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The Ontology of Sponsality in Karol Wojtyła's Thought: The Relationship to Which We Are Called

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Abstract: This article presents a teleological perspective on spousal love, exploring Wojtyła's thoughts on sponsality as the divine plan for human love. The investigation is important because spousal love is presented in the Bible and in Christian mysticism as an analogy for God's love and for the eschatological mystery. It is also necessary considering the social impact of family experiences on issues such as mental health, parenthood, criminality, and antisocial behavior. This bibliographical research is based on Wojtyła's *Love and Responsibility* and *The Catecheses on Human Love in the Divine Plan*. It is divided into four sections: the human person as a relational being, biblical texts about spousal love, Wojtyła's teaching on this category, and the teleological aspects observed in this teaching. Our findings indicate that for Wojtyła, spousal love is the teleological reality of the human person, supported by three main aspects. (1) According to Wojtyła's personalistic thought, God must be understandable when inviting a person to a definitive relationship. The Bible uses spousal relationship to indicate God's definitive alliance. (2) Wojtyła understands spousal love as the original sacrament of trinitarian relation. He states that the human person is the image and likeness of God because it was created as man and woman. (3) Spousal love is a total gift of self that leads the person to blessedness and fulfillment. It is the only way to imitate Christ in his kenosis.

Keywords: sponsality, spousal love, teleology, eschatology, ontology, theology of the body, nuptiality, Karol Wojtyła, John Paul II

Pope Benedict XVI in his social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, calls for a critical and axiological deepening of "relationship" (*CV* 53), especially from an anthropological and metaphysical perspective. This category is fundamental for understanding the most essential realities of the human person and of the Trinity itself. The Ineffable is not fully understood through the categories that are attributed to him. In this way, the statement that the Trinity — or even the human being — is relational is not the end of the matter. It is necessary to say something more about this relation, to try to unravel it from the very relations established and revealed by God.

Pope Francis, for his part, has on two occasions exhorted the members of the International Theological Commission (Francis 2023) to consider a "Bride Church."

To be a bride depends on being in a very specific kind of relationship that springs from spousal love: sponsality. But what is spousal love?

Karol Wojtyła's history of philosophical and theological production includes two fundamental texts that help us answer this question: *Love and Responsibility* (2013) and the *Catecheses on Human Love in the Divine Plan* (John Paul II 2006).[1] These texts deal with an *adequate anthropology* which, in its reflections, takes into account theological, axiological, phenomenological, teleological, ontological and metaphysical aspects. It is an integral vision of the human being.

This reflection is important in at least three ways: to better understand the Trinitarian relationship; to better understand the reality of anthropological relationships; and, finally, to shed light on human relationships, especially their ethical aspects.

This ethical and social impact is even more valuable when one thinks of studying the relationship from the perspective of spouses. The overall marriage rate has been decreasing, while the divorce rate and the proportion of children born outside of marriage have been increasing over time (Ortiz-Ospina and Roser 2020). Furthermore, many studies (Cassel, Paini, and Kirsten 2021; Grossmann et al. 2002; Dagan et al. 2021; McCormick and Kennedy 2000; Stokkebekk et al. 2019; Kalmijn 2016; Roeters and van Houdt 2019; Lewis and Lamb 2003; Araújo and Faerstein 2023; Cabrera et al. 2000; Miralles, Godoy, and Hidalgo 2023) point to the negative impacts of unstructured, divorced, and dysfunctional families, as well as the absence of one of the parental roles or low parental interaction with their children; impacts that particularly affect children's cognitive and emotional development, and are associated with depression, suicide, and drug addiction, both in adolescence and adulthood. The damage obviously goes beyond the subjective aspects and affects society as a whole: the family dimension and some of its aspects have a significant impact on violence, crime, antisocial behavior, as well as recidivism in crime (Basto-Pereira and Farrington 2022; Derzon 2010).

Therefore, dealing with the subject of spousal love and its horizons of application and understanding is crucial for developing a proper family ethic, self-awareness as spouses and parents, and consequently for designing and promoting public policies, social and pastoral actions that correspond to this understanding, based on theological anthropology, and that affect not only personal and individual life, but also that of society.

On the other hand, theology has always aimed to understand Revelation in an effort to know and relate to the Creator. Thus, deepening our study of the category of relation, especially the relationship to which he calls us, will always be the theological exercise par excellence.

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1 As pointed out by Waldstein (2006) and Merecki (2014) it is worth noting that most of these Catecheses were written prior to Wojtyła's papal election. However, this fact does not diminish the magisterial importance of the catecheses. Additionally, it allows us to consider them as part of Wojtyła's original thought.

In addition to the social and theoretical justifications, this work is important because there are few studies that directly address the ontological aspects of spousal relationality. By researching these characteristics, we can develop a more complete understanding, which will lead to more effective application of these concepts in ethics and social life.

The proposed section offers a teleological perspective on spousal relationality, in other words, as the relation to which we have been called. The methodological approach is based on bibliographical research, specifically the reflections of two texts that shape Karol Wojtyła's spousal thought (*Love and Responsibility* and *The Catecheses on Human Love in the Divine Plan*) and some commentators such as Michael Waldstein, Giovanni Reale, and Jarosław Merecki. A complementary bibliography was consulted when necessary.

The text is organized into four sections. The first one addresses the aspects of the human person as a relational being. The second section focuses on biblical texts about spousal love. The third section develops Wojtyla's teaching on this category. In the final section, the teleological aspects observed in Wojtyła's thought on spousal love are further explored.

1. Development

1.1. Relationality and the Need for Understanding It

Relationality is considered an ontological reality, initially of the Trinity, as noted by Gregory of Nyssa (Maspero 2011). As the human being is believed to be the image and likeness of God, it is also considered ontological to man (Maspero 2011; Ratzinger 1995). The need for relationality in man is not due to any imperfection or lack, but rather is an inherent aspect of human ontology. Because he is the image of a God who is a Communion of Persons (Maspero 2011; John Paul II 2006) the human being is a relational being in his deepest essence (Ravasi 2011; John Paul II 2006).

The man par excellence, Christ, has existed within the Trinitarian relationship for eternity. Because The Word lives the Trinitarian relation, he, incarnated, lives the Trinitarian relationship bodily. In other words, the man Christ reveals divine relationality through his humanity. In this way, the category of relationship is an "element of a new ontology, of a new project of existence made accessible by the Trinitarian revelation." (Maspero 2011, 19) There is a new way of living because Jesus Christ lived his relations as a body, in the same way that the Trinity relates within himself — given the limitations of incarnate corporeality.

However, throughout human history, relationality is wounded by sin – sin is precisely its rejection — and salvation, consequently, is the return to relationship; not to any relationship, but to the proper one (Ratzinger 1995). Through salvation we

are invited to return to the right relationship. The question remains: what exactly is the right relationship?

Human beings are invited to live the Trinitarian life, with love dwelling within them, united with Christ who is one with the Father (John 17:21–26). This invitation cannot be forced, nor can it be a complete mystery without meaning or significance. Communication cannot be unintelligible. If God desires to establish a particular relationship with a human being, he cannot use the person as a means to achieve this relationship. It is crucial for persons to have a clear understanding — sufficiently for they to give their conscious consent — of the nature of the relationship they are about to enter. This is because it is impossible for God to use the person as a means "because he, by the very fact of giving a rational and free nature to the person, decided that the person himself will define the ends of action." (Wojtyła 2013, ch. 1) Karol Wojtyła continues (2013, ch. 1): "Therefore, if God intends to direct man to some ends, first and foremost he lets him know these ends, so that man can make them his own and strive for them on his own." It is important to note that persons must be able to comprehend the nature of the invitation in order for God to guide them towards these ends. To do otherwise would be to undermine the very quality that God has bestowed upon humans — that of being self-determined and inalienable (Wojtyła 2013).

The human being is corporeal. Therefore, when clarifying the divine will and the type of relationship to which we are invited, it is necessary for God to take our corporeality into account. That brings the possibility to understand the nature of the relationship that God invite us to within human relations themselves.

Synthesizing, humanity is the main way in which God has chosen to reveal himself, especially — and fully — in the person of Christ (John Paul II 2006; Second Vatican Council 1965). If it is possible for every human being to participate in Trinitarian life, which is relational, then it may be necessary to understand at least part of this Trinitarian relationship through the categories of human relationships. To do so, we must first understand the relationship to which we are called in the history of Revelation, and which human relationship best reflects the Trinitarian relationship.

1.2. Biblical Indications of Sponsality as the Apex of Relationality

Sacred Scripture presents two significant categories for thinking in terms of relationality: filial and spousal. While filiation reveals much about the nature of the relationship, there are certain aspects of the relationship to which we are called that differ from our understanding of filial relationships.

As we understand from our human experience, it is usually the father who gives his life to his son, while in the Gospels we too are called to lose our life in order to save it (Matt 16:24–26). The son, even in the Gospels but especially in our daily lives, presents the possibility of leaving home, taking what is his, and disobeying (Luke 15:11–32). On the other hand, we are called to do the Father's will, as Jesus

himself has done (John 6:38; 1 John 2:17). Above all, a son is not one with his father, while we are invited to be one with the Father. Even Christ's relationship with the Father cannot be fully explained by the father-son hermeneutic. It is Christ's desire for us to become one with him as he is one with the Father (John 17:22–23).

On the other hand, the Bible gives indications that sponsality is the kind of relation to which God invites us. Sometimes reflecting their full realization, with their healed relationality, their sponsality, as the ideal bride or fruitful wife (Song of Songs; Isa 54:1–10; 62:4–5; Jer 2:2; Ezek 16:8; Hos 2:18, 21–22; Matt 22:1–14; Eph 5:22–33; Rev 19:7). At other times reflecting their relationality stained by sin, their non-sponsality, being called a prostitute (Isa 1:21; Jer 3:1–9; Ezek 16:15; Hos 1:2; Rev 17:1, 5).

Jesus states that, from the beginning of creation, is the spousal relationship that unites two beings as one (Matt 19:4–6; Mark 10:5–9). Hence the hypothesis that the sponsality can be an explanatory hermeneutic for the Trinitarian relationship, for the relationship between God and human beings and between human beings themselves, without losing the clarifications that the filial relation provides. After all, in eschatological contexts and in the figures of the definitive relationship, there is less emphasis on the filial relation and more emphasis on the spousal relationship.

From this reflection, it can be inferred that in divine revelation, the highest form of relations is sponsality. The prophetic books and the Song of Songs seem to give sponsality a definitive character, as they speak of the development of the relationship between God and his people. The first line of the Song of Songs expresses the bride's deep longing for the groom: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" (Song 1:2). The prophets texts about spousal relation are many: "Do not fear [...] For your husband is your Maker; [...] My love shall never fall away from you, nor my covenant of peace be shaken" (Isa 54:4–5, 10), "No more shall you be called 'Forsaken,' [...] But you shall be called 'My Delight is in her,' [...] For as a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; And as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you" (Isa 62:4–5). "On that day — oracle of the Lord — You shall call me 'My husband,' [...] I will betroth you to me forever [...] and you shall know the Lord" (Hos 2:18, 21–22). These Old Testament texts suggest a definitive relationship. They indicate the culmination, the final form, of the relationship between God and his people.

The New Testament contains several parables that illustrate the Kingdom of Heaven through spousal aspects. For instance, in Matt 22:1–14 Jesus tells: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son." Another example of an eschatological parable is that of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1–13). The Letter to the Ephesians (5:22–33) draws a comparison between human marriage and the relationship between Christ and the Church, portraying it as a perfect spousal relationship. The book of Revelation concludes the biblical narrative with the marriage between the Bride (the Church) and the Lamb (Christ) (Rev 19:7; 21:2; 22:17). The last sentence of the last commentary of the Pilgrim's Bible states: "This

is how Revelation and our Bible end: with 'the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride', as it began with the joyful voice of the bridegroom (Gen 2:23), the voice that John the Baptist heard with joy (John 3:29)." (Alonso Schokel 2017, 2976)

The fact that the spousal relationship constantly appears to be definitive, and especially eschatological, is very significant. That does not oppose to the fact that we are and we will always be children because we have inherited the Filial Spirit from Christ (Rom 8:15). Nonetheless, in order to fully receive this inheritance both now and in the end of the days, it is necessary for us to unite with Christ in marriage; we must clothe ourselves with clean linen garment (Rev 19:8) and Ophir's gold (Ps 44[45]:10). The result is sonship, but the invitation is to nuptiality.

Considering the above, it is acceptable to understand that sponsality is the type of relationship that can expresses the definitive relationship to which we are called to participate in Trinitarian life. Acknowledging the marriage proposal of the Lamb is how one enters Trinitarian relational life. From this point is important to comprehend the characteristics of this spousal relationship; understanding that will be obtained through an analysis of spousal love based on the concepts of Karol Wojtyła.

1.3. Spousal Love According to Karol Wojtyła

Reale (2003, LXXIX) identifies two fundamental elements of love that are presented in Wojtyla's *Love and Responsibility*: "1) a specific relationship that is established between people, and 2) the attitude that men in this relationship assume towards the good." Furthermore Reale (2003, LXIX) states about Wojtyła's thought: "The imitation of the 'Absolute Interaction' of the three Persons of the Trinity constitutes the paradigmatic basis in the constitution of the human person. And just as it happens in the Trinity, so the human person is fully fulfilled only in love."

According to Wojtyła, there is an inherent opposition between love and use. Wojtyła establishes a precise ethical norm, called the personalistic norm, which states in its negative form: "the person is a kind of good that is incompatible with using, which may not be treated as an object of use and, in this sense, as a mean to an end." (Wojtyła 2013, ch. 1) This norm has an obvious Kantian basis.[2] Furthermore, Wojtyła's expands from it in the positive expression of his personalistic principle: "the person is a kind of good to which only love constitutes the proper and fully-mature relation." (Wojtyła 2013, ch. 1)

As Reale notes (2003) Christian love consists of self-giving. Above all, "love is a union of persons." (Wojtyła 2013, ch. 1) Moreover, Wojtyła's thought delves deeper, describing a profoundly experiential encounter between a man and a woman as they

2 "Wojtyła takes up, in the first instance, the Kantian thesis according to which the human person must always and only be treated as an 'end' and never as a 'means', and takes it to its extreme consequences, stating: 'No one has the right to use a person, to use them as a means, not even God, their creator.'" Reale states (2003, LXVII) citing *Love and Responsibility*.

discover each other as potential reciprocal gift of self. Merecki (2014, 167–68) describes this event as follows:

> In human experience, however, the discovery of a person's uniqueness doesn't only have this meaning [being an end in itself]. It happens that a person discovers the uniqueness of another person among all the others. This has its foundation already in the body, in the sexual institute, which directs the male towards the female and the female towards the male, passes through the emotional experience of falling in love, but finds its culmination in the act of the person, in their free decision. When, in the experience of falling in love, the uniqueness of a person in the world of people is discovered, then the man and the woman ask themselves a question: how do I affirm this truth, how do I respond to this unique value that this person has for me? In order to respond adequately to this unique value, love in the most general sense is not enough; the love that touches every human person is not enough. It is precisely from the discovery of the unity of a person in the midst of other people that the desire to give oneself to the other is born in the heart of man or woman.

Merecki's beautiful observation is, in fact, the discovery that Wojtyła made when he encountered the couples he accompanied during his time as a priest. *The Jeweler's Shop* is a play written by Karol Wojtyła that portrays how spousal love and its expressions can touch the depths of the human heart. In this play, Wojtyła illustrates Andrew's discovery of the uniqueness of a person through his relational experience with Teresa. She holds a specific persistent position in Andrew's mind that he could not neither explain nor comprehend. In Andrew describes this position as a "*you ought to*" in his consciousness.

The love of the personalistic norm is sufficient as a practical response to everyday life in any relationship that may exist between people. However, as if love was not enough, spousal love emerges and goes beyond simply treating people properly as if an even greater love was possible and necessary. The experience of love begins to expand, starting with the body and radiates out to the whole person. A love that only finds an answer in the total giving of self.

According to Karol Wojtyła's thought, spousal love is the total gift of self. This integrality, or totality, distinguishes spousal love from other expressions of love. "Spousal love is something other and something more than all the forms of love analyzed so far, both from the perspective of the person who loves, and from the perspective of the inter-personal connection created by love." (Wojtyła 2013, ch. 2) For Wojtyła, spousal love differs from other forms of love by expressing the "giving one's own person." (Wojtyła 2013, ch. 2)

Waldstein (2006) argues that this statement is very similar to Kant's definition of the marriage relationship. However, in Immanuel Kant it seems to be rather contractual, while for Wojtyła it is ontological. For Waldstein (2006) Kant suggests that the surrender of oneself is a contractual recovery of oneself, once a person uses

another one as an object to obtain sexual pleasure, and this pleasure is negative. There is no dimension of gift in Kant's definition. In contrast, Karol Wojtyła's self-giving love is not only related to pleasure, nor does pleasure have a negative character as an integral and reciprocal self-giving. For Wojtyła, self-giving is independent of a contract and is a fundamentally subjective act of one person towards another, who mutually decide to give themselves totally in a reciprocal relationship because of the love they feel for each other (John Paul II 2006; Wojtyła 2013). João W. R. Chagas Júnior (2022) defines love in Wojtyła's thought as a spousal attribute of the person, as the ability to become a gift — and it is "through this gift that he or she [the human person] realizes the meaning of his being and existence." (Chagas Junior 2022, 60)

Wojtyła's perception does not align with the romantic and idealized view of love that is commonly known. This view typically considers love between a man and a woman solely from the perspective of eros, which is focused on the hormonal reactions experienced during the encounter. In contrast, Wojtyła believes that love involves a decisive and determined, therefore rational and ethical, choice to give of oneself (Wojtyła 2013). It is important to make a thoughtful decision rather than an impulsive one. The phrase "because of the love they feel for each other" should not be interpreted as simply referring to mutual feelings of strong emotions and hormones experienced by both men and women. While this phenomenon is significant, Karol Wojtyła's concept of love encompasses much more. He refers to a "love that is not limited to sentimental experience, but involves the whole person, flowing in the gift of self to the other." (Merecki 2014, 159) According to Wojtyła, love is not only filled with emotions but also with all the human phenomena that facilitate the possibility of a complete and reciprocal self-giving relation between a man and a woman. This includes the crucial attitude of decisive gift of self, which is an ethical attitude (John Paul II 2006; Wojtyła 2013).

This is the central theme of *Jeweler's Shop* (Wojtyła 1992) that revolves around three stories. Each story focuses on a different couple who decided to commit to each other in their own unique way. Andrew and Teresa are drawn to each other despite the differences between their feelings and decide to marry. Their marriage was a spousal one. Stephen and Anna, on the other hand, struggle in their marriage and lose the mutual care and sympathy. However, they were able to maintain a space for the gift of self that can arise, precisely because of their ethical decision, despite the temptations. Wojtyła at the end of the play indicates that this space can be regained. Christopher and Monica were driven by impulses, yet they made a very conscious and thoughtful decision to unite, despite the feeling of insecurity stemming from their stories.

It is evident in all Wojtyła's work, including the dramaturgical one, that the body has a profound spousal significance: its role is to induce us to seek this gift of ourselves. According to Merecki, Wojtyła views the body as a "principle of communion: man is for woman and woman is for man. This is what St. John Paul II calls

the spousal meaning of the body. The body in its sexual configuration contains within itself 'the capacity to express love'." (Merecki 2014, 138) The concept of the body as a sign of total gift of self is a "fundamental concept for building an adequate anthropology, made up of permanent meanings, among which is that of sponsality. This spousal meaning is something essential and irreducibly human in man." (Chagas Júnior 2022, 59)

This ontological condition is based on "the God-given power of the body to be a sign of the radical gift of self between man and woman." (Schonborn 2006, xxv) In other words, the divine plan for human love is the total gift of self (John Paul II 2006), which leads to holiness, fullness, and union with God. Giving ourselves as a gift is how we fulfill ourselves as persons, and spousal love is precisely this giving of ourselves in an integral way, without reservations (John Paul II 2006). Marriage is a journey that is in accordance with God's will and is founded on spousal love. The body serves as a sign of this love and its value.

Regarding the spousal meaning of the body, the pontiff states that it is a matter of "a transparent sign by which the Creator – together with the perennial reciprocal attraction of man and woman through masculinity and femininity — has written into the heart of both the gift of communion, that is, the mysterious reality of his image and likeness." (John Paul II 2006, 324)

This definition of spousal love as a total gift of self, which demands a series of intrinsically linked attributes and characteristics, expands not only into different hermeneutics and analogies, but also into radical and defining understandings. As John Paul II (2006, 500) stated, it allows for "a certain cognitive 'penetration' into the very essence of the mystery." Furthermore, in reflecting on the analogy of Ephesians and the prophets regarding spousal love, the Pope understood the mystery between God and humanity — its creation and redemption — "as the love proper to a total and irrevocable gift of self by God to man in Christ." (John Paul II 2006, 500) Of all the biblical analogies, none other seems to suggest such an integral self-giving as spousal love (John Paul II 2006).

John Paul II believed that God's complete gift is found in the 'transcendental fullness of his divinity' and that "such a 'total gift' (an uncreated gift) is shared by God himself only in the 'Trinitarian communion of Persons'," (John Paul II 2006, 501) This communion is what we are invited to and prepared for in the economy of salvation. The Church receives "the fullness of salvation as a gift of Christ, who 'gave himself for her' to the end." (John Paul II 2006, 478) Although John Paul II does not explicitly state it in his catecheses, he implies that *kenosis* is a necessary condition for love to be considered spousal. To fully comprehend the highest expression of love as a total gift of self, we must delve deeper into this kenotic reality.

Gaudium et Spes (no. 24) says that Christ reveals us to ourselves. He reveals to us that it is the total gift of self — which requires *kenosis* — that is the deepest attitude of love. He teaches that the greatest act of love is to give one's life (in the broadest sense

of the word). The gift of spousal love must achieve the same totality, meaning it must be a gift of the truth of ourselves, which is the image and likeness of the Trinity. This truth can only be understood with the innocence of the heart, which is moral participation in the permanent and eternal act of divine will (John Paul II 2006). According to John Paul II, spousal love is the union of the will with that of the Father, in configuration with the total gift of the Son, which is only possible in the Holy Spirit. On this basis, conjugal love continually fulfills and reveals the human person.

Sponsality does not reveal persons who totally gives themselves and then no longer have anything to give – as if by giving everything there's nothing left to give. This is very paradoxical. The *kenotic* being discovers or takes possession of oneself precisely in this surrender. Through this surrender, one expands spiritually and consciously, allowing for even more to be offered than before (John Paul II 2006). In this expansion process, *kenosis* is not something that needs to be repeated because the giving is already integral. There is no need to perform a new *kenosis*. There is an expansion of the gift of self that has already been made. Persons who give themselves in this way discover more about themselves, give more, and fulfill themselves more. This expansion was well understood by John Paul II (2006) in his analysis of spousal love. The fullness of *kenosis* is the infinitude of the gift, which is the infinitude of love. Through spousal love, we participate by the Holy Spirit, in Trinitarian Love.

1.4. Sponsality as the Teleological Reality of the Human Being

When we delve into Wojtyła's thought, especially his catecheses on human love in the divine plan, it becomes evident that the human person possesses a spousal character that extends beyond the confines of marriage but is revealed by it. This leads us to conclude that the person is ontologically spousal. Merecki (2014, 138) refers to this as "spousal existence."

In fact, John Paul II's reasoning leads us to Trinitarian love, to the beatific vision won for us by the merits of Christ, that is, to a communion of redeemed persons. This is our supreme vocation — and it is Christ who reveals it — which is made known through the two spousal paths: indissoluble marriage or renunciation of marriage for the love of the Kingdom of God (John Paul II 2006). It is a vocation conceived for us from the beginning, ontological, inscribed in our constitution and expressed through our body, through our sexuality (John Paul II 2006).

The purpose of this analysis is to comprehend the nature of the relationship that human beings are destined for in the ultimate, eschatological horizon, as per Karol Wojtyła's thought. Specifically, what sort of relationship was envisioned for human beings in teleological terms? This inquiry is genuinely Wojtylian, despite not being explicitly posed by him, considering the term he employs for his *Theology of the body* is "Human love on the divine plane." (John Paul II 2006, 659) Although some indications have already been set, it may be beneficial to revisit some of the earlier themes

and introduce additional ones to further explore how Wojtyła's thinking views sponsality as teleological for human beings.

As previously mentioned, human beings exist within a relational ontology. This belief is supported by both the first account of creation and the concept of original solitude present in John Paul II's catecheses (John Paul II 2006). In the Priestly account of creation (Gen 1), when God says that he created man in his own image and likeness, he adds: "male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). As per John Paul II's (2006) statement, this complement can be seen as evidence that the divine image and likeness is related to the relationality, moreover spousal relationship.

In the analysis of the Yahwist text of creation, particularly Gen 2, it is noted by John Paul II (2006) that the state of solitude experienced by the first male human being before meeting the woman indicates the ontological need of persons to relate to one another. The Yahwist text portrays loneliness as a primordial condition of human existence, which is not exclusive to males as it predates sexual differentiation (John Paul II 2006). According to John Paul II (2006), this loneliness does not imply that humans were created as solitary beings, but rather that it drives them towards their original purpose. This conclusion is supported by two arguments. Firstly, the creation of man without a woman is not the finished work. Creation of man alone, without a woman, made God declare that "it is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen 2:18), while God's statement before the whole creation is that it was "very good" (Gen 1:31). Secondly, it could be argued that indications of creation as an unfinished work are found in the Yahwist text itself. This is evident both in the torpor, that according to the Pope is a state of return to the divine creative act in which the human being has no part, and in the man's exclamation upon meeting the woman, which expresses a sense of completion (John Paul II 2006).

Original solitude also emphasizes the human need for self-definition through self-awareness and the fact that humans are inherently in a relationship with God: "*the created man* finds himself from the first moment of his existence *before God* in search of his own being, as it were; one could say, in search of his own definition; today one would say, in search of his own 'identity'." (John Paul II 2006, 149) This search is for their own fulfillment.

According to John Paul II (2006), is the original unity to surpasses and overcome the original solitude. This does not imply that solitude disappears, but rather that it is resolved. The concept of original unity emerges from the fact that human being is a body in two different ways: male and female (John Paul II 2006). This differentiation highlights the complementary nature that leads to oneness. The original unity that overcomes the original solitude — and therefore the search for fulfillment and the need for relationship — is a nuptial union. It is worth quoting the entire paragraph:

> In any case, in the light of the context of Genesis 2:18–20, there is no doubt that man falls into this "torpor" with the desire of finding a being similar to himself. If by analogy with

> sleep we can speak here also of dream, we must say that this biblical archetype allows us to suppose as the content of this dream a "second I," which is also personal and equally related to the situation of original solitude, that is, to that whole process of establishing human identity in relation to all living beings (*animalia*), inasmuch as it is a process of man's "differentiation" from such surroundings. In this way, the circle of the human person's solitude is broken, because the first "man" reawakens from his sleep as "male and female." (John Paul II 2006, 159–60)

Loneliness and the desire for self-definition are alleviated through the encounter with another person. This person presents a somatic homogeneity that is so evident that, despite sexual differences, the man awaking from his sleep exclaims: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." (Gen 2:23) (John Paul II 2006)

"In the biblical account, solitude is the way that leads to the unity that we can define, following Vatican II, as *communio personarum*." (John Paul II 2006, 162)[3] The second account of creation "reveals, in the manner proper to it, that the complete and definitive creation of 'man' [...] expresses itself in giving life to the '*communio personarum*' that man and woman form." (John Paul II 2006, 163) According to Wojtyła's thought, the relationship that makes us the image and likeness of the Trinity, and for which we were created, is the sponsality. This relationship is characterized by the integral and free gift of self, which requires a kenotic attitude. Sponsality can be seen as the teleological reality of the human being.

The text highlights the significance of freedom and choice in the act of self-giving, particularly in the ethical considerations of how to give and whom to give. *Love and Responsibility* (Wojtyła 2013) argues that genuine exercise of freedom is only possible within the spousal relationship, in contrast to the filial relationship where the person is giving without choice in a natural and biological process. When a person leaves their parents, they do not give up that relationship, but they come to see its importance reduced by another, much more human, that arises from mutual choice: the relationship between spouses. In other words, a relationship that is not imposed, but assumed. It is a determination — something profoundly human. The spousal union is constituted by the body in its femininity and masculinity. It is within this union and through the body that one person helps the other to find themselves in communion of persons (John Paul II 2006). This choice "establishes the conjugal covenant between the persons, who become 'one flesh' only based on this choice." (John Paul II 2006, 168) The decision expresses self-determination and is based on the structure of original solitude, in this case, double solitude, which is the expression of self-consciousness (John Paul II 2006).

This reality highlights an essential aspect of humanity, and it is also profoundly divine: the awareness of one's solitude leads to a voluntary and self-determined

3 John Paul II references *GS* 12.

decision to form a profound relationship and fully unite with another person. This communion of persons is so inherent to the human being that the Pope expresses it as "inner normativity" — that which objectively guides the interior of the human being — "that gives the covenant its essential meaning." (John Paul II 2006, 277)

It is important to note that the ultimate expression of "one flesh" is procreation. Wojtyła expands this notion to include paternity and maternity, and how this ontological characteristic is also teleological as a consequence of the spousal relationship (John Paul II 2006; Wojtyła 2013). This parental reality does not exclusively concern biological parenthood, which is the purpose of the union in the conjugal act, but not the unique purpose of spousal love. Those who choose to live the "continence for the Kingdom" can carry out their role as spiritual parents (John Paul II 2006).

In fact, those who choose to live a life of continence in view of the Kingdom, live sponsality in a unique way. Their chaste abstinence points to the eschatological corporeal reality (John Paul II 2006). This brings us to the final perspective necessary to affirm that spousal love is the teleological reality of the human being: as a path desired and created by God it must point to beatitude. In other words, John Paul II referred to sponsality as the 'human love in the divine plan' (John Paul II 2006, 659); this plan must include our salvation and our predestination to be holy and without blemish before God (Eph 1:4).

It is important to remember and recall that John Paul II's reflections are an investigation into the teaching and doctrine left by Jesus Christ on spousal love. John Paul II argues that, in the eyes of Christ, the foundation of spousal love and the reality envisioned for married couples remain the same as they were before the Fall (John Paul II 2006). In his confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus twice uses the expression "in the beginning," which John Paul II interprets as having a normative aspect (John Paul II 2006). Therefore, to live sponsality according to the *ethos of the Gospel* is to live it as it was originally conceived (John Paul II 2006). Jesus found in the Genesis account the teachings on spousal love, to the extent that he used it to respond to the Pharisees' provocations by combining the two creation accounts. At the same time, this is not only a normative response to the Pharisees' moral theological questioning. It also indicates that the desired state for sponsality is the original situation of the spouses before the Fall, as planned by God. This is supported by Jesus' statement "what God has joined together, no human being must separate," (Mark 10:9; Matt 19:6) which has a sacramental aspect (John Paul II 2006).

This statement presents the theological and ontological aspects of spousal love, emphasizing that the union of spouses is performed by God as a result of his will and plan for human love, as revealed in the book of Genesis. It is not simply a correction of marriage practices, but rather a theological, ontological, and teleological perspective on spousal love. John Paul II's work was to examine the accounts of creation in light of Christ's guidance. The Father acts through the Word, not as a fleeting concept but rather as a manifestation of the Spirit. The purpose of God's original act of

uniting spouses must have a specific function in his plan of eternal blessedness, as it is impossible for God to act in vain.

Christ's response makes it impossible to claim that the possibility of living original spousal love ended with original sin once he indicates "the beginning" as a reference for marriage relationships. Although original innocence is not possible, Christ's act of redemption — which is also a redemption of the body — allows for a new approach to God's plan for human love (John Paul II 2006).

> In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ does not invite man to return to the state of original innocence, because humanity has left it irrevocably behind, but *he calls him to find* — on the foundation of the perennial and, one might say, indestructible meanings of what is "human" — the *living forms of the "new man."* In this way a connection is formed, even a continuity, between the "beginning" and the perspective of redemption. In the ethos of the redemption of the body, the original ethos of creation was to be taken up anew. (John Paul II 2006, 323)

Furthermore, John Paul II equates communion through a reciprocal gift with the desire for union with God. This perception is supported by his biblical synthesis of desire, which results in the following patristic sentence: "[Concupiscent] 'desire,' I would say, is the deception of the human heart with regard to the perennial call of man and woman to communion through a reciprocal gift — a call that has been revealed in the very mystery of creation." (John Paul II 2006, 287) According to John Paul II, this concept of desire refers to a theological unity of Christ's thought, indicating consistency and completeness. The Pope states that since the human person was created from the beginning in the image and likeness of God, when Christ refers to "'the heart' or the inner man [in the Sermon of the Mont], his words do not cease to be charged with that truth about the 'beginning,' to which he had referred the whole problem of man, woman, and marriage in answer to the Pharisees." (John Paul II 2006, 287) This means that the beatitude, the ultimate end of the human being, are precisely that communion of persons.

John Paul II (2006) recognizes that the state of original innocence described in Genesis is the same state of election presented in Eph 1:4: "he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him." It is this holiness that God sees in the creation of man and woman when he declares it "very good" (Gen 1:31). This state of original innocence, lost through sin and regained through redemption, is a state of holiness. The Holy Spirit's action restores our potential to live in a state of original innocence, allowing us to freely live sponsality.

Grounded in the ethos of the Gospel, living the body in its true meaning, the spousal one, is a path to sanctification. This is the Good News hidden in John Paul II's reflections on the body, which are only a small part of his overall work. Living the body in its spousal meaning, as a sacrament of the Trinitarian Communion,

is an essential part of the path to salvation. It is God's plan for the body, and therefore for the person and human love.

2. Final Considerations and Conclusions

Karol Wojtyła referred to his catechesis on sponsality as "The Human Love in the Divine Plan." (John Paul II 2006, 659) The title is teleological, as it suggests that God has a plan for how mankind should love. According to the Pope, in response to the Pharisees' provocation about divorce, Jesus states that God has united man and woman in a very specific bond that no one should break (John Paul II 2006). According to the Pope's interpretation, Jesus' repetition of "the beginning" indicates that he supports the relationship established by God in the original state of mankind as the one that still represents God's plan for human love (John Paul II 2006).

An analysis of the ontological aspects of spousal love within Wojtyła's thought reveals that sponsality holds a profound teleological meaning for the human person. This is evident not only from his catecheses's title but also from several elements that appear in the Pope's texts, including the catecheses and *Love and Responsibility*. Three main aspects support his conclusion.

First: Wojtyła's personalistic thought on self-determination and inalienability and biblical use of spousal analogy led to understand sponsality as the definitive relation.

Human beings are ontologically relational because they are created in the image and likeness of the Trinity. Original sin prevents a blessed relationship with God from prevailing, and redemption is necessary to reintegrate this relationship with God. However, because we are capable of love, we are also free. Since the Creator has made us this way, he would not force us into a relationship without considering our capacity for self-determination and inalienability. Therefore, he would communicate us this invitation in a way that is understandable to us. The invitation must consider the human persons integrally, including their corporeality. When delving into the story of divine revelation, one may note that the spousal relationship is always linked to the perennial relation between God and humanity. Biblical definitive relations and eschatological figures are often associated with sponsality.

We are invited to participate in the life within the Trinity by relating to each other and to God in a Trinitarian way. This requires us to give ourselves totally. Our image and likeness of God lies in our potential to relate to each other in love. Love is self-giving, and spousal love is its total (integral) form. When spousal love finds reciprocity, the relationship is called sponsality. Therefore, the apex of relationality is sponsality.

Second: the Pope's understanding of the image and likeness of God regards the original relationship between man and woman as a unitive relationship between two persons. This relationship is created by God's action, which unites them as one flesh, resulting in a unity of persons.

This is John Paul II's interpretation of Christ's answer to the Pharisees: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate" (Matt 19:6). The pontiff emphasizes that this answer has a normative aspect and is part of Jesus' teaching and revelation. Wojtyła reflected on Jesus' emphasis on "the beginning" and concluded that the spousal relationship desired by God before the Fall is the same model that Jesus indicates for spouses to follow (John Paul II 2006). Therefore, it is both possible and desirable to live spousal love as it was originally intended by God. Sponsality is the original plan for human love restored through redemption (John Paul II 2006). It is important to note that according to John Paul II, spousal love can be experienced not only within marriage but also in a life of continence for the Kingdom (John Paul II 2006).

According to John Paul II (2006), spousal love between a man and a woman is a sacrament that is specifically created to reveal divine love. Therefore, it is the most appropriate hermeneutic for Trinitarian Love since marriage is the paradigmatic case of the Trinitarian Relationship (John Paul II 2006; Waldstein 2006). The perfection of the reciprocal gift only happens in the Trinitarian Relationship, to which we are called, yet to love with a spousal love, as an image and likeness of the Trinity is God's plan for humanity.

But that is not the end of the matter. A question with two possibilities arises: (1) Were we created to experience spousal love, or (2) does this kind of relationship exist because we have certain ontological characteristics that make it possible?

If the second case occurs, spousal love is only a possibility based on certain ontological attributes, and we are considered persons precisely because we have these attributes, then it means that, on the horizon of the *imago Dei*, to be a person — image and likeness of the Trinity — is to have attributes that make relationship possible, while relationship itself is only a possibility. In this case, the possibility of relationality, particularly sponsality, would be located on the horizon of possibilities opened up by our ontological attributes. However, it would have neither a protological nor an eschatological role here, because it wouldn't be part of the teleological aspect of the human being, nor would it be necessary for the fullness of being. Relationality would here be ontologically possible, but not original, much less necessary; it would be an accident, not an aspect of the essence of the person. This principle should also be applied to the analogy of the Trinity (as marriage is the paradigmatic case of Trinitarian love). However, this risks falling into tritheism. Relationality would cease to be an ontological feature of the Trinity; it would be a possible reality because the Trinitarian persons could and chose to be so. If the second option were the answer to the question, we would only have the characteristics of the human person that

originate in personalistic philosophical thought: self-conscious, self-determined, inalienable, and their derivatives. This would not necessarily assume the possibility of transcendence, or going out of oneself, and would result in a modern inadequate anthropology (John Paul II 2006; Waldstein 2006; Merecki 2014; Wojtyła 2013).

If we accept the first proposition of our question (we were created to live spousal love) as true, then spousal love retains its full *imago Dei* aspect as the apex of relationality. This proposition sustains the affirmation that the Trinity is a relationship, and so are human beings. Therefore, we are meant to live in a relationship that reflects the image of the Trinity. No other kind of love can achieve this because any kind of love that does not involve the total gift of self is a love without fullness. Hence, the proposition that being a person means having the capacity to find the fullness of love in spousal love becomes an accurate conclusion. Is a new personalistic definition that arises from Wojtyła's thought analysis. Karol Wojtyła develops a spousal personalism.

Taking the position, that we are ontologically — rather than accidentally — relational, does not create an impasse regarding whether relationship, as a fact, precedes existence, or consciousness — a fundamental aspect of Wojtyła's personalism according to Merecki (2014). Even if we did not wish to enter a relationship, we would still exist and be relational, despite not being related to anyone. In this sense, existence precedes relationship. However, we are teleologically and ontologically relational, which means that we are ontologically transcendental. Wojtyła's thought (John Paul II 2006; Wojtyła 2013) suggests that even if the absolute of non-relationship were possible, our solitude would still lead our consciousness to go beyond ourselves and discover a relationship with the Absolute in the whole created world.

Third: spousal love can lead the person to blessedness and fulfillment by imitating Christ's *kenosis*.

There are two aspects to this guidance. The first pertains to the fulfillment achieved by consciousness in human historical reality. John Paul II (2006) describes in his catechesis a cyclical phenomenon of the expansion of love and self-awareness. By totally giving oneself to another person, when this giving finds an adequate reception, the giver discovers oneself precisely in the process of giving, because one encounters a gift greater than one thought one could offer. There is an expansion of consciousness and spirit that allows the giver to offer even more, finding a new boundary of self. This expansion continues as long as it finds reception. It is not necessary to perform a new kenosis once one has already given oneself totally; it is a matter of love in perfect and unlimited expansion.

The second aspect corresponds to the eschatological reality. God designed a specific type of relationship that he blessed and chose to be the sacrament of his own love (John Paul II 2006). It is impossible for God to behave vainly. Therefore, this act of his drives human beings towards his will, which is for "everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4) and "to be holy and without blemish

before him" (Eph 1:4). Furthermore, sponsality is the only type of relation that leads to a perfect union between persons, fulfilling Jesus Priestly Prayer (John 17:21).

Our analysis of Wojtyła's thought has led us to identify these three major themes that demonstrate that sponsality is the teleological reality of human person. At the same time, it can be stated that these same characteristics serve as a radical synthesis of spousal love and without one of them love cannot be considered spousal: (i) it is based on free personal choice; (ii) it has the Trinity as its origin and model, making it kenotic; and (iii) it leads to perfect union, which is the fullness of beatitude.

Further study is required to analyze which ontological aspects are necessary for of the human beings to be able to love in a spousal way. If the teleological reason for human beings is to love in a spousal way, it must have been inscribed in their being from the beginning. What attributes of the human beings demonstrate that they were designed for spousal love? This question should inspire additional research.

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"Interpretation" in *RIBLA*: A Multifaceted Meaning

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Abstract: This article analyses the evolution and meaning of "Interpretation" in the journal *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* (*RIBLA* [Latin American Journal of Biblical Interpretation]) from its inception in 1988 up to 2023, with a focus on the period 2012–2023. Launched in Costa Rica in 1988, *RIBLA* reflects the faith experiences and struggles of Latin American communities and churches from the popular Reading of the Bible in Latin America and the hermeneutics of liberation. In its early days, *RIBLA* focused on biblical hermeneutics as the interpretation of the text in its historic context in relation to the life of the Ecclesial Base Communities (BECs) of the continent. In the years 1988–2011, it emphasised a liberationist interpretation of the Bible, with a focus on Indigenous communities. The dialogue between Revelation in indigenous religions and Revelation in traditional religions is important, as is the figure of Paul in the theology of liberation. Between 2012 and 2023, *RIBLA* restates the importance of biblical narratives in collaborative interpretations. In short, "interpretation" in *RIBLA* is seen as fundamental to confront the challenges of Latin America and the world. With a constant commitment to the Word of God, contextualised liberation and a dialogue between hermeneutics and hermeneutics of liberation, the journal offers an "unfinished" interpretation that is "open" to new considerations, as a beacon of critical reflection in the midst of historic crises.

Keywords: interpretation, *RIBLA*, hermeneutics, Ecclesial Base Communities (BECs), Latin America, Bible, emergent communities, diverse hermeneutical perspectives

This article explores the meaning of "Interpretation" in the journal *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana*[1] (*RIBLA* 1988–2023 [Latin American Journal of Biblical Interpretation]), specifically in the period between 2012 and 2023. The concept of 'interpretation' will be understood under the specificity of the context of Latin American biblical interpretation constituted in *RIBLA*, drawing also on the theoretical developments of Hans-Georg Gadamer (2003) and Paul Ricoeur (1995). Launched in the first semester of 1988 in San José, Costa Rica, the journal positions itself in the faith experiences and struggles of Latin American communities and churches. The inaugural topic was "Lectura Popular de la biblia en América Latina. Una Hermenéutica de la liberación" (Popular Reading of the Bible in Latin America: A hermeneutics of liberation) (Richard et al. 1988) and examines the nature of the journal and the choice of the name, *RIBLA*, to encapsulate the key

1 The Journal is published in Spanish and Portuguese, three times a year. It can be consulted at: https://www.centrobiblicoquito.org/ribla/.

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words: Journal, Interpretation, Bible and Latin America. It is necessary to mention that this article emphasises the time period from 2012 to 2023, and stops, during this period, at some volumes that invite a direct reflection on Latin American biblical interpretation.

RIBLA's first issue includes an editorial by Pablo Richard (1988) who highlights Biblical hermeneutics as the central argument, that is, the interpretation of biblical text in its historical context and to the service of the Word of God, alive and active today in the Ecclesial Base Communities (BECs) of the continent.

During the 1970s and 1980s, biblical work in Latin America focused on hermeneutics as a liberating and original exercise. Communities interpret the Bible from their position as a people, mostly impoverished and humble, but faithful to historic-critical methods and biblical exegesis. For *RIBLA*, biblical hermeneutics in the region is inseparable from its source: the poor communities.

According to Milton Schwantes (1988, 5–6), in this context the Bible is reclaimed for life by the modest and humble people of the slums and impoverished countryside of Latin America. The reading of the Bible acquires a specific direction and is shared with other groups and contexts involved in similar struggles, with a common language that is accessible to all.

1. "Interpretation" in the Early Days of *RIBLA*

The editorial in *RIBLA* 1 focuses the argument on Biblical Hermeneutics,[2] understood as the interpretation of biblical text based on the Reading of the Word of God by BECs, in its diverse and complex historical context (Gadamer 2003; Ricoeur 1995). This method attempts to find in the Bible the life and strength needed to advance the existential project (Richard 1988, 7). The introduction and the editorial page establish a synonymous relationship between biblical interpretation and hermeneutics.

Biblical interpretation has been increasingly centred on God's poor and devout people by scholars and practitioners. They have discovered people's capacity to listen to the Word and to the Teacher of the Word, the Spirit of Jesus who guides us to all the Truth (John 16:13). The power of the Spirit and the accumulated knowledge of biblical scholars unite in the liberating and productive work in the service of

2 Biblical Hermeneutics focuses on the study of principles, methods, and theories aimed at interpreting the sacred texts of the Bible. This field encompasses both exegesis, which involves a critical and philological analysis of the text to propose a primary meaning in its historical, cultural, and literary context, and hermeneutics, which is responsible for translating those meanings into contemporary contexts, allowing for a profound understanding of the biblical message in the present. Biblical hermeneutics, therefore, seeks not only to unravel the literal sense of the text but also to analyze its theological, ethical, and existential dimensions, promoting a continuous dialogue between the ancient text and modern human experience.

the Word. Thus, the hermeneutics of liberation was born. This issue offers, in a concise and critical way, some advances in the field of Hermeneutics (Richard 1988, 7).

RIBLA's purpose is to capture the *popular reading of the Bible*, that is, Bible readings by individuals and communities of believers. Biblical Hermeneutics from different human conditions generates varied and diverse "hermeneutics." This dynamic inspires the community through the Word of God to face their daily tasks, forge learning pathways born from assemblies and generates theological-biblical dialogue in Latin America and with brothers and sisters from other continents.

2. "Interpretation" in *RIBLA* 1988–2011

RIBLA highlights the importance of a liberationist interpretation of the Bible. In issue 11, Milton Schwantes and Pablo Richard focus on the reading and interpretation of the Bible by Abya Yala (indigenous name for Latin America), emphasising the connection between faith, culture and social struggles. Popular reading of the Bible becomes a hermeneutics of liberation, as it enables the Indigenous people to discern their religious traditions and to better understand the sacred texts, and expands the horizons of their religion and culture (Schwantes and Richard 1992, 6).

The fruitful dialogue between God's Revelation in indigenous religions and the Revelation in biblical traditions supports these hermeneutical experiences. Moreover, *RIBLA* emphasises the evangelical practices of the Indigenous people as a referent not only for these communities, but also for believers in Latin America and the Caribbean. It addresses the interpretation of Paul in the last decade of the 20th century, acknowledging its limited use of liberation theology and in the early days of *RIBLA*. The interest in Paul as creator of a counter-hegemonic symbolism in the midst of oppression reflects a new reading of the apocalyptic, as escapist literature and as justified protest and certain hope (Míguez 1995, 5–6).

The study of the Pentateuch in *RIBLA* 23 encourages dialogue with other interpretations of the book and is situated in the praxis of Latin American communities. Liberation theology posits *the Exodus* as a fundamental hermeneutics for reading the Bible; but it is not only limited to what it was but also to the everyday implications for believers (Schwantes 1988, 7).

3. Diverse Hermeneutical Perspectives

Issue 28 of *RIBLA* brings together the academic work of the Third Continental Meeting of Biblical Animation (Medellín, 1995) and focuses on the hermeneutics of

the New Testament, specifically in the Letter to Philemon. The assembly approached the study from diverse hermeneutical perspectives such as feminist, rural, urban, black and indigenous (Reyes 1997, 5–7).

In a subsequent meeting of *RIBLA's* biblical scholars in Lima in 1996, the decision to compile an issue with the hermeneutical contributions of the Continental meeting was restated. The hermeneutical development emerged from the biblical movement, using as a pretext Aníbal Cañaveral Orozco's study of *Letter to Philemon: A Response to the Longing for Freedom* (1997, 44–52).

According to Francisco Reyes Archila (1997, 5–7), *RIBLA* 28 captures the meaning of collaborative interpretations, and demonstrates a closer and more scholarly relationship between members of the biblical movement. The issue addresses the epistle to Philemon from a hermeneutics of "new subjects," as a strategic text to challenge the universal exegetical tradition. The Latin American reading redefines the interpretation of Paul's epistles and offers new perspectives on the apostle, his theology and early Christianity (Reyes 1997, 7).

The text also confronts the necessary dialogue between exegesis and hermeneutics. Specific hermeneutics include the peasant, based on the meaning of *Oikos* (house) which centres on the rural house and its kitchen. Black hermeneutics emphasises Onesimus' social condition as a slave and underlines the historical experience of slavery and the need for freedom. Hermeneutics through women's eyes exalts both the emotional and body language of Apphia and other women in the letter, and reclaims the voice and dignity of the women in the New Testament. Indigenous hermeneutics analyses authority and relationships within the community from the symbolic world of ancestral cultures. Child-centred hermeneutics questions the presence of children in the families of Philemon, Apphia and other women as a central mediation for a believer's reading of the Word of God from childhood. In the framework of collaborative interpretation in *RIBLA* 28, hermeneutics and exegesis are essential in community Bible reading in Latin America. Both processes are interwoven in a constant, mutually enriching dialogue.

4. "Interpretation" in *RIBLA* 2012–2023

This period is central to this article because it is where *RIBLA* reaffirms the importance of biblical narratives in collaborative interpretations. Moreover, it does so especially by appealing to interpretation from a communal biblical perspective. For example, issue 73 (2016), dedicated to the Acts of the Apostles, broadens geographical limits, and addresses the expansion of communities. It invites believers to be witnesses to the Gospel in the complex circumstances of Latin America (Izidoro 2012, 5) and engages in dialogue with the popular religiosities of the continent.

It also examines mediterranean cultures of the first century A.D., and interpretation from the viewpoint of those excluded and impoverished (Izidoro and Noguiera 2016, 7–8). Further, it assesses early Christianity's interpretation of the apocryphal texts, excluded by conservative clerical and theological prejudices, as they reveal popular spiritualities and practices. Their reading uncovers complex interrelations with everyday life within the imperial context of Rome which articulate poor people's identity, develop strategies and strengthen memory in the face of adversity and show early Christianity on the social margins.

4.1. "Interpretation" of the Bible in Challenging Situations

RIBLA issue 74 (2017) addresses the conflicts and peace processes in Colombia. It examines the transition from war to a culture of peace, explores the relationship between the Bible and the context, and emphasises the role of religious communities in the peace process (Mena López and Moya 2017, 7–8).

In turn, *RIBLA* 75 explores slavery, oppression, and diverse manifestations of violence, against a backdrop of the Book of Judges, a case study little explored in Latin America (Arias Ardila and Andiñach 2017, 7). The sacrifice of the daughter of Jephthah, judge of Israel, is examined through a paradigmatic hermeneutics; there the young and new peoples are the first victims of the conflict and the "human sacrifices" constitute a recurrent theme that converses with an image of God, as seen in Judg 1:1–3, 6; 3:7–16, 31; 17:1–21, 25 (Arias Ardila 2017, 85–100).

Mercedes L. García Bachmann (2017, 101–18) adopts a paradigmatic hermeneutics when he goes beyond the "traditional" gender roles of women as a daughter, mother, or wife. Although many women as victims of violence are present, the accounts in Judges also introduce women who are brave, warriors, judges, and prophets. For Lucía Riba (2017, 119–36), the story of Levite's concubine (Judg 19) requires an ethical and political compromise to come to terms with the biblical critique of violence and the androcentric perspective evident in many texts.

According to Zoila Cueto Villamán (2017, 137–50), in Judg 17–21, the structure of the literary passage, on the basis of the phrase 'there was no king in Israel,' leaves room to interpret the prominence of women. Despite enduring manipulation, abuse and even slaughter, women open the door to hope and carry out an important role in a kingless society.

In this context, the authors offer a new name for Paul of Tarsus' Letter to the Galatians, no longer a letter of 'justification through faith' or a 'letter of freedom in Christ' but as the 'Epistle of the Opening of Frontiers' (Ferreira and Izidoro 2017, 7): "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26–28).

For *RIBLA* 76, this anthem has deep connections with Latin America as it condemns discrimination based on social status, race, language, religion, political choice or gender (Ferreira and Izidoro 2017, 11).

4.2. "Interpretation" of the Bible from Emergent Communities

In *RIBLA* 77, young people critically and creatively convey their realities in the interpretation of biblical passages (Londoño and Torres Millán 2018, 7). This process takes up aspects of Latin American exegesis and biblical theology and addresses contemporary topics such as social pain, injustice, feminicide, climate change and corruption.

RIBLA 80 analyses the capitalist economy and new idolism (Míguez 2019, 11–22) and introduces an ecological hermeneutics (Castillo 2019, 37–57; Lopes 2019, 59–74; Cañaveral Orozco 2019, 145–66). Categories of health, fullness of life and salvation are explored from an eco-theological approach, deconstructing patriarchal images of God. Further, the symbolic imagery of Jesus connects with certain categories: wealth/poverty; economy/ecology; violence/death; land/agriculture; exploitation/usury, all current situations in Latin America.

Issue 81, centred on Nehemiah, explores forced migration (Kaefer 2020, 9). Nehemiah supports the diasporic communities, renews convictions and maintains a joyous hope. José Ademar Kaefer highlights the prohibition of mixed marriages in Neh 13:23–29 as a reflection of the mentality of those returning from Babylon; a current ideology found today to legitimise divisions, prejudices, and violence in the region.

Jhon Fredy Mayor Tamayo (2020, 107–22) analyses the hermeneutics of Nehemiah 4 and 6, which shows the rupture between Jews and Samaritans. In contrast to the traditional version, the Samaritans are victims of the Jews who use Persian interests to reconstruct Jerusalem in detriment to the minorities.

Omar João da Silva (2020, 21–34) examines the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem in Neh 2:1–10 and 3:1–32 and highlights the difference between "wall" in the singular and "walls" in the plural. The former, as an ideological concept, restricts the Jewish community's sense of belonging whilst the latter emphasises the physical building of the walls.

In response to the COVID context (2020–2021), *RIBLA* 82 suggests models of "good living" from the Bible with categories of imperial, colonisation, decolonisation, colonial and decolonial (Ventura Campusano and Dietrich 2020, 7–9). The Christian biblical-theological interpretation contributes to the struggle against imperialist, colonial and neoliberal systems, present today in Latin America and marked by colonial expansion.

Maria Cristiana Ventura Campusano and Luiz José Dietrich (2020, 8) describes colonialist imperialism and advocates for an antihegemonic reading of the Bible. Interpretation attempts to generate itineraries of decolonisation, a change of mentality,

in the style of Paulo Freire, who proposes overcoming the internal oppressor in the minds of the oppressed.

4.3. A Biblical "Interpretation" from a Critical Analysis of Reality

RIBLA 83 considers "Alternative Communities" and the popular reading of the Bible in Latin America (Mansilla 2021, 7–9). In the base communities, these pastoral practices, daily celebrations and believers' reflections imply biblical reading and also a critical interpretation of reality. According to Sandra Nancy Mansilla, these alternative communities, situated on the margins and the peripheries, are made invisible and are overlooked, but from there biblical texts are rescued that envisage controversies over power, authority, status and representation in biblical structures and institutions and their written contexts (Mansilla 2021, 7).

This issue also recognises new voices on the continent for biblical interpretation from epistemological, cultural, and economic "otherness" (Villalobos Mendoza 2020). These communities speak of God, community, dignity, justice and diverse spiritualities to contrast the power of capitalism and patriarchal-colonial oppression.

From their liminal position, alternative communities make the border a habitable place. This liminal condition is a path between two fields, a transformative space open to new possibilities (Mignolo 2000; García Paredes 1997; Mansilla 2019a). At the same time, to live on the border implies protecting and threatening, coexisting between civilisation and brutality. Community interpretation emerges from these marginal circles, challenges academic and institutional comfort zones and generates a critical hermeneutics of reality (Mansilla 2021, 10).

4.4. Biblical "Interpretation" of the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the COVID-19 context, issue 84, *Pandemic and Bible*, critically examines the impact of the pandemic, human fragility, solidarity, and the need to see our neighbour as a brother or sister and not as a danger (Fernández and Kaefer 2021, 7–9). Furthermore, a Latin American biblical hermeneutics (LBL) is proposed that focuses on the mystique of giving one's life for others and being solidary.

RIBLA 85 explores the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on vulnerable populations, questioning health systems that are focused on callous economic benefits. The pandemic triggered economic, political, and sociocultural crises and revealed stark realities such as human trafficking, issues also considered in the Bible (Madrigal Rajo and Lopes 2021, 7–8).

The coercion of individuals includes, among others, prostitution, slavery, sexual exploitation, forced services and labour. Rebeca Cabrera (2021, 26–40), supported by Gen 16 and 21, highlights the patriarchal right of men to withhold sexual access to women and children, proposing ethical dilemmas due to the threat to an individual's

dignity. The contextual interpretation of the "womb for rent" goes beyond theological and legal reading to focus on ethics.

Larry José Madrigal Rajo (2021, 41–56), through Gen 37, stresses the hermeneutic production of gender in sibling violence and the commercialisation of a body that is different. According to Madrigal, a gendered hermeneutic deconstruction is possible of the male figure and the links of violence and power in the family.

The Song 8:8–10 is interpreted by Daylíns Rufín Pardo (2021, 84–95) from a hermeneutics of liberation perspective, with linguistic and grammatical data. The Song of Songs, which, for Rabbi Akiba, was the most sacred book because it interprets the love between Yahweh and the house of Israel. Without dwelling on sexuality, women's bodies and marriage, it opens up an important and symbolic mystique in the eloquent and poetic words of women, revealing a free personality and a connection with the primordial rights of Eve's descendants.

Mercedes Lopes (2021, 119–30) unmasks the desperate and degrading situation of the young exploited slave girl in Acts 16:16–20, where Paul removes her gift of divination. The young girl was tricked by her "owners," her life and body were commodities and a concentration of others' wealth.

4.5. A Hermeneutics from Childhood

RIBLA 86 addresses the harsh reality of childhood during the COVID-19 pandemic and uncovers additional pandemics within this health emergency (Montemayor López and Madrigal Rajo 2022, 7–9). The first article highlights the active presence of children as clear subjects of revelation in biblical narratives (Mayor Tamayo 2022, 17–32). Children are victims of violence and painful experiences, but they are also the protagonists of processes of change and transformation.

For Alejandro Cussianovich (2022, 44–58), the image of a child in the mother's womb (Isa 7:10–17; 43:5; 44:3) confirms God's revelation in life's details, in the relationship between vulnerable and impoverished communities. Karen Castillo Mayagoitia (2022, 59–74) bases childhood rights on the exegesis of Matt 19:13–15, with a feminist focus that empowers women and children in the face of patriarchal criteria.

Elisa Medina Fuentes (2022, 98–116) uses the methodology of "three photographic views" to compare the Exodus and Matt 2:16–18 narratives and unveils the connection through the painful reality of a sacrificed childhood. Edesio Sánchez Cetina (2022, 131–47) explores "early youth" during the Second Temple and highlights the importance of the family in religious and educational instruction of yesterday and today.

From Isa 9:1–6, in the fragility of the child-king, Ventura and Schiavo (2022, 148–64) uncover the passage from control and power to a life of service. Mailé Vázquez Avila (2022, 178–96) conducts a systematic exegesis of 2 Kgs 5:1–14 from narratives written by children of their understanding of the biblical story.

RIBLA 87 considers it relevant in today's Latin America to study Saint Paul's letter to the Church in Rome. Pedro Robledo Ramírez (2022, 11–40) presents a rhetorical analysis of the letter drawing on literary symmetry and its role in the overall structure of the epistle. Pablo Manuel Ferrer (2022, 80–94) uncovers dichotomies in Rom 6–7, exploring tensions between greed/grace and law/grace in a neoliberal and virtuality/corporality context.

For Richter (2022, 111–31), the phrase 'All Israel will be saved!' in Romans 6–7 makes Jesus Christ the fulfilment of the law and the salvation of everyone through faith. César Moya (2022, 132–55) reinterprets Rom 13:1–7 in terms of obedience and insubordination and suggests the existence of a "revolutionary subordination" behind the Pauline text.

4.6. Interpretation of the Bible and the Deconstruction of Fundamentalism

RIBLA 88 addresses with concern the increase in literal readings of the Bible in Latin America, with attitudes of hate and discrimination in ecclesiastic and social circles (Mena López 2022, 7–8). This fundamentalism interprets the Bible as a text dictated by God which scorns people's capacity to question and develop critical thought.

Sexist, racist, xenophobic, and homophobic readings circulate from the pulpits and on social media, challenging individual and collective rights in the name of religious freedom and prioritising legal norms over human rights (Mena López 2022, 7–8).

This issue proposes an interpretation of the Bible that promotes non-violence, gender equality, welcoming migrants, women, children, and sick people, respecting even those who do not share a Christian perspective. To counter fundamentalist positions, it suggests beginning the interpretation at the historical evolution of biblical texts, the authors' cultural background and scientific and critical contributions (Pontificia Comisión Bíblica 1993, 25–26).

In order to counter literal and fundamentalist readings of the Bible, *RIBLA* 88 offers examples such as the deconstruction of punishment and the law in the first chapters of Genesis (Guerra Carrasco 2022, 35–48). Scholarly and critical debate between faith and culture dismantles *biblicism*[3] and *bibliolatry*[4] (P. Riba 2022, 49–61). Another example is based on a feminist exegesis to read the patriarchal reform of King

3 There are various definitions of "biblicism." It is an expression of a fideistic tendency that makes the reading of the Sacred Scriptures or its exegesis the only point of reference for the truth. It identifies the Word of God only with the Sacred Scriptures and empties Tradition of any meaning. See *FR* 55.

4 According to the *Spanish Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (1980), "bibliolatry" is the worship of a sacred book, for example, the Jewish and Christian Bible. It is the adoration of a book, the idolatrous homage to a book or the deifying of a book. It is a form of idolatry that does not permit neither critical exegesis nor interpretation of the text.

Hezekiah of Judah (2 Kgs 18:1–8). Carolina Bezerra de Souza, uiz José Dietrich, and Clóvis Torquato Jr. (2022, 63–76) draw on *kyriarchy*[5] to unveil women's hidden and silent religious experiences and the love for their feminine divinities in Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, John's letters reflect divisions in Christian communities but confront hate and enmity with "agape: inclusive love." (Mena López and Vergara 2022, 125–42) God's self-sacrificing love, in the face of intolerant and antagonistic stances, is an inclusive experience that does not discriminate against anyone.

4.7. Peasants and the Common Home in Biblical Interpretation

RIBLA 89 highlights the key work of Latin American peasants during the COVID-19 pandemic and how essential their work was in the global food crisis (Cañaveral, Vásquez and Da Silva 2023, 7–8).

Since 1997, Peasant Hermeneutics of the Bible has sought recognition and this was finally achieved in *RIBLA* 89 (2023, 8). This issue emphasises the diversity of peasant faces and reiterates the urgency to preserve nature in the face of climate change. Peasant biblical hermeneutics influences rural pastoral ministry, theology of the land and catechism of the peasant population (Cañaveral Orozco, 12–6). The methodology of this interpretation is described with seven criteria, centred on "*campesinidad*"[6] (Martínez Cardozo 2023, 27–39).

Vázquez Avila (2023, 40–54) interprets Gen 2:28; Exod 1:10; Hos 6:6 and Qoh 9:7 from the interplay between the Bible and the peasant world. Esteban Arias Ardila (2023, 55–66) explains the serpent in Gen 3 as a symbol of repression of the peasants by the powerful.

Kaefer (2023, 67–79) conducts a peasant analysis of the narratives in Gen 37–50 and evidences the struggles of shepherds and villagers in a context of seasons, famine and violence. Sandro Gallazzi (2023, 93–109) discusses the theologies in Lev 25 and introduces the peasant voice which defends the land as a gift from God. Marcos Paulo Bailão (2023, 124–39) interprets Ps 133 from a peasant hermeneutics, as working together in the field is the basis of the community. Valmor Da Silva (2023, 157–76) explores the parables of Jesus and reveals peasant images and realities in his metaphors.

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5 The term was coined in English by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in 1992, when her book *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* was published. It derives from the Greek *kyrios* (κύριος), meaning lord and master and from the Greek *archè* (ἀρχή), which can be translated as authority, control, sovereignty. *Kyriarchy* means "sovereignty", rule by a sovereign. According to the author, *kyriarchy* is not so much a hierarchical system that emphasises domination, but a complex pyramidal system because it comprises the creation of a slave class, race, gender or people. The position of oppression and dependency is reinforced with education, socialisation and severe violence, and the rationalisation of masculine ideology.

6 *Campesinidad* is a category constructed in the grassroots work of peasant communities. There is no corresponding word in English for this term (Martínez Cardozo 2023, 28).

4.8. Job's Interpretation of Contemporary Crises

Under the title *Job: A Current and Situated Reading*, *RIBLA* 90 reflects Latin American biblical work; the Book of Job goes beyond addressing pain in a postexilic Jewish context. The experience of suffering resonates in current Latin American reality and gives a voice to the oppressed and those in need of justice (Cardoso and Fonseca Ariza 2023, 7).

The focus of the Book of Job becomes crucial in the exegesis, posing questions about divine action in times of crisis and the underlying theologies. In the Latin American context, the Book of Job interweaves social problems, theoretical frameworks, methodologies and offers ethical proposals from a believer's reading.

Based on traits of the Jewish literary community, Santa González (2023, 33–40) emphasises the tradition of *Targumim*. The literary reading of Job provides elements to interpret pain and suffering from a theological perspective. Jovanir Lage (2023, 41–50) highlights the religious and political outcry against forms of ideological repression, questioning the theology of retribution that blames poor people for their inhumane situation. Carmiña Navia Velasco (2023, 51–58) introduces four images of God, in particular that of God as a mystery, based on the experiences of women in Cali, Colombia.

A feminist reading of Job 2:9–10; 28 (Cabrera Piñango 2023, 59–70), achieves an intertextual interpretation of the "monsters of chaos" (Monteiro de Matos 2023, 71–84) and an exegetic reading of Job 38:1–42:6, which explores Yahveh's link with creation in Hebrew terms (Favaretto 2023, 85–100).

According to Nancy Cardoso (2023, 101–18), Paulo Freire's pedagogy is relevant in the interpretation of the Book of Job, with the categories *limit-situation* and *limit-act*. To close, this issue brings a documented testimony of a pastoral group reading of the Book of Job during the COVID-19 period (Rodrigues Da Silva 2023, 134–45).

4.9. Interpretation of Resistance and Violence Today

RIBLA 91 analyses violence in the Bible from structural, symbolic, gendered and religious perspectives and explores new approaches to resistance and resilience in the midst of violent contexts exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of non-violent processes, such as community participation, popular education and academic research confronts the realm of death and devastation (Gareca, Madrigal Rajo, and Starr 2023, 9–10).

Violence emerges in certain biblical texts and even though the texts reflect the cruelty of their context, they do not justify it. The authors criticise violence and propose alternatives. They highlight violence as the result of unjust structures (Rodrigues de Morais and Dietrich 2023, 17–35), whilst Gareca, Madrigal, and Starr (2023, 51–64) examines biblical narratives that glorify masculine characters despite

having committed acts of violence. The parable of the compassionate Samaritan demonstrates that gender-based violence can be resisted (Rosal 2023, 91–109).

On the other hand, Paul of Tarsus criticises religious violence and defends fraternal love as the foundation of Christian faith (Sales de Lima 2023, 149–62). The editors of this issue emphasise the relevance of harsh regional and global realities, highlighting the importance of returning to life-giving sources, even in the midst of the destructive violence in the Gaza Strip and Israeli civil society (Gareca, Madrigal Rajo, and Starr 2023, 16).

Conclusion

"Interpretation" in *RIBLA* (1988–2023) is fundamental for its multifaceted evolution in response to the challenges of Latin America and the world. The commitment to the Word of God, contextualised liberation and the dialogue between hermeneutics and hermeneutics of liberation are its reason for being. An essential purpose of Abya Yala is the fruitful dialogue between indigenous religions and biblical traditions. Inspired by the figure of Paul, creator of a counter-hegemonic symbolism, *RIBLA* promotes an interpretation "unfinished" and "open" to new considerations, because it will always be formative for the faith of communities, in particular for the impoverished and vulnerable ones, to recognise its new expression in Latin America. In the midst of historic crises, *RIBLA* offers the continent a biblical hermeneutics as a beacon of light and assertive, critical reflection.

Translated by Juan David Restrepo Zapata

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The Synodal Method in Building Marital and Family Community

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to present the use of synodal method in building the family community. The method was developed for the use of the Synod about the synodality, initiated in 2021 in the Catholic Church. Documents of the church indicate the need for using the method within the universal Church as well as the local Churches. However, due to the fact that a Christian family is also a domestic Church, the method can also be used in building the marital-family community. The research conducted for the use of this article was based mainly on the documents of the Catholic Church devoted to the synod on synodality. They became the source of the undertaken analyses. The authors also used the elaborations regarding the research problem and the marriage and family issues. The aim of the article and the nature of the source materials suggest the use of the adapted research methods. The leading method was the monographic method in some of its dimensions. Moreover, the other research methods include: descriptive method, the method of the analysis of documents and the analysis of the contents. The article consists of three parts. The first part presents the novelty and characteristics of the synodal method. The second part was devoted to the applicability of the method in building the community of marriage and the third part was devoted to the applicability of the method in deepening the bond between parents and their children.

Keywords: synodal method, synod, marriage, family, domestic Church

While initiating the Synodal Way for the People of God in 2021, Pope Francis inscribed in it the communion and participation. These two realities: communion and participation are possible to implement with the proper method of conducting dialogue which, apart from being conducted by the interlocutors, is also conducted by the Holy Spirit (Coda 2019, 175–76). This method was called the synodal method in the synodal documents. It is an innovative method, although it originated in the well-known forms of dialogue and cooperation previously used in the Catholic Church. This method was mainly developed for the needs of the synod on synodality, however, it can – due to its specific nature – be used not only in the universal Church and in the local Churches but also in the family, that is in the domestic Church (Fiałkowski 2018, 550).

The Light-Life movement, also known as the Oasis movement, offers the spouses the marital dialogue as a tool for deepening their relationship and for building unity in marriage. However, the synodal method is broader and more comprehensive,

it can introduce additional values and can be used not only in conjugal relations but also in the family. Although the synodal method can use the elements of the marital dialogue, it differs from it in a few crucial aspects.

The marital dialogue focuses on communication and on solving problems which arise between the husband and wife. It is intimate and private, and it focuses on the marital relations and on everyday life. It aims at deepening the mutual understanding, at strengthening the bond, at solving problems and at supporting healthy communication. The outcome of the marital dialogue directly influences everyday life of the spouses, improving their relations and the mutual understanding. The dialogue can be practised every day or as often as it is necessary, and it constitutes an integral part of the marital life.

On the other hand, the synodal method can be used in order to deepen the marital dialogue and to discover it in a new form; it also involves the whole family. This method is structured and collective and it is directed at the joint decision-making, at building consensus and at promoting unity. It aims at solving problems, planning and joint decision-making. The outcome of the synodal method are long-term and aim at improving the functioning and unity of the whole community. The method is introduced periodically, as a part of the planned meetings, often in response to the specific needs or problems.

Although both the marital dialogue and the synodal method are based on communication and cooperation, they differ with regard to the scope, aims, structure, time and tools. The marital dialogue is more private and intimate, focused on the relation between two people, while the synodal method is more structured and collective and it aims at reaching the consensus between the spouses as well as between the spouses and their children.

The aim of this article is to indicate the possibility of application of the synodal method in the family – that is: in the domestic Church. It mainly concerns the application of the method in building the community-dimension of marriage and of the family. The article is based mainly on the documents of the Catholic Church which regard the synod on synodality. The authors also used certain elaborations on this issue and on the issues of marriage and the family. The assumed aim of the article and the source materials suggest the use of the adapted research methods. The authors used a range of detailed methods, mainly: the method of analysis of documents, the analysis of the contents and the descriptive method. The monographic method was the leading method. The article consists of three parts. The first part presents the novelty and characteristics of the synodal method. The second part was devoted to the applicability of the method in building the community of marriage and the third part was devoted to the applicability of the method in deepening the bond between parents and their children.

1. The Novelty and Characteristics of the Synodal Method

Both the Holy Scripture and the Tradition confirm that synodality is the integral feature of the Church, and through this feature the Church reveals Herself and develops as the People of God (ITC 2018, 42). The fundamental call of the synodality is the common discernment of the signs of time (*GS* 11, 44). Common, that is the one involving all of the People of God. The novelty of the Synod of Bishops of 2021–2024 regarded not only the division into the preparatory local phase and the continental phase, but also the decision introduced by Pope Francis to increase the number of the lay faithful in the plenary sessions of the synod and to give them the right to vote. It is enough to mention that the first session of the synod included 363 members with the right to vote, including 54 women.

In order for the community discernment to be properly experienced, its participants need to be mature enough. It is also required to use tools and structures which foster the dialogue and interaction within the People of God. Thus the new formula of the synod suggested by Pope Francis and the original method of the synodal work. Before the first session of the synod, *Instrumentum Laboris* calls it: "the dialogue in the Spirit," but is also known as: "the conversation in the Spirit," "spiritual conversation" or generally "the synodal method." (*IL* 32)

The basis of this method consists in listening meant as careful listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit inside oneself and into the voices of the companions on the road for discernment (Coda 2020, 190). Listening in the synodal method is intentional, that is: it depends on the man's will. Therefore, it is not enough to listen, but we must also hear it. It sometimes requires leaving our comfort zone, questioning one's thoughts and certainties and opening to the new ways of perceiving certain issues. Listening must permeate every stage of the synodal method. The fruits of the process of discernment and the proper direction on the way of our vocation depend on the commitment into hearing God's voice.

The synodal method consists of a few following stages. However, we must remember that they do not regard technicalities but rather a clear definition of the steps which should be taken to make the discernment effective (Steccanella 2022, 46). Each particular stage permeate s the others and often require adjustment to a certain topic, to the other participants or to the external conditions. Still, they indicate intentions and dynamism which are characteristic for the synodal way of the dialogue (*IL* 41).

The dynamics of the conversation in the Spirit includes three basic steps which are complemented by a kind of "a preparatory process." The first step assumes speaking up of all the group members. It is not about a free statement or presenting one's state of knowledge on a certain subject or about presenting revolutionary theses. The first speech should express one's own experience discovered during the prayer in the course of the preparations with regard to the suggested topic (*IL* 37).

Therefore, the synodal method firstly assumes the personal prayer which becomes the source of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit in oneself. The openness in listening also assumes the openness to hear oneself in order to most specifically define the opinion on a given subject. The preparatory process of the prayer leads to reassuming one's spiritual intuitions, to defining expectations and priorities with regard to the subject which should be taken up. This double "inner level" constitutes not only the starting point but it is also necessary because it opens the man into God's voice and it allows the light of the Holy Spirit to permeate one's personal thoughts, desires and opinions (Steccanella 2022, 48).

The others listen with the awareness that everybody brings a valuable contribution, without entering into disputes and discussions (*IL* 37). There is no question of any prejudice, of the attitude of closure and indifference. It is not time for the evaluation of someone's opinion or for expressing one's reasons "for" and "against." It is about listening to the voices of others with the awareness that in me as well as in the others the Holy Spirit permeates our prayers. This is the role of the next step of the method which assumes a moment of silence and prayer. After the speeches of every group members, now is the time for God to speak. This is the time for listening to one's own experience gained during listening to the other speeches of the group members. "The interior traces that result from one's listening to sisters and brothers are the language with which the Holy Spirit makes his own voice resound." (*IL* 38)

The second fundamental step on the synodal way is another speech given by all of the group members. This part is called the space for others and for the Other. This time it is about sharing the thoughts and emotions which are stored in every member's minds after listening to the others. It is not a proper moment to add the information which you have not talked about in the first part. This is the time to share the inner and most striking emotions which appeared while listening to others, which were most surprising and which opened a new perspective or what is the greatest challenge (*IL* 38).

The third step of the synodal way is "building together." It consists in determining by the group members the key points which appeared while listening to God, to oneself and to others. Similarly to the previous two steps of the common discerning, this one too is preceded by a moment for the personal prayer. The fruit of the prayer is to build the common position for each of the members to feel represented. The group works on a common short text which contains a list of the most often mentioned issues, points of convergence as well as issues which caused disagreement or doubts. We can say that this stage constitutes the answer to the question: what steps are we called to together by the Holy Spirit? (*IL* 39).

The culmination point of the common way is the prayer of praise of God and the prayer of gratefulness for the received experience. This is a particular experience because the conversation in the Spirit does not only consist in the exchange of thoughts. The word which is spoken and heard results in the feeling of intimacy

and the mutual closeness. The term "in the Spirit" indicates a genuine protagonist of the dialogue. The foundation of each stage is the prayerful listening of the Voice of the Holy Spirit and opening to the free action of Him Who blows like the wind wherever it pleases (John 3:8). The conversation between brothers and sisters in faith opens the space for *con-sentire*, that is listening to the Voice of God together. *Instrumentum Laboris* emphasizes that a genuine conversation in the Spirit demands a step forward in the precise, although unexpected, direction which indicates a certain activity (*IL* 33).

The conversation in the Spirit, although it is inscribed into the long tradition of discerning in the Church, still it constitutes a certain novelty included in a certain framework. The aim of the synodal method is to pass from "me" to "us," which allows to include the personal experience into the community dimension (*IL* 35). However, it is not an obvious process, therefore it requires formation and proper spiritual direction. In order to enhance the communication in the group, the process is accompanied by a facilitator (Lat. *facilitare* "facilitation"). His task is to moderate the group, which consists in not only supervising the technical aspects of the method, but rather in providing certain dynamics to the synodal group, which assumes the intermingling listening, speaking and acting.

In order to notice particular elements of the synodal method more precisely, it should be defined as the following layout:

1) personal preparation: reflection and the prayer meditation on the suggested contents;
2) community discernment:
   - silence and listening to God's word;
   - personal speech and careful listening to the others;
   - silence and prayer;
   - dialogue on the basis of what emerged earlier;
3) building together:
   - silence and prayer;
   - the answer to the question: to what steps is the Holy Spirit calling us together? – creating a short résumé;
   - the prayer of thanksgiving.

2. Using the Synodal Method in Building the Community of Marriage

The conversation in the Spirit was "discovered" in the synodal process as the atmosphere enabling to share personal experiences which creates the space for the community discernment in the Church (*IL* 34). Using the dynamics of the synodal method

does not have to be limited to the work of the Synod, but it can also be transferred to other institutions and environments, particularly the ones which are characterized by the way they function which is referred to as "the unity in diversity." One of them is the community of marriage which assumes the autonomy of each of the spouses, and at the same time it creates the unity of bodies and souls.

Dialogue is the basis of the synodal method, it leads to expressing oneself and to hearing the neighbour. Our partner in the dialogue usually comes from a different environment, has a different temperament and the way of thinking, and consequently, he or she has a different perception of the same subject. It also regards the community of marriage. On the one hand, choosing a husband or a wife, people are usually guided by a certain compliance as for the life ideals, beliefs, religions, the world of values or ethics. On the other hand, there are a number of issues which the spouses perceive in a different way, in particular with regard to the matters of lesser importance. Man and woman, while contracting marriage, decide to share their lives with the other person who has his or her own experience or even the burden of their upbringing, the influence of their environment and mental and emotional conditions (Szyran 2010, 103).

The marital covenant does not erase the individual features of a person, his or her character, emotions, feelings or thoughts, but it joins them with the bond of love with the individuality of the spouse. The two individuals "me" and "you" enter into the mind of "us" (Gen 2:24). Therefore marriage constitutes a specific form of a meeting of two people of the opposite sex, who often come from different environments and experienced different models of upbringing and culture, and who are now facing the task of creating the unity in the community of the two. Thus building the mutual relation of love must be rooted in the widely defined dialogue which, according to Pope Francis, is "essential for experiencing, expressing and fostering love in marriage and family life. Yet it can only be the fruit of a long and demanding apprenticeship." (*AL* 136)

The so called "dialogic practice" is a particular form of the marital dialogue. It consists in the monthly meetings of the spouses in order to remove everything that is an obstacle on the way of their mutual love and of the unity of marriage (Szyran 2010, 127). The synodal method is perfectly inscribed in this way of the marital meeting as its central part consists in listening and thus focusing on the other person.

The spouses begin their meeting – according to the dynamics of the conversation in the Sprit – with the personal preparation. While listening to oneself, and confronting with the important events and experiences of the previous month, they examine their hearts in order to express what they are currently experiencing. Christian spouses are aware that marital covenant must built on God's word (Matt 7:21–29), therefore it takes place in the atmosphere of the concentration on the prayer, with calling for the light from the Holy Spirit. It is also the time of praying over the past events and inscribing them into the marriage vow spoken before the spouse, before God and before the community of the Church.

After experiencing such a personal preparation, there comes the time of listening to one another. Here we should stress: only of listening. Sharing what the spouses are feeling in the depth of their hearts: joys, hopes, concerns and difficulties. The meeting should begin with the common prayer in order to unite their hearts and to become properly prepared for the given time. This is the moment of hearing the spouse, of creating the space for the unconstrained sharing of the most important thoughts which might not have been uttered in the everyday life. It is also worth to share the currently appearing feelings and emotions in order to fully unveil one's heart before the spouse.

Now comes the moment of the silence and prayer. After hearing the wife by the husband and the husband by the wife, the spouses need this time to hear the other's experience and to inscribe them in their hearts. This is the moment when the spouses inscribe the emotions and thoughts of the other spouse into their personal experience. This process is taking place in the atmosphere of the proper dialogue, the aim of which is not to change the other person but to get to know and to understand him or her. Only as a result of such a dialogue, the spouses are able to adopt the common decisions and actions and try to change oneself and not only and primarily not the other spouse (Grzybowski 2009, 13). This is not an easy task, therefore the spouses need to ask for the support and assistance of the Holy Spirit.

The spouses can now share the fruits of their prayer on the basis of their mutual speeches. Similarly to the process of the synodal method, this is not the time for the evaluation of the other person's comment, also in the marital dialogue, this is not a moment for the discussion or for the mutual accusations. Before the spouses proceed to expressing their personal opinions, feelings and thoughts, it is necessary for them to make sure that they have heard everything that the other person wanted to say. Often one of the spouses does not expect their problem to be solved right away but he or she only needs to be heard. He or she needs to know that their problem became the couple's "common problem." He or she needs to know that his or her success, joy but also sorrow, disappointment, fear, anger, hope, dreams and expectations were noticed (*AL* 137).

The marital dialogue based on the synodal method is included in the third part. The marital conversation is supposed to direct the spouses to look in the same direction in order to become the genuine "us." This is the result of the next prayer meditation. This is the time when the spouses discover God's plan for both of them together in their marriage. When the spouses contract marriage, they take up the task of building the unity based on God (Coda 2023, 104). The spouses committed themselves in the spirit of the full responsibility for themselves to care for each other with every available means. In the sacrament of marriage God was invited to their marriage and family life in order to protect and lead the spouses. Building love also requires making proper use of the fruits of the sacramental grace. "Dialogic practice" if it comes from the inside of the married couple, becomes the time of the special God's

action. The personal experience and background of the spouse, which are inscribed into the atmosphere of the prayer, lead to the unity of hearts, of souls and of minds (Szyran 2010, 131–32).

The spouses proceed to building together. It regards working out the common direction of action, possibly formulating the necessary postulates, indicating priorities and undertaking certain commitments. This is a process which assumes their common participation. They try to find harmony and common perspective which will constitute the foundation for their further action and for the development of their marital relation. This moment is very sensitive because imposing "yourself" or, on the contrary, the passive indifference, can disrupt the dialogue, and consequently, destroy the obtained fruits. Pope Francis writes about the habit of giving importance to another person. It regards the appreciation of others and not underestimating the experiences of others or their requests, although it would be necessary to express one's point of view or, on the contrary, to give up on your own right (*AL* 138).

The meeting ends with the common prayer which is a thanksgiving. The spouses thank God for each other and renew their marriage vows. It can proceed in the private but extremely intimate form of the vows renewal. It contributes not only to the return of the original love but also motivates to even greater zeal for fulfilling the spoken words. In the final part of the meeting of spouses they should express the mutual thanksgiving and possibly, if they experienced it during their prayers, the words of apology. The non-verbal communication is essential here, it includes the gestures of the mutual kindness and closeness.

The main aim of the marital dialogue based on the synodal method is the deeper and more mature getting to know of the spouses; their joys and successes, needs, hopes as well as disappointments, sorrows and pain. In this dialogue the spouses recognize the truth about themselves, which is mainly revealed in the gift of themselves full of love, the gift of one's inside and the richness of one's emotional life (Szyran 2010, 64). In its nature this dialogue does not aim at solving problems but at achieving mutual understanding and building the relationship. These relationships enable the common discernment and making decisions, solving the difficult and painful matters and the common building of the bond based on love (Grzybowski 2009, 19).

The synodal method is not limited to building the marital bond for the so called "dialogic practice." The given proposal indicates the dynamics of using the conversation in the Spirit also in other moments of the marital life. It can also be useful in solving the conflicts. Its undeniable value is revealed in calming emotions and in looking at the emerging conflict not only through one's own experience but also the experience of the other spouse. Solving the conflict with a few of the elements of the synodal method depended not only on the husband or wife's decision, but it requires their common consent as well. Moreover, the spouses ask God for help and this help can direct the spouses to the unexpected solutions for reconciliation.

The dynamics of the presented method underlines the community discernment. It is particularly important in the cases when the needs of the spouses are not identical and they must decide what to do and in what order in a certain situation. Each particular stage of the synodal method allows to present one's opinion and, at the same time, to hear the opinion of the other. The "common building" seems to be the most difficult element. It is the most difficult element but, it is worth to notice, that the element is possible to realize. If the spouses do not only talk "me" but "us," it is possible to work out a compromise which in turn will strengthen the marital community bond (Zarembski 2015, 167–68).

3. Using the Synodal Method in Deepening the Bond Between Parents and Children

Synodal method based on the dialogue is useful in deepening the bond between parents and children. The dialogue between them is intergenerational. However, this dialogue has become very difficult nowadays. The quickly changing social and cultural conditions .of the contemporary family result in a situation when the challenges in certain fields which the parents used to face are significantly different from the challenges faced by the generation of their children. This leads to misunderstandings in perceiving reality and in adopting different ways of thinking and of assessing the occurring phenomena. The misunderstandings which result from using the same terminology by the parents and by their offspring, however giving them different meanings and content, sometimes lead to tensions or even to conflicts. The misunderstandings in the intellectual sphere and the accompanying emotions may even lead to prejudices within the family and, in a further perspective, to the existential distancing the children from their parents (Zając 2018, 526).

The synodal method, the first element of which is the prayer, mostly promotes building the good will in parents and in their children. The prayer meant as a sincere meeting and conversation with God, in particular a common prayer of the two generations, is an aid helping to look in the same direction (Mierzwiński 2008, 390). God's presence is a kind of a catalyst of the transformation of emotions and knowledge brought to the common prayer by both sides and a transformation of them into the common feelings and contents which they will take with them for the further stages of the family dialogue. We can even claim that the prayer is beneficial for overcoming the tensions inside each person as well as between them.

The positive attitude of parents and children towards one another, despite their different ways of perceiving the world, is a good starting point for the personal speech and for the mutual listening. The child is now able to express himself or herself and has the courage to present his or her point of view, although he or she knows that

this point of view is not approved of by his or her parents. The child is also able to highlight all the aspects of cases, knowing that the parents will not disrupt the presentation of all the issues. The parents can also talk to the children about everything, including the issues which are usually avoided by young people who consider their parents to be out of date. The adults are aware that they are free to speak and their children will not disrupt the conversation.

The synodal method is beneficial for the acquisition of skills of the unconstrained speaking out but it also teaches to carefully listen to the interlocutor and deepens the empathy. It is noted that the currently threatening phenomenon regards the mutual listening to other interlocutors. The people who are listening to the interlocutors expressing the contents, do not pay attention to the contents. In fact, this conversation is not a dialogue but two monologues, because both interlocutors are not listening to each other and the contents expressed by each of them do not correspond with each other to a noticeable extent. The synodal method encourages the interlocutors not only to listen to each other but also to place each other in the position of an interlocutor and to look at the presented phenomena with the other's eyes. Thus it teaches listening to and understanding the other person as well as the empathy towards his experiences and background (Parysiewicz 2010, 269).

The synodal method can be useful in bringing up the young generation. The method is beneficial for the individualistic approach to every child in the family and in solving educational problems (Bereźnicka 2014, 112). One of the educational problems of the parents is omitting the individual differences between the children and treating them all in the same way. And as long as the rules in the family can be permanent and should be equally valid for all the family members, the parents approach towards their children should always take into account the children's sex, age, character, temperament, talents, limitations, and other individual features. Some parents do not understand their educational failures. They claim that applying the same methods of upbringing and the same approach towards all their children, they are not capable of upbringing their children equally successfully. Such parents lack the awareness of the differences between the needs and expectations of the children and the full knowledge of the children's experiences and about the relations between the siblings as well as about the atmosphere at home. Bringing parents and children together for the common conversation makes it possible for the parents to carefully listen to each of the children and for everyone to express his or her opinion (Zarzecki 2012, 70–71).

The necessity to listen to all the members of the family, which is suggested by the synodal method, gives the parents possibility to deeply dive in and get to know the inner world and the life situation of their children. The children who turn to their parents do not always manage to be heard. The parents who are focused on other things, which they consider to be more important, or who tend to have as much time for their children as possible, may not find enough time for their children and do not

pay enough attention to their children's life matters. What is more, they often consider their children's problems to be insignificant and therefore, they do not talk about them. Using the synodal method encourages parents to give their children as much time and attention as they need in order to build their inner-family relationships. It is also beneficial for solving the children's problems. Although many problems are revealed only between a child and his parents, other children should also be involved into their siblings' lives. It results in co-responsibility for the fate of the other family members, motivates to provide support to them and is beneficial for the deepening of the bond between the siblings. These bonds are now likely to become more and more rooted in the mutual love and empathy. What is more, it replaces the unhealthy competition and the negative attitudes which emerge between the siblings (Parysiewicz 2017, 239–40). The synodal method may also contribute to creating the space for each family member to express themselves freely and to the requirement of the patient listening to each family member regardless of the seriousness or the lack of it in perceiving the matters of a family member.

Another problem which can be easily solved on the synodal way regards building the consensus between parents in the cases of their various approaches to bringing up the children (Pyźlak 2022, 325). This issue is partly included into the range of the marital dialogue which the parents lead with each other using the synodal method. It also partly belongs to the matters of the whole family. The differences in the style of bringing up children between the father and the mother strongly influence the upbringing of each particular child as well as the relations between the siblings. Different styles of bringing up result in the fact that children are prone to use their parents' attitudes for their own purposes, which in turn can result in the development of the attitudes of egocentrism and self-interest in the children. It can also lead to the attempts to manipulate the parents. It is important that the fundamental matters should be discussed by the parents only, without the presence of the children, and that they should draw up the consensus as for solving the problems, however, the family dialogue based on the synodal method is the space for presenting the parents' joint position towards the whole family community. Moreover, the ambiguous and questionable aspects raised by the children at the time should also be solved by the parents in the spirit of consensus.

The synodal method, which assumes the ability to listen and to express oneself, which is accompanied by the prayer at various stages, has the community building value. It serves to foster getting closer of the family members and deepening the feeling of responsibility for one another. It also fosters taking the appropriate responsibility for the community of the family perceived as the common wealth by each member. Thus it serves the deeper involvement into the community building and into its tasks for its best interest. This work is expressed through, e.g. taking up roles and responsibilities in the household. And, what is more, the engagement can also be taken in the spirit of the service for the other family members to even greater

extent. Using the synodal method in the community of the family enables building enduring bonds between parents and children and among the children, the bonds can accompany them with equal intensity after the offspring's gaining independence and their leaving the family home (Kamiński 2013, 183–84).

Conclusion

The synodal method was developed for the use of the synod on synodality. According to the teaching of the Catholic Church, the method was supposed to be used in the works of the synod within the universal Church and the local Churches. The article indicates that the method can also be used for the development of the domestic Church, that is the family. It is useful for the deepening of the bond between husband and wife. It can become a form of the marital dialogue of the spouses who aim at deepening the unity between them and God. The synodal method can also be used in the dialogue between parents and children. The method is fostering community building. It serves the mutual understanding between people of different generations and strengthening the bonds between the household members. It fosters the Christian upbringing of the young generation and acquiring the skills of establishing contacts and creating deep relationships in the future.

The community building value of the method results from its roots in the dialogue with the Holy Spirit Who is invited into the dialogue between the people who are bound by close ties. His presence fosters mutual openness to one another of the family members and their assuming the attitude of being open to one another based on the free will. In the atmosphere of friendliness, they acquire the skills of listening of one another, the skills to share their opinions and to express their experiences. The religious nature of the synodal method allows to get rid of unnecessary fears and worries and it is beneficial for the deepening of the mutual trust and care.

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Inclusion of People with Disability in the Church Community Life in the Perspective of Disabled Individuals: The Role of the Priest

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Abstract: The physical presence of people with disability in the extent of the parish community is based on two main components: (I) activities undertaken by a priest to organize religious life, including those for people with disability, and (II) activities undertaken by people with disability within the parish community. The aim of the article is to answer the question: What is the importance of a priest in the context of the presence of people with disability in the church community? The empirical article is based on results of the nationwide qualitative research that was conducted among people with disabilities (using the FGI group interview; targeted group selection; the participants of the study were people with physical disabilities, deaf and hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired, and people with intellectual disabilities). The analysis of the data obtained allows us to put forward the thesis that the inclusion of people with disability in parish life is a consequence of a close, personal relationship with a priest who has at least basic knowledge of the physical, mental, and sometimes also intellectual capabilities of a faithful person with disability. The results obtained may constitute a contribution to pastoral discernment regarding the factors influencing the presence of people with disability in the Church community.

Keywords: Catholic Church, Church, community, priest, disabled person, disability, parish, inclusion

The available research allows to observe that the rate of parishioners' involvement in the life of the community depends, to a large extent, on the level of their religiousness and internal motivation, but also on the level of trust in the institutions of the Church and the openness of priests (Boguszewski 2014; Wciórka 2005). In order to build confidence, close relationships with the clergy and other members of the parish community, based on trust and characterized by kindness and acceptance, are very important (Ault et al. 2023, 138–45; Mariański 2014, 81–106).

The world of barriers for people with disability is much more complex and difficult to overcome than in the case of "healthy" people, as it usually requires constant engagement of others who are more or less involved in providing assistance. It should be emphasized, after John Paul II, that it is important for a person with disability

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to be surrounded by care and love, but also that he/she is aware of his/her abilities: the ability to communicate with others, to cooperate with them, or to support and help others; and that he/she constantly struggles to retain his/her abilities and secure their further development (Jan Paweł II 1993, 74). People with disability are willing to report access to various types of activities within the parish only if they feel safe and needed at the same time. This need for community, agency and commitment was often pointed out by Pope John Paul II in his speeches. In the homily delivered during the Jubilee of the Disabled, John Paul II addressed people with disabilities, assuring them that he was aware of indifference which deepens suffering and loneliness, and of love which, supported by selflessness, builds up strength and gives meaning to life. At that time the following commitment was also made: "In Christ's name, the Church is committed to making herself more and more a 'welcoming home' for you." (Jan Paweł II 2001, 43) Therefore, it should be assumed that the Church as a community, and the parish as a small part of it, is a place where every person with disability feels needed, important, and valuable; where he/she receives strength and at the same time can give strength to others; where he/she receives but also gives; and where he/she feels at home, but also invites others to this home. Erik W. Carter also refers to this idea of hospitality, emphasizing that the need for a sense of belonging to the community of the Church is not only the domain of people with special needs, but it is a universal need. In his concept of belonging, Carter mentions the following aspects of needs: real presence, being invited, included, known (not anonymous), accepted, supported, cared for, befriended, needed and loved (Carter 2022, 6–12).

The available literature on the subject allows to conclude that there are several basic types of barriers that significantly hinder, discourage, and sometimes even completely prevent the participation of people with disability in the religious life of the parish. Some of the most serious barriers determining the participation and involvement of people with disability in the life of the parish are those related to the attitude of priests and members of the parish community. They are attitudes that can be described as lack of commitment or empathy, lack of initiative aimed at the needs of people with disability, and often being prejudiced and reluctant. They are also attitudes that result from not having basic knowledge of the functioning and the needs of people with disability (Janocha 2020).

On the basis of a nationwide research carried out in Poland, it should be pointed out that, according to the clergy, on average, in every parish there are: 30 parishioners with physical disabilities, 7 people who are blind or visually impaired, 10 people who are deaf or hard of hearing, 14 people with intellectual disabilities, 11 people with developmental disorders or autism spectrum.

Disability caused by hearing organ defects is the least excluding factor – 74% of deaf or hard of hearing parishioners participate in Holy Mass, parish groups and the life of the parish community in general, and 23% of them receive the sacraments at home. Physical disability is the greatest barrier to active participation in the life of

the parish community – only 20% of physically disabled parishioners have the opportunity to actively participate in religious life, and 46% receive the sacraments at home. In the case of blind or visually impaired people, 43% of parishioners are religiously active, while 28% receive the sacraments at home. Among people with intellectual disabilities, similarly to the group of people with developmental disorders or autism spectrum, slightly fewer than a half of parishioners take an active part in parish life, while about 40% of people with disability receive the sacraments at home. There are no comprehensive studies on the involvement of people with disability in the life of Church communities (Janocha 2020, 112). Partial, local research conducted by Dariusz Lipiec among the blind in Poland showed that a very small percentage of them sit on parish councils. Research conducted by Wiesław Przygoda shows that over a quarter (26.5%) of the members of the parish Caritas and charity groups are 66 years old and older, which allows to assume that among the disabled there are also people with disability related to old age (Lipiec 2018, 139). The percentage of people with disability involved in religious associations in the parishes remains unknown.

Forms of pastoral work with the disabled are properly structured if they aim at enlivening and deepening religious life and showing the proper meaning of life in suffering. In addition, they prepare for conscious and active participation in the liturgy, help in rehabilitation, which consequently leads to the acceptance of one's disability and reconciliation with God's will. The work of priests in the environment of people with disability should indicate ways to regain faith in their own strength, which show the right role models mobilizing people with disability to oppose their dysfunctions (Pyźlak 2020, 48)

Considering the above, it seems reasonable to analyze the reasons for the relatively low involvement of people with disability in the parish life. The empirical material collected during the nationwide research is abundant in the statements of people with disability which illustrate the importance of the priest with regard to the idea of the parish being a "welcoming home."

1. Methodology

A nationwide qualitative research was carried out (by means of the Focused Group Interview [FGI] and purposive sampling) among people with disabilities as part of the project "Postanowienia Konwencji ONZ o prawach osób niepełnosprawnych a legislacja i praktyka pastoralna Kościoła Rzymskokatolickiego w Polsce" (Provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the light of Legislation and Pastoral Practice of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland). The study involved people with mobility disability, deaf and hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired, and people with reduced intellectual capacity. The research

was carried out in January and February 2020, and was preceded by a pilot study conducted at the turn of November 2019, the aim of which was to develop the final version of the survey used during the interviews.

The study involved 15 homogeneous focus groups (the same type of disability) in each category of disability, 7 heterogeneous focus groups (different types of disability) – 1 per each examined diocese, 5 focus groups with families/carers of people with disability, 3 focus groups with disabled members of pastoral groups and Catholic activists.

The conducted qualitative research focused on ensuring maximum variability in the sample, which allowed for capturing the variability and diversity within the research field. The adopted assumption allowed to identify the areas of activity in the religious life of people with various types and degrees of disability who live in different areas.

The research material contains transcripts of 49 individual in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted in five groups of participants: individuals with hearing impairments (7 interviews), those with mobility impairments (4 interviews), blind and visually impaired (5 interviews), those with intellectual disability (24 interviews), and carers of people with disability (9 interviews). The interviews were used to elicit how participants perceived the issues under study and enabled them to present these issues from their own perspective and in their own words. The analysis of the interviews involved reconstructing the information from participants' statements on the issues specified in the scenario. This analysis was not quantitative in nature but focused on the meanings expressed by participants. The following central topics were identified in the interviews: faith in God, prayer and Holy Mass, sacraments, involvement in liturgical ministries, involvement in parish groups, attitudes of other parishioners, expected attitudes of parishioners and priests, and barriers to participating in religious and parish community life. While transcribing the interviews, we developed a detailed description that included qualitative differentiation, such as the different types and specific characteristics of phenomena, as well as new information in the description of a given phenomenon. The following research operations were used in the analysis: coding of meanings, condensation of meanings, and categorisation of meanings. The categories were developed in two ways: (1) in connection with the central topics of the interviews, and (2) ad hoc during analysis. The limitations to data collection and analysis arose from the specific context of the study (a diverse group of respondents with disabilities). These limitations included: the need to develop specific communication relationships and adapt questions to each respondent; the difficulty in assessing the range of spontaneous, cognitively rich, specific, and adequate responses of interview participants with disability; the occurrence of statements that were logically unrelated to the topic of the interview, inaccurate, brief, or prompted or suggested by the interviewer; the involvement of third parties in the interviews (e.g., mother or carer). The interviewer's development and explanation of

the thematic threads obtained in participants' responses, as well as the quality of the transcript, were satisfactory (with some minor stylistic and typographical errors, and occasional gaps in the transcripts with the annotation: incomprehensible).

Due to the subject of the study, it was assumed that people who declared being a Roman Catholic would be invited to participate in the qualitative research. At the same time, however, at the stage of recruitment for the study, the level of religiousness of these people was not assessed (except for the interviews with Catholic activists) because the degree of activity in the life of the parish was to be discussed.

2. Results

In order to understand the context of the activity of people with disability in the parish community (or lack thereof), one should take a closer look at the attitude of this group towards faith. People with disability have a specific, personal understanding of spiritual matters. To some extent, faith seems to be "mediated" by mental and/or bodily deficiencies (Poston and Turnbull 2004, 95–108). The issue of including the cause and meaning of disability in religious reflection is manifested in the statements of the respondents, both people with disability and their carers (Zhang and Bennett 2001, 143–54). People who experience suffering often ask themselves about its meaning while searching for answers in prayer and/or in the teaching of the Church.

> Speaker 1: I like going to church. I am [...] a believer. And if I hadn't trusted my life to Our Lady and God five years ago, I would have been under a lot of stress.
> Speaker 2: It was very difficult for me. But I got over it. I got over it. […] So I'm happy with the faith. Very happy even. (FGI, people with disability)

Faith provides the disabled with a meaning of their own situation, and of the resulting limitations and difficulties, but it also gives them hope (Canda 2001, 109–34; Gaventa 2009). Depending on the moment of acquiring a disability (inborn or developed during one's lifetime), one's own faith is understood and perceived differently.

> Speaker 1: [...] For me, faith is a very important thing. The moment I lost my sight, it was like I'd found God. And on him I base my blindness, in a way, and my life. And faith helps me a lot. Every day, I start my day with a prayer and go out. God is like this guide on the paths of life [...]. When I could see, they called me Night Owl. Without God, I went where I wanted to go. But today it is different and I can say that I lost sight and I would not change it, but I found God in my life and I would never change this situation [...]. And today I'm a happy man because I have someone who loves me. I found God, and that's the most important thing in my life. (FGI, person with disability)

What is more, in the opinion of the carers, who observe the disabled and their struggles with the disease on a daily basis, faith makes it easier to endure hardships and understand suffering in terms of grace or act of God (Lysne and Wachholtz 2011, 1–16; Hebert et al. 2006, 497–520), while giving hope and consolation, which in turn leads to better well-being and discovering the meaning of disability and faith (Zhang and Bennett 2001, 143–54; Gordon et al. 2002, 162–74; Hatun et al. 2016, 209–35).

> Researcher: Does faith help people with disabilities?
> Speaker 1: It gives hope.
> Speaker 2: Yes.
> Speaker 3: It helps.
> Speaker 1: It also explains certain issues, because they wonder why they were born with a disability. So they can figure out if something's going on; why it's happening; why it's happening to them. This question is most often asked: why them. What have I done? Is this punishment? Why did fate, or God, treat me like this? (FGI, carers)

Personal relationships with the priest and knowing each other have a great impact on the activity of people with disability in the life of the Church and the parish. A priest who, through personal, honest conversations, knows the specificity of a disabled person's illness, situation, problems or needs, is able to personalize the message and, while respecting the limitations resulting from the disability, suggest a more active, adapted participation in the Holy Mass and/or the life of the parish. "There are also different priests. There may be, simply, a priest who doesn't encourage other parishioners to participate in the life of the parish, because there are nice priests, etc., but there are also not so nice ones. This may also discourage parishioners from having contact with the priest who may be so cold." (FGI, disabled person)

Some respondents point to the indifference of priests, paying attention to the lack of empathy, interest or simple ignorance. In a natural way, such an attitude is discouraging, building barriers and even giving the impression of being uninvited to activity in the Church. "A lot depends on what the priest thinks of himself. There are priests who respond positively to people with disabilities, and there are priests who just have to serve their duty and that's it. It makes you feel like a thing, unnecessary in any case." (FGI, disabled person)

Disability is very often a barrier to active participation in the life of the parish. If the clergy do not take the trouble to establish closer relations, despite the explicit needs related to the experienced disability, people with disability remain passive and, apart from the participation in the Sunday Mass at best, they do not engage in activities within the parish community, although they could and would like to.

People who are completely deaf seem to be in the worst situation, because without the help of a qualified person who knows sign language they are not able to participate independently and actively in the life of the parish community.

> Researcher: Tell me about groups or parish communities. What makes it difficult to participate in such groups? Are there no such groups, or does disability make it difficult?
> Speaker 1: Unfortunately, no one speaks sign language in those groups.
> Researcher: So there is no signer, I understand.
> Speaker 1: I have no opportunity to speak, which makes me unable to understand them, and they do not understand me.
> Researcher: Do you have a sense of being invited by the priest to participate in the above activities?
> Speaker: No, I don't feel that way. (IDI, person with disability)

Some of the respondents not only declare their willingness to participate more actively in the parish life and engage in religious activities, but also know of other people with disability who expect some initiative from priests to give them a clear signal to join. These are often well-connected groups, whose inactivity results only from the lack of an "invitation." The respondents emphasize the profound lack of such initiative on the priests' part. Research indicates that this is a potential group of people who, in a collective manner and under favorable circumstances, could get involved in the life of the parish. "It would surely give her a lot of pleasure. She'd love to. That's the kind of thing she's interested in. She would like to help and do something, take part in something. She knows many deaf people who would also like to participate in such a thing. And deaf people also very rarely take part in masses in general, because they are deaf and simply can't do many things. There are no such forms for the deaf." (FGI, disabled person)

The respondents also point to situations in which priests respond to the needs of people with disability and initiate various types of events in which they can participate. Such invitations are received very positively and, as a rule, people with disability appear at these meetings and take an active part in them. For believers suffering from various types of diseases, these initiatives are a source of a sense of agency but also an opportunity to leave home and get rid of the stigma of an inferior person.

> Researcher: Were there any priests who, for example, encouraged you by saying, "Listen, come, we have such a great meeting. Maybe we could organize something together?"
> Speaker 1: I think that's not the case.
> Speaker 2: Unless, for example, there already is a great meeting or something. Then, Father Rafał says, "An interesting meeting, so come, you're welcome, it will be fun" or something.
> Speaker 3: There is a chapel.

> Speaker 2: There are young people. They have a performance, so it is the parish priest who invites you to this performance at 7 pm.
> Speaker 3: Ours invites, too. Recently there was the 5th anniversary, so "Come, because there will be a mass and then the outdoor party by the church, by the chapel." (FGI, people with disability)

Some people with disability, whose level of disability allows, are also very willing to engage in the activities for the benefit of other people. This is largely due to the experiences associated with the disease, the desire to be needed and the need to share the good with other people. Faithful with disability who are involved in helping others are usually able to reach those in need, as it is easy for them to apply an empathetic approach due to personal experiences related to their own limitations. The obtained data shows that it is a group that could help others and at the same time benefit from doing so.

> […] There is this foundation "Dzieci Dzieciom" (Children for Children) in Warsaw and Father Małachowski gathered us all from different Polish cities. It was beautiful. We simply helped to care for children with disabilities. I am disabled myself, but I helped as much as I could. And just then it felt like this community. We were at the center. Then, we went to the Eucharistic Congress. And we often made various remarks to the priest, hoping that he would pass them on somewhere higher up. We had a visit from one bishop, then another bishop. I think then, in those days, twenty years ago, it actually made a difference. And now, not so much. (FGI, disabled person)

An initiative aimed at people with disability does not necessarily have to include the element of aid. For the purposes of self-esteem and being needed, it is often enough to assign work that is perceived by this person as important and serving others. A tailored, well-thought initiative that serves all members of the community may be an excellent opportunity to improve qualifications and intensify contacts with others. "In our parish, a priest once had the idea to open a parish library. And he asked me to help him. There was this MAG program. I forgot, I didn't know much, I was studying and there I borrowed materials from my older friends, so that I could, as they say, eat it all up." (FGI, person with disability)
The respondents with disability particularly highly appreciate all kinds of initiatives of the clergy, which are addressed directly to them and result from the proper understanding of their needs.

> And in our parish, the parish priest introduced occupational therapy workshops for people with disabilities. And there they meet, they do things, they learn, so to speak, plastic things, some ceramics, etc. And I think that the priest also gives the opportunity to do something with their time to those disabled people who come to these workshops. And

> he also organizes some trips to Warsaw, to the cinema, to the theater, to the pool. For the disabled, and for the fit ones. That's a cool initiative, too. Now, he has also organized a rental of rehabilitation equipment for the disabled, so it's also a nice thing, additional, for these people. Maybe I don't need it, but I know that it can be a big facilitation for others. It's a cool thing, in my opinion, especially for those who are in wheelchairs or not walking. (FGI, person with disability)

Initiating the activity of people with disability by priests also involves creating certain conditions and, above all, recognizing the potential of such integration. In the case of people with intellectual disability, one can usually observe a lot of motivation to actively participate in the Holy Mass, for example through activities reserved for altar boys. Only formal considerations, which are based on the adequacy of strictly defined activities at a given time, may constitute a barrier. The aforementioned kind and inclusive attitude of the clergy is associated with "turning a blind eye" to certain deficiencies resulting directly from the disability and not from ill will or lack of sufficient motivation of such a person.

> Researcher: And the participation in the Holy Mass itself, do people under your care have a need for participation? Would they like to?
> Speaker 1: Very much.
> Researcher: And serving at the Holy Mass?
> Speaker 2: They want to as well.
> Researcher: Well, because not everyone can, to be sure.
> Speaker 1: It also depends on the priest, how he approaches such a child.
> Researcher: And how does he approach?
> Speaker 1: There are different approaches so it's possible and just so that a healthy altar boy could also tell you at some point what you should do, whether you should ring the bell or pass the chalice. It's all about helping them all the time.
> Speaker 2: He does not.
> Speaker 3: I'd like to give my example, in our church there's a disabled boy who serves at every mass.
> Speaker 4: [...] If he knows anyway, he understands what it's about, of course, there's no problem, because we were in Tuchów at the mass and our boys served as we were there. No problem. At least I haven't come across it. (FGI, carers)

Certainly, the mechanisms involving believers with disabilities in the life of the community include the clemency and kindness of priests who understand the specificity of disability and make the rules more flexible, so that people with disabilities have the opportunity for a comfortable and dignified participation in religious practices. Such priests, through their inclusive attitude, build personal and lasting relationships with the faithful with disability, which have an impact on

the motivation of this group of people to participate in the liturgy and in the life of the parish community.

> I'll be honest. Since I've had trouble kneeling, because I haven't been kneeling in church in the last three years, I sit or stand. Unless my spine hurts. And I've had so many problems lately that I went to confession and I couldn't kneel. I just simply couldn't kneel before a priest. It was recently that I've come across such very understanding priests who stood up. The priest got up and heard my confession standing, I did not have to kneel at the confessional. Similarly, when it comes to confession in Miodowa Street, there is a separate room in the church, where one confesses. And there, no priest made me kneel. I could stand, calmly. I didn't have to kneel. No one reproached me; no one reprimanded me. It was really very touching for me that the priest stood with me and heard my confession in a church, for example, because I wouldn't kneel. (IDI, disabled person)

Initiating the activity of people with disability is an important and delicate matter, because it requires deeper knowledge of the disease itself, but also of the mental condition of a specific person. The respondents' statements indicate that the satisfactory inclusion of people with disability in the life of the parish is a consequence of a close, personal and trustful relationship with a clergyman who has at least the basic knowledge of physical, mental and sometimes intellectual capabilities of a believer. It should be pointed out that the parish creates opportunities for various subjective involvement of people with disability in the scope of each basic function. The disabled can perform liturgical functions: an altar boy, a lector, they can sing in parish choirs, children's and youth schools, as well as be extraordinary ministers of the Blessed Sacrament. They can engage in parish catechesis and prepare children, youth and adults for the sacraments, work in family life counseling centers. It is also possible to involve people with disability in various bodies and parish teams. Among these we can include: parish pastoral or economic council, as well as the parish Caritas team. People with disability can also engage in various social and cultural activities. The only limitation in this respect is the one caused by the degree of disability and physical possibilities of existence (Lipiec 2018, 139).

> When someone simply asks me: could you sing the psalm because you sing nicely? Well, if that's how they see it, then why shouldn't I do it? When it's said that the liturgy is to be held at the highest possible level. And if I can add something that will make this liturgy more beautiful, then why not? And the same goes for... because I didn't mention it, I sometimes play at weddings or funerals, like for the same reason: because it's important to someone that I play, or just like that. Like, that is for the glory of God, but also for people – through people for God. I don't know how to say this, but like I never wondered, I didn't assume that it's me who would do something for God. What can I do for God? Then, I'll sing the psalm. It's just that on the other hand, since I have a voice... I have this voice practiced...

> I'm prepared for it, so, well, it befits to just share it. And that's how I can share it, how I can contribute. (FGI, person with disability)

It is worth pointing out that in Polish parishes, lists of people with disability are practiced, which are intended not only to record people with disability, but are also related to the recommendation that parish priests visit them. This concerns in particular pastoral visits, apart from the one-year visit, which clergy are obliged to make each year. It is recommended that parish priests visit homes where families with a disabled member live more often, preferably on a regular basis, providing them with spiritual support, as well as all their relatives. It is also important that parish priests know the living situation of these families. The Church believes that carol visits once a year do not provide the basis for adequate knowledge of the living conditions of disabled parishioners (Fedorowicz 1960, 1–4).

Conclusion

The sense of belonging to the Church community is a common need of all who want to be in the Church. It is not only the domain of people with special needs, people with disability or the elderly. Undoubtedly, the possibility of being in the community results not only from the willingness, which seems to be crucial, but also from several other factors including architectural accessibility, mobility, adaptation of infrastructure and liturgical setting, and, to a large extent, the attitude and openness of priests. The last factor, in turn, is the result of not only pastoral empathy, but also of the knowledge they have about disability, the specificity of the needs of people with disabilities, creativity or a simple acknowledgment of the demand for action dedicated to people with special needs. For people with disability, priests' attitude is one of the key factors which affect their "being" or "not being" in the Church. To further problematize the issue, it is worth quoting Father Witold Dobrołowicz, who recalled the words of one parish priest: "Why should I organize something in the church for people with disability? Let these people come and say what they expect," while answering the question about the presence and the role of people with disability in the life of the Church (Dazbłąż 2021).

Therefore, it should be considered whether the level of activity and participation of people with disability in the community of the Church depends on the attitude and openness of the priest, or whether it depends on the disabled articulating their own needs, personal willingness and involvement in determining the paths of reaching the Church. Should activities for the inclusion of people with disability come "from below" (bottom-up initiative) or "from above" (top-down initiative)? Dialogue

and understanding on this issue seem to be the key to effective activity for the benefit of both the Church community and the presence of people with disability.

Translated by Dominika Bugno-Narecka

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"The Apostle of the Apostles," Prostitute or Penitent? A Typology of Mary Magdalene in the Homilies of Gregory the Great

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Abstract: Mary Magdalene, who is mentioned on the pages of the Gospels twelve times, is regarded as one of the most famous and stirring strong emotions women of the New Testament. In some religious circles to this day, one can still hear claims that Mary of Magdala was a prostitute. Others argue that Magdalene is the "Apostle of the Apostles" (*Apostola Apostolorum*) because she was the first person to bear witness to the risen Lord (e.g. Hippolytus of Rome, Jerome of Stridon). Pope Gregory the Great, on the other hand, combined three evangelical women into one figure in his two homilies: the nameless sinful woman (cf. Luke 7:37), Mary Magdalene (cf. Luke 8:2), and Mary mentioned in John 20:11 – into a single figure. Thus, Mary of Magdala was regarded as a prostitute. Gregory the Great's theory became prevalent in Western Christianity over the next fifteen centuries. This paper aims to analyse homilies XXV and XXXIII by Gregory the Great and attempt to address the question of whether, for the pope-commentator, Mary Magdalene is exclusively and mainly a symbol of the "convert prostitute?" This paper adopted the philological method. It concludes that perhaps the pope himself would have been astonished that for so many centuries, the most enduring legacy of his two aforementioned homilies is the image of Magdalene as a "convert prostitute" rather than the moral teaching he wanted to convey. After all, the commentator also juxtaposed Magdalene with the Shulamite from the Song of Songs, Eve, Simon the Pharisee, Peter, Zacchaeus and Dismas, and saw in her a "type" of a Christian of every era.

Keywords: typology, Gregory the Great, homilies, Apostle of the Apostles, Mary Magdalene

The woman called by the name Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνή is mentioned by the Evangelists twelve times (cf. Morgenthaler 1958, 118). In the Synoptics, she is mentioned nine times (Matt 27:56; 27:61; 28:1; Mark 15:40; 15:47; 16:1; 16:9; Luke 8:2; 24:10), while in the Gospel of John, her name appears three times (19:25; 20:1 and 20:18), where we learn about her only in the narrative of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. Authors of some lexicons or concordances also include here John 20:11, 16, where the figure of Mary Magdalene appears under the name Μαρία (John 20:11) and Μαριάμ (John 20:16) (cf. e.g. Rigato 2011, 98; Schmoller 1989, 324).

Mary Magdalene has fascinated and intrigued scholars for many centuries. Although many monographs and scholarly articles have been written on this biblical woman (cf. Kucharski 2021, 14–19), Pope Gregory the Great's testimony concerning Magdalene, which he included in his two homilies concerning John 20:11–18 (cf. Gregorius Magnus, *Homilia* XXV, 1–10) and Luke 7:36–50 (cf. Gregorius Magnus, *Homilia* XXXIII, 1–8), continues to be a *terra incognita* for Polish and international

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scholars alike. Of course, Gregory's homilies on the Gospels have survived to be translated into selected modern languages, such as French (cf. Grégoire le Grand 2005, 2008) or Polish (cf. Św. Grzegorz Wielki 1998), but there are no papers addressing the question of Mary Magdalene in Gregory the Great's homilies.

Hence, this article examines these two homilies and seeks an answer to the question: is it really the case that, in the opinion of the pope-commentator, Mary Magdalene was primarily a "type" of a convert prostitute? This question appears to be of great interest, as from the sixth century onwards, echoes of this theory still resound in some circles today.

1. Mary Magdalene – A Brief Etymology of the Name

All too often, the exegetical writings of the Fathers of the Church are concerned with deriving the etymology of proper names found in the texts they comment on. The fascination with the etymology of names was reinforced by the conviction that the names used in the Bible contained a hidden meaning, as Saint Augustine of Hippo maintained (cf. *De doctrina christiana* II, 38, 56–57). It is no different in the case of the woman known as Mary Magdalene. While this enigmatic figure is familiar from several biblical scenes, the etymology of her name is unclear and raises some questions, thus offering a wide range of interpretations.

The first part of the name, i.e. Μαρία/Μαριάμ, with Flavius Josephus providing further alternatives: Μαριάμη, Μαριάμμη and Μαριάμμνη (cf. Tronina 1990, 127–28), is derived from the Hebrew מרים, the etymology of which has been and continues to be widely debated in the scholarly world. For example, Jerome of Stridon (fourth/fifth century) was the first of the Latin writers to deal with the derivation of the etymology of names appearing in the Bible. In his *Liber de nominibus hebraicis* (cf. PL 23, 771–858; CCSL 72, 57–161), he offers several possible interpretations of Mary's name. Indeed, he explains that some commentators have interpreted the name as *illuminant me isti* ("they enlighten me") / *illuminatrix* ("enlightener") or *smyrna maris* ("myrrh of the sea"). He believes that the name Mary is better translated as *stella maris* ("star of the sea"), *amarum mare* ("bitter sea") or *domina* ("lady") based on Syriac (PL 23, 842; cf. Jóźwiak 2021, 163–66).

On the question of Jerome's interpretation of Mary's name as "star of the sea," opinions among scholars are divided, as theorised that the author of the Vulgate interpreted the name as *stilla maris* ("drop of the sea") rather than *stella maris*, which would correspond to some extent with the Hebrew word מר ("mote," "drop," "speck"; cf. *HALOT* 629) and ים ("sea," lake," "open sea"; cf. *HALOT* 413–14). Subsequently, the copyist then confused or deliberately changed the vowel "i" to "e" in the Latin word, i.e. putting down *stella* rather than *stilla*, as intuitively, this version might have

seemed more likely to him since *stilla* is a rather rare biblical word and only occurs in the singular nominative form in Isa 40:15 (cf. Sabatier 1751, 581). In fact, the noun *stilla* appears only seven times in the Bible in the following forms: *stilla* (Deut 40:15); *stillae* (Deut 32:2; Jer 3:3; Mic 5:7); *stillam* (Job 26:14); *stillas* (Job 36:27; Job 38:28). Furthermore, in textual criticism, there are analogous *exempla*, namely the use of *stella* instead of *stilla* or vice versa (cf. Bardenhewer 1895, 69–73; Jóźwiak 2021, 168–70). This "error" or deliberate alteration by the copyist has become a permanent feature of history, since already in the Middle Ages, the interpretation of the name Mary as "star of the sea" was widespread in the Latin Church and echoes to this day, not only in so-called popular piety but also in papal documents:

> With a hymn composed in the eighth or ninth century, thus for over a thousand years, the Church has greeted Mary, the Mother of God, as "Star of the Sea": *Ave maris stella*. Human life is a journey. Towards what destination? How do we find the way? Life is like a voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by – people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? (*SpS* 49)

On the other hand, the last etymology proposed by Saint Jerome for Mary's name derives it from the Aramaic noun מרה ("lady") (cf. Davidson 1974, 513; Rosenthal 1961, 89), which appears – in our view – highly probable. Setting aside the language behind the phrase *sermone syro* in Saint Jerome's biblical commentaries. After all, we know that Syriac is part of the Aramaic branch of the Semitic languages, and the *vir trilinguis* quite freely and interchangeably uses the names of Syriac/Aramaic or Chaldean languages.

Elsewhere in *Liber de nominibus hebraicis* (cf. Hieronymus; PL 23, 848, 851), the author of the Vulgate adds to the enumerated interpretations of the name in question *illuminans* ("the enlightening") and *illuminata* ("the enlightened"). We do not list these etymologies as distinct because these, like *illuminatrix/illuminant me isti*, were derived from the verb "to light up," "make light"; cf. Lewis and Short 1891, 887): *illuminatrix/illuminant me isti – illuminans – illuminata – illuminare*. When analysing the interpretations of names proposed by early Christian authors, it is, of course, necessary to bear in mind that patristic etymologies are somewhat "loose" scientifically and rely on the juxtaposition of similar-sounding words. Etymologies are built on connotations (cf. Jóźwiak 2021, 164).

Furthermore, Bertram Otto Bardenhewer, a late nineteenth/early twentieth-century German patrologist, offers several etymologies of the name Mary (cf. Bardenhewer 1895). According to Antoni Tronina, there are more than 60 hypotheses

(cf. Tronina 1990, 127), while in the opinion of Aleksy Klawek, there are 80 (cf. Klawek 1951, 56–58). According to our calculations, Bardenhewer provides about 65 theories. Of course, these explanations do not constantly oscillate around scientific etymology. They are based on the actual state of knowledge of Semitic linguistics, but certainly, the accumulation of etymologies on one biblical name impresses the reader (cf. Jóźwiak 2021, 162).

In Aramaic, on the other hand, the name in question was מרים (*Maryam*), and this form can most likely be derived from the word מריר ("bitter"; cf. Zorell 1964, 474), although this etymology is also highly questionable.

The second part of the name, i.e. ἡ Μαγδαληνή is understood by most scholars as a deadjectival noun, indicating the person›s origin from a particular locality, i.e. a woman of Magdala. This position is held, among others, by Richard Atwood (cf. 1993, 26) and Esther De Boer (cf. 2000, 32). Maria-Luisa Rigato (cf. 2011, 101) takes a different stance, claiming that ἡ Μαγδαληνή has no connection with her place of birth or residence but was instead a cognomen she received from Luke the Evangelist (cf. Luke 8:2). If ἡ Μαγδαληνή were a cognomen, it is most likely that the word must be derived from Hebrew מגדל ("tower"; cf. Zorell 1964, 407). Jerome of Strydon also offers this etymology in his *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* (cf. PL 23, 842), except that he believes that it is better to derive the etymology not from the noun (*turris*) but from the adjective (*turrensis*).

The town of Magdalene's origin itself is the subject of archaeological research. Since the 1970s, such works have been led by Virgilio Canio Corbo (cf. 1974, 5–37), Stanislao Loffreda (from 1971 to 1977; cf. Loffreda 1976, 133–35) and Stefano De Luca (since 2007; De Luca 2009, 343–562). It is worth noting that Israeli archaeologists Dina Avshalom-Gorni and Arfan Najar (2009–) have also been involved in the excavation of Magdala. A team of Mexican archaeologists led by Marcela Zapata-Meza (2010–; cf. Kucharski 2021, 111–38) also participated in this research.

2. "The Apostle of the Apostles," Prostitute or Penitent?

Mary Magdalene, precisely because she was an eyewitness of the Risen Christ, was also the first person to bear witness to it before the apostles, thus becoming the *Apostola Apostolorum*. The first of the Christian writers to give her this title was Hippolytus of Rome (second/third century) in his commentary on the Song of Songs, as Julian R. Backes, among others, reports in his article:

> And after this with a cry the synagogue expresses a good testimony for us through the women, those who were made apostles to the apostles, having been sent by Christ: those to whom first the angels said, "Go and announce to the disciples. He has gone before you into Galilee. There

> you shall see him" (Mk 16:7). But in order that the apostles might not doubt [that they were sent] from the angels, Christ himself met with the apostles, in order that the women might become apostles of Christ and might complete through obedience the failure of old Eve. For this reason [she] listens obediently that she may be revealed as perfect. (Backes 2017, 67)

Jerome of Stridon confirms this information (cf. *Commentarii in Sophoniam*, *Prologus*; PL 25, 1338). Pope Gregory the Great (sixth century), on the other hand, in his two homilies (cf. *Homilia* XXV, 1–10; *Homilia* XXXIII, 1–8), merged the three evangelical women – the nameless sinner (cf. Luke 7:37) who anointed Jesus' feet with fragrant oil in the house of Simon the Pharisee, Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus freed from seven demons (cf. Luke 8:2), and Mary mentioned in John 20:11 – into a single figure. Thus, Mary of Magdala became a symbol of the adulteress. Gregory the Great's theory became prevalent in Western Christianity over the next fifteen centuries. However, it appears the pope himself was not at all confident of its validity. Because in the crucial argument, when he combines the figures, he employs the vital word that seems to have all too often vanished from later interpretations – *credimus* ("we believe," "we think," "we suppose"). Indeed, it might appear that this term does not imply doubt but expresses a conviction.[1] However, it must be remembered that when Gregory uses the term *credimus*, it is an assessment not based on proper arguments derived directly from the Bible and the teaching of earlier commentators: "Hanc vero quam Lucas peccatricem mulierem, Iohannes Mariam nominat, illam esse Mariam credimus de qua Marcus septem daemonia eiecta fuisse testatur" (*Homilia* XXXIII, 1; CCSL 141, 288; "Indeed she whom Luke calls the female sinner, and John calls Mary, we believe that she is the Mary of whom Mark attests that seven demons were [expelled] from her" [my own translation]).

This is all the more so because the reference for reflection in patristic literature was the Bible. The Fathers of the Church and Christian writers "thought," as it were, with Scripture. We can also translate *credimus* as "we recognise" or "we have a conviction," (cf. *credere*) (Lewis and Short 1891, 479) but it does not convey absolute certainty as to our opinion. Moreover, the pope-commentator adds that the seven demons that Christ cast out of the woman represent general vices ("universa vitia"), for in Gregory the Great's view, the number seven contains the universe ("septenario numero universitas figuratur" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 1; CCSL 141, 288]).

Conversely, by looking at Gregory's idea from a broader perspective, the main conclusion is that the combination of the three women from different Gospel pericopes is a symbol of sorts and contains a deeper meaning. Mary Magdalene, as an example of the prostitute (*peccatrix*), is for Gregory the Great, an example of the path leading to Christ. This sinner then becomes the symbol of the penitent, whose love

1 Cf. also: https://twojahistoria.pl/2019/02/19/biblijna-maria-magdalena-wcale-nie-byla-nierzadnica-skad-wlasciwie-wzielo-sie-to-przekonanie/.

for the Lord is so fervent it can be described as "burning" even, as the pope repeatedly emphasises in his homily: "Maria Magdalene, quae fuerat in civitate peccatrix, amando veritatem, lavat lacrimis maculas criminis, et vox Veritatis impletur qua dicitur: 'Dimissa ei sunt peccata multa, quia dilexit multum'. Quae enim prius frigida peccando remanserat, postmodum amando fortiter ardebat" (*Homilia* XXV, 1; CCSL 141, 205; "Mary Magdalene, who was a sinner in the town, loving the truth, washed the stains of [her] transgression with her tears, and was filled with the voice of Truth, by which it was said: 'Her many sins were forgiven her because she loved much.' For she was icy at first because of sin, but later, loving much, she burned [with the flame] of love" [my own translation]). Commenting on John 20:11: "But Mary was standing outside the tomb, weeping," Gregory emphasises that such a great power of love ignited Magdalene's thought ("huius mulieris mentem quanta vis amoris accenderat") that she did not leave the tomb, even though all the disciples had fled. Inflamed by the fire of her love, though weeping, she searches further ("flebat inquirendo, et amoris sui igne succensa"). Hence, the commentator ultimately shifts the emphasis from the sinner (*peccatrix*) to the one who loved greatly ("amoris sui igne succensa" [*Homilia* XXV, 1; CCSL 141, 205]).

In Homily XXXIII, Gregory repeatedly emphasises that the penitent sinner Magdalene is a kind of paradigm and should be an example for every believer to follow ("paenitentem peccatricem mulierem in exemplum vobis imitationis anteferte") as one who experienced the immensity of God's mercy ("considerate apertum vobis misericordiae gremium"): "Videte tantae pietatis sinum, considerate apertum vobis misericordiae gremium. […] Ad vos igitur, fratres carissimi, ad vos oculos mentis reducite, et paenitentem peccatricem mulierem in exemplum vobis imitationis anteferte" (*Homilia* XXXIII, 8; CCSL 141, 298; "See the embrace of such immense grace; perceive the depths of mercy open to you. […] Turn the eyes of your hearts, dearest brethren, towards one another, and follow the example of a repentant female sinner" [my own translation]).

3. Other Typologies of Mary Magdalene in Gregory's Homilies

Although Gregory the Great sees Mary of Magdala as a sinner (*peccatrix*) in his homilies, it must be remembered that this is neither the only nor the most important, but one of many typologies of this figure. This Doctor of the Church, as was the custom of early Christian authors, does not stop at individual symbolism, as he skilfully juxtaposes Mary Magdalene also with the Shulamite from the Song of Songs, Eve, Simon the Pharisee, Peter, the tax collector Zacchaeus or the "Good Thief." Each of these characters has followed "their" own path to *metanoia*, and they are examples of people of hope and conversion.

3.1. Mary Magdalene vs the Shulamite from the Song of Songs

Currently, in biblical studies, one of the main theories about John's pericope, which describes Magdalene's encounter with the Risen Christ, is that of an intertextual relationship between John 20:11–18 and Song 3:1–4. In one of his articles, Adam Kubiś writes:

> Many commentators believe that John's description of the encounter between the risen Lord and Mary Magdalene contains allusions to the Song of Songs and thus to the marriage metaphor. French exegete Michel Cambe has suggested that Song 3:1–4 is the background to the entire narrative of John 20:1–18. Despite the lack of apparent lexical links between the two texts, the similarity of scenes (*parallélisme de situations*) is noticeable. Indeed, both scenes speak of a woman searching for a man she loves. Both searches take place in the Holy City. This search unfolds at night (Song 3:1 – ἐν νυξίν) or at the end of the night (Song 20:1 – πρωΐ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης). In both scenes, the search for the beloved is at first fruitless (Song 3:2; John 20:2). This is followed by a conversation, in which a question is asked (Song 3:2; John 20:12–13). The Song of Songs features watchers (οἱ τηροῦντες) who find the woman, and she asks them the question, "Have you seen him whom my soul loves" (Song 3:3). In John, the watchers are replaced by angels, to whom Mary Magdalene answers their question, "Woman, why are you weeping?" (20:13). The encounter is followed by the finding of the beloved (Song 3:4; John 20:14–16). Having found the one she loves, the woman is unwilling to let him go: ἐκράτησα αὐτὸν καὶ οὐκ ἀφήσω αὐτόν – "I held him, and would not release him" (Song 3:4); μή μου ἅπτου – "Do not cling to me" or "Do not hold on to me" (John 20:17). (Kubiś 2018, 50–51)

In light of these considerations, it is worth noting that the phrase μή μου ἅπτου (John 20:17), which biblical scholars usually translate as "Do not stop me" (e.g. Biblia Tysiąclecia [Millenium Bible], 5th ed.) is not a literal translation of the original text since Greek ἅπτου in this verse is the negative imperative of the verb ἅπτω, which in the context of this sentence would have to be interpreted as "to touch," "to take hold of," "to hold," or "to make close contact") (cf. BDAG, 126). Thus μή μου ἅπτου literally means "do not touch me." In the discussed passage, as commentators on John's writings suggest, this "touch" would refer to an attempt to embrace the risen Lord, dismissing contact entailing patting his back or shaking his hand. Some scholars try to prove that the imperative μή μου ἅπτου has to be rendered as "stop touching me" or "stop holding me," suggesting Mary Magdalene's persistent attachment to Christ, which alludes to the emotional nature of the risen Lord's encounter with the women in Matt 28:9–10. Next, scholars present various proposals for explaining the prohibition against "touching" Jesus. For example, one interpretation is based on the analogy of the biblical prohibition against touching holy places during the theophany (cf. Exod 19:12–13). In contrast, other scholars suggest that Jesus' warning to

Magdalene not to touch him before his ascension refers to a concept that appears in the *Apocalypse of Moses* (cf. *Apoc. Mos.* 31:3–4). Namely, touching the body in a certain state endangers the one who touches and the one who is touched. In the opinion of Craig S. Keener, the idea that Jesus' body is forbidden to be touched because of the nature of his resurrected body, as well as before Christ's ascension, is unlikely. In this commentator's view, Jesus temporarily limits Magdalene's "embrace" or her desire to "embrace" the risen Lord since he must ascend to the Father soon. Kenner also believes that Jesus may be warning Mary Magdalene not to become too attached to his physical presence, for "It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh does not offer anything of benefit" (John 6:63), and his spirit will remain with her and all his followers forever (cf. John 20:22) (Keener 2003, 1192–94).

Sabine van den Eynde, among others, contested the theory of an intertextual relationship between the two texts (cf. 2007, 905–6). Ultimately, Kubiś concludes that this criticism is unfounded, considering that by juxtaposing Song 3:1–4 with John 20:11–18, it is possible to distinguish a significant number of similarities regarding vocabulary, motifs, or identical sequences of given elements occurring in both texts (cf. Kubiś 2018, 52–53).

Gregory the Great noted this intertextuality already in the sixth century, though not to the same extent as modern Bible scholars, hence his comparison of Mary Magdalene with the Shulamite in Song 3:1. The pontiff emphasises the fact that it is the "force of love" that pushes Mary of Magdala to seek the risen Lord and intensifies the desire to search for him ("vis amoris intentionem multiplicat inquisitionis"). She makes many attempts, and in the end, she finds the one whom her "soul loves" like the Shulamite in the Song of Songs, roaming around the house in search of the Bridegroom: "Sed amanti semel aspexisse non sufficit, quia vis amoris intentionem multiplicat inquisitionis. […] Hinc est enim quod de eodem sponso Ecclesia in Canticis canticorum dicit: «In lectulo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea; quaesivi illum et non inveni. Surgam et circuibo civitatem per vicos et plateas, et quaeram quem diligit anima mea»" (*Homilia* XXV, 2; CCSL 141, 206; "But it is not enough for those in love to have seen each other once because the power of love multiplies the desire to seek each other out. [...] For this reason, the Church says of this bridegroom in the Song of Songs: 'On my bed, during the night I sought [him] whom my soul loves. I sought him and did not find him. I will arise and roam about the city, in the streets and in the squares, and I will seek [him] whom my soul loves'." [my own translation]).

3.2. Mary Magdalene vs Eve

For Gregory the Great, Magdalene is also a type of Eve from Genesis. Just as the first woman brought sin upon humanity by her fall, so now Mary of Magdala – a "convert sinner" – brings the news of redemption, for it is through her that the apostles learn of

Christ's resurrection. Thus, she becomes the "Apostle of the Apostles" (*Apostola Apostolorum*). The pope emphasises that, as Eve once brought death upon her husband in paradise ("in paradiso mulier viro propinavit mortem"), so now Magdalene brought life to men, or apostles ("a sepulcro mulier viris annuntiat vitam"). One proclaims the words of the one who brings life ("dicta sui vivificatoris narrat"), while the other proclaims the words of the deadly serpent ("moriferi serpentis verba narraverat"). Eve holds in her hand the "cup of death" (*potus mortis*), while Magdalene holds the "cup of life" (*poculum vitae*) (cf. *Homilia* XXV, 6; CCSL 141, 212). And this appears to be the right key to understanding the whole idea behind Gregory the Great's construct of combining the three women into one (cf. Luke 7:37; 8:2; John 20:11).

3.3. Mary Magdalene vs Simon the Pharisee

Another interesting comparison that Gregory presents is the juxtaposition of Mary Magdalene with the Pharisee, hospitably receiving Jesus at his house (cf. Luke 7:36–50). Although Simon's attitude is not entirely clear because, on the one hand, he cannot be accused of lack of openness towards Christ and his teachings (the Pharisee, which was rare, invited him into his house), on the other hand, it was a hospitality full of reserve because he did not fulfil the honours of a host towards an important guest (giving water to his feet, a kiss of welcome or anointing his head with oil). Moreover, the scene between Jesus and the "sinful woman" so appalled the Pharisee that, in his pride, he judged them harshly in spirit and questioned Jesus' "prophecy," thus confirming his earlier prejudice against the Teacher of Nazareth, which of course did not escape the attention of the pope-commentator. Commenting on this pericope, Gregory the Great emphasises in his *Homilia* XXV that Magdalene is a witness to divine mercy ("testis divinae misericordiae"), while Simon the Pharisee is the one who wanted to obscure this source of mercy ("Pharisaeus dum pietatis fontem vellet obstruere"), which, of course, was Jesus: "Then he said to her: 'Your sins are forgiven you'" (Luke 7:48). Then the commentator, reading the Bible in the light of the Bible, refers to John's pericope 20:11–18 and adds that she who sought the dead clung to the living ("viventi adhaeserat, mortuum quaerebat"), and found the living when she sought him as dead ("viventem reperit, quem mortuum quaesivit").

> Adest testis divinae misericordiae haec ipsa de qua loquimur Maria, de qua pharisaeus dum pietatis fontem vellet obstruere, dicebat: "Hic si esset propheta sciret utique quae et qualis est mulier quae tangit eum, quia peccatrix est." Sed lavit lacrimis maculas cordis et corporis, et Redemptoris sui vestigia tetigit, quae sua itinera prava dereliquit. Sedebat ad pedes verbumque de ore illius audiebat. Viventi adhaeserat, mortuum quaerebat. Viventem reperit, quem mortuum quaesivit (*Homilia* XXV, 10; CCSL 141, 215; "She is a witness of divine mercy; the same Mary whom we are discussing, and of whom the Pharisee, as he wished to obscure the source of mercy, said: 'If he had been a prophet, he would certainly

> have known who, and what kind of woman she is who touches him, that she is a sinner.' But she washed the stains of her heart and body with her tears and touched the foot of her Saviour [she] who had forsaken her wicked ways. She sat at his feet and listened to the words from his mouth. She clung to the living one, [though] she sought [him] as dead. She found the living one whom she sought as dead" [my own translation]).

Then, in *Homilia XXXIII*, the pope stresses the pride of Simon the Pharisee and singles out three characters throughout the story, seeing in them the following symbolism: the Pharisee and the woman are symbolic of the sick (*aegri*), while Jesus is the physician ("inter duos autem aegros medicus aderat"). In Gregory's view, the difference between "these sick" is that the woman is aware of her illness, whereas the Pharisee's pride makes him oblivious to his illness ("aegram reprehendit de aegritudine, […] qui ipse quoque de elationis vulnere aegrotabat et ignorabat"). Pride clouds his ability to see, and showing his superiority and contempt, he rebukes not only the sinful woman but also his guest ("non solum venientem peccatricem mulierem, sed etiam suscipientem Dominum reprehendit" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 3; CCSL 141, 289]).

The pope-commentator goes on to point out that one sick retained her mental faculties, while the other lost his ability to think logically ("unus aeger […] integrum sensum tenebat, alter vero […] sensum perdiderat mentis"). For the woman shed tears because of her "illness," while the Pharisee, haughty in his false righteousness, revealed the severity of his weakness ("vim suae invaletudinis exaggerabat") and lost his capacity for logical judgement and did not know that he was far from being healthy ("a salute longe esset ignorabat" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 3; CCSL 141, 289–90]).

Gregory also indicates that Christ ate a real meal at Simon's house ("ad pharisaei prandium Dominus discumbebat"), while in the attitude of the penitent woman, he delighted in the "food" of her heart ("apud paenitentem mulierem mentis epulis delectabatur"). Jesus the Truth had a physical meal with the Pharisee ("apud pharisaeum Veritas pascebatur foras"), while with the convert sinner, he had a spiritual meal ("apud peccatricem mulierem, sed conversam, pascebatur intus" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 7; CCSL 141, 295]).

Presenting a mystical interpretation, the commentator writes that the Pharisee is symbolic of the Jewish people (*pharisaeus – iudaicus populus*), while the sinful woman symbolises the converted gentiles (*peccatrix mulier – conversa gentilitas*) (*Homilia* XXXIII, 5; CCSL 141, 292). For example, commenting on Luke 7:45, the ancient exegete explains to the reader that a kiss is a symbol of love and that this faithless nation, i.e. the Jewish people, did not give God a kiss because they did not want to worship him out of love but served him out of fear ("ex caritate eum amare noluit, cui ex timore servivit"). In contrast, the "called gentiles" do not stop kissing the Saviour's feet, as they breathe his love without ceasing ("vestigia osculari non cessat, quia in eius continuo amore suspirat" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 6; CCSL 141, 294]).

According to the commentator, Christ presents to the Pharisee, being a "type" of the faithless Jewish people ("pharisaeus […] perfidus ille populus ostendatur"), the deeds of a woman (including the kiss) as one of the goods of the gentiles, for the Magdalene could symbolise them ("Redemptor noster facta ei mulieris quasi bona gentilitatis enumerat" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 6; CCSL 141, 293]).

Finally, in one passage, the Doctor of the Church instructs us that both Simon the Pharisee and Mary Magdalene were presented to us as paradigms ("De duobus quippe ei debitoribus paradigma opponitur"), which Gregory asserts more than once. Some "blame" is attributed to both. One of the wrongdoers is less at fault, the other more so ("quorum unus minus, alius amplius debet" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 4; CCSL 141, 290]). However, the key in this passage is the noun *paradigma* ("an example," "paradigm"; cf. Lewis and Short 1891, 1300).

3.4. Mary Magdalene vs Peter, Dismas and Zacchaeus

It must be remembered that Gregory the Great examines specific biblical figures not so much to evaluate for the sake of evaluation but to derive moral-ascetic teaching from their life stories. The Italic monk usually comments on the Bible based on the well-known concept of the threefold meaning of the biblical text: historical (*historia*), typological (*significatio typica*) and moral (*moralitas*). In the first meaning, the commentator explains things in a literal sense; in the second, he looks for some symbolism and allegory; while in the third meaning, which can also be understood as beyond the literal, he seeks to translate a particular biblical text into an ascetic or moral life.

Thus, the pope considers episodes from the life of Peter the Apostle, looks at the "Good Thief," examines the tax collector Zacchaeus, looks at Mary Magdalene and sees in them "examples of hope and repentance placed before our eyes" ("et nihil in his aliud video, nisi ante nostros oculos posita spei et paenitentiae exempla" [*Homilia* XXV, 10; CCSL 141, 215]).

In a detailed argument, the ancient commentator explains that Peter the Apostle is the perfect example for people whose faith has faltered ("fortasse enim in fide lapsus est aliquis, aspiciat Petrum"). Although Peter denied Christ three times and dissociated himself radically from him, using the usual formula that the rabbis used as anathema at the time: "I do not know this man" (Matt 26:74), his weeping, as Gregory points out, saved him ("qui amare flevit, quod timide negaverat").

He continues by placing before the reader of his homilies the "Good Thief," whose name, according to the tradition, was Dismas. This thief, in Gregory's view, is the example to follow for people who are cruel in their dealings with their neighbours ("alius contra proximum suum in malitia crudelitatis exarsit, aspiciat latronem"). Such a person, if he shows remorse, even at the last moment of his life, can receive an eternal reward like the "Good Thief" ("qui et in ipso mortis articulo ad

vitae praemia paenitendo pervenit"): "This day you shall be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

On the other hand, those who steal from others because of their greed and desire for profit should, in the opinion of the commentator, look at the tax collector Zacchaeus ("alius avaritiae aestibus anhelans aliena diripuit, aspiciat Zacchaeum"), who gave back fourfold to everyone whom he robbed ("qui si quid alicui abstulit, quadruplum reddidit"): "Behold, Lord, one half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone in any matter, I will repay him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Thus, Zacchaeus symbolises the plunderer who can always repent, provided he is willing to repair the material damage he has done.

And finally, Mary Magdalene, who, in this passage, is for Gregory the Great, the paradigm of a woman inflamed by lust for carnal pleasures ("alius libidinis igne succensus, carnis munditiam perdidit, aspiciat Mariam"), ultimately burning with love for Christ, burned up carnal love within herself ("quae in se amorem carnis igne divini amoris excoxit").

Hence, in the opinion of the pope-commentator, Magdalene the prostitute, Peter the one who denied Christ, Dismas the evil-doer and Zacchaeus the thief, represent for Christians certain paradigms on the path to *metanoia* towards full Christian perfection. Indeed, God, in the conviction of the Doctor of the Church, has placed before our eyes people whom we should emulate, and they represent examples of his mercy ("Deus ubique oculis nostris quos imitari debeamus obicit, ubique exempla suae misericordiae opponit"). They all experienced the mercy of the Creator and, repenting of their transgressions, were saved.

> Fortasse enim in fide lapsus est aliquis, aspiciat Petrum, qui amare flevit, quod timide negaverat. Alius contra proximum suum in malitia crudelitatis exarsit, aspiciat latronem, qui et in ipso mortis articulo ad vitae praemia paenitendo pervenit. Alius avaritiae aestibus anhelans aliena diripuit, aspiciat Zacchaeum, qui si quid alicui abstulit, quadruplum reddidit. Alius libidinis igne succensus carnis munditiam perdidit, aspiciat Mariam, quae in se amorem carnis igne divini amoris excoxit. Ecce omnipotens Deus ubique oculis nostris quos imitari debeamus obicit, ubique exempla suae misericordiae opponit (*Homilia* XXV, 10; CCSL 141, 215–216; "For perhaps someone has fallen in faith, let him look at Peter, who wept bitterly because he fearfully denied [Christ]. Whoever was inflamed with the sin of cruelty against his neighbour, let him look at the thief, who, showing remorse, attained the reward of [eternal] life at the very moment of death. Whoever, [while] breathing greed and desire for gain, has plundered another, let him look at Zacchaeus, who, having taken something from someone, gave back [to everyone] fourfold. [Finally,] he who [is] inflamed by the fire of carnal lust and has lost the purity of the flesh, let him look at Mary, who [burning] with the fire of divine love, burned in herself the love of the flesh. Indeed, the almighty God sets before our eyes from every side [those] whom we should emulate, everywhere he presents examples of his mercy" [my own translation]).

3.5. Mary Magdalene vs Christian of Any Era

Turning finally to allegorical interpretation, Gregory, in *Homilia* XXXIII, points out that Mary Magdalene symbolises every Christian ("nos ergo, nos illa mulier expressit"). She sprinkled the Saviour's feet with precious oil (cf. Luke 7:46), and every Christian – in Gregory's view – is "the sweet fragrance of Christ for God" (cf. 2 Cor 2:15). If we do righteous works, we sprinkle the Church with the fragrance of good opinion ("quibus opinionis bonae odore Ecclesiam respergamus") and, like Magdalene, we pour the precious oil on the Lord's body ("quid in Domini corpore nisi unguentum fundimus" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 5; CCSL 141, 292]).

The evangelical heroine stood back at Jesus' feet (cf. Luke 7:38). In the view of the Doctor of the Church, each one of us stands at the feet of Christ ("contra pedes Domini") when persisting in sin, we have opposed his ways ("cum in peccatis positi eius itineribus renitebamur"). But if we do penance for our sins ("si ad veram paenitentiam post peccata convertimur"), we again stand back at the feet of Jesus ("iam retro secus pedes") because we follow in his footsteps (*Homilia* XXXIII, 5; CCSL 141, 292).

Magdalene shed tears at the Lord's feet (cf. Luke 7:38). Every Christian does so by showing compassion towards neighbours ("per compassionis affectum inclinemur"), by sympathising with the saints in tribulation ("si sanctis eius in tribulatione compatimur") and by treating their sorrow as our own ("si eorum tristitiam nostram putamus" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 5; CCSL 141, 292]).

Moreover, the woman used her hair to wipe Christ's feet (cf. Luke 7:38). In the belief of the ancient commentator, we wipe the feet of the Lord with our hair when we compassionately suffer with his saints ("quando sanctis eius, quibus ex caritate compatimur"), when we share with other people the things we have plenty ("etiam ex his quae nobis superfluunt miseremur"), for as reason feels pain through compassion, so a generous hand indicates a feeling of compassion. And he sheds tears at the Saviour's feet but does not wipe them with his hair ("sed capillis suis non tergit, qui utcumque proximorum dolori compatitur"), who, though united in pain with his neighbour, yet does not share with him the things he has plenty ("sed tamen eis ex his quae sibi superfluunt non miseretur"). It can also be the case, as the pope-commentator emphasises, that someone weeps with a neighbour and does not wipe his feet with his hair, when he has only offered words of compassion to the other ("plorat et non tergit, qui verba quidem doloris tribuit"), which has not lessened the intensity of the neighbour's pain ("quae vim doloris minime abscidit" [*Homilia* XXXIII, 5; CCSL 141, 292–93]).

And finally, the woman kissed the Lord's feet (cf. Luke 7:38). Explaining this action, Gregory instructs that we do likewise if we love those we support generously ("si studiose diligimus quos ex largitate continemus"). He goes on to state that we should take care that the needs of others do not become burdensome to us ("ne gravis

nobis sit necessitas proximi") and that when the hand has offered what is necessary, the spirit should not be ossified ("cum manus necessaria tribuit, animus a dilectione torpescat"), concludes the commentator (*Homilia* XXXIII, 5; CCSL 141, 293).

Conclusion

After analysing both Gregory's homilies, the following conclusions arise:

1. In the detailed argument on the matter, the commentator, by combining into one three evangelical women – the nameless sinner (cf. Luke 7:37), Mary Magdalene (cf. Luke 8:2) and Mary (cf. John 20:11) – uses the verb form *credimus* (cf. *Homilia* XXXIII, 1; CCSL 141, 288), which in the context of the whole passage should be translated as "we believe," "we think," "we suppose," and which appears to have been often overlooked by later commentators. This key verb does not imply a judgement or conviction based on sound arguments, nor does it contain absolute certainty as to one's opinion.
2. In the case of Gregory's interpretation of Mary Magdalene, perhaps the pope himself would have been astonished that, for fifteen centuries, the most enduring legacy of his two homilies on the biblical figure in question was the symbol of Magdalene as a "convert prostitute," rather than the moral teaching that Gregory the Great wished to impart to the reader. After all, the commentator still juxtaposed Magdalene with the Shulamite from the Song of Songs, Eve, Simon the Pharisee, Peter, Zacchaeus and Dismas, and saw in her a "type" of Christian of every era.
3. In both homilies, the pope repeatedly emphasises that the penitent sinner Magdalene (*paenitens peccatrix mulier*) is a paradigm (*paradigma*) and example (*exemplum*) of sorts. Moreover, she should be an example for every believer to follow as one who has experienced the immensity of God's mercy.
4. All the biblical figures (the Shulamite from the Song of Songs, Eve, Simon the Pharisee, Peter, Zacchaeus, the "Good Thief") with whom the pope juxtaposes Mary Magdalene are, for Gregory, examples of people of hope who followed their own path to conversion.
5. Although Gregory the Great notes that Mary of Magdala is a sinner (*peccatrix*) in his homilies, it must be remembered that this is neither the only nor the most important, but one of many typologies of this figure. Moreover, in the commentator's view, this sinner ultimately becomes one who "burns" with love for the Lord (*amando fortiter ardebat*).
6. Finally, it is important to bear in mind the interpretation conventions of biblical texts by the Fathers of the Church and early Christian writers, who usually offered the reader, *per allegoriam*, multiple proposals for interpreting a single

image. Doubtless, this tendency to trace a supraliteral meaning in almost every biblical verse, as the Origenian spirit still lingers in Gregory the Great due to the reading of his later followers, is a rich source of moral, spiritual and ascetic reflection.

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Janusz Nagórny's Interpretation of the Personalistic Category of Participation and Its Implementation in the Theological-Moral Reflection on Social Life

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Abstract: Moral theology, like any science, develops not only through the addition of new concepts but also through the explanation of phenomena with increasing accuracy and depth by applying adequate tools and methods, which can and should be improved. In describing the essence of social life and morally evaluating social attitudes, such a tool is provided by the personalistic category of participation. This category – extensively discussed by Karol Wojtyła in his book *The Acting Person* – was originally interpreted and applied to the theological-moral reflection on social life by Fr. Janusz Nagórny (1950–2006) – moral theologian from the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. What was his contribution to this implementation? What rendered his understanding of participation so original? What were the methodological and substantive consequences of such a reception? To answer these questions, the author analyses Nagórny's publications, including those which so far – mainly due to their popular science and popularising character – have not been the subject of more in-depth study. The analysis presented here leads to the conclusion that Nagórny lent a theological character to a philosophical category by its biblification and, in such an interpretation, he applied it to detailed areas of social life. Furthermore, the use of elements of the historical method justifies the thesis that he was the initiator of this type of implementation and contributed to making it popular in Polish moral theology.

Keywords: Janusz Nagórny, Karol Wojtyła, participation, solidarity, opposition, personalism, covenant, community, social life, morality

The methodological reorientation of moral theology after the Second Vatican Council marked a departure from the methods of treating moral issues that had been developed since its autonomisation and a turn towards biblical morality, which gave it a number of new features. One of these was an appreciation of the communal aspects of moral life, while moving away from the individualistic treatment of moral issues characteristic of post-Tridentine theology (Gocko 2006, 183; 1998, 123–50).

The appreciation of social issues within the post-conciliar reorientation of moral theology was undoubtedly a result of biblification, but over time it was also expressed as a wider opening to the personalist category of participation, which was extensively addressed by Karol Wojtyla in the fourth part of his book *The Acting Person* (K. Wojtyła 1979, 261–300), and which is still the subject of many philosophically oriented studies today (Tarasiewicz 2016, 417–32; Mizdrak 2010, 115–30;

Pawlak 2006, 51–62; W. Wojtyła 2020, 103–18). Wojtyła's concept of the participating person, interpreted in conjunction with biblical sources, has found application in explaining the very nature and specificity of the Christian view of interpersonal community, especially the relationships within it and the obligations that arise from these relationships.

Although this category is also present in Catholic social teaching pursued autonomously, there is no doubt that Fr. Prof. Janusz Nagórny – rightly regarded as one of the protagonists of the post-conciliar opening of Catholic moral theology to social issues – significantly contributed to its introduction into moral theology (Gocko 2010, 175). He considered participation to be one of the most important keys to interpreting the Christian vision of community more fully, to properly understanding the problem of interpersonal relations within social life and to assessing specific moral attitudes and to interpreting the entire social teaching of Pope John Paul II (Nagórny 1997, 119; 2007, 228; Pokrywka 2008, 419).

In outlining a Christian vision of community, Nagórny consciously uses the personalistic category of participation specifically as a personalistic category. However, he makes his original contribution to it by its theologisation, biblification and applying it to specific areas of community life. The essence and significance of this contribution can be better understood in the context of the changes which, inspired by the Second Vatican Council, occurred in moral theology in the second half of the 20th century. Therefore, before proceeding to present participation itself as a key to understanding the full scope of social life and, at the same time, as a tool for evaluating detailed social issues, it is necessary to at least briefly outline the context in which Nagórny undertakes his scientific work as a moral theologian. This context determines a gradual departure from individualism in favour of highlighting the communal aspects of moral life and moral theology as a reflection on such life.

1. Janusz Nagórny as a Witness and Participant in the Social Reorientation of Moral Theology

The studies and the beginning of the academic work of Nagórny coincided with the first phase of the post-conciliar renewal of moral theology. Admittedly, since the end of Vatican II and the famous call for the renewal of moral theology contained in the Decree on Priestly Training *Optatam Totius* ("Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology. Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world" [*OT* 16]), more than a dozen years had passed by then, this renewal was still in its infancy. The overly individualistic view of the moral life, which had been

characteristic of the prevailing currents before the Council: Alphonsianism and, to a lesser extent, Neo-Thomism, had to some extent survived in the lectures, especially of those who, not being associated with academic centres, had devoted themselves mainly to teaching in seminaries and who, themselves brought up on textbooks by Hieronymus Noldin and Dominikus Prümmer, faithfully followed in their footsteps (Zadykowicz 2006, 277).

These essentially pre-conciliar approaches were also present in Polish moral theology after the Council (Greniuk 1993, 172). They portrayed man as an individual who, not so much owing to, but in spite of, life in society, is to strive for the salvation of their own soul. The conception of social life was therefore negative. It was also focused on case studies, the individual cases that moral theology of the time sought to solve. There is no doubt, therefore, that the approach to social issues was one of the special areas in need of renewal, both from a substantive and methodological point of view. The idea was not only to broaden the scope of issues to include certain problems, but also to develop an overall, holistic concept of community.

In line with these demands, social issues, although always present to some extent in moral theology, began to receive even more attention after Vatican II, especially in the circles of theologians associated with the academic centres of the time (Kowalski 2006, 47). A number of problems in this area were taken up already in the first period of the renewal by such Polish authors as Stanisław Olejnik (1970), Franciszek Greniuk (Greniuk 1977), Tadeusz Sikorski (1976, 1977, 1978), and Jan Kowalski (1970). The aforementioned theologians, using the data of sciences such as philosophy, psychology and sociology in their argumentation, highlighted the communal aspects of morality. Moreover, they stressed that the specificity of Christian morality includes its social dimension. None of them, however, made explicit reference to the category of participation.

The 1980s and 1990s saw a particular intensification of theological-moral publications, which were an expression of the ongoing social reorientation of the discipline. They abounded in literature that addressed both the totality of social issues and their particular aspects. The best known in this respect is the seven-volume series Dar. Wezwanie. Odpowiedź (The Gift. The Call. The Response) by Stanisław Olejnik, the last volume of which was entitled *Moralność życia społecznego* (Morality of Social Life) (Olejnik 1993).[1] Henryk Skorowski's publications: *Być chrześcijaninem i obywatelem dziś: Refleksje o postawach moralno-społecznych* (To Be a Christian and a Citizen Today: Reflections on Moral and Social Attitudes) (1994) and *Moralność społeczna: Wybrane zagadnienia z etyki społecznej, gospodarczej i politycznej* (Social Morality: Selected Issues in Social, Economic and Political Ethics) (1996) can also serve as textbooks. A number of independent (i.e. not included in the entirety of

1 A similar title (*Teologia moralna życia społecznego* [Moral Theology of Social Life]) in a three-volume edition is given to the last volume (Olejnik 2000).

teaching on moral theology) detailed studies have also been published presenting a holistic approach to social morality. Most of them discuss the subject of participation in connection with the common good, which is the space for participation and solidarity, which fosters the creation of the common good (Strzeszewski 1985, 516–18; Majka 1988, 420–21; Zwoliński 1992, 28–29; Piwowarski 1993, 183; Borutka, Mazur, and Zwoliński 1999, 58–59, 63–64). Some of them discuss the principle of participation separately, as part of detailed classifications made within the basic social principles (Mazur 1992, 179–80). Monographs devoted to individual social issues are also being written. Also, an increasing number of conferences and doctoral dissertations address social issues (Gocko 2006, 189–90). Within the faculties of theology at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw and the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Chairs of Social Moral Theology are established; the one in Lublin is not headed by Nagórny.

Therefore, Nagórny makes his contribution in a specific context. His vision of social morality is a reflection of everything that the Church of his time lives by. At this time, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is published, with one of the articles in its chapter "The Human Communion" entitled "Participation in Social Life." (*CCC* 1897–1927) In disseminating the teaching contained in it, Nagórny is constantly searching for ways to better respond to the signs of the times (Gocko 2010, 175). For him, such a sign of the times was the need to show even more clearly the communal aspects of morality. For this reason, he first interpreted man's vocation to community life by referring to biblical foundations. Later, he began to interpret this reference using also the original concept of personalism created by Wojtyła, and especially one of the elements of this concept – the category of participation. This use, however, was not a mere repetition, a loanword; it was rather an adaptation of the idea he interpreted. In this sense, Wojtyła's book *The Acting Person* was for Nagórny a source of inspiration rather than a collection of *dicta probantia*. That is why he did not always quote it directly, although the reader will find a lot of such literal quotations and paraphrases, as well as references to studies that address it. However, it is not these that testify to the extent to which its content has been received. All the more so, he did not polemicise with the theses it contained, but rather developed them, supplemented them and made them the starting point for his theological-moral analyses.

2. Janusz Nagórny's Theological-Moral Interpretation of the Category of Participation

Nagórny's vision of the life of a person in a community was profoundly theological, i.e. not philosophical, still less sociological, which, however, did not mean that he founded it exclusively on biblical premises (Nagórny 1997, 102–3; 1994, 75;

Nagórny 2004c, 243). On the contrary, the communal character of the Old Covenant and the vision of community presented in the New Testament were supplemented by Nagórny with data that Christian personalism brought to the reflection on the social dimension of human life. It is not surprising, then, that in the book *Posłannictwo chrześcijan w świecie* (The Mission of Christians in the World), the fragments concerning participation were placed immediately after the presentation of the biblical vision of community life (Nagórny 1997, 112–32). He assumed that a person's participation in community life can be regarded from both a philosophical-ethical perspective, as Wojtyła did, and from a theological one. Moreover, he was convinced that referring to the natural order alone is not enough and that it is necessary to delve into the deepest foundations, i.e. Christian Revelation (Nagórny 2010b, 58–59). Thus, his conception of participation was inscribed in the theological character of the Church's social teaching, the character he always defended (Gocko 2008, 403).

Nagórny thus succeeded in combining the natural and supernatural dimensions of participation and its anthropological and theological aspects. According to the Professor, participation has its foundations in human nature and Revelation. It is an anthropological category, but this anthropology has a theological character. For him, therefore, the category of participation was an important complement to the biblical vision of community. It allowed him to reach out to the natural-law order, to philosophical reflection of an anthropological-ethical nature. As a moral theologian, Nagórny was looking for a harmonious synthesis between what the Holy Scriptures teach about the communal character of human life and what results from the concept of human life interpreted in the spirit of Christian personalism (Nagórny 1997, 112). He argued that reflection on participation does not cease to be theological-moral when it turns to the natural-law order and to philosophical personalism. He was convinced that this double direction of search defends moral theology against both losing the Christian specificity of presence in the world and neglecting the temporal dimension of life and preventing Christians from adopting the attitude of dialogue and cooperation in a pluralistic society (Nagórny 2010b, 57). The Professor was aware that the concept of community is not unambiguous (Nagórny 1997, 102). On the contrary, it has numerous connotations depending on the adopted concept of man. Therefore, he thought of the philosophical category of participation as a tool for dialogue with those who are not necessarily open to the message of the Bible.

The category of participation, or better, the "category of participating person" described by Wojtyła, seemed to Nagórny to be particularly well suited to developing a theological vision of community. However, as a moral theologian, he repeatedly emphasised that the Christian view of social life is derived above all from a biblical vision of communal life, yet he immediately added that this does not in any way imply the omission of all that is contained in the philosophical concept of the human person and its dialogical dimension (Nagórny 1997, 103).

What was the reason for this "suitability" of the personalistic category of participation for developing a theological vision of community? According to Nagórny, it is its connection with the biblical idea of the Covenant, which points not only to the participation of man in the life of God, but also to the participation in the lives of others in the spirit of love (Nagórny 1997, 103; 2007, 248–49). In this way, Nagórny closely linked the category of participation with the biblical vision of covenant that was absolutely fundamental for him. The category of covenant, he argued, makes it possible to show the social character of participation and to overcome its individualistic interpretation and egoistic conception of life. Christians – he wrote – called to build an interpersonal community and to participate in this community are above all called to participate in the New Covenant in Christ, to participate in the community of the saved, and thus to co-create the Church as a true "communion of persons." (Nagórny 1997, 101)

It seems, the Professor argued, that this Christian interpretation of participation finds its theological foundation in the vision of the New Covenant. Participation and solidarity are, as it were, the contemporary name of this Covenant which God has concluded with humanity in his Son, Jesus Christ. If God, out of love, not only creates a special bond with human beings but allows them to participate in His life, then a special duty of solidarity with other human beings arises from this Covenant-participation. Christians who follow their Master not only participate in God's Covenant with people but themselves become, as it were, a "covenant" for others, and this is done through participation in the lives of other people and in the lives of individual communities (Nagórny 1997, 131–32; 2010b, 62).

Nagórny thus proves that the category of participation considered in terms of the concept of man as a relational being fits harmoniously into the biblical vision of community life based on the idea of Covenant in Christ. Both perspectives of interpreting the communal character of the human person converge in the truth that man, created by God and thus endowed with existence, has not only been given the world but, above all, has been endowed with a particular "image and likeness" of God, while man's ability to enter into relationship with another "you" is a natural capacity, finding its fulfilment in God's salvific self-communication to man. In either case, it has the character of a covenant gift. In this way, the personalistic vision of community leads one – as the Professor writes – directly to the theology of community (Nagórny 1997, 132).

The theology of community pursued by Nagórny reached the deepest, supernatural sources of participation. The Professor writes: "The attitude of participation experienced in the spirit of Christian faith is born out of the awareness of belonging to Christ and participating in His life and mission on earth. This reference of participation to Christ thus reveals its broader perspective: it acquires a supernatural dimension, for it is the realisation of the kingdom of God on earth." (Nagórny 1997, 129) Nagórny was convinced that a proper understanding of the biblical doctrine of

the interrelation of community members with the community itself makes it possible to more deeply explain the roots of individuals' participation of individual people in the life of society. It seems, wrote the Professor, "that it is precisely this biblical perspective on the interconnectedness of individual members of a community with the community itself that can provide a starting point for a proper presentation of the problem of the social character of human action." (Nagórny 1997, 107)

Pointing to the supernatural sources of participation, Nagórny links this category with a Christian's participation in the threefold mission of Christ and with the theological virtues, especially love (Nagórny 1997, 129; 2010b, 57). It is in the theological virtues that the Professor perceived a great causal and motivational power of many concrete forms of participation (Nagórny 2010b, 66). Speaking of opposition as one of the principles of participation, he emphasised its connection with the capacity for sacrifice, growing out of Christian fortitude (Nagórny 1997, 126–27).

Linking the category of participation with the biblical vision of the covenant led the Professor to link the vertical and horizontal elements of participation. That is to say, he did not see participation as a mere contribution to community life, but as a consequence of the truth of God's fatherhood towards all people and a consequence of the covenant that God has made with each person and with the nation as a whole. The biblical category of covenant allowed Nagórny to reconcile the necessity of an individual's personal involvement in religious life with participation in the nation's life. It also helped to demonstrate the possibility of and need for the universality of participation. Indeed, the central law of the covenant, which was the commandment to love one's neighbour, opened up an ethnic community to an increasingly open fraternity, which also included strangers and foreigners (Nagórny 2007, 107; 1997, 107).

By this specific "theologisation" of participation, Nagórny was able to show the ecclesial dimension of the Christian life and emphasise that it is not just individual Christians but the entire Church that is present in the world and the entire Church that participates in the life of individual societies (Nagórny 2010b, 63). It also made it possible to recognise the social dimension of sin (Nagórny 1997, 107). The concept of participation presented by Nagórny is very realistic precisely because it takes into account the reality of sin. This is because the Professor closely linked the category of participation with the theological category of sin as a source of community breakdown, but also as an obstacle to authentic participation. "Man called to community," he wrote, "is at the same time man in need of salvation." (Nagórny 1997, 110) It is also realistic in that it accounts for the objective difficulties of the obligation to participate. These include, for example, all forms of prejudice against Christians who want to participate in the building up of civil life, as this prejudice motivated the pagan community in the biblical world and motivates it today (Nagórny 1997, 111).

Through the category of the covenant, especially the New Covenant, Nagórny portrayed participation as a form of transforming the world from within so as to

orient the community towards an eternal perspective and at the same time towards temporal prosperity. Thus, Nagorny's category of participation is not only an anthropological category but also a theological one. Thanks to the theological approach to this category, the relative character of temporal values and a specifically Christian approach to the world, which is neither contempt, rejection nor uncritical affirmation, has been shown (Nagórny 1997, 111; 2010b, 68).

Nagórny also outlined a concrete image, a model of authentic participation in the person of Jesus and the early Church: "Christ [...] as God-Man is fully in solidarity with human beings, which is also expressed in the truth of the New Covenant, which is a Covenant in Christ and with Christ. This must also be read in the light of the words of Christ, who told his Apostles: 'I am with you always, until the end of the age' (Matt 28:20). In this declaration: 'I am with you'," writes Nagórny, "every follower of Christ should also recognise the call for an individual to want to be together with others, too, for God's solidarity with people is a call for solidarity between people. Thus, the Christian refers to the model of Christ as the true Emmanuel, that is, 'God with us', as the One who in solidarity has become involved in all human affairs." (Nagórny 1997, 130) And a little further on, "the disciple of Christ should at the same time recognise in his Master the One who is 'a sign of opposition' and a sign that 'will be contradicted' (cf. Luke 2:34). Christ repeatedly made it clear by His conduct that he was that 'sign of opposition' to evil which he perceived in the lives of both individuals and society. Only the imitation of Christ in the totality of His mission and His attitude towards human society can enable individual Christians and the entire Church to fulfil their tasks in the world." (Nagórny 1997, 130)

Nagórny – as is evident from the above – linked the personalistic perspective of participation with the Christological foundation of the Christian life: "Any call to participation should ultimately be read by the Christian in the context of life with Christ." (Nagórny 1997, 131) He also linked the fruitfulness of participation to Christ and being grafted in Him: "For Christ says: 'Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). Only the one who grows, matures and bears fruit in union with Christ can fully undertake the toil of responsibility for both oneself and others and thus can be a participant in community life." (Nagórny 1997, 131) Nagórny emphasises, however, that "Showing the Christian perspective on participation is not limited to pointing to the model of such participation in Christ, but also refers to the supernatural endowment of man. Man by his very nature is capable and called to participate in social life, but transformed and strengthened by grace, he can do it in a new and more perfect way." (Nagórny 1997, 131; 2007, 248) What is more – as the Professor convinces – a person can and should do it in many areas of their life.

3. Janusz Nagórny's Application of the Principles of Participation to Concrete Situations

Nagórny had a great ability to apply general ethical principles to specific situations. This also applied to how the duty to participate in social life was realised. Very often, on various occasions and, perhaps above all, in his publications and speeches of a popular-scientific and popularising character, he showed not only the foundation and essence of participation but also its numerous detailed, practical aspects. Moreover, he not only showed, but called for, solidarity and opposition, attitudes which, according to Wojtyła, express authentic participation (K. Wojtyła 1979, 284–87). His theological-moral reflection on participation thus had a practical orientation.

The Professor placed the call to participation in the context of the challenges arising from the concrete situation of the contemporary world (Nagórny 2007, 233–36; 2010b, 57). One could even say that his reflection in this regard grew out of his concern about the state of solidarity of Poles and their capacity for constructive opposition. In one of his columns, he said: "I watch with concern how easily interpersonal ties and social relations are broken in today's Poland. How easily divisions and quarrels arise also in those human groups and communities, which are specifically called to seek ways of love and unity." (Nagórny 2005, 39–40)

Therefore, it was in the light of the possibility or impossibility, the willingness or unwillingness to be with others, through others and for others that he evaluated social and political programmes, the electoral decisions of Poles and their moral attitudes, the already existing and created legal acts, and even the words and deeds of politicians and journalists sometimes mentioned by name. He interpreted many specific topics in terms of participation: human labour (Nagórny 2000, 60–61), patriotism (Nagórny 2000, 104; 2006, 129–30), upbringing in the family (Nagórny 2000, 60, 79), religious education (Nagórny 2000, 63–64), education for freedom (Nagórny 2004b, 27), the mission of the media and responsibility for the word (Nagórny 2000, 74), fraternal admonition (Nagórny 2004a, 194), and showing young people the meaning and value of life (Nagórny 2000, 211).

Nagórny emphasised that a Christian cannot give up participation, which on the practical level is realised through the ordinary testimony of life and expresses participation in the work of evangelisation of the world (Nagórny 2000, 202, 205; 2010b, 63). A Christian cannot give up witnessing even if the environment is hostile or even hostile towards the mission of believers (Nagórny 1997, 111). On the contrary, they must constantly remind themselves that they are called to put into practice the principle of solidarity, i.e. "all with all," and "all for all." (Nagórny 2007, 230) When necessary, they are also obliged to oppose constructively. Such an attitude is – according to Nagórny – an expression of responsibility for others (Nagórny 2007, 279), including care for their salvation (Nagórny 2000, 125–28). Thus, the Professor called for solidarity that is general, but also for the "neighbourhood," "local,"

and "grassroots" solidarity (Nagórny 2007, 278). He outlined detailed principles of solidarity of working people, and solidarity of families. He described specific forms of participation resulting from specific vocations, e.g. of parents, teachers, and catechists (Nagórny 2000, 126–27).

What then are these specific forms of participation? Nagórny's social sensitivity had him exposing the delusion of those who proclaim the possibility of building social life solely on democratically legislated law. While not denying the need to care for good law, the Professor was at the same time pointing to its insufficiency. He postulated that this life be based on a certain system of virtues, which he somewhat jokingly called "urgently wanted." (Nagórny 2007, 75) From 18 March to 24 June 2004, he delivered a series of talks on *Radio Maryja*, in which he presented these virtues as the foundation of social life; as something that every citizen should "contribute" to the community of the state and the nation, so that this community would truly deserve the name. Participation, therefore, also involves being concerned for the formation of oneself and others, for being guided by a righteous conscience, aimed at building the social order. For a person does not only bring "something" into the community, but first and foremost they bring themselves into it, and the shape of social life depends on what they are like and what their conscience is like.

Among these "urgently wanted" virtues, Nagórny included wisdom (Nagórny 2000, 159), prudence, a healthy sense of shame and decency, humility, responsibility, fortitude, justice (Nagórny 2000, 156), honesty, patience and perseverance, moderation, kindness, unselfishness, patriotism, mercy, readiness to help others (Nagórny 2000, 151), capacity for dialogue (Nagórny 2000, 129–31), and even simple kindness (Nagórny 2000, 108–10). Commenting on the invocations of *The Litany of Loreto*, the Professor created a full "litany" of virtues that need to be developed in oneself and "brought" into social life. In this he saw a way to solve many social problems, e.g. poverty, loneliness, discouragement, resignation (Nagórny 2007, 242; 2005, 41).

He saw the concern for one's own development, for one's own education, for one's own family, for multiplying one's own prosperity as an attitude of solidarity, because – as he argued – all this is important not only for a particular person and his or her loved ones, but is somehow a co-creation of the prosperity of the community of the nation to which one belongs (Nagórny 2007, 237, 252, 285). Participation is always oriented towards the future, towards the creation of a perfect community. A person who lives according to the indicated virtues becomes a sign of hope for a better tomorrow (Nagórny 2000, 170). Participation – according to Nagórny – is, however, not only a person's "contribution" to social life, but also the ability to receive, to open up to other people, to their good advice (Nagórny 2000, 112–13).

The professor also showed the consequences of non-participation. He had the courage to say unpopular things when he blamed the lack of moral order in many areas on condoning evil, on scandalous behaviour of politicians and supporting and

electing them (Nagórny 2007, 78). Speaking of the need for responsibility, he warned that "if we do not feel more responsible not only for our personal lives, but also for everything that determines the life of the nation and the state, we will lose the regained freedom." (Nagórny 2007, 87) Thus, for the Professor, any form of indifference to social issues, including the evil existing in social life, was the negation of participation (Nagórny 2000, 77, 152).

Wojtyła considered individualism and totalism (K. Wojtyła 1979, 272–73) and conformism and avoidance (K. Wojtyła 1979, 289–91) to be the negation of participation. Nagórny was aware of these attitudes in his own time. He stigmatised specific manifestations of conformism and avoidance, escapes into privacy and exuberant individualism on the one hand and collectivism on the other (Nagórny 2007, 234, 256, 260, 263; 2005, 40, 42). He called for overcoming all manifestations of apathy and passivity. For, according to him, participation is also "going against the tide," opposing everything that destroys man and social life (Nagórny 2007, 89); it is even a fight for justice and for just rights (Nagórny 2007, 93; 2000, 208). The Professor was aware that there is still much to be done in the field of Christian participation in social life. How eloquent in this respect are his words about *Solidarity* as a trade union, but at the same time as a moral stance: "The first *Solidarity* contributed to overthrowing the totalitarian system and Soviet domination. And the second one? First, I beg God for it to be born at all." (Nagórny 2007, 108)

In his contemporary Polish society, Nagórny perceived a spirit of egoism, anti-solidarity, privacy, aversion to community life, and divisions that prevent people from cooperating. Faced with these phenomena, he called for participation also by looking for some synonyms for the term. He said, for example: "Nothing about us without us – that is the best incentive to participate in any election." (Nagórny 2007, 104) He also used certain images, for example when he said: "The ballot papers symbolise something that can be associated with the spirit of solidarity." (Nagórny 2007, 231) For him, participation was about defending the values of social life, such as, for example, defending the life of the unborn, and mobilising others to such defence. In his statements, one can find specific definitions of participation. For example, he said of solidarity that "it means the ability to be with another person," (Nagórny 2005, 41) "it is one of the names of love" (Nagórny 2007, 247); that it is the same as covenant (Nagórny 2007, 249); that "today it also means hope." (Nagórny 2007, 235–36) It is worth noting, in passing, the word "today," which is used fairly often in his statements. It is a form of sign that his reflection on participation is indeed rooted in current circumstances.

In his application of the principles of participation to concrete situations, Nagórny drew attention to the need to create the right conditions for such participation. What good is it, he asked, when a person wants to contribute to the life of the community when those who have already gained some office consider themselves infallible and no longer need any help, any advice but only flatterers (Nagórny 2007, 85–86)?

Nagórny was also particularly sensitive to the problem of the participation of the Church and individual Catholics in political life. He courageously defended this right; moreover, he pointed to the obligation of such participation in spite of the slogans about "the Church's meddling in politics," which were used both then and now (Nagórny 2007, 114). He also extended participation to the fields of economics, culture, education and the media. He devoted a special place in his articles and speeches to the need to care for the family. He ranked this type of participation – both of the spouses and parents themselves and of the entire community with regard to marriage and the family – among the most important (Nagórny 2007, 117). He considered the upbringing of the young generation in the spirit of solidarity, i.e. teaching young people to live with others, through others and for others as a special form of family participation in social life (Nagórny 2007, 286–87).

Nagórny portrayed participation as the "contribution" of a particular person to social life, but he also developed the communal, and especially ecclesial, elements of this involvement (Nagórny 2000, 229–31; 2004b, 84). He criticised the views that only individual believers can be involved in social life, while such involvement is denied to the institutionalised community. He proved that not only solidarity with the weakest, with people in need but also the Church's call for morality in public life, work on human conscience, creating a culture of life and striving for its legal protection is also a participation in the spirit of solidarity (Nagórny 2004b, 38, 41, 55, 72; 2005, 94, 113).

The interpretation and application of the principle of opposition to current situations is also interesting. The vision of tolerance reduced to a total negation of the right to dissent, as well as "political correctness" are – according to the Professor – negations of this principle (Nagórny 2007, 255; 2000, 269). Nagórny linked constructive opposition with the capacity for sacrifice, with the Christian virtue of fortitude and courage, in the name of which the individual is able to oppose everything that destroys the community (Nagórny 2007, 256). Opposing the existing or created legal order, if it refers to an intrinsically unjust law, is sometimes a concrete expression of such opposition (Nagórny 2000, 25; 2003, 235). Besides, Nagórny himself stated that if one wanted to list all inappropriate attitudes and situations in our social life, towards which an attitude of opposition is necessary, one would have to speak for at least several hours (Nagórny 2005, 43). However, he particularly lamented the lack of opposition to manifestations of rudeness and savagery, to obvious and drastic forms of ridiculing Christian values, and religious symbols, but also to corruption, violence, lies, deceit (Nagórny 2005, 43–44).

It seems that Nagórny's original contribution to the reflection on the duty to participate is even a call to leave, to withdraw from public life addressed to those who have proved too weak or even more to those who have proved immoral. The Professor said: "A normal person will have enough shame to consider that when they have lost public trust, they should withdraw from public life, resign their position."

(Nagórny 2007, 81) And even more: "Today, responsibility for Poland means not allowing people who have been compromised many times to continue to influence our social life." (Nagórny 2007, 88) Elsewhere: "Whoever lies should never be elected again." (Nagórny 2007, 96) Therefore, according to Nagórny, there are situations when others must be prevented from "participating." This is because if people bring into social life different forms of aggression, violence, attack, destruction of one's neighbour, hostility, brutality, various forms of contempt, and disregard for the weaker and less educated, then this must be opposed (Nagórny 2007, 100, 128). In doing so, the Professor referred to the words of John Paul II uttered in Gdańsk in 1987 that "solidarity also generates struggle." (Giovanni Paolo II 1987) As he immediately added, this is not a fight against others, but a battle for man, for man's rights, for man's true progress: a battle for a more mature shape of social life (Nagórny 2007, 229).

This is why he called for a new awakening of the attitude of responsibility for social matters in those who, even with a completely justified sense of injustice, have relegated themselves to the margins of social life (Nagórny 2007, 88). This issue is all the more pressing because – as he said – "the peculiar drama of our times is that in Poland the people who are more 'in solidarity' with each other are the wicked people, the criminals of various kinds, all those who unite and cooperate for evil purposes." And immediately the Professor adds: "of course, this is not solidarity, because this unity is not based on love." (Nagórny 2007, 278) A true "contribution" to society will only be possible if one is capable of sacrifice, of renunciation, of rising above one's own self-interest (Nagórny 2000, 48–49).

4. The Significance of Implementing the Category of Participation for Theological Reflection on the Morality of Social Life

Although, almost immediately after the Second Vatican Council, many Polish moral theologians drew attention to the need to appreciate the communal aspects of moral life, there is no doubt that Nagórny was the first to discuss the category of participation so extensively and to use it so creatively. Above all, it served him as a methodological tool for grasping the very essence of social life and the duties of an individual towards the community. From a substantive point of view, however, it contributed to his moral theology, especially to that which was more practically and pastorally oriented, a number of specific issues which were not included in the older models of reflection on the good and evil of human acts and of the person who performs them within the framework of social life.

A detailed analysis of Nagórny's writings made it possible to reveal the originality of his approach to participation in relation to the thought of Karol Wojtyła. It should be emphasised, however, that an attempt to capture the originality of his contribution

to the interpretation of this category cannot lead to juxtaposing the two authors. As already mentioned, for Nagórny the category of participation was the key to reading the entire teaching of John Paul II. Thus, many of the intuitions found in his works were inspired by the message conveyed by Wojtyła already in his role as pope, later than the book *The Acting Person*.

Inspired by the reflection of Wojtyła – John Paul II – Nagórny demonstrated the existence of a harmonious relationship between the anthropological category of participation and the biblical vision of community. By introducing Wojtyła's more personalistic and philosophical category into the area of his biblical analyses, he created a form of synthesis in the interpretation of the Christian vision of community life. It is a theological vision, which grows out of the conviction that the rationale of the duty to become involved in various areas of social life cannot be limited only to natural arguments, but such arguments cannot be omitted either (Nagórny 2010b, 79). Nagórny was convinced that participation and the resulting principles of solidarity and opposition can and should be interpreted in two complementary dimensions: in the natural dimension that is universal for all people; and in the dimension of faith, i.e. in the deeply Christian dimension (Nagórny 2007, 107, 226). It seems that such a close link between these dimensions and the development of the supernatural dimension of participation is the Professor's original, creative contribution.

There is no doubt that the theological perspective of participation was more important and more fundamental for Nagórny. However, he builds a certain type of bridge between it and Wojtyła's thoughts of a more philosophical (anthropological) nature. Thus, it can be said that the Professor made an evangelical interpretation of participation and its principles and of their application to detailed areas of Christian life. This indication of various planes of solidary presence of an individual in the community, the variety of forms and means of involvement of individuals and whole communities, was undoubtedly an original contribution of Nagórny to the development of Wojtyła's category of participation.

In the context of the Covenant, and at the same time with the use of philosophical tools, the Professor showed that not only are the individual and the community not contradictory concepts but – on the contrary – they are complementary and only considered together they reveal the anthropology of the community. Both the data of Revelation and the very nature of man confirm that members of a particular community does not so much become lost, as find themselves in it and, as it were, confirm themselves by simultaneously participating in everything that constitutes the good of that community (Nagórny 1997, 107). In this way, Nagórny made the category of participation and the level of its implementation the test of a truly Christian attitude (Nagórny 1997, 112). He considered the principles of participation – solidarity and opposition, as another way of expressing the fundamental command to love as Christ does (Nagórny 1997, 123).

By linking the personalistic category of participation with the biblical vision of community life, the Professor inspired research not only on participation itself, but also on the theological character of Catholic social teaching (Pokrywka 2000; Gocko 2003). He provided theological instruments for evaluating the different forms of a person's participation in community life. By combining philosophical reflection with biblical premises, he pointed to the possibility of dialogue around social issues between Christians of different denominations and even between believers and non-believers. His intuitions about certain social problems were extremely pertinent and remain still valid today. Most importantly, however, these issues and new problems can be evaluated in the light of the same principles of participation.

The category of participation has entered permanently into the social teaching of the Church. The most recent *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* lists it among the fundamental principles and values of social life (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace 2005, nos. 189–91). Of course, this is not attributable to Nagórny, but confirms his intuition that participation is more than just one of specific moral attitudes. Also, numerous publications on the morality of social life today refer to the terminology and category of participation. The term has entered the language of moral theology and autonomously practised Catholic social teaching. Even there are no direct indications of its origins in Wojtyła's writings, it functions universally as a theological-moral category and as a principle of social life closely linked to the common good and solidarity (Borutka 2004, 119–20, 124; 2005, 599–601; Drożdż 2005, 552–55; Bełch 2007, 170, 175; Mazurkiewicz et al. 2024, 111–12). The family's tasks in relation to society (Zarembski 2020, 319–36), human labour (Kupny 2003, 32), participation in culture and its creation (Krajewski 2020, 13), in elections (Nagórny 2010a, 415), presence in the media (Klichowski 2011, 199–208) and many other aspects are explored in the light of the principles of participation.

Conclusions

The analysis of Janusz Nagórny's scholarly and popularisation works leads to the conclusion that his understanding of the category of participation is his original contribution to the theological research regarding social life, especially in terms of its foundations. This is because his view of participation was not a simple repetition of social philosophy. On the contrary, it had a deeply theological character. Consequently, his entire moral and social reflection is not a social ethics pursued from a philosophical perspective, but a moral theology of community life.

The originality of Nagórny's approach to participation lies in the close connection of this personalistic category with the biblical idea of covenant that is absolutely fundamental for him. Reference to this idea allowed the Professor to show the double

source of participation: the very nature of man and man's supernatural endowment by God. While Karol Wojtyła focused on the natural sources of participation, Nagórny devoted more attention to the supernatural sources of this attitude. Hence, themes such as the creation of man in God's image and likeness, participation in Christ's threefold mission, and especially the new covenant in Christ, are presented in his works in connection with participation.

Nagórny therefore looked at the sources of moral theology in an original way for his time. Despite his keen awareness of biblical sources, he did not reject philosophy and the human sciences. On the contrary, he fulfilled the postulate on the mediating role of philosophy in theological reflection that John Paul II formulated in his Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio* (no. 68). His understanding of the principle of participation expresses his conviction that it is possible and at the same time necessary to use philosophy in moral theology.

Nagórny does not practice moral theology in a historical and existential vacuum. On the contrary, he is familiar with and makes use of the achievements of his predecessors, but makes his own original contribution to these achievements. He is also familiar with current moral and social problems. His interpretation of the principle of participation is an example of inscribing a personalist category in a specific historical and theological context, but also in a specific situation, which is particularly evident in his practical application of the principles of participation to current problems. As part of this application, he significantly developed the category of the participating person by emphasising that an individual participates not only by contributing "something" to social life but, above all, by contributing themselves to it. Hence, in terms of participation, he described the care for the formation of oneself and the acquisition of appropriate virtues, which are to be one's first "contribution" to the good of the community.

The theologisation of participation allowed Nagórny to underline the ecclesial character of participation, and to show Christ as the source and perfect model of two attitudes expressing participation: solidarity and opposition. Through theologically elaborating on the category of participation, some specific issues, such as the theological virtues or sin, were also explored in more depth.

By introducing the category of participation into moral theology, Nagórny contributed to overcoming its negativism and casuistry. This is because he presented social life as an opportunity and as a unique entirety, and not merely as a threat and a collection of individual cases. Although he undoubtedly contributed to significantly broadening the range of issues within theological-moral reflection, the issue of participation cannot be regarded as just one of many in Nagórny's works. On the contrary, it plays the role of a methodological tool, an aid to understanding a holistic conception of social life. Nagórny turned Wojtyła's concept of participation as "acting together with others" or "co-operation" (K. Wojtyła 1979, 261–64) into a specific type of interpretative key.

This key is fairly widely used in moral theology nowadays. Today, it is no longer possible to practise a moral theology of social life without recourse to the category of participation. To abandon it would mean to return to the legalistic and individualistic models of the past, in which man and his actions were seen solely in terms of a narrow relationship between the individual and God, and all morality was reduced to achieving one's own perfection solely through obedience to the law, in which other people and the entire community could only be an obstacle. However, the constantly emerging simplifications in the understanding of participation itself (Karwat 2017, 54), as well as the spreading attitudes of avoidance and conformism that contradict it, challenge one to show its deepest foundations and its possible goals – the self-realisation of the person with the simultaneous "humane" shape of community life.

It is worth noting that Nagórny not only conducted theoretical research on participation but also sought allies in shaping pro-social attitudes and in opening ever-new spaces for human talents and initiatives. All the more so because, as he noted, it was rather common at the time to discourage participation (Nagórny 2007, 115). From today's point of view, therefore, it can be said that he not only analysed the attitude and principle of participation, not only taught about it, but also sought the social impact of those truths about which he himself was convinced. Therefore, his theology of participation also had a practical dimension and was directed to both the construction of a coherent theory and the promotion of moral and social attitudes corresponding to this theory.

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Recognising the Risen Lord Through Scriptures: The Apostle Paul as an Ideal Match for the Two Disciples on the Way to Emmaus in Luke 24:13–35

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Abstract: In the concluding chapter of his gospel, Luke culminates the "Journey to Jerusalem" with Jesus accompanying his followers on a journey not defined by geographical or chronological elements, but rather one immersed in discipleship. In the sequel to that journey to Jerusalem, the one to Emmaus, Jesus accompanies two disciples: Cleopas and an intentionally undisclosed follower (see 24:13, 18). The end of this journey, emblematic of faith in the suffering, crucified and risen Lord reaches its zenith in the two disciples recognising Jesus in the breaking of the bread. The moment Jesus disappears from their sight (24:31) elicits a reaction demonstrating the potentiality of discerning the Risen Lord even in the "opening of the Scriptures" (24:32). This study endeavours to analyse the recognition of Jesus the Lord in the specific mystery of his death and resurrection through the opening of Scriptures as exemplified by the Apostle to the Gentiles. In this vein, Paul emerges as a speculative yet paradigmatic correlate to the unnamed second disciple. Similar to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Paul too travelled the journey of recognising the Risen Lord, transitioning from a zealous persecutor of the adherents of Jesus of Nazareth and his message (see Acts 9:1–4; 22:7; 1 Cor 15:9), which had a decisive and definitive turn in the Christophany on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9; 22; 26), to an apostle in complete acknowledgement of Jesus as "Lord" (see Acts 9:5; Phil 2:11; Rom 10:12), and even to a believer "who has been crucified with Christ" (see Gal 2:19). Analogously to the two disciples, Paul too went through the same developmental milestones as the two disciples, with Jesus, as it were, walking alongside him, elucidating the Scriptures—from perceiving Jesus as "the accursed crucified criminal" (see Deut 21:22–23) to affirming "Jesus is alive" (1 Cor 15:17–28) and proclaiming that "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that 'Jesus Christ is Lord'" (Kyrios Iēsous Christòs)" (Phil 2:11). This trajectory renders conceivable for all adherents to Jesus of all times the possibility to decipher the scriptural depictions of the Lord articulated by Moses, the Prophets, and the Scriptures (Luke 24:27, 44).

Keywords: disciples of Emmaus, Paul, crucifixion, Risen Lord, transformation, imitation

In the final chapter of his gospel, Luke concludes the "Journey to Jerusalem"[1] by portraying Jesus accompanying his followers on a journey characterised not by geographical or chronological elements, but rather one immersed in discipleship. Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus enters the geographical Jerusalem in Luke 19:41–45, his journey in making disciples continues even in his post-resurrection appearances, including the journey with the two disciples of Emmaus (see Luke 24:15, 28). After recognising him in the breaking of the bread, they return to the community of the Eleven

1 Fitzmyer 1985, 163, 823–827; Marshall 1989, 400–699, 823–27; Bock 1996, 957–64; Bovon 2013.

and their companions in Jerusalem (24:33), narrate to them what had happened on the road to Emmaus and "how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread" (24:35). The aim for the Journey to Jerusalem from Luke 9:51 to 19:48 has been fulfilled: Jesus' followers—both the Eleven and their companions, and the two from Emmaus—have become true disciples by proclaiming in Jerusalem that "He is risen," that he has made himself known to them and that they have recognised him.

The journey to Jerusalem is not a chronological, straight line either, since in 10:38–42 Jesus is near Jerusalem, while later in the passage he is back in the North (see 17:11). Rather, it is a journey in time within the context of the necessity of God's plan. Journey notes punctuate the passage from 9:51 to 19:48 (9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28, 45). Jesus travels to meet his appointed destiny in Jerusalem (13:31–35) (Bovon 2013, 4–8). The thrust of this passage is that Jesus initiates a new way to follow God (Aletti 1991, 153–69). It is the journey that ends with the declaration by the community of disciples in Jerusalem that "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" (24:34), and with the confirmation by the two disciples of Emmaus: "Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread" (24:35).

Even the literary structure of the Emmaus pericope in Luke 24:13–35 finds its chiastic centre in the exclamation "He is alive" (v. 23c) in the vision of angels to the women who had gone to anoint Jesus' body after his death (see Appendix; Aletti 1991, 153–55).

The walk to Emmaus, a sequel to the Jerusalem journey, features Jesus accompanying two disciples—Cleopas and an intentionally unnamed follower (24:13, 18) (Rastoin 2014, 379–81). The culmination of this journey, symbolic of faith in the suffering, crucified, and risen Lord, reaches its peak as the two disciples recognise Jesus in the breaking of the bread (*en tē(i) klásē(i) tou ártou* – 24:35). The moment Jesus vanishes from their sight (24:31) triggers a reaction that underscores the potentiality—or rather, what they ought to have done—of discerning the Risen Lord even in the "opening of the Scriptures": "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures (*hōs diēnoigen hēmin tàs graphàs*) to us?" (see 24:32) (Marshall 1989, 898–99; Rossé 1995, 1030–31)

This analysis delves into the phenomenon of discerning the presence of Jesus through the act of engaging with the Scriptures, as delineated in Luke 24:32. This is exemplified by the shared experience of the two disciples en route to Emmaus and by the Apostle Paul, displaying noteworthy parallels with the disciples on the Emmaus road. The convergence between Paul's spiritual and scriptural journey and that of the Emmaus travellers concerning Jesus' death and resurrection prompts scrutiny that provides insight into the substantive connotations of Christian discipleship.

1. The Two Journeys

A prominent objection to the parallel nature of the two journeys is the assertion that they depict two entirely disparate contexts, precluding any potential intersection. In Luke 24, the two disciples express their disillusionment over unfulfilled expectations to "the only stranger [*mónos paroikeis*] in Jerusalem who does not know these things" (v. 18). Similarly, Paul faces disappointment when, despite being fully authorised by the High Priest in Jerusalem with letters to the synagogues in Damascus to arrest Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem (Acts 9:2), he is abruptly stopped by an unidentified figure, who later introduces himself as Jesus "*hon su diṓkeis*" (Acts 9:5b) and to whom he reveals his confusion: "Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 9:5a). Here, the two disciples perceive Jesus as *mónos paroikeis*, whereas, in Jesus' own words, Paul considers "the Lord" as his persecuted adversary.

Both narratives present a lack of recognition. The two disciples' eyes "were kept from recognising him" (Luke 24:16),[2] while Paul, struck blind on the Road to Damascus, "could see nothing" (Acts 9:8).

Each journey also embodies a distinct negativity. The disciples "stood still, looking sad [*estáthēsan skuthrōpoí*]" (Luke 24:17), while Paul's demeanour is depicted as "still breathing threats and murder" (Acts 9:1).

In response to the disciples' disappointment and lack of understanding, Jesus elucidates the lesson of how the Scriptures foretell his life and mission (Luke 24:25–27). Conversely, Jesus instructs Paul: "get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do" (Acts 9:6). While Jesus does not explicitly reveal himself through Scripture to Paul, Paul later frames his Damascus experience in terms of divine revelation in Gal 1:13–16: "You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it … But when God … was pleased to reveal his Son to me … I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus."

The recognition of Jesus occurs through the "breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:35) at Emmaus, where Jesus takes bread [*labṑn tòn árton*] (Luke 24:30) and the disciples' eyes are opened. In Acts 9:19, Paul regains his strength after "taking some food [*labṑn trophḕn*]." Surprisingly, the disciples' exclamation upon recognising Jesus in the "breaking of the bread" centres on their prior experience with him opening the Scriptures: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures [*hōs diḗnoigen tàs graphás*] to us?" (Luke 24:32)

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2 The optical aspect is emphasised over and over in the Emmaus pericope: "looking sad" (v. 17); "before [*enantíon*, literally, "in the presence of"] God and all the people (v. 19); "they had indeed seen a vision of angels" (v. 23); "but they did not see him" (v. 24); "they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight" (v. 31).

Both the Emmaus disciples and Paul commence their journeys with a lack of true understanding of Jesus. Paul explicitly states his desire to know Christ in Phil 3:10, indicating his initial ignorance: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death." In Gal 1:13–24, Paul further emphasises his emerging lack of understanding, describing the need for God's revelation of his Son to him (vv. 15–16).

Paul's initial ignorance of Jesus ("Who are you?") stemmed from a Jewish perspective, particularly Deut 21:22–23. The theophany marks the beginning of Paul's search for understanding, akin to Jesus guiding the disciples through the Scriptures to reveal his true identity. The one questioned in dismay, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place [*ouk égnōs tà genómena*] there in these days?" (Luke 24:18), is the same one Paul later acknowledges, "For I decided to know nothing [*ou gàr ékriná ti eidénai*] among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2).

2. "Were Not Our Hearts Burning Within Us?"

This study aims to analyse the recognition of Jesus the Lord through the "opening of Scriptures," as speculatively and paradigmatically illustrated by the Apostle to the Gentiles. The resemblance between Paul's transformative journey and the disciples of Emmaus' collective experience prompts a juxtaposition, wherein the similarities can be examined and potential insights into Christian discipleship can be gained. In this context, Paul emerges as a speculative yet paradigmatic counterpart to the unnamed second disciple, since Luke provides the name of the first one: *Kleopas* in v. 18 (Dinkler 2017, 687–706; see the *synkrisis* literary device in Rastoin 2014). In the Emmaus pericope, Jesus demonstrates a different perception of "the things that have taken place (*tà genómena*) [*in Jerusalem*] in [*those*] days (v. 18; see v. 13, implying that "those days" referred to the days of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth). The two disciples specify that "the things" were his death (v. 20) and his resurrection (vv. 21–24).

In reply, Jesus explains what his perception of "the things" was: his sufferings, death and glory as Messiah were foretold in the Scriptures (vv. 25–27). Later in the evening, when the Risen Lord appears to the Eleven and their companions, together with the two disciples who had returned to Jerusalem, Jesus again refers to his crucifixion (vv. 39–40). Yet again, he explains to them how the whole of the Scriptures—the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms—must be fulfilled concerning his suffering, death and resurrection (vv. 44–46). Jesus' death and resurrection serve as the focus and centre of all that the Scriptures have to say about him and what the disciples are to believe about him.

Similarly to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Paul underwent a life-changing journey of recognising the Risen Lord. He transitioned from being a fervent persecutor of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth and his message (see Acts 9:1–4; 22:7; 1 Cor 15:9), that had a decisive and definitive turn in the Christophany on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9; 22; 26), to an apostle fully acknowledging Jesus as "Lord" (see Acts 9:5; Phil 2:11; Rom 10:12), and even to a believer who "has been crucified with Christ" (see Gal 2:19). Yet, he too considered all there was to "hand on" (*parédōka*) about the Lord Jesus was "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3–4) (Wright 2003, 209–398). Thus, the focus of this paper will be the recognition of the Lord in his suffering, death and resurrection through the Scriptures at Emmaus and by Paul.

3. Differentiating Historical and Biographical Data in the Pauline Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles

At this point, an aside is indispensable. The Apostle Paul is a central figure for understanding early Christianity, yet reconstructing his life and mission is a complex task due to the distinct methodologies and perspectives of the Pauline Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles. To accurately grasp Paul's life and contributions one needs to differentiate between historical and biographical data within these sources and recognise their individual contexts, authorships, and purposes (see Marshall, Travis, and Paul 2002, 31–45). "Luke wrote 'Acts' with a purpose," is Morna D. Hooker's straight statement concerning Luke's method for writing Acts.[3]

3.1. Acts of the Apostles as a Source

Attributed to Luke, the Acts of the Apostles should not be viewed merely as historical documentation but as "chrono-theology," where history is used as a medium of divine revelation. Luke's portrayal of events is thus theologically motivated, reflecting God's self-disclosure through historical occurrences.

3.2. Pauline Epistles as Sources

Paul's letters are crucial for understanding his theology and mission. For instance, Gal 1:11–2:10 offers an autobiographical account of Paul's conversion, which

3 For an exhaustive differentiation between the sources of Acts and the Letters of Paul, see Hooker 2003, 8–23 (ch. "What Do We Know About Paul?").

holds higher credibility due to its first-person narrative. The interpretation of terms such as "then" (*épeita*) in Galatians significantly impacts the chronology of Paul's post-conversion activities. Comparing these with 1 Cor 15:3–10, where épeita indicates the appearances of the Risen Lord, demonstrates how interpretative differences can alter the narrative. Additionally, Paul's reference to his travels to Syria and Cilicia in Gal 1:21, alongside other texts, suggests these accounts are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Chronological inconsistencies, such as those between the Jerusalem Council's decisions and Paul's confrontation with Peter in Gal 2:11–14, necessitate a re-evaluation of these narratives. Peter's apparent ignorance of the Council's directives at Antioch, despite his central role, further complicates the chronological coherence of these events.

3.3. The Pauline Corpus

The *Corpus Paulinum*, divided based on authorship and authenticity, canonicity and inspiration[4] includes Proto-Pauline Epistles, which are widely considered authentic and provide direct insight into Paul's theology and missionary work. For instance, in Galatians, Paul offers autobiographical details about his conversion and early ministry (Gal 1:11–24), which are pivotal for understanding his self-perception and mission. The Deutero-Pauline Epistles, with disputed authenticity, reflect theological advancements indicative of different contexts or authorial intentions. Ephesians, for instance, emphasises the cosmic dimensions of Christ's work and Church unity (Eph 1:3–14), suggesting post-Pauline theological evolution.[5] The Pastoral Epistles, generally viewed as pseudonymous, address Church organisation and pastoral care. These texts emphasise orthodoxy and Church leadership (1 Tim 3:1–13), reflecting an ecclesiastical structure more developed than the Proto-Pauline letters, indicating a later composition period addressing specific community challenges.[6]

Thus, distinguishing between historical and biographical data in the Pauline Epistles and Acts requires careful consideration of their distinct perspectives and methodologies. The Book of Acts provides a valuable narrative framework that must be critically assessed against Pauline letters. Integrating these sources with a nuanced approach enables scholars to construct a more comprehensive and accurate portrait of the Apostle Paul.

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4 Rinaldo Fabris differentiates between the Proto-Pauline, the Deutero-Pauline ("di tradizione paolina"), and the Pastoral Epistles: see Fabris 1997, 499–533.

5 See Ehrman 2012. James D.G. Dunn (2003) states that a historical-critical analysis provides a framework for understanding the Letters' distinct contributions and historical reliability. On the other hand, according to N.T. Wright (2005, 3–20), literary analysis examines rhetorical and stylistic features to differentiate authentic Pauline elements from later additions. See also Roetzel 1999, 76–81.

6 See Hooker 2003, 24–31 (ch. "A Bundle of Letters"); Brown 1997, 409–12. Also Murphy-O'Connor 1996.

4. Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms

The Mishnaic tractate *Avot* (= *Chapters of the Fathers*, a compilation of the ethical teachings and maxims from Rabbinic Jewish tradition) states: "Just as a ball is thrown from hand to hand without falling, so Moses received the Torah at Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets delivered it to the men of the Great Synagogue." (*Pirkei Avot* 1.1; Neusner 1988, 672) The trajectory traced out by *Avot* understandably moves along the Hebrew canon of Scriptures. This would also be the reason why Jesus rebukes the two disciples: "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!" (24:25). Luke also comments: "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the Scriptures" (24:27), underlining what Moses, the prophets and indeed all the Scriptures say about him. Later, when the two disciples join the Eleven and their companions in Jerusalem after recognising him in the breaking of the bread and admitting that they should have recognised him from the moment he was opening the Scriptures for them, Jesus himself traces out to the disciples the tripartite division of the Hebrew Scriptures as proof of what he had to go through. In Jerusalem, Jesus reiterates to the incredulous disciples: "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled" (24:44).

5. Recognising the Lord Through Scriptures

The New Testament offers a considerable number of instances where the Lord God or Jesus are recognised through the Scriptures. Paul rebukes the Jewish People for not acknowledging the presence of God or the Lord Jesus because of their hardened hearts (Hays 1989, 131–48). In 2 Cor 3:12–17, he explicitly shows that,

> Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with complete frankness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, the same veil is still there; it is not unveiled since in Christ it is set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds, but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. (Aageson 1993, in particular, 31–44; Hays 1989, 122–53; Stanley 1992)

This goes in the same vein as the behaviour of the two disciples of Emmaus: "While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with

them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him" (24:15–16). Furthermore, the excerpt in 2 Cor 3 parallels what Jesus rebukes the two disciples for in verses 25–32 (see Bucur 2014, 690–91).

The same revelation, this time specifically about Jesus as the Suffering Servant himself, was made to the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:27–35 as he was journeying home from Jerusalem, where he had been "to worship" (v. 27), and was reading the prophet Isaiah. So the deacon Philip, under the thrust of the Holy Spirit, ran up to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. "He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him" (vv. 30–31).

The passage of the Scripture that the eunuch was reading was Isa 53:7–8. The eunuch inquired Philip regarding the identity of the person about whom the prophet spoke in the passage he was currently perusing. Then Philip began to speak, and "starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus" (v. 35) (Evans 2012, 149).

6. The Two Disciples of Emmaus Read Their Own Story in Scripture

The two disciples were "reading" Jesus' story (Luke 24:19–20—"The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him"). But they were also "reading" their own story into that of Jesus (Luke 24:21—"But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place…") (Aageson 1993, 45–69) The two disciples were reading their salvation story (24:21). But they were also reading into the place the Messiah had in that story: (24:21—"we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel") (Dinkler 2017, 384).

Consequent upon these multiple "readings," the two disciples were reading their story into the Scriptures. Baring their souls to the "stranger" accompanying them, they exclaimed:

> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him (Luke 24:21–24).

Besides, Jesus' rebuke continues to show them how to read the Messiah's story into their own: "Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that *the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory*?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he *interpreted to them* the things about himself in all the scriptures (vv. 25–27)." (See Moloney 2013, 81–89) However, their reaction later on to their recognising him at the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:31–32) implies that they should have recognised him in the "opening of the Scripture" by Jesus on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Jesus made his, Israel's and indeed their own story fall into place (vv. 24–27).

In a few verses, a whole series of dynamic actions of recognition through the interpretation of the Scriptures by Jesus took place: "They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures [*diēnoigen*] to us?' . . . 'They were saying, «The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!»' Then they told [*eksēgounto* – 'they exegeted' to the Community what Jesus had done with them] what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them [*egnōsthē*] in the breaking of the bread."

The interpretative action reaches its summit when the two disciples themselves could explain Scriptures to the Eleven and their companions that "He is risen" (24:35)!

7. The Apostle Paul Makes the Journey Through Scriptures

Paul's journey in recognising the true Jesus in his sufferings, death and resurrection went through developmental milestones akin to the two disciples of Emmaus: from perceiving Jesus as "the accursed crucified criminal" (see Deut 21:22–23) to affirming that "Jesus is alive" (1 Cor 15:17–28) and proclaiming that "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that 'Jesus Christ is Lord'" (Phil 2:11) (Fee 2007, 370–417). In Gal 3:13–14, Paul himself expresses the reversal of the situation of Jesus from a curse to an intermediary of blessing for everyone, Gentiles included: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree' [quoting Deut 21:23]—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Romanello 2018, 36–40) While Deut 21:1–9 speaks about protecting the land from cursedness through contact with the corpse of a murder victim, the present passage of Deut 21:22–23 concerns the corpse of an executed criminal. The hanging of his body on a tree or wooden post served as a deterrent effect the sight would have on other would-be criminals.[7]

7 Vermes 2005, in particular, 62–83; McCane 2003; Brown 1994, 36–93; Navone and Cooper 1986, 108–303.

The Israelites, as well as some of their ancient Near Eastern neighbours, practiced the hanging of bodies to trees or some form of gallows (*wᵉtālîtā ʾal-ʾēts*) (Clines 2007, 524, §3; Nielsen 2001, 269–71; Bauer et al. 2000, 549, §2b.c.) in a public place either as means of execution (see Josh 8:29; Esth 2:23; 5:14; 7:10; 8:7) or as a public display after the criminal died (see Gen 40:19, 22; Josh 10:26–27; 2 Sam 4:12; 21:12) (Fitzmyer 1978, 493–513). YHWH commands the Israelites to hang a criminal's body on a tree as an expression of that person's accursed state, i.e., to provide tangible evidence that this criminal is the object of a curse (Schneider 1967, 37–41). Being accursed is not the result of hanging on a tree but instead the cause for it. Paul makes use of this passage in Gal 3:13–14 to affirm that Christ hung "upon the tree" to beat the curse of the violated covenant and to turn away God's wrath from his people by delivering them from the curse of the law (Caneday 1989, 208). The law presented here limits the time that the body can be left to hang—the daylight hours that remain after the execution so that the next day would not have begun. To be hung on a tree is tantamount to being under God's curse, and to leave the corpse hanging there overnight is to desecrate the land that YHWH has bestowed on his chosen nation and to invite God's curse to fall on the entire land (Grisanti 2012, 672; Markl 2018, 179).

The profound radical transformation experienced by and within Paul in his apprehension of Jesus of Nazareth on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9; 22; 26) comes with his declaration in Gal 2:19: "I have been crucified with Christ" (*Christō(i) synestaúrōmai*)! (Wright 2003, 375–98) Even if Paul's is a response of faith, it is described in terms of death on the cross, a death inasmuch as it is an act of such complete identification with Christ's death as to be a participation in it, a "cocrucifixion" (*synestaúrōmai*) (Gorman 2004, 204; Martyn 1997, 277–80). The perfect tense of the Greek verb suggests a past act with ongoing consequences (Wallace 1996, 573–74); like Paul, believers remain in a constant state of being crucified and thus dead in Christ (Gal 2:20a).

8. Paul's Backward Journey Towards a More Comprehensive Understanding of Jesus

Just as the Emmaus pericope finds its centre in "He is alive" (*hoì légousin autòn zēn*) in Luke 24:23c, so also in one sweeping verse the Apostle Paul himself enunciates where the focus of all his and all Christian belief lies (Wright 2003, 312–74). In 1 Cor 2:1–2, Paul states: "When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This definitely does not imply that Paul's belief stopped with Jesus' death. Only if Jesus had risen

from that terrible death could he be Paul's and all Christians' focus of belief (Pitta 2009, 150–53).

In fact, Paul's letters, and especially the Proto-Pauline ones, link together Jesus' death and his resurrection to such an extent that in Paul, the resurrection does not annul death; it rather highlights it! (Zumstein 2001, 486) A few examples would suffice:

"But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom 6:8–11);

"For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Rom 14:9);

"It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20);

"For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4:11);

"And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them" (2 Cor 5:15);

"For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God" (2 Cor 13:4);

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him" (1 Thess 5:9–10).

8.1. Moses

This solid belief in Jesus' death and resurrection is the point of arrival of a long journey that had its first—just as solid—steps in what "Moses and all the prophets" (Luke 24:27) had enunciated. In Deut 21:22–23, Moses lays down in the Toràh the law concerning criminals and their capital punishment. A Jewish rabbi (see Luke 7:40; 9:38; 11:45; 20:21, 39) who met the same fate as any criminal sanctioned by Deut 21:22–23 would not only not be a prospective Messiah but a curse from YHWH upon the Promised Land of Israel and its people.

It is totally understandable that "a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Don C. Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee… as to righteousness under the law, blameless" would be full of "zeal, a persecutor of the church" (Phil 3:5–6). It is just as comprehensible how and why in his "earlier life in Judaism," and being "advanced in Judaism beyond many among [*his*] people of the same age… [*and*] far more zealous for the traditions of [his] ancestors" Paul was "violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it" (Gal 1:13–14) (see Young 1997, 11, 29–30; Aageson 1993, 45–69). In the Risen Lord's own words on the Road

to Damascus, Paul's persecution of the church was tantamount to persecuting Jesus himself: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15).

8.2. The Prophet Isaiah and the Suffering Servant

Jesus Christ not only assumes the role of a perfect man, embodying the archetype of the second Adam, as argued by Paul in 1 Cor 15:21–50, but also manifests himself as our High Priest, Prophet-Redeemer, Final Sacrifice, Lawgiver, and King. These prophetic, redemptive, priestly, and kingly dimensions converge into the powerful current of messianic expectations, finding ultimate realisation in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Dunn 2003, 79–101; Aageson 1993, 105–16).

Within the Jewish theological milieu, these themes were ingrained, and anticipation prevailed regarding the Messiah's fulfilment of these multifaceted roles. Yet, the New Testament reveals that the unexpected nature of Jesus' manifestation in his incarnation and earthly life defied conventional expectations. Had Jesus assumed a triumphant stance, overthrowing Roman dominance, many might have construed it as a fulfilment of his anticipated kingly role. However, the revelation unfolds differently; Jesus fulfils these roles in unforeseen ways. The notion of a suffering Messiah, particularly one who undergoes crucifixion, proved to be scandalous.[8] The profound concept that the suffering Jesus was, in fact, God incarnate, was a revelation beyond the conceivable imaginations of contemporaneous observers.

Michael Gorman in his book *Reading Paul* (Gorman 2008) claims that Paul's Christological hymn in Phil 2:6–11 is essentially a re-interpretation of the Prophet Isaiah's (as one of the most important and quoted *nᵉbi'îm*) description of the Suffering Servant in the light of Christ (see also Gorman 2004, 105, 422, 434). Gorman compares Isa 52:13; 53:4–5, 12 with the Philippians passage to show how Paul sees Jesus as being the fulfilment of the Isaiah prophecy. The Fourth Servant Song in Isaiah provides the most probable background to Jesus' foretelling that it is "written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt" (Mark 9:12; see also, 14:49), or as during the journey to Emmaus that, "Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?'" (24:25–26) (see Grindheim 2012, 59)

Paul echoes the resolute words of God's Suffering Servant in Isaiah's Third Canticle (50:8–9) when he fearlessly queries, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31) The Servant's proclamation, articulated in the first person singular, surpasses even Paul's boldness and is notably more intimate. The audacity of the Servant stems from his profound and comprehensive experience—he has endured scourging,

8 See 1 Cor 1:23: "we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block [*skándalon*] to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."

endured insults and spitting, and suffered the grave indignity of having his beard forcibly torn out by adversaries. Rather than succumbing to despair, the Servant, resilient in faith, discerns a transformative apprenticeship within these agonising circumstances. The afflictions have become a crucible for discipleship, refining the Servant's voice to articulate words of hope and vindication, addressing the weary and downtrodden with resounding encouragement.

This notwithstanding, the enigma surrounding the Suffering Servant as depicted in the Fourth Canticle (Isa 52:13–53:12) represents a peculiar construct. This Canticle delineates the overarching mission of the Servant—namely, the sacrificial self-giving of a sinless individual for the redemption of transgressors. By surrendering his life as a sacrificial offering to ransom the multitude, the Servant earns divine exaltation, and God extends pardon to all on behalf of whom he has perished (see Phil 2:9–11) (Ross, n.d.). This prophetic proclamation arguably stands as the most significant anticipation concerning Jesus within the entirety of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, it is this very intricacy that prompted the apostle Paul to assert his resolution "to know nothing while I was with you but Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2), after tracing out the contours of the Suffering Servant in Jesus Christ in Chapter 1. It is within the presence of the Crucified One, identified as God's Suffering Servant, that the comprehensive outlines of God's grand design begin to emerge. Through the bestowal of God's Son—being destined for suffering and death for others—into the world, Paul ultimately attained a profound understanding and appreciation of the love of God, "who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

Onee can never overestimate the paramount significance of the Fourth Canticle, noting that it crucially defines the essence of the gospel as salvation through the forgiveness of sins in accordance with Scripture as highlighted by Paul in 1 Cor 15:1–8. The reference to "according to the scriptures" specifically alludes to Isaiah, given that the Gospels have not yet been authored.

Jesus himself aligns his mission with the role of the Suffering Servant, embodying the narrative outlined in the Fourth Oracle of Isa 53:5–12. This prophetic passage delineates his suffering for transgressions and iniquities, bearing chastisement for the restoration of others and offering healing to them through shedding his blood. The description eerily parallels an eyewitness account of Jesus' passion, even though Isa 53 was written centuries before his birth.

The creedal statement in 1 Cor 15:3 emphasises the shedding of blood for the remission of sins, aligning with the depiction in Isa 53 of the Servant's death for the sins of many. This underscores the importance of recalling Jesus' actions at the Last Supper and which Paul presents as 'Tradition, *parádosis*' (1 Cor 11:23) in his argumentation concerning the Institution of the Eucharist in 1 Cor 10–11, in particular 11:23–26, in anticipation of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary, emphasising the shedding of his blood for the forgiveness of sins: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (11:25).

8.3. The Psalms

In the third part of the Hebrew canon–the *kᵉtûbîm*, the Psalms themselves expressed the same attitudes that Paul must have experienced against God's own enemies when he counted Jesus of Nazareth as one of them, seeing that he merited the punishment of crucifixion that Deuteronomy considered as a curse. In Ps 3:7, the psalmist eagerly invites YHWH—"Rise up, O Lord! Deliver me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked." In Ps 139:19–22, the psalmist expresses himself in such strong terms: "O that you would kill the wicked, O God, and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—those who speak of you maliciously, and lift themselves up against you for evil! Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies." Similarly, Psalm 58 culminates the psalmist's hatred towards the wicked by exclaiming in verse 6: "O God, break the teeth in their mouths." (Hays 2005, 101–18)

In Psalm 22, Paul, the staunch Jew, could perceive that even the God-loving psalmist could go through the terrible suffering that Jesus of Nazareth went through in his passion and death ordeal. Understandably, Paul must have asked himself: would this Jesus of Nazareth be the suffering faithful and trusting believer or YHWH's Suffering Servant that the psalm depicts, instead of the curse that Deuteronomy proffers? (Sciberras 2023a, 393–96)

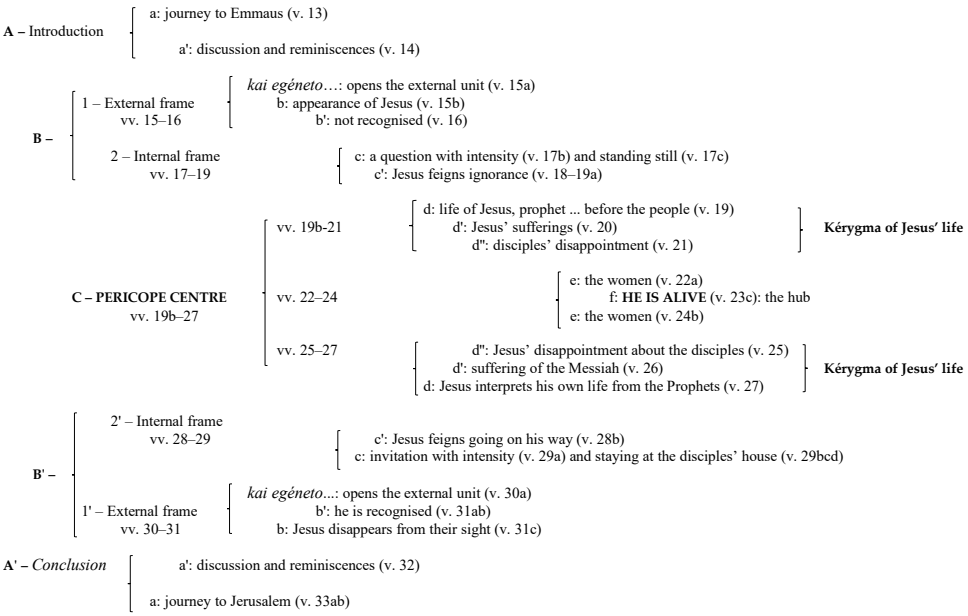
In a parallel vein to the two disciples of Emmaus' scriptural experience, Paul went through analogous developmental milestones as the two aforementioned disciples, with the accompaniment of Jesus, who served as an elucidating presence expounding upon the Scriptures. This elucidation facilitated Paul's perceptual shift from regarding Jesus as the condemned and crucified malefactor, a perception informed by Deut 21:22–23, to affirming the vitality of Jesus through the resurrection narrative outlined in 1 Cor 15:17–28. This transformative process culminated in Paul's proclamation that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall avow the lordship of "Jesus Christ" (*Kyrios Iēsous Christòs*), as articulated in Phil 2:11. The cross and resurrection is the centre of Emmaus and of Paul's life, belief and teachings (Sciberras 2023b, 55–75).

Conclusion

In congruence with the narrative of the disciples' encounter on the road to Emmaus, the apostle Paul traversed a transformative trajectory marked by the recognition of the Resurrected Lord. This trajectory witnessed a discernible transition in Paul's ideological stance, evolving from an ardent persecutor of the adherents of Jesus of

Nazareth and his teachings, as documented in Acts 9:1–4; 22:7, and 1 Cor 15:9, to assuming the role of an apostle who unequivocally acknowledges Jesus as 'Lord,' as evident in Acts 9:5, Phil 2:11, and Rom 10:12. Furthermore, Paul progressed in his spiritual journey to embody the status of a believer who has undergone crucifixion with Christ, as delineated in Gal 2:19. This trajectory posits a plausible scenario whereby adherents of Jesus throughout various epochs may engage in the interpretative elucidation of scriptural representations pertaining to the Lord as enunciated by Moses, the Prophets, and the Scriptures, as delineated in Luke 24:27, 44. Paul's paradigmatic transformation on the same scriptural lines as that of the two disciples of Emmaus is the irrefutable challenge that convicts every Christian to establish where their spirituality is truly rooted. Here lies the mimetic dynamics and power of proclamation: "Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me" (1 Cor 4:15–16), even if Paul had to come a very long way in his recognition of the true Jesus Christ. In 1 Cor 11:1–2, he raises standards even higher: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1, even when he could exclaim: "I have been crucified with Christ" [Gal 2:19]). He could even commend the Corinthian Christians: "because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions (*paradóseis*) just as I handed them on to you" (1 Cor 11:2), i.e. traditions such as that he proclaimed in 1 Cor 15:3–17 concerning Jesus' death, resurrection and post-paschal appearances (Evans 2012, 159–60).

Appendix: A Structural Presentation of the Emmaus Pericope (Luke 24:13–35)



Source: Dussaut 1987, 161–213.

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The Rape of Dinah: Motives for Incorporation in the History of the Patriarchs

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Abstract: This article presents a philological analysis of the tragic story of Dinah, the daughter of the patriarch Jacob, as described in Gen 34. A comprehensive analysis of the literary text in the context of the Bible as a whole reveals a number of contradictory elements within the narrative, which contribute to the heterogeneity and multi-layeredness of the biblical text. These elements indicate that the story underwent an earlier form and that the rape of Dinah was deliberately included in the narrative of the patriarchs. This article aims to elucidate the rationale behind the deliberate incorporation of Dinah's rape into the history of the patriarchs. The following three motives are posited as the reasons for this incorporation: 1) the conquest of Shechem as the first city in the land of Canaan; 2) the explanation of the curse of Simeon and Levi; 3) the preservation of the integrity and purity of the nation.

Keywords: rape, Dinah, uncleanness, Gen 34, Jacob

The narrative of Dinah's rape, found in Gen 34,[1] stands out as a jarring narrative break within the larger story of the patriarch Jacob. In the biblical account, Dinah goes out to meet the "daughters of the land," but is subsequently raped and then seduced and/or abducted by Shechem, a Hivite, who falls in love with her and wishes to marry her. In order to legally take Dinah as his wife, Shechem asks his father for help, and they go to Jacob to negotiate the terms of Dinah's marriage. During the negotiations, which include Jacob's sons, the rapist shows no remorse, although he does express a willingness to pay a high bride price. Unwilling to give their sister to such a criminal, Jacob's sons resort to deception: Shechem can only marry Dinah if he and his tribesmen agree to be circumcised. This condition is eventually agreed. On the third day after the circumcision, two of Jacob's sons (Simeon and Levi) enter the city of Shechem and kill all the men and take their sister back home.

The narrative of Dinah,[2] particularly in terms of its historical context and interpretation, has been a subject of considerable debate among scholars. This debate encompasses various perspectives on the story's meaning and significance, including its

1 With the exception of a few instances of literal translation, the translation of the Bible verses used in this article comes from the King James Bible.

2 The Book of Jubilees, a second-temple period text discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, offers a unique perspective on the story of Dinah. *Jub.* 30:1–6 and 24–26 retells and condemns the "profanation" of the Israelite virgin, Dinah, employing an angelic speech, *Jub.* 30:7–17, 21–22 extends to a broader

historical accuracy, its connection to broader themes within the Hebrew Bible, and the interpretations offered by different religious traditions (Caspi 1985, 25–45; Geller 1990, 1–15; Wyatt 1990, 433–58; Kugel 1992, 1–34; Zlotnick 2002; Scholz 2002; Rofé 2005, 369–75; Schroeder 2007; Schroeder 2015; Shemesh 2007, 2–21; Zakovitch 2012, 116–29; Feinstein 2014, 65–68). However, this discussion shifts focus to a different aspect of Genesis: the potential impact of genealogical fluidity on the text's historical accuracy. This concept suggests that the inclusion of Dinah in genealogies may not always reflect a purely historical record, but could be influenced by various factors, including the evolving social and religious landscape of the time.[3]

The first mention of Dinah's birth is in Gen 30:21, where we learn that Leah (the daughter of Laban the Aramean of Paddan-Aram and Rebekah's sister), who had already borne six sons to the patriarch Jacob[4] – Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, gave birth to a daughter named Dinah. The narrative progresses with an intriguing interweaving of childbirth and naming. The arrival of each son is accompanied by an elucidation of his name, frequently reflecting Leah's hopes and aspirations. When Zebulun, her sixth son, is born, she exclaims, "God has endowed me with a wonderful gift; now my husband will dwell with me" (Gen 30:20). The Hebrew *yizbəlēnî*, meaning "he will dwell with me," poignantly expresses Leah's longing for a deeper connection with Jacob. However, a curious anomaly breaks this pattern. Dinah, Jacob's only daughter mentioned by name, stands alone with no explanation of her name. Although the name "Dinah" is open to interpretation as either "her judgment" or "her vindication," the text itself remains silent on this matter (Drawnel 2004, 172). This omission prompts us to consider the social dynamics at play. Was the practice of naming with significance reserved solely for sons? Did the patriarchal structure view daughters as less deserving of symbolic names, considering they would eventually leave the household?

In Gen 32:23, as Jacob prepares to cross the Jabbok River on his way back to Canaan, we encounter a puzzling detail: "he took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children." The Hebrew word in this verse is *yəlādâw*, which literally means "his children." However, we would expect the word *bānâw*, meaning "his sons," since the number does not match. Benjamin, Jacob's twelfth son, was born later, on the way to Bethlehem, so he is not included in the count. This leaves us with eleven sons, which means that the daughter born to Jacob in the meantime is

critique of exogamous marriage, and *Jub.* 30:18–20 connects the killing with the subsequent elevation of the sons of Levi to the priesthood (Drawnel 2004, 235–36).

3 Yair Zakovitch (2012, 120–29) claims that the present form of the text in Genesis 34 concerning Dinah's encounter with Shechem has undergone significant redaction. He proposes the existence of an earlier narrative that omits the element of rape and its attendant details, such as Dinah's removal from Shechem's dwelling.

4 Jacob also had Joseph and Benjamin with his second wife Rachel; Dan and Naphtali with his slave Bilhah; and Gad and Aser with his slave Zilpah (Gen 30:35).

not counted in the biblical narrative. The question then arises: why is Dinah omitted here? Jewish scholars have pondered this question, but have not found a definitive answer. In one of his commentaries, Rashi explains that Dinah was hidden from Esau in a basket to prevent him from marrying her. However, Rashi argues that Jacob was punished for this act. He suggests that if Jacob had not kept Dinah away from his brother, she would have been under Esau's protection and would not have fallen into the hands of Shechem (*Aggadat Bereshit* 32:23:1). While this explanation may seem unconvincing, Rashi suggests that Dinah's concealment is the reason she is not included among Jacob's eleven children in the biblical passage.

In Gen 46:8–15, a list of Jacob's *bānâw û-ḇənoṯâw*, meaning "sons and daughters," who settled in Egypt is presented. However, the list only includes thirty-three male names: Reuben (1) and sons of Reuben: Hanoch (2), Phallu (3), Hezron (4) and Carmi (5); sons of Simeon (6): Jemuel (7), Jamin (8), Ohad (9), Jachin (10), Zohar (11) and Shaul (12); sons of Levi (13): Gershon (14), Kohath (15) and Merari (16); sons of Judah (17): Er (18), Onan (19), Shelah (20), Pharez (21) and Zarah (22); sons of Pharez: Hezron (23) and Hamul (24); sons of Issachar (25): Tola (26), Phuvah (27), Job (28) and Shimron (29); sons of Zebulun (30): Sered (31), Elon (32) and Jahleel (33). While the text seems to deliberately ignore the existence of Dinah, it does make further reference to her, e.g. in Gen 46:15: "These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters, were thirty-three." Interestingly, in Gen 35, which immediately follows the story of Dinah in Gen 34, another list of Jacob's children is presented, yet Dinah is once again omitted. Assuming that the current form of the biblical text describing the rape of Dinah has undergone editorial revisions, there is possibility of the existence of an earlier narrative behind the text as it is now. This raises crucial questions about the story's original purpose and meaning within the broader context of the text: Was it created to justify the plundering of Shechem? Does it sufficiently justify Jacob's curses against Simeon and Levi? Was it also intended to discourage mixed marriages?

1. The Conquest of Shechem as the First City in the Land of Canaan

The rape of Dinah took place in the land of Canaan, in Shechem, where Jacob had come to settle. He had set up camp outside the city and purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred *kesitas* (Gen 33:19). However, the violent events surrounding Dinah may serve as a justification for the eventual conquest of Shechem. As Jacob lay on his deathbed, preparing to bless his sons, he said to Joseph: "Moreover I have given to you one Shechem, i.e., "ridge" [pronounced as in the name of the city Shechem] above your brothers, which I took from

the Amorites" (Gen 48:22), and a little further on it turns out that he conquered the place promised to Joseph with his "sword and bow." If we read this as referring to the city of Shechem rather than as another mountain slope on which there was a settlement, it could be argued that Jacob[5] was the conqueror of this city. This interpretation is consistent with the description given in the text without the need to consider the connection with the revenge of the sons, which in this case would fit as a later interpolation into the text about Dinah.

2. The Explanation of the Curse of Simeon and Levi

In the aftermath of the assault, Shechem attempted to defuse the tense situation and secure the approval of Dinah's father, Jacob, by proposing marriage to Dinah. The biblical text provides few details about the nature of their relationship after the incident. However, it does mention Shechem's professed affection for Dinah, saying that he "spoke to the girl's heart" (Gen 34:3). Faced with this challenge, Shechem approached his father, Hamor, to act as a mediator in negotiations with Jacob. Hamor initiated the discussion: "And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it" (Gen 34:9–10). For the family of Jacob, ordinary – though wealthy – shepherds, the guarantee of peace from the family of Hamor, as well as the freedom to move, live and work within the territory of the Hivites, seems like a very good deal. On the other hand, it is difficult to say how much Hamor himself would gain from the agreement with Jacob. He was certainly concerned about his son's life, since he decided to help him in the negotiations to obtain Jacob's consent to marry his daughter, who had been wronged by Shechem (Barmash 2020, 76). It should be noted, however, that the Bible does not say that Shechem feared revenge from Dinah's family for her injury. Rather, Genesis emphasises the fact that he loved her very much and cared for her (Gen 34:3, 8, 12, 19).

But Jacob's sons, motivated by a desire to uphold the family honour, responded with a deceitful plan. They agreed to the marriage on the condition that all the men of Shechem undergo circumcision (Gen 34:14). This willingness to undergo circumcision, a foreign practice to the Hivites, can be interpreted as evidence of Shechem's

5 In the book of Jubilees, Jacob was part of the revenge: "Jacob and his sons were angry with the Shechemites because they had defiled their sister Dinah. They spoke deceptively with them, acted in a crafty way toward them, and deceived them. Simeon and Levi entered Shechem unexpectedly and effected a punishment on all the Shechemites. They killed every man whom they found in it. They left absolutely no one in it. They killed everyone in a painful way because they had violated their sister Dinah" (*Jub.* 30:3–4; VanderKam 1989, 191; Zlotnick 2002, 71).

strong desire to marry Dinah. Though, it seems strange that they would agree to undergo such self-mutilation in order to gain some material and cultural benefits (the promise of uniting into one people with the family of Jacob). It also seems strange that the sons of Jacob proposed that all the Hivites should be circumcised, which is a very high price to pay for marrying the daughter of the patriarch. These are questions that cannot be answered without deeper cultural studies in the area, and the interpretation of the whole story may depend on the answers to these questions.[6]

According to the account, when the men were in great pain on the third day after circumcision, Simeon and Levi (Dinah's full brothers) entered Shechem and killed all the men, taking Dinah home with them. It is worth noting that during the negotiations, Dinah remained in Shechem, with the Hivites, and it is unclear why Jacob and his sons did not immediately come to her aid if she was being held by force. It is possible that they feared a direct confrontation that might fail and therefore resorted to trickery. In any case, on the third day of circumcision, Dinah's brothers plundered the city and abducted the local women and children. Given that, as it seems from Gen 34:25, only Simeon and Levi participated in the act of bloody revenge, and they were cursed by Jacob on his deathbed for carrying out this revenge (Gen 49:5–6), it is believed that the whole story was created in order to justify this very curse (Frankel 2015).

According to Talmudic tradition, Simeon and Levi were fourteen and thirteen years old at the time of Dinah's defilement (who herself was only six years old[7]; although according to *Demetrius Chronographus*, Dinah was defiled at the age of sixteen and four months), and at the time of the revenge (Bader 2008, 111–13). It appears that these boys were not yet of an age to plan and execute such a revenge. This perspective, in conjunction with the young age attributed to Dinah, suggests that the story of Dinah was created at a later date than the story of Jacob's blessings and curses on his deathbed. At that time, there was already a certain degree of uncertainty about the age of Dinah's brothers, and the probability of the implementation of the revenge plan by two minors was not taken into account. The author of the fragment about Jacob's death would therefore have to tacitly assume that Simeon

6 Not unimportant for our analysis is the fact that, according to Herodotus of Halicarnassus, in those lands the majority of peoples, including the Egyptians, practised circumcision and it was shameful for a man not to be circumcised. Only the Philistines were not circumcised, which was due to their Aegean origin (in 1 Sam 17:26, 36, when David spoke of Goliath, he called him an "uncircumcised Philistine," and this was clearly intended as an insult) (Spence and Exell 1881, 407). The question then arises: how could Shechem agree to their demand if he was already circumcised?

7 In the book of Jubilees, Dinah was the victim of a rape at the age of twelve: "There [i.e., in Salem, near Shechem] Jacob's daughter Dinah was taken by force to the house of Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of the land. He lay with her and defiled her. Now she was a small girl, twelve years of age. He begged her father and her brothers that she be given to him as a wife" (*Jub.* 30:2; VanderKam 1989, 191; Zlotnick 2002, 71).

and Levi were already adult men (which still seems unlikely that these two killed all the men in Shechem).

It is worth emphasising that Jacob[8] did not like what his sons had done. He believed that revenge would make the Canaanites and Perizzites to hate his family. In the biblical story of Dinah, we look in vain for his clear opposition to the planned crime of his sons. We only know that after the fact he was very concerned, or even terrified, that he, his family, and his people would be destroyed. Although he remained passive at the time of his sons' conspiracy, it is challenging to ascertain whether he was aware of their intention to exact revenge on the entire Hivite people. The biblical narrative does not provide a definitive answer to this question.

As previously stated, Jacob's blessings in Gen 49 contain an additional intriguing element: the curse of Simeon and Levi. In this passage, Jacob delivers a severe condemnation of these two sons: "Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let not my soul enter their council... in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstrung an ox" (Gen 49:5–6). Their father subsequently curses them and denies them an inheritance. He does not explicitly state what specific situation he is referring to, which may have been the reason why they are mentioned in the story of Dinah as the ones who massacre the inhabitants of Shechem. It is noteworthy that in the same narrative, it is not only these two brothers of Dinah who are depicted as being influenced by anger; it is also stated in general terms about her brothers. The possibility of the later separation of Simeon and Levi from the rest of the brothers is also indicated by the Greek translation (right table), which, in relation to the analogous Hebrew passage (left table) speaking of Dinah's brothers, distinguishes this particular pair. This distinction is made in order to place the responsibility for the bloody act of revenge on them (Frankel 2015):

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8 It is not known who informed Jacob, and his sons, that Dinah had been sexually abused, since she herself was staying in Shechem at the rapist's house, but when he heard of the rape, he remained silent (*wəheḥĕriš*) and waited until his sons returned from the field (Gen 34:5). In this passivity, in this lack of a clear reaction on Jacob's part, one might seek tacit approval for the sons to deal with the culprit themselves. But the text itself gives no such indication. Apart from that, it would mean that Jacob is unable or unwilling to take personal responsibility for the wrong done to his daughter and to inflict the appropriate punishment himself. Apart from the age of the sons, it could be assumed that he simply wanted to discuss the matter with the male members of the family, which is more likely in the text, if only because the sons are involved in the negotiations between the parties.

It is also difficult to say what the contextual meaning of the expression under discussion might be, e.g. in English, "to be speechless at the news of something tragic," because Jacob did learn of the serious wrong done to his daughter? Impulsive people show an immediate, often not fully thought-out reaction to the news of tragic events. Jacob, as the personification of a wise patriarch, does not react in accordance with the negative emotions that arise in a person at this time. He simply "fell silent," in the sense that he experienced these emotions strongly inwardly, but did not show them outwardly. From this perspective, such "silence" cannot be identified with "silent acceptance" of revenge. This would be an over-interpretation, and if the sons understood their father's silence in this way, the biblical story clearly shows that they were wrong, because Jacob was angry about the act of revenge, and later – on his deathbed – did not bless the two sons mentioned.

Gen 34:13 the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father	Gen 34:13 the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father
Gen 34:14 said to them	Gen 34:14 Simeon and Levi, the brothers of Dinah, said to them

In light of the aforementioned alterations, it is probable that it was originally Jacob's sons who perceived Shechem's desire to marry Dinah as an opportunity to sack the city. The accentuation of the role of Simeon and Levi in the murder of the inhabitants of Shechem (Gen 34:25) may have been a subsequent addition, elucidating the hitherto ambiguous issue of Jacob's cursing of these two of his descendants.

3. Preserving the Integrity and Purity of the Nation

The tragic story of Dinah begins with her going out *lirʾôṯ biḇnôṯ hāʾāreṣ*, which can be translated as "to see the daughters of the land" (Gen 34:1). The meaning of the phrase *lirʾôṯ bə-* is not entirely clear, and it could also mean "to enjoy something." This has led to the suggestion that Dinah simply wanted to have a good time, perhaps by going for a walk with the local girls and getting to know them. Many scholars have looked for clues in the text that might suggest or foreshadow the misfortune that was to befall Dinah. Some have even questioned whether she was somehow to blame for what happened to her. Rashi (*Bereshit Rabba* 80:1) draws attention to the fact that in this chapter Dinah is referred to as the daughter of Leah, but the phrase "daughter of Jacob" is omitted. Why is this? Rashi points out that it is to suggest a certain similarity between the daughter and the mother. In another part of the biblical story, Leah is said to have *wattēṣēʾ*, meaning "she went out," to meet Jacob in order to spend the night with him in exchange for her son Reuben's mandrakes, which she had given to Rachel (Gen 30:16). The same verb is used in the story of Dinah, who *wattēṣēʾ*, meaning "she went out," to see the local girls. It is possible that, as in the case of her mother, Dinah's "going out" has a negative connotation, suggesting bad intentions. Some scholars even see this as an example of the adage "like mother, like daughter" (Kass 2003, 478). Interestingly, the use of the same verb in relation to a man does not necessarily imply bad intentions. For example, when Jacob *wayyēṣēʾ*, which means "he went out," from Beersheba and went to Haran (Gen 28:10), Rashi does not speak of Jacob's bad intentions. Instead, he explains that the verb was used deliberately to convey the sense of emptiness left behind when a righteous person leaves. When Jacob *wayyēṣēʾ*, which means "he went out," from the city mentioned, its radiance, splendor, and glory went with him. This would not have been the case with anyone

else (Lawee 2019, 217). This raises the question of why a woman's (Dinah's) going out is perceived negatively, while a man's (in this case Jacob's, although he is said to have been a righteous man) going out is perceived positively.

When Shechem saw Dinah, he kidnapped her and raped her. The Hebrew verb *wayʿannehā* is used in this passage translated "he raped her." Classical translators of this passage ascribe to this verb the meaning of "forced to have sexual intercourse," emphasising the tinge of coercion supposedly inherent in the root *ʿayin-nûn-hê*. On the other hand, Ellen van Wolde and Hilary Lipka argue that the biblical expression *wayʿannehā* discussed here should not be translated as "and he raped her" (with the consecutive *wāw*). In their view, it is a verb of the *piʿel* group, in which the above-mentioned root does not refer to rape or sexual abuse, but to the (general) defilement of a woman, for example by treating her with disrespect (in the context of social status). A similar view is taken by Washington, who adds, on the basis of an analysis of Deut 22:24, 29, that in the case of the verb *ʿayin-nûn- hê*, it refers to some sexual abuse, but not to acts of sexual violence (Freedman 1990, 51–63; Bechtel 1994, 19–36; Van Wolde 2002, 543; Frymer-Kensky 2002, 179–98; Washington 2004, 208; Gravett 2004, 279; Lipka 2006, 87–90).

The question thus arises as to whether the sexual intercourse between Dinah and Shechem can be considered sexual violence. In other words, was Dinah having intercourse with the son of Hamor against her will? It should be noted that accepting the hypothesis that Dinah was not sexually abused does not automatically imply that she was not dishonoured. Gen 34 also emphasises three times that Shechem *ṭimmēʾ*, i.e. "dishonoured or made unclean" Dinah:

Gen 34:5	Gen 34:13	Gen 34:27
ṭimmēʾ ʾēṯ dinâ bittô	*ṭimmēʾ ʾēṯ dinâ ʾăḥōṯām*	*ṭimmʾû ʾăḥōṯām*
had defiled Dinah his [Jacob's] daughter	had defiled Dinah their sister	had defiled their sister

In the Mosaic Law, the term "sexual uncleanness" referred exclusively to adultery and prohibited marital unions. Given that both Shechem and Dinah were young and unmarried individuals, not bound by any betrothal or marriage arrangements, the use of the verb *ṭimmēʾ* could be considered unjustified. Nevertheless, the author of the biblical text emphasises that she was made unclean and dishonoured (Harrington 2020, 176). Why? Furthermore, the heroine herself, Dinah, is not allowed to speak and express the extent of her own suffering in relation to the seemingly shameful act of Shechem. The text reveals nothing about what is going on inside Dinah herself.

In ancient times in the Middle East, a virgin who lost her chastity brought shame on her family and her social status was degraded. A woman's virginity was crucial in negotiating the amount of money a prospective bridegroom would have to pay as

compensation to the father of his future wife. In the legal discourse on sexual relations with an unmarried virgin, if a man seized her and slept with her, he should give her father fifty shekels of silver and take her as his wife, without the possibility of abandoning her for the rest of his life (Deut 22:28–29). The will or testimony of the woman was not taken into account – such a woman had to marry the *de facto* perpetrator of the rape. From the perspective of the modern Western worldview, such a law seems unacceptable, but at the time of Dinah, the practice of "forced" marriage was intended to ensure the future of a girl who had lost her virginity in this way. If the father did not consent to his daughter's marriage to the rapist, the fine had to be paid regardless. In such a case, the woman remained in the house under the care of her father (Exod 22:16). In the light of the biblical text, the question arises as to why Dinah was not either married to Shechem or why the payment of the appropriate amount for the loss of virginity was not sufficient?

The harrowing tragedy of Dinah, which reveals the dark history of the patriarchal period, is repeated in the reign of King David (2 Sam 13), when his eldest son Amnon raped his sister Tamar (by another mother). The news of the rape saddened David, but he remained passive and chose not to take punitive action against Amnon. Amnon's brother Absalom (David's son, but by another woman) took revenge on Amnon and was banished by David for three years (after which his father forgave him for murdering his brother). It should be pointed out that both biblical stories begin with rape and end with the death of the rapist. Both fathers are united by despair, caused by the suffering of the child, and by external passivity in acting to punish the perpetrators of evil. In both stories, revenge is taken by the siblings. Here it is worth showing that the author of the account of Tamar modelled on similar incidents from the account of Dinah, in order to prepare the ground for his own, distinct perspective on the shameful act of *nəḇālâ* in Israel (2 Sam 13:12). The act of rape itself is also introduced in both texts with similar expressions:

Gen 34:2	2 Sam 13:14
wayyiqqaḥ ʾōtāh wayyiškaḇ ʾōtāh way ʿannehā	*wayyeḥĕzaq mimmennâ way ʿannehā wayyiškaḇ ʾōtāh*
took her and lay with her and violated/forced her	overpowered her and violated/forced her and lay with her

In addition to the similarities, there are significant differences between the two stories. While Shechem loved Dinah with great love after the shameful act, Amnon felt great hatred towards Tamar. For Shechem, Dinah is a woman from a foreign people, whereas Tamar is Amnon's sister. Dinah's relationship with Shechem is unclear, whereas Tamar – firstly – cried out for help during the rape, and – secondly – tried to stay in Amnon's house so that he would look after her. Dinah stayed in Shechem's house, while Tamar was thrown out of Amnon's house by him. Shechem spoke

tenderly to Dinah and wanted to marry her – Amnon responded to Tamar's cries of despair with harsh words and drove her out of his house. Simeon and Levi slaughtered the men of the town of Shechem (collective punishment), whereas Absalom ordered his servants to kill Amnon alone (individual punishment). A final difference worth mentioning here is that Shechem belonged to a foreign people, whereas Amnon belonged not only to the same people as the victim (and thus as the person who later punished him), but also to the same family as her (and the avenger) (Scherman 2000, 282).

The narrative of Dinah (as well as the narrative of Tamar) strongly emphasises that a *nəḇālâ*, or "wickedness" (Gen 34:7), has been committed against a member of their community. The Hebrew term *nəḇālâ* is usually translated as "wickedness, abomination, obscenity, insult, disgrace, anger, foolish act, vile thing," and even "crime," or "carrion." In the context of the narrative of the wrong that Shechem did to Dinah, it can be said that *nəḇālâ* is an act that "repels," or "is repulsive," or "wicked." It is also noteworthy that this Hebrew word in the context of sexual relations appears in other places in the Hebrew Bible. Deut 22:21, for example, describes the case of a girl who married a man who later accused her of lacking virginity. In such a situation, the Torah's decision is clear: the woman is to be stoned for committing an act called *nəḇālâ*. Such an act was considered disrespectful to the people one belonged to, and also an insult to the sanctity of that people. Therefore, the punishment was severe. In addition, the term *nəḇālâ* is also used in the Bible to describe sexual relations with other people's wives, as well as rape (Judg 7:23–24; 20:6; Jer 29:23).

Although Dinah's brothers are described as being grieved by what happened to their sister, Gen 34 focuses more on the fact that a great evil and injustice has occurred within the community of Israel,[9] rather than expressing empathy for the girl herself. It could be argued that the description of the event, especially the reaction of the brothers, reflects a more legalistic and seemingly "heartless" approach to the problem, rather than a purely "human" one based on compassion. The brothers decide to punish (in the form of revenge) because "such an act" should not have happened in Israel. This is rather than necessarily seeking to bring relief to their sister, show her support, or make her feel safe.

The seemingly heartless attitude of the narrative towards the whole situation may be due to the fact that the story may have been adapted at a later stage to fit a particular vision of the Israelite community, one in which evil has no right to enter, and if it does happen, it should be resolutely suppressed. The narrative clearly condemns the act committed by Shechem against Dinah, but it also emphasises the brothers' revenge. On the other hand, it ignores the aspect of the victim herself, and especially

9 Cf. *Jub.* 30:5 (VanderKam 1989, 192; Zlotnick 2002, 72): "Nothing like this, namely the defilement of an Israelite woman, is to be done anymore from now on. For their punishment [i.e., of the Shechemites] had been decreed in heaven."

her emotions. Both observations show that the narrator was interested in generalising the message of individual evil and elevating it to the rank of an important event (in this case, evil) for the whole community. This is also evidenced by the use of the expression *bə-yiśrāʾēl*, i.e. "in Israel," which is something of an anachronism, since Jacob and his sons did not yet constitute a people, and certainly not "Israel." In fact, it is not until Exod 1:9 that the term *ʿam bənê yiśrāʾēl*, i.e. "the people of the sons of Israel" appears, and even there "Israel" is not yet mentioned as a separate people. The use of this term in the story of Dinah may therefore have contributed to the attempt to justify some forms of revenge against foreign peoples, precisely at the time when this text was undergoing such transformations.

It would seem that in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah,[10] who clearly opposed the increase in intermarriage and the general tendency to break down the traditional isolation, there could have been some changes in the content of the text about Dinah as well. One clue may be the issue of circumcision, which was practiced almost universally by all peoples and tribes in this area during the patriarchal period. In contrast, at the time of the Second Temple, there were already much fewer of these peoples, and perhaps the Israelites could distinguish themselves in this respect, since one of the legal-religious problems that was considered was the issue of Israeli women entering into marriage with uncircumcised men (Lange 2008, 80–81; Harrington 2020, 292). By comparing certain passages from the story of Dinah and from the Book of Nehemiah, one can clearly see this difference, that is, two opposing views on this matter:

Gen 34:9	Neh 13:25
make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves.	made them swear by God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves."

In an attempt to prevent the process of cultural assimilation with neighbouring peoples, the story of Dinah may have been written at the time of the controversy over the "purification of the Jewish people." The proposed legal solution of uniting with a foreign people – "we will dwell with you and become one people" (Gen 34:16) – was unacceptable. The author may have deliberately introduced certain changes in the Book of Genesis (e.g. concerning her birth in Gen 30:21, adding her to the list of those who went to Egypt in the description of Gen 46:15) in order to

10 The author of the Aramaic Levi Document (ALD) portrays Dinah's interaction with Shechem as a form of "desecration" (4Q213a, 3–4). In contrast to the Genesis account, where the focus is on Shechem's act of violence, the Aramaic Levi Document assigns culpability to Dinah. The text explicitly states that she "profaned her name (i.e., herself) and the name of her ancestors, and shamed all her brothers" (4Q213a, 3–4). This perspective suggests a strong emphasis on female purity and the sanctification of children as they would enter the temple (Drawnel 2004, 1–2; Harrington 2020, 135, 291–92).

show that similar values already existed in the patriarchal period. The last sentence of the brothers, which *de facto* sums up the whole story: "If [we] allow our sister to be treated as a *zônâ*, i.e. a harlot" (Gen 34:31), can be interpreted as follows: could a holy family unite with an unclean family?

Conclusion

It is important to note that, upon examination of the Bible, it becomes evident that there was no inherent issue with engaging in interactions with neighboring peoples for an extended period of time. The Scripture makes mention of Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave and concubine of Abraham, Keturah, a descendant of Japheth, son of Noah, and Abraham's second wife after Sarah's death, Rebekah the Aramean, wife of Isaac, Leah and Rachel the Arameans, daughters of Laban (Rebekah's brother) and wives of Jacob, Asenath, daughter of the Egyptian priest Poti Fera and wife of Joseph, Zipporah, daughter of the Midianite priest Jethro and wife of Moses, Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite and wife of King David, etc. No evidence exists to indicate that these individuals underwent a process of conversion. Members of neighboring tribes often intermarried, although it seems natural that at least one side had to adopt new values, norms of life, social roles, and probably also faith. It even seems that there was a period of settlement of early Israel in the land of Canaan, in which either the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites (Ezra 9:1) could have theoretically joined the Israelite people. The situation underwent a transformation with the introduction of the concept of a chosen people and a holy offspring, which underscored a distinctive bond with God (belonging was contingent upon birth).

This raises the question of why the narrative of Dinah was presented as exceptional during Abrahamic times, given that the changes were implemented at a considerably later juncture. While the traditional interpretation of the narrative focuses on the tragic fate of Dinah and the moral implications of the story, a textual analysis of the Hebrew Bible suggests that the text may have undergone significant redaction. Consequently, it is plausible to posit an earlier, less dramatic narrative. This might have involved Jacob's family arriving in Shechem, settling peacefully, and engaging in pastoral activities. The traumatic incident of Dinah's violation and its subsequent events, such as her rescue, might be later additions. Dinah's conspicuous silence and her absence from the narrative after her violation raises questions about her role and the extent of her suffering. It can be a deliberate choice by the author, intended to emphasize the passivity of women in ancient societies, or her absence is a result of the narrative's focus on the actions of men and the broader implications of the story.

The ambiguity surrounding the motivations of the characters and the potential for subsequent editorial modifications in the history of the patriarchs remains a topic of ongoing debate among scholars. Was there a distinct account pertaining to Shechem, wherein it was Jacob who engaged in combat with the inhabitants of that city and secured its surrender through his own efforts? Is it possible that a later editor may have attributed the slaughter to Simeon and Levi, incorporating the narrative of rape as a motive for their actions? Was the immediate response of Jacob's family primarily to the act of rape itself, or was the emphasis placed on the potential "dishonor" associated with intermarriage with a Canaanite "impure" family? The constraints of the biblical text as a singular historical document render it difficult to determine the precise historical events that occurred in Shechem with absolute certainty. Further study, including the exploration of archaeological evidence or the analysis of related ancient Near Eastern texts, may provide additional insights.

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The Theological Foundations of Matylda Getter's (1870–1968) Humanitarian Activities in the Face of Life-Threatening Situations

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Abstract: The article aims to present the theological foundations of the life and activities of Mother Matylda Getter, a Franciscan sister of the Family of Mary, superior of the Warsaw province, engaged throughout her life in the care, upbringing, and education of abandoned children and orphans, and then cooperating particularly sacrificially during the German occupation in saving endangered Jewish children. The authors of the article posed the question of the reasons for the unusual attitude of Mother Getter, who, as a distinguished long-term superior of a religious province, was not required to take such risky actions during the war. The following analysis shows that this was possible because of a deep commitment to a personal relationship with the Master of Nazareth and openness to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as well as the long-standing cooperation of many people adhering to a shared spirituality and monastic rule.

Keywords: Matylda Getter, Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, Jews, the rescue of Jewish children, Second World War, the German occupation of Polish lands

Admiration for heroes is a timeless and cross-cultural phenomenon. Even if, with time, the system of cultivated attitudes and values undergoes changes, the need to notice outstanding figures, who show the horizon of human possibilities, sometimes lighting up the light in even the deepest darkness of events and human doubt, does not disappear in any culture. The selection of recognized heroes usually reflects currently preferred values and hidden longings; it influences the imagination and goals of the next generation.

There are heroic attitudes, aroused by the urgency of the moment and the dramatic nature of the event; the manner of immediate action demonstrates the heroism of the person responding at the risk of his or her life. However, long-term situations beyond the day of test require not only a strong impulse of heart and will, but also numerous competences, which are achieved through the development of virtues, so valued in many cultures, regardless of the preferred value systems. Deeper reflection on the lives of prominent figures reveals the non-accidental nature of their choices and actions; one can recognize the time of their maturation, and the acquisition of competences that enable them to perform extraordinary deeds. The mere possession

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of these skills does not necessarily entail a decision to use them, especially in a risky situation. The question remains open as to what drives some individuals to take long-term actions far beyond their duties or responsibilities in the face of threats to their own lives and the lives of their loved ones.

An example of such a figure is Mother Matylda Aleksandra Getter (1870–1968),[1] Franciscan of the Family of Mary, an outstanding and brave person (Frącek 1978, 72–73; see 1994; 2018a; see Waluś 2013, 68–71; Zechenter 2019),[2] undertaking throughout her life under very difficult social and political conditions tasks beyond the expectations and demands of her surroundings.

The skills, competence, and virtues acquired earlier over the years enabled Mother Matylda Getter to work effectively and energetically on behalf of children, adolescents, and adults in extremely difficult conditions. For 81 years Mother Matylda Getter committed her strength and health to the Congregation of the Franciscan Family of Mary, strongly influencing the development of the community through her work in positions of responsibility; she was a teacher and educator, but also the superior of monastic homes in Odesa, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, then the Warsaw Province. She gained widespread recognition for her educational and organizational work before 1939. During the Second World War, she saved, among others, over 750 Jews, including more than 500 children. The figure of Mother Matylda Getter can be aptly described in the words of Pope Francis: "Worthy of special consideration and honour are those Christians who, following more than closely the footsteps and teachings of the Lord Jesus, have voluntarily and freely offered their lives for others and persevered with this determination unto death." (Francis 2017; cf. Francis 2018) Despite her constant exposure to danger, the leader of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary survived the war, even though she risked her life every day in the name of Christ saving people in danger during the German occupation. One can speak of her "free and voluntary offer of life and heroic acceptance *propter caritatem* of a certain and untimely death;" (Francis 2017; cf. Francis 2018), because she saved people, as she herself pointed out, in the name of Christ, risking her own life and that of her fellow nuns, who agreed every day for several years to practice the virtues to a heroic degree, aware of the threat of death or suffering and of slowly dying in a concentration camp, according to the laws of the German occupation (Frącek 1983, 5).

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1 Information, materials and suggestions during the writing of this article are owed to the help of Sister Archivist and Historian of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary Sr. Teresa Antonietta Frącek, PhD, without whom this text could not have been written.

2 She was a nun of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, a teacher, educator, superior of monastic homes in Odesa, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, and the Warsaw Province, organizer of 25 educational and caring institutions, meritorious in the field of education and charity, awarded the Order of Polonia Restituta (1925), the Golden Cross of Merit (1931), the Golden Cross of Merit with Swords during the Warsaw Uprising (September 27, 1944), and posthumously with the medal "Righteous Among the Nations" (1985).

Mother Matylda Getter would not have accomplished many of these deeds had it not been for the solidarity-faithful assistance of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, who risked their own lives every day to save those in danger, usually completely unknown to themselves beforehand. The attention of researchers is drawn to their faith in Divine Providence, their mutual loyalty and solidarity in risk-taking, their sense of identity as a Franciscan community across all divisions, and to their strong, carefully developed Christian arethology, enabling the Provincial Superior to act efficiently as the leader of a community of several hundred women (Frącek 2018a, 38).[3]

In examining her life and activities, questions can be posed to define the research problem. Was it action arising from duty or from a life united to Christ, which in effect seeks fulfilment in love?[4] How did Mother Matylda manage to involve the entire religious community and many lay people in such a risky activity? What determined her success as a leader of several hundred people in a situation of constant threat to life? What were the foundations of her life and activities? The search for answers to these questions will be made possible by analyzing the written memoirs of Mother Matilda, her autobiographical notes, also the prepared history of the Congregation of the Franciscan Family of Mary and the accounts of the witnesses who were saved.

The present reflections are in the context of her most important virtues, above all the theological ones, that were evident throughout her life, attested to her strength and rendered her influence fruitful. The first to be presented are faith and hope in the life of Mother Matylda Getter, that were crucial in all her binding decisions, followed by her responsible love, maturing over several decades of pursuing her religious vocation. A very important virtue of Mother Matylda Getter as Superior of the province was prudence, the ability to manage a community of several hundred people, dependent on Mother Matylda Getter as Superior, but also co-responsible for her decisions. Another subject of reflection will be her fortitude and love in taking in abandoned, unwanted, orphaned children, as well as children threatened by war and persecution. The conclusion attempts to summarize the observations and show the conclusions drawn from the study.

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3 "The example of the superiors worked best, but the top-down initiatives of the religious authorities were realized thanks to the generosity and dedication of the sisters, who carried the burden of responsibility for the safety of those in hiding day and night in children's homes, educational and nursing institutions, hospitals and homes for the sick." (Frącek 2018a, 38)

4 Livio Melina (2001), in one of his articles on the issues addressed here, argued that the category of virtue makes it possible to grasp the theological dimension of action in the dynamic perspective of the acting subject who seeks fulfillment in love. Thus, this is not just an appeal to the category of example or ontological foundation. There is much more to it. Christocentrism of virtues was advocated by Hans Urs von Bathasar (see 1988, 70–123).

1. Mother Matylda Getter's Faith and Hope Under Conditions of Danger

The dominant value in the life of Mother Matylda Getter was faith in Divine Providence and the resulting Christian attitude of hope. All of her most important life choices, starting with her decision to join a religious congregation, would have to be considered completely illogical and impractical. Even if in many eras taking up the religious life could sometimes be associated with social promotion, securing a stable, though not the easiest, life, and a path of – not only spiritual – development, the situation was completely different during the Partitions of Poland, when Matylda Getter lived. At that time, anti-Polish and anti-Catholic policies prevailed in the Polish territories under the Russian partition; as a result, religious congregations were banned, and the existing communities were already condemned to extinction. The uncertainty of tomorrow, the constant menace of police investigation, and the lack of all legal and financial safeguards meant that committing one's strength and health, in the name of Christ, to social work with no stable prospects for the future, was in itself proof of great faith and trust in Divine Providence. Matylda Getter accepted these commitments and subordinated her life to them. The nineteenth century did not encourage women's independence; deprived of many political and social rights, and deprived of the right to wear the habit, the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary were regarded as "old maids" and were of little importance in society.[5]

Matylda Getter's decision to give her life, health and strength to an unofficially operating religious congregation could only have resulted from her faith in her own vocation and God's invitation, God's faithfulness and an all-predicting Providence. This faith was strongly linked to a sense of responsibility for the country, for the children and young people, for the Church; but it carried a risk far greater than, for example, accepting a religious vocation in the midst of peace, in a country guaranteeing the possibility for religious congregations to function and carry out their official activities. Only having hope in God's protection could bring peace of heart in such a situation.

The constant threat of the tsarist police and the real danger of arresting the sisters and losing the schools and orphanages they ran made it difficult to plan and develop a religious community, so the idea of the Mother Superiors to merge the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary with the international, already officially operating Congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary may have seemed reasonable. This step was taken in accordance with canon law, thus giving the sisters the status of belonging to a regular order, approved by the Holy See (Frącek 1994, 91;

5 The establishment and activities of dozens of religious congregations active in the territory of Poland have not always been remarked upon by historians, e.g. for example, there is no discussion of such social groups in the popular awareness of the time (Kita, Klempert 2014).

cf. 2018a, 18–19). The Sisters of the Family of Mary gained a much greater sense of security and the advantages of an international community. Realistically, however, this meant that the Family of Mary, absorbed by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, practically ceased to exist, and the French superiors resigned from their work in Polish territory and were willingly sending abroad Polish women who had been educated and formed through the efforts of the Family of Mary community.

It was only through faith that Mother Matylda Getter's fairly risky step of separating part of the Sisters of the Family of Mary from the already secure French congregation could have been taken. Mother Matylda wanted to save the identity and traditions of the Polish congregation, which until then had acted according to the principles of its founder, St. Zygmunt Szczęsny Feliński, shaped in the spirit of community unity, without division into two choirs, without strongly accented hierarchy, but with a commitment to the poorest Polish youth, in particular those deprived of educational opportunities. The history of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary provides evidence that Mother Matylda Getter was right, however, when, in 1914, she courageously, with faith and hope, in defiance of many negative opinions, made on her own the after all risky secession of part of the community of the Family of Mary from the international congregation on Polish soil, this choice did not seem at the time to be either reasonable or logical[6] (Frącek 1994, 91; see 2018a, 25–26). Such a risky decision could only have resulted from her faith in her own vocation and in Divine Providence, interpreted the way the founder of the Family of Mary, Archbishop Zygmunt Szczęsny Feliński, taught it, confirming this faith and hope also in his exile.

With this very courageous decision, resulting from her deep faith, Mother Matylda saved the work of Abp. Feliński in the Polish lands under the Russian partition; bringing it to flourish over time. She saw the fruits of this hope as the superior of the community of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, as together with the Superior General and her sisters she founded more than twenty homes for children and young people, various schools, also orphanages and care institutions[7]

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6 The decision of mother Getter was accepted by 20 sisters in three homes: two in Warsaw, in Hoża and Żelazna streets and a home with a school for children in Kostowiec near Pruszków, while 10 homes and more than 100 sisters remained with the Missionaries. The situation of those 20 sisters stabilized when in 1919 they merged with the Lviv community of the Family of Mary, hitherto cut off by the Partitions of Poland. This merger was supported by Card. Aleksander Kakowski and Mons. Achilles Ratti, Apostolic Visitor to Warsaw who later was elected Pope Pius XI. From Lviv's Family of Mary, which already had papal approval, the union was joined by ca. 500 sisters, and by 80 from Warsaw. Of the Family of Mary, 580 sisters began their work in independent Poland. Meanwhile, all the homes they inherited from the Missionary Sisters of the Family of Mary had collapsed.

7 Matylda Getter was constantly founding new homes for children; in 1919, an orphanage was established in Zamoyskiego Street in Warsaw, in 1920 "Zosinek" was foudned in Międzylesie for war orphans; in 1921, an orphanage, kindergarten, and home for the elderly in Sejny and the "Loretto" care center in Warsaw's Praga district; from 1923, there were institutions in Augustów and Chotomów, from 1924, a large orphanage, kindergarten, and school in Płudy, an orphanage and kindergarten in Białołęka, then

(Frącek 2018a, 26–29; cf. Frącek 1994, 92; see Zechenter 2019, 5). Had Mother Matylda not made a very risky secession, these centers would not have been established on Polish soil. Notwithstanding the considerable merits of the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in many countries, it is permissible to emphasize the value of Mother Matylda Getter's responsibility for the commitments she assumed towards her own congregation, towards her compatriots, her confidence in the judgment of Abp. Feliński, who, in creating the Polish congregation, designated to it primarily the tasks in its immediate environment. Matylda Getter herself, with her perfect command of French and German, would have had a much better chance of a more stable life in the international congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, where she could have engaged her energies in much less dangerous activities (Frącek 2018a, 22).[8] Her secession fostered, above all, better use of the capacities of the Sisters of the Family of Mary, who were very much involved in the upbringing and education of children; whereas in an international congregation, mainly French-speaking, many of the Polish sisters could only do very simple work in various countries, undoubtedly to the benefit of those in need, but not in accordance with their originally chosen and accepted vocation.

Decisive for Mother Matylda was her fidelity to the path indicated by the founder; as she herself reminded the community when accepting the position of superior: "For our Congregation – after God – our Homeland is the greatest moral value. We wish to serve our beloved Homeland first and foremost by educating and instructing the young people entrusted to our care to be good citizens, aware of their duties." (Frącek 2018a, 34)

Mother Matylda Getter's faith led her to a constant, strong commitment throughout her life in very different environments, which she accepted in the Franciscan spirit according to the Founder's will. She was a very well-educated, well-formed, and elegant person, and won acclaim and hearts by working with the same generosity both among well-educated charges, future teachers of new students, which was a great investment for the congregation and by dedicating her time in the poorest environments, from which it was difficult to expect success and fruit adequate to the work devoted to them (Frącek 2018a, 3; see Zechenter 2019, 4–5).[9]

"Ulanówek" in Międzylesie, an orphanage in Ostrów Mazowiecka, the "Jutrzenka" children's home in Pustelnik (today Marki) and others.

8 Matylda Getter was held in high esteem in the congregation, e.g. Superior General Florentyna Dymman and the Superior of the Odesa house, Maria Drzewiecka, chose her twice as a traveling companion to Rome (1893, 1900).

9 From 1903 she was entrusted with the office of educator at the most prestigious Establishment of the Family of Mary in St. Petersburg, which was founded as early as 1859 Abp. Feliński. This school and orphanage were considered exemplary, among the best in all of Russia. After the death of Mother Superior F. Dymman in 1906, Mother Getter was appointed secretary to the new superior, Mother Kazimiera Herman. Matylda Getter was able to find her way in both the elite environment of St. Petersburg and the poor Jewish quarters of Odesa, the so-called Mołdawianka.

Only strong Christian faith and hope can explain also her very risky and self-sacrificing commitment during the Second World War on behalf of the Polish population in hiding from the German occupiers, above all the incomparable effort to protect several hundred adults and children of Jewish origin isolated by German orders ("Rozporządzenie" 1939, 2077). As early as 1939, the Germans began resettling Jews in designated quarters in several cities and were introducing further restrictions, imposing penalties for leaving a district without permission and for helping a Jew. According to Hans Frank's decree of October 15, 1941, Poles would be punished with the death penalty for hiding Jews; in November 1941, this regulation was tightened, forbidding to offer any form of assistance, therefore also, for example, to give food, to a Jew. On October 28, 1942, a decree of the SS commander in the Warsaw District, and from November 10, in the General Governorate, informed that it was punishable by death for Poles to give aid to Jews, but also for concealing information about their presence in the area. Unlike in the Western countries occupied by Germany, in the Polish territories, an immediate execution was carried out on the spot ("an Ort und Stelle") for giving bread or water to a Jew. The principle of collective responsibility was strictly adhered to: together with the "guilty," their children, parents, wives, and husbands were killed. Whoever took in Jews risked the life of the whole family.

Many witnesses emphasized in their written memoirs that the driving force for all the dangerous actions of Mother Matylda was her living faith. Fearing a real, constant threat, she held onto the conviction that she was acting according to God's will and could count on divine providence in every situation (Frącek 2018b, 174–75). Well aware of street roundups of passers-by, also of executions for helping Jews, Mother Matylda declared that "in the name of Christ" she could not refuse shelter to anyone (Frącek 2018a, 41) and with great hope assured the children, terrified by the brutality of the German soldiers, that there was a chapel in the house and no one would be hurt (Frącek 2018a, 68). This faith in the importance of the presence of the Blessed Sacrament guided her at all times; in a situation of danger, she prayed, confident in God's protection (Frącek 2018a, 64). This faith urged her to receive every Jewish child, whose concealment, after all, entailed mortal danger, and to treat them as sent from God; in this spirit, she asked the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, anticipating: "Will you, Sister, accept God's blessing?" (Frącek 2018a, 71) She viewed her everyday life, and the lives of others, in a spirit of faith and hope, whether doing great deeds or ordinary ones such as cooking soup for the hungry, taking care of trifles, or symbolically celebrating birthdays or vows of both lay and religious during the fighting of the Warsaw Uprising, which proved that faith results in love and kindness towards everyone in everyday life.

2. Mother Matylda Getter's Love Towards her Charges in Her Everyday Life

Mother Matylda Getter at all times offered love in its practical dimension; most importantly, a love that was legible and understandable to those around her, irrespective of the age and background of her charges. Despite the many changes of the workplace and the ever-growing circle of charges, their relatives, and successive generations of nuns, she was called diminutively "Matusia" (Mommy) throughout her adult life. Her strong, determined character, indomitable will, iron self-discipline, dutifulness, and energy of action were combined with great kindness and personal charm, which gave her great power of influence and strengthened her authority. Even the first surviving recollections of the female charges from St Petersburg prove that at an early age, Mother Matylda attracted attention even in the select circle of female teachers and educators of one of the most admired educational centers in all of Russia. The charges recalled that "the strongest, radical influence on the young people was exerted by the mistress, the good young Mother Matylda Getter, whose tact and balance combined with great kindness, exquisite elegance, charming grace, were complemented with the originality of the way she interacted with the young people and influenced their psyche." (Frącek 2018a, 16–17) This combination of self-imposed demands, constant development of virtues, and mastery of the weaker points of her character enabled Mother Matylda Getter to educate and supervise her co-workers with great benevolence and, at the same time, to clearly set boundaries and show the goals set. With this practical, kindly love, Mother Matylda surrounded girls from indigent families of the Polish diaspora in St. Petersburg at the end of the 19th century, also poor youth from the provinces of the tsarist empire, and later Warsaw street children and orphans, the homeless, those who came every day for meals served at the home of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, and soldiers of the First World War. Out of sheer benevolence, she showed and recommended to the sisters care and concern not only for the Poles, but also for the Russian soldiers, whom she might have treated as occupants of her own homeland (Getter 2007, 164–65; cf. Frącek 2018a, 23–24),[10] but her spiritual formation enabled her to see the human being beyond national and political divisions.

At the same time, she was fully aware of her vocation, which she discovered in conversations with her confessor; when she declared her desire for a monastic life and considered joining the Carmel, she heard: "You will go to the Family of Mary because it is now necessary to save poor children and work for the country"

10 During the First World War, in July 1915, Mother Matylda set up a hospital for Russian soldiers who had been severely poisoned with chlorine by the Germans at Bolimów near Łowicz, among whom were also Poles from the Tsarist conscription. She then ran a day-care center with meals for children and adolescents, and at the convent gate the sisters fed dozens of poor people every day, see 2 photographs of the hospital and the sick with the medical staff (Zechenter 2019, 6).

(Frącek 2018a, 9). Mother Matylda put these words into practice for more than 80 years very strictly, striving to secure not only the basic needs of her charges.

She also showed the practical dimension of love as the superior of the Family of Mary in Warsaw's Praga district, when, in the years 1919–1925 and 1927–1937, she created, in agreement with the Superior General, educational centers, especially for orphans and abandoned children, i.a. a nursing home in Międzylesie (1920), another in Sejny, in Warsaw's Praga district, then in Augustów and Chotomów (1923), Płudy (1924), Białołęka (1926), another in Międzylesie (1927), Pustelnik (1928), Brańszczyk and Struga (1929), Studzieniczna (1930), Raków (1932), Ostrołęka (1934), Dłutowo (1934), Dzisna (1935), Wirów and Mickuny (1936), and Niekasieck (1937). The smallest of the homes received 30 boys, the largest – 200 girls. She carefully chose the location of the centers, taking care to provide opportunities for the charges to play in the greenery close to home and fostering good relationships between the children. A good family atmosphere, a suitable neighbourhood and the close presence of a school were important to Mother Matylda, but she created her own schools on the premises if necessary. She genuinely wanted to create a home for the orphans and took care to avoid an atmosphere typical of an orphanage. Houses were given names that evoked good associations, e.g. "Zosinek," "Ulanówek," "Strzecha chłopięca" (Boys' Thatch), "Jutrzenka" (Morning Star) and others (Frącek 1980, 21–78).

Larger institutions were also organized in a well-thought-out way, e.g. in the largest center in Płudy, Mother Getter divided 200 girls into smaller groups, the so-called "little families," living in small houses, which she gave nice names, e.g. "Zacisze" (Retreat), "Chochlik" (Fairy), "Echo," "Kościuszko," "Kruszyna," "Polonka," "Rusałka" (Frącek 2018a, 37–30). This attentiveness and care of Mother Matylda influenced both the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary and the charges. The cordial atmosphere in the centers supported education and upbringing. The sisters used the system of "little families," facilitating mutual support and relationships between children of different ages. A loving effort was made to ensure that care in the nursing homes was adapted to the needs and abilities of the children (Frącek 1980, 169–203).

The courageous decisions of Mother Matylda Getter were combined with composure, excellent situational awareness, organizational skills, and prudence. The often risky decisions made in a spirit of faith turned out to be excellent choices, confirmed with energy, work, effort and commitment, and bore visible good fruit. (Frącek 1980, 204–30).

The Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary fully approved of her authority. At the age of 66, in 1936, she became Superior of the Warsaw Province, which comprised 404 sisters, working in 44 monastic homes in 6 dioceses and four provinces. She thus served the office of superior, focusing on the care of children from poor families and expanding the scope of her activities each year. During the tenure of Mother Matylda before the war, sisters in the Warsaw province taught in ten common schools, five of

which were owned by the congregation, ran twenty-one orphanages, eight day-care centers for children from poor families, seven boarding schools for secondary school female students, a Warsaw hostel for working girls, sisters also worked in three hospitals and three outpatient clinics for the sick and visited the poor sick in their homes (Frącek 1980, 204–57).

Mother Matylda Getter's social and educational activities attracted the attention of local authorities in many cities, but also in small towns, where her effective organization of schools completely transformed the community. Appreciating the strength of her leadership, her skills, the level of education and training provided in the sisters' homes, and the generosity, and openness of the institutions, Mother Matylda was conferred, with the decree of the President of the Republic of Poland on April 30, 1925, with the Order of Polonia Restituta with the conferral of the Officer's Cross, then for the subsequent years of further persevering activity she was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit on November 9, 1931 (Frącek 2018a, 3, 33).

For all witnesses at the time, the faith, self-sacrificing love, perseverance, and energy of Mother Getter; her achievements would have been more than sufficient to recognize her as one of the most outstanding Polish women of the first half of the 20th century. It seems, however, that she has not been adequately recognized in writing and historical studies.

Her enormous influence both on the children themselves brought up in so many educational centers and schools, and on the spirituality and formation of the sisters of the ever-growing congregation, then one of the largest in Poland certainly deserves recognition. She led the congregation for three consecutive three-year terms (1936–1945). Turning 70, she could consider her life to have been sacrificial and successful; no one could have expected more commitment from her. However, looking at her increased activity during the Second World War, one can see that her faith, love, and hope grew steadily, while her authority, developed through years of monastic leadership, further defined the paths of the Warsaw Province.

3. Prudence in Leading the Community

Mother Matylda Getter's fortitude and courage, evident throughout the war, were combined with prudence. In keeping with her long experience as a superior, she was concerned first and foremost with the community; during the occupation, she took care to maintain the unity and spirit of the congregation. In five years, she convened six conventions of home superiors, making it possible to exchange experiences despite obstacles to correspondence. Every year she organized at least three series of common retreats for the sisters, which provided an opportunity for meeting, formation, and spiritual support. Separately, she took care of retreats supporting superior

sisters. She regularly organized meetings of the provincial council, with 59 meetings held during the occupation. She kept a rich correspondence, supporting the sisters spiritually through circular and private letters (Frącek 1981, 80–124). At the same time, she inspired and recommended the improvement of the sisters' education; on her initiative, during the occupation, about 60 sisters graduated from the clandestine Pedagogical Lyceum, pedagogical-educational and catechetical courses (Frącek 1981, 127–68). This method of managing the monastic community enhanced the spiritual development of the sisters, as well as their relationships with each other. It was evident that Mother Matylda Getter cared not only for those at risk and in need of protection but for the congregation as a whole.

In the current situation, she was involved in helping arrested sisters, seeking their release, in the meantime sending them parcels as far as this was allowed. At the same time, she substituted them in their duties, for example during the imprisonment of the provincial superior of Poznań, Mother Maria Parlińska (1941), imprisoned in the Bojanowo camp, Mother Matylda took over the care of the homes of the Congregation in the Land of Warta, then, in the same situation, she took over responsibility for the houses of the Lwów and Poznań Provinces within the General Governorate. Despite the extremely difficult conditions of the occupation, she opened 13 new monastic homes (Frącek 1981, 79–125). Prudent efforts to maintain the spirit in the congregation made possible intense activity during the occupation and the congregation's strong commitment to help civilians, underground movements (Frącek 1981, 275–85), the imprisoned (Frącek 1981, 269–75); people hiding from the Gestapo (Frącek 1981, 265–69) and Jews, destined by the German occupiers for total extermination (Frącek 1981, 423–24).

The incomparable altruism of Mother Matylda Getter in rescuing children and adults of Jewish origin who were in immediate danger of death during the German occupation is strongly emphasized; it was known that Poles rescuing Jews were punished by being shot on the spot or sent to one of the German extermination camps. Mother Matylda had long had many good contacts with the Jewish community; she grew up in Warsaw on Krochmalna Street, associated as a typical Jewish street, as a nun she was the superior of an orphanage for poor children (1898–1903) in the Jewish suburb of Odesa, the so-called Moldawianka (Frącek 2018a, 5, 13). Among the charges there were also children of Jewish origin.

The experience of taking responsibility for several decades, but also the children entrusted to her by their parents and orphans motivated Mother Matylda during the war to take in Jewish children from the ghetto, at risk of death at any time, often hungry and wandering without a roof over their heads (Smólski 1961, 1964, 1981; Wroński and Zwolakowa 1971; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna 1966; Kurek 1992). Sometimes these children were brought to the convent by their parents or friends; sometimes lonely children came to the convent on their own, overcoming a great many obstacles and dangers (Tyndorf and Zieliński 2023, 134, 236, 241;

cf. Puścikowska 2019, 105–21; cf. Petrowa-Wasilewicz 2021). Taking in Jewish children risked death not only for Mother Matylda Getter but also for the community of sisters, according to the rules introduced by the German occupier. The children themselves were also aware of the danger, as their accounts written down years later indicate, for example, by Małgosia Frydman Mirska: "Taken out from the Warsaw Ghetto, hidden in turns by many people, in the face of danger she herself came with her younger sister to the nuns' convent at Hoża Street: I was terribly afraid, [...]. Passing through the gate, I was aware that my drama would be decided behind it: life or death. Mother Superior Matylda Getter looked at us and said: yes – I accept. It seemed to me that the heavens had opened up to me." (Cf. Acher 2011; Tyndorf and Zieliński 2023, 236)

In keeping with her vocation, her many years of religious formation and her accepted principles of engagement, Mother Matylda Getter believed that assistance to children and adults of all backgrounds and creeds was a result of a divine mandate and acted in accordance with the rule written down by the founder, Abp. Feliński, for whom of particular importance were the words: "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45) and "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me" (Matt 18:5; cf. Mark 9:36–37).

4. Love Requiring Fortitude

The Synoptics found it very important to record the words of Jesus equating taking in a child "in his Name" with taking in himself and even the Father himself.[11] This sentence motivated and inspired the activity of many religious congregations who took in abandoned children, orphans, also from very poor families, literally as if they were welcoming Jesus himself.[12] Mother Matylda, accepting the inspiration of Abp. Feliński, took this invitation as the motto of her life, taking orphans and abandoned children into her care, meeting their needs to the best of her ability. This vocation, pursued for decades, took on a new and dramatic dimension during the Second World War. The literal fulfillment of this evangelical invitation of Jesus undertaken during the German occupation of Polish lands was associated with great risk and

11 The words recorded by Mark and Luke seem to coincide, to receive a child in Jesus' name means to receive the Son of God and, through him, the Father himself, cf. "And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me'" (Mark 9:36). Cf. "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me" (Matt 18:5), "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me" (Luke 9:47–48).

12 The evangelical words of Mark and Matthew were chosen by Abp. Feliński as a motto, see Feliński 1888.

an immediately enforced death sentence for those who received people, including children of Jewish origin. Undoubtedly, during the German occupation of Polish lands, most Jewish children were saved thanks to Mother Matylda Getter (Tyndorf and Zieliński 2023, 236, 240–41; See Frącek 1982, 285–300). The Babylonian Talmud, intended for Jews in the Diaspora, appreciated the importance and value of welcoming children, especially orphans; at the same time, while not explicitly prescribing heroic deeds, rather anticipating their possibility, it emphasizes the importance of supporting and saving even one person.[13] It should be noted that in the case of the activities of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, this refers to several hundred people, most of them children.

As a result of helping the Jews, the Sisters of the Franciscan Family of Mary saved the lives of more than 800 Jews, including more than 500 children and young people, and more than 250 elderly people. They hid more than 300 children in their own orphanages and boarding schools, about 120 children in other homes of their own congregation, and more than 80 in private families. In monastic homes, the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary hid around 150 elderly people and mediated the hiding of about 100 Jews in private homes. They also provided short-term assistance to approximately 400 people and, for a longer period of time, they helped more than 100 people (Frącek 1981, 300). This is a unique contribution of the Sisters of the Family of Mary to the effort to help the Jews. (Tyndorf and Zieliński 2023, 187; Frącek 2006). However, about 3 million of them died.

Mother Matylda regarded the question of accepting Jewish children as a matter of faith. Her fortitude stemmed primarily from her conviction that the Family of Mary could not refuse to accept Jewish children in the name of Christ; she prompted the sisters to heroic acts by asking a previously agreed-upon question (Frącek 2018a, 70–71).[14] The great faith and steadfast hope of Mother Matylda emanated on her fellow sisters. Understanding the risk to the whole congregation and its work, she had previously considered the situation in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and gained, as she claimed, absolute conviction that she was acting in accordance with God's will, accepting Christ himself and following the principles of the Family of Mary.

The provincial home in Warsaw at Hoża 53 Street became a place of reception for Jewish children who had to be issued new documents and find a place in one of the congregation's orphanages. Mother Matylda Getter opened all the homes of her province to the persecuted, and in every orphanage, monastic home, and mission she was undertaking, Jews were hidden. The elderly, whose appearance betrayed

13 Whoever kills a person, it is as if he has killed the whole of humankind, and whoever saves the life of a person is as if he has saved the life of the whole of humankind (cf. *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin*, n.d., 37a).

14 "Will you accept God's blessing, Sister?", asked Mother Getter to Mother Superior Tekla Budnowska. The answer to this question was: "Yes, I will accept." That blessing was a Jewish child, in this case, the war child Danka Markowska, or rather Janka Dawidowicz (now living in London), whom Mother Getter moved from Płudy to Warsaw for safety (Frącek 2018, 70–71, photograph of Janka, 69).

their origins, she placed in the homes of private friends of the congregation, keeping a constant eye on their needs and safety. In this way, endangering the entire congregation, she saved several hundred Jewish children and adults, inspiring the admiration of witnesses and survivors (Szymańska 1979, 203–5; cf. Puścikowska 2019, 105–21; Petrowa-Wasilewicz 2021; see Tyndorf and Zieliński 2023, 187, 192, 134), she was awarded in 1985 the "Righteous Among the Nations" medal; the ceremony of awarding the medal and diploma and planting a tree in the Garden of the Righteous was held on September 14, 1986 (Frącek 2018a, 73–77).

As far as possible, almost all of the homes of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary were involved in helping the civilian population. For example, at the provincial home, Mother Matylda enabled the shelter of some 500 refugees in 1939, treated as needed by the nursing station (Frącek 2018b, 190). Throughout the occupation, Mother was in charge of the kitchen serving meals to approx. 300 people a day, and during the Warsaw Uprising 1100 people, insurgents and civilians. The congregation continually supported those arrested, and a center for the production of new documents for people wanted by the Gestapo, cooperating with the underground prison cells, operated in the provincial home (Frącek 1981, 258–300).

At the same time, Mother Matylda Getter consistently and calmly took care of orphans and abandoned children. She took in all, without exception, children left behind by those arrested and forced into hiding from the German occupiers (Frącek 1981, 265–66). Thanks to her management and dedication, 22 orphanages survived in the Warsaw province; after the forced liquidation of a few of them, Mother Matylda Getter founded nine new ones. There was a steady increase in the number of children in need of care due to executions and round-ups. Mother Matylda continually organized education in the orphanages, and effectively maintained an atmosphere of peace and security and cared for material conditions.

In 1944, the headquarters of the Warsaw Province at Hoża 53 Street, with the consent of mother Matylda, housed the headquarters of the commander of District VII "Obroża" of the Home Army, Lt. Col. Kazimierz Krzyżak, pseud. "Kalwin," and the Zaremba-Piorun grouping, fighting in the section of Emilia Plater, Koszykowa, Wilcza and Wspólna Streets – a point of support and sustenance. Mother Getter, in cooperation with the leadership of the Home Army "Obroża," donated the premises of the boarding house for the creation of an insurgent hospital for all the wounded, later moved for safety reasons to the PZU building on Poznańska Street. She and her sisters also took care of feeding the Home Army command, the covering company, the hospital doctors, and medical staff (Frącek 1981, 282), and had an insurgent hospital set up for the wounded.

With the end of the war in 1945, her term as provincial superior, which had been extended as a result of the war, came to an end. At the age of 75, she became Superior of the Warsaw home on Hoża Street, elected for consecutive three-year terms

until 1954 (Getter [n.d.]). She died in Warsaw on August 8, 1968, in an atmosphere of universal respect (Frącek 2018a, 60–61).

Mother Matylda Getter was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta on April 30, 1925, even before the Second World War, "for her merits in the field of child hygiene and child care in the country" and, in recognition of her subsequent activities, she was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit on November 9, 1931 (Frącek 2018b, 174). Due to her significant involvement during the Warsaw Uprising, she was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit with Swords on September 27, 1944. After the war, it was not until January 17, 1985, that she was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations Medal for rescuing Jews during the German occupation (Frącek 2018a, 73–74). Also posthumously, on October 24, 2018, she was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta "for the heroic attitude and extraordinary courage shown in saving the lives of Jews during the Second World War, for outstanding merits in the defense of dignity, humanity, and human rights."

The surviving memoirs about her depict Mother Matylda as spiritually strong, energetic, at the same time cheerful, even radiant, very intelligent, interested in people and their problems, good and kind. Many testimonies of rescued Jewish children bring the reader closer to their personal encounters with Mother Matylda and the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, who supported them at the risk of their lives under conditions of occupation. Mother Getter, who remained composed in countless situations of danger, constantly maintaining her peace, faith, hope and valiant charity, virtues which enabled her to work intensely, remained for them an authority figure and a source of reassurance. She had a special gift of prayer and devotion to Divine Providence and a strong spiritual, moral, and, above all, aretological formation.

Conclusion

Acquiring good in any area of life is related to action, and action should be conscious and purposeful, and skillfully aimed at achieving good. A person who makes the effort to acquire perfection objectively perfects themselves. Virtue becomes the cause of their goodness. Practiced virtue transforms a person, and makes them more perfect.[15] Moreover, virtue does not allow evil, it does not allow vice, which is its opposite. Virtue is, as it were, the moral armor that protects an individual from neglecting

15 The definition of virtue given by Aristotle (*Ethica nicomachea* 1106a; 2,6,3; LCL 73, 91) expresses it extremely aptly: "excellence or virtue in a man will be the disposition which renders him a good man and also which will cause him to perform his function well."

the good. It is what makes a person undertake a particular action leading to the good or the fulfillment of the good itself willingly, immediately, and with satisfaction.

The aim of human action is the good, which is human life. It is both given and assigned to a human being. Moreover, life is the good of every person, hence it is a common good and the cause of social life (Kiereś 2021, 296–99).

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the attitude of Mother Matylda Getter, who had a deep faith in Divine Providence and personal contact with Christ, was made possible by a strong, carefully developed Christian arethology. She discerned what the true good was in her life, as well as in the lives of those who played a role in her life. Her actions in practice have resulted in so much good.

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The Theological-Spiritual Sense of the Principle and Foundation at the Different Stages of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

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Abstract: The *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola have been famous in the Church for almost five centuries for their extraordinary effectiveness in building and deepening one's relationship with God. This effectiveness is attributable not so much to their content, which is related to the fundamental truths of the faith of the Catholic Church and to the contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ, as to their precise method. The author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, by adapting their content to the exercitant, helps them to open themselves more and more to the action of the Lord God and to cooperate with him, so that he may ultimately love him in everything and serve his Divine Majesty. This final chord of man's spiritual union with God is already present, as it were, in embryo in the first exercise of the Ignatian retreat, in the so-called Principle and Foundation (*Principio y Fundamento*). This exercise, commonly known as the Foundation, is, as it were, the root of the whole tree of spiritual development contained in the *Spiritual Exercises*. This is because the content of the Principle and Foundation develops and deepens more and more during the different stages of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The purpose of this article is to analyze scientifically the content of the Principle and Foundation and to show the theological-spiritual sense of the Principle and Foundation in the different stages of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The text uses the method of analysis of the source texts and the literature on the subject, as well as the hermeneutical method, and shows that the synthesis of the spiritual life contained in the Ignatian Principle and Foundation continually develops and reaches its culmination in the last spiritual exercise of the Ignatian retreat – in the so-called "Contemplation to attain the love of God" (*Ad amorem*). In conclusion, it is shown that the content of the Principle and Foundation constitutes the foundations of the spiritual life, which, on the path of development, leads the exercitant to be able to "in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty." (*SE* 233)

Keywords: *Spiritual Exercises*, Principle and Foundation, meditation, contemplation, contemplation *Ad amorem*, spiritual development

Principle and Foundation (*Principio y Fundamento*) is the name of the first spiritual exercise with which Ignatian retreats begin according to the method of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola (*SE* 1–161). In the so-called Autograph of the *Spiritual Exercises*, which was written in Spanish, the title of this exercise is *Principio y Fundamento* (cf. SE 23).[1] In the *Podręczny słownik hiszpańsko-polski*

1 In the critical edition of the original texts (*arquetipos*) of the *Spiritual Exercises* one can find different translations of the title of the exercise. In the Versio Vulgata, the title reads: "Principium sive Fundamentum";

(Handy Spanish-Polish Dictionary) we read that the word *principio* means: "beginning," "source," "basis," "principle," (Wawrzykowski and Hiszpański 1982, 593) while the word *fundamento* means, among other things: "base," "foundation." (Wawrzykowski and Hiszpański 1982, 396) The Latin *principium*, on the other hand, translated as "beginning," "basis," "principle," (Kumaniecki 1999, 337) corresponds to the Ancient Greek word ἀρχή, meaning both "beginning" and "principle," but also "foundation." (Cf. Abramowiczówna 1958, 340) Mieczysław Bednarz translated the Spanish title of this first exercise *Principio y Fundamento* into Polish as: "Zasada pierwsza i podstawowa [Fundament Ćwiczeń]" (The First and Fundamental Principle [Foundation of Excercises]) (Św. Ignacy Loyola 2022a, 200). Jan Ożóg, on the other hand, translated it as: "Zasada i Fundament" ("Principle and Foundation") (Św. Ignacy Loyola 2019, 20).[2] Following his suggestion, this paper shall use the title: "Principle and Foundation."[3]

The purpose of this article is to scientifically analyze the content of the Principle and Foundation and to show the theological-spiritual sense of the Principle and Foundation in the different stages of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. What is therefore sought here is the answer to the question: is the content of the Principle and Foundation present, and to what extent, in the successive stages of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola? To date, scholarly analyses of the content of the Principle and Foundation, undertaken by experts in Ignatian spirituality (e.g.: Arzubialde 2009; López Tejada 1998; Rendina 1989), do not provide an answer to the question posed in this paper. These authors analyze the content of the Principle and Foundation, but do not show its relationship with the other stages of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In order to answer the question posed, I will first analyze the context of the Principle and Foundation, that is, its place in the structure of the entirety of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and briefly explain its basic purpose. What will follow is an analysis of the content of the Principle and Foundation, pointing to the spiritual dynamics of receiving and responding as the fundamental forms present in the building of man's relationship with God contained in this exercise. Finally, it will be shown how the seed of spiritual development, present in the Principle and Foundation, is increasingly developed and deepened in the various stages of the *Spiritual Exercises*, called weeks[4] by St. Ignatius, to find its completion and culmination in the last exercise – "Contemplation to attain the love of God" (*Ad amorem*) (cf. *SE* 230–37). This

in the Versio Prima of 1541: "Principium et Fundamentum"; while in the 1547 Versio Prima text: "Principium et Fundamentum," cf. Calveras 1969, 164–65.

2 Jacek Paweł Laskowski, on the other hand, translated the title as "Początek i Fundament" ("Beginning and Foundation"). See Św. Ignacy Loyola 2018, 23.

3 This title is commonly used and understood in the practice of giving Ignatian retreats as the Foundation.

4 "Week" in the *Spiritual Exercises* is a conventional name for one of its stages. It does not necessarily correspond in length to a week. Depending on the spiritual purpose of a particular stage of the *Exercises* and the needs and talents of the individual exercitant, it can be shortened or lengthened accordingly.

study uses the method of analysis of the source texts and the literature on the subject, as well as the hermeneutic method.

1. The Place and Purpose of the Principle and Foundation in the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Although the Principle and Foundation is numbered twenty-three (cf. *SE* 23), but this is because under numbers 1–20 are the so-called Annotations to the *Spiritual Exercises*, that is, "introductory observations [aimed] to provide some understanding of the spiritual exercises which follow and to serve as a help both for the one who is to give them and for the exercitant." (*SE* 1) In number twenty-one, St. Ignatius describes the main purpose of the *Exercises* (cf. *SE* 21), and in number twenty-two he gives the so-called "presupposition" (*praesupponendum*), i.e. the principle of benevolent forbearance, which is a prerequisite for mature conversation with others and mutual relations (cf. *SE* 22).

Not only does the Principle and Foundation occupy a specific place in the entire Ignatian retreat, since it begins all four weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises*, but it also has an outlined purpose, linked to the overall process of spiritual development proposed by St. Ignatius of Loyola.

1.1. The Place of the Principle and Foundation in the *Spiritual Exercises*

The entire *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola are divided into four parts, called weeks by their author. The spiritual development contained in each week of the *Spiritual Exercises* corresponds to the three classical paths of the spiritual life: the path of spiritual purification, the path of spiritual enlightenment and the path of spiritual union (cf. Rodríguez Molero 1967, 358–403). St. Ignatius himself explains in the Tenth Annotation to the *Spiritual Exercises*, explaining the actions of the various spirits according to the spiritual stage of the individual, that the stage of the path of purification "corresponds to the Exercises of the First Week" and the stage of the path of enlightenment "corresponds to the Exercises of the Second Week." (*SE* 10) By contrast, he says nothing about which weeks of the *Exercises* correspond to the path of spiritual union. However, the more important contemporary commentators on the *Spiritual Exercises* show that these are weeks three and four (cf. Rendina 1995, 42).

All four weeks of the *Exercises* are preceded by the spiritual exercise that St. Ignatius just called the "Principle and Foundation," described in number twenty-three in the booklet of the *Exercises* (cf. *SE* 23). In fact, they are crowned with a spiritual exercise called "Contemplation to attain the love of God" (*Ad amorem*) (cf. *SE* 230–37).

In the Autograph of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the Foundation is not placed at the beginning of the first week of the *Exercises*, nor is it an integral part of it, but precedes it, being outside its structure and introducing, as it were, the entire process of spiritual development outlined in the *Spiritual Exercises* (cf. Calveras 1969, 164). In a similar way, the *Ad amorem* contemplation is not part of the final fourth week of the *Exercises*, but is outside it, crowning and culminating the entire process of spiritual development contained in the Ignatian retreat (cf. Calveras 1969, 306). Thus, the two exercises – the Principle and Foundation and the "Contemplation to attain the love of God" (*Ad amorem*) – form a kind of bracket, encompassing the four weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

It seems to have been St. Ignatius' intention to place the Principle and Foundation at the very beginning of the entire *Spiritual Exercises* with a deep biblical sense. During his long convalescence of several months at Loyola (1521), which was the beginning of his path of spiritual conversion, St. Ignatius, in addition to reading the *Golden Legend* or *Lives of the Saints* (*Flos Sanctorum*) by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa (d. 1298), he also read a work entitled *Life of Christ* (*Vita Christi*) by Ludolph of Saxony (1295–1378).[5] While reading the *Life of Christ*, he probably reflected on the Gospel of St. John the Apostle, which, like Genesis (cf. Gen 1:1), begins with the words Ἐν ἀρχῇ, "In the beginning" (John 1:1). The ancient Greek word ἀρχή, means, as have already been mentioned, not only "beginning," "principle," but also "foundation" (cf. Abramowiczówna 1958, 340). It can therefore be assumed that St Ignatius' meditation at Loyola on the Gospels, contemplating the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ described in them, may have influenced not only the title of this first exercise: "Principle and Foundation," but also its place at the very beginning of the entire path of spiritual development according to the method of the booklet of the *Spiritual Exercises*.[6]

1.2. Purpose of the Principle and Foundation

The placement of the Principle and Foundation at the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises* indicates that it is a very important spiritual exercise. Its importance is also underlined by its very content. St. Ignatius wanted this first exercise to also be a special preparation and introduction of the exercitant into the spiritual dynamics of

5 The book *Golden Legend*, *Lives of the Saints* (*Flos Sanctorum*) was written in Latin by the Italian Dominican Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, and translated into Spanish as *Flos sanctorum, a honor e alabança de Nuestro Señor Jesu Christo* (Toledo 1480), while the book *Life of Christ* (*Vita Christi*) by Ludolf the Carthusian of Saxony was written in Latin and published in 1472. Its title was *Vita Iesu Christi e quator Evangeliis et scriptoribus orthodoxis concinnata*. It was translated by Ambrose Montesino into Spanish (*Vita Christi Cartuxano, interpretado del latín en romance por fray Ambrosio Montesino...*) and published in four volumes by Stanislaus Polonus in Alcala in 1503. Cf. Codina 1926, 200–243.

6 For more on the influence of St. Ignatius' reading of the *Vita Christi* on the *Spiritual Exercises*, see Alonso 2015, 71–72; Ramírez Fueyo 2020.

the four weeks of the *Exercises* (cf. Valdés 2005, 4–20). The content of the Principle and Foundation points to its threefold purpose. First, to make the exercitant profoundly aware of the main purpose of human life. Second, to help them understand the purpose of existence of all other creatures. Third, to arouse in them a deep desire and a strong will so that, in their inner freedom, they may use creatures to the extent that they help them to bond with God the Creator, rejecting everything that would threaten this bond (principle: "as much as" – *tantum quantum*), and so that, of the creatures that help to build a relationship with God, he may choose only that which helps this union with God more (principle: "more," "greater," "better" – *magis*) (cf. García Bonasa 2018, 73–76).

The truth contained in the Principle and Foundation concerns the fundamental purpose of human life. The exercitant considers that they were created "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27), i.e. for loving relationships with God and with creatures modelled on the relationships that exist between the three Divine Persons.[7] Thus, this exercise opens the way to all other meditations and contemplations proposed by St. Ignatius. This fundamental meditation on the main purpose of human life is thus a solid preparation of the exercitant for the good practice of the entire *Spiritual Exercises*.

The preparation of the exercitant by this first exercise for the practice of an Ignatian retreat involves not only a deep understanding and inner experience (mind) of the main purpose of human life and the purpose of the existence of all other creatures, but also the acquisition by the exercitant of certain volitional (will) and spiritual dispositions, and the grace of inner freedom. In fact, the Principle and Foundation are intended to help the exercitant to awaken in themselves a deep desire and a strong will of inner balance, of holy indifference or, as Jacek Bolewski puts it, of "impartiality" (Bolewski 2009, 98–105; 2010a, 91–97; 2010b, 95–101) towards all creatures so that, for the sake of the supreme value of strengthening the loving relationship with God, they "should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things" (*SE* 23) (cf. Bottereau 1969, 1692–94). This is why St. Ignatius, before introducing the exercitant to the reflection on the truths contained in the Principle and Foundation, encourages them to begin the retreat "with magnanimity and generosity toward his Creator and Lord," and to "offer Him his entire will and liberty, that His Divine Majesty may dispose of him and all he possesses according to His most holy will" (*SE* 5) (cf. Hajduk 2016, 125–38; Jesús Plaza 2008, 225–37). Offering one's freedom to God even before the retreat begins and repeating this act of reason and will in the Principle and Foundation generates in the exercitant's heart a strong desire and decision to use not only those creatures that "are created for man to help him in attaining the end," but to choose from among them "what is more conducive to the end for which we are created." (*SE* 23)

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7 For more on this topic, see Kowalczyk 2023, 7–13.

2. Principle and Foundation in the Light of "Contemplation to attain the love of God" (*Ad amorem*)

Most authors who comment on the *Spiritual Exercises* distinguish two main parts in the Principle and Foundation in terms of the structure of the text and its content. The differences between them concern what belongs to each of these two parts. Some believe that the first part of the Principle and Foundation includes the first three sentences, in which St. Ignatius speaks of the main purpose of human life, the purpose of the existence of other creatures and the principle of the proper use of creatures (*tantum quantum*); while in the second part they place the remaining two sentences, in which the author of the *Exercises* speaks of the need to become interiorly free, impartial (*indifferentia*) and the principle of *magis*.[8] According to others, the first two sentences belong to the first part and the following three sentences belong to the second part.[9] There are also those who while analyzing the *Exercises* divide the entire text of the Principle and Foundation into four parts. According to them, the first part consists of the first two sentences, the second part consists of the third sentence, the third part consists of the fourth sentence, and the fourth part consists of the fifth and final sentence (cf. Arzubialde 2009, 113–14).

Without undermining the rationale of the above proposals for capturing the structure of the text of the Principle and Foundation, it is proposed here that the content of this first exercise of the Ignatian retreat should be read through the prism of the last exercise, which is the "Contemplation to attain the love of God," called *Ad amorem* (cf. *SE* 230–37). Its essence and purpose are expressed in the request for fruit: "to ask for an intimate knowledge of the many blessings received, that filled with gratitude for all, I may in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty." (*SE* 233) In this request, one can distinguish two distinct parts. In the first the exercitant asks for "an intimate knowledge of the many blessings received," while in the second part they ask that they may "in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty." (*SE* 233) In these two parts we see the dynamic of receiving God's love and responding to God's love – receiving and responding.

Thus, if one looks through the lens of the request for the fruit of the last exercise of the Ignatian retreat – *Ad amorem* (cf. *SE* 233) – to the content of the first exercise (cf. *SE* 23), it can be seen that already in the first, most important sentence of the Principle and Foundation, the dialectic of welcome and response is present. For in it, one can read: "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul." (*SE* 23) The content of this sentence points to the main purpose of man's life, which is loving intimacy with God, and the way to build this

8 Darío López Tejada (cf. 1998, 145), among others, is a representative of this group of authors.

9 A representative of this group of authors exploring the *Exercises* is, among others, Sergio Rendina. Cf. Rendina 1989, 8–9.

most important, life-giving relationship, which consists in receiving God's love from God. The experience of God's love generates in man a gratitude that prompts him to praise God – this is expressed by the verb "to praise" (*alabar*). The experience of being endowed by God with his love leads to a desire and decision in man's heart to respond with love to God's love – this is expressed by the verbs "to reverence" (*acer reverencia*) and "serve" (*servir*). Man's response to God is only possible if man accepts his love beforehand. In the words of St. John the Apostle: "We love [God] because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). The content of the Principle and Foundations, framed in this way, allows its division as follows: the first part is the first sentence, in which St. Ignatius speaks of the main purpose of man's life, that is, to build a reciprocal relationship with God in a dialectic of receiving and responding; and the second part is the next four sentences, which are a development and practical application of the content present in the first sentence.

2.1. Receiving the Love of God the Creator

Man's first experience is being called into existence by God the Creator: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). In this primordial experience of God's relationship with man, it is the Creator who gives and it is man who receives. In the first sentence of the Principle and Foundation, this love descending from the Creator to the creature is referred to by St. Ignatius with the verb "to praise." For to praise the Lord God means to see and receive his gifts of love.[10] From these experiences arises gratitude to God the Creator for the grace of coming into existence in him. This is what the psalmist does: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14). Mary, the most perfect model of gratitude to God, sings in the *Magnificat*: "for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name" (Luke 1:49). St. Paul encourages the Thessalonians: "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:18). Saint Ignatius, in a letter to his sister Teresa Rejadell, written in Venice on June 18, 1536, emphasizes: "you would be giving praise to the same Lord because you are making known His gift, and you glory in Him, not in yourself." (St. Ignatius of Loyola 1959, 20) On the other hand, in a letter to Simon Rodericks, one of the first companions of St. Ignatius, the first Provincial of Portugal, written in Rome on March 18, 1542, he notes that "ingratitude is the most abominable of sins and that it should be detested in the sight of our Creator and Lord by all of His creatures who are capable of enjoying His divine and everlasting glory. For it is a forgetting of the graces, benefits, and blessings received." (St. Ignatius of Loyola 1959, 55)

10 For more on this form of man's relationship with God, see Schiavone 2007, 105–13; Royón Lara 2014, 159–72.

The receiving of descending Love manifests itself not only in the act of man's creation, his coming into existence in God the Creator, which gives rise to great gratitude towards him, but also in the work of creating other creatures. Indeed, in the second sentence of the Principle and Foundation, St. Ignatius reminds that: "The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created." (*SE* 23) The existence of all other creatures has, according to St. Ignatius, a twofold purpose. First, they are to show man the love of God the Creator for him: "The other things on the face of the earth are created for man," (*SE* 23) that is, out of the Creator's love for man. Second, the other creatures, as the innumerable gifts of a loving God, are to help man to reach his ultimate goal, that is, an ever deeper loving relationship with God: "to help him in attaining the end for which he is created." (*SE* 23) In the Book of Wisdom, once can read that it is "Through the greatness and beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wis 13:5). St. Augustine adds that the beauty of things created "is a profession (*confessio*)" of the "Beautiful One (*Pulcher*)" (as quoted in the *CCC* 32, n. 9). As we read in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The glory of God consists in the realization of this manifestation and communication of his goodness, for which the world was created." (*CCC* 294) Thus, at the stage of Principle and Foundation, to glorify the Lord God means to accept with a great feeling of gratitude the descending Love, that is, to accept the gift of one's own life, but also the gift of the existence of all other creatures.

2.2. Man's Response to the Love of God

Becoming aware of the gifts of God the Creator – the gift of one's own life and the gifts of other creatures, accepting them and spiritually tasting ever more deeply the descending Love of God gives rise to a feeling of great gratitude in the human heart. It also gives rise to a sincere and mature desire to respond with love to Love. Mary, in the mystery of the Annunciation, after having received the love of God the Father and of Jesus conceived in her, by the power of the Holy Spirit gives a wholehearted response: "I am the Lord's servant, may your word to me be fulfilled" (Luke 1:38). St. Ignatius shows in the Principle and Foundation that there are two forms of man's loving response to the boundless love of God the Creator. He defines these forms with the verbs: "to reverence" and "to serve."

Reverencing the Lord God means respecting and fulfilling the will of God as revealed to us in the commandments of God, in the commandments of the Church, in the duties related to the state of one's life, in submission to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit or in caring for those most in need. Fulfilling God's will is thus one form of responding with love to Love: "Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me" (John 14:21; cf. *SE* 165–66). Reverencing the Lord God at the spiritual stage of the Principle and Foundation is also expressed in the proper use

of creatures – "as much as" (*tantum quantum*). Even though all God's creatures are good in themselves: "For everything God created is good" (1 Tim 4:4; cf. Gen 1:31), but because of the effects of original sin and the consequences of our personal sins, as well as the disordered feelings that we may be guided by in our daily choices, spiritual discernment is needed to apply the principle of *tantum quantum* in the use of creatures, according to which "man is to make use of them in as far as they help him in the attainment of his end, and he must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to him" (*SE* 23) (cf. Calveras 1931, 193–205; Królikowski 2017a, 83–95). Practising this Ignatian principle is a viable form of reverencing the Lord God (cf. García Mateo 2007, 77–79).

An even deeper form of man's loving response to the Creator's love is expressed by the verb "to serve." The most perfect model of serving God is Jesus Christ: "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30). Therefore, the Ignatian "to serve" is to imitate Jesus Christ – the obedient, despised and loving one (cf. *SE* 97–98, 146–47, 155, 167, 203), is to love and imitate him "in all" (*SE* 233) (cf. García-Rodríguez 2007, 1637–47; Kasiłowski 2023, 29–38). As Simon Decloux observes: To serve is to take the form of a servant, or rather: to choose as a master the one who first wished to clothe himself for us with the marks of a servant, and to offer him our lives precisely in order to imprint on them the clearest sign of his Gospel (cf. Decloux 1983, 145). At the stage of Principle and Foundation, serving the Lord God corresponds to the famous Ignatian *magis* and means being in total spiritual equilibrium, impartiality, so that "our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created." (*SE* 23)[11]

3. The Process of Receiving and Responding to God's Love in the Four Weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola

In addition to the overarching purpose of the entire *Spiritual Exercises*, described by St. Ignatius in numbers one and twenty-one (cf. *SE* 1, 21), there are the objectives of the individual weeks of the *Exercises*. The objectives of the weeks of the *Exercises*, in turn, are made up of the objectives of the meditations or contemplations that follow and are set out in requests for the fruit of the exercise (for what the exercitant wants). Therefore, an analysis of the goals of the four weeks shall be undertaken, seen through the lens of the meditation and contemplation goals of a particular stage of the *Exercises*. In this way, it will be established if and how the inner dialectic of receiving of God's love and the response to it on the part of man, which is the essence

11 This more, greater, better (*magis*) is the most characteristic feature of Ignatian spirituality. Cf. Diego 2007, 1155–68; Geger 2020, 65–77.

of the content of the Principle and Foundation, deepens and develops in the further stages of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

3.1. The Process of Receiving and Responding to God's Merciful Love in the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*

The process of receiving God's love at the stage of the first week of the *Spiritual Exercises* concerns the grace of knowing the obstacles to man's relationship with God, i.e. sins, and the grace of deeply experiencing God's boundless mercy. The first grace is asked for by the exercitant in one of the meditations: "[for] an understanding of the disorder of my actions, that filled with horror of them I may amend my life and put it in order" (*SE* 63) (cf. Domínguez Morano 2004, 39–51; García Domínguez 2020, 83–86). He also asks for a second grace in one of the talks concluding the meditation: "Imagine Christ our Lord present before you upon the cross, and begin to speak with him, asking how it is that though He is the Creator, He has stooped to become man, and to pass from eternal life to death here in time, that thus He might die for our sins" (*SE* 53) (cf. Catalá 2015, 183–89). Concluding their meditation on their own sins, they issue "a cry of wonder accompanied by surging emotion" (*SE* 60) (cf. Ruiz Jurado 2010, 52–59). He concludes the whole exercise "with a colloquy, extolling the mercy of God our Lord, pouring out my thoughts to Him, and giving thanks to Him that up to this very moment He has granted me life" (*SE* 61) (cf. Domínguez Morano 2005, 109–23). Similarly, in the concluding discourse of the meditation on hell, the exercitant thanks God: "for this, that up to this very moment He has shown Himself so loving and merciful to me" (*SE* 71) (cf. Giménez Melià 2020, 87–90). The reception of merciful love is completed by the general confession, that is, the confession of one's whole life, envisaged by St Ignatius at the end of the first week of the *Exercises* (cf. *SE* 44) (cf. Calveras 1951, 211–17; Królikowski 2017b, 149–78). Thus, the descending Love at the stage of the first week of the *Exercises* is the love of the Savior and Redeemer. This means that at this stage the exercitant opens themselves even more to the love of God than at the Principle and Foundation stage, when he received the love of God the Creator. This is because here they additionally receive the love of God the Redeemer. As we sing in the *Exsultet*: "Our birth would have been no gain, had we not been redeemed." (*The Roman Missal* 2010, 355)

The process of giving an answer to God's merciful love in the first week of the *Spiritual Exercises* begins with seeking an answer to the threefold question: "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?" (*SE* 53) The deeply experienced grace of God's mercy generates in the heart of the exercitant great gratitude and a strong desire "to resolve with His grace to amend for the future." (*SE* 61) In the repetition meditation, in the so-called three colloquies, they ask the Lord God for two graces – to feel the ugliness of their own sins and to correct themselves and put themselves in order: "an understanding of the disorder of

my actions, that filled with horror of them, I may amend my life and put it in order." They also ask for a knowledge of the mentality of this world and a firm rejection of it: "a knowledge of the world, that filled with horror, I may put away from me all that is worldly and vain." (*SE* 63) Thus, in the first week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the exercitant not only responds to the love of God the Creator through the right use of creatures, as desired in the Principle and Foundation stage, but, guided by grateful love for the Redeemer, they furthermore resolve to put their spiritual life firmly in order and to make a strong resolution to improve for the future.

3.2. The Process of Receiving and Responding to the Friendly Love of Jesus Christ in the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*

The exercitant, full of gratitude not only towards God the Creator (Principle and Foundation), but also towards the Savior and Redeemer whom he has experienced especially in the first week of the *Exercises*, now encounters his invitation to build a relationship of friendship. Already in the first contemplation of the second week, he hears the call of the Eternal King (cf. *SE* 91–98): "Follow me!" (Luke 5:27) he then asks Jesus for the grace to accept his invitation: "to ask of our Lord the grace not to be deaf to His call" (*SE* 91) (cf. Arantxa Gavilán 2019, 189–92). Accepting the grace of Jesus' invitation to follow him opens the exercitant to another grace, namely the gift of knowing Jesus in depth. He asks for this grace in all the contemplations of the second week of the *Exercises*: "to ask for an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become man for me." (*SE* 104)[12] Along with receiving the grace of knowing Jesus, the exercitant also receives the gift of discerning different spirits – good and evil – which he asks for in "The meditation on two standards" (cf. *SE* 136–47): "to ask for a knowledge of the deceits of the rebel chief and help to guard myself against them; and also to ask for a knowledge of the true life exemplified in the sovereign and true Commander, and the grace to imitate Him" (*SE* 139) (cf. Cebollada Silvestre 2018, 181–84). He also receives this grace through the Ignatian Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (cf. *SE* 313–36).[13] Thus, the process of receiving at the stage of the second week of the *Exercises* no longer consists only in accepting the love that creates (Principle and Foundation) or redemptive love (first week of the *Exercises*), but moreover in accepting Jesus' invitation to grow in friendly love with him: "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him" (Mark 3:13). At this stage of the *Exercises*, God not only creates creatures "for me," (*SE* 23) but he himself becomes Man in order to be a Gift "for me." (*SE* 104)

12 For more on the inner knowledge of Jesus and the Gospel contemplations in the second week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, see Lamarthée 2018, 177–80.

13 For an in-depth analysis of the Ignatian Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, specific to both the first and second week of the *Exercises*, see Królikowski 2020; 2021.

The response to Jesus' gift of friendly love is expressed in a loving decision to follow him. Therefore, the exercitant asks Jesus to be "prompt and diligent to accomplish His holy will," (*SE* 91) to excel in this by making of themselves a sacrifice "of greater value and of more importance," (*SE* 97, cf. *SE* 98) and through this, "may love Him more and follow Him more closely." (*SE* 104) They ask: "to imitate Him" (*SE* 139) who is poor and obedient to the Father's will, desirous of scorn and insults, and humble, that is, loving (cf. *SE* 146); they ask Jesus "to be received under His standard, first in the highest spiritual poverty, and should the Divine Majesty be pleased thereby, even in actual poverty; secondly, in bearing insults and wrongs, thereby to imitate Him better." (*SE* 147) In the meditation "Three classes of men" (cf. *SE* 149–56) the exercitant even begs Jesus "for the grace to choose what is more for the glory of His Divine Majesty and the salvation of my soul." (*SE* 152) In the meditation on the "Three kinds of humility" (cf. *SE* 165–67) they express the desire and decision to live according to the third and most perfect kind of humility, the manner of loving Jesus Christ: "I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor, rather than riches, in order to imitate and be in reality more like Christ our Lord; I choose insults with Christ loaded with them, rather than honors; I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world. So Christ was treated before me." (*SE* 167)[14] Thus, the response given to God in the second week of the *Exercises* no longer concerns only the right use of creatures or a strong resolution to improve in order to avoid sins at all costs, so as not to offend God the Creator and Savior, but moreover it concerns the firm choice of Jesus Christ to follow him as the poor, despised and humble one.[15]

3.3. The Process of Receiving and Responding to the Sacrificial Love of Jesus Christ in the Third Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*

In the third week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the exercitant learns to receive not only friendly love, but moreover sacrificial love, that is, the love of Jesus Christ the Suffering One who lays down his life for his friends (cf. John 15:13). The exercitant participates in this school of sacrificial love by contemplating the sorrowful mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ. He asks for the grace to receive Sacrificial Love, for "sorrow, compassion, and shame because the Lord is going to His suffering for my sins." (*SE* 193) The "sorrow, compassion, and shame" experienced is much greater than in the first week of the *Exercises*. There, the exercitant as a sinner contemplated "Christ our Lord present before me upon the cross." (*SE* 53) They gave thanks to

14 The three classic Ignatian meditations in the second week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, also known as the "Ignatian triad," are: "On Two Standards," "On Three Classes of Men" and "On Three Kinds of Humility." An extensive analysis of these can be found in Raúl Cruz 2009, 6–65.

15 In making the choice to follow Jesus, the exercitant is helped by the Rules for making a sound and good election (cf. *SE* 169–89). An extensive commentary on these rules can be found in Królikowski 2023.

the merciful Jesus who died for us while we were still sinners (cf. Rom 5:8). Here they experience Jesus' sorrow as their friend, for whom "the Lord is going to His suffering." (*SE* 193) The exercitant thus reflects on "what Christ our Lord suffers in His human nature, or according to the passage contemplated." (*SE* 195) They also consider "how the divinity hides itself; for example, it could destroy its enemies and does not do so, but leaves the most sacred humanity to suffer so cruelly" (*SE* 196) (cf. Oller Sala 2009, 229–42; Jesús Plaza 2012, 29–40). Finally, they reflect on the fact that "Christ suffers all this for my sins," (*SE* 197) out of love for me (cf. Catalá 2018, 165–75). Thus, the exercitant, who in the Principle and Foundation has felt the love of the Creator, and in the first week of the *Exercises* has experienced in depth the boundless love of the Redeemer, and in the second week the love of the Friend who has invited them into loving friendship, here, in the third week, learns to receive even more than before – they wish to receive the love of Jesus, who loves up to the Cross, up to the last moment of his life, up to the total gift of Himself: "He loved them to the end" (John 13:1).

The exercitant's response to Jesus who loves with sacrificial love is to feel "compassion" with him, that is, to feel his love that is so great. They therefore desire "with great effort to strive to grieve, be sad, and weep." (*SE* 195) Seeing how much Christ suffers for them, they consider "what I ought to do and suffer for Him." (*SE* 197) They therefore ask "for sorrow with Christ in sorrow, anguish with Christ in anguish, tears and deep grief because of the great affliction Christ endures for me." (*SE* 203) "Com-passion" of the exercitant with Christ who is in anguish and full of sorrow is also expressed in the practice of the so-called Additions, which are meant to "help one to go through the exercises better," (*SE* 73) and which St. Ignatius intended for this time. In one of them, one can read: "I will make an effort while rising and dressing to be sad and grieve because of the great sorrow and suffering of Christ our Lord." (*SE* 206a) In another, the author adds: "I will take care not to bring up pleasing thoughts, even though they are good and holy, for example, of the Resurrection and the glory of heaven. Rather I will rouse myself to sorrow, suffering, and anguish by frequently calling to mind the labors, fatigue, and suffering which Christ our Lord endured from the time of His birth down to the mystery of the passion upon which I am engaged at present" (*SE* 206b; cf. *SE* 78) (cf. Grzywacz 2018, 123–36; López Hortelano 2018, 299–302). Compassion with Jesus who loves with sacrificial love is also expressed by the exercitant through the practice of the Ignatian "Rules with regard to eating" (*SE* 210–17) (cf. Giullén 2019, 289–92; Królikowski 2014a, 127–46). Thus, the exercitant's response to the felt and deeply experienced sacrificial love of Jesus Christ at this stage of the *Exercises* is expressed in an even greater love towards him than in the previous stages of the Ignatian retreat.

3.4. The Process of Receiving and Responding to the Transforming Love of the Risen Jesus in the Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*

The acceptance of God's love at the stage of the fourth week of the *Exercises* is linked to the gifts of the Risen Jesus. The exercitant, contemplating the mysteries of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, receives transforming love from him.[16] Like to the disciples and the women, the Risen Jesus wants to give the exercitant the grace of transforming fear into courage: "Do not be afraid" (Matt 28:10); sorrow into great joy: "The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20); disbelief into strong faith: "He saw and believed" (John 20:8), "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28); lack of hope into a burning heart: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32); despair into strong love: "Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabbuni!' (which means 'Teacher')" (John 20:16) (cf. Alonso 2016, 193–95). The exercitant in each contemplation of the fourth week of the *Exercises* asks for the grace of profound transformation: "to ask for the grace to be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy and the glory of Christ our Lord" (*SE* 221) (cf. Jiménez 2018, 395–98; Renau 2018, 391–94). The grace of transformation is given by the Risen Jesus, full of "glory and joy"[17]. In addition to contemplating the Risen One full of "glory and joy," the exercitant in each contemplation "considers the divinity, which seemed to hide itself during the passion, now appearing and manifesting itself so miraculously in the most holy Resurrection in its true and most sacred effects" (*SE* 223) (cf. Parra Mora 2011, 43–59). They also contemplate the Risen One as the Consoler: "considers the office of consoler that Christ our Lord exercises, and compare it with the way in which friends are wont to console each other" (*SE* 224) (Martínez Morales 2011, 3–17). By observing the Ignatian Additions, specific to that week of the *Exercises*, the exercitant receives graces from the Transforming One. One of them reads: "as soon as I awake, to place before my mind the contemplation I am to enter upon, and then to strive to feel joy and happiness at the great joy and happiness of Christ our Lord." (*SE* 229a) In the next one, St. Ignatius adds: "to call to mind and think on what causes pleasure, happiness, and spiritual joy, for instance, the glory of heaven." (*SE* 229b) The exercitant also receives the grace of transformation through the beauty of creation: "as far as there is reason to believe that it might help us to rejoice in our Creator and Redeemer, to make use of the light and the pleasures of the seasons, for example, in summer of the refreshing coolness, in the winter of the sun and fire" (*SE* 229c) (cf. Guillén 2017, 393–97; Mollá Llácer 2017, 399–402). At the stage of the fourth week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, therefore, the exercitant receives the grace

16 The aim of the first week of the *Exercises* is to "change distortion," the second to "apply change," the third to "confirm application" and the fourth to "transform confirmation." Cf. Ruiz Jurado 1998, 19.

17 In this request for the fruit of the fourth week of the *Exercises*, the emphasis is not so much on the joy and strong joy of the exercitant, but on its Cause, that is, "the great joy and the glory of Christ our Lord." (*SE* 221) Cf. Casanovas 1930, 97–103.

of a profound transformation, they accept the power of the Transforming One. Therefore, like St Paul, they say: "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

The exercitant's response to the transforming love of the Risen Christ is to share with others their new life in Christ, his great glory and joy (cf. *SE* 221), and to give joyful testimony to him. This is expressed, among other things, in moderation and just measure in all things (*SE* 229d). In imitating the Risen One as the Counselor, the exercitant wishes to exercise "the office of consoler." (*SE* 224) He desires to be a gift to others both in the material dimension, of which St. Ignatius speaks in the "Rules for the distributions of alms" (cf. *SE* 337–44) (cf. Guillén 2007, 1550–53; Królikowski 2014b, 75–91), as well as in the spiritual dimension – cf. "Rules for thinking with the Church" (cf. *SE* 352–70) (cf. Corella 1996; Molina 2019, 395–98). Thus, the exercitant's response at the stage of the fourth week of the *Spiritual Exercises* is to live the New Life, the Risen Jesus, and to bear witness to him even in the face of persecution. It was only after being transformed by the Risen One that the disciples not only did not fear persecution, but rejoiced in him and proclaimed his teaching: "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah" (Acts 5:41–42; cf. Phil 2:17–18).

4. The Process of Receiving God's Love in All Things and Responding to It in "Contemplation to attain the love of God"

"Contemplation to attain the love of God," (cf. *SE* 230–37) intended by St. Ignatius as the last exercise in the Ignatian Retreat, is the culmination and crowning achievement of the entire *Spiritual Exercises*.[18] As already mentioned, it is in this contemplation that the dialectic of receiving God's love and responding to it rings out most clearly. This dialectic is particularly manifest in the request for the fruits of this exercise: "to ask for an intimate knowledge of the many blessings received, that filled with gratitude for all, I may in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty." (*SE* 233)[19]

4.1. To Receive God's Love and Be Fully Imbued with Gratitude

In this contemplation, Saint Ignatius encourages "to ask for an intimate knowledge of the many blessings received." (*SE* 233) The exercitant, imagining how they stand "in the presence of God our Lord and of His angels and saints," (*SE* 232) who intercede

18 For an extensive analysis of this issue, see Królikowski 2003.

19 For an extensive bibliography on this contemplation, see Królikowski 2022b, 261–65.

for them, desires to inwardly know and receive God's love, expressed in the innumerable and infinitely great gifts of God. God loves us in events done out of love for us, since love "ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in word." (*SE* 230; cf. John 14:21; 1 John 3:18)

At the first point of contemplation, therefore, the exercitant recalls "the blessings of creation and redemption, and the special favors I have received […] pondering with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and finally, how much, as far as He can, the same Lord desires to give Himself to me according to His divine decrees" (*SE* 234) (cf. Kotlewski 2020, 18–25). According to the second point, the exercitant is "to reflect how God dwells in creatures: in the elements giving them existence, in the plants giving them life, in the animals conferring upon them sensation, in man bestowing understanding. So he dwells in me and gives me being, life, sensation, intelligence, and makes a temple of me, besides having created me in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty" (*SE* 235) (cf. Lenartowicz 2008, 148–63). In the third point of contemplation, they consider "how God works and labors for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth, that is, He conducts Himself as one who labors. Thus, in the elements, the plants, the fruits, the cattle, etc., He gives being, conserves them, confers life and sensation, etc." (*SE* 236) (García-Rodríguez 1996, 47–60). And in the final fourth point, they look to "consider all blessings and gifts as descending from above. Thus, my limited power comes from the supreme and infinite power above, and so, too, my justice, goodness, mercy, etc., descend from above as the rays of light descend from the sun, and as the waters flow from their fountains, etc." (*SE* 237) (cf. Bracken 2013, 71–82; Lera Monreal 2017, 299–303).

The receiving of God's love in this contemplation is about all that comes from God and is about God himself, who gives himself to man "as much as He can." This makes it possible to be "entirely grateful." In no previous exercise of the Ignatian retreat does the word "entirely" appear with regard to descending Love. Here, as nowhere before in the *Spiritual Exercises*, the exercitant desires to be "entirely" imbued with love.

4.2. In All to Love and Serve His Divine Majesty

Since "love consists in a mutual sharing of goods," (*SE* 231) therefore the exercitant desires to "in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty." (*SE* 233) At every point in this contemplation, being "filled with gratitude for all" and desiring "in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty," (*SE* 233) they reflect: "I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of myself (*SE* 234). The exercitant is invited to give all of themselves, all their freedom, will, reason and all that they possess to God. They

expresses this in a prayer of total offering: "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. Dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me." (*SE* 234)

In the "Contemplation to attain the love of God," not only does the receiving of love take place "entirely," but also the response to love concerns "everything." For the exercitant asks God for grace so that they can "in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty." (*SE* 233)

Conclusion

The analysis of the content of the Principle and Foundation, carried out through the prism of contemplation *Ad amorem*, i.e. in the dynamics of building a relationship between man and God, makes it possible to clearly conclude that in the successive stages of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the exercitant opens themselves more and more to God's love.

At the Principle and Foundation stage, the exercitant receives from God a love expressed above all in his gifts existing in the order of creation. The response on man's part to the love of the Creator thus shown is the right use of his creatures. At the stage of the first week of the *Exercises*, the exercitant accepts the love of the Savior, that is, the boundless love of the merciful God. The response is a strong resolve on the part of the exercitant not to depart from love at any cost, but to abide faithfully by it. At the stage of the second week of the *Exercises*, the exercitant additionally accepts the invitation of Jesus Christ to build up mutual friendly love. The exercitant's response is to follow Jesus generously and magnanimously in order to imitate him as the poor, despised and humble one. In the third week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the exercitant receives sacrificial love from the suffering Christ and responds with the same love. In the fourth week, on the other hand, they receive the transforming love given by the Risen Christ. The response to this love is to bear joyful witness to it, even in the midst of persecution. In the contemplation *Ad amorem*, the exercitant opens themselves "entirely" to the love of God, which enables them to "in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty." (*SE* 233)

The mature love (*caritas discreta*), "entirely" and "in all things" present in the last exercise of the Ignatian retreat, grows out of the love of God experienced at the Principle and Foundation stage and develops in the following weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises*, like the trunk, branches, branches, leaves and fruit of a tree develop from its roots. This first exercise, as one can read in the official Directory of the *Spiritual Exercises*, is therefore the ethical and spiritual foundation (*basis totius aedificii moralis et spiritualis*) (Iparraguirre 1955, 643) of the entire *Spiritual Exercises*.

Saint Ignatius de Loyola, who lived during the Spanish Golden Age, proposed, alongside many saints in the Church, a method of spiritual development which he included in the *Spiritual Exercises*. According to this method, the exercitant, by meditating on the truths of God and contemplating the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ, opens themselves ever more to the love of the Lord God. The value of the Ignatian method of spiritual development lies in the fact that the spiritual exercises, such as meditations, contemplations, examinations of conscience and spiritual discernment, are undertaken with the help of individual spiritual direction. Spiritual accompaniment helps the exercitant to objectivize their spiritual experiences that occur during the spiritual exercises being practiced. Thus, starting from the truths considered in the Principle and Foundation, through the following four weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises*, to the culminating "Contemplation to attain the love of God," the exercitant goes through a journey of spiritual development. This does not mean, however, that the passing of the path according to the *Spiritual Exercises* closes their further path of spiritual development. Indeed, they can attend the Ignatian retreat again to continue the process of spiritual development. In this sense, Ignatian retreats are a permanent and up-to-date tool for deepening the relationship with God.

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Ephod – What Was It and What Was Its Use? A Question About the Potential Way Forward in the Development of Its Role in the Old Testament Texts

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Abstract: In biblical texts, *ephod* appears most often as part of priestly garb. In the statements of non-priestly authors (before the Babylonian Exile), the linen *ephod* symbolizes priestly ministry in general. Sometimes, it is also regarded as an object of illicit worship (a practice condemned by the Deuteronomist) or an instrument necessary for divination practices (a symbol of priestly ministry). In these cases, the verb used indicates not so much a garment as an object. For the post-exile priestly authors, the richly woven and decorated *ephod* is henceforth exclusively part of the high priestly garb. This change in the role of the ephod represents the only discernible path of "evolution" in the use of *ephod* in the Hebrew Bible. One can only speculate about its possible earlier uses, such as garment put on statues of deities, based on the suggested (Akkadian, Ugaritic; cf. Isa 30:22) etymology of the word.

Keywords: ephod, priestly garb, high priest, divination practices, illicit worship

The Hebrew word אפד/אפוד (*ʾēfōd*/*ʾēfôd*; 49 times in the Hebrew Bible) is one of those "special expressions" that we are unable to translate with an adequate word into any of the modern European languages. Therefore, all we can do is transcribe it. In the LXX translation, *epōmis* (Exod 25:7; 28:4, 6, 7, 8), used as an equivalent for this Hebrew word (Exod 29:5), can also mean "shoulder pieces" (Exod 36:1[39:4]) (Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie 1992, 179; Jurewicz 2000, 377). The difficulty arises both from the fact that the etymology of the term is not fully explained and from its very use in the Old Testament texts. A good overview of the discussion related to this "object," especially in the context of its use in mantic practices, is offered by Frederick H. Cryer (1995, 278–81) and Ann Jeffers (1996, 202–8), among others. Today, most of these past attempts to interpret the role that *ephod* played and what it was are, according to Jeffers (1996, 204–5), unacceptable. This is because, on the one hand, in most of the instances (29 out of 49 uses) in which the word is found in the Hebrew Bible, it refers to an elaborately crafted piece of the high priestly garb (P texts: Exod 25:7; 28:4, 6, 12, 15, 25–28; 29:5; 39:9 – together with חשן [*ḥōšen*] – a kind of breast pocket/pouch (breastpiece) containing fortunes; Exod 35:9, 27), being at the same time a symbol of this office (Lev 8:7). On the other hand, the earlier texts only refer to a kind of simple linen loin cloth associated with the priestly ministry (1 Sam 2:18, 28: little

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Samuel/priests; 2 Sam 6:14 / 1 Chr 15:27: David). In still other pre-priestly accounts, it more or less explicitly refers to some object of worship (Hos 3:4; Judg 8:[23]27; 17:4–5; 18:14–20; 1 Sam 14:3? 1 Sam 21:10) or instrument appearing as a result of consulting God (1 Sam 23:4–6; 30:7).

In view of this variety of uses, there have been suggestions in the history of research that *ephod* (henceforth, we use the simplified form of the transcription) may have denoted a variety of objects during the monarchy, the use of which depended on the place and the role assigned to it (item of clothing, object of worship, divination instrument; May 1939, 44–69; Morgenstern 1942, 153–266; 1943, 1–52; Mayers 1992, 550). However, this begs the question of what, then, was *ephod* before it became an important distinguishing feature of high priestly garb according to priestly authors of the Second Temple period? An item of clothing? A priestly accessory with some special purpose? Seeking answers to these questions, we put forward the thesis that *ephod* was from the beginning a special element of priestly garb associated with the priestly ministry and its "atypical," in relation to the priestly description, uses were solely due to this role. Another issue is the question of what was the reason for its special significance for the priestly ministry? This is another question we seek to answer in the following article.

1. Etymology

The analysis should begin with the question about the etymology of the word *ephod*, which is not entirely clear. Dictionaries (*KBL* 1, 75; *Ges*[18], 88; Jenson 1997, 476; cf. also Rambiert-Kwaśniewska 2023, 122–23) suggest references to the Akkadian word *epattu* (plural *epadātu*) "a costly garment" (*AHW* 1:222 – *CAD* 4, 183) and Ugaritic *ʿpd* – "garb" (*KTU* 1.136: 10; 4,707: 11.13; 4,780: 1.3.4.7). Manfred Görg (1991, 472–73), with reference to a dissertation by Ingolf Fredrich (1963), still points to the possibility of an Egyptian borrowing (eg. *jfd* – "linen, four-weave"), but other researchers have not taken up this last suggestion. Indeed, many of them believe, however, that originally *ephod* may have been part of the precious metal costume adorning the statues of deities, and that its use in a divination context merely symbolized the presence of the deity itself (Smend 1994, 420; Görg 1991, 473; Cryer 1995, 280; Utzschneider 2008, 1351).

If pointing to Akkadian *epattu* and Ugaritic *ʿpd* is correct, then – given the basic meaning of both words: "cover/wrap" – it may also have referred to a type of container/pouch for fortunes used in divination practices (Jeffers 1996, 209). The abovementioned older scholars believed that the Old Testament texts reflected a certain evolution in the meaning of the term, and that before the Babylonian Exile it referred to something originally associated with a deity, and later it was exclusively

a priestly garment or accessory that had nothing to do with the earlier uses (Elliger 1958, 19–35; Grintz and Sperling 2007, 455–56; Groß 2009, 459). It should be noted, however, that many contemporary exegetes doubt that such an evolution of meaning can really be demonstrated (Noort 1997, 103; Cryer 1995, 280–81; Utzschneider 2008, 135), since the pre-priestly texts themselves, in their opinion, do not recount historical events and thus do not provide us with any convincing data on the actual, earlier use of the *ephod mentioned in them*. Cryer (1995, 278), for example, considers all texts concerning *ephod* in 1–2 Sam to be post-deuteronomistic. Consequently, he and many others believe that *ephod* has a purely theological function in them, indicating that everything in specific scenes happens according to the will of YHWH and in the presence of a priest (Schmitt 2014, 112). Such statements, however, do not provide us with any answer about what the term *ephod* actually meant.

Interesting in the context of the discussion of the etymology and origin of the word *ephod* may be the difficult-to-date (Beuken 2010, 161, 166) text of Isa 30:22, which features the term אפדה (*ʾăfuddâ*) – meaning "(a closely fitting) covering" (*KBL* 1, 75), referring to a garment made of silver covering (צפה *ṣāpâ*) a statue of a deity (cf. Exod 28:8; 39:5: "waistband") (Oppenheim 1949, 172–93). The verb stem אפאפד (*ʾāpad*) – "to be (tightly) tied (with a belt)" (cf. Exod 29:5; Lev 8:7) (*KBL* 1, 75) belongs to the same word family as the noun *ephod*. For some exegetes (Alexander 1997, 475), this is an occasion to suggest that *ephod* originally may have had this exact role – a (metal) covering used to adorn an idol. Practices of this kind, known from Egypt and Mesopotamia and confirming such a possibility, are described by Hans Wildberger (1982, 1198–99), among others. Indeed, in the statement from Hos 3:4 *ephod* occurs without any link to the priestly function alongside תרפים (*tᵉrāfîm*). On the one hand, the mere absence of such a link expressed explicitly does not necessarily mean that it did not exist. On the other hand, however, we also cannot exclude the validity of the aforementioned opinion that *ephod* may have had different uses and taken different forms in different periods, from a simple piece of divine attire or covering, to a more ceremonial reworking of its role and appearance towards the end of the monarchy, and then linking it exclusively to the high priestly ministry during the so-called Second Temple period ([post]priestly texts; cf. also Sir 45:6–13, esp. v. 8) (Jenson 1997, 476).

2. Element of High Priest's Attire

For the priestly circle of the Second Temple period, *ephod* is first and foremost an elaborate element of a high priest's attire made of precious materials (Exod 28:6–14). It is mentioned as the first element of this attire (Exod 28:8; 39:2) along with the fact that it was woven entirely of multicolored yarn interspersed with gold (Exod 39:3).

The quality and most precious nature of these materials and the first place on the list, as assumed by the priestly authors, emphasize the supreme sacred status of this element, resulting from the high priestly ministry in the Tabernacle.

The very description of *ephod* resembles a kind of tight sleeveless garment, similar to an apron, held on the body by cords, straps and rings (Kugler 2007, 278; Rambiert-Kwaśniewska 2023, 121–26). As we have mentioned, it was woven with precious multicolored yarn (Exod 28:6, 8), connected with a waistband and shoulder pieces (Exod 28:7–8) and adorned with precious stones (Exod 28:9–13). "The structure of the description indicates that *ephod* is a protection used to immobilize and secure *ḥōšen* (Exod 28:28), the latter being a kind of pouch for the prophecy elements proper, called *urim and thummim* (Exod 28:30)." (Lemański 2009, 564) It is from the above description that exegetes conclude that *ephod* itself may have been a type of above-mentioned apron, which was lowered and joined by a belt (v. 8) running around the hips (Houtman 2000, 487; Utzschneider and Oswald 2023, 234–35. On *ḥōšen*, see Rambiert-Kwaśniewska 2023, 126–34; on the relationship of *efod* to *urim and thummim*, see Majewski 2012, 91–107). However, this appearance (Exod 28:6–14) and role of it (cf. Exod 28:15–33) are characteristic only of P and even later redactions (cf. Exod 39:2–8) (Görg 1991, 473), for whom *ephod* became – as we mentioned – one of the symbols of the high priestly office (Lev 8:7; cf. 1 Sam 2:28). It constituted one of the four distinctive features of the high priest's attire (cf. Sir 45:6–13; Mishna *Yoma* 7:5; Josephus, *Ant*. 3:162; *J.W.* 5:231–361), which emphasized, with its craftsmanship and the use of precious materials, the higher degree of sanctity characterizing the central and most important architectural element of the temple (Jenson 1997, 477), to which only the high priest had access. For this reason, similarly made garments were not allowed to be worn/used in secular life (cf. Lev 19:19b).

3. Waistband/Apron

In texts other than the priestly texts, however, the appearance of *ephod* seems to be much more modest (Rambiert-Kwaśniewska 2023, 285–94, 424–25). The verses 1 Sam 2:18 (little Samuel) and 2 Sam 6:14 / 1 Chr 15:27 (David) mention אפוד בד (*ʾēfôd bād*) – a "linen *ephod*" with which little Samuel and the adult David are "girded" (חגר *hāgar*). It is also mentioned that the same "linen *ephod*" was also worn by the 85 priests of Nob, murdered by Doeg the Edomite (1 Sam 22:18). In the latter case (vv. $18b_2$19), however, this is a post-Deuteronomistic addition to the text (Dietrich 2015, 618). Returning to the other two texts, it is important to note that Samuel wore *ephod* while still a child entrusted to the service of the temple in Shiloh, and David while performing a quazi-priestly service when transferring the ark to Jerusalem (Lemański 2006, 126–28). *Ephod* itself is also mentioned in these contexts

as an item of clothing characterizing those performing priestly service (1 Sam 2:28). In this case, however, as in 1 Sam 22:18, reference is made to "wearing" (נשׂא *nāśāʾ*) *ephod*, which is rather ambiguous, since the verb used in the Hebrew Bible refers to wearing objects rather than clothing (*KBL* 1, 683–84. Cf. also Dietrich 2010, 133). This is rather intriguing, since verses 27–29 in 1 Sam 2 constitute, according to scholars, a later addition originating in priestly circles (Caquot and Robert 1994, 56; Dietrich 2010, 121, 141). Thus, both cases (1 Sam 2:28; 22:18) involve a later, post-exile redaction. Thus, later redactors in both cases may have viewed *ephod* not so much as a piece of clothing, but as an accessory with which the priest of the "time of David" girded himself or which he carried with him.

Let us now return to the two texts mentioned earlier. The above-mentioned story of young Samuel and the priests of Shiloh is composed of two narrative threads: Samuel and his function and Heli and his sons. 1 Sam 2:18 is part of the oldest version of the story (1:1–28; 2:11a, 18b–21, 26), supplemented at the end of the monarchical period by, inter alia, v. 18a (Dietrich 2010, 125–26). It can therefore be assumed that in the case of Samuel, the biblical author still has in mind a pre-monarchical version of *ephod*, although the question of whether the legend of Samuel and the *ephod* he wore goes back to the beginning of that monarchy must remain open (Dietrich 2010, 126). However, we find here no description of *ephod*, and the only information concerns the fact that it can be used to "gird" oneself. Thus, the biblical author is more likely to be thinking of a scanty item of clothing, especially since, on the one hand, a moment later it is added that the mother made young Samuel an additional little robe every year (cf. 1 Sam 2:19; cf. also Exod 28:4, 31). On the other hand, the scantiness of this item of clothing can also be inferred from the description of the *ephod* worn by David. In this case, the mentioned *ephod* is part of a redaction that is difficult to date, giving the tradition about the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem a processional character (see a discussion in Dietrich 2019, 564–66). The image of the king performing an ecstatic dance in front of the ark may suggest that this redaction dates from the period of the so-called Davidization of the Psalter (Porzig 2009, 166–77).

Moreover, according to the biblical author, his garment provokes an ironic statement by Michal, David's wife, that he went around "half-naked" in full view of the slave girls of his servants" (cf. 2 Sam 6:20b). Both examples lead us to believe that they may refer to a type of waistband, and thus – as we mentioned – rather a type of modest and symbolic only garment. However, if – as suggested by other pre-priestly statements – the aforementioned *ephod* was a certain item related to priestly ministry that was strapped to the hips, it may have already resembled some kind of "apron" worn in this way (like the Scottish kilt) (Klein 2002, 25).

The "wearing" of *ephod* is also referred to in 1 Sam 14:3 (the priest Ahijah, a descendant of Heli the priest of Shiloh). In this case, it is done in the context of Saul's war expedition against the Philistines and the verb used here already describes, without doubt, an object (Dietrich 2015, 80: "ein fester, vermutlich kostenförmiger

Gegenstand") that can be carried (נשׂא *nāśā*') (so 1 Sam 14:3, 18; 22:18) rather than worn as a piece of clothing. In this case, reference is then made to bringing this *ephod* to seek prophecy (1 Sam 14:18). It can therefore be speculated that originally *ephod* may also have meant a linen pouch/container for fortunes, which only with time became a distinctive and symbolic element of priestly garb, first in the form of a waistband/ apron (so 1 Sam 2:18; 6:14), and later elaborate piece of clothing characteristic only of the high priest's attire (thus, in some places *ephod* may appear as a garment, and in others as "urn, pouch, container"; so suggests Scherer 2003, 593). The already mentioned Julian Morgenstern (1943, 1–15) even thought that it should be assumed that originally there may have been multiple *ephods* with different uses (such as that of Micah in Dan – Judg 17; of Gideon in Ophrah – Judg 8:27; of the priests of Nob – 1 Sam 23:9).

The context of 1 Sam 14:3, 18 and the very form of expression in both these verses has given rise to a discussion on the possible identification of *ephod* with the ark (Porzig 2009, 158–61). Indeed, the Masoretic text (also Kuśmirek and Parchem 2022, 364–65) mentions the ark (ארון האלהים *'ărôn hāʾĕlōhîm*), but the LXX already mentions *ephod.* David Toshio Tsumura (2007, 365) argues for assuming that in the war with the Philistines the two objects could have been used together, and so explains the above discrepancy. Some scholars, however, have explained this discrepancy on the grounds that the LXX translator wanted to hide the fact that there were multiple arks used in divination practices (Arnold 1917; Toorn and Houtman 1994, 209–31). The existence of two arks was postulated, for example, by Rabbi Judah ben Lagish. Most rabbis, however, rejected this suggestion (*ySot* 8,22b–c; ySher 6,49c; cf. Dietrich 2015, 87). It must then also be noted that the ark was never used as an instrument for prophesying (Dietrich 2015, 87). Moreover, the historicity of the whole story is also questionable here (Davies 1975, 86–87). Moreover, with this interpretation, one would have to explain why it was decided to replace the ark with *ephod* only in 1 Sam 14:18 (Dietrich 2015, 87). It is possible that the original statement in the Hebrew text was understood as a mention of an ordinary container (cf. Gen 50:26), and for this reason the Masoretic version included the ark in this role (Caquot and Robert 1994, 165: "une simple boîte"; Scherer 2003, 600).

In any case, here *lectio difficilior* (ark) does not mean *lectio probabilior,* but rather *improbabilior*, and the ark in the Masoretic text probably replaced the *ephod* originally mentioned there (*Vorlage* LXX). There may have been two main reasons for this change. First, the fact that *ephod* was considered here as an "idolatrous object of worship," and then also the fact that in 1 Sam 4 it was the ark that was treated as a war palladium (Porzig 2009, 160. Cf. also Kio 1996, 240–46) and the change in 1 Sam 14:18 was "forced" by the war context of the entire story. It should be noted again, however, that in this case it is *ephod*, in turn, that never serves as a war palladium, but is an object used in divination practice (Dietrich 2015, 88: "Klar is dann auch, dass Ahijas Ephod ein kastenförmiges Gebilde war").

4. Object of Worship

In some non-priestly texts, *ephod* also appears not so much as an item of clothing, but as some kind of object of worship. In this role, it is mentioned as an object located in the sanctuary at Nob (1 Sam 21:10). However, Walter Dietrich (2015, 569–70) classifies 1 Sam 21:2–7, 9–10 as part of a later redaction. It is mentioned in some places that *ephod* can be placed (יצג *jāṣag*), worn (נשׂא *nāśāʾ*; 1 Sam 2:28; 14:3), brought (נגשׁ *nāgaš*; 1 Sam 23:9; 30:7), and which – through the "hand of the priest" – is brought down (ירד *jārad*; 1 Sam 23:6). Verse 6 in the latter case bears the hallmarks of a typical Deuteronomistic redaction (Dietrich 2015, 669–70). In the description in Judg 8:27 it clearly has the characteristics of an object made (עשׂה *ʿāśâ*) of gold and intended for worship in Gideon's hometown of Ophrah. From the point of view of the Deuteronomistic redactor, however, this is illicit worship (cf. also Judg 17:4–5; 18:14–20; Hos 3:4). The connection between *ephod* and objects of worship as well as the interpretation of their role, especially in Judg 17–18, is studied by Rüdiger Schmitt (2014, 96–100), among others. The fact is, however, that in the latter texts, unlike in Judg 8:23–27, the role of these objects is not explained.

Gideon, rejecting the offer to become king (Judg 8:23), collects the precious golden valuables taken from the defeated Midianites/Ishmaelites (Judg 8:24–26) and uses them to make (Judg 8:27: עשׂה *ʿāśâ*) *ephod*. The situation is reminiscent of that which took place "earlier" at the foot of Sinai (cf. Exod 28:6: golden valuables + Exod 32:2–4); Walter Groß (2009, 459) points to similar vocabulary in these texts (cf. also Webb 2012, 264). An extensive discussion of this issue is also provided by Diane M. Sharon (2006, 89–112), and Gideon plays a role similar to Aaron and his sin of making the Golden Calf (Judg 8:27a *vs.* Exod 32:1, 4) (The way the whole situation is described is typical of the Deuteronomistic phrasing concerning the installation of illicit objects of worship; cf. Scherer 2005, 269–73; Groß 2009, 458). He fabricates (עשׂה *ʿāśâ*) *ephod* from the collected valuables and then sets it (יצג *jāṣag* hifil) (cf. 1 Sam 5:2; 2 Sam 6:17; 1 Chr 16:11: about the ark) in Ophrah, his hometown (v. 27a). However, the Israelites begin to worship it, which is clearly met with criticism from the biblical author, who describes such behavior as prostituting (זנה *zānâ*) and calls the event a "snare" (מוקשׁ *môqēš*) for Gideon and his family (v. 27b). The context indicates that we are talking about *ephod* that becomes an object of worship in a private shrine. The initiative to make such an object came solely from Gideon. He did not act here at the behest of YHWH or any of his representatives (cf. 1 Sam 13:8–14; Spronk 2019, 248). Is this, then, about private worship and reducing the true God to the role of a "personal god"?

Even if Gideon's intentions were good and stemmed from his piety, the worship of the object he ordered to make was judged to be evil. Here, *ephod* did not serve the purpose of consulting God, but became an object of worship itself. Barry G. Webb (2012, 264) notes that rulers (David being the exception) generally

consulted God through prophets, and *ephod* is associated more with "the time of Moses" (cf. Num 27:21). He suggests, therefore, that what we have here is a reference to the "ideal of Moses," in which *ephod* would play the role of a symbol of divine authority. Indeed, from the earlier description, it does not appear that the whole situation is something reprehensible. Such an evaluation of it is only given by the post-Deuteronomistic redactor of this text (Groß 2009, 457). Nevertheless, it should also be noted that here *ephod* is clearly and from the outset acting as an object of worship. Whether it was in fact originally a metal garment put on statues of deities is debatable (Groß 2009, 459), since the latter are not mentioned in this text (but cf. Judg 17:4–5; 18:14–20). Perhaps here *ephod* was in fact only to be used as an element of divination practices, and its worship (comparable to the worship of the Golden Calf in Exod 32) was treated as a violation of a commandment from the Decalogue, which explains the negative final evaluation (v. 27b) (Groß 2009, 459). Thus, ultimately it all comes down to illicit worship and the wrong image of YHWH. Hence the above-mentioned statement about it "becoming a snare/trap" for Gideon and his family. A similar situation is described later in Judg 17–18. This is about a Deuteronomistic text containing a clear polemic of the Judean environment against the worship practiced in the north (Dietrich 2014, 229).

This time the precious metal is silver, and the objects made of it (עשׂה, *āśâ*) for the private shrine of Micah are described as "carved" and "cast metal statues" (פסל ומסכה *pesel ûmassēkâ*; Rambiert-Kwaśniewska 2023, 287–88). The first are the idols forbidden in the Decalogue (cf. Exod 20:4; Deut 5:8), and the second of the expressions is again likely an intentional reference to the story of the Golden Calf (Exod 32:4; cf. 1 Kgs 14:9). Later on, Micah also makes אפוד ותרפים (*ʾēfôd ûtᵉrāfîm*) for his sanctuary and appoints (literally: fills his hands) one of his sons as his priest (Judg 17:5). This is evidently his private sanctuary (cf. v. 5a *casus pendens*: "Now this man Micah had a shrine"), which, judging by the description, had little to do with YHWH (Block 1999, 478; Spronk 2019, 467).

It includes objects of worship (v. 4) and staff (v. 5). What is the role of *ephod and teraphim*, two objects clearly linked here? It is about a traditional pairing (cf. Hos 3:4). It is clear from the description that they are not likely to be objects of worship here (as in Judg 8:27), but constitute the temple inventory that is essential to the legitimacy of this private shrine. Perhaps they are instruments used for divination (cf. 1 Sam 23:9–12; 30:7–8). Using them to obtain answers from God in this place would be sufficient proof of its "legitimacy." This "private shrine" is later taken over by the Danites, who take it (the objects and staff) when they decide to migrate north (Judg 18:14–20). In this way, the object of worship from one of the prominent village houses (cf. Judg 18:14) (Spronk 2019, 478) will be transformed into an object of worship practiced at a Danite tribal shrine.

One can also consider the late, redacted text (Wolff 1990, 72–73) of Hos 3:4, where *ephod* is again mentioned along with תרפים (*tᵉrāfîm*), to be close

to this Deuteronomistic critique of illicit worship (Wöhrle 2006, 230–32). The two items, when occurring together, are always mentioned in this order (cf. Judg 17:5; 18:14, 20). The latter was an object of domestic worship (cf. Gen 31:19, 34, 35), and had an anthropoid form (cf. 1 Sam 19:13–16) and also served as a divination instrument (cf. Zech 10:3; Ezek 21:26). A similar role is also attributed to it in Hosea's speech. In this case, *ephod* – according to the intuition of the LXX translator[1] – may instead be a metonymy and not so much signify an idol as appear as a symbol of the priesthood (Gruber 2017, 179–80). This understanding stems from the connection of the two objects to each other. As A. A. Macintosh (2014, 105–6) notes, the sequence listing the items that Israel will be deprived of contains repetitions of the word אין (*ʾên*) – "without/there is no," which is, however, missing before the word תרפים (*tᵉrāfîm*). He believes that this means that the two objects belong together. According to the same scholar (Macintosh 2014, 107), *ephod* may originally have been "a metal breast-plate attached to an image of god" (cf. Judg 8:27) and only over time did it become part of the priestly garb (cf. 1 Sam 2:18; 2 Sam 6:14) and later the high priestly garb (P texts). In any case, in the present context, both items are mentioned as necessary for seeking prophecy. In this case, *ephod* is probably mentioned by the prophet as an item used by the Israelites to Yahwistically legitimize pagan worship (Andersen and Freedman 1980, 306; similarly Macintosh 2014, 107).

It is important to note one more interesting text in the Books of Samuel. In 1 Sam 21:10, there is no mention of either a piece of clothing or a prophecy, but of Goliath's sword, which is located in the shrine at Nob. The whole episode (1 Sam 21:1–10) fits both into the narrative thread associated with Saul and the tradition associated with the place (Dietrich 2015, 569). In the present context, the sword itself seems to have the status of some "legendary weapon," but in the narrative of David's battle with Goliath it does not play any special role (cf. 1 Sam 17:51a, 54). However, it is possible that it is this "legend" that was picked up and written into the episode of the fight with Goliath. In the text of interest, 1 Sam 21, the information about his sword as a trophy "wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod" is intriguing. The mention of *ephod* is confirmed by 4QSam^{b} (*ʾḥr ʾpd*), some Greek versions (including the Codex Alexandrinus) and the Peshitta. It is, however, omitted in the Codex Vaticanus. In such a case, the words "wrapped in a cloth" may be a later gloss explaining the role of *ephod* in this place or an alternative reading (McCarter 1980, 348). Without it, however, the mere statement that the sword was behind the ephod אחרי האפוד (*ʾaḥărê hāʾēfôd*) may suggest that originally *ephod* here meant neither a part of the garment nor some sort of sword sheath, but an object of worship located at Nob (McCarter 1980, 350; Tsumura 2007, 534), behind which the sword in question was placed. On the other hand, one cannot exclude the suggestion that

1 The LXX does not contain this word, but the use of the word *hieratias* in this case may be an interpretation of it (metonymy) and, understood as an apron worn by a priest, be synonymous with the priesthood.

this object of worship (statue?) may have owed its name to "the garment placed on it, called *ephod*" (Rambiert-Kwaśniewska 2023, 290).

5. Instrument for Prophecy/Consultation with God

The way we interpret the role of *ephod* in Hos 3:4 leads us to the question of the role it played in divination practices. In such a context, *ephod* appears primarily in two texts: 1 Sam 23:9; 30:7. In both situations described therein, it is used by the priest Abiathar, the son of Ahimelek, who is commanded by David to "bring" (נגשׁ *nāgaš* hifil) him *ephod* in order to seek prophecy from God. In both of these places, however, as Schmitt (2014, 112) notes, it is unclear whether *ephod* is an instrument for making prophecies, or whether its presence is merely necessary during the ritual of consulting God. In his opinion (Schmitt 2014, 113; 2022, 243; similarly Cryer 1995, 280–81; Utzschneider 2008, 1351–52), in both cases *ephod* symbolizes the person of the priest and thus the presence of God, on a *pars pro toto* basis (as part of the priestly garb). It thus constitutes a necessary element in practicing a legitimate form of divination. The high priestly *ephod* is perhaps a derivative of the role it played earlier in divination practices, but it should be noted that the latter role is only mentioned in texts recounting the "times" of David. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that the two situations mentioned here are solely a construct of the later author of these texts, as rightly noted by Dariusz Dziadosz (2002, 193, n. 5). *Ephod* itself, however, is not a divination instrument. This role, as exegetes often add, was probably performed by *urim and thummim* (McCarter 1980, 371; Dietrich 2019, 145. On *urim and thummim*, see Schmitt 2014, 93–94; Dietrich 2015, 99–101). Abiathar is in fact the keeper of the sanctuary who "brough the ephod down with him" (1 Sam 23:6). However, several peculiarities arise in the latter case. First, the closer context (cf. 1 Sam 23:2–4) suggests a consultation with God conducted without the need for *ephod* (this is what the Masoretic text implies. However, firstly, many exegetes – following the Targum and Peshitta – suggest an article at this point next to the word *ephod* (cf. Stoebe 1973, 419; Dietrich 2015, 656: translation + 657 note 6b), and secondly, the information itself about *ephod* being "worn" by Abiathar is quite unusual. The verb used (ירד *jārad*) suggests byits basic meaning "descent" (*KBL* 1, 415), as if the object were personified here. This can be understood as "an expression of the divine power that resides in it" (Dietrich 2015, 676 with a reference to Fokkelman 1986, 423: "a fascinating personification of the holy article which refers to its real owner" and through him, it reveals itself. The ark was described in a similar way earlier (cf. 1 Sam 6:8–9). Tsumura (2007, 552) suggests that the verb refers to the person of Abiathar, but the preposition ב (*b*^{e}) at the beginning of the sentence – according to him (Tsumura 2007, 553) – should not necessarily be understood as indicating that this event preceded the events described

in 1 Sam 23:1–5 (as suggested by Althann 1984, 33). Indeed, vv. 6, 9 give the impression of something added to the narrative of vv. 2–4. In the latter verses, the presence of *ephod* when consulting God seems unnecessary (cf. 1 Sam 22:6–19: the account of the murder of the priests of Nob). In vv. 6, 9, opinion on the matter has clearly changed an important role in the practice of divination begins to be played by the figure of priest Abiathar wearing *ephod* (cf. 1 Sam 22:20–23: the account of Abiathar's escape[2] and his protection by David). This information is therefore secondary in the present version of the text (Dietrich 2015, 676). That same interpretive tradition also includes the second mention of Abiathar and his *ephod* used when consulting God (1 Sam 30:7–8) (Dietrich 2019, 145).

Conclusions

Etymological suggestions (Akkadian: *epattu*, Ugaritic *ʿpd*) make it possible to link the biblical word *ephod* to some item of clothing, perhaps originally associated with a deity statue itself (cf. Isa 30:22). The priestly texts (cf. Exod 28:6–14) explicitly refer to one of the elements that distinguish the high priest's garb and symbolize his superior office relative to other priests (Lev 8:7; cf. 1 Sam 2:28). From the context (cf. Exod 28:6–14 / 15–33), it appears that it may have taken the form of a richly decorated apron, atop which was placed a container/ breastplate containing items (*urim* and *thummim*) used to seek prophecy. In the non-priestly texts, however, reference is already made only to a modest item of clothing, perhaps a linen waistband or a short apron (1 Sam 2:18; 2 Sam 6:14), which at the same time could not only be worn like a garment, but also "brought" like an object (1 Sam 2:18; 14:3, 18; 22:18) and used for other purposes as well. In the latter cases, we are dealing with two different situations. In one, it is clearly an object of worship (Judg 8:27; 17:4–5; 18:14–20), which is evaluated negatively by the Deuteronomistic redactor (as in Hos 3:4), and in the other, it is an object brought and used in divination practices (1 Sam 23:9; 30:7). The latter usage seems to be related not so much to the use of *ephod* as a divination instrument, but to its symbolic-theological role (it represents the presence of the priest/god) in divination practices.

The role of *ephod* is thus referred to in the Hebrew Bible in two theological contexts: priestly (a richly decorated element distinguishing the high priest's garb) and Deuteronomistic (a modest [linen] element of priestly garb also used in "illicit worship" or when seeking prophecy). On this basis, it can be assumed that in the final period of the monarchy, *ephod* was, in its most general definition, an item of clothing associated with the "legitimate," Yahwistic priestly ministry (like the modern

2 Cf. 1 Sam 30:7–8; 2 Sam 8:17; 15:24, 32; 17:5; 20:35.

stole), and only in the Second Temple period did it become a distinguishing feature of the high priestly garb. This is the only path of "evolution" in the meaning of *ephod* that can be demonstrated based on the Old Testament texts. Initially, it may have been surrounded by some aura of divinity (numinosum?), as suggested by statements about the worship use of the object. When it comes to its potential earlier role, however, one can only speculate based on the above-mentioned presumed etymology and the words of the prophet Isaiah (Isa 30:22). Accepting these etymological suggestions as valid, some scholars suggest that the biblical role of *ephod* may derive from its earlier association with garments put on deities. Such an opinion, however, is now purely speculative, since none of the biblical texts allow such conclusions to be drawn directly.

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Conception of Mary According to Nicolaus Biceps OP in the Context of the Dominican Education System

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to present the interpretation of the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary contained in the commentary on the *Sentences* by Nicolaus Biceps in the context of the educational system of the Dominican Order. The specified research goal was achieved in the following way. First, the system of intellectual formation in the Dominican Order was analysed based on the resolutions of the general chapters, and then the relevant contained in the 14th-century work was presented. This allowed us to capture the position of the Czech Dominican, his method of argumentation, the sources on which he based his reflection, as well as the theological problems he had to face when commenting on the issue of the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the University of Prague. Finally, this approach allowed us to find an answer to the question to what extent the Dominican educational system influenced the interpretation of the conception of Mary by medieval Dominican theologians and the consolidation of their negative position towards the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Keywords: Conception of Mary, Nicolaus Biceps, Dominicans, education, Mariology, Bohemia

The search for answers as to why the Dominicans steadfastly opposed the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary has not adequately considered the system of intellectual formation. The method of education within the Dominican Order, including the selection of works for study, shaped their understanding and interpretation of issues related to Revelation. One key issue was the question formulated in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard: *An priusquam* [Virgo Maria] *conciperetur, obligata fuerit peccato?* (Was [the Virgin Mary] bound by sin before she was conceived?) (PL 192, 760). Since the *Sentences* quickly became a fundamental textbook in theological education, students beginning their theological studies learned the answers

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provided by contemporary theologians through their commentaries. This process shaped their methods of argumentation and interpretation of theological sources. The theological education they received significantly influenced their pastoral ministry. Therefore, it is appropriate to examine the intellectual formation of the Dominicans to understand one of the key aspects that profoundly impacted the position of the Friars Preachers towards the Immaculate Conception.

To present the Dominican education system, this study considered sources such as the acts of general chapters from the 13th to the 16th century. These acts, by recommending the implementation of guidelines for all Dominicans, provide an objective picture of the preacher formation system.

In this context, we focused on the commentary on the *Sentences* by Nicolaus Biceps, a Czech Dominican who lectured in theology at the University of Prague. Biceps' commentary is a product of his education at a Dominican college and, as a Dominican, he subsequently educated generations of theology students. Our analysis is limited to the issue of the conception of Mary in Biceps' interpretation, an area that has been only briefly addressed in the works of Vladimír J. Koudelka (1957, 148–49),[1] Václav Wolf (2005, 42–43),[2] Štěpán M. Filip – Radim T. Černušák (2002, 196), as well as Włodzimierz Zega (2002, 55–56), and has never been the subject of comprehensive research. This study, utilising a previously unpublished source, contributes to the understanding of further issues in the medieval debate on the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, including its impact in Bohemia.

1. Education in the Dominican Order of the 13th–14th Centuries

From the beginning of their existence, the Dominicans attached great importance to intellectual formation, which took place in the monastery school. After completing the novitiate and before beginning the actual studies, the monk would pursue his education for about two years. He would familiarise himself with the regulations concerning monastic life and liturgy. If necessary, he would supplement his knowledge of reading and writing in Latin. This period was called *studium grammaticae* (Kielar 1969, 306).

Starting in 1259, three-year *artium* studies were officially introduced to prepare students for the study of theology (Acta 1259, 99–101). With the spread of Aristotelianism, these schools began teaching logic, followed by physics, metaphysics, and the ethics of Aristotle (Acta 1271, 159–60). *Artium* schools gathered Dominican

1 Koudelka, by focusing solely on a single sentence of Nicolaus Biceps' commentary and neglecting the broader context, incorrectly classified Biceps as a supporter of the Immaculate Conception.

2 Wolf, relying on the manuscript held in Prague (ff. 91rb–92rb), concluded that Nicolaus Biceps adhered to the teaching that Mary was conceived in original sin.

students from neighbouring monasteries. Classes were taught by theology lecturers or individuals with the degree of Master of Artium (Acta 1305, 12).

The next stage in Dominican education was studying at the school of theology, which lasted three years. This is confirmed by the acts of the general chapter of 1313 (Acta 1313, 64). The subjects of study included the Holy Scripture, the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, and the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor. Two years were devoted to commenting on the *Sentences* (Acta 1305, 12) while one year was dedicated to the study of the Holy Scripture (Acta 1309, 38).

A defining feature of Dominican intellectual formation was the emphasis on the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas. This is evidenced by the acts of the general chapter of 1309, which mandated that lectors conduct lectures according to Thomas' doctrine and that students diligently study his writings.

The canonisation of Thomas Aquinas in 1323 resulted in an even stronger emphasis on Thomistic formation. The acts of the chapters of 1329, 1330, and 1340 recommended the study of Aquinas' writings. By 1342, the Dominicans at the chapter formally recognised Thomism as the official teaching of the Order (Acta 1342, 280).

Higher education played a crucial role in the Dominican education system. The first institution to offer such education was the school established in 1218 by Pope Honorius at the monastery of St James in Paris (Kielar 1975, 289). This monastery school provided advanced theological education (*studium solemne*) and swiftly became integrated into the University of Paris (Mulchahey 1998, 351). Thus,

> [when it is stated that] the Dominicans studied or taught at the University of Paris, it should be understood that they were primarily referring to their activities at the monastic school of St James, which was part of the theological faculty of Paris. Just as the University of Paris served as a central and advanced institution for all of Christendom, so too did the school of St James […] become a pivotal and central institution for the entire Dominican Order. (Mulchahey 1998, 251)

The Parisian Studium became a model for subsequent institutions of higher learning established by the Dominicans between 1246 and 1248 in Bologna, Montpellier, Cologne, and Oxford. These institutions, created to serve the needs of the entire Order, were thereafter known as *studia generalia* (Acta 1246, 34; Acta 1247, 38; Acta 1248, 41). By the end of the 14th century, the Order had established seventeen such institutions (Acta 1378, 447–49). The curriculum at these schools included the study of the Bible and commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, supplemented by readings from the works of Thomas Aquinas (Kielar 1975, 292).

2. Dominican Education in the Czech Lands

The Convent of St Clement in Prague, founded between 1225 and 1227, was the first Dominican monastery established in the Czech lands (Koudelka 1956, 127–60). This convent included a school where classes were conducted by lectors (Kadlec 1966, 65), as evidenced by records from the general chapter in Trier (Acta 1266, 135).

In 1347, the Prague house of studies attained the status of a general study (Acta 1347, 319). This resolution adopted by the chapter from Bologna was associated with the Emperor's project to found a university in Prague, which necessitated a theological faculty for papal approval (Filip and Černušák 2002, 190). This requirement was mentioned in the papal permission granted on 7 April 7 1348. In order to ensure a group of qualified lecturers, Charles IV requested Pope Urban IV's support to recruit masters of theology from the Dominican, Cistercian, Augustinian, Franciscan and Carmelite convents in Prague for teaching at the University. The Emperor was committed to maintaining a high standard of lectures at the University. From the outset, there was a close relationship between the University of Prague and the Dominican General Studium of St Clement. This relationship was formalised in 1383 with an agreement signed by Raymond of Capua, the General of the Dominicans, and representatives of the University of Prague. Under this agreement, the Dominican General Studium at the monastery of St Clement was incorporated into the University. Another testament to this close bond is the annex to the agreement signed by Raymond of Capua in 1384, which allowed University representatives to conduct ceremonies in the Dominican church of St Clement if the University chapel could not accommodate all attendees (Filip and Černušák 2002, 191).

Unfortunately, this vibrant connection was short-lived. In 1420, the Hussite rebellion led to the collapse of the St Clement monastery in Prague, along with its flourishing Dominican General Studium (Filip and Černušák 2002, 193).

The acts of the general chapters provide much information about the education of the Dominicans in the Czech province (Acta 1341, 272). During the chapter held in Avignon in 1341, it was decided that Herman, a lector from Prague, would temporarily assume the duties of the provincial of the Czech province following the acceptance of the previous provincial's resignation (Acta 1341, 277). The acts of the general chapter in Bologna in 1347 reveal that, at the request of Charles IV, a general studium was established at the monastery of St Clement in Prague. John of Tambaco, a master of theology from the province of Germany, was appointed lector of the new studium (Acta 1347, 319).

The Dominicans gathered at the chapter in Lyon (1348) assigned a new lector in Prague: "Assignamus lectorem in conventu Pragensi fratrem Leonem Raticensem." (Acta 1348, 325) A year later, this position was held by Friar Martinus Clatoninensis (Acta 1349, 330). It is also recorded that a general chapter of the Dominicans was held in Prague in 1359. Although no specific resolutions concerning the Studium of

the Czech province were passed at this chapter (Acta 1359, 384), records from Valencia (1364) provide information about the appointment of a lector for the general Studium in Prague. The general chapter granted the provincial of Bohemia autonomy in this matter (Acta 1370, 418). The ongoing activity of the general Studium in Prague is further evidenced by the resolutions of the chapter in Carcassonne (1378), which appointed the chief lector, commentator on the *Sentences*, and master of students in the monastery of St Clement in Prague (Acta 1378, 448).

The records of subsequent general chapters do mention representatives of the Dominicans from the Czech province, some of whom held academic titles. However, their influence on the proceedings of these general chapters was negligible. Consequently, resolutions concerning the Czech province are seldom found (Acta 1484, 383, 386).

Conversely, the records of the Dominican general chapters from the 14th to the 16th century reveal the rigidity of the education system within the Order of Preachers. Despite the emergence of new philosophical trends, such as nominalism, and new challenges within the Church, including Hussitism and the Reformation, the Dominican education system remained unchanged. This is confirmed by records from the 15th and 16th centuries, which detail the nominations of brothers assigned to lead commentaries on the *Sentences* (Acta 1571, 138–39). These records indicate the continued presence of the old scholastic system and its associated teaching methods. In the Dominican general studies of this period, in addition to the commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, selected aspects of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine were taught, focusing particularly on speculative and moral issues. This is validated by the records of the general chapter held in Bologna in 1564 (Acta 1564, 63). Subsequent chapters went even further in this direction. For instance, the Dominicans gathered in Barcelona in 1574 decreed that in a speculative exposition of Thomas' doctrine, it was necessary to consider the Prima Pars, Prima Secundae, or *De Incarnatione* from the *Summa Theologiae*. Moral questions, on the other hand, were to be presented based on the Secunda Secundae of Aquinas' work or Book IV of Lombard's *Sentences* (Acta 1574, 161).

Simultaneously, it is important to note that the general chapters imposed severe disciplinary sanctions on Dominicans who deviated from the doctrine of Aquinas by introducing novelties contrary to it (Acta 1564, 59). These decisions reflect the Order's alignment with Thomas Aquinas' teachings and, conversely, a lack of openness to the new trends emerging in Europe at that time. The observed rigidity and ossification of Dominican theology from the 14th to the 16th century suggest an inherent resistance to altering their stance on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

3. Nicolaus Biceps and His Work

In this context, it is pertinent to examine the contributions of Nicolaus Biceps, a Dominican friar from the Czech province. He was born between 1353 and 1355 (Zega 2002, 22), and details regarding his entry into the Dominican Order and his early education in philosophy remain uncertain (Zega 2002, 30). It is likely that he pursued his theological studies in Prague (Zega 2002, 29). By approximately 1380, Biceps was engaged in commenting on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard at the Dominican Studium in Prague (Zega 2002, 56–59). He may have been awarded the title of Master of Theology at the general chapter of 1385 (Zega 2002, 28). Additionally, Raymond of Capua, the General of the Order of Friars Preachers, entrusted Nicolaus with the mission of religious reform in the Czech lands (Zega 2002, 38). However, this task was cut short by Biceps' untimely death in 1390 or 1391 (Zega 2002, 20, 46–47).

The Dominican friar left behind a significant work, the *Commentary on the Sentences* (*Quaestiones Sententiarum*), which he produced during his academic tenure in Prague (Zega 2002, 14). Analysis of eleven manuscripts preserved in various libraries and archives reveals that there are two editions of this work. The first edition (A), found in manuscripts from the Chapter Library and the National Library in Prague (Biceps, Sent., P; Biceps, Sent., P3) includes commentaries on Books II–IV of the *Sentences* (Zega 2002, 48–51). The second edition (B), which contains commentaries on all four books, is transmitted through several manuscripts, including one held in the Marienbibliothek in Halle (Biceps, Sent., H). The first edition (A) was created between 1379 and 1381, while the second edition (B) dates from 1386 to 1388 (Zega 2002, 51, 62–65).

The issue that is the subject of our analysis, *Utrum beata Virgo concepta fuit in originali peccato?* [Was the Blessed Virgin conceived in original sin?], appears in Book III of the commentary edited in Prague (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 91vb–92va; H, 104rb–106ra; Zega 2002, 14, 70). As this work has not been published, our study relied on the working version of the text from both editions prepared by Włodzimierz Zega.

4. Marian Lecture by a Dominican

Biceps begins his commentary by stating three conclusions around which he develops his reflection.

In the first conclusion, he asserts that the opinion that the Blessed Virgin Mary was not conceived in sin is contrary to the teaching of authorities whose examples of life and doctrine have been approved by the Church.

The second conclusion is the hypothesis that the Blessed Virgin Mary was not conceived in original sin. This does not directly contradict either Scripture or reason, and if God had willed it, it would have been appropriate.

The third conclusion is that preachers and teachers should not teach that the Blessed Virgin was not conceived in original sin, as such innovations have not been approved by the authority of the Church (Biceps, Sent., P, 91vb; H, 104rb).

It should be noted that the above-mentioned statement has been interpreted in various ways by modern researchers, resulting in differing conclusions.

For the Dominican Koudelka, Nicolaus Biceps was a supporter of the Immaculate Conception. He based his opinion on a statement found in the Prague manuscript P3 of the commentary: "Predicatores et doctores non habent predicare B. Virginem non esse conceptam in originali peccato, quamvis de facto ita esset, quod concepta esset sine originali peccato" (Koudelka 1957, 149).[3]

Wolf presented a different perspective in his monograph. Analyzing the Prague manuscript P (ff. 91rb–92rb), he concluded that, according to Nicolaus Biceps, the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin (Wolf 2005, 43).

The Prague manuscript contains the following variant of the text: "Tertia conclusio, quod praedicatores et doctores non habent praedicare beatam Virginem non esse conceptam in originali peccato, quamvis de facto ita est [in the manuscript P3: esset], quod concepta esset sine originali peccato" (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 91vb; P3, 147ra).[4]

However, the Halle manuscript records the following text: "Tertia conclusio: Praedicatores et doctores sanctae matris Ecclesiae modernis temporibus, salva gravitate sua, non habent dicere beatam Virginem sine originali peccato conceptam, quamvis de facto sic esset concepta" (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, H, 104rb).[5]

Both versions of the text convey a clear position: despite the initial directive to preachers and teachers not to assert that Mary was not conceived in original sin, there is a statement in the unreal subjunctive mood concerning the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This suggests that Nicolaus Biceps was not a supporter of this Marian privilege. A definitive answer to this question will require a thorough analysis of the broader context in which the Czech Dominican articulated his views.

After presenting the above-mentioned conclusions, the Dominican proceeds to elaborate each point in detail.

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3 In English: "Preachers and doctors are not to preach that the Blessed Virgin was not conceived in original sin, even if [according to Koudelka: although] in fact it was so, that she was conceived without original sin."

4 "The third conclusion is that preachers and doctors are not to preach that the Blessed Virgin was not conceived in original sin, even if in fact it is so [according to the manuscript P3: it was so], that she was conceived without original sin."

5 "Third conclusion: Preachers and doctors of the Holy Mother Church in modern times, save their seriousness, are not to say that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without original sin, even if in fact she was so conceived."

The first statement – that the Blessed Virgin Mary was not conceived in original sin – contradicts established Church teaching. The Dominican supports this view by citing St Augustine's doctrine on the universal transmission of original sin at the moment of human conception (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra; H, 104va). Consequently, since the Blessed Virgin was conceived through the marital act of her parents, she would, by this doctrine, have been affected by original sin. The Dominican substantiates his position by referencing an extensive list of theologians who upheld a similar doctrine, including Gregory the Great, Bernard of Clairvaux, Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, Durandus of Saint Pourçain, Hervéus Natalis, Peter of Tarentaise, William of Godino, John of Paris, Giles of Rome, as well as Franciscan theologians such as St Bonaventure and Richard of Middleton, and Carmelite theologians like Guido (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra–92rb; H, 104va–105va).

The conclusion to be drawn from Biceps' reflections is as follows: all who deny the universal dimension of original sin are rejecting a fundamental truth that is affirmed in Holy Scripture.

Biceps, in furthering his argument, referenced the views of St Bonaventure, who argued that while the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin, the Feast of the Conception of Mary could be celebrated, not for the act of her conception itself, but for her sanctification, which occurred after the union of her soul and body (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92rb–va; H, 105va). Additionally, he cited Thomas Aquinas, who, drawing upon Bernard of Clairvaux, supported the idea of celebrating the liturgical feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, provided that this celebration acknowledged her subsequent sanctification, which purified her of original sin (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92rb–va; H, 105va).

The solution proposed by Nicolaus Biceps represents a conciliatory position. He interpreted the doctrine of Mary's conception within the framework of Aristotelian-Thomistic anthropology, emphasising the role of God's sanctifying grace following the formation of the human being.

The Czech Dominican also addressed the timing of Mary's sanctification. Drawing on the views of Peter of Tarentaise, he observed that Mary was sanctified on the same day or hour, but not at the exact moment of her conception (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, 92rb; H, 105vb). Consequently, the feast should not be celebrated as the conception but rather as the sanctification of Mary, which occurred after the union of the soul with the body, specifically on the 80th day following the appearance of the embryo. In Dominican tradition, the term *conceptio* implied the absence of a rational soul, which precluded the possibility of divine grace at that stage, as God can bestow grace only upon a rational being.

In Nicolaus Biceps' commentary, he also addresses the opposing views of Duns Scotus, which he criticises for lacking support from the authority of the saints or rational arguments, and instead being based solely on the author's personal will.

Additionally, Biceps references opinions from the commentaries on the *Sentences* by Franciscan scholars Gwarro and Peter of Candia. Peter of Candia, who commented on Book III of the *Sentences* at the University of Paris between 1378 and 1380 (Zega 2002, 56), supported his views based on his personal devotion to the Virgin Mary. He cited an anecdote involving Saint Bernard, who, according to tradition, appeared to a Cistercian monk after his death, revealing a mark on his chest as a consequence of his criticism of the feast of the Conception of Mary celebrated by the canons of Lyon (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92va; H, 106ra). However, Biceps, adhering to Dominican prudence, dismissed this account as a fictional tale, arguing that saints in heavenly glory could not bear any imperfections (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92va; H, 106ra; Zega 2002, 55–56).

He justified his rejection of these views by referring to the official teaching of the Church, emphasising that in matters of faith, one should adhere to the doctrine of the Holy Mother Church. Consequently, he argued against endorsing the notion that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived free from original sin, given that the Church had not sanctioned this belief (Koudelka 1957, 149).

In conclusion, the Dominican observed that proponents of the Immaculate Conception rely solely on philosophical arguments, which lack support from the holy Doctors whose teachings have been endorsed by the Church (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 91vb–92va; P3, 147ra–vb; H, 104rb–106ra).

5. Comparison of the Two Editions of Nicolaus Biceps' Commentary on the *Sentences*

Both editions of Biceps' commentary (A and B), preserved in manuscripts P and H, exhibit a similar structure and method of argumentation. As Włodzimierz Zega observed, "[t]he issues addressed in both editorial versions are largely the same or similar, as evidenced by the list of topics. This indicates a close relationship between the two versions." (Zega 2002, 49)

The differences observed pertain to the content of the editions. The later editorial version, B, was produced by either condensing or expanding certain aspects and incorporating additional quotations to illustrate the theses presented. Consequently, editorial version B is "more systematic and elaborate," although it is also "more schematic and impersonal" compared to version A (Zega 2002, 49).

In developing his initial claim regarding the universal consequences of original sin, Biceps appended several quotations from St Augustine's *Contra Julianum*. Among these, he included a passage that enumerates Eastern and Western Christian writers of antiquity who endorsed the same truth, namely Irenaeus, Cyprian, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Gregory, Basil, and Jerome (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q.

1, H, 104va). Drawing on St Augustine's argument, the Dominican strongly emphasized that sin entered the world through one man and, consequently, all humanity is implicated in this sin.

In his reflection on the universal consequences of original sin, Biceps also highlighted the unique manner in which Christ entered the world. Unlike all other individuals born through the marital act, who are tainted by original sin, Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, was free from any stain of sin. In support of this assertion, he referenced passages from the writings of St Gregory the Great and St Bernard of Clairvaux (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra; H, 104vb–105ra).

After discussing the exceptional conception of Christ, Nicolaus Biceps addressed the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary according to St Anselm of Canterbury. Drawing from *Cur Deus Homo*, he underscored that Mary was conceived in original sin. He also referenced *De Conceptu Virginali* to highlight the contrast between the natural process of human conception and the miraculous conception of Christ. Additionally, in the *Oratio*, he emphasised that Mary was purified from original corruption and sanctified while still in her mother's womb (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, H, 105ra).

Nicolaus Biceps then invoked the authority of St Bonaventure to remind proponents of the Immaculate Conception that no one had ever been heard to claim that the Blessed Virgin was conceived free from original sin (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92rb; H, 105ra). He argued that this approach was both rational and prudent, as it relied on the authority of the saints who, acknowledging the universal consequences of original sin, recognised Christ as the only one who entered the world free from any sin. Conversely, there was no precedent for regarding the Virgin Mary as free from original sin. This aligns with piety; while the Mother is to be honoured, the Son – who is the sole Redeemer of all humanity – deserves far greater reverence.

Referring to liturgical arguments, the Dominican compared the positions of St Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P3, 147va; H, 105va). The Angelic Doctor, citing Bernard of Clairvaux, maintained that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin and, consequently, that her conception should not be celebrated. He noted, however, that some churches do celebrate this feast in honour of her sanctification. Biceps augmented this discussion with similar views expressed by Richard of Middleton and Peter of Tarentaise.

Finally, both editions of Nicolaus Biceps' commentary include opinions that contradict the previously held views, particularly regarding the Immaculate Conception. It should be noted, however, that edition B is supplemented with quotations from texts that are abbreviated in the Prague manuscript. In this edition, the Dominican provides a summary of the views of Duns Scotus, Gwarro, and Peter of Candia (Biceps, Sent., III, d.3, q. 1, P3, 147vb; H, 105va–106ra). Duns Scotus, in particular, posited that if grace had been conferred upon the soul from the moment of its creation, it would never have been deprived of original justice. This privilege, he argued,

is not a result of the soul's own merit, but is granted through the merits of another. Consequently, humanity would have been conceived in original sin had it not been prevented by this external act of healing.

The views of Peter of Candia are presented in two distinct ways. Version A of Biceps' commentary cites the legend of St Bernard of Clairvaux . However, in the later revision, version B, only Nicolaus Biceps' commentary is included. According to Biceps, Peter of Candia openly challenged the authorities that were based on common law rather than privilege. In contrast, Peter of Candia upheld the privilege of the Immaculate Conception of Mary due to his devotion and reverence for the Mother of God.

In conclusion, the Dominican argued that the supporters of this extraordinary privilege for Mary lack a foundation in Holy Scripture and thus contradict the authority of the saints, who have consistently grounded their reflections in biblical evidence.

6. Fundamental Issues Addressed in the Commentary on the *Sentences*

The Universal Dimension of Original Sin

In his commentary on Book II of the *Sentences*, Nicolaus Biceps, drawing on the authority of Thomas Aquinas, asserts that all individuals born *per viam coitus* inherit original sin (Biceps, Sent., II, d. 31, q. 2, P, 78va). This principle is further reinforced in his commentary on Book III, where Biceps consistently invokes the doctrine of St Augustine. He interprets the marital act as the mechanism for transmitting original sin and underscores its universal application (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra). According to this view, the Blessed Virgin Mary would also have been tainted by original sin at the moment of her conception (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra). Only Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, was exempt from this original sin.

The Dominican, in affirming the universal nature of original sin as transmitted by the first parents, highlights its foundation in Tradition, as reflected in the writings of the early Church Fathers (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, H, 104va).

Transmission of Original Sin

In his commentary on Book II of the *Sentences*, Nicolaus Biceps employed the Augustinian concept of the transmission of original sin, which posits that this sin is passed through sexual intercourse. He supported this view by citing the authority of St Thomas Aquinas (Biceps, Sent., II, d. 31–32, q. 2, P, 78va; H, 90va).

This concept, which intricately associates original sin with human corporeality, facilitated the defence of the unique and immaculate nature of the earthly beginning of Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary (*STh* III, q. 15 a. 1).

Embryology

Nicolaus Biceps' commentary presents the perspective of Peter of Tarentaise, who argued that Mary could have been sanctified on the same day or even at the same hour, but not at the moment of her conception. This view reflects the anthropological concept of Aristotle, as adopted by Thomas Aquinas and subsequently by Nicolaus Biceps. According to this theory, the male seed plays an active role by transforming the matter provided by the woman into an embryo (*STh* I–II, q. 81 a. 5). Once the embryo achieves the appropriate form, it is then ready to unite with the rational soul, which is created by God *ex nihilo* (Gibellini 1960, 31). Consequently, as noted by Peter of Tarentaise, the notion of holiness and grace pertains only to rational creatures. Thus, considering Mary's sanctity before her existence seems incongruent. For the Dominicans, the term 'conception' referred to the embryonic stage, awaiting the union with a rational soul, rather than to the existence of a person.

Unlike the Dominicans, Franciscan theologians, following the solution of Duns Scotus, identified the moment of conception with the moment of animation (Söll 1981, 289). This led to the adoption of the theory of direct animation, which emphasises the union of the soul and body at the moment of conception (Caspar 1991, 4). Nicolaus Biceps' commentary briefly references this position held by Duns Scotus (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, H, 105vb).

The theory of indirect animation, as adopted by Thomas Aquinas and subsequent generations of Dominicans, posed challenges in reconciling it with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. For the Angelic Doctor, *conceptio* referred to the formation of an embryo without a rational soul, whereas for the Franciscans, it denoted the beginning of the existence of a human person, who was a recipient of God's grace. Consequently, for the Dominicans, it was problematic to celebrate the feast of the *Conceptio Mariae*, as Mary had not yet come into being at the moment of conception.

Nicolaus Biceps' commentary offers a conciliatory approach. By referencing the views of St Bonaventure and St Thomas, he suggests that the feast of the *Conceptio Mariae* should not be celebrated in recognition of the conception itself, but rather in honour of the purification and sanctification that occurred after the conception.

The Concept of Redemption

Nicolaus Biceps embraced the classical concept of Redemption, which, based on Revelation, highlights the existence of sin and the subsequent liberation of humanity achieved through Christ's death on Calvary (*STh* III, q. 14, a. 1). In his commentary, the Czech Dominican contrasts this traditional view with the proposal of Duns Scotus, who framed the saving activity of Christ as preservation from sin (*redemptio praeservativa*) (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, H, 105vb). According to Duns Scotus, Christ was not only the Redeemer but also the most perfect Mediator between God and humanity. He asserted that "the most perfect mediator corresponds to the most perfect act of mediation on behalf of the person" for whom it is performed. Duns Scotus proposed that Christ's mediation, at its highest level of perfection, was specifically directed towards Mary, preserving her from original sin (Krupa 2013, 109).

This notion of preserving Mary from the sin of her first parents introduces a novel concept of redemption, termed *redemptio praeservativa*. Given that this proposal, which finds scant support in Holy Scripture, diverged from traditional views, it was met with criticism by Dominican theologians, including Nicolaus Biceps.

The Omnipotence of God

Nicolaus Biceps also addressed an important argument used by supporters of the Immaculate Conception, which he unfortunately did not elaborate upon in his discourse: the will of God (*si Deus hoc facere voluisset*).

Franciscan theologians frequently invoked the triad describing the power of God, as formulated by Anselm of Canterbury: *potuit, decuit, fecit*.[6] In his treatise *De Conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis* (1314), the Franciscan Peter Aureolus distinguished between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*. The former encompasses a range of possibilities, one of which is actualised in the world through *potentia ordinata*. Thus, if God had wished to preserve Mary from original sin, according to Peter Aureolus, he could have done so through *potentia ordinata* (Krupa 2013, 119).

In contrast, St Thomas Aquinas argued that the distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* does not apply to God (Krupa 2013, 120), as God's power, considered in itself, is absolute. He posited that "the power of God is ordered by the wisdom of God, and each of His actions is both absolute and ordinary (*absolutum, ordinatum*)."

This comparison of interpretations leads to the following conclusions:

Both the Franciscans and Dominicans acknowledged a singular divine power. However, for the Franciscans, the principle that ordered God's power was his will, while for the Dominicans, it was his wisdom. This distinction highlights

6 In English translation: "He could, He had to, He did."

a fundamental divergence in their interpretations of the Immaculate Conception (Krupa 2013, 121). "For the Dominicans, the belief that Mary was conceived in original sin and subsequently purified was entirely consistent with divine wisdom. Conversely, for the Franciscans, the notion that God willed to preserve the future Mother of His Son from original sin was considered a necessity for such preservation." (Krupa 2013, 121)

Auctoritates

Nicolaus Biceps' commentary on the *Sentences* highlights the significant concept of *auctoritas*. For medieval theologians, this term was inseparably linked with truth, underscoring the authenticity of the work. The notions of *auctoritas* and *authenticitas* were considered inseparable.

In this context, Holy Scripture, as the revelation of God's Truth, possessed absolute *auctoritas*. Biceps' commentary reflects the common belief among theologians of the era that Holy Scripture is inspired and, therefore, contains God's truth (Biceps, Sent., II, d. 31, q. 2, H, 90va). Moreover, this work reveals the different approaches of the Dominicans and Franciscans to the interpretation of Holy Scripture as regards the Immaculate Conception of Mary. For the Dominicans, this issue appeared to contradict the Bible. Conversely, for the theologians of the Order of St Francis, the absence of references to the Immaculate Conception in Holy Scripture did not automatically negate the Immaculate Conception of Mary (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, H, 104rb).

The concept of *auctoritas* not only referred to Holy Scriptures as the source of Divine Truth but also to the individuals who transmitted it. According to John of Damascus, the Holy Spirit spoke not only through the Law and the Prophets but also through the evangelists, shepherds, and doctors (Johannes Damascenus, *De fide ortodoxa*; PG 94, 1176). Therefore, the holiness of their lives was a guarantee that the writings they produced were influenced by the same Spirit that inspired the Holy Scriptures. For this reason, the writings of the Church Fathers were highly valued, copied, and disseminated. Biceps' commentary confirms that the opinions of the Fathers held considerable authority. At the same time, he notes that the claim that the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin opposed the authority of the saints (*auctoritas sanctorum*) (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, H, 104rb). The Czech Dominican referred to the authority of St Augustine, Gregory the Great (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra; H, 104va), as well as two medieval writers: St Bernard of Clairvaux and St Anselm of Canterbury (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra; H, 105ra).

In this context, the question of the authority of private revelations arises. Medieval theologians did not adopt a uniform stance on this issue.

From the twelfth century onwards, to bolster the credibility of the belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the legend of the Abbot Helsin, based on a private

revelation, was disseminated (Lamy 2000, 63). However, not all theologians accepted this story uncritically. For instance, Pseudo-Abelard questioned the authenticity of the narrative, asserting that it should not be used as a theological argument (Pseudo-Abelardus, *Tractatus de Conceptione Virginis Mariae*, 138). Peter of Celle took a similar stance, humorously dismissing the dreams and fantasies experienced by the English in a letter to Nicholas of St Albans (Petrus Cellensis, *Epistula 171* [PL 202, 614]).

Despite their critical attitude towards private revelations, theologians had to address the question of their *auctoritas*. In the 13th century, a story circulated among supporters of the Immaculate Conception about St Bernard of Clairvaux appearing in the heavenly glory with a stain on his Cistercian habit. This story was included in a commentary by the Franciscan Peter of Candia, and subsequently critiqued by Nicolaus Biceps, who unequivocally opposed the opinion of the Church Fathers (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92va). Biceps described such narratives in one word: *fabula* (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92va).

Liturgy

In the sermons of medieval preachers, fragments of liturgical texts were often quoted to lend credibility to the feast being celebrated, especially when there was a lack of strong biblical texts. This approach was exemplified in the Dominican sermons on the Assumption of the Mother of God. A similar method was applied in relation to the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Nicolaus Biceps, drawing on the opinion of St Bonaventure, noted that the feast of her conception should be celebrated not because of the conception itself, but because of the consecration that followed it (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92rb).

The decrees of the Dominican General Chapter of Rodez (1388) cannot be overlooked (Acta 1388, 30). The participants emphasised that Mary, as the Mother of Christ and Protectress of the Order of Preachers, deserves special honour. Citing the authority of St Thomas Aquinas, they noted that 'the Mother of Christ, on the eightieth day from her conception, on which her soul was united with her body, after a short lapse of time, was sanctified more abundantly than the other saints' (Acta 1388, 30). Although some tried to honour her conception, the participants of the chapter, emphasising her innocence and sanctification, ordered the introduction of the Feast of the Sanctification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*De sanctificatione Beatae Mariae Virginis*) with the rank of *totum duplex*. For the liturgical celebration of this new feast, the office of the Birth of Mary was to be used, substituting the term *nativitas* with *sanctificatio* (Acta 1388, 30).

The introduction of the Feast of *Sanctificatio Mariae* into the Dominican liturgy is further confirmed by the acts of the general chapter in Le Mans (Acta 1491).

The chapters' resolutions regarding the new Marian feast were implemented, as confirmed by the preserved liturgical books. The Dominican missal from the first

half of the 14th century, housed in the National Library in Prague, lists four Marian feasts: *Purificatio, Annuntiatio, Assumptio, and Nativitas Mariae* (*Missale incompletum Ordinis Praedicatorum*).

However, the formula for the mass *Sanctificatio S. Mariae* is notably absent from these earlier texts. It appears in later printed editions of Dominican liturgical books from the 15th century, which include the rubric that interests us (*Missale Ordinis Praedicatorum* 1484; *Missale Ordinis Praedicatorum* 1500).

Church

For Nicolaus Biceps, the Roman Church represented the ultimate *auctoritas*. Its magisterial function served as a point of reference for all the faithful. Biceps' commentary underscored the authority of the Church, which introduces and approves teachings that are universally recognised as truth (Biceps, Sent., III, d. 3, q. 1, P, 92ra). Conversely, the proclamation of views and innovations not approved by the Magisterium of the Church was considered inappropriate. The role of the Church as the final arbiter in matters of faith was comprehensively emphasised.

Conclusion

The analysis of Nicolaus Biceps' commentary on the *Sentences*, specifically regarding the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in light of the findings of the general chapters of the Order of Preachers, confirms the decisive influence of the Dominican education system on his negative stance towards the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Since the doctrine of St Thomas Aquinas played a significant role in the intellectual formation of the Dominicans, gradually becoming a mandatory subject of study, it is not surprising that Dominicans influenced by it adopted a negative position on the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

This stance was further reinforced by the Dominican liturgy, which, in implementing the recommendations of the general chapters, introduced the feast of the Sanctification of Mary (*Sanctificatio Mariae*), interpreting this celebration in a Thomistic context.

In this light, the position of the Czech Dominican is unsurprising. His commentary on the *Sentences* reflects the typical Dominican perspective on the original sin contracted by Mary and her subsequent sanctification. The work of the Czech Dominican reveals a solid education, highlighting the quality of the studies in Prague. The author was well-versed not only in the opinions of the Church Fathers but also in those of contemporary theologians, including proponents of the Immaculate Conception.

Nicolaus Biceps' commentary highlights the theological issues that concerned the scholars of his period. The Dominicans, committed to the Holy Scripture, emphasised the universal effects of original sin. At the same time, influenced by St Thomas Aquinas' concept of embryological conception, they felt compelled to accept the sanctification of the Virgin Mary. However, the chronological concept of the simultaneous conception, infusion of the soul, and purification of Mary introduced by Duns Scotus remained foreign to the Dominicans.

Similarly, the concept of conservative redemption (*redemptio praeservativa*) proposed by Duns Scotus, which was neither grounded in Holy Scripture nor in the Tradition of the Church, was negatively received by the Dominicans.

Biceps' commentary reflects another significant issue in the theology of that time: the question of *auctoritates*, or authoritative sources, upon which theologians should base their reflections. Educated at the Dominican Studium in Prague, Nicolaus Biceps relied on primary sources: Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the liturgy. He also emphasised the role of the official teaching of the Roman Church, demonstrating respect for its rulings. By building on these solid foundations, Biceps argued that the positions held by proponents of the Immaculate Conception were not firmly supported.

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The Formula "come, see" in the Palestinian Targums

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Abstract: The article examines the expression "come, see," which appears three times in non-translation passages of the Palestinian Targums (Gen 22:10; 28:12; Num 21:6). This technical phrase is rarely used in the Hebrew Bible, where it occurs only once (Ps 66:5). The paper aims to closely analyze the three instances of "come, see" in the Palestinian Targums to determine its meaning and literary function within the text. The focus is on the non-translation passages in the Palestinian Targums because these expansions of the sacred text reveal the theology of the targumists.

Keywords: Palestinian Targums, *Targum Neofiti*, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, "come, see"

The development of in-depth studies on targumic literature has revealed many common elements with New Testament texts. Notable similarities in theological ideas and linguistic expressions can be observed between the Palestinian Targums and Johannine literature. Over the past few decades, many articles and books have been written describing these similarities. One such work is Martin McNamara's book, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible. A Light on the New Testament*. Among the many theological concepts and linguistic expressions shared between the Targums and Johannine literature, the author highlights the phrase "come and see," which appears four times in the Gospel according to John (McNamara 2010, 214).[1]

This study adopts the approach of several scholars, such as Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Bruce Chilton, and Geza Vermes, who argue that similarities between the New Testament and Jewish literature result from a shared Jewish tradition, which influenced both the New Testament texts and the targumic/rabbinic literature (cf. Morrison 2005, 592). According to Vermes, the New Testament is a simply dated segment in relation to undated material within a developing tradition (Vermes 1982, 372–73). Therefore, this study does not aim to prove the possible influence of the Targums on

1 The expression "come and see" appears in the Gospel of John in slightly different forms: "ἔρχεσθε καὶ ὄψεσθε" (John 1:39); "ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε" (John 1:46; 11:34) and "δεῦτε ἴδετε" (John 4:29). It should be noted that in Polish, the topic of the correlation between the phrase "come, see" occurring in the Fourth Gospel and in targumic literature has been addressed in: Wróbel 2014; 2017, 286–333.

the text of the Gospel of John, as examining the correlations between the occurrences of this expression is beyond its scope. Instead, it suggests that because the expression "come, see" appears more frequently in targumic literature than in the Hebrew text, its meaning should be explored by examining its usage in the Targum.[2]

Avigdor Shinan notes that the Targum must be "an object of study in and for itself," and concludes that "the scholarly exploration of the Targums for their own inherent interest and into a dimension beyond textual and linguistic issues still awaits fresh energies." (Shinan 1983, 48) This article aims to contribute these "fresh energies" to the study of the expression "come, see" in targumic literature.

Before examining the specific cases of use "come, see" some fundamental methodological considerations must be addressed. This article is limited to the Palestinian Targums and will not consider other Jewish literature, such as the Talmud and other rabbinic texts, where the phrase is also quite frequent.[3] Due to the nature of Talmudic redaction, it is challenging to isolate the specific theology of this genre. Hermann L. Strack and Günter Stemberger describe the Talmudic genre, noting: "The Palestinian Talmud was not in fact edited in the proper sense, but merely represents a hasty collection of material … the 'redactor' must have simply collated the blocks of material directly and without order." (Strack and Stemberger 1996, 171) In contrast, targumic literature, which originated as translations of the Hebrew Bible with some expansions, presents a different character. Our focus will primarily be on the expression in the narratives of *Targum Neofiti* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, as it appears to have a more restricted and technical meaning in targumic literature compared to its usage in the Talmud and other rabbinic texts.[4]

In this brief study, all occurrences of the phrase "come, see" in the Palestinian Targums will be presented. Following this, an attempt will be made to closely analyze

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2 In the Hebrew Bible a similar phrase is hardly ever used. It appears only in Ps 66:5, where psalmist invites all the earth to praise God: "Come and see what God has done" (לכו וראו מפעלות אלהים). *Tg. Onq.*: אזילו וחמון עובדי אלהא.

3 The term "Palestinian Targums" can be confusing. There are three ways of understanding of this term: (1) the Targums composed in Palestine; (2) the Targums with many large midrashic expansions; (3) the Targums written in late Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. In this study the notion "Palestinian Targums" is used to refer to *Targum Neofiti* (*Tg. Neof.*), *Targum from Cairo Genizah*, the so-called *Fragment Targums* (*Frg. Tg.*), and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (*Tg. Ps.-J.*). I am aware of the difficulty with the claim that *Tg. Ps.-J.* belongs to the Palestinian Targums. However, since *Tg. Ps.-J.* was composed in Palestine, in the Late Jewish Literary Aramaic, and contains the entire Pentateuch it is reasonable to take into consideration also this version, while discussing the formula "come, see." McNamara mentions *Tg. Ps.-J.* along with *Tg. Neof.* as the one of the examples of the Palestinian Targums (McNamara 2010, vii; 1992, 4). Cf. Mortensen 2006, 1; Smelik 1995, 76.

4 Where it will be relevant *Fragment Targum* will be discussed either. Unlike *Targum Neofiti* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, *Fragment Targum* is simply collection of variants readings and additions and has the fragmentary character. For that reason, it does not share the same genre of narrative with *Tg. Neof.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.* (Klein 1980, 12–19).

the meaning of each instance in order to identify some general characteristics of the phrase in targumic literature.

1. The Phrase "come, see" in the Palestinian Targums

The Aramaic expression "come, see" contains two verbs: אתי (to come) and חמי (to see) (Sokoloff 1992). Though both words taken separately are very frequent in the Palestinian Targums, examining the collocation of these two verbs together, in the imperative form alters the situation. The expression "come, see" appears only four times in the Targums to Pentateuch (including the marginalia): Gen 22:10; 27:27 (mg.); 28:12; Num 21:6.[5] Distribution of the occurrences of this expression is unbalanced. Three of them appear in *Genesis* and the other in *Numbers*. The focus is on the non-translation passages in the Palestinian Targums.[6] In *Tg. Neof.* Gen 27:27 (mg.) the expression "come, see" seems to be only the mode of rendering the verb "see" which is present in the MT.[7] Although, this verse contains the expansion, the formula "come, see" appears in the translated part of the verse and does not have similar meaning to the other three occurrences, which seem to have a technical sense in the Palestinian Targums. Since the focus is on the non-translation passages the case of *Tg. Neof.* 27:27 (mg.) will not be the object of this study.

2. Grammatical Analysis

The expression "come, see" (אתון חמין) consists of two G imperatives without a *waw*, an asyndetic construction, which Gesenius considers a coordination of the complementary verbal ideas (Kautzsch 1910, §120d; Joüon and Muraoka 2008, §177). The general definition of the asyndetic construction provided by Takamitsu

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5 Each of three versions of Palestinian Targums (*Tg. Neof.*, *Tg. Ps.-J.*, *Frg. Tg.*) contains the expression "come, see" in the expansions. In Gen 27:27 the expression "come, see" appears only in the marginalia of *Tg. Neof.* Both *Tg. Ps.-J.* and *Frg. Tg.* do not confirm this translation.

6 In his article Morrison claims that non-translation passages in the Targums presents "the theology of the targum at work." (Morrison 2005, 592)

7 MT Gen 27:27: ויגשׁ וישׁק־לו וירח את־ריח בגדיו ויברכהו ויאמר ראה ריח בני כריח שׂדה אשׁר ברכו יהוה. *Tg. Ps.-J.* follows faithfully the beginning of the MT and translates: וקריב ונשיק ליה וארח ית ריחא דלבושוי וברכיה ואמר חמון ריחא דבני כריחא דקטורת בוסמנייא דעתידא מתקרבא בטוור בי מוקדשא דאיתקרי חקיל דבריך יתיה ייי ואתרעי לאשראה שכינתיה תמן

Tg. Neof. Gen 27:27 (mg) follows faithfully the beginning of MT but adds the verb "come": וקרב לוותיה ונשׁק יתה ואריח ית ריח לבושׁוי וברך יתיה ואמר אתון חמון ריחה דברי כריח קטרת בסמניה טביה דעתיד למתקרבא עלגבי מדבחא בטור בית־מקדשׁא הוא טורא ברך יתיה חי וקיים כל עלמיא

Muraoka's *Grammar of Qumran Aramaic* is as follows: "two or more verbs which are all of identical inflectional categories may be juxtaposed without a coordinating conjunction." (Muraoka 2011, 207) This kind of grammatical construction is well known in the Hebrew language. Gesenius notes that when the preceding imperative denotes a physical movement, such as: לך (לכו), קום (קומו), it is "for the most part only equivalent to interjections, *come! up!*" (Kautzsch 1910, §110h) Similar syntax appears also in the Aramaic language. According to Holger Gzella: "Rein interjektionalisiert leitet der Imperativ eine Aussage ein und verlegt das inhaltliche Gewicht auf die folgenden Imperative. Besonders häufig begegnet dieser Gebrauch mit קום 'aufstehen' im Sinne von 'Los!' und dergleichen." (Gzella 2004, 309) Muraoka claims that when the first verb of asyndesis is a verb of physical movement such as קום "it seems to indicate a call to action, and it is devoid of its usual meaning, for the person addressed was not necessarily seated on receipt of the instruction." (Muraoka 2011, 208)

The phrase "come, see" can be treated as the example of the asyndetic construction (verbal hendiadys). The first imperative אתו in the phrase is the verb of movement and could be explained in terms of interjectory force.[8] As suggested by Elitzur A. Bar-Asher Siegal the non-lexical verb (the hendiadys verb) functions in this case as an adverb which modifies the second verb (Bar-Asher Siegal 2013, 269). Thus, the verb אתי does not mean simply the physical movement but it functions rather as the intensification of the meaning of the second imperative of verb חמי. If it is the case the emphasis is placed on the action of seeing and the whole phrase could be translated: "come, see!" To highlight the asyndetic construction the phrase will be translated without conjunction "and."

3. Individual Occurrences of "come, see" in the Targums.

3.1. Gen 22:10

The first reference of the "come, see" in *Targum Neofiti* appears in Gen 22:10. Likewise, both *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and *Fragment Targum* provide the same phrase. According to *Targum Neofiti*, Abraham was tempted by God with ten temptations (נסיונה עשיריה) of which the sacrifice of his son Isaac was going to be the last one (Grossfeld 2000, 173). The mention of the tenth temptation means that the action is about to enter into a climax of the whole Abraham cycle.[9] From the very beginning of the *Akedah* story the reader is involved into a dramatic situation in which the father

8 Similar construction occurs in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 50:1 where Judah encourages his brothers: "Come, let us plant (איתון נבני) for our father a tall cedar" and in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 50:3 where Egyptians wept for Jacob saying one to another: "Come, let us weep (איתון ניבכי) over Jacob."

9 Morrison notes that "il numero 10 potrebbe significare la prova ultima, nel senso della prova estrema." (Morrison 2014, 439)

has to sacrifice his own son. Abraham informed in v. 2 about the difficult God's request responds without any hesitation (הנני) and immediately commences fulfilling the will of God. The narrator builds suspense while describing in detail the preparation of the Moriah sacrifice.[10] The narrative culminates in v. 10, when Isaac, placed upon the altar above the wood, requests to be bounded tightly. The reader observes terrifying scene in which he sees the altar, the bound boy upon it and the father with a knife in his hand stretched above the son in a gesture of killing. At this point the narrator slows down the action describing the eyes of the father, which were directed towards the eyes of his son, and the eyes of Isaac, which were gazing at the angels of the height. Then, the dramatical scene is interrupted by the *Bat Qol* (בת־קול), that comes out from heavens:

Tg. Neof. Gen 22:10:

בה בשעתא נפקת בת קול מן שמייא ואמרת אתון חמון תרתין יחידיין דבעלמי חד נכס וחד מתנכס דנכס לא מעכב ודמתנכס פשט צואריה

In that hour a *Bat Qol* came forth from the heavens and said: "Come, see two individuals who are in my world; one slaughters and the other is being slaughtered. The one who slaughters does not hesitate and he who is being slaughtered stretches out his neck."

3.1.1. Speaker of the Revelation – the Bat Qol

Targum Neofiti employs the expression "come, see" in order to introduce the announcement, which is proclaimed by the *Bat Qol* (lit.: daughter of a voice) that came from heavens.[11] The speaker of the examined expression is the heavenly voice. One of the characteristics of the Targums is the reverential attitude in speaking of God (McNamara 2010, 141–45). To avoid the use of the holy name, targumists applied many other modes by which they referred to God. In some contexts, they replaced the Holy Spirit, who was believed to be God himself, with the *Bat Qol*, of whom concern was to speak to Israel (McNamara 2010, 168). Even if this notion is not so frequent in the Palestinian Targums, it is well known in the rabbinic literature.[12] Rabbinic tradition links the *Bat Qol* with the time of the cessation of prophecy.[13] As it is in the *Tosefta*, the *Bat Qol* took over the role of prophets: "When the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, died, the holy spirit ceased out of Israel; but nevertheless it was granted them to hear communications from God by means of

10 The narrative devotes seven verses (Gen 22:3–9) describing step-by-step how Abraham was fulfilling God's request.

11 McNamara explains: "In a sense the *bath qol* was the same as the Holy Spirit, God revealing his will to man, or as continuing divine action after the Holy Spirit was believed to have ceased to be with Israel." (McNamara 1992, 39)

12 In *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10; 27:33; 38:25; Num 21:6 and in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 28:15.

13 For the discussion on the *Bat Qol* as a secondary form of communication of God see: Verman 1992, 10–11.

a *Bat Qol.*" (t. Soṭah 13:2)[14] Thus, the announcement which is expressed by the *Bat Qol* has a similar significance to the prophecies.[15] It function as the revelation of God himself through the heavenly voice.

Dealing with a specific role of the *Bat Qol* in the midrashic tradition, Christine E. Hayes presents in her article several examples taken from rabbinic literature, which can be illuminating for this study. The author evokes the story of Judah's confession and repentance on the occasion of his sexual liaison with Tamar. She cites the passage from B. Sotah 10b in which the *Bat Qol* appears to praise Judah for his confession:

> A *bat qol* came forth and said, "You saved Tamar and her two sons from the fire. I promise that on account of your merit I will save some of your offspring from the fire." Who were they? Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. "She is more righteous than I." How did he know? A *bat qol* came forth and told him, "From me come forth secrets." (Hayes 1995, 178)

Concluding her discussion on this passage Hayes claims that: "Here the *bat qol* does not declare Judah's innocence or announce divine orchestration of the whole affair. Rather, the *bat qol* commends Judah for his act and informs him of the merit he has earned for his good deed." (Hayes 1995, 178)

Another function of the *Bat Qol* is subsequently presented by Hayes is based on B. Makkot 23b:

> R. Eleazar said: In three places the Holy Spirit [more commonly, *bat qol*] appeared-in the court of Shem, in the court of Samuel and in the court of Solomon. In the court of Shem as it is written, "Judah recognized and said, 'She is more righteous than I.'" "How did he know? Perhaps the woman who was with him gave her [the pledges] and another man had been with her [Tamar]." But a *bat qol* came forth and said, "From me come forth secrets…" (Hayes 1995, 184)

On this occasion the function of the *Bat Qol* relates to the court process. It is the *Bat Qol* and not the pledges that becomes the proof of the innocence of Tamar. Judah is convinced that he is the father of the children due to the heavenly voice which gave the testimony of Tamar's innocence.[16] This passage reveals how great

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14 Paul V. Flesher and Bruce Chilton explain that the *Bat Qol* "literally means 'daughter of a voice' or echo. The Rabbis believed that the age of prophecy had ceased with the last of the biblical prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, but that those attentive to the ways of heaven could still hear echoes from the heavenly council where all wisdom was known." (Flesher and Chilton 2011, 502)

15 Vermes (2014, 11) notes that the view about the end of prophecy was not supported by history. He evokes: 1 Macc 4:46; 14:41; 1QS 9:11 and Matt 11:9; 13:57; 21:11; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; 7:16, 26; 24:19 showing that still in the final period of the Second Temple prophets were expected.

16 Tanhuma B. Wayyeseb 17 makes it even more explicit showing that Judah was encouraged by the heavenly voice to confess his guilt: "At that moment a *bat qol* came forth and said to him, 'Say: From me she conceived. So that she will not burn.' After this he confessed 'From me is this thing.'"

importance for the Israelites had the proclamations pronounced by the *Bat Qol*. This notion was employed by the rabbinic literature in order to support an "incomprehensible nature of God's operation in the world: Judah's act was abominable and yet from him – indeed, from his sin – kings arose." (Hayes 1995, 184) From the human point of view, it is impossible to declare Tamar and Judah innocent, thus higher authority has to be introduced in order to explain an obscure divine plan. What is incomprehensible for a human being has to be revealed by the *Bat Qol*. This is the case of the targumic expansion of Gen 22:10. The heavenly voice starts its announcement employing the phrase "come, see." This expression performs a characteristic function of providing God's revelation.

3.1.2. Time of the Revelation

The message from heaven comes at a specific time. Targum clarifies that the *Bat Qol* came forth "in that hour (בה בשעתא)." Doubtless, this expression refers to the hour of the *Akedah* as the whole event. But another interesting point could be made here. Both, marginalia of Gen 22:10 in *Targum Neofiti* and the *Fragment Targum* contain the phrase "the hour of distress" which, according to Craig E. Morrison, has a technical sense in *Targum Neofiti.* The scholar points out that among the other aspects of the meaning of "the hour of distress," there is also the strong conviction of divine intervention from the part of those who suffer (Morrison 2005, 598). If it is the case, "the hour," in which the *Bat Qol* speaks, is the moment of a great distress of man and at the same time the hour of God's intervention. Moreover, knowing that the *Akedah* story is one of the crucial moments in the salvation history, the presence of the phrase: "come, see" on this occasion could not be only accidental.[17] God intervenes manifesting his revelation and explaining the deeper meaning of what is going on. The reader encounters one of the most incomprehensible biblical story and risks misunderstanding of this crucial moment of the salvation history. Thus, not only the notion of the *Bat Qol*, which has the great authority, but also the phrase "come, see" is employed in order to introduce the God's interpretation of the event which takes place on the earth. The reader is invited to get through the visible reality and see what is beyond it, just as God does.

3.1.3. Content of the Revelation

After having examined the speaker of the expression "come, see" and the time when it is being pronounced the question of the content of the message which follows this introductory phrase should be raised. First, what is being revealed by the voice that comes from heaven, is not the heavenly reality but rather something which takes place on the earth. The *Bat Qol* invites the reader to observe two men, Abraham and

17 Right after this sacrificial trial God blesses Abraham, his descendants. Because of the obedience of Abraham God promises that all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Gen 22:18).

Isaac, who are individuals in the world (תרתין יחידיין דבעלמי). Thus, the aim of God's revelation is not to disclose some transcendental mystery of heavenly character, something that would be beyond human perception. The revelation which is introduced by the expression "come, see" does not have incomprehensible, apocalyptical character, but to the contrary, it aims to focus the reader's attention on the earthly, visible reality.[18] But at the same time it is not a simple description of what is going on in the world.

The divine message, which follows "come, see" pretends to preserve the reader from misunderstanding of the event, by providing a proper interpretation of it. The reader, who has been deeply shocked by the cruelty of this expected sacrifice, is at risk of missing the real meaning of the *Akedah,* thereby remains on its outer surface. The *Bat Qol* invites him to go beyond the plain observation of the action. The voice from heaven opens the reader's eyes underscoring what is really important to comprehend. The *Bat Qol* praises the obedience and the unity of the father and the son using the phrase תרתין יחידיין דבעלמי making from their uniqueness the most significant point of the *Akedah*. This expression evokes *Tg. Neof.* Gen 3:22 where the phrase יחידיי בעלמא is used for the first time. In the first reference God declares that Adam is alone (unique) in the world just like God is alone (unique) in heaven.[19] The comparison between God and the first human being, is made based on their uniqueness. The same title is not attributed to anyone elsewhere in *Targum Neofiti* except: Abraham and Isaac (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10), Abraham (*Tg. Jon.* Isa 51:2; Ezek 33:24) and Israel (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Num 23:24; 29:36; Deut 26:18). In *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10 Abraham and Isaac are honored with this appellative by the *Bat Qol*. This parallel with the first man before his disobedience underscores the fact that the *Akedah* restores the original likeness and communion between the man and God.[20] It is confirmed in the further verses (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:16–18) in the promise given by the Lord:

> In the name of his Memra I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing (ארום חלף דעבדת ית פתגמא הדין) and have not withheld your son, only son, I will certainly bless you (מברכה אברך יתך) and multiply your sons (ומסגיא אסגי ית בנך) as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is upon the seashore. And your sons will inherit the cities

18 The revelation offered in Gen 22:10 is not similar to those from the Book of Daniel or Book of Revelation, which are expressed in many mysterious and difficult to interpret images.

19 *Tg. Neof.* Gen 3:22: ואמר ייי אלהים הא אדם קדמיה דברית יתיה יחידיי בעלמא היך־מה דאנא יחידיי בשׁמי מרומא.

20 Another point, which renders Abraham similar to Adam, is a small addition in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:1 which reveals that Abraham, just as Adam before had sinned עני בלשן בית קודשא (answered in the language of the sanctuary). It is the first time when this kind of solemn characteristic of the speech is attributed to someone else than Adam. Except of Adam (Gen 2:19), this expression appears elsewhere in *Tg. Neof.* as attributed to Jacob (Gen 31:11 [mg.]; 35:18) Laban (31:47) and Moses (Exod 3:4) (McNamara 1992, 58). Thus, Abraham, after Adam, is the second figure who speaks with God "in the language of the sanctuary." And it is the only instance when he does so.

of their enemies. And because you listened to the voice of his Memra (חלף די שמעת בקל ממריה), in your descendants will all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Moreover v. 10 is framed with the verb פשט.[21] As Abraham stretched out his hand in order to slaughter his son, so that Isaac stretched out his neck to be slaughtered.[22] This inclusion underlines once again the obedience of both the father and the son, to the will of God. They do not attempt to change the divine will and even do not dispute with it.[23] Thanks to Abraham and Isaac's obedience the humanity will enjoy redemption through the merit (זכו) of Abraham.

3.2. Gen 28:12

The expression אתון חמון occurs one more time in *Targum Neofiti* of the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 28 the reader is familiarized with Jacob's dream. After conspiracy of Jacob and his mother, Isaac sends his son to Paddan-aram, to the house of Laban.[24] During the journey Jacob dreams of a ladder stretching to heaven on which the angels ascend and descend. The God's messengers proclaim good tidings saying:

Tg. Neof. Gen 28:12:

והא מלאכיה דילוון יתיה מן בייתי דאבוי סלקון למבשרי למלאכיה מרומא למימר אתון חמון לגברא חסידא דאיקונין דידיה קביעא בכורסיה איקרא דהוויתון מתחמדין למחמי יתה והא מלאכין מן קדם ייי סלקין ונחתין ומסתכלין בה

And behold, the angels that had accompanied him from the house of his father ascended to bear good tidings to the angels on high, saying: "Come, see the pious many whose image is engraved in the throne of Glory, whom you desired to see." And behold, the angels before the Lord ascended and descended and observed him.

On this occasion the formula "come, see" appears once again.

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21 This inclusion is present also in *Tg. Ps.-J.*

22 *Tg. Ps.-J.* underlines even more that Isaac willingly offered himself. In the beginning of the chapter 22 the narrator reports the quarrel between Isaac and his older brother Ishmael. Isaac with confidence says: "if the Holy One, blessed be He, were to ask all my members I would not refuse. These words were immediately heard before the Lord of the world." (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 22:1) In the light of this version, it seems to be Isaac rather than Abraham who is tested by the Lord.

23 As Morrison noted their willing disposition regarding God's will is emphasized by the phrase בלבה שלמה (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:6, 8) which is associated with both, Abraham and Isaac. Morrison recalls *Tg. Neof.* Exod 19:8, when Israelites, at the moment of the ratification of the Sinai covenant, with "a perfect heart" were subordinated to God. Likewise, also Abraham and Isaac fulfil divine will with "a perfect heart." (Morrison 2005, 594)

24 Samuel R. Driver points to the fact that it was not Jacob to invent this conspiracy but rather his ambitious mother Rebekah. The writer discloses in this way his sympathies with Jacob (Driver 1904, 255).

3.2.1. Speaker of the Revelation

In this expansion of *Targum Neofiti* the speaker of the words: "come, see" is no longer the *Bat Qol*, but the angels who accompanied Jacob from the house of his father. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* in Gen 28:12 specifies who really these angels are:

> והא תרין מלאכיא דאזלו לסדום ואיטרדו מן מחיצתהון מן בגלל דגליין מסטירין דמרי עלמא והוו מיטרדין ואזלין עד זמן דנפק יעקב מבית אבוי והינון לוון יתיה בחיסדא עד ביתאל
>
> Two angels who had gone to Sodom and who had been banished from their apartment because they had revealed the secrets of the Lord of the world, went about when they were banished until the time that Jacob went forth from his father's house. Then, as an act of kindness they accompanied him to Bethel.

The allusion is probably made to Gen 19:13, where two angels reveal to Lot God's intention of the destruction of Sodom. From this expansion the reader learns that there are some secrets (מסטירין) of the Lord, which are known to the angels and should not be revealed to a man.[25] Thus, even if the announcement is not proclaimed by the *Bat Qol*, it has still a divine character. Moreover, these two angels are characterized as the ones who gladly disclose God's secrets. Revealing מסטירין was claimed to be also the role of the *Bat Qol*. It was the *Bat Qol* which in B. Makkot 23b says: "From me come forth secrets." The revelatory character of what follows the expression: "come, see" is subsequently confirmed in Gen 31:13 where the Lord through his angel says to Jacob: "I am the God who was revealed to you at Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me." Hebrew text slightly differs from the targumic versions and reads as follow: אנכי האל בית־אל אשר משחת שם מצבה אשר נדרת לי שם נדר. "The God of Bethel" is rendered by the Targums as "the God who was revealed to you at Bethel (אלקא דאיתגליתי עלך בביתאל)." Hence, the Targums leave no doubt that the dream of Jacob was really the revelation of God himself.

3.2.2. Time of the Revelation

The moment in which the angels proclaim the commendation of Jacob is a crucial moment to the whole Jacob cycle in which the son of Isaac experiences the revelation of God and obtains the promises from him. For Jacob, this is the first personal encounter with God; he was aware of the faith of his ancestors, but on this occasion, he has a possibility to see God face to face (פנים אל־פנים). Jacob understands the vision because right after the revelation he confesses: "Truly the Lord is in this place, yet I did not realize it" (Gen 28:16). This remarkable encounter pushes him to worship God by setting up the stone as a sacred pillar, pouring oil on the top of it and making a vow (Gen 28:18).

25 The angels who revealed God's intention regarding Sodom were punished by banishment from their apartment (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 28:12).

Before he wakes up, he sees the Lord, who introduces himself as "the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac" (Gen 28:13). This is the only occurrence of such an appellative for God, in which Abraham and Isaac are mentioned together. Usually, the Lord is presented by the titles such as: "The God of Abraham your father" (Gen 26:34; 31:42) or "the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exod 3:15, 16). According to Gordon Wenham, who comments on the Hebrew text of Genesis: "the double title 'God of Abraham … God of Isaac' recalls the great promises and blessings given to them and anticipates their reaffirmation and reapplication to Jacob." (2002, 222)

The promises consequently received in Jacob's dream correspond to those found in Gen 13:14–16.[26] This point makes a strong parallel of the revelatory dream of Jacob with the revelation given to Abraham on the Moriah. In both cases God finishes his speech giving the blessing not only for them, but through their merits for all the nations. What is original in the promise received by Jacob is the assurance of divine presence: "I in my Memra am with you." (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:15)[27] Jacob is the first in the Bible who heard such a promise, which further will be also given to Moses (Exod 3:12), Joshua (Josh 1:5) and Gideon (Judg 6:16) (Wenham 2002, 225). In the New Testament only Joseph, the son of Jacob (Acts 7:9) and Jesus (John 3:2; Acts 10:38) appear as the persons with whom God was (ὁ θεὸς μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ). Thus, the revelation provided on this occasion has a particular significance and cannot be underestimated.

3.2.3 Content of the Revelation

The targumic rendering of the Bethel episode introduces the revelation concerning Jacob. The reader is informed that the content of this revelation has great importance because is proclaimed by the angels of the Lord. The message provided by the heavenly beings in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12 discloses similar dynamic as in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10. Similarly, the object of the revelation is again the person, not any of heavenly realities. In *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10, the reader is invited to observe Abraham and Isaac, whereas in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12 the angels encourage other angels to observe Jacob. Also, in this case they use the phrase "come, see." Once again, the invitation to see Jacob is only the first step. The messengers of God lead their listeners to a deeper observation. They do not simply present the person of Jacob but rather point to his specific features saying: "come, see (אתון חמון) the pious man (לגברא חסידא) whose image is engraved in the throne of Glory (דאיקונין דידיה קביעא בכורסיה איקרא), whom you desired to see (דהוויתון מתחמדין למחמי יתה)." In *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10 the *Bat Qol* points to the fact of the uniqueness of Abraham and Isaac, now the angels emphasize

26 Jacob would inherit the land, have descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth, and bring blessing to the nations.

27 MT Gen 28:15: הנה אנכי עמך. This kind of assurance is characteristic element in the Jacob cycle (cf. Gen 26:3; 31:3; 46:4).

three mysterious features of Jacob. The reader is invited not simply to see Jacob, but to recognize in him the one who is pious, whose image is engraved in the throne of Glory, whom the angels desire to see.

The first characteristic of Jacob is expressed by the title חסידא which occurs seven times in *Targum Neofiti*, all of them in expansions. For the first time this notion is used in regard to Isaac (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 24:60). Afterwards, the title is repeated twice in regard to Jacob (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12; 29:22). Another two occurrences are linked with Joseph (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 49:22, 26) and the last two references are associated with Aaron (*Tg. Neof.* Num 21:1; *Tg. Neof.* Deut 33:8). However, the collocation גברא חסידא in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12 recalls a special attention because only here it is uttered by the angels of the Lord. As it has been already claimed both the angels of the Lord and the *Bat Qol* disclose the secrets of God. The remaining six references of חסידא come from human mouths. Therefore, this characteristic of Jacob comes not from the human observation, but it is the truth of God proclaimed by his messengers, thus as such becomes indisputable.

Jacob is not only "the pious man" but he is also the one "whose image is engraved in the throne of Glory, whom you (angels) desired to see."[28] This strong affirmation, on some level, links Jacob with the divine world.[29] Since this original phrase does not occur elsewhere in *Targum Neofiti* it is difficult to ascertain its meaning. McNamara notes that "the Glory of the Lord is a metonym of God … and in Targums is employed in connection with God's relations to the world." (McNamara 2010, 147–48) Jacob, therefore, is somehow present in the most elevated place in heaven. Throne is an image of divine sovereignty and judgment (Dan 7:9–10) (Verman 1992, 7). Even if the targumic sources do not provide a satisfactory explanation concerning this notion the rabbinic tradition seems to be richer in this regard.

In the Talmudic tradition exists an idea that "the souls of the righteous are hidden under the Throne of Glory." (Mas. Shabbath, 152b) Jacob is not only hidden under the throne of Glory, but his image is permanently engraved in this throne. This suggests that in the God's eyes he must be extremely important. Jerome H. Neyrey claims that this kind of presentation of the patriarch could be a reminiscence of so-called Merkabah mysticism (Neyrey 1979, 429). After the cessation of prophecy with Malachi it was assumed that God did not communicate to the Israelites in direct manner. The *Bat Qol* was believed to be the following form of God's communication. This kind of mediated form of communication with God was not sufficient for some and on this basis emerged a new type of spirituality which consist of the combination of apocalyptic symbolism and the visionary theosophy (Verman 1992, 10–11). This was

28 It is possible to find a parallel with 1 Pet 1:12, which shows how the angels desire to see the salvation brought by Jesus (εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι). In terms of intertextuality there is a strong connection between these two texts.

29 Another image which underscores Jacob's connection with heaven is the vision of a ladder which becomes a bridge thrown between heaven and earth.

the time when Merkabah mysticism emerged in response to the growing demand for apocalyptic visions among the people. Many authors of apocalyptic writings described individuals who were guided by angels to reach heaven. Typically, these accounts of celestial journeys were accompanied by descriptions of visions of God enthroned in heaven and the angelic hosts surrounding his throne. Both the concept of Jacob's image engraved on the throne of Glory and the angels' desire to see him fit this apocalyptic pattern. In the targumic tradition, Jacob is not only guided by angels to heaven but is also already present there through his image engraved on the throne of Glory.

Another interesting parallel should be presented. The Book of Ezekiel describes the vision of the prophet given to him by the river Chebar. After seeing a strange living being (חיות) with wheels (אופנים) he observes the form of the throne above which there is the form like the appearance of a human beings.

MT Ezek 1:26:

וממעל לרקיע אשר על־ראשם כמראה אבן־ספיר דמות כסא ועל דמות הכסא דמות כמראה אדם עליו מלמעלה

And above the expanse that was over their head was the form of a throne, like the appearance of lapis lazuli stone. And above the form of the throne was a form like the appearance of a human being over it from above.

Tg. Jon. Ezek 1:26:

ומעלוי רקיעא דעל רישיהון כחיזו אבן טבא דמות כורסיא ועל דמות כורסיא דמות כמראה אדם עלוהי מלעילא

And above the expanse that was over their heads was the form of a throne, like the appearance of a precious stone. And above the form of the throne was a form like the appearance of a human being over it from above.

The Targumic Toseftais written in the margin of f.180^{r} in Ms.7 of the Montefiore Library dated on 1487: [30]

נוסח אחר צורת יעקב אבונא עלוהי מלעילא

Another version: The form of Jacob our father over it from above.

Here, both MT and *Tg. Jon.* display the vision of celestial throne with the motif of the appearance of human being above. The Tosefta's rendering clarifies that human

30 According to Willem F. Smelik, Toseftot is a "collections of highly midrashic 'additional' readings to TO and TJon of which no complete version survived or existed." (Smelik 1995, 30)

appearance belongs to Jacob. Alinda Damsma in her book *The Targumic Toseftot to Ezekiel* comments on this passage and presents broad rabbinic tradition concerning the motif of Jacob's image engraved on divine throne (Damsma 2012, 125–28). Among the other evidence she cites is *Hekhalot Rabbati*, where God describes His deep love for Israel by saying that He will embrace and kiss the countenance of Jacob engraved on the throne (קלסתר פניו יעקב אביהם שהיא חקוקה לי על כסא כבודי) (Schäfer 1981, 164).[31] Another interesting parallel contains one of the piyyut which describes how Moses goes to heaven in order to receive the Torah and sees there the image of Jacob rising ahead him (דאיקונין דיעקב הוא מזדקף לקיבליה). Damsma's survey makes it clear that the motif of Jacob's image engraved on the divine throne was common in rabbinic literature. Unfortunately, despite this rich tradition, the exegetical background of this notion remains vague (Damsma 2012, 127).

All these texts present Jacob in a much better light than MT does. The announcement proclaimed by the angels in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12 makes Jacob a highly important person in God's eyes and at the same time legitimized him in the eyes of readers. The question that should be raised here is why Jacob is honored so much. The reader still has in his memory the story in which shrewd Jacob bought the birthright from his brother (Gen 25:29–34) and stole the blessing deceiving his old father (Gen 27:1–30). From the narrative point of view, the targumic revelation provided by the angels aims to change not entirely positive image of Jacob. The one, who will become the founder of twelve tribes of Israel has to be not only a man accepted by God, but even more, he has to be the chosen one. Thus, the invitation to observe the patriarch encourages the reader to see Jacob in a new light, in the light of the God's choice. The angels who used to reveal the mysteries of the Lord now disclose this one, that despite Jacob's dishonesty, God chooses him, gives him blessing even greater than this given to Abraham and Isaac, and keeps his image engraved on his divine throne. Does this mean that God approves patriarch's dishonesty? Even if the narrator avoids any explicit moral comments, that does not mean that he has no moral values. Wenham in his commentary to the Hebrew text of the Book of Genesis offers a sober opinion in this regard: "By setting this new step forward in the history of salvation in the context of such unprincipled behavior by every member of the family, each self-centeredly seeking his or her own interest, the narrator is not simply pointing out the fallibility of God's chosen, whose virtues often turn into vices, but reasserting the grace of God. It is his mercy that is the ultimate ground of salvation." (Wenham 2002, 216)

The complicated story of Jacob presented in the MT, in the Palestinian Targums and in the rabbinic literature gains a different meaning. These texts honor Jacob showing him as the one chosen by God and despite his complications put his icon

31 The Greater (Book of the Heavenly) Palaces is the one of the Hekhalot texts written in Hebrew with an Aramaic phrase. This text describes praxis for traveling to the divine throne room. It is the example of Merkabah mysticism texts (Davila 2013, 137–57).

on the throne of Glory. It is not deceit and stolen blessing of Isaac, which make from Jacob one of the greatest patriarchs of Israel. What makes him great is the free will of God to choose him despite his complicated life story.[32] Similarly to Tamar and Judah who were proclaimed innocent by the *Bat Qol* also Jacob is honored by the angels of the Lord. Once again that what is incomprehensible for a human being, has to be announced with the highest authority (the angels) who employed the expression "come, see" inviting readers to grasp the divine mysteries which are revealed.

3.3. Num 21:6

The last reference of "come, see" which will be discussed here is slightly different than the previous cases. It appears in the Book of Numbers in a completely different context than in the Book of Genesis. In Num 21:4–5 the narrator presents one of the moments in which people become impatient and rebel against God and Moses. As a response for their ingratitude God punishes them with the fiery serpents, which bite the people causing their death. On this occasion the Targums offer an expansion which introduces God as an active participant of the dialog with the rebellious people. *Targum Neofiti* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* are presented below to facilitate the comparison:

Tg. Neof. Num 21:6:

ברת־קלא נפקת מן גו ארעא ואישׁתמע קליה ברומה אתון חמון כל ברייתה ואתון אציתו כל בני בשׂרא לטית חויה מן שׂרויה ואמרית לית עפרא יהוי מזונך אסקת עמי מארעא דמצרים ואחתת להון מנא מן שׁמייא ואסקת להון בירא מן תהומא ואגיזת להון סלווי מן ימא וחזרו עמי למתרעמא קדמיי על עסק מנה דמיכלי קליל ייתי חויה דלא אתרעם על מזונת

The *Bat Qol* went out from the earth and its voice was heard on high: "Come, see, all creatures, and come, give ear, all you sons of flesh: The serpent was cursed from the beginning and said to it, Dust shall be your food." I brought My people up from the land of Egypt and brought down for them manna from heaven, and I brought a well up from the abyss, and I brought quail over for them from the sea, and My people have turned to murmur before Me on account of the business of the manna, whose food is of little worth. The serpent will come, who did not murmur concerning its food, and will rule over the people who have murmured concerning their food.

32 This idea aligns with God's general tendency to choose the smallest or least likely. Cf. Deut 7:7; 1 Sam 16:11.

Tg. Ps.-J. Num 21:6:

> ברת קלא נפלת מן שמי מרומא וכן אמרת איתון חמון כל בני־נשא כל טבוון דעבדית לעמא אסיקית יתהון פריקין ממצרים אחיתית להון מנא מן שמיא וכדון חזרו ואתרעמו עלוי והא חויא דגזרית עלוי מן יומא שירוי עלמא עפר יהוי מזוניה ולא אתרעם עלוי ועמי אתרעמו על מזונהון וכדון ייתון חוייא דלא אתרעמו על מזונהון וינכתון ית עמא די אתרעמו על מזונהון בכן גרי מימרא דיי בעמא ית חיוון חורמנין ונכיתו ית עמא ומיתו אוכלוסין סגיאין מישראל
>
> The *Bat Qol* fell from the heavens on high, and thus it said, "Come, see, all mankind, all the good things that I have done for the people. I have brought them up redeemed from Egypt. I brought down for them manna from heaven, and now they have turned and murmured against it. And behold the serpent about whom I decreed from the time of the beginning of the world, 'Dust shall be its food,' and it did not murmur against it, but My people have murmured against their food. So now serpents will come, which have not murmured against their food, and they will bite the people who murmur against their food." Then the Memra of the Lord incited venomous serpents against the people, and they bit the people, so that many of the people of Israel died.

A first impression is that this expansion is much more elaborate and longer than the previous ones. Secondly, contrary to *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10 and *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12, the revelation which follows "come, see" in the Targums of Num 21:6 has a negative content. The *Bat Qol* does not praise some of the remarkable features of the man, as it has done concerning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but rather rebukes the whole community of Israel because of their sin of murmuring.

3.3.1. Speaker of the Revelation

Similar as in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10, the phrase אתון חמון is pronounced by the *Bat Qol*. Knowing that this kind of designation in the targumic literature introduces God's act of communication with Israelites, the importance of what is being said is underscored. The text sets his readers in the ambient of God's revelation. It is the heavenly voice that is disclosing before the Israel the real sense of events which took place on the earth. At this point another interesting remark should be made. *Tg. Lam.* 3:38 reads as follows: "From the mouth of God Most High evil does not go forth, without a *Bat Qol* intimating [that it is] because of the robberies with which the earth is filled. But when he desires to decree good in the world, from the mouth of the Holy One it goes forth." This verse provides an interesting characteristic of the targumic theology, which tried to avoid stating that evil could come from the mouth of God or at least it does not come in the same manner as good. In the note to this verse Philip S. Alexander claims:

> God only does so [command evil to take place] in response to human sin. It is sin that is the root cause of evil, not God. Evil ultimately does not issue from God: punishment is his *opus alienum*. God, however, is the direct source of all good … Good and evil do not

> go forth from God's mouth in the same way. That it is to say, one (good) issue from God directly, the other (evil) indirectly, in response to human sin. If people did not sin, God would not issue evil decrees. (Alexander 2007, 155)

The emphasis, therefore, is made to cases in which God has to decree some kind of punishment in the reaction to people's sins.[33] Although this statement seems to be the case of *Tg. Neof.* Num 21:6, there is no other evidence for this claim in the Palestinian Targums. Other occurrences of the *Bat Qol* appear in the context of the announcement of good matters (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10; 27:33; 38:25).

3.3.2. Time of the Revelation

It is not the first time when the Israelites complain against God, but it is the first time, when they are punished so severely. Commenting on the Hebrew version of the Book of Numbers, Timothy R. Ashley notes that in previous case of their complaint about the food, God responded providing them quails to eat. But in Num 21:6 God's reaction is to send fiery serpents that kill many people (Ashley 1993, 402). This divergence in God's responses suggests that the rebellion in Numbers 21 is particularly egregious and requires such severe punishment. Hebrew version of this story immediately after the description of murmurings in v. 5, introduces the action of God which could be treated as an answer for the questions of Israelites. Thus, the reader of the MT is in front of the action and reaction structure of the wilderness story and can be scandalized by the punishment decreed by God. *Targum Neofiti* does not leave God silent. By employing the *Bat Qol*, the narrator introduces a lengthy expansion in which the heavenly voice decrees the serpent's punishment explaining that this is the consequence of sins of the Israelites. The expression "come, see" thus functions once again as an introduction to God's revelation, but this time with a negative content, which explains the divine perspective.

Before examining the content of the *Bat Qol* revelation, another problem must be addressed. *Targum Neofiti* points to the earth as the place the heavenly voice came from (ברת־קלא נפקת מן־גו ארעא). The narrator continues that this voice was heard on high (אישתמע קלי ברומה).[34] *Tg. Ps.-J.* differs on this occasion from *Tg. Neof.* rendering that: "The *Bat Qol* came from the heaven on high (ברת קלא נפלת מן שׁמי מרומא)." This difference raises the question: Is this only a mistake or maybe deliberate change of the author of the Targum? What was the direction of this revelation? As in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12 the reader has been told that addressees of "come, see" were the angels on high, similarly in *Tg. Neof.* Num 21:6 the narrator discloses specific receivers to whom the massage is directed: כל בני בשרא … כל ברייתה (all creatures …

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33 Alexander provides some examples which prove this statement, all from rabbinic literature: b. Sanh. 11a; t. Soṭah 13:2 (Alexander 2007, 154).

34 In the same way the idea is presented by *Frg. Tg.*: ברת קל נפקת מן־גו ארעא ואשׁתמע קלא במרומיא.

all you sons of flesh).[35] It is clear, therefore, that the revelation which follows "come, see" is addressed to the human beings who live in the world. Thus, the target point of the proclamation is on the earth. The logical source, which is suggested by *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, would be heavens (שׁמי מרומא). Why then *Targum Neofiti* reads that the *Bat Qol* "went out from the earth and its voice was heard on high?" It is plausible that, by doing so, the Targum conveys an idea that has been previously discussed. By attributing the proclamation of the punishment to the earth, the Targum suggests that God is not directly responsible for the serpent plague, even though His voice announces it. The *Bat Qol* emerges from the earth – a realm associated with human evil and sin – and is heard from above, signifying that these sins require a just response from the Lord. Thus, the punishment is closely connected to human actions.

3.3.3. Content of the Revelation

The message proclaimed by the *Bat Qol* is unusual. Instead of the praise of uniqueness and obedience of Abraham and Isaac in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10 or "good tidings" about Jacob in *Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12, the heavenly voice in *Tg. Neof.* Num 21:6 reveals the evil deeds and ingratitude of the Israelites. However, the content of Lord's revelation is still the reality which takes place on the earth and concerns specific action of people, their murmuring. After an elaborate introduction, which consists of the exhortation "come, see" and addressee "all mankind," the *Bat Qol* proceeds with the haggadic presentation of salvation history. In some way, the last "come, see," which appears in *Targum Neofiti,* provides a short summary of the events of this history. In the beginning the image of a serpent is introduced as the one which, as the consequence of being cursed by the Lord, was decreed to eat the dust of the earth. Subsequently, the heavenly voice reminds people of all good things that God has done. *Targum Neofiti* lists: deliverance from the land of Egypt, the gift of the food (manna and quails) and water (well in the desert). *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* omits the gift of quails and water underscoring in this way the importance of the manna gift, regarding which the Israelites murmured. Another difference is that according to *Targum Neofiti*, God just brought his people up out of the land of Egypt (אסקת עמי מארעא דמצרים). Whereas in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and *Fragment Targum* the verb "redeem" appears (אסיקית יתהון פריקין ממצרים). Both *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and *Fragment Targum* put the emphasis on the deliverance from the land of Egypt as the act of redemption and on the gift of manna, while *Targum Neofiti* seems to present more general picture of God's providence towards Israelites. However, each version combines the goodness of the Lord with the ingratitude of people. *Targum Neofiti* reads: "My people (עמי) have turned (וחזרו) to murmur (למתרעמא) before Me on account of the business of the manna (על־עסק מנה), whose food is of little worth (דמיכלי קליל)." *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* does not mention the turning of the people and does not

35 *Tg. Ps.-J.*: כל בני־נשׁא (all mankind); *Frg. Tg.*: כל בני־אנשׁא כל בני־בסרה (all creatures, all you sons of flesh).

clarify what was the food regarding which they murmured: "My people (עמי) have murmured (אתרעמו) against their food (על מזונהון)." *Fragment Targum* on this occasion provides the most elaborate version reading: "My people (עמי) have turned (חזרו) to murmur (למתרעמין) before Me on account of the matter of the manna (על עיסק מנא), saying, 'Our souls are in distress (נפשן מעיקא) because of this food, which is of little worth (בלחמא דמיכליה קליל).'" Both *Targum Neofiti* and *Fragment Targum* link the rebellion of the Israelites with the gift of manna.

It is worth to compare the targumic version concerning the reason of the rebellion with the Hebrew text which reads: אין לחם ואין מים ונפשנו קצה בלחם הקלקל (Num 21:5). As Ashley notices: "the cause of the complaints is lack of water and acceptable food … Whether the complaint was about the manna (as in 11:6) or about the food available in the desert is not said. If the former is the case it amounts to a direct rejection of God's providence." (Ashley 1993, 404) This doubt is removed by targumists, who explicitly link the complaints of the people with the gift of manna. It is suggested that their rebellion was not merely against bad conditions in the desert but and above all against God's goodness and providence, which makes their sin greater. The contrast between not complaining of cursed serpent and complaining of the Israelites in illustrative way underlines strongly the ingratitude of them.[36]

Evidently, the expansion introduced by "come, see" points to the acts of the Israelites, this time of negative character, but at the same time invites the readers to go beyond the ordinary observation. The revelation, which follows "come, see" provides God's interpretation of the rebellion of people and brings to light the real weight of their sin. They do not only complain against the lack of food, but they also forget about the benefits they received and underestimate the gift of manna, the sign of God's providence and care, calling it: לחמא דמיכליה קליל (food, which is of little worth). By "come, see" phrase, the reader is invited to contemplate not only the punishment of the fiery serpents, but also the great sin of the people which was in fact the cause of this affliction. Also, in this instance the narrative function of the phrase "come, see" can be uncovered. The expression is addressed to the reader in order to focus his attention not on the external layer of the serpent story, but rather to prompt him to accept divine wisdom which often goes beyond human reasoning.

Conclusion

The study of the phrase "come, see" in the Palestinian Targums has shown that this formula is not a mere invitation for physical movement and observation. In each case examined, what follows this introductory phrase reveals its deeper meaning

36 *Tg. Ps.-J.* in a particular manner emphasizes the act of murmurings repeating the word (רעם) five times in v. 6.

and purpose. The phrase carries a specific and technical significance. This brief investigation has identified five aspects that are common to each use of the phrase "come, see":

1. *Introduction of the revelation*. The phrase "come, see" introduces a divine revelation. What follows this introductory phrase is always the God's message (proclaimed by the *Bat Qol* or the angels). The function of revelation is to reveal something hitherto unknown.
2. *It appears in the crucial moment of salvation history where proper comprehension of the event is required*. In *Tg. Neof.* Gen 22:10 the obedience of Abraham and Isaac gains "merit" that will compel God to "redeem" Israel in the hours of distress. Jacob, in his dream receives the blessing and the promise of the land which will be fundamental for the existence of the future of Israel (*Tg. Neof.* Gen 28:12). In Num 21:6 "come, see" appears on the occasion of the great sin of ingratitude of the Israelites.
3. *The point of departure for the revelation is a common person and his actions*. The revelation does not begin with the description of some transcendental reality. The fundament of what is being revealed is a man (it can be both individual persons, as in case of Jacob, Abraham and Isaac or the Israelites in general) and his deeds or features. Thus, there are being revealed: Abraham, Isaac and their sacrifice, Jacob and his piousness, the Israelites and their sin of murmuring. The first layer of the revelation's content deals with ordinary life.
4. *The aim of the revelation is to lead the receiver to a deeper level of perceiving*. It is not enough to observe the visible reality. The receiver is encouraged to surpass his own human impressions in order to acquire a divine perspective on the event. He is asked to observe Abraham and Isaac but from the perspective of their obedience and uniqueness; to see Jacob as the pious and extremely honored man in the eyes of God; to see the Israelite and their rebellion in the light of graces that God has bestowed upon them in order to comprehend better their ingratitude. Thus, "come, see" introduces a new, profound insight into the meaning of an event which takes place on the earth.
5. *The narrative function of the phrase "come, see" is to direct the reader's attention to the true meaning of an event*. This phrase appears when there is a significant risk of misunderstanding the event. The narrator does not allow the reader to remain passive; instead, the reader is invited to make an effort to look beyond the visible reality and perceive what lies beyond it. The invitation is to view the visible reality from God's perspective. The goal is to understand earthly reality through eyes transformed by divine revelation.

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Conceptio Mariae or *Sanctificatio Mariae*? Peregrine of Opole's Relations with the Dominican Studium Generale in Bologna

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Abstract: This study aims to elucidate the connection between Peregrine of Opole, a Polish Dominican active at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, and the studium generale in Bologna through an analysis of his sermons. The focus is on the concept of the sanctification of Mary (*sanctificatio Mariae*), which appears in both Peregrine's sermons and the writings of Bologna Dominicans such as Bombolognus of Bologna and Jacopo da Varazze. By comparing interpretations of this concept, the study identifies significant similarities that suggest Peregrine of Opole likely completed his theological studies at the Dominican studium generale in Bologna during the late 13th century.

Keywords: Peregrinus de Opole, Bombolognus de Bolonia, Jacopo da Varazze, sermons, Sanctification of Mary, Dominicans, theology, education

Despite Peregrine of Opole's significant achievements, research on his life and work has not produced the expected results, primarily due to the scarcity of source material. Peregrine, a Dominican preacher born around 1260, received the Dominican habit at the monastery in Racibórz, where he also completed his initial studies (Podsiad 1997, VIII). He was elected prior of the monasteries in Racibórz (1303) and Wrocław (1304) on two occasions (Wolny 2001, 31). Between 1306 and 1327, he served three terms as provincial (Wolny 2001, 32). In 1318, Pope John XXII appointed him inquisitor for the dioceses of Kraków and Wrocław. He passed away around 1333 (Podsiad 1997, XIII), leaving behind a collection of 128 sermons *de tempore* and *de sanctis*,[1] compiled in Racibórz between 1297 and 1304 (Podsiad 1997, XIII).

The roles undertaken by Peregrine, along with the sermons he composed, attest to his rigorous intellectual formation and thorough preparation for preaching. It is

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1 Hervé Martin proposed an alternative list, which includes 105 sermons from the *de tempore* cycle and 207 sermons from the *de sanctis* cycle. See Martin 2008, 13.

widely agreed among scholars that Peregrine likely received advanced theological education at one of the Dominican theological centres in Europe. However, the specific location where Peregrine deepened his theological knowledge remains a matter of debate. Identifying the place where this Dominican from Opole continued his studies could reveal the influence of a particular intellectual environment on his theological reflections. To address this question, the study focuses on a theological issue that was extensively discussed by theologians and preachers in the 13th and 14th centuries: the conception of the Virgin Mary. By analysing Peregrine's interpretation of this topic and comparing it with the views of other contemporary theologians and preachers, it may be possible to identify similarities that could suggest the location of his studies and its impact on his preaching. This aspect of Peregrine's work has not been analysed in previous research.

1. Peregrine's Theological Studies

The origins of the first Dominican studium are linked to the Monastery of St. James in Paris, as documented in the Dominican Constitutions of 1220 (Mulchahey 1998, 351). This institution was recognized as a centre of higher education, integrated within the structures of the University of Paris, and was authorized to admit students from all provinces.

The growing popularity of the Dominican Order and the establishment of new monasteries across Europe necessitated rigorous preparation for the ministry of preaching. Consequently, this led to the creation of new institutions of higher learning, known as *studia generalia*. In 1248, the General Chapter in Paris passed a resolution to establish such schools in Oxford, Bologna, Montpellier, and Cologne. Each province was granted the right to send three students annually to Paris and two brothers to each of the other centres (Mulchahey 1998, 351).

In this context, the question of where Peregrine of Opole pursued his studies abroad arises. Polish researchers have expressed varying degrees of caution on this matter. Antoni Podsiad limited his conclusion to the assertion that Peregrine had studied abroad (Podsiad 1997, IX), while Jerzy Wolny suggested that these studies took place in Prague (Wolny 2001, 30). However, it is impossible to overlook the University of Paris, which held a prominent position in the Dominican education system. Nevertheless, both of these hypotheses appear to be untenable.

The likelihood of Paris being the place of education for the Polish Dominican Peregrine seems questionable. Firstly, his sermons reveal no trace of the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Secondly, Peregrine's *sermones* contain pointed criticisms of the Parisian masters, which casts doubt on the possibility that he studied there. For instance, in his sermon on the Memorial of St. Paul the Apostle, he states: "Multi

gloriantur de hoc, quod fuerunt Parisius, ubi sunt boni magistri et qui studuerunt digniores litteratores reputantur, sed Paulus dignior omnibus, quia non Parisius, sed in caelo per ipsum Dominum et hoc in schola angelorum doctus fuit" (Peregrinus, *In Commemoratione sancti Pauli apostoli*, 453–54).[2] Similarly, in the sermon for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, he remarks: "Unde erat quidam obsessus, qui interrogatus de gaudio, quod habent sancti in caelo, respondit: <Si totum caelum esset pergamenum et totum mare encaustum et omnes stellae magistri Parisienses et omnia stramina pennae, certe hi omnes Parisienses nec manibus, nec lingua possent describere minimum gaudium, quod sancti habent de vultu Dei>." (Peregrinus, *In Dominica tertia decima post Pentecosten*, 245)[3]

The quoted fragments of Peregrine of Opole's sermons seem to exclude the possibility that he pursued studies in Paris.

Another hypothesis, proposed by Wolny, suggests that Peregrine might have studied at a studium generale in Prague. However, this hypothesis is also unconvincing. In the 13th century, the Dominicans established studia generalia in Paris, Bologna, Montpellier, Cologne, and Oxford. The studium generale in Prague, however, was not founded until 1347 by order of the General Chapter in Bologna. Therefore, Peregrine could not have received his education in Prague.

Given that Bologna was home to a studium generale of the Dominicans during that period, it is worth considering whether Peregrine of Opole may have received a comprehensive theological education there. Certain aspects of his sermons provide grounds for hypothesizing that he could have studied at the studium generale in Bologna (Filip and Černušák 2002, 190). For instance, his sermons reveal a strong familiarity with geography and events in Italy, such as Dominic's studies at the University of Padua (Peregrinus, *In festo Translationis sancti Dominici confessoris*, 594), references to Dominican monasteries in Pavia (Peregrinus, *In festo sancti Marci evangelistae*, 415) and Milan (Peregrinus, *In festo beati Petri primi martyris*, 580), and detailed accounts of the martyrdom of Peter of Verona in 1252 (Peregrinus, *In festo beati Petri primi martyris*, 578–83). Such knowledge suggests that Peregrine may have gathered this information firsthand while in Italy. Additionally, the Polish Dominican incorporated numerous materials from the *Legenda Aurea* (Iacopo da Varazze 1998) and the *Sermones de Sanctis* (Jacobus de Voragine 1484) by James of Voragine into his sermons.

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2 "Many boast of the fact that they were in Paris, where there are good teachers and those who studied are considered more worthy writers, but Paul is more worthy of all, because he was not in Paris, but in heaven through the Lord himself and this was taught in the school of angels." (Peregrinus, *In Commemoratione sancti Pauli apostoli*, 453–54)

3 "Whence there was a besieged man, who, when asked about the joy that the saints have in heaven, answered: <If the whole sky were parchment and the whole sea were reddened and all the stars were Parisian teachers and all the straws of feathers, certainly these Parisians could not describe with hands or tongue the least joy which the saints have from the face of God." (Peregrinus, *In Dominica tertia decima post Pentecosten*, 245)

2. The Sanctification of Mary in the Sermons of Peregrine of Opole

The hypothesis regarding Peregrine of Opole's theological studies at the studium generale in Bologna necessitates further investigation. The initial step in this inquiry is to analyse how the Dominican interpreted the issue of Mary's conception, with the aim of comparing his views to those of other Dominican theologians of the period, based on the content of his sermons. It should be noted that Peregrine of Opole did not leave behind any sermons entirely dedicated to the conception of the Blessed Virgin. His Marian sermons were delivered during the liturgical celebrations of the four Marian feasts that were part of the calendar at that time: the Purification of Mary (*Purificatio Mariae*), the Annunciation of Mary (*Annuntiatio Mariae*), the Assumption of Mary (*Assumptio Mariae*), and the Nativity of Mary (*Nativitas Mariae*). While some sermons contain brief references to Mary's conception, when these references are collected and analysed as a whole, they provide insight into how Peregrine of Opole understood this theological issue.

2.1. Sermon for the Feast of the Purification of Mary

"Ipsa enim existens in utero materno sanctificata fuit ab originali peccato, fuit magis purificata in mundo, in quo numquam peccavit nec venialiter, quod nemini inter natas mulierum creditur esse donatum secundum Bernardum, sed maxime fuit purissima in Filii conceptione. Sanctus enim sanctorum intrans in ipsam Sanctam Sanctorum effecit, ut in ipsa nulla esset macula." (Peregrinus, *In festo Purificationis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 369)[4]

In the text quoted above, Peregrine does not explicitly mention the conception of Mary (*conceptio Mariae*). Instead, he emphasizes her sanctification (*sanctificatio*) from original sin. This indicates that, according to Peregrine, the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin and subsequently purified and sanctified.

A distinctive aspect of Peregrine of Opole's interpretation of Mary's sanctification is its alignment with the mystery of the Incarnation. Peregrine posits that the conception of the Son of God by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary represented the culmination and fulfilment of a mystery anticipated from eternity. Accordingly, Mary's sanctification was seen as a preparatory step for her role as the Mother of God. Peregrine thus describes a dual sanctification of Mary. The first sanctification occurred in the womb of her mother, while the second took place at the moment of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The phrase "maxime fuit purissima" [she was very

4 "For she herself, existing in her mother's womb, was sanctified from original sin, she was more purified in the world, in which she never sinned even venially, which is believed to have been given to no one born of women, according to Bernard, but above all she was most pure at the conception of her Son. For the Holy of Holies, entering into the Holy of Holies itself, made it so that there was no spot in it." (Peregrinus, *In festo Purificationis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 369)

pure] pertains to this second sanctification, during which the seed of sin (*fomes peccati*) was entirely eradicated.

2.2. Sermon for the Feast of the Annunciation of Mary

"Secundo missus est ad Virginem in anima et corpore formosam. In anima fuit pulchra, quia ante sanctificata quam nata et post conceptionem in tantum fuit confirmata, quod nec venialiter peccare potuit." (Peregrinus, *In festo Annuntiationis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 399)[5]

In this sermon, Peregrine of Opole does not address the conception of Mary explicitly but highlights her sanctification, which he asserts occurred before her birth. The Dominican does not specify the exact timing of Mary's sanctification.

Consistent with his previous sermon, he emphasizes the dual nature of Mary's sanctification: the first took place in the womb of her mother, while the second occurred at the moment of Christ's conception. This latter sanctification resulted in the eradication of the source of sin, thereby ensuring Mary's moral perfection.

2.3. Sermon for the Feast of the Assumption of Mary

"Mirabile quod fuit in sanctitate, quia ante sanctificata fuit quam nata et post conceptionem Filii in tantum fuit conformata, quod nec venialiter peccare potuit." (Peregrinus, *In festo Assumptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 479)[6]

In this sermon, Peregrine of Opole extols the remarkable holiness of Mary, employing the phrase "ante sanctificata fuit quam nata" [She was sanctified before she was born] to indicate her sanctification prior to her birth. Although the concept of Mary's conception in original sin is not explicitly mentioned, the emphasis on her sanctification suggests this underlying belief. Peregrine reiterates the notion of Mary's double sanctification: the first occurring before her birth and the second during the conception of Christ. This second sanctification, effected by the Holy Spirit, resulted in the complete eradication of original sin, enabling Mary to be free from even venial sin. Consequently, Mary is portrayed as surpassing all saints in holiness and beauty (Peregrinus, *In festo Assumptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 479), reflecting her exceptional sanctity among all people (Peregrinus, *In festo Assumptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 480).

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5 "In the second place he was sent to the Virgin, beautiful in soul and body. She was beautiful in soul, because she was sanctified before she was born and she was strengthened after conception to such an extent that she could not even sin venially." (Peregrinus, *In festo Annuntiationis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 399)

6 "It was wonderful that she was in holiness, because she was sanctified before she was born and after the conception of the Son she was shaped to such an extent that she could not even sin venially." (Peregrinus, *In festo Assumptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 479)

2.4. Sermon for the Feast of the Nativity of Mary

"Item secundo nata est sanctissime, quia sanctificata fuit per Spiritum Sanctum, antequam nata." (Peregrinus, *In festo Nativitatis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 499)[7]

In this sermon, Peregrine of Opole underscores that the Blessed Virgin's entrance into the world was preceded by the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit. He employs his characteristic formulation: "sanctificata fuit, antequam nata" [she was sanctified before she was born], emphasizing that Mary's sanctification occurred before her birth. According to Peregrine, this divine intervention rendered her birth supremely holy (*sanctissime*).

In summary, the treatment of the conception of Mary in Peregrine of Opole's sermons is notably sparse. It is addressed in only a few sentences across four Marian sermons. Despite the limited information, an analysis of his views leads to several conclusions. Notably, Peregrine does not use the term 'conceptio' with reference to the Blessed Virgin, reserving it instead for Christ. Rather, he employs the term 'sanctificatio Mariae' to describe Mary's sanctification.

Peregrine of Opole repeatedly employs the phrase "sanctificata fuit, antequam nata," which highlights the dual aspect of Mary's sanctification: her initial contamination by original sin and her subsequent sanctification before birth. This phrase underscores the relationship between sanctification and Mary's birth, a distinctive feature of Peregrine's interpretation. The terminology used by Peregrine does not directly address Mary's conception but instead emphasizes the sanctity of her birth. According to him, the Blessed Virgin's birth acquires its unique significance through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, which frees her from sin.

Another aspect emphasized by Peregrine is the spiritual beauty of the Blessed Virgin, resulting from this sanctification. Thus, for Peregrine, the focus is less on the concept of sin and its cleansing and more on the sanctification and beauty of Mary.

Additionally, the term 'sanctificatio Mariae' in Peregrine's discourse has a Christocentric dimension. Mary's sanctification is intrinsically linked to her future role as the Mother of Christ. Consequently, Peregrine underscores two phases of her sanctification: the first occurring before her birth and the second occurring prior to the conception of Christ. While the initial sanctification by the Holy Spirit neutralized the seed of sin in her womb, the second sanctification, preceding the Incarnation, resulted in the complete elimination of sin.

7 "Also she was born the second time most holy, because she was sanctified by the Holy Spirit before she was born." (Peregrinus, *In festo Nativitatis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, 499)

3. The *Conceptio Mariae* Celebrated in Bologna?

The Franciscan scholar Celestino Piana observed that in thirteenth-century Bologna, the topic of celebrating the Feast of the Conception of Mary attracted more interest from canon law specialists, such as Guido da Baysio and Giovanni Andrea, than from theologians (Piana 1941a, 20). These canonists recognized only four widely acknowledged Marian feasts. Although Giovanni Andrea mentioned locations where the Feast of the Conception of Mary was observed, he himself remained skeptical about such a celebration (Piana 1941a, 20).

Piana rightly pointed out that both St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, when addressing the issue of Mary's conception, referred to the liturgical celebration as a potential argument in the debate concerning the Immaculate Conception. In contrast, Bombolognus of Bologna, a theologian of the local Church, did not address this issue. Instead, he emphasized the Feast of the Nativity of Mary as an argument for Mary's sanctification in her mother's womb (Piana 1941a, 20–21). The Dominican theologian from Bologna associated Mary's sanctification with her birth rather than her conception.

The observation is corroborated by a Franciscan antiphonary from the 13th century, which was intended for the Franciscan monastery in Bologna (Piana 1941a, 21).

Notably, this antiphonary does not include any mention of the Feast of the Conception of Mary.

Similar conclusions are supported by an analysis of various statutes from the city of Bologna: the *Statuti del Comune* from 1250, the *Statuti della Società dei Callegari*, and the *Statuti della Società degli Spadai* from 1283. These documents list only four widely recognized Marian feasts and make no reference to the Conception of Mary (Piana 1941a, 22).

In conclusion, the absence of any references to the Feast of the *Conceptio Mariae* in 13th-century theological writings, canon law, liturgical books, and city statutes used in Bologna suggests that this feast was not observed in Bologna during that period.

4. The Sanctification of Mary in the Commentary on the *Sentences* by Bombolognus of Bologna

Bombolognus of Bologna, a prominent Dominican theologian and commentator on the *Sentences* in the latter half of the 13th century, addressed several aspects of the sanctification of Mary (Piana 1941a, 11). His treatment of this topic, as explored

in Celestino Piana's research published in *Studi Francescani*,[8] encompasses the following dimensions:

a) The sanctification of Mary's body prior to its union with her soul,
b) The sanctification of Mary's soul prior to its union with her body,
c) The sanctification of Mary before her birth (Bombolognus de Bolonia, *Commentaria in III Sententiarum* d. 3, a. 1–2; Piana 1941b, 186–91).

In considering the first possibility, Bombolognus of Bologna dismissed the notion that the body of the Blessed Virgin could have been sanctified before its union with the soul. He argued that divine grace is granted only to a rational creature (*creatura rationalis*) (Bombolognus de Bononia, *Commentaria in III Sententiarum* d. 3, a. 1, q. 1; Piana 1941b, 187), and thus, Mary's body, which lacked a soul, could not have been sanctified. Bombolognus also examined the marital act, which results in human conception and simultaneously serves as the conduit for the transmission of original sin. He distinguishes between the *actus personae* and *actus naturae* in the marital act. Based on this distinction, the Dominican contends that the marital act of Joachim and Anne could be regarded as holy. Since it was an act of a person (*actus personae*), its guiding principle was the will; thus, in this instance, the sexual intercourse could be considered a meritorious act rather than a sinful one (Bombolognus de Bononia, *Commentaria in III Sententiarum* d. 3, a. 1, q. 1; Piana 1941b, 188). However, when considered as *actus naturae*, the marital act is inherently sinful. Therefore, conception itself, arising from this act, could not be meritorious. Furthermore, Bombolognus questions, "How can one speak of sanctity without the Spirit who sanctifies? What connection does the Holy Spirit have with sin, and how can sin be spoken of where there was no lust?"

Bombolognus of Bologna also examines the second possibility, namely, the sanctification of Mary's soul prior to its union with the body. This argument aligns with the views of proponents of the Immaculate Conception, who claimed that if Mary's soul were graced from the moment of its creation, then, upon its union with the body, the body would not transmit original sin to the soul (Bombolognus de Bononia, *Commentaria in III Sententiarum* d. 3, a. 1, q. 2; Piana 1941b, 189). These proponents drew on St. Anselm's argument concerning the hierarchy of beings, with Christ at the pinnacle, whose holiness is reflected in both His body and soul being free from original sin. Next in this hierarchy is the Mother of Christ, whose purity and sanctity, while not equalling that of her Son, surpass those of other saints. Consequently, she is seen as a mediator between humanity and Christ, representing an intermediate level of sanctification Piana 1941a, 19). Bombolognus, however, rejected this hypothesis, arguing that it would undermine the universality of original sin and

8 Bologna, Bibl. Univer., Ms. cod. 755 and Assisi, Bibl. Comun., Ms. cod. 155. See Piana 1941b, 185.

the all-encompassing nature of Christ's redemptive act (Bombolognus de Bononia, *Commentaria in III Sententiarum* d. 3, a. 1, q. 2; Piana 1941b, 189).

The third hypothesis considered the sanctification of Mary occurring after the union of her soul with her body (*animatio*), but before her birth (Bombolognus de Bononia, *Commentaria in III Sententiarum* d. 3, a. 1, q. 3; Piana 1941b, 190). Bombolognus of Bologna posited that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified immediately after her animation (*statim post animationem*).

Additionally, the Dominican theologian highlighted the concept of Mary's double sanctification: the first occurring in her mother's womb and the second occurring before the conception of Christ. The first sanctification involved the purification of the Blessed Virgin from sinful actions, but did not eliminate the possibility of sinning (Bombolognus de Bononia, *Commentaria in III Sententiarum* d. 3, a. 2, q. 2; Piana 1941b, 195). The second sanctification, however, conferred upon her the state of being incapable of sinning (*impossibilitas peccandi*).

The theological reflections presented in the commentary by the Dominican of Bologna indicate that his views were not influenced by the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. Instead, his positions on the conception of Mary align more closely with those of St. Bonaventure (Piana 1941a, 28). The similarities between Bombolognus of Bologna's reflections and those of the Seraphic Doctor become more apparent when comparing their approaches to the issue of Mary's sanctification and the presentation of specific theological arguments (Piana 1941a, 28). Concepts such as *persona media* and *mediatrix* [media persona and mediatrix], which are unfamiliar to Dominican tradition, appear prominently in Franciscan Mariology.

The depiction of Mary's sanctification in Bombolognus's commentary illustrates the Dominican theological perspective developed at the Dominican studium in Bologna, which was notably influenced by Franciscan theological ideas (Piana 1941a, 28).

5. *Sanctificatio Mariae* as Presented by Bombolognus of Bologna and Peregrine of Opole: Similarities and Differences

A comparison of the teaching on the sanctification of Mary as presented in the commentary by Bombolognus of Bologna with the interpretation found in the sermons of Peregrine of Opole reveals notable similarities.

Firstly, both Peregrine of Opole and Bombolognus of Bologna emphasize the sanctification of Mary that occurred in the womb of her mother, prior to her birth. Both theologians highlight this aspect with the phrase "Beata Virgo sanctificata fuit antequam nata." Neither the Dominican from Bologna nor the preacher from Opole focused on Mary's purification from original sin but rather on her sanctification.

In addition to the sanctification before Mary's birth, both authors refer to another sanctification that took place before the conception of the Son of God. At this moment, through the action of the Holy Spirit, Mary was confirmed in holiness to such a degree that she was rendered incapable of committing even a venial sin. Consequently, the holiness of the Blessed Virgin surpassed that of all other saints, making her the most esteemed among all people. Both Bombolognus and Peregrine emphasized Mary's mediating role between Christ and sin-afflicted humanity.

The observed similarities suggest an influence of Bombolognus of Bologna's theology on the reflections of the Dominican from Opole, leading to the hypothesis that Peregrine of Opole may have received his education at the Dominican studium generale in Bologna. To test this hypothesis, a subsequent research step has been undertaken. Given the significant impact of Jacopo de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* on Peregrine's preaching, a comparative analysis was conducted between Peregrine's interpretation of the conception of Mary and the corresponding interpretation found in Jacopo de Voragine's *Sermones de Sanctis*.

6. The Sanctification of Mary in Jacopo da Voragine's *Sermones de Sanctis*

As Giovanni Paolo Maggioni has observed, the *Legenda Aurea* was initially intended not as a devotional text for laypeople but as a handbook for preachers, offering material for sermon composition (Maggioni 2013, 23).

To effectively utilize the resources provided in the *Legenda Aurea*, Jacopo de Voragine compiled a series of *Sermones de Sanctis*, which served as a guide for preaching based on the *Golden Legend*.

These *Sermones de Sanctis* functioned as a tool for interpreting hagiographic figures, drawing upon the narratives presented in the *Legenda Aurea*. In these sermons, the Dominican demonstrated how to derive moral and spiritual insights from the hagiographic texts, thereby integrating and harmonizing the diverse stories they contained (Maggioni 2013, 24).

The *Sermones de Sanctis* by Jacopo da Voragine include homilies on four Marian feasts observed in the 13th century: the Purification of Mary (*Purificatio*), the Annunciation (*Annuntiatio*), the Assumption (*Assumptio*), and the Nativity of Mary (*Nativitas Mariae*). A detailed analysis of these Marian sermons reveals that Jacopo de Voragine does not employ the term 'Conceptio Mariae' in reference to the Virgin Mary. This term, which describes the inception of Jesus' earthly existence in the womb of the Virgin Mary, is notably absent from his sermons.

Instead, Jacopo de Voragine uses the term 'sanctificatio' to describe the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin. For instance, in the sermon on the Purification of Mary,

he states, "ipsa enim fuit sanctificata" (Jacobus de Voragine, *De Purificatione Marie*, XLIIIrb).[9] A similar expression is found in the sermon on *De Assumptione Marie* (Jacobus de Voragine, *De Assumptione Marie III,* CXXIIvb). A distinctive feature of Jacopo de Voragine's Marian sermons is their Christocentric perspective. The concept of Mary's double sanctification is framed in the context of Christ's conception: the first sanctification occurred in her mother's womb, and the second prepared her for the mystery of the Incarnation (Jacobus de Voragine, *De Annuntiatione Marie I*, LVva).

The research indicates that Jacopo de Voragine focused on the sanctification of Mary rather than her conception. It is noteworthy that, unlike Peregrine of Opole, the Italian Dominican did not use the term 'sanctificatio Mariae' in reference to the birth of Mary.

7. The Influence of Jacopo de Voragine's *Sermones de Sanctis* on the Preaching of Peregrine of Opole

It is evident that Jacopo de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* significantly influenced the preaching of Peregrine of Opole. The *Legenda Aurea* provided sources for various details included in Opole's sermons, such as Mary's presence in the Temple (Iacopo da Vorazze 1998, 905–6) and the appearances of the Risen Christ to the Mother of Jesus and to the Apostle James (Peregrinus, *In festo Resurrectionis*, 115). The *Golden Legend* also supplied exempla for preaching, including the story of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist (Iacopo da Varazze 1998, 95; Peregrinus, *In Dominica decima octava post Pentecosten,* 267–68).

In this context, it is pertinent to explore the potential impact of Jacopo de Voragine's Mariology, as presented in his *Sermones de Sanctis*, on Peregrine of Opole's preaching. Comparative analysis reveals notable similarities between the two preachers. Both Jacopo de Voragine and Peregrine of Opole focused on the sanctification of Mary rather than her conception.

A key distinction lies in the term used by Peregrine of Opole: *sanctificata in utero antequam nata* [sanctified in the womb before birth]. This term, referring to Mary's sanctification relative to her birth, is unique to Peregrine and is not found in Jacopo de Voragine's Mariology. The latter's writings do not incorporate this specific interpretation.

Another similarity is their Christocentric perspective. Both preachers discuss Mary's double sanctification in the context of preparing for the Incarnation of Christ. They emphasize Mary's spiritual beauty and sinlessness, achieved through the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit.

9 "[…] for she herself was sanctified." (Jacobus de Voragine, *De Purificatione Marie*, 43)

However, it is notable that neither Peregrine of Opole nor Jacopo de Voragine addresses the celebration of Mary's conception – a topic of considerable debate in the Parisian theological milieu. This omission indicates that the issue of Mary's conception was not a focus of theological reflection in either northern Italy or Poland during this period (Wojtkowski 1958, 113).

Conclusion

The research conducted reveals that the concept of the sanctification of Mary as presented in the sermons of Peregrine of Opole aligns closely with the interpretation found in the commentary on the *Sentences* by Bombolognus of Bologna. A key element linking both perspectives is the association of sanctification with birth: "sanctificata antequam nata." This distinctive approach underscores the influence of Bombolognus of Bologna on Peregrine of Opole's Mariological views and supports the hypothesis that Peregrine likely completed his theological studies at the Dominican studium generale in Bologna.

The examination of writings from Dominican theologians affiliated with the Bologna centre highlights a particular approach to the sanctification of Mary (*sanctificatio Mariae*). The Italian theologians, including Bombolognus of Bologna and Jacopo de Voragine, emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in both cleansing the Blessed Virgin from sin and sanctifying her. Their theological reflections were centred on a Christological perspective, viewing the double sanctification of Mary as preparatory for the mystery of the Incarnation. Conversely, the conception of Mary (*conceptio Mariae*) was not a focus of their interest. This omission can be attributed to the absence of a liturgical celebration of this feast in thirteenth-century Bologna and to the distinct theological trajectory of the Bologna centre, which differed from the Parisian tradition.

Comparing the treatment of the sanctification of Mary in the sermons of Peregrine of Opole with the interpretations found in the writings of Jacopo de Voragine and Bombolognus of Bologna reveals elements of a distinctive Dominican theology specific to the Lombard region. This perspective differs notably from the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, which, following his canonization, swiftly became the standard for all academic centres within the Dominican Order.

Translated by Agata Dolacińska-Śróda

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SHORT STUDIES/PRZYCZYNKI

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"Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into…" Dependence of Matt 22:13 on Plato's Euthyphro 4c?

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Abstract: There is a striking similarity, both in form and content, between Matt 22:13, where the king punishes the invited guest for lacking a "wedding robe," and Plato's *Euthyphro* 4c, where Euthyphro's father punishes the hired laborer for murder. The most probable explanation for these similarities is that Matt 22:13 reflects an echo of Plato's text.

Keywords: Matthew, Plato, Euthyphro, intertextuality

In Matt 22, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a king who held a wedding feast for his son. However, the invited guests disregard the king's invitation, killing the servants he sent. The king becomes furious and orders their execution:

> 8 Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy.
> 9 Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet."
> 10 Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good
> and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to see
> the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, 12 and he said
> to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless.
> 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into
> (δήσαντες αὐτοῦ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐκβάλετε αὐτόν εἰς) the outer darkness, where there
> will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" (Matt 22:8–13 NRSV)[1]

In Plato's dialogue, *Euthyphro* (4th c. BC), Euthyphro, an Athenian religious prophet, informs Socrates that he has brought charges against his father for murder. We then read:

> The man who was killed was a hired workman of mine, and when we were farming at
> Naxos, he was working there on our land. Now he got drunk, got angry with one of our
> house slaves, and butchered him. So my father bound him hand and foot, threw him into
> (συνδήσας τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ, καταβαλὼν εἰς) a ditch, and sent a man here

1 The Greek text according to NA[28].

> to Athens to ask the religious adviser what he ought to do. [4d] In the meantime he paid no attention to the man as he lay there bound, and neglected him, thinking that he was a murderer and it did not matter if he were to die. And that is just what happened to him. For he died of hunger and cold and his bonds. (*Euthyphr.* 4c–d; LCL 36, 15)

The similarity between the phrases "δήσαντες αὐτοῦ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐκβάλετε αὐτόν εἰς…" (Matt 22:13) and "συνδήσας τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ, καταβαλὼν εἰς…" (*Euthyphr.* 4c) immediately catches the eye.[2] These phrases share a formal resemblance unique among known texts in ancient literature (TLG): within a radius of 9 words, the character sequences δησ, ποδασ, χειρασ, βαλ, εισ appear in the same order.[3] The similarity deepens when we notice that these character sequences either form identical words (πόδας, χεῖρας, εἰς) or analogous words (δήσαντες / συν-δήσας as forms of the aorist active participle of the verb δέω; ἐκ-βάλετε / κατα-βαλών as forms of the aorist of the verb βάλλω). Moreover, contextually, these narratives are similar to such a degree that one could construct a story that equally encapsulates both of them (CND)[4]: "A stranger arrives at a place where, in a convivial situation, he commits a specific reprehensible act. The master of the place orders the outsider to be bound hand and foot and then cast into a dark place, where he subsequently experiences ultimate suffering."

How can this similarity between the two stories be explained without resorting to the category of coincidence? Admittedly, we could imagine that a ruler binding someone hand and foot and casting them into some dark place is something that could occur under virtually any latitude or longitude. However, the fact that the specific reprehensible act is committed by an outsider in a convivial situation, and that the ultimate suffering he experiences as a consequence of this act serves as the climax and resolution of a self-contained narrative unit, compels us to consider the possibility of a connection between the two texts. There is not the slightest indication that we are dealing with a "narratological scheme" in the Proppian sense.

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2 As far as I know, no one in the scholarly literature has yet noted this similarity. Only John Duncan Martin Derrett, in the margin of his study dedicated to exploring the connection between the description of Lazarus in John 11:44 (ὁ τεθνηκὼς δεδεμένος τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας) and Matt 22:13, as a parallel passage also mentions *Euthyphr.* 4c: "It is obvious that, to arrest people, and to prevent them from moving, both feet and hands should be tied. Isaac asked to be tied by hands and feet (Tanhuma, ed. Buber, *Wayyirá*', 114). Evidence from Homer (*Od.* 22.173, 189) and from Plato (*Euthyphro* 4c) confirms that this was the procedure." (Derrett 1995, 195) Derrett pointed out *Odyssey*, where Odysseus gives the order to capture and imprison the goatherd Melanthius: "but do you two bend behind him his feet and his arms above, and throw him into the storeroom [σφῶϊ δ' ἀποστρέψαντε πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὕπερθεν | ἐς θάλαμον βαλέειν]." (*Od.* 22.173–74) The verb βάλλω also appears here as well as the preposition ἐς. A similarity to both *Euthyphr.* 4c and Matt 22:13, however, emphasizes an even greater similarity that exists between *Euthyphr.* 4c and Matt 22:13. It cannot be ruled out that Plato, who knew Homer "by heart," was inspired (perhaps subconsciously) by *Od.* 22.173–74.

3 Accessed July 7, 2024. https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/. For comparison, see n. 2.

4 "Common Narrative Denominator." (Kozlowski and Poloczek 2024, 3)

Nor is there any evidence to suggest that Matt 22:8–13 and *Euthyphr.* 4c–d depend on the same source. Let us now examine the plausibility of Matthew being directly inspired by Plato.

In Galatians Paul most probably references the Plato's *Apology of Socrates* (Reece 2022, 215; Renehan 1973, 23–24). In recent years, a number of references to Plato's dialogues have been identified in Luke: *Timaeus* (Hubbard 2022), *Apology of Socrates* (Chodyko and Kozlowski 2023; Reece 2021) and *Phaedo* (Kozlowski 2024). As far as I know, no references to Plato's dialogues have been identified in Matthew so far. However, we do know that Matthew contains obvious references to the text of Aesop's fables (Reece 2016). In light of the above, the most plausible explanation for the formal and contextual parallels between the texts is that *Euthyphr.* 4c is a hypotext of Matt 22:8–13. It does not seem that we are dealing with a reference that is significant for interpretation: by recognizing this reference, we do not learn anything about the meaning of the parable that we did not already know. We would therefore be dealing here with an *echo* of Plato's text, as understood by Benjamin D. Sommer.[5] The evangelist, at some point in his literary formation, must have encountered the beginning of *Euthyphro* and remembered that phrase along with the context in which it appears. Subsequently, in a narrative situation deemed analogous by him, he used it as a sort of template.

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5 "An echo alters nothing in the interpretation of the sign itself, though the presence of a familiar phrase makes the text more interesting." (Sommer 1998, 16)

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REVIEWS/RECENZJE

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John S. Bergsma and Jeffrey L. Morrow, *Murmuring Against Moses: The Contentious History and Contested Future of Pentateuchal Studies* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2023). Pp. 308. 39,95 USD. ISBN: 978-1-64585-149-3 (hardcover), 978-1-64585-150-9 (paperback), 978-1-64585–151-6 (e-book)

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Research on the Pentateuch has undergone quite a radical transformation over the last several decades. The Documentary Hypothesis (also known as Source Theory), dominant since the end of the 19th century and was mainly associated with the name of Julius Wellhausen, began to be subjected to thorough criticism starting from the late 1960s, which resulted in many new hypotheses at the turn of the 20th century about the creation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Torah). Although The Documentary Hypothesis itself has not stood the test of time, many of its elements have survived in these new hypotheses. What is common to all these new theories is the belief that the Pentateuch in its current form was finally formed during the so-called Second Temple period (after the Babylonian Exile), and its oldest traditions (e.g. the laws known as the Book of the Covenant, traditions about Jacob-Israel) date back to the 8th century BC. The first compositions, combining various elements of the tradition with Moses and then perhaps also with traditions about the patriarchs (Jacob), appeared shortly before the fall of the kingdom of Judah (end of the 7th century BC), and were gradually expanded by deuteronomistic, priestly and post-priestly circles. Without ignoring the differences in the way these processes are explained, the one common element of all the new hypotheses is the belief that the Pentateuch was written in a rather late period (5th–4th century BC). This research consensus is stated in the monograph by John S. Bergsma and Jeffrey L. Morrow, *Murmuring Against Moses*. As the authors of the study under review write:

> We are not going to argue that Moses is the author of Pentateuch. In fact, we are not going to come to a conclusion on who is responsible for the Pentateuch in its final form. We are not even going to come to a conclusion as to precisely when the Pentateuch was written or finalised. What our work hopes to accomplish is to challenge the hegemony of standard source-critical approaches to the composition of the Pentateuch and to highlight new evidence for the Pentateuch's antiquity, at least prior the Babylonian Exile (p. X).

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Bergsma and Morrow divided their monograph into three parts. Each part consists of three chapters. In the introduction, they present not only their research goals, but also an overview of their work (pp. IX–XIII). The book includes an extensive bibliography at the end (pp. 255–308).

In part one ("Moses and the Sources: A Survey of Challenges to the Documentary Hypothesis," pp. 3–72), they discuss various positions challenging the Documentary Hypothesis, starting with the first fifty years of literary challenges (stylistic unity indicated in the first half of the 20th century), then looking at the Pentateuch from perspective of Ancient Near Eastern Studies and Archaeology, and finally considering the wide application beyond Pentateuchal Studies in the source-critical studies of other parts of the Bible (21th century). As the authors themselves write: "The second and third chapters pick up where the first left off and continue the survey for remainder of the twentieth century into the twenty-first, primarily from the perspective of the disciplines of archaeology and ancient Near Eastern studies" (p. XII).

In part two ("New Evidence for the Antiquity of the Pentateuch," pp. 81–169), both researchers prove the antiquity of the Pentateuch by referring to the example of the Samaritan Pentateuch as well as the Prophets. Pointing to the evidence in the form of quotation or allusion to all of the alleged sources (P, H, and D, composed or edited according to traditional dating after the Babylonian Exile, i.e. 587–537 BC) in the pre-exilic or exilic prophets, "as well the absence of any focus on Jerusalem in the Pentateuch, which is difficult to explain in the post-exilic period in the face of the rise of Samaritanism and the Samaritan embrace of the Pentateuch" (p. XI). Both authors argue here that the traditional point of view ("Scholars typically view Leviticus and Deuteronomy [P/H and D] as influenced by the Prophets," p. XII) requires change and they convince readers of this by pointing out that "the evidence examined in this chapter (i.e. chapter IV) supports the view that Leviticus and Deuteronomy were written prior to the exilic prophets, mainly Ezechiel and Jeremiah" (p. XII). Then they draw attention (chapter V) to "the complete absence of Zion theology from the Torah… There is no mention of Jerusalem anywhere in the Pentateuch, nor is there any mention of the Temple, nor of the Davidic Kingdom" (p. XII), and ultimately they notice that "the Pentateuch, even the Masoretic Text, has a much more northern tone to it than is usually recognised. Such a northern focus favours the Samaritans in ways that do not make sense if much of this was the product of the southern Kingdom of Judah, or priests in Jerusalem attempting to weaponise Israelite tradition with a Southern-focuses text after Exile" (p. XII). The last chapter (VI) "focus[es] in more details on the presence of Zion theology in all the other parts of the Hebrew Bible *except* the Pentateuch" (p. XII).

Part three ("The History of Pentateuchal Source Criticism," pp. 173–253) concludes with a history of Pentateuchal source criticism from its earliest stages in late antiquity (Gnostic and Roman anti-Christian polemics) to the medieval Muslim period, showing how these arguments denying Mosaic authorship and origin of

Pentateuch survived in the medieval Latin Christian West, the Renaissance and early Enlightenment (17th century AD). In chapter VIII, "focus is on the early modern skeptics who begin to speculate on late dating the Pentateuch to the period after Babylonian Exile…to challenge the Pentateuch's Mosaic authorship based on stylistic criteria and on apparent anachronisms in the text" (p. XII). The final chapter (IX) examines how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars build upon this skeptical textual foundation with literary theories designed to identify distinct sources underlying the Pentateuch. This process reached its zenith in Julius Wellhausen's classic formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis at the end of the 19th century.

Looking from the perspective of this "research plan," Bergsma and Morrow argue that the Pentateuch, at least in its essential part, was written before the Babylonian Exile in the North (Samaritan Pentateuch), and that the theories leading to the shift of its date of origin to the period after the Babylonian Exile and to Judea were the result of the tendency to deny the Mosaic authorship of this work. Are the arguments given by the two authors sufficient to undermine the existing consensus?[1]

The list of researchers contesting Wellhausen's theory and arguments – e.g., the problem of the Samaritan Pentateuch (J. Iverach Munro); stylistic unity, insufficiency of the criterion for changing the divine name (Arthur H. Finn); literary unity (Umberto Cassuto); antiquity of P (Yehezel Kaufmann); historical and archaeological arguments (William F. Albright, Cyrus H. Gordon; Moshe Weinfeld; Kenneth Kitchen; Edwin Yamauchi) – provides a good but insufficient review of the history of Pentateuch research.[2] It does not contain any counter-arguments that have emerged in relation to the assumptions made by the above-mentioned researchers. This review is therefore considered to be quite selective and it is structured according to the adopted thesis. It is no different for authors writing after 1980. The monograph mentions various arguments challenging the theories about the late origin of the Pentateuch, but they lack a critical assessment or at least attention to the weaknesses of many of the assumptions. As an example, one can mention the contribution by Isaac Kikawada and Arthur Quinn (pp. 61–64), who argue for the "carefully constructed unified whole (chiastic structure)" of many texts from Gen 1–11. However, this does not change the fact that there are also differences of a critical and literary nature which are not mentioned in the monograph in question.

A similar problem arises in chapter 4, in which our researchers pose the question: "the law before the prophets or the prophets before the law?" (pp. 81–124). Here, they find "the strength of arguments" mainly in the analysis of selected texts from the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah. In the summary, they write: "Using the two books of sixth-century priest-prophets Ezechiel and Jeremiah, we have shown that

1 On this topic, see Gertz et al. 2016; Krause et al. 2020; Lemański 2023b.

2 On this topic, see Dozeman 2017, 33–199; Lemański 2020, 65–186.

both works exhibit many instances of the conflation of the distinctive diction and concepts of the Pentateuchal texts ascribed to the priestly and holiness schools on the one hand, and of Deuteronomy on the other" (p. 123). They draw the following conclusion from this: "at last from the sixty century and probably from much earlier (based on evidence of Hosea), both so called 'P' and so-called 'D' were extant and considered authoritative for the people of Israel" (p. 124). Once again, when discussing the texts, it is necessary to take into account, for the sake of balance, the critical and literary elements regarding the texts of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In both cases, of course, it is not always necessary to agree with the conclusions drawn from this or that type of analysis (which is especially difficult in the case of Ezekiel), but pointing them out is always important because it allows us to approach the conclusions drawn by the two authors with a little more caution.

The most interesting parts of the monograph are undoubtedly chapter V: "The Elephant Not in the Room: The Implication of the Absence of Zion and the Northern Israelite Character of the Pentateuch" (pp. 125–43) and chapter VI: "Did Post-Exilic Judaism Really Abandon Zion Theology?" (pp. 145–69). The authors rightly note the problem of the absence of the so-called Zion Theology in the Pentateuch, as well as the lack of explicit mention of the "central" importance of the temple in Jerusalem. In the latter case, the authors write: "the Pentateuch mentions Jerusalem not at all, and Gerizim only twice, so one would have to conclude that neither Judean nor Samaritan interests were heavily at work in the redaction of the text of the 'Common Pentateuch'; otherwise, one would expect more decisive interventions in the text resolving the controversy of the location of the central sanctuary – such interventions as we do, indeed, find in the Samaritan Pentateuch. Certainly Genesis, with its emphasis on the sacrality of several locations within the land – especially Bethel, but also Shechem, Hebron, Beersheba – as the potential to subvert or destabilise Deuteronomy's insistence on a single place of worship for the whole nation" (p. 131). They further note that "Zion theology tends to be a dominant theme in most of the books of the Old Testament: certainly in the Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy through 2 Kings), the Chronicler, the Psalms, and the major and minor Prophets. There are even important connections to it in the wisdom literature. However, Zion theology is absent from the Pentateuch. Neither David, nor Jerusalem, nor the Temple are ever mentioned in Genesis through Deuteronomy" (pp. 145–46). Therefore, they are right to ask the question: "How can this be explained?" (p. 146). Then, they go on to argue that "several scholars have begun to abandon the notion that Deuteronomy's 'place that the LORD your God will choose' is or was ever intended to be a thinly-guised cipher for Jerusalem" (p. 146). According to them, this was influenced by the discovery of "a rival candidate" for the temple in Jerusalem on Mount Gerizim (dating back to 450 BC). Its existence – according to our researchers – would have only encouraged "the Jerusalem priesthood…to be much more explicit about the divinely chosen city and sanctuary

if they wished the Pentateuch to provide religious legitimation for Jerusalem and its Temple" (p. 147).

Bergsma and Morrow discuss two theories on this topic (pp. 147–49). The first one (Gary Knopers, Christophe Nihan), assumes that "The Pentateuch is a collaborative document between the Jerusalem and Gerizim priesthoods designed to provide a common foundational religious text that allowed latitude in the interpretation of the exact location of the one central sanctuary. Judean took it to be Jerusalem, Samaritans Gerizim, but otherwise both could accept the Torah" (p. 147). The second one (Jean-Louis Ska) "argues that cities destroyed by foreigners in the ancient Near East were considered accursed, and this in part explains why post-exilic Judeans omitted Jerusalem from their sacred history as recorded in the Pentateuch" (p. 148). The validity of both proposals is questioned by the authors of the discussed monography. Firstly, because there is "no literary evidence whatsoever that any group or sect within Palestinian post-exilic Judaism responded to the trauma of Jerusalem to their faith, seeking refuge instead in a purely religion focused on the mosaic Torah" (p. 148). Secondly, because "majority of religious texts that are commonly thought to be composed or redacted in Judah during the Persian Period represent a heightened focus on the great triad of Zion Theology (Davide, Jerusalem, Temple) over against older texts" (p. 162; arguments cf. pp. 149–62). Summarizing the analysis, the two researchers came to the following conclusion:

> We need to acknowledge that the 'common Pentateuch', with its (1) absence of Zion, (2) valorization of northern religious sites (esp. Shechem and Gerizim), and (3) subjugation of (southern) Judah to (northern) Joseph (Deut 33,7 vs. Deut 33,13–17) look like an outlier when placed among all the post-exilic sacred documents of Judaism. Therefore, it must either be a product of the northern Samaritans that was then adopted by the Judeans, or else the common patrimony of the Judeans and Samaritans reaching back into the pre-exilic period to a time when the Pentateuchal vision of Israelite unity under Josephite leadership (Gen 37,5–11; 49, 26; Deut 33,17) could have been acceptable even to the Judeans (p. 167–68).

The absence of Zion Theology (but cf. Exod 15:17) and no mention of the importance of temple in Jerusalem (apart from uncertain allusions in Gen 2:13: Gihon, cf. 1 Kgs 1:33; Gen 14:18, cf. Ps 76:2 uncertain; Gen 22:2: Moriah, cf. 2 Chr 3:1; *Jubilees* 18:13: Salomon's Temple) is in fact an interesting and important problem that needs to be solved. Bergsma and Morrow's proposal is one of the possible theories attempting to unravel the mystery. However, it must be remembered that in this study they are contesting the prevailing findings on the creation of the Pentateuch. Due to what they propose (the pre-exilic dating of the Pentateuch), they do not address the issue of Moses, who is the dominant figure in the Pentateuch but almost absent elsewhere in pre-exilic texts (outside Judean Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic

History) (Lemański 2022). Apparently, there is no mention of Abraham or prehistory in the texts from this period (but cf. Ezekiel).[3] These and many other issues would also need to be resolved in order to accept the tentative thesis put forward by the two authors at the end of their monograph.

The lack of emphasis on the central importance of the sanctuary in Jerusalem may also be the result of a change in theological awareness after the Babylonian Exile. This process is visible (1) in Ezekiel, for whom the sphere of the sacred no longer belongs only to the sanctuary, but to the entire city of Jerusalem (Ezek 43:12), and God's presence is not limited to Jerusalem (Ezek 10:18–22; 11:22–25), (2) in the statement of Jeremiah questioning the inviolability of the temple in Jerusalem (Jer 7) and (3) then also in priestly texts, in which the sanctuary is located where the chosen people are present (Exod 25–31; 35–40; portable Temple), which reaches its apogee in the extending the spheres of the sacred to the entire nation and to all aspects of its everyday life (cf. Leviticus: Theology of Holiness) (Lemański 2023a).

Admittedly, the monograph in question is an interesting voice in the discussion on the creation of the Pentateuch, but as a whole it is not entirely convincing, because it combines only a certain sequence of important arguments, while ignoring other issues raised and resolved in more "classical" studies on the origins of the Pentateuch. Nevertheless, this voice in the discussion is worth noting and the doubts raised in it should be analysed, which is what the authors themselves indicate, admitting at the beginning – as already mentioned – that they do not propose a comprehensive and definitive solution to the issue of the creation of the Pentateuch.

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Maciej Raczyński-Rożek. *Dwie ręce Ojca. Chrystologia Ducha w ujęciu Hansa Ursa von Balthasara i Sergiusza Bułgakowa* (Myśl Teologiczna 116. Kraków: WAM, 2024). Ss. 524. 62,90 PLN. ISBN 978-83-277-3909-4

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Nakładem krakowskiego wydawnictwa WAM, w prestiżowej serii Myśl Teologiczna, ukazała się książka ks. dr. Macieja Raczyńskiego-Rożka z Akademii Katolickiej w Warszawie *Dwie ręce Ojca. Chrystologia Ducha w ujęciu Hansa Ursa von Balthasara i Sergiusza Bułgakowa*. Autor książki jest teologiem dogmatycznym, który dał się już poznać jako znawca myśli Balthasara i Bułgakowa. Jego zainteresowanie dialogiem między myślą katolicką a prawosławną zaowocowało monografią zbiorową pod jego redakcją *Teologia między Wschodem a Zachodem* (Dobrzeniecki and Raczyński-Rożek 2019). Swój doktorat poświęcił idei nadziei powszechnego zbawienia w pismach Balthasara. W swoich dotychczasowych artykułach poruszał m.in. zagadnienia eschatologiczne i angeologiczne u wyżej wymienionych autorów. Teraz przyszedł czas na monografię poświęconą centralnemu tematowi obu teologów, to jest chrystologii Ducha. Jest to kwestia w zasadzie nieobecna w polskim piśmiennictwie teologicznym, a przecież wiąże w sobie najistotniejsze dogmaty teologii chrześcijańskiej – o Trójcy Świętej i o Wcieleniu. W 1979 roku Międzynarodowa Komisja Teologiczna wydała dokument *Wybrane zagadnienia z chrystologii*, w którym określiła ramy uprawiania katolickiej chrystologii. Członkowie komisji podkreślili w nim ciągłą konieczność aktualizacji nauczania Soborów Chalcedońskiego i Konstantynopolitańskiego III, a według nich w tym zadaniu szczególne znaczenie mają pneumatologiczne i kosmiczne wymiary chrystologii. Jako że chrystologia Ducha to nic innego jak chrystologia wydobywająca pneumatologiczne aspekty w życiu, misji i zbawczym dziele Jezusa Chrystusa, to można bez cienia przesady stwierdzić, że dzięki oryginalnej i pionierskiej pracy Raczyńskiego-Rożka polska teologia wreszcie spełnia na własnym podwórku ten bez mała półwieczny postulat Międzynarodowej Komisji Teologicznej.

Praca *Dwie ręce Ojca* ma przejrzysty i logiczny układ. Składa się z trzech części, z których dwie pierwsze mają po sześć rozdziałów, zaś ostatnia – dwa. Autor w pierwszej części („Chrystologia Ducha w sofiologii Sergiusza Bułgakowa") gruntownie przygląda się teologii Sergiusza Bułgakowa, następnie w drugiej części

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(„Chrystologia Ducha w trynitologii Hansa Ursa von Balthasara") przechodzi do omawiania teologii Hansa Ursa von Balthasara, by wreszcie w części trzeciej podsumować wyniki swoich badań i zestawić obu omawianych myślicieli. Otrzymujemy w ten sposób nie tylko dzieło omawiające kwestie związane z chrystologią Ducha, ale także bardzo rzetelne i całościowe opracowanie myśli dwóch czołowych teologów XX wieku. Prześledźmy dokładniej tok wywodu Raczyńskiego-Rożka.

We Wstępie przedstawia on pojęcie chrystologii Ducha oraz wskazuje na jego wagę w dwudziestowiecznej teologii. Ten fragment skądinąd wymagającej w lekturze książki jest bardzo przystępnym wprowadzeniem do zagadnienia, potrzebnym ze względu na rzadkie jego występowanie w polskiej literaturze teologicznej. Autor przyjął w nim postawę polemiczną: chce przede wszystkim uzasadnić wagę poruszanej przez siebie problematyki, a czyni to przez wskazanie na znanych i cenionych teologów, którzy uznali chrystologię Ducha za obiecujący kierunek rozwoju współczesnej chrystologii. I tak, Karl Barth znany z chrystocentryczności swojej propozycji teologicznej, twierdził, że gdyby miał więcej czasu, to na nowo przemyślałby swoje *opus magnum*, *Dogmatykę kościelną*, tym razem z perspektywy Ducha Świętego. Yves Congar, tomista, zauważał pewien brak w chrystologii św. Tomasza, a który to brak polegał na pomniejszonej roli Ducha Świętego. Autor ten twierdził, że wynikało to głównie z nieuwzględnienia przez Akwinatę aspektu historycznego. Walter Kasper, opowiadając się za chrystologią pneumatologiczną, twierdził, że pozwala ona ująć pośrednictwo Chrystusa w aspekcie trynitarnym.

Dalej Raczyński-Rożek przechodzi do określenia istoty chrystologii pneumatologicznej. Według niego „chrystologia Ducha kładzie nacisk na historyczne urzeczywistnianie się wydarzenia Jezusa: od momentu Wcielenia po jego kulminację w Zmartwychwstaniu. Od narodzin, przez Chrzest w Jordanie, całą publiczną działalność, aż po śmierć i Zmartwychwstanie Duch prowadzi Jezusa" (s. 13). Chrystologia Ducha podkreśla nierozerwalny związek Drugiej i Trzeciej Osoby Trójcy Świętej w objawianiu Boga – tym też zresztą można wytłumaczyć tytuł dzieła Raczyńskiego-Rożka zapożyczony od św. Ireneusza z Lyonu – *Dwie ręce Ojca*. Oznacza on, że Bóg w swoim wyjściu ku stworzeniu posługuje się niejako „dwoma rękami" – Logosem i Duchem, a rolą teologów jest ten sposób objawienia poprawnie zinterpretować i opisać. W chrystologii Ducha za Louisem Bouyer można wyróżnić dwa zasadnicze motywy: historyczny, podkreślony w powyższym cytacie, w którym kluczowe jest dostrzeganie w historii zbawienia „wspólnego, ale i rozróżnialnego działania Logosu i Ducha" (s. 17), oraz wewnątrztrynitarny, którego główną zasadą jest ta mówiąca, że wewnętrzne życie Trójcy Świętej jest podstawą wszelkiej jej aktywności. To rozróżnienie uzasadnia dokonany przez Raczyńskiego-Rożka wybór teologów w jego prezentacji chrystologii pneumatologicznej. Pierwszy motyw rozwijał m.in. Sergiusz Bułgakow i dlatego to on jest bohaterem pierwszej części książki, zaś drugim zajmował się Hans Urs von Balthasar, którego teologia w związku z tym jest analizowana w drugiej części.

W pierwszym rozdziale pierwszej części książki („Inspiracje Sergiusza Bułgakowa") autor przygląda się intelektualnym inspiracjom Bułgakowa ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem dwóch myślicieli: niemieckiego filozofa Friedricha Schellinga oraz rosyjskiego teologa Włodzimierza Sołowjowa. Rosyjska filozofia i teologia z przełomu XIX i XX wieku była pod wielkim wrażeniem myśli niemieckiej, ale większość jej dorobku nie odpowiadała celom teologii prawosławnej z racji na immanentyzm idealizmu niemieckiego, który traktował Absolut jako moment procesu historycznego, a z racji na swój progresywizm, przekonanie o wiecznym rozwoju świata, nie był w stanie uznać wyjątkowości Jezusa Chrystusa. Według Bułgakowa można w tej regule znaleźć dwa chwalebne wyjątki: teorię antynomii Kanta (o tym więcej w streszczeniu następnego rozdziału) oraz filozofię Schellinga. Ta druga wyróżniała filozofię negatywną i pozytywną. Filozofia negatywna zajmuje się ideami (można w tym określeniu odnaleźć przytyk Schellinga do Fichtego i Hegla) i powinna być przekroczona przez mit i objawienie (tym zagadnieniom Schelling poświęcił ostatnie dekady swojego życia), tak aby sformułować filozofię pozytywną, która rozumie Boga jako czystą egzystencję oraz byt osobowy. Wielkim poprzednikiem Bułgakowa w rosyjskiej myśli był Sołowjow. Centralnym motywem jego metafizyki była idea wszechjedności, „czyli rzeczywistości jako czegoś jednego" (s. 39), panenteistyczna myśl Boga we wszystkim i wszystkiego w Bogu. W swej teologii Sołowjow podejmował prawosławny temat Sofii, którą utożsamiał nie, jak to zazwyczaj się zdarza, z Logosem, lecz z idealną ludzkością, archetypem ludzkości, z wiecznym Bogoczłowieczeństwem (s. 40). Sofia jako aktywna zasada jest duszą świata czy też ciałem Boga, elementem pośredniczącym między Bogiem a światem. Tematykę tę podjął i rozwinął w swoich pismach Bułgakow.

Drugi rozdział pierwszej części zatytułowany jest „Rosyjska filozofia religii". Według Raczyńskiego-Rożka wyróżnia się ona osadzeniem przekonania o istnieniu Boga na osobistym doświadczeniu religijnym oraz intuicyjnym rozumieniem bytu (s. 61). Dzięki temu doświadczeniu filozofia może dotrzeć do punktu, w którym poszukiwania człowieka przejęte są przez teologię, ale myśli rosyjskiej towarzyszyło mocne przekonanie, że filozofia ma swoje ograniczenia w poznaniu Boga. Wyjaśnia to pochwały Bułgakowa kierowane pod adresem rozdziału *Krytyki czystego rozumu* Immanuela Kanta, w którym królewiecki filozof analizował antynomie czystego rozumu. Rosyjski teolog odczytywał go w duchu prawosławia jako znak transcendencji przedmiotu myśli względem ludzkiego umysłu. Pochwalał wniosek Kanta, który w każdym punkcie antynomii każe zatrzymać się rozumowi człowieka i zawiesić wydawanie sądu. Bułgakow czytał więc *Krytykę czystego rozumu* jako wezwanie do zatrzymania się rozumu ludzkiego we własnych granicach. Czerpie z niej inspirację do sformułowania projektu filozofii antynomicznej, która w przeciwieństwie do filozofii dialektycznej, głosi, że „Bóg jest całkowicie transcendentny i nie ma przejścia od Jego nie-coś do Coś, do nicości meonalnej, potencjalnej" (s. 65–66). Morał, jaki teolog wysnuwał z filozofii antynomicznej, brzmi, że Bóg może ukazać się w świecie

wyłącznie dzięki Objawieniu. Pamiętając o długu wdzięczności, jaki teologia Bułgakowa zaciągnęła względem filozofii Schellinga, nie zdziwi nas, że wykorzystuje on również pewne intuicje filozofii idealistycznej, według której świat powstaje dialektycznie w Bogu. Oznacza to, że jest z Nim na jednej płaszczyźnie ontologicznej. Świat i Bóg są współistotne – to główna teza panenteizmu, którą Bułgakow obrazował metaforą dziecka (świata) w łonie matki (Boga). Dziecko wzrasta wraz z matką, ale jest od niej jednocześnie całkowicie zależne. Bóg panenteizmu nie jest tym samym, co Bóg teologii negatywnej i filozofii antynomicznej. Bułgakow rozwiązywał to napięcie, twierdząc, że „tworząc świat Absolut [Bóg filozofii antynomicznej] staje się Bogiem [filozofii dialektycznej]" (s. 70). Bóg w świecie staje się i podlega procesowi, ale Absolut pozostaje niezmienny i niedostępny. Ten wyraźny kontrast domaga się jakiegoś szczegółowego wyjaśnienia. Bułgakow dostarczał je w swojej sofiologii, której poświęcony jest rozdział trzeci („Sofiologia") pracy Raczyńskiego-Rożka.

Bóg jest podstawą świata i ciągle w nim działa – teza ta stoi u źródeł sofiologii Bułgakowa. Raczyński-Rożek wyjaśnia pokrótce historię tego tematu w teologii prawosławnej, a następnie omawia jego znaczenie w myśli Bułgakowa. Sofia jest dla niego pewną granicą między Bogiem a stworzeniem. Jak każda granica jest tym, co łączy i co oddziela oraz ma swoje dwie strony: Sofię Boską (odwieczną) oraz Sofię stworzoną (dusza świata, siła jednocząca i organizująca świat). Szukając najbliższego porównania dla Sofii w świecie filozofii, Bułgakow wskazywał na platońską naukę o ideach. Platon uważał, że świat rzeczywisty ma swą podstawę w ideach, zaś Bułgakow odnosił tę prawdę do Sofii. Boska Sofia jest wewnętrznym życiem Boga Trójjedynego (w przeciwieństwie do wielu teologicznych interpretacji Bułgakow nie utożsamiał Sofii z żadną z Osób Trójcy Świętej). Sofia stworzona to życie udzielone światu przez Boga i realizujące się w czasie. Tak jak Boska Sofia musi zostać hipostazowana przez Boskie Osoby, tak Sofia stworzona musi zostać zhipostazowana przez ludzkość. Celem stworzenia jest ostateczne zjednoczenie się z Boską Sofią, w czym pobrzmiewają Sołowiowskie motywy wszechjedności oraz Bogoczłowieczeństwa. Zapoczątkowanie tego procesu ma miejsce we Wcieleniu, które w związku z tym dla Bułgakowa musi angażować wszystkie trzy Osoby Trójcy Świętej. W ten oto sposób można przejść do omawiania właściwej chrystologii Ducha u Bułgakowa, a Raczyński-Rożek czyni to w rozdziale czwartym, piątym i szóstym pierwszej części swojej książki.

Kluczową dla zrozumienia trynitologii Bułgakowa tezą jest ta, że Ojca objawia zarówno Syn, jak i Duch. Organizuje ona także wykład czwartego rozdziału („Diada Słowo-Duch w wewnętrznym życiu Trójcy Świętej"), w którym autor analizuje relacje wewnątrztrynitarne, porządek wewnątrztrynitarny (*taxis*), temat pochodzeń, w tym kwestię *Filioque* oraz nierozdzielność diady Słowo-Duch. Bułgakow odrzuca kategorię przyczynowości w opisie trójjedyności Boga i wzajemnych relacji między Osobami, gdyż obawia się subordynacjonizmu. Zamiast pojęcia przyczyny używa pojęcia samoobjawienia, które pozwala na właściwe rozumienie pochodzeń oraz monarchii

Ojca. Według koncepcji rosyjskiego teologa każda Osoba Trójcy Świętej objawia pozostałe dwie, a tożsamość każdej z nich określa odniesienie do innych Osób. Zgodnie z tą regułą Ojciec jest objawiany przez Syna w Duchu Świętym. Syn jest treścią Ojca, którą objawia dzięki Duchowi Świętemu. Opis objawienia jako diady zmusza do połączenia chrystologii i pneumatologii w integralną chrystologię Ducha.

W piątym rozdziale pierwszej części Raczyński-Rożek przygląda się zgodnie z tytułem diadzie Syn-Duch w aspekcie stwórczym i kenotycznym („Diada Słowo-Duch w ekonomii zbawienia – objawienie sofianiczne"). Autorowi chodzi o pokazanie, jak *taxis* trynitarna znajduje swoje odbicie w życiu świata oraz jak diada Słowo-Duch jest w nim od zawsze obecna, będąc niejako jego podstawą: Słowo nadaje treść i znaczenie, zaś Duch – życie. Przebłyski prawdy są obecne w świecie od momentu jego stworzenia. Bułgakow może rzec, że wszystkie narody i kultury są dla chrześcijaństwa w pewnym sensie starym testamentem, choć autor ten podkreśla, iż uprzywilejowanym miejscem ujawnienia się prawdy o Bogu jest historia zbawienia zapisana w Starym i Nowym Testamencie ze szczytowym wydarzeniem Wcielenia Syna Bożego. Taki sposób inkarnacyjnego objawiania Ojca wprowadza nas w ideę kenozy, ponieważ oznacza uniżenie się Boskości aż do poziomu hipostatycznej jedności z człowieczeństwem. Wcielenie stanowi całkowicie nowy etap objawienia, które poprzez Zmartwychwstanie, Pięćdziesiątnicę ma przeniknąć cały świat aż do swej ostatecznej formy w momencie Paruzji. Stąd też w kolejnym i ostatnim rozdziale pierwszej części Raczyński-Rożek analizuje działanie diady Syn-Duch w tych najważniejszych wydarzeniach nowotestamentowego objawienia.

Szósty rozdział („Diada Słowo-Duch w ekonomii zbawienia – objawienie osobowe") jest najważniejszy dla pierwszej części dzieła. W nim autor *Dwóch rąk Ojca* analizuje istotę chrystologii Ducha Bułgakowa. Raczyński-Rożek opisuje ją następująco: „Życie ziemskie Jezusa da się podzielić na pewne etapy, które są wyznaczane przez następujące wydarzenia: Wcielenie, Chrzest Pański, Przemienienie, Pasja, Zstąpienie do piekieł, Zmartwychwstanie, Wniebowstąpienie. W realizowaniu misji mesjańskiej przez Jezusa objawia się coraz wyraźniej osobowe działanie Ducha Świętego" (s. 170–71). Owo działanie Bułgakow przyporządkował do trzech misji Chrystusa: prorockiej, kapłańskiej i królewskiej. Od Chrztu do Przemienienia najłatwiej wyakcentować funkcję prorocką, od Przemienienia do Wniebowstąpienia – kapłańską, a od Wniebowstąpienia do Paruzji – królewską. Chrzest w Jordanie jest dla Bułgakowa wydarzeniem przełomowym, ponieważ to wtedy Jezus został publicznie „namaszczony" Duchem Świętym. Wcześniej spoczywał On na Jezusie jako moc czy łaska. „Wyróżniającą cechą działania Ducha Świętego w Jezusie jest to, że objawia Chrystusowi Jego samego" (s. 172). Udział Ducha Świętego w kapłańskiej misji Jezusa uwyraźnia się w Przemienieniu, ponieważ Tabor jest mistyczną antycypacją Golgoty. O ile we chrzcie Duch namaścił Jezusa na proroka, o tyle w Przemienieniu namaścił Go na kapłana. Misja Chrystusa kapłana-ofiary jest wewnętrznym zaakceptowaniem woli Ojca i przeżyciem swego życia w posłuszeństwie aż po

Krzyż. Bułgakow uważał, że w tym wydarzeniu bierze udział cała Trójca Święta, w tym – zgodnie z chrystologią pneumatologiczną – Duch Święty: „Duch Święty dzieli cierpienia Boga-człowieka aż do momentu opuszczenia Go przez Boga, kiedy to Duch Święty także Go opuszcza. To opuszczenie Syna dla zbawienia świata jest obrazem duchowego współukrzyżowania Ducha-Miłości razem z Synem" (s. 179). A zatem śmierć Chrystusa to nie tylko przypadek skrajnej kenozy Syna, ale również i Ducha: Duch Ożywiciel ogranicza w tym momencie swoją działalność do minimum. Dopełnieniem ofiary Chrystusa jest uwielbienie wyrażone w Zmartwychwstaniu, Wniebowstąpieniu, zasiadaniu po prawicy Ojca i Zesłaniu Ducha Świętego. Zmartwychwstanie zapoczątkowuje królewską misję Chrystusa, a także dopełnia Jego misji prorockiej: zgodnie ze świadectwem Ewangelii wg św. Łukasza (24,45) zmartwychwstały Jezus otwiera uszy swoich uczniów, aby rozumieli Pismo. Z kolei epifanie zapisane w Ewangelii wg św. Jana podkreślają jedność Syna i Ducha również w Zmartwychwstaniu: w Wieczerniku Jezus, ukazując się uczniom, tchnął na nich Ducha Świętego (J 20,22). Misja królewska w ziemskim życiu Jezusa jest tylko zapowiadana, czy to poprzez Jego rodowód wywodzący się od Dawida, czy to przez uroczysty wjazd do Jerozolimy. Jezus ogranicza się do królowania w ludzkich sercach, ale wraz z Wniebowstąpieniem następuje dopełnienie tej funkcji. Jednocześnie „diadyczne zjednoczenie Syna z Duchem Świętym zmienia swój charakter […]. Teraz to Chrystus jest drogą dla Ducha Świętego, a nie odwrotnie, jak to było przed Wcieleniem i w okresie od Zwiastowania do Wniebowstąpienia […]. Teraz wysłany przez Syna Duch Święty jest skierowany ku światu w swojej własnej Hipostazie, ponieważ On sam zstępuje na świat, a nie został posłany do niego tylko ze względu na zesłanie Syna" (s. 198–99). Tak przedstawiona chrystologia Ducha pozwalała Bułgakowowi ukazać historię zbawienia jako historię kenozy Boga, „która narasta aż do czasu Wcielenia i Wniebowstąpienia, aby zostać w nich przezwyciężona" (s. 219), pozwalała także odpowiedzieć na ważne współcześnie pytania o obecność Boga w życiu narodu wybranego i religiach pogańskich oraz o sposób, w jaki Bóg zbawia człowieka poza Kościołem; rzucała światło z jednej strony na dogmatyczne kwestie *Filioque* oraz rolę Maryi w historii zbawienia, a z drugiej – na antropologiczne zagadnienie relacji między Duchem Świętym a duchem człowieka.

Jak widać z powyższego streszczenia, chrystologia Ducha rozwijana przez Bułgakowa opiera się na analizie historii zbawienia. Inny – wewnątrztrynitarny – charakter ma chrystologia Ducha wypracowana przez Hansa Ursa von Balthasara. Cała jego uwaga jest skupiona na dynamice relacji między Osobami w Trójcy Świętej. Pierwszy rozdział drugiej części (pod tytułem „Duch Święty a istota Boga") wprowadza nas do ogólnej trynitologii szwajcarskiego teologa. Podstawowym działaniem w Trójcy Świętej jest zrodzenie Syna przez Ojca, a ich wzajemna, nadmiarowa miłość jest odrębną Osobą, uosobieniem wolności i tajemnicy – innymi słowy Duchem Świętym. Podobnie dogmat o Trójcy Świętej rozumiał francuski teolog François-Xavier Durrwell. Raczyński-Rożek przechodzi w drugim rozdziale drugiej części do analizy

tez tego autora („Duch Święty jako otwartość i głębia Boga – biblijna chrystologia Ducha Durrwella"), jako że Balthasar wskazywał na niego jako teologa, który „do końca doprowadził" trynitarny aspekt chrystologii Ducha. Durrwell zauważał, że żaden pneumatologiczny traktat nie stawia w centrum Zmartwychwstania. Tymczasem właśnie w tym wydarzeniu Duch Święty objawił się jako osoba. Ta teza stała się dla francuskiego myśliciela motywem poszukiwań obecności Ducha Świętego w innych wydarzeniach zbawczych. Zdaniem Balthasara dociekania Durrwella upoważniają do sformułowania tezy o Duchu Świętym jako sprawcy Wcielenia, zaś „uznanie osobowego działania Ducha Świętego w wydarzeniu Wcielenia oznacza, że całe ludzkie istnienie Syna, a w zasadzie cała historia zbawienia, musi być nim naznaczone" (s. 280). Wraz z przyjęciem tej perspektywy znajdujemy się w centrum chrystologii Ducha, mówiącej o Bogu działającym przez obie ręce. Z tego powodu Raczyński-Rożek obrał za temat trzeciego rozdziału drugiej części sprawstwo Ducha w wydarzeniu Wcielenia („Duch Święty jako «sprawca Wcielenia» – aspekt spekulatywny chrystologii Ducha"). „Kluczowe dla zrozumienia toku myślenia Balthasara jest przybliżenie średniowiecznego terminu *gratia unionis*" (s. 281), który oznaczał jednoczące działanie Ducha Świętego tworzącego unię hipostatyczną. Kolejnym zagadnieniem, przy okazji którego szwajcarski teolog pokazywał nierozdzielność Syna i Ducha, było ujęcie Ducha Świętego jako Nauczyciela i Przewodnika, jako Tego, który umożliwia rozpoznanie prawdy objawionej w Jezusie Chrystusie. Trzecim tematem było zagadnienie tzw. konkretnego i uniwersalnego. Wbrew tezom niemieckiego filozofa czasów oświecenia Gottholda Ephraima Lessinga, Balthasar twierdził, że można pokazać uniwersalne znaczenie konkretnego wydarzenia historycznego. Odpowiedź na zarzuty stawiane przez filozofię oświeceniową, zdaniem Balthasara, możemy znaleźć wyłącznie w chrystologii Ducha. To ona ukazuje główne zadanie Trzeciej Osoby Trójcy Świętej jako uniwersalizację dokonań Chrystusa. Wyraźnym przykładem takiej uniwersalizacji jest sakrament Eucharystii.

Koncepcja Ducha Świętego jako sprawcy Wcielenia oraz tego, który uniwersalizuje dokonania Syna, rodzi pytanie, czy nie powoduje ona zaburzenia *taxis* trynitarnej w ziemskim życiu Chrystusa? Pytanie o inwersję trynitarną jest głównym tematem rozdziału czwartego części drugiej pracy („Inwersja trynitarna i kenoza wewnątrztrynitarna"). Jak wyjaśnia ten termin Raczyński-Rożek, w stanie uniżenia „relacja Jezusa do Ducha polega na wykonywaniu misji, która przejawia się zarówno w posiadaniu Ducha, jak i w posłuszeństwie Duchowi. W tym przypadku mówimy o inwersji trynitarnej" (s. 317). W wielu miejscach Pisma Świętego, jak wskazywał Luis Ladaria Ferrer, Duch działa nad Jezusem, co potrafi ująć chrystologia Ducha. Jednak głównym zarzutem wobec tej koncepcji jest rezygnacja z tożsamości Trójcy immanentnej i ekonomicznej. W ten oto sposób od chrystologii Ducha przechodzimy w samo serce rozważań trynitologicznych. Zdaniem Balthasara najlepszą odpowiedzią na zarzuty jest wskazanie na kenozę Boga, która ujawnia się w misterium paschalnym. „W teologii Balthasara nie będzie mowy o jakiejś zmianie, która dokonuje

się w naturze boskiej […]. Nie nastąpi też zmiana w relacjach wewnątrztrynitarnych czy też wprowadzenie do nich jakiejś nowości. Kenoza we Wcieleniu i na krzyżu stanowi objawienie i odbicie istniejącej odwiecznie w Bogu prakenozy" (s. 340–41).

Teza o inwersji trynitarnej i kenozie wewnątrztrynitarnej przynosi skutki dla chrystologii i pneumatologii szwajcarskiego teologa. W ostatnich dwóch rozdziałach drugiej części Raczyński-Rożek skrupulatnie je analizuje. W piątym rozdziale przygląda się chrystologii Balthasara i jej rozwiązaniom problemu wiedzy i wolności Jezusa w Jego ziemskim życiu („Chrystologia pneumatologiczna – historyczność Jezusa Chrystusa"). Dzięki temu, że Jezus otrzymuje wolę Ojca w Duchu „można uzasadniać zarówno stopniowe zdobywanie wiedzy przez wzrastającego Chrystusa, jak i Jego podejmowanie wyborów w ramach wolności skończonej i nie trzeba pozbawiać ich historycznego charakteru" (s. 368). W szóstym rozdziale drugiej części („Pneumatologia chrystologiczna – Duch Święty jako Osoba") autor *Dwóch rąk Ojca* wyłuskuje wszystkie oryginalne myśli pneumatologii Balthasara. Ponieważ treści te pojawiały się już we wcześniejszych partiach tekstu, rozdział ten ma charakter zbiorczy i podsumowujący. Raczyński-Rożek wraca w nim do tematów Ducha jako Przewodnika i Nauczyciela, prawdy jako miłości, Ducha jako Osoby, Ducha jako nadmiaru miłości między Synem a Ojcem oraz relacji między Duchem Świętym a duchem ludzkim.

Trzecia część *Dwóch rąk Ojca* („Między Wschodem a Zachodem") ma charakter komparatywny. Raczyński-Rożek próbuje wydobyć w niej na przykładzie chrystologii Ducha Bułgakowa i Balthasara różnice między teologią katolicką a prawosławną (czy też zachodnią a wschodnią). W pierwszym rozdziale trzeciej części („Wschód w kontekście Zachodu") szczególnie interesujący jest fragment dotyczący porównania głównych autorytetów obu teologii – św. Tomasza z Akwinu i św. Grzegorza Palamasa – z którego wynika, że różnice między nimi pochodzą głównie z oparcia się Akwinaty na filozofii Arystotelesa. Drugim elementem wyróżniającym jest obecność sofiologii w refleksji wschodniej, praktycznie nieobecnej na Zachodzie, choć Raczyński-Rożek przywołuje tu postać Louisa Bouyer jako tego, który przeczy tej tezie. Drugi rozdział trzeciej części akcentuje bardziej perspektywę katolicką („Zachód w kontekście Wschodu"). Autor *Dwóch rąk Ojca* przypomina w nim, że Balthasar odrzucał sofiologię z powodu obaw, że zawiera ona elementy gnostyckie, ale inspirował się kenotyczną doktryną Trójcy Świętej Bułgakowa, która wynikała z jego sofiologii: „Kategoria Sofii służy Bułgakowowi do zachowania równowagi między dualizmem i panteizmem. Kenotyczna miłość z samej swojej natury musi udzielać się innemu" (s. 450). Balthasar musiał zapewnić jedność i różnicę w Trójcy bez odwoływania się do Sofii, a czynił to poprzez Tomaszową kategorię osobowości: „Przypominając, że Tomasz rozróżnia Osoby boskie jako przeciwieństwo relacji w boskiej istocie, Balthasar zdaje się podążać za Tomaszem, twierdząc, że sama natura boskiej istoty rozpatrywana jako relacja daje podstawę do zrozumienia zarówno jedności, jak i różnicy" (s. 471). Według szwajcarskiego teologa tylko jeśli zrozumiemy miłość

Boga jako kenotyczną, będziemy mogli pojmować boską prostotę jako dynamiczną. Różnice między autorami ujawniają się w ich rozumieniu zstąpienia do piekieł Chrystusa. Bułgakow mówił w tym kontekście o ogołoceniu z Boskości oraz opuszczeniu przez Ducha Świętego, natomiast „Balthasar, odnosząc się do dystansu wewnątrztrynitarnego i posługując się kategorią paradoksu, utrzymuje bóstwo Chrystusa nawet w momencie śmierci i zstąpienia do piekieł" (s. 484). Różnica uwidacznia się także w samej chrystologii Ducha. Myśl prawosławnego teologa postrzega działanie Trzeciej Hipostazy jako coraz bardziej przenikające świat aż do momentu jego przebóstwienia. U katolickiego teologa Duch Święty „utrzymuje rozdział między Bogiem a światem poprzez włączanie go w dynamikę miłości trynitarnej" (s. 492). Ten punkt widzenia pozwala zachować wolność i odrębność stworzenia.

Podsumowując, badanie teologiczne przeprowadzone w *Dwóch rękach Ojca* jest odpowiednikiem badań podstawowych w naukach ścisłych, znajdujących się dzisiaj pod ostrzałem instytutów przydzielających granty naukowe. Jest to tym ważniejsze, że praca Macieja Raczyńskiego-Rożka powstała i do tego korzystała ze wsparcia grantowego Narodowego Centrum Nauki.

Książka ta jest zarazem wymagająca i fascynująca. Wymagająca, gdyż zajmuje się autorami bardzo subtelnymi, wykuwającymi dla wyrażenia swych myśli własny język oraz własne metody teologiczne. Raczyński-Rożek dokonuje wszelkich starań, by przedstawić teologię Bułgakowa i Balthasara możliwie przystępnie bez tracenia istoty i rygoru myśli opisywanych przez siebie autorów. Cenne są podsumowania, które pozwalają czytelnikowi śledzić tok skomplikowanego siłą rzeczy wywodu. Na szczególne podkreślenie zasługuje fakt, że Raczyński-Rożek sięga do tekstów oryginalnych. W popularnych streszczeniach teologicznych (można tu wymienić Dirka Ansorge *Krótką historię teologii chrześcijańskiej* [Ansorge 2021] czy Tracy Rowland *Nurty współczesnej teologii* [Rowland 2017]) nagminną praktyką jest pomijanie *Trylogii* Balthasara przy omawianiu jego teologii, tymczasem polski autor zadał sobie trud sięgania do tego obszernego, ale podstawowego do zrozumienia głębi szwajcarskiego myśliciela tekstu. Otrzymujemy dzięki temu czystą wodę teologii Balthasara.

Jednocześnie *Dwie ręce Ojca* są pracą fascynującą, gdyż wprowadza nas ona w centrum dyskusji nad najważniejszymi dogmatami wiary chrześcijańskiej (Trójca Święta, Wcielenie). Pokazuje podstawowe dylematy i spory, w których uczestniczą współcześni teologowie. Książkę można zaliczyć do nurtu odnowy pneumatologicznej zapoczątkowanej przez Heriberta Mühlena. Jest ważnym głosem reagującym i odpowiadającym na zarzut chrystomonizmu w teologii chrześcijańskiej. Chrystologia Ducha zaprezentowana polskiemu czytelnikowi przez Raczyńskiego-Rożka jest też ciekawą alternatywą dla wszelkich historiozoficznych podziałów epok w duchu tego dokonanego przez Joachima z Fiore, a które dzisiaj często przybierają formę pluralizmu religijnego, głoszącego równorzędne działanie Ducha Świętego w każdej religii i w związku z tym pomniejszającego uniwersalne znaczenie Chrystusa. Zatem chrystologia Ducha jest lekarstwem nie tylko na chrystomonizm, ale i – pokuśmy

się o ten neologizm – pneumatomonizm. Praca Raczyńskiego-Rożka powinna zainteresować nie tylko teologów, ale również filozofów chrześcijańskich, gdyż na przykładzie Bułgakowa i Balthasara pokazuje udaną symbiozę filozofii i teologii, nawet jeśli ta pierwsza wydaje się odległa od chrześcijaństwa. Kant z reguły jest oskarżany (szczególnie w kręgu teologów z grupy *Communio*, takich jak Henri de Lubac czy Joseph Ratzinger) o zgubną separację wiary od rozumu, tymczasem Bułgakow czytał go jako autora wyznaczającego rozumowi granice, tak potrzebne dla uczynienia miejsca dla tajemnicy i Objawienia. Z kolei Hegel jest jednym z przedstawicieli prometeizmu humanistycznego oraz intelektualnym spadkobiercą Joachima z Fiore, tymczasem Balthasar potrafił zinterpretować go jako filozoficznego twórcę chrystologii Ducha.

Jak widać z powyższego, każdy czytelnik zainteresowany teologią chrześcijańską i filozofią Boga znajdzie w recenzowanym dziele mnóstwo inspiracji dla swoich indywidualnych poszukiwań. W serii Myśl Teologiczna opublikowano już wiele prac wzbogacających dorobek polskiej teologii. Dzięki *Dwóm rękom Ojca* znacząco się on teraz powiększył.

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