the mistakes of the translator” (Brückner 1904a, 17). These words of Brückner remained valid for a long time. *History of the Three Kings* was published a couple of times in fragments (Vrtel-Wierczyński 1959, 322–34; 1995, 111–14, Wydra and Rzepka 1996, 213–32; 2004, 148–53). Between 1952 and 1955, Stefan Vrtel-Wierczyński worked on a full edition, but never completed the work (Wydra 2019, VIII). A photocopy of the *Codex of Laurentius de Lasco* was published in 2019 (Wydra 2019). That same year, the Staropolskie Apokryfy Nowego Testamentu website (Old Polish New Testament Apocrypha) published a full transcription and transliteration of *History of the Three Kings*.² Access to the modern edition, as well as the increase in interest in Old Polish apocryphal literature observed since the turn of the century, have increased the researchers’ interest in the apocrypha – however, it was usually analyzed together with other texts of the *Codex of Laurentius de Lasco* (Osiewicz 2020, Masłej 2021, Nowak-Pasterska et al. 2021) or

² Project financed by the National Science Centre (Narodowe Centrum Nauki – NCN) entitled: “Początki języka polskiego i kultury religijnej w świetle średniowiecznych apokryfów Nowego Testamentu. Uniwersalne narzędzie do badań polskich tekstów apokryficznych” [The Origins of Polish Language and Religious Culture in the Light of the Medieval Apocrypha of the New Testament. Universal Tool for Research on Polish Apocryphal Texts] (no. 2017/26/E/HS2/00083), under the leadership of prof. UAM, dr hab. Dorota Rojszczak-Robińska, apocrypha.amu.edu.pl.

when conducting broader research on legends concerning the Three Kings (Kowalewicz 1960) or Old Polish New Testament apocrypha.³ There are several studies devoted to the text itself (Kowalewicz 1973, Sjöberg 1978, Adamczyk 1994, Piacentini 1997, Bryłka-Baranowska 2023), but it remains largely under-researched. The Polish translation of *Historia Trium Regum* is imperfect – in many places it appears that the author copies the syntactic structures used in the source without understanding (Brückner 1904b, Kowalewicz 1973, Piacentini 1997). On the other hand, contrary to claims of a slavish approach to the Latin text, the translator did not always remain faithful to the source: he deviated from the source material – often in parts of the text that are theologically marked (Bryłka-Baranowska 2023). In the study of Old Polish apocrypha, much attention is now paid to the sources of these texts (Rojszczak-Robińska, Deskur, and Stelmach 2021).

2. Analysis of Biblical References

2.1. Quotations

History of the Three Kings features direct quotes from the Gospels woven into the narrative. In this way, the author introduced the story of Nativity itself (165r/13–166r/7), the visit of the Magi to Herod (183v/3–184r/7), the bowing of the Wise Men (184r/7–16; 186v/16–187r/2; 193v/7–8), the presentation of Jesus at the temple (199r/7–19) and the flight to Egypt (199v/6–12; 207v/2–16). Each time a longer quotation from the Gospels is signaled with direct formulas: “Jakoż mowi ewanjelista” [As the Evangelist says], “Bo jako mowi ewanjelista” [For as the Evangelist says], “Potem jako mowi ewanjelista” [Then as the Evangelist says], “jako Ewanjelija powiada” [as the Evangelist speaks]. In one case, St. Luke is indicated directly as the source of a quotation – “jako tu święty Łukasz mowi” [as St. Luke says here]. The author quotes larger sections of the biblical text, occasionally interrupting the narrative to add information, clarify, or elaborate. Often the transition from quoting an inspired text to more casual storytelling is not clearly signaled. Sometimes the author continues his story, formulating possible questions from the reader and answering them through references to other sources:

O tem, czegodla ci trzej krolewie pierwaj do Jerusalem niżli do Betlejem przyszli, **wiele ksiąg rozmajicie wypowiadają**, o których wiele rzeczy a przyczyn są pisany. Ale między innymi rzeczami a przyczynami była jedna przyczyna, iże [...] (184r/16–21) [Many books tell in various ways about the reasons why the three kings came first to Jerusalem and not to Bethlehem, of which many things and causes are described. But among other things

³ A full bibliography on Old Polish apocrypha is collected at <https://apocrypha.amu.edu.pl/elabo?id=4>.

and causes there was one cause, that (...)], **A jako albo ktorym obyczajem** błogosławiona dziewica panna Maryja z młodzieńcem synem swoim do Egiptu przyszła była i jako sie stąd tam zasie wrociła, **w księgach o młodości Jesusowej** tamo szerzej a dostatecznie najdzie. (184r/16–21) [And how or by what means the blessed virgin maiden Mary with her young son came to Egypt, and how she returned from there, can be found more extensively and sufficiently in the books about the youth of Jesus].

The additions introduced into the biblical text seemingly look like asides with metatextual reference:

A zategoż stała się jest z anjołem wielkość rycerstwa niebieskiego chwałącego Boga a mowiącego: “Chwała na wysokości Bogu, a na ziemi pokój ludziom dobrej wolej.” **A mamy wiedzieć**, iż Betlejem nie było ani jest wielkiej ważności, tako iż tamo są wiele komor a jaskinie, a leży od Jeruzalem we dwu milu onego kraju, a ninie miasteczko nie jest wielkie, a rzecz<ono> jest miasto Dawidowo, a to dlatego, iż Dawid jest się był z niego narodził. (166r/3–14) [And at once the angel was accompanied a great group of heavenly knights who praised God and said: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.” And we are to know that Bethlehem was not, nor is it now, of great importance, and that there are many stables and caves there, and it lies from Jerusalem two miles of the country, and now the village is not big, and it is called the city of David, because David was born in it.]

In fact, the narrative is full of such “asides” that sometimes interrupt the actual story for several pages. The phenomenon of describing everything and treating every piece of information related to sacred history on an equal level in *History of the Three Kings* was discussed by Maria Adamczyk:

The whole work, similar to a painstaking chronicler’s account, not omitting (almost) any detail, shrouded in digressions treated as equally cognitively important components of the “summa,” brings to mind the metaliterary statement of Master Wincenty Kadłubek, also justifying the need for such divagation: “for who would pass utterly indifferently the grapes or figs hanging on either side of the path, when they almost fall into his mouth by themselves? Thus, it is seemly to cheer oneself up with such delicacies” (Adamczyk 1994, 146)

There are two times when the formula “as the Evangelist says” introduces short quotations:

Potem jako mowi ewanjelista: “A odpowiedź wzięwszy we śniech, tedy gwiazda, która im uprzedała albo przed nimi szła, więcej się im nie ukazowała, ale już do ziem, do krolestw swych, człowieczym obyczajem gospod we dnie i w nocy, <po> drodze idąc, szukali a żądali” (193v/7–13; cf. Matt 2:12) [Then as the Evangelist says: “And as they received the answer

in a dream, the star which guided them, or went ahead of them, appeared to them no more; but when returning to their lands, their kingdoms, while walking on the road, they sought and demanded inns at day and night as is custom for man”), I część mirry z winem zmieszawszy a potym ustom Jesusewym na krzyżu pić dali, jako mowi ewangelista: “A dali są jemu z mirrą wino,” a drugą część mirry Nikodem, książę żydowski, pospołu z aloes i z inszymi maściami przydał a włoż<ył> w grob Boży” (204v/6–12, cf. Matt 27:34) [And having mingled one part of myrrh with wine, they held it to the lips of Jesus on the cross to drink, as the Evangelist says: “And they gave unto him wine with myrrh,” and the other part of myrrh was gifted by Nicodemus, the prince of the Jews, together with aloes and other ointments and placed in the sepulchre of God].

The work also features unsignaled evangelical quotations, for example, speaking of Christ, the author recalls:

Bog, który tedy z dziewice panny Maryje przez obłapienia ręku, ale mocą bostwa swego raczył sie narodzić na ten świat, **który złożył mocarze z stolca, a powyszył pokorne**, to jabłko, które wszystek świat znamionowało, swą pokornością a mocy wielkością we mgnienu oka starł a wniwecz obrocił (193r/1–8, cf. Luke 1:52) [The God who at that time deigned to be born into this world from the virgin maiden Mary, without bodily contact but by the power of His divinity, who brought down the rulers from their thrones and exalted the humble; this apple, which signified the whole world, by His humility and great power, in the twinkling of an eye, He obliterated and turned it into nothing].

History of the Three Kings quotes almost the entire second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew (excluding verses 14–18) and partially the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke (excluding verses 15–21, 23, 25–27, 31–37, 39–52). Thus, from the entire chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, the apocryphal work omits only the description of the slaughter of the innocents and the prophecy from the Book of Hosea (2:15) concerning the calling of the Son of God out of Egypt, even though the text describes the Holy Family’s escape from persecution. The author therefore abandoned the type lining, hinted at by the cited biblical passage itself. This seems to contradict the generally observed tendency to emphasize the relationship between the Old and New Testament and the narrative *horror vacui*. But in fact, it was the attempt to describe everything that influenced the omission of Hosea’s prophecy. In Matt 2:15, the entire stay of the Holy Family in Egypt is shortened to the phrase “and remained there until the death of Herod,”⁴ while the author of *History of the Three Kings* described the events of the stay in Egypt in more detail, so he omitted this verse in the translation.

⁴ All English-language Scripture citations per Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (RSVCE, n.d.), accessed online at <https://www.biblegateway.com/> [February 1, 2024].

History of the Three Kings quotes messianic prophecies. The most frequent quote in the text is the prophecy of Balaam from the Book of Numbers: “a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel” (24:17). This quotation is a recurring motif upon which the entire first part of the apocrypha is built, depicting the historical story of waiting for the Messiah. In the text, the prophecy is cited five times, each time in a slightly altered form:

1. “Wyniknie gwiazda z Jakoba a powstanie człowiek z Isr<ae>, to jest z żydowstwa, a będzie panował wszystkiemu ludu” (154r/4–7) [A star shall arise from Jacob, and a man shall arise from Isr<ae>, that is from the Jews, and he shall reign over all the people]
2. „Wyniknie gwiazda z plemienia Jakob, a powstanie człowiek z pokolenia żydowskiego, a będzie panował wszystkiemu ludu” (156r/7–10) [A star shall arise from the tribe of Jacob, and a man shall arise from the tribe of the Jews, and he shall reign over all the people]
3. „A wszakoż on nie był człowiek, który miał powstać z Żydowstwa a który miał panować wszystkiemu ludu” (161r/6–8) [And yet he was not the man who was to rise from the Jews and who was to reign over all the people]
4. „Wzędzie a wyniknie gwiazda z plemienia Jakob, a powstanie człowiek z Israel, to jest z pokolenia żydowskiego, a będzie panował wszystkiemu ludu” (162v/7–11) [A star shall rise and emerge from the tribe of Jacob, and a man shall arise from Israel, that is from the tribe of the Jews, and he shall reign over all the people]
5. „Wyniknie gwiazda z plemienia Jakob, et cetera” (163r/6–7) [A star will arise from the tribe of Jacob, et cetera].

There was a change in the context of the use of these quotes in the apocrypha. The prophet Balaam (the text also testifies to a variant spelling of the name, Balaan) is presented as an unambiguously positive figure, with no references to bribery, persuading the Israelites to worship Baal, God’s wrath or death in the war against the Midianites – so the text departs from the Judaic and New Testament traditions, in which Balaam is a figure of a perverse counselor and evil teacher (cf. Num 31:8, 16; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev 2:14). In *History of the Three Kings*, Balaam is a Gentile who was the first to whom the coming and reign of Christ was revealed. According to the text, he also prophesied about the arrival of the three kings, and his vision is preached not to Balak, but to Cyrus. Meanwhile, Cyrus himself is portrayed as the ruler not only of the Persians, but also of the Chaldeans. The apocryphal description therefore combines figures that were actually separated by several centuries to present an idea consistent with the author’s intention: the Gentiles (treated as an essentially homogeneous group, despite the later separate description of the kingdoms of the Wise Men from the East) had been expecting a miracle and the Messiah since the time of Balaam, and to this end they developed the field of astrology (in the text, astrology is presented as the science of celestial things and the course of the planets).

The apocrypha also invokes the prophecy of the virgin birth from Isaiah (7:14). This passage is also shown in an altered context: the warning given to Ahaz in the work is addressed to his son, Hezekiah. This technique facilitated the author's narrative transition to the description of the astronomical sign for extending the years of Hezekiah's life. The apocryphal author sees in this miracle a type for the star in the East. The passage reads:

Tedy czasow Ezechijasza, krola Juda, prorokował Isajasz o dziewiczym rodzaju mówiąc chwalebnie: "Oto owa dziewica pocznie a porodzi syna, a będzie wezwano jimię jego Emanuel – Bog." A tego Izajasza proroka czasow ten isty krol Juda, Ezechijasza, niemógł aż na śmierć, ktoremu gdyż ten isty Isajasz jimieniem Bożym powiadał jemu, iż mu sie śmierć przybliżała, tedy ten isty Ezechijasza krol płakał, a to nie dla bojaźni śmierci, ale iżże syna nie miał, ktorego by po sobie dziedzicem ostawił, a iż <t>y obiaty Abramowy a Dawidowy i prorocstwa <Balaam i> Izajaszowy w nim miałyby stać a zaginać. Tedy sie nad nim zmiłował a zlutował, więc piętnaście lat zdrowia żywotu jego przydał, na których to on Ezechijasza znamienia prosił, iżby słońce wspanie wracało naprzeciwko swemu wschodu. A tak sie stało, iżże sie zasnęło wracało, a tedy Kaldei, którzy tych czasow w astrologii (w tej nauce o rzeczach niebieskich), pazdrocząc, barzo sobie lubowali, ujrzawszy tako niewidane a niezwykle znamię w niebie i na słońcu, nad zwyczaj barzo się zdziwili. A usłyszawszy sławę, iżże dla Ezechijasza, krola Juda, to znamię sie stało, tedy jemu barzo wielkie dary posłali, a onego chwalić u<myś>lili. Ale iżże Ezechijasza z wielkiej swego serca prostości w pychę wielką serca swego podniósł sie jest, tedy Bog wszechmogący nijako naprzeciwko jemu jest sie poruszył a rozniewał, tedy wszystkie rzeczy, ktore Kaldeum, onej to ziemie ludziam i posłom, ukazał, do Babilonijej dlatego pobrane być temu istemu Ezechijaszewi krolewi przezeń, Izajaszewi zupełnie ukazał. Bo aczkoli Ezechijasza, krol Juda, był sie narodził i w słońcu dla jego tako niesłychane a niezwykle znamię było sie stało, a wszakoż on nie był człowiek, ktory miał powstać z Żydostwa a ktory miał panować wszystkimu ludu, jako Balaam prorokował. (159v/19–161r/9, cf. 2 Kgs 20:1–21) [Then in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, Isaiah prophesied about the virgin birth, saying praisingly: "Behold, this virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be Emmanuel – God." And in the days of this Isaiah the prophet, this king of Judah, Hezekiah, fell sick to death, and when this Isaiah, in the name of God, told him that death was approaching then this king Hezekiah wept, and this not because of fear of death, but because he had no son to leave as an heir, and that these promises of Abram and David, and the prophecies of Balaam and Isaiah would cease and perish with him. Then he had mercy on him and took pity on him, so that fifteen years of health were added to his life, as proof of which Hezekiah asked for a sign to make the sun go back towards its East. And so it came to pass that it did go backwards, and then the Chaldeans, who at that time were very fond of studying astrology (the science of heavenly bodies), having seen such an unprecedented and unusual phenomenon in the sky and the sun, were very astonished. And having heard the tidings that this phenomenon had occurred for Hezekiah, king of Judah, they then sent him very great gifts, and resolved to praise him alone. But because Hezekiah, out of the great simplicity of his

heart, yielded to a great pride of heart, therefore God almighty was offended and wrathful towards him, and therefore all the things that he (Hezekiah) showed to Chaldea, that land, to the people and to the messengers, for this reason He (God) fully ordered Isaiah to take them to Babylonia from that said Hezekiah king. For although Hezekiah, king of Judah, was born, and such an unheard of and remarkable phenomenon happened for him in the sun, he was not the man who was to rise from the Jews, and who was to reign over all the people, as Balaam prophesied.]

This, as can be seen, is the 2 Kgs 25, which is summarized and commented on through the prism of messianic predictions. Hezekiah's fear of death and the miracle itself are shown in this light. The passage highlights the interest of the Chaldeans – learned astrologers – in the phenomenon. They reacted to the miracle as the kings would later react to the sight of a star in the east: they brought gifts and came to glorify the born king. The Apocrypha also explicitly indicates that although a king of Judah was born and accompanied by an astronomical miracle, he was not yet the one referred to in Balaam's prophecy. Recalling this story was meant to show that the Gentiles had been preparing for the coming of Jesus since the time of Balaam.

In *History of the Three Kings*, a supposed prophecy from the Book of Daniel is also read in the context of the Gentiles: “Gdyż przydzie święty nad świętymi (rozumiej Bog wszechmogący), tedy przestanie niedowiarstwo wasze” (172r/16–18) [When the holy of holies (understand God Almighty) comes, then your unbelief shall cease]. The apocryphal text indicates that prophet Daniel's prediction of the “cessation of unbelief” was realized for the Gentiles in the coming of Christ. The problem is that similar words do not appear in the Book of Daniel, contrary to the information in the text: “aby sie napełniło prorocstwo Danijela proroka rzekąc...” (172r/14–15) [so that the prophecy of Daniel the prophet may be fulfilled, which said...]. The Polish text follows the Latin source, which reads: “impleretur prophetia Danielis, qui inter alia sic ait: «Cum veniet sanctus sanctorum, cessabit unctio vestra.»” The quotation in this wording is given by Pseudo-Augustine in his sermon *Contra Judaeos Paganos et Arianos sermo de Symbolo*, indicating Dan 9:24 as the location: “Cum venerit, inquit, Sanctus sanctorum, cessabit unctio (Id. IX, 24).”⁵ The sermon was popular in the Middle Ages, and was used in liturgical dramas, often Christmas dramas (Sepet 1867, Kretzmann 1916, Young 1922, Reeve 2006, Symes 2012). A frequent motif was the procession of Old Testament prophets delivering their messianic prophecies – among them was Daniel uttering the words quoted in *History of the Three Kings*, but also other prophets referenced in the apocrypha, including Balaam and Isaiah. It could be, then, that liturgical dramas were one of John of Hildesheim's sources.

⁵ Pseudo-Augustinus, *Contra Judaeos, Paganos et Arianos sermo de Symbolo*, PL 42, 1123–24. Jacques-Paul Migne includes the sermon among the works of St. Augustine, but it is considered a pseudo-epigraph by contemporaries.

Even modern scholars cite the siglum “Dan 9:24” after Pseudo-Augustine when discussing the prophecy of the cessation of unbelief (Symes 2012, 40). Pseudo-Augustine in his sermon does not quote but repeatedly refers to the Old Testament books.⁶ In the analyzed example, he introduces an element of rhetorical dialogue – he first asks Daniel to testify about Christ, and then gives Daniel’s supposed words, which are a distant rendering of Dan 9:24. The actual prophecy in the Book of Daniel refers to the anointing (“ungatur”) and the Holy of Holies (“Sanctus sanctorum”). During the stated period of seventy weeks, transgression and sin are to cease, and righteousness is to come. Pseudo-Augustine, in his sermon against the Jews, interprets this passage not only christologically (Christ is the Holy of Holies), but also as a prediction of the cessation of the special “anointing” of the Jews – with the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the advent of the New Covenant, the chosenness of Israel passed to all mankind. This interpretation was perpetuated, which was influenced by the use of the sermon in liturgical dramas, and found its way into *Historia Trium Regum* as well. However, the Polish author does not mention the anointing, but rather “unbelief,” as that which was to cease with the coming of Christ. He does so most likely because, as elsewhere in the text, he interpreted the prophecy in the context of the Gentiles rather than Jews:

A wszakoż wszyscy ludzie w onych wszystkich stronach wschodnich, w Indyjey i w Parsyjej, i w Kaldei, jawnie wiedzieli, iż Herod był cudzoziemiec, od cesarza i od Rzymianow krol Żydostwa był ustawion, a nie był z plemienia ani z pokolenia krolewskiego rodzaju żydowskiego nar>odzon, jako było onych czasow, gdy Bog-człowiek narodził sie był, a to dlatego, aby sie napełniło prorocstwo Danijela proroka rzekąc: “Gdyż przydzie święty nad świętymi (rozumiej Bog wszechmogący), tedy przestanie niedowiarstwo wasze.” (172r/5–18) [And all the people in all the eastern parts, in India, and in Persia, and in Chaldea, knew openly that Herod was a foreigner, appointed by the emperor and by the Romans the king of the Jews, and he was not descended from the tribe or from the royal generation of the Jewish race, as it was in those days, when the God-Man was born; and this was so that the prophecy of Daniel the prophet may be fulfilled, which said: “When the holy of holies (understand God Almighty) comes, then your unbelief shall cease.”]

This is another example of the author of *History of the Three Kings* introducing changes in translation (Bryłka-Baranowska 2023). However, this is a special case, as previous research indicates that Scripture (especially the Book of Psalms, but also the prophetic books), due to their use in medieval education and their prevalence in scholarly circles, were often translated independently, often in a faithful manner

⁶ For example, he does so at the beginning of the same chapter: “Veniat et ille Daniel sanctus, juvenis quidem aetate, senior vero scientia ac mansuetudine, convincat omnes falsos testes: sicut convicit seniores impudicos (Dan. XIII, 47), ita suo testimonio Christi conterat inimicos.”

(Rojszczak-Robińska 2020; 2023b). The analyzed fragment of *History of the Three Kings* proves that, at least in this case, the author did not refer to his own knowledge of Scripture, but mediated the quotation from *Historia Trium Regum*, while introducing changes to it. Perhaps if he had been able to refer to a familiar passage from the Book of Daniel, he would have remained faithful to it. Augustine's authority (Rojszczak 2007) and the fact that the prophecy in this form was better suited to the content of the work may also have played a role in this. However, these are conjectures that cannot be conclusively resolved.

Accusing the Jews of unfaithfulness, the author cites a prophecy from the blessing of Jacob:

A dlatego krześcijany jich zdradliwość z jich patryjarchy Jakoba sromocą a gańbią, który tako mowił: "Nie będzie oddalona cześć z Żydowstwa, a książę z pokolenia jego, ależ przydzie, który ma być posłan, a on będzie odkupienie ludu" (172v/7–12, cf. Gen 49:10) [And therefore the Christians their treachery from their patriarch Jacob humbled and disgraced, who said thus: "The glory shall not depart from the Jews, and the prince from his generation, until he shall come who shall be sent, and he shall be the redemption of the people.]

The prophetic quotation read typologically in *History of the Three Kings* in a literal way are the opening verses of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah (60:1–3):

A w onej to mgle i w ciemności gwiazdę są stracili, jako Izajasz prorok mowi: "Powstań, oświeć Jerusalem, iżec przychodzi światłość twoja a chwała Boża na tobie wszdła <jest>. Iże owa ciemności przykryją ziemię, a mgła przykryje ludzie, nad tobą zaprawdę wejdzie Pan, a chwała jego w tobie będzie widziana. A będą chodzić ludzie w światłości twojej, a krolewie w jasności wschodu twego." (180r/9–18) [And in this fog and in the darkness they have lost [sight of] the star, as Isaiah the prophet says: "Arise, enlighten Jerusalem, for your light has come and the glory of God has risen over you. For that darkness shall cover the earth, and fog shall cover the people, but the Lord shall verily come upon you, and his glory shall be seen in you. And men shall walk in your light, and kings in the brightness of your rising."]

The author, to emphasize the fulfillment of the prophecy, described the entrance of the kings into Jerusalem and the subsequent fog and darkness, obscuring the star in the East. In the apocrypha, Isaiah's prediction is realized in a literal way, which in a way takes away the depth and spiritual meaning of the prophecy. In addition, the place where the kings stopped because of the darkness according to the apocrypha is the foot of Calvary. Thus, the author alluded to later New Testament events.

The later part of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, traditionally associated with the bowing of the Wise Men, has also been referred literally to the moment the kings entered Jerusalem:

A to ono miasto zewsząd oblegli i ogarnęli, jako mowi Izajasz prorok: “O Jerusalem, przydzie tobie mocność a wielkość ludu rozmajitego, obkwitość a wielkość wielbrądów ogarnie ciebie, dromedary Madian i Effa, ci wszyscy z S<aba> przydą, złoto a kadzidło nosząc, wszystkie zwierzęta i wszystko bydło Cedar zgromadzi sie około ciebie” (183r/7–14). [And the city was besieged and overrun from all sides, as Isaiah the prophet says: “O Jerusalem, the might and greatness of various peoples shall come to you, the abundance and greatness of camels shall cover you, the dromedaries of Midian and of Ephah, all those of Sheba shall come, and gold and frankincense they shall carry, and all the beasts and all the cattle of Cedar shall gather around you.”]

The Polish author deviates from *Historia Trium Regum* in several places, rendering the quotation in the wording familiar from the Vulgate: he changed the order of the toponyms mentioned and dropped the conjunction before “all those of Sheba.” This would suggest that he relied on his knowledge of Scripture or that he used another copy of the work of John of Hildesheim. This is because *Historia Trium Regum* differs from the biblical text in such detail that it cannot be ruled out that another copy of it would have sounded different.

When the Wise Men are depicted with their gifts in *History of the Three Kings*, Caspar is shown as the black king of Tarsis. Shortly thereafter, the author compiled two quotations – from Ps 72:9 and the Isa 60:14, attributing them to a single, unidentified “prophet”:

[...] jako prorok mowi: “Przed onym będa padać Murzynowie, a nieprzyjaciele jego ziemię będą lizać. Przydą do ciebie, którzy uwłaczali a urągali tobie, a będą chwalić ślady nog twoich” (188r/11–15) [(...) as the prophet says: “Before him shall the Negroes fall, and his enemies shall lick the ground. Those who have belittled and insulted you shall come to you, and they shall praise the marks of your feet”].

The compilation of these two Old Testament passages comes from the work of John of Hildesheim and was translated by the Polish author based on *Historia Trium Regum*.

In *History of the Three Kings*, most of the quotations are mediated – whether it is precisely through the translation of *Historia Trium Regum* or by citing Gospel passages that contain an Old Testament prophecy. This happens, for example, with the prophecy from the Book of Micah, which was introduced into the apocryphal text as part of the quotation of the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

W Betlejem Jude. Bo zaprawdę pisano jest przez proroka mówiącego: “I ty, Betlejem, ziemio Juda, niekaki nie jesteś mniejsza w ksiągach Juda. Bo z ciebie zaprawdę wynidzie albo wyniknie książę, które będzie rządziło lud moj israelski” (183v/14–184r/1) [In Bethlehem of Judah. For verily it is written by the prophet who says: “And you, O Bethlehem,

land of Judah, are by no means lesser among the princes of Judah. For from you[r land] shall verily come or arise a prince who shall rule over my people of Israel”].

The scribe quotes the prophecy as it appears in Matthew.

In other Old Polish apocrypha, it has been observed that biblical passages were translated by authors independently, directly from Scripture (Rojszczak-Robińska 2016; 2020). The same is evidenced by an analysis of the ways in which the prophecy of Balaam is cited in *History of the Three Kings* (Rojszczak-Robińska 2023a). The passage with the supposed prophecy from the Book of Daniel indicates a dependence on a non-canonical source, but this example proves nothing, as there is no biblical text to which the Polish author could refer in this case. In this context, the change in translation is puzzling, possibly indicating an awareness of the non-canonical nature of the quote. There is no known translation of Scripture that the Polish writer could have used, so the question of source selection in the case of mediated quotations is still unresolved – and is likely to remain so.

2.2. Allusions

The author of *History of the Three Kings* alludes to well-known biblical events, figures or places. Such was the case with the comparison of the journey of the kings from the East to the relocation of the prophet Habakkuk:

Bowiem ten Bog, który w Starym Zakonie Abakuka proroka z żydowskiej ziemi aż do Babilonijej, do Danijela proroka, który był wsadzon między lwy, aby ji pożerły, posłał, a ten więcej niżli przez sto dni niżli się wroczył a onogo za włosy wywiódł, teże ten Bog, gdyż się począł Zakon Nowy, t<e>dy tych trzech krolow z Indyjej i z Kaldei, i ze s<ł>ońca> wschodu we trzechnaście dni był mocen przewieść tamo do Żydowstwa, takie też przez żadnego nagabania ani przez szkodzenia (179v/5–16, cf. Dan 14:33–39) [For this God, who in the Old Law sent Habakkuk the prophet from the Jewish land as far as Babylonia, to Daniel the prophet, who was put among the lions to be devoured, and he returned for more than a hundred days, and led him away by the hair, this very God, when the New Covenant began, had the power to bring these three kings from India, from Chaldea, and from the East of the Sun in thirteen days there, to the Jews, in the same way, without any difficulty or harm.]

The apocryphal work features a story about the wondrous arrival of three kings from distant lands to the manger in thirteen days. The story is characterized by reference to the Book of Daniel as the antitype for Habakkuk’s miraculous relocation. This confirms the tendency observed by Maria Adamczyk: “There is no doubt that the apocrypha are characterized by a pronounced tendency to accentuate and create prefigurative connections” (Adamczyk 1980, 61).

At the beginning of *History of the Three Kings*, the Jews are accused of not accepting Balaam's prophecy and calling him a sorcerer. The text then refers to Job, who was also a Gentile and about whom, for this reason, the Jews "mało abo nic mają" [have little or nothing], as the author declares. Although the entire work has no connection to either Job or Saint Paul, the apocryphal states that the former lived in Syria, in the village of Zabab, which is near Damascus, where "błogosławiony święty Paweł spadł był z konia i nawrócił się jest" [the blest Saint Paul fell from his horse and was converted]. This reference is completely out of context, a connection between the Old and New Testaments which does not add much to the content of the work, which albeit introduces the motif of conversion – relevant to the idea of universal conversion of the Gentiles presented in the text. The reference to Job is also intended to emphasize the role of the Gentiles in the Old Testament in opposition to the clearly diminished role of Jews, consistently portrayed in the apocrypha as infidels.

The author cited the names of rulers and the names of lands to describe the history of Gentile peoples in the context of Israel's biblical history, while alluding to subsequent Old Testament prophecies.

A w tem jęctwie prorok Danijel pod tajemnicą o dziewiczym rodzaju wiele chwalebnie prorokował o kamieniu wyciętym z gory przez rękę wycinających, to jest o synu Bożym (162r/6–10) [And in that captivity the prophet Daniel, under the mystery of the virgin conception, prophesied much gloriously about the stone cut out of the mountain by the hand of the cutters, that is, about the son of God].

The quoted passage is an allusion to chapter two of the Book of Daniel, which depicts Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a colossus on legs of clay. The author immediately shows the interpretation of the Old Testament passage in the Messianic context in the words: "of the virgin conception" or "that is, about the son of God." The use of this passage has additional meaning as well. In Nebuchadnezzar's court there were many Babylonian sages, Chaldeans and sorcerers. This is an important element linking the entire briefly quoted history of Israel with the history of the Gentiles' interest in the coming of Christ. On the one hand, references are made in *History of the Three Kings* to messianic prophecies, while, on the other hand, the presence of the Gentiles, people from the East, Chaldeans is emphasized in the same salvation story. This makes it possible to defend the thesis that the Gentiles had been looking out for the star in the East ever since they became aware of Balaam's prophecy. Therefore, the author states:

A tedy Cyrus, krol Persarum i Kaldei, wszystkie księgi żydowskie i proctwa Isajasza, Jeremijasza, Danijela, Mich<easza> i Balaam, i drugih, inszych prorokow z żydowskiego języka w kaldejski przepisać i wyłożyć kazał[i], między ktorymi wiele rzeczy naleźli, ktore przez Kaldeusze, Perses, podług ich prorocstwa miany być napełnione, a zwłaszcza

proroctwo Balaam, proroka pogańskiego, który między jinszymi rzeczami tako mowił: “Wzejdzie a wyniknie gwiazda z plemienia Jakob, a powstanie człowiek z Israel, to jest z pokolenia Żydowskiego, a będzie panował wszystkiemu ludu.” (162r/15–162v/11) [And then Cyrus, king of Persia and Chaldea, had all the books of the Jews and the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Micah and Balaam, and other prophets transcribed and translated from the Jewish language into Chaldean, among which they found many things which were to be fulfilled by the Chaldeans, Persians, according to their prophecy, and especially the prophecy of Balaam, the Gentile prophet, who among other things said this: “A star shall rise and emerge from the tribe of Jacob, and a man shall arise from Israel, that is from the tribe of the Jews, and he shall reign over all the people.”]

In addition to the Gospel account of the birth of Christ, the author of *History of the Three Kings* also presented information about Bethlehem and detailed where exactly the Nativity took place. Here he alluded to the figure of David – according to the apocryphal account Jesus, as the antitype of the son of Jesse was born, not only in the same locality as David, but even in the same building:

A na tym tamo mieściu niejaki stał dom Isaj, ojca Dawidowego, w którym sie też był Dawid narodził a w kroła israelskiego pomazan. A na tym tamo mieściu Bog z Maryjej dziewice jest sie narodził (166r/14–19) [And in that place there stood the house of Jesse, the father of David, in which David was born as well, and was anointed king of Israel. And in the same place God from Mary the Virgin was born].

The apocryphal author references the figure of David also later in the text, where the comparison is based on the motif of the good shepherd: “A na tem mieściu Dawid owce pasł, a miedźwiedzom i lwom je tam iste odejmował i z paszczek wyrwał” (170r/14–16) [And in that place David pastured the sheep, and he took them away from bears and lions there, and snatched them from their jaws].

Another important allusion is found in the story of the Wise Men’s journey to Bethlehem. The voice coming from the star is identified with the voice coming from the pillar of fire leading the Israelites during the Exodus:

I mowią nawroceni Żydowie wschodu słońca, iż Żydowie między sobą wierzą, iż anioł, który syny israelskie po wyściu albo wywiedzeniu z Egiptu w słupie ogniowym uprzedzał, iż też ten isty głos anielski z gwiazdy był słyszany (185v/19–186r/5) [And the converted Jews of the sunrise say that the Jews believe among themselves that the angel who guided the children of Israel after the departure or the exodus from Egypt in the pillar of fire, that this was the same true angelic voice that was heard from the star].

This “type” from *History of the Three Kings* is intriguing, since the canonical texts do not attest to a voice coming from either the pillar of fire or the star of Bethlehem.

The association of fire from heaven with the voice of God brings to mind Philo of Alexandria in *On the Decalogue*:

Then from the midst of the fire that streamed from heaven there sounded forth to their utter amazement a voice, for the flame became articulate speech in the language familiar to the audience, and so clearly and distinctly were the words formed by it that they seemed to see them rather than hear them (Philo, *Decalogue*, 46 [LCL 320, 28]).

The need to combine the message of the Old and New Testaments is also evident in the description of the story of the thirty gold coins offered to Jesus by Melchior. Of course, specifying their number had a purpose, because mentioning thirty coins immediately brings to mind thirty pieces of silver. And indeed, from Abraham, who took this money with him when leaving Ur, through Jacob, the kingdom of Sheba and Solomon, the money made its way to Melchior, and from his hands – to Jesus. Left behind during the flight into Egypt, it was found by a shepherd who offered it to the Temple, and from the Temple treasury it ended up in the hands of Judas. The fate of myrrh was depicted similarly; according to the apocrypha, part of it was given to Jesus on the cross to drink with the wine, and the rest was allegedly used by Nicodemus to prepare Christ's burial.

The Polish author's use of allusions emphasizing typological relationships worked in two directions – retrospectively and prospectively. Sometimes the presence of a theme (e.g. an object, such as coins or myrrh) in the Gospel message initiated a search in the Old Testament for any traces that could be used to provide an origin story or foreshadowing for that theme. On the other hand, the Old Testament (e.g. the story of Habakkuk's relocation) may have inspired the apocryphal author to describe certain events. It was for this reason that the apocryphal author mentioned the conversion of St. Paul, which was consistent with the theme of the work: conversion, and was to connect, through location, to the Old Testament story of the Gentile believer, Job.

2.3. Echoes

History of the Three Kings is dominated by quotations and allusions. Echoes often take the form of narrative parallelisms covering large portions of the text. The apocrypha describes the state of destruction of the house of Jesse, the house of David. The passage echoes words from the Book of Amos (9:11–12):

On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this,

repeated in Acts (Acts 15:14–17), where this prophecy applies directly to all Gentiles:

Symeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name [...]”

The fate of the kings after meeting the newborn Jesus is likened to New Testament events. The relationship between the Wise Men is similar to the state in which the first Church lasted – they behave like the disciples after Pentecost:

tako sie przywitowali a pospolicie sie zobłapiali, a z wielkim weselim są sie radowali. Aczkolwiek rozmajitych językow a mowy byli, a wszakoż sie koźdemu z nich widziało, jakoby wszytki języki umieli a jemi mowili. A gdyż już sie poznali, a poznawszy, tedy jeden drugiemu swoję przyczynę drogi i rzeczy inszych powiadali są, a w onych wszytkich rzeczach są się zgodzili. A gdyż sobie ony rzeczy są powiedzieli, dlaczego ktory z nich jechał, tedy barzo sie są weselili a w miłość [g] jeden ku drugiemu są sie zapalili (182r/16–182v/9, cf. Acts 2:4–11) [so they greeted one another, and merrily rejoiced. Although they were of different tongues and speech, it appeared to each of them as if they knew all languages and spoke them. And once they came to know one another, and having known each other, they told one another the cause of their travel and other things, and in all these things they were united. And because they told one another these things, why each of them travelled, they rejoiced greatly, and were enkindled with love to one another].

The way the kings at the end of their lives prepare and come to meet Thomas the Apostle is analogous to their journey to Bethlehem:

[...] oni trzej krolowie, aczkolwiek byli barzo starzy, zgarbieni, a wszakoż lepak gotowali sie są z barzo z wielkimi dary ku Tomaszewi świętymu ze wszytkimi ich książęty i ze wszytkimi pany ślachtetnymi, i ze wszytkim ludem pospolitym (211v/1–6) [(...) these three kings, although they were very old and bent, and yet prepared again to go with great gifts to Thomas the Saint with all their princes, with all their noble lords, and with all their common people].

After the death of the kings, the star appeared again. It stayed over the place where their bodies were kept, and with the translation of the relics to Cologne, it moved over that city.

Summary and Conclusions

Analysis of the references to the Scripture makes it possible to draw conclusions about the structure of the entire *History of the Three Kings*. It is divided into four parts: the first, Old Testament, shows the history of the Gentiles' wait for the coming of Christ. The second is related to the New Testament – it is a description of the Nativity and the journey of the Wise Men, as well as foreshadowing of Passover events. The third presents the fate of the three kings after meeting Christ, as well as the activities of St. Thomas. These passages are often presented using echoes and parallelisms. The last part of *History of the Three Kings* depicts St. Helena's search for the relics, the conversion of the Gentiles, but also the existence of many dissenting groups, who are nevertheless united by the three kings, and the arrival of the remains of the Wise Men in Cologne. Quotations and allusions mostly appear in the first two sections, which are related to the content of Scripture. The rest of the apocryphal is based on subtle references that emphasize the continuity of the story being told and tradition. The Old Testament foreshadows the New and is the strict cause of it, while the history of the Church, the three kings and all the Gentiles are, as it were, a repetition of earlier events.

References to Scripture are used in the text to emphasize Old Testament messianic figures and their fulfillment in Christ, and to present the story of the conversion of the Gentiles. The universalist message, suggesting that the three kings prepared the entire world to receive Christ, is combined in the text with a simultaneous belittling of the role of the Jews and an indication of their failure to fulfill the task assigned to them by God as the Chosen People. Some of the references have no justification in the content of the work other than to emphasize the continuity between the Testaments. Such passages also set particular events or characters in a “historical” and “geographical” context – albeit often false.

The apocryphal author often matched passages and motifs taken from the Old Testament to apocryphal themes to bring out or emphasize the typology. Sometimes, on the other hand, it was Old Testament motifs that inspired the creation of apocryphal themes. The author usually used quotations and allusions to emphasize the close connection between the Old and New Covenants. Eagerly referencing the authors of prophecies may have served to emphasize the authority and veracity of the text itself. When depicting later events, he used explicit forms of intertextual references less often, more frequently using echoes.

The analysis presented here has raised the important question of the basis of the translation of the biblical text in *History of the Three Kings*, although it has not resolved it. Some of the Scripture quotations show the Polish author's independent work with the text, while others reveal his dependence on the text of John of Hildesheim. However, it should be noted that the use of the text of *Historia Trium Regum* in the Bible translation has been proven only in those passages that are

highly transformed inspired text – this refers to the so-called prophecy of Daniel and the compilation of the Book of Psalms (72:9) with the Book of Isaiah (60:14).

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