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of Slovak Academy of Sciences

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This book has been prepared under the Mob-Open-20-08 grant project Spiritual values and traditional culture, BAS-SAS-21-08 grant project Linguistic image of legal and cultural thinking in texts of older Slovak and Bulgarian literature and the VEGA 2/0067/20 grant project Preparation and publication of a handwriting book of sermons and the Holy Scriptures interpretations from the 18th century.

Published by VEDA Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Science for
the Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava

Translation © Mgr. Monika Križanovičová

Layout Bc. Martin Žeňuch

ISBN 978-80-89489-52-7 (Print)

ISBN 978-80-89489-53-4 (e-Pub)

<https://doi.org/10.31577/9788089489534>



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Crisis as an Opportunity for the Revival of Values

Peter Žeňuch – Svetlana Šašerina, Eds.

Bratislava 2022

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Introduction

by Peter Žeňuch & Svetlana Šašerina

Comparative Slavist research into languages and cultures offers many possibilities for finding answers to the most complex value questions of human existence. From the functional point of view, human existence is considered to be inherently unchanging, especially when it finds harmony between the material and spiritual spheres. In moments of crisis, it uses the means by which it can visibly realise the need for such a balance.

The fragile stability of human existence is therefore evidenced in particular by the presence of mercy in man, which cannot appear in space-time by itself, but only in combination with the human emotion of love. Mercy is the recognition of man's being in community. To be part of a community is to live beyond the open door to one's heart. The door typifies hope. An open door is a call for love to come from another person. To open the door to mercy is not only a call to the one who comes, but especially to the one to whom this door to the heart opens. For a person in any crisis, whether of material or spiritual deprivation, lack of recognition, rejection, or of worries, the open door epitomises dialogue. Therefore, mercy manifests itself in dialogue so that jealousy may end. To be jealous is to struggle for favour, for only such person is jealous who is enslaved by a sense of anxiety and lives in fear caused by envy for other people's success. Mercy then begins to fade from consciousness and one betrays one's positive experience. Fear does not replace calmness and equanimity, but it causes restlessness. However, that is when one may realise that this fear is a reason to humbly seek again the lost balance and values. Mercy is thus the measure indicating the relationship of human being to human being. Only mercy turns fear into awe, distress into love and man into a living work of God.

It is said that vehemence in the expression of love is a display of courage. Courage shown in love is based on the transparency of loving, so loving is not made for the mental or physical enjoyment of one, but it is demonstrated in the giving and receiving of patient love.

The monothematic set of studies thus focuses mainly on the relationships built on value conflicts, which show the real identity of the culture that has formed the basis for the coexistence of European nations and cultures.

The publication contains four thematic areas that provide insights into the knowledge of value relations in society applied in everyday communi-

cation, i.e. in language and culture. The chapters of the book explore the topic of value categories, which are represented in language by concepts like purity, sin, repentance and mercy. Expressed through linguistic means in communication between members of the community and between people and God, it is the theme of repentance that constitutes a specific source of comparative thinking about the development and cultivation of man as a unique anthropological category combining good and evil. The axiological terminology employed in language as an instrument of communication is a fitting image for how people behave in various situations and moments of everyday life. There is actually a unique source of knowledge of spiritual power inherent in language. This power makes it possible to materialise thought in action and even to lift people out of the place of their suffering, pain and damnation, with the hope of an ever-recurring pardon. Anyone can walk home into the arms of their father, to the place of their birth, if they discover the highest value of the beloved.

The image of mercy is therefore found in a number of spiritual songs and sermons. Two chapters of the book are devoted to the interpretation of axiological thinking based on the revival of the values derived from mercy, from the triumph of truth and justice against the backdrop of the Church of the Byzantine rite and in the Protestant Christian tradition in Slavic context. Both perspectives offer a semiotic interpretation of concepts associated with the revival of value thinking based on historical memory as a unique source of learning from moments of crisis in the evolution of human culture. The way out of the crisis is in admitting one's own weakness. The interpretation of the motifs of mercy in selected Marian spiritual songs leaves room for understanding the relationship between linguistic and cultural and communicative stereotypes in the perception of threat and danger.

Various examples come into focus, pointing out unusual natural phenomena as well as social events, outbreaks of plague and other phenomena that often cause existential concerns and great confusion among people. It is precisely such events, which are often historically verifiable, that allow a particular situation to be seen as a starting point or a chance to restore diminished traditional values and morals. The interpreted symbols from spiritual works provide a critical anamnesis of the situations caused by the betrayal of spiritual and cultural values based on Christian European roots.

The image of the Christian roots of Europe is represented by the relationship between the Latin Church tradition and the Greek (Byzantine) Slavic cultural and religious milieu. This spiritual Christian unity is divided only by the forms in which both communities show their fear of God's rule (theocracy). Although the existing tensions have their origins in the

historical development of diverse Christian denominational identities in Europe, this division can be viewed primarily as evidence of the fragile stability of the relationship between the individual and the community. In fact, a genuine interest in a better understanding and knowledge of the other contributes to the spiritual and cultural maturity of the community. Visible and demonstrated at first sight, the competition has so far forced all Christian denominational communities not only to deepen their own integrity and historical memory, but also to find a clear alliance against hatred in key situations.

Common interests based on spiritual purpose and inherent human-centred spiritual values described in the Decalogue are eventually the goal and result of the revival of spiritual and cultural values.

Reviving the value system in the context of Marian spiritual tradition

Peter Žeňuch

Introduction

A society's value system is closely linked to the cultivation and sustainability of human memory. Cultural memory is reflected in the civilisation development of a human society, preserving an image of human actions in the world. Thanks to their thinking, humans have the gift of creativity, which allows them to develop and improve.¹

Anthropological and culturological aspects of learning about human evolution point to an entire spectrum of values applied every day by people throughout the world.

An integral part of this value spectrum is the language as an instrument of thought and a means of communication. It allows people to express and describe all their thoughts, feelings and ideas connected with the material and spiritual world they engage in.

From the very beginning of the formation of human society, since first interpersonal relationships, language has played the most important role in conquering the world and represents a central pillar of cultivation of human nature (identity).

People use linguistic means to name all realities perceived by their senses and grasped by their minds. Human civilisation itself is connected with the development of thinking and human creativity and imagination. Man is invited to name every being and find in it support for everyday life, work and creativity.

The emergence and life of a community (house, family, nation) is inevitably conditioned by the existence of relationships, i.e. mutual complementarity. These are not only relationships based on attraction or the

¹ Dubovský, P. (ed.): *Komentáře k Starému zákonu*. [Commentaries on the Old Testament] Volume I. Genesis. Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2008, p. 71.

fulfilment of needs, but it is a connection established as a result of internal similarities between the members of human community and their mutual communication. According to the teaching of the Bible, there is no humanlike being on earth because the axiological dimension of likeness to God (Genesis 1:27) prevails in humans. A human's personality is thus fully manifested in the life of the community. This is characterised by the complexity of human existence, which is reflected in the complementarity of all elements of human nature.²

Man is a co-creator of values and takes part in their management, naming and cultivation. The Bible (Genesis 2:19-20) says that humans, through the means of language, have gained dominion over all God's creations and they continue their mission to conquer the world when they name things, realities and actions that they themselves contribute to and cultivate using their creativity. Linguistic means are a source of learning about the oldest events in the world and the beginning of human society and civilisation. They include mainly linguistic means used in texts of the Bible, but also in various narratives, literary sources, epics, historical documents, chronicles and written culture in general. Linguistic means are evidence of the development of human thinking since the times of ancient civilisations. They contain proofs of origin and of the foundation for communicative (relational) and civilisational development of man, which in different parts of the world with diverse natural existential conditions has manifested itself in the historical and social conditions of development that the diversified human society has undergone in the context of its own cultivation.

Although in today's world we clearly differentiate between religious and non-religious everyday, this division is not natural for people as both components of human nature (physical and spiritual) cannot be separated from each other. Humans themselves are created in the synergy of experience (knowledge) and faith. All sources of cultural memory are reflected in the synergy of human knowledge and faith. The apt rabbinical commentary taken from the extensive Jewish collection *Midrash Rabba (Bereshit Rabba)* may be useful in this regard. It affirms God's intention to create man in his own image so that no person can say to another that the origin of one human being is greater than the origin of the other. God did not create man

² Humans are created in the image of God, which distinguishes them from other beings. From Adam's rib, during his deep sleep, God made him a woman and appointed the human being (man and woman together) as the ruler destined to govern and cultivate themselves and the world.

from the heavenly elements, for humans would then live forever and not die. However, if God created humans only from the lower elements and humans merely died, they would not be able to live forever. God therefore created man in his own image from the higher as well as lower elements so that people themselves could choose from them those which they would cultivate in order not to die, but to live forever.³

The main asset of human nature is diversity based on the fact that the righteous should not boast that they are descended only from the righteous, and that the unrighteous should not make excuses that their ancestors were not that righteous. People are free to choose the responsibility for their actions and thus are naturally protected from deception and the appropriation or misuse of ancestral merits. People thus resemble not only celestial beings: they stand upright and are ready for the freedom of choice, they can see, understand and, above all, speak – communicate. At the same time, they also have the characteristics of dumb creatures (animals), which include the basic necessities of life: eating, drinking, procreation, excretion and mortality. In their actions, however, humans have the choice of cultivating their individual qualities and so by choosing the way of their existence they cultivate themselves for life or death.

The word as the expression of the relationship between content and form

The right to name things and phenomena is related to humans being invited to take part in creation. Man was given the right to fill the word with content. The natural result of this right is mainly the desire to know the truth. Perhaps that is why the etymological basis of the Slovak words for *truth* (*pravda*) and *right* or *law* (*právo*) is determined by the highest degree of the value of knowledge. The terms *правда* and *право* express the harmony between objective reality and a person's decision to act in accordance with the right to free choice.

The names *truth* and *right* create primordial tension that is balanced in the community by complementarity in man's relationships with God and with man, that is, between people. A relationship based on intrinsic coherence forms a natural part of cultural memory that can be expressed by linguistic means. Cultural memory expressed in the linguistic image of the

³ Dubovský, P. (ed.): *Komentáre k Starému zákonu*. [Commentaries on the Old Testament] Volume I. Genesis, op. cit., p. 78.

world constitutes the basis, the means and the goal of human identity.⁴ The identity of a community is always expressed by anthropological linguistic means, through which the material world is in close relationship with the spiritual dimension and human imagination. Even words such as *pravý, pravdivý, správný* (*genuine, true, right*) express the qualities of the highest degree of reality perceived by the senses, grasped by reason and inherent in the object or subject described.

Already the Bible describes man created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26) using anthropological linguistic means. In breathing, which is the perfect expression of human life ('Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being,' Genesis 2:7), people are able to form a word by the vibration of the vocal cords and the activity of speech organs and thus subdue all named realities. By the existence of speech and communication, humans resemble their true model. In the New Testament, this relationship with God is stabilised in the incarnation of the Word, i.e. Christ. The Holy Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 3:18) even writes that it is through faith that we are transformed into God, of whom Christ is the perfect image (Corinthians 1:15), for he who sees Christ sees the Father (John 14:9). The anthropomorphic naming of things and phenomena is therefore an example of a legitimate way⁵ of expressing the relationship between a term and its content. All names expressed by human language in speech are therefore a reflection of human thought and experience. This is why no terms created by human beings ever lose their anthropomorphic characteristics, since they are the result of human reasoning and are anthropocentric.⁶

⁴ Cultural memory presents a picture of the cultural, social and spiritual order of a society, which each community naturally protects from various foreign and adverse influences. Cf. Žeňuch, P.: *Mariánske paraliturgické piesne v cyrilských spevníkoch na Slovensku z 18.–20. storočia* [Marian paraliturgical songs in Cyrillic songbooks in Slovakia from the 18th – 20th centuries]. In Žeňuch, P. – Zubko, P. (eds.): *Bohorodička v kultúrnych dejinách Slovenska* [The Mother of God in the Cultural History of Slovakia]. Bratislava: Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV – Bratislavská gréckokatolícka eparchia, 2014, pp.163-199.

⁵ See Le Goff, J. – Schmitt, J.-C.: *Encyclopédie médiévale* [Encyclopedia of Middle Ages] (translation from the French original *Dictionnaire raisonné de L'Occident médiéval*, 1999). Prague: Vyšehrad, 2020, p. 432.

⁶ Cf. Žeňuch, P. – Šašerina, S.: *Obraz Boha v jazyku ako nástroji komunikácie a axiologické aspekty sviatku a sviatočnosti*. [The image of God in language as an instrument of communication and axiological aspects of feast and sacramentality]. In Седакова, И. А. – Žeňuch, P. – Китанова, М. et al.: *Axiologický výskum slovanských jazykov / Axiological Investigation into the Slavic Languages*. Bratislava – Moscow: Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava

The proof of the relationship between God and man is the language of Holy Scripture itself. It uses means of expression understandable to humans referring to value categories that clearly reflect and semantically fulfil an image decodable in human thought, perception and imagination.

Every human means of communication (language) is also evidence of the cultivation of a person in their own community. It is in the community that uses a particular linguistic code as a means of communication and an instrument of thought that language is a living instrument for expressing man's relationship to man and to God. This is also confirmed by the need to translate sacred and biblical texts into the national languages, which fulfil their kerygmatic task of communicating the truth about God. For this purpose, a cultivated form of language is used in the various communities as a means of communication, since God is present in every language and in all the historical stages of the development and cultivation of a community's language.

The use of language and its means is the result of humans' creative activity, which is based on conveying an image of the world by means of linguistic signs. Language therefore becomes not only a means of expressing thought, but also an affirmation of responsibility for free human knowledge. It is in human speech that thinking is manifested. Linguistic means synergistically express the relationship between image and representation, between sign and its content, between truth and faith.

Marian tradition as a basis for the revival of values

The union of faith and truth is reproduced in folk piety by linguistic means in spiritual songs. Spiritual songs are therefore seen as empirical expressions of man and community. Spiritual songs apply and develop universal motifs based on the axiological principles of kerygma (proclamation) of truth. The kerygma of the Bible is based on truth and people's experience of God and faith so it is not primarily intended for institutionalised settings. In addition, the expressions of folk religiosity included in the spiritual songs did not remain hidden, but motivated people to express their experience across the full spectrum of reverence for God and the saints. People's religious experience is represented especially by the spiritual songs dedicated to God, the Holy Trinity, Christ, various saints, martyrs, confessors and

SAV – Институт славяноведения РАН, 2019, pp. 18 and 21 and also Вендина, Т. И.: Средневековый человек в зеркале старославянского языка. [Medieval Man in the Mirror of the Old Slavonic Language]. Москва: Индрик, 2002, pp. 162-166.

Doctors of the Church, who found their place in the feasts of the church year. A special group consists of various penitential and supplicatory songs, songs of thanks and songs with different thematic focuses (e.g. funeral songs, wedding songs, songs for Lent, etc.). A thematically unique group is also represented by songs dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God, who is a typical example of a person experiencing faith and God's mercy.

The mission of spiritual songs is to encourage, instruct, exhort, explain and point to God and the saints, to inform and elucidate the causes and origins of miracles, biblical events, apparitions and feasts, to venerate and celebrate them.⁷

Spiritual songs use a variety of linguistic devices to convey the experience and sincere desire of human beings to respond positively to a variety of important stimuli shaping human relationships in communion with the natural and supernatural worlds. Spiritual Marian songs also include various songs with themes describing a person in crisis, in particular the image of a crisis of faith in God's mercy. This crisis has led man to commit evil in a state of jealousy. Jealousy is a state of mind already known from Cain's relationship and his attitude towards his own brother. Cain's solution was his free decision to inflict violence on his own brother. Although any decision by a person to act violently may have various external motivations, the decision itself need not be the source of an act of iniquity. However, an act of iniquity stems from a person's desire to command attention by any action, even iniquity, which gives rise to violence. And since every decision is made with the heart, all names with the root *srd-* (heart-) (*srditost'*, meaning 'wrathfulness', 'anger', *srdnatost'*, meaning 'courage', *srdečnost'* or 'cordiality', meaning 'amiability, kindness, sincerity', along with the term *milosrdenstvo*, i.e. 'mercy', meaning 'friendly understanding or sympathy for another's misfortune and suffering' can be seen as a picture of a human's personality disposition. A human's personality cannot be disguised even by modern means of personality training. The prerequisite for a person's transformation is acceptance of oneself, acceptance of one's position, one's place in the life of the community, etc. In spite

⁷ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder. Edition des handschriftlichen Liedguts im ehemaligen Bistum von Mukačevo im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert. Bausteine zur Slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs. Edition of Handwritten Songs in the Former Bishopric of Mukachevo in the 18th and 19th centuries. Building Blocks of Slavic Philology and Cultural History] Reihe B. Editionen. Volume 23. Along with: Monumenta byzantino-slavica et latina Slovaciae. Vol. II. Köln – Weimar – Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2006.

of this experience arising from man's cultural memory, it is still a great mystery why man in crisis situations more often chooses to do evil than good.⁸

Spiritual songs based on popular Marian devotion are interwoven with the image of the Mother of God as the Mediatrix of Mercy in every need. So not only does the Marian spiritual song have an adorative, prayer, celebratory and religious function, but it also contains a variety of images and examples that focus on the reflection of moments of crisis whose resolution is realised in the fulfilment of the decision for *mercy*.

Mercy is first and foremost a deep emotion arising from conscious involvement in helping to resolve a person's crisis. Mercy itself, however, has no effective means to resolve the current crisis, but in itself it represents the necessary perspective for a successful revival of the value system, which takes place in the functionalisation of relationships in the community and in the purification of the neglected (degraded) human consciousness and capacity to govern the world as God. Mercy does not search for the reasons or causes of the crisis. Mercy is a perspective and its goal is the revival of values affecting human relationships. Mercy is the image of God in man.

The deification of humans through mercy can be seen in a number of spiritual songs with Marian themes, but also in the Marian religious cult itself, since it reflects the main principles of the character of the community that reveres the Mother of God. The reverence for the Mother of God provides many examples of satisfying the human desire for peace, protection, fulfilment, love, understanding, etc. The Mother of God is therefore not only an example of humility, but also an example of serenity in temptation and crisis; she is a heroine, a ruler, a protectress, a guide and a true human being with a sincere attitude of zeal for values that are expressed through mercy and love for each member of the community.

What takes centre stage in the spiritual Marian song, is the depiction of the Mother of God as protectress, rescuer, comfortress in misery,

⁸ See Dubovský, P. (ed.): Komentáře k Starému zákonu [Commentaries on the Old Testament]. Volume I. Genesis, op. cit., p. 199. A decision (by choice) can give rise to the very essence of the crisis resulting from man's action in favour of the good. Doing good is shaped at turning points along the lines of ethical character of that action, which may be influenced, for example, by acting in the name of the noble (altruistic) good as an end. Another type is acting on behalf of a useful good with the goal of personal or collective benefit as the outcome of such action. A third type, however, is already acting for the purpose of a pleasurable good, which is ethically dangerous because it already threatens the very essence of morality and thus focuses only on the originator of such action. Cf. John Paul II: Paměť a identita [Memory and Identity]. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 2005, pp. 40-42.

in poverty, in old age, in loneliness, in abandonment, in barrenness, in threats to certainties, rights and justice and in every need. The Mother of God is a patroness in times of danger and turmoil, for example, in times of rebellions, uprisings and ravages of war. All these and many other examples of crisis are the result of man's resistance to diversity in the world. The desire to dominate is the embodiment of jealousy, which results in unease as a symptom of human fragility. Therefore, people erroneously try to blame the emergence of crisis on the action of God, especially when they interpret crisis events as God's retribution for human mistakes and shortcomings. This jealousy of God is caused by the unenforceability of humans' right to receive recognition from God for their efforts. Already in the Abel-Cain story of fratricide, man experienced this difficult state of jealousy, which did not arise from a desire to murder a brother, but from jealousy of God who made possible the existence of diversity and cultural diversity when one is a shepherd (Abel) and the other a peasant (Cain). Human criticism of God also results from the obligation to hand over the first share of every yield. This commitment to hand over the first part of the gift (of the harvest, of the profit, of the benefit, of the proceeds, of the yield, of the income) lays the groundwork in the human heart for the emergence of jealousy and, consequently, a crisis of human identity. Every success or failure is thus an image of the struggle for *truth* and *right* according to human free choice.⁹

Marian spiritual song, which mirrors folk piety, points to these value conflicts of the relationship between truth, right and justice, which are reflected in various social and cultural-historical situations (in the family,

⁹ Standing upright (straight) before the Truth is the opposite of crookedness (sin). The rejection of evil (sin) does not cause a crisis in a relationship if one can control one's actions by doing good. However, even the good can be threefold: noble, useful or pleasurable (John Paul II: *Pamăt' a identita* [Memory and Identity], op. cit., p. 40), and opting for the good is related to freedom of choice. Here a person is really in an environment where freedom of choice and the prevention of conflict, which can imply a crisis of values, are decisive. John Paul II writes about it: 'A person wants a certain good, chooses it, and then is responsible for their choice. Against the backdrop of this metaphysical and, at the same time, anthropological vision of the good, a division is created, which is already primarily ethical in character. It is a division or rather a differentiation between the noble good (*bonum honestum*), the useful good (*bonum utile*) and the pleasurable good (*bonum delectabile*). These three kinds of good determine human action in an organic sense. (...) to move pleasantness to the first place in analysing human action is dangerous and threatens the very essence of morality' (Cf. John Paul II: *Pamăt' a identita* [Memory and Identity], op. cit., p. 40-41). So, what matters in this system is not only the place of man in the system of values, but also the place of the proper use of freedom in conjunction with human thought in the sphere of good and evil.

in war, in plague epidemics, in riots and tyrannies, etc.). The question of responsibility for all decisions comes to the fore.

Every crisis offers humans an opportunity for the cultivation of the heart, for example, by the decision to leave the bondage into which they fall when they feel that by freely choosing anger or jealousy, they will gain independence. It should be noted that jealousy itself is not the opposite to (the contradiction of) love. To be jealous or envious is to love what I cannot achieve myself. However, for the revival of true love, a reciprocal power of grace in the heart is necessary, i.e. to be in a state of favourable attitude towards the other person. To become strong in mercy, one does not need to seek the degree of grace in forgiveness, but in the strength of accepting the state of one's commitment to communicate in favour of revitalising the values and goods that result from complementarity, that is, from the relationship between people.

The image of mercy in Marian spiritual song

The themes of the songs, which express popular Marian devotion and reverence, are drawn from the Bible and from apocryphal and legendary tradition. However, an important part is to pass down the experience of a person's living and everyday faith from one generation to the next. This is why the development of popular Marian religiosity is a counterpoint to official Marian liturgical veneration. It is through spiritual songs that the experience of faith is passed to the wider community associated with Marian reverence.¹⁰ The rhymed song lyrics are easier to remember, unlike the liturgical texts. From the formal perspective, the songs also have a simpler structure, which has a God-centred content through the image of the Mother of God.

The inspiration for such popular devotion comes from various invocations of litany nature and various exclamations of the worshippers: 'Kyrie eleison', 'Christe eleison'. These in fact link the service with folk singing. In addition to the anthropological forms of address for God,¹¹ specific forms of address for Mary appear in the texts of popular religious reverence. They are formed using symbols inspired by psalm texts and the biblical world from the Old Testament, e.g. *the burning bush*, *Aaron's staff*, *Noah's ark*, *the Ark of the Covenant*, and also influenced by the New Testament and the

¹⁰ Cf. Petri, H. – Beinert, W.: Učení o Marii [The Teaching about Mary]. Olomouc: Matice Cyrilometodějská s. r. o., 1996, pp. 587-589.

¹¹ See Žeňuch, P.: Jazykový obraz Božej vlády [The linguistic image of God's reign]. In: Parrésia. Revue pro východní křesťanství / A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies, 2019 – 2020, vol. 12.-13., pp. 181-194.

symbolism of nature, e.g. *the star of the sea, the ivory tower, the pure lily, the well of sweetness, the grapevine, the window to heaven, etc.*

A special group of forms of address for Mary consists of comparisons of her to the tabernacle in which the eucharistic meal is hidden, e.g., the Mother of God as the *kivorion (sacrament house), God's table, the inexhaustible chalice, etc.* Mary is also often compared to Mount Zion in paraliturgical songs: Ты гора еси гора сиона, подобна еси гда трона (MBSLS, p. 889). Mary actually represents the New Testament Zion that brought the New Testament to humanity. Just as the tablets of the Law of Moses were deposited in the ark of the Old Covenant, under the heart of Mary, as in the ark of the New Covenant, was deposited the New Testament: Christ. The most widely used iconographic representation of the Mother of God, however, is the Hodegetria icon, which depicts the Mother of God standing or down to the waist, holding Jesus as a child in her left hand. Nonetheless, Christ is also depicted here as a ruler, holding a scroll of parchment or a book in his left hand (representing the Word of God) and blessing with his right hand (the fingers of his right hand forming the letters IC XC, which stand for Jesus Christ). Mary points with her right hand to the little Jesus. Icons of this type are very numerous and many are considered miraculous.¹²

The titles of the Mother of God as *Queen of Peace, Queen of Angels*, or designations that also point to her regal majesty, e.g., *ruler, protectress, rescuer, duchess, representative, enthroned, throne of the Most High, royal sceptre*, etc., reinforce people's belief in her firm, stable and permanently unchanging position of rulership. To the Mother of God as the Queen belongs the throne and the majesty. In the tradition of the Eastern Church, the throne in icons is usually reserved only for Christ as the true Pantocrator. In the icon of *Mary's Majesty*, however, the Mother of God is also depicted as the heavenly ruler, the Queen (МАРІЕ НЕБЕСНА ЦАРИЦЕ) seated on the throne, yet with Christ sitting on her knees, Mary thus represents the throne of the Most High. The majesty of Christ is also the majesty of the Mother.

¹² Žeňuch, P.: Pieseň o obraze klokočovskom ako historické svedectvo o zázraku. Kultúrno-historická a jazykovo-historická interpretácia prameňa. [The song of the Klokočov icon as a historical testimony of a miracle. Cultural-historical and linguistic-historical interpretation of the source.] In: Žeňuch P. et al.: Bohorodička v kultúrnych dejinách Slovenska. Slziaci klokočovský obraz Patrónky Zemplína. [The Mother of God in the Cultural History of Slovakia. The Weeping Klokočov Icon of the Patroness of Zemplín]. Bratislava: Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV – Veda, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2020, pp. 51-90.

The symbolism of the paraliturgical songs helps the believer to understand the meaning and significance of the kerygma in salvation history. This kerygma is reinforced by the historical awareness expressed in various allegories, images and symbols with the motif of the purification of man. Such a symbol is, for example, the water springing from the stone at the place of the apparition of the Mother of God or at the place of her icon weeping, the miracle of healing, deliverance from ills, enemy armies, etc. Purification is represented by the image of tears (e.g. in the weeping of the icon), which symbolise spiritual and physical purging and the subsequent revitalisation of life, which the miraculously weeping image or icon of the Mother of God performs for a person. In this context, Mary is often seen in many spiritual songs as the *fount of new joy* and *the mother of new life*. There is a special symbolism in the names associated with the depiction of the Mother of God as a *compassionate rescuer*, *an early rescuer*, *a patient helper*, *a suffering mother* and *a perceptive woman*, who is ready to show mercy under any circumstances and in every difficult situation. The Mother of God is the image of a hurting person in a state of crisis who longs to catch God's attention and be in his favour.

This aspect of the spiritual renewal of a person in crisis is represented in the Marian tradition, for example, by the song with the incipit **МИЛОСЕРДІА ДВЕРИ**. The desire to open the door is a recurring motif in the song. The door is an image of the space for the coming of God's mercy, which the Mother of God helps open for a person in crisis, in hardship and amid the worries of life: **МИЛОСЕРДІА ДВЕРИ, ШВЕРЗИ НАМЪ МИЛОСЕРДІА ДВЕРИ. БЛАГОСЛОВЕНАА БГРДЦЕ ДИВО, ШВЕРЗИ НАМЪ МИЛОСЕРДІА ДВЕРИ.**¹³ In the song, the Mother of God acts as the human who provides, in particular, guidance for opening the doors to human hearts for the arrival of God's mercy. In liturgical texts, the Mother of God is also compared to *the ladder* on which God descended to man when she consented to God's coming into the world, and now, by the same path, she leads man to the knowledge of the truth. She is the key for opening the door to God's mercy.

The leitmotiv of the song **МИЛОСЕРДІА ДВЕРИ** is derived from a liturgical troparion, which is also the basis for other interpretations of popular Marian religiosity in thematic areas for which it is necessary to emphasise the process of human transformation. The birth of mercy in man is a condition for the revitalisation of the value system. Perhaps this is why the purely an-

¹³ Cf. Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], pp. 647-648.

thropological dimension of the celebration of Mary as a successful human being can be seen in the annual liturgical cycle of the church's feasts. In fact, the church's liturgical calendar in the milieu of the Byzantine tradition begins with the Marian feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God (8 September) and continues with the feast of the Entry (Presentation) of the Theotokos in the Temple (21 November) and the Annunciation of her motherhood (25 March). The annual cycle ends with the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos (15 August). The central set of spiritual songs aimed at the development of folk religiosity is therefore probably mainly represented by the texts of songs from the church's festive cycle. These also make up the most important source of popular Marian veneration. This cycle inspired by the official teachings of the church is complemented by folk religiosity.

At its core, folk religiosity is the sum of values, historical experience and Christian tradition.¹⁴ Folk religiosity has the capacity for reviving synthesis, linking emotion with reason, community with church, faith with homeland, person with community, thus constantly making the biblical stories present in contemporary events. This connection between past and present, faith and the experience of generations, is made possible by the constant recollection and reliving of the cultural memory of the community.¹⁵ This folk piety provides the most important answers to people's many existential questions when they begin to compare their lives with that of Mary. The faithful, however, are not passive in these comparative glances at their own lives and that of Mary, but draw strength for their own action in family and social life from the similarity of the various trials of life.¹⁶ A very interesting aspect of folk religiosity in this regard is provided by the song of the family of Jesus, which is recorded on sheet no. 4r-4v in the songbook from the

¹⁴ Folk piety is viewed as a combination of Christian and pre-Christian customs, values and axiological ideas about the functioning of humans in the world. Белова, О.: Народная Библия. Восточнославянские этиологические легенды. [Folk Bible. Eastern Slavic etiological legends]. Москва: Индрик, 2004.

¹⁵ Cf. *Katechismus katolíckej cirkvi* [Catechism of the Catholic Church]. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 2013, § 1674-1679.

¹⁶ Зосим, О.: Западноевропейские богородичные песни в восточнославянском репертуаре XVII–XIX вв. [Western European Mother of God Songs in the East Slavic Repertoire of the 17th-19th cent.] In *Вестник православного Свято-Тихоновского гуманитарного университета. Серия 5: Вопросы истории и теории христианского искусства*, no. 4, 2011, pp. 133-164. See also Зосим, О.: Східнослов'янська духовна пісня: сакральний вимір. [Eastern Slavic spiritual song: Sacred dimension.] Київ: Міністерство Культури України, Національна академія керівних кадрів культури і мистецтв, 2017.

village of Kamienska, the Kamienska Songbook or Kamiensky Bohohlasník (1737). In the song entitled *Сѣ фамиліи Іс Хсѣтой*,¹⁷ for example, there is a plea for the newborn Mary to always stand up in time for saving virtue as well as marriage and to work to fix all broken relationships between people and also between the classes of the society: *НЕНАРУШЕНЬ Ъ ПАНЕНЬѢ, НАДОСКОНАШІЙ Ъ МАЛЖЕНЬѢ, ЗОПСОВАНЫ НАПРѢ СТАНЫ, А СПРѢ ЗГОДАЖ МЕДЖИ ПАННИ, БЫ МО Ъ ПОКОЮ ТУ ЖИЛИ, Ъ ЕДНОСТИ БѢА ХВАЛИЛИ*. Very interesting in the song is the appeal to St. Joseph, who is addressed as the son-in-law of Joachim and Anna. He thus represents man in full harmony with the humanly imperfect learning about God's presence already at the conception of each new human being. Here Joseph presents himself as an important mediator of supplications before God, who in his family has overcome the crisis of rebellion against God before accepting Christ: *И ТЫ ПРЕДІННІЙ Ъ СВѢ СПРАВА ІХЪ ЗАТЮ, ПОСЦЕНЬ Ъ ТВѢМЪ БѢА ПОЧАТЮ, ЗЪ ІАКОВА ІУСИФЕ СѢТІЙ; ЗА ШЦА Ш БѢА ЪЗАТІЙ, БЛГѢАЙ НА БѢА НШЕГО, ЗА НА МЪКИ ПОДЕМШАГО, БЫ СМЫ ГО НЕУБРАЖАЛИ ЗА ГРѢХИ ПОКЪТОВАЛИ*.

The most widespread dimension of the Marian cult is represented by the spiritual songs dedicated to the Feast of Pokrov, e.g. Intercession or the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God (1 October). These commemorate the historically verifiable event of saving Constantinople from destruction by the Persians and the Avars. In many of the symbols and images, the Mother of God is seen in song not only as a protectress, but above all as a *powerful ruler, rescuer and mediatrix of God's mercy*. In many songs inspired by this theme, the Mother of God appears as a true *duchess*. In a well-known spiritual song with the incipit *ИѢКЪ БѢГОМЪ ІЗЪВРАНИЮ, МАТЕРЬ ДѢВЪ ПРЕКРАСНЮ*,¹⁸ one can find the explicit title of the Mother of God as the Duchess of the Christian Family. The designation 'duke' is semantically associated with 'a member of a privileged estate with the status of a knight', but it also contains a semantic dimension that emphasises in particular 'the generosity of a person with excellent manners'. The Mother of God is indeed the first person to give herself over fully to God's mercy, so she is rightly a 'duchess' and the first representative of Christians: *СѢНА ВЪ*

¹⁷ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], p. 139.

¹⁸ In eastern Slovakia it is known mainly thanks to variants of the song in the Kamiensky Bohohlasník from 1734, the Šariš Songbook, in Juhasevič's songbooks from 1811 and 1812 and also in many East Slavic manuscript songbooks of the 17th and 18th centuries. Cf. Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 170-172.

ѢСТЬ ВОЕВОДА, ХРЪТІАНСКАГВ РОДА: ЧЖДАНА, ЦРЦЕ, МТИ НША ВЛЦЕ, ВСѢМЪ ДАРЖЕШЪ, ПРНВ: ДАРЫ НЕЗАВИСТНО. The title ‘Duchess of Christians’ is inspired by the title of the opening kondak of the Akathist to the Theotokos, in which the Theotokos is addressed as ‘the duchess’, ‘the mighty and invincible ruler’: ‘*Взбранной Воеводѣ, побѣдительнаа, якв избавльшеса ѿ слыхъ, благодарственнаа восписуемъ Ти раби твои, Богородице, но какв имущаа Державу непобѣдимую, ѿ всакихъ насъ бѣдь свободи, да зовемъ Ти: Радуйса, Невѣсто неневѣстнаа!*’ ‘To you, Mother of God, mighty ruler, we sing a song of victory. You have delivered us from evil, therefore we thank you fervently, though we are but unworthy servants. You are invincible, deliver us from all misery that we may sing to you: Rejoice, Virgin Bride!’

As a liturgical text, the Akathist itself was written in praise of the Mother of God to thank for the protection from the attacks of the Persians and Avars on the holy city of Constantinople. One only needs to add that this first kondak of the Akathist *Взбранной Воеводѣ...* was sounded according to the legends from the Synaxar, which describe the miracles of various icons of the Mother of God, always in times of danger and hostile attacks on Christian centres. The miraculous triple overcoming of the enemy attack on Constantinople (an Avar-Slavic attack and two Arab attacks) influenced the cultural awareness of the entire Christian community of the invincibility of the Mother of God. Perhaps this is why the use of motifs from the Akathist has become a characteristic element of spiritual songs, which are dominated by the hope of salvation for man, and not only in the liturgically specific Lenten season when this ancient liturgical hymn is sung on Akathist Saturday (the Saturday before the fifth Sunday of Great Lent). It turns out that when the believer sings the Akathist (in Greek ακάθιστος, in Church slavonic **НЕСЕДАТЕЛЬНЫЙ**) in the upright posture (standing), it is a symbol of resolve and a manifestation of strength in every time, in danger and crisis,¹⁹ for strength is manifested in the acceptance of one’s own weakness. Only a strong person can truly reveal their weaknesses, and the realisation of one’s

¹⁹ The chanting of the Akathist became established only after the new invasions of the Saracens (in 673 and 716) and spread throughout the Byzantine Church. Its use as a liturgical text was confirmed by Patriarch Sergius in the 7th century, to whom the authorship is also erroneously attributed. Theologians and church historians consider Romanos the Melodist the author of the Akathist and regard this hymn as a testament to the faith of the ancestors. For more see Hurbanič, M.: *The Avar Siege of Constantinople in 626. History and Legend*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

own strength in the manifested weakness is the result of the freedom of choice to do good, not only in times of prosperity, but especially in times of crisis, hardship, anxiety, etc.²⁰

In some spiritual songs the Mother of God also appears as a real heroine or warrior, a duchess dressed in military armour with shield: *ЗЫЙ НА СТЪЮ ВЪРЪ ѿ НАТЪРЫ, МОНАСТЫРСКІЕ БЕЗЪСЪРМАНЪ МЪРЫ, ХОТѢЛЪ ПОДЪ МОЦЪ СВОЮ ВЪЗАТИ, НАДЪ ТЫМЪ МЪРОМЪ ДБА МЪТИ, РАТЪНКУ ДАЛА, ЗА ТАРЧУ СТАЛА*²¹ and elsewhere e.g.: *Заставъ на тарчовъ збавленна: силѣ всего имени, оушикну же на, в мѣсцахъ беспечныхъ, збѣи неприятелей вѣчныхъ*.²² But even here, the Mother of God is neither a heroine nor a warrior with the intention of gaining military success or so that she may be celebrated for accomplishing extraordinary feats (saving from destruction, healing the sick, a weeping icon, etc.). She stands out for her bravery, courage and determination that she shows in life's decisive moments because they arise out of everyday necessity. In spiritual songs, too, the real heroes are those who are involved in reliving the described event as each such event is a way of reliving the development of a person in a particular state of crisis. In the song, the protection of people and their rights is not achieved through military intervention and the expulsion of the enemy, but through an act of mercy towards the suffering, which is considered to be the real rescue.

In this context, other symbols can also be mentioned. They depict the Mother of God as a defender at court trials. For example, there is symbolism based on the variation of the meaning of terms in legal terminology intended to demonstrate the presumptive innocence of human society, which turns to the Mother of God for protection, since she has been spared from the consequences of sin and is fully associated with God's mercy. The appeal

²⁰ 'Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.' (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10).

²¹ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 889-892.

²² Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 817-818.

for help in the crisis is thus directed to the Mother of God as the advocate of the right side of the dispute: **Πὸ τῆς τοῦ Πλάτῃς σα οὐτῆκαμε πανενκο Μῦρια, οὐ τῆς στράνης γλαδάμε μάτκο λυτότηβα**; so that also those who turn to her may be spared from the difficulties of the crisis. The song with the above incipit is dedicated to the feast of Pokrov (1 October) and is written in Cyrillic in the Šariš Songbook of the early 18th century. Its other two variants can also be found in Ján Juhasevič's songbooks from the early 19th century (1811 and 1812). The model is the song written down in the second edition of the *Cantus Catholici* collection (Trnava, 1700) and probably spread from it in the area of the Byzantine-Slavic tradition in eastern Slovakia, as evidenced by the language of the song itself. However, the song may have penetrated the area of the Church of the Byzantine rite in Slovakia as early as the end of the 17th century from *Šteyer's hymnbook* as it has the character of a planctus or lament, but owing to the Turkish threat, it acquired the dimension of a prayer for protection from the enemy, as evidenced by the verses: **ГЛАТЬ, БО ТАГНГТ (НА) НАСЪ ПОГАНОВЕ, ОТВРАТЪ ПРОТИВЕНСТВА, КЪ ТЕБѢ БОЛАМЕ, МЫ ХРИСТИАНЕ, БРАИ (НАСЪ) НЕВЕСПЕЧЕНСТВА**. The dispute expressed in the song is a basis for understanding the crisis between the Christian and Muslim worlds, which for the Hungarian milieu at that time was represented mainly by the Turkish threat and interfaith unrest.²³

In the context of folk religiosity, the allegory of the Mother of God as a judicial advocate shows an interesting semantic dimension of the believers' reproach that people address to heaven for the fact that on the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God (15 August), this jealous heaven takes not only the soul, but also the body of Mary as the only tangible proof of the earthly life of a noble person: **ГДѢ НБѢ ЗАДРОСНЕ ЦЮ НА ВЪТВАРЕШЪ; ГДЫ ЕДНЪ ПОТѢХЪ Ѡ НА ѠБИРАЕШЪ; ЧИМЪ СА ВЪДЕТЪ ЗЕМЛА ТѢШИЛА; ПОТѢШИТЕЛКИ КОЛЬ СВОЕЙ ПОЗЫЛА**.²⁴ Here jealousy is also at the core of the dispute between man and the supernatural world (heaven). This conflict is nonetheless pervaded or permeated in the eyes of the simple man by the mystery of human deification in the form of the acceptance of Mary as the queen of heaven. In the following verses of the song, however, the Mother of God is already presented as the enduring hope of salvation for those who continually pray to the Mother of God as a heavenly protectress and helper

²³ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 173-175.

²⁴ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 520-521

in crisis: ЛЕЧЬ ПЛАЧЪ Ё ВЕСЕЛОСТЬ ѠМѢНЯЙТЕ ВЪСИ, НЕЗАБУДЕ Ѡ НАСЪ МѢИ И Ё НѢСИ. ТИЛКО ЕЙ ЗАВСЕ ТРЕБА В МЫСЛИ МАТИ, И ЦЮ ДЕНЬ КРИПКО Ѡ ПОМОЩЬ ПРОХАТИ.²⁵

Various other spiritual and paraliturgical songs describing historically verifiable events, e.g. attacks of heretics on churches and monasteries, various riots, plagues, events based on eyewitness testimonies, etc., were also very popular. They point to the constant presence of the mercy of God in a particular historical space-time. Such spiritual songs often resemble historical and heroic songs in genre. In their interpretation, however, the spiritual and historical plotlines cannot be seen separately, but the historical and religious dimensions of the song must be interpreted as a whole with doxological overlap.

The embodiment of this worldview is people's active participation in religious, historical and cultural life based on freedom of choice and action, yet such unbounded freedom can only be achieved by the heart. According to the tradition of the Eastern Church, the heart cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the human body. The heart is the synecdochic image of the whole human being. It is not for nothing that the priest, when celebrating the liturgy, calls on the worshippers: 'Lift up your hearts!' It is not a matter of a one-off emotional outburst or of thinking about what is happening during the celebration of the liturgical rites. 'Lift up your hearts!' is a total call for the believer to lift up to God all that we are, all our thoughts, all our feelings, all our desires: simply the whole person.²⁶

Therefore, a paraliturgical song denotes such a song and literary form which is not merely an approximation of the mystical world, but it creates a spiritual area of its own. The primary mission of paraliturgical songs is thus to encourage, instruct, exhort, explain and point to God and the saints, to inform and elucidate the causes and origins of biblical and apocryphal events, miracles and apparitions, and to venerate and celebrate them. In this way, the paraliturgical song proclaims the mystery of faith using metaphor, imagery and allegory to liken a particular sociohistorical event to biblical (New Testament or Old Testament), legendary and apocryphal scenes. According to this teaching, a mysterious re-enactment of the past is constant-

²⁵ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 520-521.

²⁶ Cf. Špidlík, T.: Slovánská spiritualita [Slovak spirituality]. In Špidlík, T. (ed.): Spiritualita, formácia a kultúra [Spirituality, Formation and Culture]. Velehrad: Refugium, 1995, pp. 28-31.

ly taking place in contemporary events. The believer repeatedly desires to be involved in these glorious processes; this is aided by the update of the historical and religious event in song through the signs of God, which cannot be understood with the senses, but only with the heart, for they stand between the two spaces of the *Sacrum* and the *Profanum*.²⁷ Just as the rites of service and liturgical rites of the Eastern Church and their chants are inspired by the ancient theophanic tradition, the sacred song raises the visibility of the contribution of the sacred dimension to the revitalisation of the society's value system. Spiritual song can thus be regarded as a song documenting faith and experience, which is complemented by historically verifiable events and also has a didactic and reflective level. At the same time, it is a simplified image of the possibilities of reviving the cultural awareness and value system of people in their relationship with God and mercy.

The manifestations of this awareness can be seen in the various spiritual songs dedicated to the Mother of God, in which she acts as an intercessor who pleads with God for the rescue of man not only in times of difficult and adverse situations caused by natural and social events, but also the transgressions of the classes as well as the church, and especially in the interpretation of various signs and threats on the verge of an apocalyptic crisis.

Although the song with the incipit *Прѣтаѡ Панно ѿгласка Црице* written in the Kamienka Songbook is a chant of gratitude about the reverence for the Mother of God, it describes a land devastated by man, especially owing to various interfaith riots at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. For this malice towards the earth and fellow human beings, people even then expected the Judgement Day as they were convinced of its coming by various natural phenomena, including, for example, the solar or lunar eclipse, or the approach of Halley's Comet. Literally, these natural phenomena are referred to in the song as follows: *ѿще не ты мѡишь сѡа за нами, зѡсквернейна земла нашими грѣхами. Нѡ хмѡрами все са заслонѡеть. Мѡцѡ ѡздобѡ свою ѡмѣняетѡ; свѣзды свѣтлыѡ, нигда непостають, запевне страшный сѡдѡ проавлають, ѿ воздухѡ са всѡ ѡминили, натѡрѡ свою надолѡ похылили. Цѡтво на Цѡтво гды настѡпѡеть, оѡпадокѡ свѣта ѡжѡ знаменѡеть*.²⁸ The song enjoyed great popularity especially in eastern Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, as evidenced by its widespread use in several local manuscript songbooks,

²⁷ For the relationship between sacred and profane space see Eliade, M.: *Posvátné a profánní* [Sacred and Profane]. Praha: Česká křesťanská akademie, 1994, pp. 17-49.

²⁸ Žeňuch, P.: *Kyryllische paraliturgische Lieder* [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 916-918.

among which we can mention the Šariš Songbook, Peter Rudnov's Songbook, and the Songbook of Nižný Tvarožec. The solar eclipse which was visible in Hungary in 1711 was perceived by the people as a harbinger of the apocalyptic end. These images are frequent in a number of song lyrics from the aforementioned period, e.g. in a song written in Ján Juhasevič's songbook from the years 1761–1763. The song explicitly mentions the bloodshed in the fratricidal war in connection with the Rákóczi Uprising of 1703–1701. In addition to the fratricidal war, there is also mention of interfaith hostility among Christians or disputes between neighbours caused by hateful words and false speeches spoken in a fit of jealousy: По затмѣню сѣнца нѣмашь ничь до-брого, толко крѣпролатиа, повсталъ брѣтъ на брѣта. Кролѣства падають, цесарства рѣшають и великіе пѣнства въ иши край рѣшаю. Вѣра на вѣрѣ барзо повстала, не ѣдна црковъ южъ ѣсть зрѣнтована. (...) В прїятелствѣ неприязни много, же радъ бы предати южъ ѣденъ дрѣгого; и сусѣда сусѣда в оубоствѣ нератѣ, але емѣ во словахъ своихъ трѣтизнѣ готѣ.²⁹

Often the only way out of a crisis situation was resignation. But the way out of a crisis is not the death of man! The only rescue is mercy, as it is also mentioned in the song with the incipit Мѣтко сѣгаѣ люде оутрапленѣ, which is also found in the manuscript Songbook of Nižný Tvarožec from the beginning of the 18th century, written at a time of crisis marked by tensions and danger to human life: Новина смѣтнаѣ южъ по свѣтѣ слынетъ, не еденъ теперъ вѣз сповѣди гынетъ. Росказаѣ пѣнно сѣтъ твой ѣгломъ, вы нефолговали наймиѣ човекови: Далъ мечъ ѣстрѣлы ѣдовити; абы племена вѣсѣхъ людеѣ гвѣтити; Бы нѣша племена были выглажены ѣко прахъ земный вѣтромъ рознесенны. Заставсѣ пѣно просъ сѣна своего, нехай некараетъ члѣва грѣшнаго. Неха некараетъ насъ ѣ запалчивостѣ, нехай ѣпѣщаеѣтъ вѣсѣ наша злостѣ. Нѣмашъ ратѣнкѣ, оѣ кого просити, тѣлко ѣ тебе пѣно вси жадаемъ.³⁰

The strengthening of the common value and cultural consciousness of the community is achieved through the constant revival of historical memory as a unique source of lessons from various moments of crisis in the development of human culture and civilisation. The way out of a state of crisis is to learn from the experience of one's ancestors who showed their courage and strength by admitting weakness, humility and mercy.

²⁹ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 923-925.

³⁰ Žeňuch, P.: Kyrillische paraliturgische Lieder [Cyrillic Paraliturgical Songs], op. cit., pp. 921-923.

The value system reflected in the homiletic tradition of the 17th and 18th centuries

Svetlana Šašerina

The homiletic works, especially the commentaries and morals from Gospel texts read during the liturgy, have a didactic character. The didactic Gospels were written as texts intended for the spiritual training of priests and the faithful. The commentaries and morals written for Gospel readings on Sundays and feasts of the church year are considered to be guides to daily Christian life. They teach people to live in a system of values which form the basis of knowing oneself and one's place in the life of society. The church explains the need to preserve values for both secular and spiritual life, thus shaping in the believer an image of the world based on the truths of Holy Scripture, reflecting the church tradition and building a person's value system in the local milieu.

The texts contained in the Cyrillic manuscript collections of Carpathian provenance are usually very simple, unchallenging interpretations of Christian morality. They contain almost no references to historical events or descriptions of people's everyday life, but they are nevertheless a source of interesting linguistic material. The texts of the sermons written in the language of common people are preceded by translations of the pericopes from the Holy Scripture in the vernacular. The use of some passages from the New Testament in the language of the locals indicates the inspiration from the Protestant milieu, where the word of God is interpreted in the language of ordinary people. In addition, texts of this kind certainly prove the translation talent of the local clergy of the Byzantine rite.

Sermon as a genre is primarily aimed at instructing parishioners in the right path, reminding them of the truths of the faith, exposing their sins and encouraging Christians in their pursuit of God's grace. In this sense, the idea of all doctrines is the awareness of man's sinful nature, the struggle with it and the attainment of perfection; in a broad sense, it is a choice between good and evil. In this context, the interpretation of the notion of *good* is particularly important because it is what largely determines social values and serves as the measure of ethics and aesthetics.

Absolute goodness is God. The perception of God is anthropomorphic: the biblical words that man was created in the image and likeness of God are naturally perceived as an indication of physical resemblance to man. Humans interpret God as a person who appears in two forms: the Pantocrator or the Almighty has power over all that is on earth, over life and death, and Christ is close and intelligible to man. According to legend, it was Christ who entered into blood brotherhood with Prov and helped cure his father's blindness. In this context, blindness appears not only as a physical, but also as a spiritual disorder: by healing the sick, Christ revives their faith and thus becomes the mediator between the earthly and the heavenly. The presence of such a merciful God in man's life, however, evoked the consciousness of man's dependence on God as the supreme power, the one who holds our lives and destinies in his hands. Filled with the fear of sin and a thirst for salvation, man thus appears weak and regards all earthly life as the preparation for eternal life.

According to R. Berger¹, the church is a community of believers founded by Christ. The church came into being in the redemptive sacrifice of Christ on the cross and in his resurrection, the church was established before people during the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and its end is expected at the end of time in the form of the heavenly communion of the redeemed. The texts of liturgical prayers refer to the church as the people of God and the body of Christ. The cycle of prayers at baptism refers to the church as the bride of Christ and mother of the faithful; baptism is viewed as the second birth and the transformation of a person into a Christian. The church as a temple (*ecclesia*) represents the communion of Christians; it is a place of mutual contact with God. At the beginning of the church, believers gathered for worship in their homes. From the 3rd century onwards, special buildings were erected for this purpose for the whole community of believers, where a special room was also set aside for the sacrament of Holy Communion. The basilica as a distinct architectural form appeared at the beginning of the 4th century and since then certain requirements have applied to the construction of churches. Christians do not consider the temple to be the house of God; this concept existed in antiquity when it was believed that a pagan deity lived in the temple and people were not allowed to enter the temple; sacrificial offerings were therefore brought to a specific place, but not to the temple. *However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool* (Acts 7:48-49). Even the temple of

¹ Berger, R.: Liturgický slovník [Liturgical Dictionary]. Verlag Herder Freiburg im Breisgau, 1999. Transl. Václav Konzal, Jaroslav Vokoun, Zdeněk Lochovský. Praha: Vyšehrad, 2008.

Jerusalem in the time of Christ was not the dwelling place of God. *The Word became flesh* (John 1:14): in the body of the resurrected Christ, transfigured by the Holy Spirit of Christ, the way is opened for those who go to God, to the temple, because they go to hear the Gospel and to participate in the sacramental celebration of God in the church. The Ugljan Didactic Gospel contains the following explanation of the necessity of temple attendance:

И СЛЪХАНА СЛОВА БЖЕГО, КТО ЕГО ПИЛНО СЛЪХАЕ^ѣ, ВЕЛИКІЙ ПОЖИТО^{кѣ} ИМАЕ^ѣ. И ДОБРОДѢЙСТВО СЯ^м СОВѢ ЧИНИ^ѣ, И ТЫ^ѣ ДШН СВОЕ^ѣ. БЖДЕ^ѣ ЗНАТИ КОТОРОЮ ДОРОГОЮ БУДЕ^ѣ ХОДИТИ ПО РОКАЗАНІЮ БЖІЮ ІАКЪ МАЕ^ѣ БЫТИ ТРЪВАЛЫ^ѣ ВЪ ЗАКОНѢ. И СТАЛЫ^ѣ ОУ ВѢРѢ ІАКЪ БЫ^ѣ СЯ МѢЛЪ ЗАХОВАТИ ПРОТІВЬ БУ. И БЛІНЕМУ СВОЕМУ. И КАЖДОМУ ЧЛКУ. ТАКѢ ОУБОГОМУ ІАКЪ И БОГАТОМУ ІАКѢ БЫ^ѣ МА^ѣ ВЪ ВСЕ^ѣ ПАМАТАТИ. НА ОНЫИ ПИШЛЫИ ЧАСЫ ОСТА^ѣНИИ. ТО Е^ѣ СТРАШНЫ^ѣ ДНЪ СЪДНЫ^ѣ.

Those who listen intently to the word of God benefit greatly from hearing it and thus do a good deed for themselves and their souls. [They] shall know which path to follow according to God's commandment, how assiduous to be in the law and steadfast in faith, how to conduct themselves towards God and towards their neighbour and towards every human being, both poor and rich. How they must remember all things, even the coming of the last day, that is, the terrible judgment day.

Manuscript texts of homiletic character reflect the world view and approach to life of man who has not yet forgotten the medieval way of perceiving life and the surrounding world, its spiritual and material dimension, but who had also not yet gained a foothold in the forming culture of the modern age, which was influenced by various aspects of the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the invention of the printing press and other discoveries. In her description of the axiological system of medieval man,² T. Vendina focuses on humans themselves, their world and society, where God has an important place as the only lasting value. However, in the homiletic works of the Carpathian region emerging in the 17th century, one can already trace a different, more developed perception of the issue of spirituality and spiritual and cultural values.

² Вендина, Т. И.: Средневековый человек в зеркале старославянского языка. [Medieval Man Reflected in the Old Slavonic Language]. Москва: Индрик. 2002, p. 275.

We will especially highlight the values associated with the house of worship, the church and the spiritual life of a simple believer of the Byzantine rite. These are, above all, faith, the communion of believers (the church), the human spirit and the filling of man by the Holy Spirit, particularly with regard to the institution of communal prayer in the house of worship, of man's eschatological views and of the coming of Christ as the incarnated divine love and of prayer and fasting.

The basis of life for a simple believer in the 17th century was faith in God. Faith in God is primarily a personal relationship; human's devotion to God is manifested in one's free consent to all the truth that God gives. Faith is God's gift; it is an exceptional virtue that comes from God and is centred on him. In order to awaken such faith in man, the helping grace of God and the inward help of the Holy Spirit are necessary, who can soothe the heart and turn it to the Lord, purify the mind and give a feeling of happiness in assenting to the truth and the belief in that truth. Faith and its daily manifestation in good works is regarded as the way to salvation and eternal life.

И ѿ вѣ кто колѣкъ ималъ вѣръ и крѣтиѣа спсєнъ бѣдеѣ.
А кто оуры не ималѣ вѣры, и не крѣтиѣа, то ѿ оужденъ бѣдеѣ.

Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

The Ugljan Didactic Gospel also contains a moral on faith, describing its three cardinal virtues: faith, hope and love. In anticipation of God's judgment, it is not enough for a person to have faith to reach eternal life, but one should strive to live the earthly life according to the commandments. In this regard, Vendina states that in this way the denominational concept of faith becomes an ethical concept on the basis of which relationships between people are built.³ A person who has faith also has moral strength, virtue, the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to resist evil.

Прѣтаа дѣа мала вѣ рѣцѣ своєѣ цнѣты вѣскѣн. коурыи
стѣпнани называюѣа.
Прѣшии стѣпень ѣсть до нѣа. вѣра еднѣкъ мѣмо вѣдати,
жѣ вѣрою глаголю не мѣжеѣ члѣкъ збавлѣна достѣпити.
тѣба до вѣры добрыѣ оучѣнкѣ.

³ Вендина, Т. И.: Средневековый человек в зеркале старославянского языка [Medieval Man Reflected in the Old Slavonic Language], pp. 281-282.

ΝΑΟΥΧΗΤΗ. ἢ Ἐ ΠΟΤΡΕΒΕ ΝΑΨΟ" ΜΟΪΕΜΟ Ξ ΝΕΓΟ ΔΟΒΡΟΥΙΟ
ΠΟΡΑΔΔ ΜΕΪΤΗ.

Love is twofold: good and evil. Love is evil when we love someone because of their wealth, because they have chests, pantries and stables full of all kinds of possessions, and therefore we wonder what to take from this person. Such love is wrong, for as long as people are rich, everyone loves them, bows down to them, worships them, addresses them as kind masters and ministers to them. But when a person remains poor, no one loves them anymore, no one looks at them and knows them.

It is also an evil love to love someone for their beauty: as long as people are alive and healthy, they are beautiful, but when they die, their bodies fall apart and rot, and the love for those people also withers away. Evil love is also when we love because of sin, that it leads to sin in us, for it allows us to sin. Just as God hates sin, he also hates the person who sins, rebukes them and is angry with them. Good is such love when we love and honour someone for their wisdom as we can learn from their wisdom ourselves and we can also receive wise counsel from them when needed.

God stands at the centre of medieval man's value system, defining the boundaries of what is allowed and what is not, what is good and what is bad. It was religious values that shaped social mores and morals. The most important value in a person's life was faith, which determined the meaning of all human life, shaping the worldview and relationships in society. The contrast between one's own, the correct faith and the false, heretical one is also associated with this concept in a person's mind. Protestants, most often Calvinists, but also representatives of the Catholic Church and the emerging Uniates, i.e. Greek Catholics, were considered heretics. In addition, there was an opposition with the so-called 'heathens', i.e. non-Christians, and the Jews, with the Jewish tradition being considered more valuable than the pagan one, and sometimes also more valuable than the heretical tradition i.e. than a different Christian denomination. Faith in the value system generally did not only mean a personal relationship with God and the affiliation to a particular tradition and community; it was translated into the category of ethics because it characterised relationships in society that were built on trust or distrust. *A loyal person* is both a representative of a particular

denomination and a person who can be trusted. The affiliation to a certain community is thus an evaluation of one's ethical qualities.

An important part of the articles of faith in a multi-denominational and heterogeneous ethnic milieu is the issue of protecting of one's own faith as well as the issue of relationships with non-Christians. The Cyrillic teaching materials express criticism of Calvinists, especially concerning the Eucharist, and criticism of Uniatism, priests and people who converted to the Church of Rome. There is a considerable number of such passages of sincere criticism in the handwritten records; this shows the topicality of the problem. This is highlighted by the calls to defend one's own faith. The polemical attacks clearly reflect the attitude and reaction of the Orthodox part of society to the processes of Latinisation and Reformation that took place in the northeastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary at the end of the 17th century. For example, the texts of the commentaries on the Gospel pericopes in the Uglian Didactic Gospel point to this complex current state of affairs in the church:

И БЫЛИ ЛАТИНЬНИЦИ ВЕСПОЛЪЗ ИЪЗ ГРЕКИ. ПРИ ЕДИННОМ
УСТАВѢ .У ЛѢТѢ И ПИ И Е ЛѢТѢ. И НА ВШИТКОМ ЕДИНО БЫЛА.
ПРОСКУРОЮ СЛЪЖИЛИ. МАЛЪЖЕНЪКИ СЛЪБЕНИИ МАЛИ. ЦЕРЕМОНИИ
ЕДИНОСТАЙНИИ БЫЛИ ЦРКОБНИИ. ТАКО ЧО НИИѢ ГРЕКОВЕ И РЪСЪ.
ДРЪЖИМО ЗА ЛАСКОЮ МИЛОГО БѢ. И НЕЧРЕБА СЪ ШЦИПАТИ Ш
ОУСТАВЫ АПЛЪСКОИ. КОТОРАА ЧО УСТАВИЛА СЪЛА СЪВОРАА
АПЛЪСКАА ЦРКОВ. ДО СКОИЧЕНА СВѢТѢА НЕ БЪДЕ ЗНИЦИЕНА. Б
ГРЕЦЪКОМ И В РЪЖКОМ ЗАКОНѢ МИЛОМ.

The Latins [representatives of the Latin rite] formed a community with the Greeks [representatives of the Byzantine rite] and they had a common status for 485 years, being united in everything. They had wives with whom they swore oaths, they conducted church ceremonies together, as now the Greeks and the Russians celebrate because they are together for the love of the dear God. There is no need to separate ourselves from the apostolic provisions established by the holy universal apostolic church, for the church will not be destroyed by Greek or Russian beloved law, not even until the end of time.

Another moral criticises Lutherans for being traitors to the church as they disobey the holy church and wilfully depart from its law because they listen to Luther's false teachings.

НЕВѢРНЫ́ХЪ ЛЮДІЙ. КОТОРЫ́И НЕПОСЛАВШИИ ЦѢКВИ СТО́И. И
ВЫСТУПЖЮ́ И ЗАКОНЪ. НА СВОСВЯЗСТВО. СЛЖУЮЧИ НАОУ́КИ
ФАЛЬШИВО́И ЛЮТЕРЬСКО́И.

In other contemporary texts, the criticism was much harsher. Well known in this regard is, for instance, the Sokyrnytsia manuscript, which includes direct insults to the supporters of unification.⁴

тыи священници, которые прияша сатанинскую вѣру
през унѣю, за попадѣ, за чада своя двоякая, за покой и за
славу сегосвѣтную краткую, продашася римляномъ во
всепугубное безуміе ихъ.

*The priests who have embraced the satanic faith in the union,
through their wives and children, for peace and short-term
glory in this world, have sold themselves to the Romans [rep-
resentatives of the Latin rite] into their destructive madness.*

Relationships with non-Christians are clearly defined in the Uzhhorod Pseudozonar Manuscript:⁵ the document imposes a prohibition of eating

⁴ For more see Вашичкова, С.: Реакция на процесс латинизации, отраженная в текстах Угрянских рукописей [Reaction to the process of Latinisation reflected in the texts of Ugrian manuscripts]. In: Medzikultúrne vzťahy východnej cirkvi s latinskou v Uhorsku do konca 18. storočia. Košice – Bratislava [Intercultural Relations of the Eastern Church with the Latin Church in the Kingdom of Hungary by the End of the 18th Century. Košice – Bratislava]: Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka in Košice – Teologická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity – Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2017. pp. 153-170.

⁵ Ženuch, P. – Beľakova, E. V. – Najdenova, D. – Zubko, P. – Marinčák, Š.: Užhorodský rukopisný Pseudozonar. Pravidlá mníšskeho a svetského života z prelomu 16.–17. storočia / Ужгородський рукописний Псевдозонар. Правила монашеской и светской жизни рубежа XVI–XVII вв. [Uzhhorod Pseudozonar Manuscript. Rules of Monastic and Secular Life from the Turn of the 16th – 17th Centuries]. Monumenta Byzantino-Slavica et Latina Slovaciae, V. Bratislava: Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV; Slovenský komitét slavistov: VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV; Moscow: Institut rossijskoj istorii RAN; Sofia: Kirilo-Methodievski naučen centăr BAN; Košice: Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka, 2018, p. 45 and XLV,1-29; LXX,6-23; LXXII,3. On this subject, see also Ženuch, P.: Rukopis s pravidlami svetského a cirkevného života z prelomu 16. a 17. storočia v kontexte medzikonfesiónálnych vzťahov pod Karpatmi [A manuscript with rules of secular and ecclesiastical life from the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries in the context of interfaith relations under the Carpathian Mountains]. In: Medzikultúrne vzťahy východnej cirkvi s latinskou v Uhorsku do konca 18. storočia [Intercultural Relations of the Eastern Church with the Latin Church in the Kingdom

with non-Christians and mixed marriages. Although a generally favourable attitude towards Jews, in some places even better than towards Calvinists, can be found in the didactic Gospels, the Pseudozonar warns of the ceremonial impurity of wheat and oil, products bought from Jews, while forbidding their use in the preparation of liturgical bread. Communication with heathens could defile a Christian and automatically led to his or her excommunication, except in situations where the pagan converted to Orthodoxy during that communication.

In the value system, the opposite of God is evil. Evil talk, malice is something that characterises only humans, but it does not come from God. It is inherent in the earthly nature of man, who is as inclined towards good as towards evil. Sin plays a decisive role in people's lives. Sin can affect time, space, work, the relationship with God, the formation of social bonds, ritual practices – a person's whole life and their relationship with the world.

Historical time is divided by sin: before and after the fall of Adam, before and after the birth of Christ, before and after the Last Judgment. The stages of human history follow one another according to key events in the history of sin: the transition from original perfection to a state characterised by the presence of sin, the fall of Adam and Eve; the process of salvation, that is, deliverance from sin begins with the incarnation of Christ; end times will bring final judgment on sinners and eternal glory to those who have not sinned. Within this historical time, individual time passes: it begins at birth when a person takes upon themselves the sin of their ancestors; it continues after baptism when, freed from original sin, a person is given the opportunity to fight off the sins around them; and it ends with physical death, when they are eternally condemned or saved because of their deeds. Sin also defines space: there is no place for it in paradise; the earth is full of sins, but it is also possible to create a sin-free environment on earth such as a monastery; the afterlife is also divided into parts according to the presence or absence of sin in it, into heaven and hell – there is also the notion of purgatory in the Catholic tradition.

The sin is at the beginning of a series of individual and collective rituals such as baptism, confession, fasting, repentance, prayer and pilgrimage – all of them are carried out for one specific purpose: to limit the impact of sin on the human being and on the world as a whole. Sin also manifests itself in

of Hungary until the End of the 18th Century]. Košice: Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka in Košice, Teologická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity; Bratislava Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2017, pp. 45-69.

a whole range of relationships, which form the basis of a person's life. Power can lead to ambition and vanity, social status to envy, economic activity can lead to avarice. All aspects of a person's life in society can lead to and are permeated by sin. The society to which a person belongs is a congregation of sinners. For forgiveness of sins and healing of the soul, man turns to God.

Sin also determines the dynamics of the relationship between body and soul within one person. Once their original perfection has been tainted by sin, soul and body exist together in a state of constant tension, out of which sin arises again. On the one hand, there is carnality as the source of hard-to-control impulses, but on the other hand, there is the nebulous spirit, which does not own the body where it resides, yet it is constantly hindered in the effort to do good. The punishment for original sin also determines the structure of sin. The flesh must work hard to survive, and the intellectual labour which results from the curiosity of a strong spirit overcomes the ignorance into which the flesh has been plunged by sin.

Every sermon focuses primarily on sin and includes reflections on the origin and existence of sin, its impermissibility and harmfulness. Mankind began to speak of sin before anything else. The fall of Adam and Eve is recorded in the Scripture; the church speaks of sin to make people feel a revulsion against evil and to steer them towards good; Christians regularly speak of sins in confession during their lives and before they die. Apparent anti-value thus becomes a subject much more discussed than virtue itself.

At the other end of the value system is *purity*. In cultural perception, the attribute 'čistý' (meaning 'pure' or 'clean') represents an absolutely positive value, which is associated with such concepts as *white, first, new, pristine, right, holy, divine* and with the meaning of *one's own*. The opposite of pure or clean is *dirty, old, used, sinful* and *foreign (different)*. Everything can be clean: *a person, an object, a plant, an animal, a time, a place, a natural phenomenon*, etc. An important part of the concept of purity is the religious perception of this name for the condition, even though the religious context of the meaning is later and figurative.

In the spiritual literature,⁶ the term *čistý* (in this context *clean*) is used to denote such objects and realities which people could use because they were harmless to them. Unclean things and realities were to be avoided because

⁶ See, for example, Ďurica, J. (ed.): *Stručný katolícky teologický slovník* [Concise Dictionary of Catholic Theology]. Bratislava: Dobrá kniha, 2016, p. 185-186 and Lapko, R.: *Čistý a nečistý vo Svätom písme*. [Clean and Unclean in Holy Scripture] In: *Slavica Slovaca*, 2020, vol. 55, issue 2, p. 307-312.

they defiled people. Among the unclean were realities related to sexual intercourse, decay and death (semen, menstruation, sweat or corpse) and unclean animals (reptiles, swine, etc.). Purity denotes God's holiness and is therefore sometimes equated with the sacred, while impurity falls into the category of profane concepts. Every transition from the sacred to the profane and vice versa causes impurity, which necessarily calls for purification.

Purity is a concept common to all older religions. In fact, purity is a prerequisite for man to be able to approach sacred, cultic objects. The Dictionary of Biblical Theology⁷ points out that the meaning of the word *čisty* (in this context *pure*) may additionally include the concept of moral virtue. However, purity is gained through rites, not moral actions, and is lost through physical contact with unclean objects. Purity means legitimacy for the participation in the cult or in the life of the holy community. It involves physical purity, the removal of what is unclean, sick and corrupt, constituting a protection against paganism. Purity governs the use of all that is holy: everything that pertains to the cult must be pure and must not be approached inappropriately. Though also understood as sacred, some morally good powers of life still cause defilement. Purification is therefore achieved by waiting (usually until the end of the day on which the defilement occurred; in the event of suspected illness, a time limit of one week is set, after which a person may be considered purified) or by taking part in purifying rites: washing the body and clothes, offering sacrifices for expiation or other rites on the Day of Atonement.

Jesus' teaching adds a new aspect to the perception of purity as a value: already the prophets declare that neither washing nor sacrifices as signs of ritual purification have any value in themselves if they are not accompanied by an inner purification and an effort to maintain purity of person and heart. We find in Psalms that the love of God is directed to those who are pure in heart (Psalms 73:1), that those may approach God who have innocent hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to vanity and swear deceitfully (Psalms 24:3-4), and that the Lord will reward those who are righteous and whose hands are clean (Psalms 18:21). Therefore, the main requirement for a person to be attached to God is cleanness of hands, purity of heart, flesh, prayer, i.e. irreproachable moral conduct. This purity can only be given to man by God, which is why we turn to him with a plea for mercy: 'God, create in me a pure heart' (Psalms 51:12). Purity means resist-

⁷ Léon-Dufour, X. (ed.): Slovník biblickej teológie [Dictionary of Biblical Theology]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990, pp. 163-168.

ance to immorality, and it is especially about abstaining from and avoiding everything that could pollute and endanger the soul. Genuine purity is the capacity to love, but perfect love for God is incompatible with a tainted heart. Purity of heart enables us to see in God not only our supreme Lord, but also a loving Father. The pure is the one who triumphs over selfishness and is able to live according to their gifts for the benefit of others.⁸

In Jesus' words, the only uncleanness is internal (Mark 7:14-23): 'Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.' From within, from the human heart, come evil thoughts. In this context, one can point out the observation that the ideal of purity is God, and therefore all heavenly creation is pure in itself, and that is why demons are also called unclean spirits. The observance of fasting, prayer and almsgiving serves to purify the believer.

A human being can be pure as well. In folk culture there is an idea of the original impurity of the human body because, though created by God, it was later defiled by Satan. Unlike the body, the human soul is originally pure as it was breathed into the body by God. The purity of man depends on the physical cleanliness of the body and clothes, on age (children and the elderly are pure, middle-aged people may not be pure), on sex and physiological condition (health, fertility, all physiological phenomena associated with female fertility from menstruation to pregnancy and postpartum purification were considered impure) and on the type of diet (Lenten food was considered pure). Purity is influenced by a person's moral and religious conduct (fasting, prayer, baptism, receiving the sacraments) and verbal expressions (silence and prayer are pure, swearing and cursing defile).

Folk tradition knows its own rituals, for which purity was essential. These are the so-called rites of initiation, e.g. at the beginning of farm-work, e.g. ploughing, sowing, mowing, weaving, etc. The farmer started his first ploughing and the first sowing of the year in a clean white shirt, he washed himself and abstained from intercourse with his wife on the eve of the first ploughing and sowing. The symbolism of the colour white is also carried over into the outcome of the work, which is why flax or wheat was sown from a white sack or in a white shirt to achieve a good result, and sometimes not only the man but also the whole family wore clean clothes during the sowing so that the rye would be harvested clean. Cleanliness

⁸ Léon-Dufour, X. (ed.): *Slovník biblickej teológie* [Dictionary of Biblical Theology]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990, pp. 163-168, and <http://www.katechizmus.sk/index.php> [17 May 2022].

was essential when beginning traditional women's work, e.g. women had to start spinning and weaving in a state of cleanness, after prayer, even while working they tried not to be angry 'so as not to spoil the threads'.⁹

In folk thought whole nations could be pure and impure; their purity was determined according to the principle of 'own – foreign'.¹⁰ Foreign nations were regarded as heathens and unclean. In this context baptism is viewed not only as gaining true faith, but also as joining the community. The presence of strangers or foreigners defiles the place and food of Christians.¹¹ Even personal relationships with people of different faiths were condemned, women were sent to convents as punishment, men were excluded from the church, etc.

The eschatological teaching of the church is based on the belief in the immortality of the soul, which is a common value for all Christians. The life goal of believers is to attain the kingdom of heaven. According to medieval ideas, man did not die but fell asleep forever, hence the name of the Dormition, for example, the Dormition of the Theotokos (15 August). The idea of what happens to the soul of a Christian after death is not elaborated in the homilies, but in folk tradition, there is information about it of apocryphal nature. However, in the Ugljan Didactic Gospel, we find interesting observations about the souls of those who passed away before Christ's coming to earth.

Двоаѣкъи были люде на свѣтѣхъ перѣ прїиѣше^м Хѣбы^м,
ѣдны погане, друѣгѣи хрѣтіане, погане были ѣвѣпѣтане,
Филїстїмове, молвїтѣ, і ѣншіи народове, во ѡни не
вѣрїли въ Хѣ. котрыи мѣлаз прїити на свѣтѣхъ. Хрѣтіане заѣз
были ѡ початѣхъ свѣта. Іадамъ, Нобѣ, Лобѣхъ, Мелѣхисѣдекъ:
во ѡни вѣрїли въ Хѣ, котрыи мѣлаз прїити на свѣтѣхъ.
таѣже і ѣншіи хрѣтіане были, прѣрци, котрыи прѣрковѣли ѡ
прїиѣшю Хѣ^м, тыи то ѣсѣ люде, прѣ нарожѣныи^м Хѣбы^м.
колѣ оумїрѣли, ишли до пѣкла, аѣ не на ѣдно^м были
мѣцѣхъ. погане были въ гѣенѣхъ ѡгнѣно^м, гдѣ трѣпѣклѣ моуѣки:

⁹ Валенцова, М. М.: Чистый [Clean]. In: Славянские древности: этнолингвистический словарь [Slavic Antiquities: ethno-linguistic dictionary], т. 5. Москва: Международные отношения, 2012, pp. 547-552.

¹⁰ For more details see the article Белова, О. В.: Свой – чужой [Friend or foe]. In: Славянские древности: этнолингвистический словарь, т. 4. [Slavic Antiquities: ethno-linguistic dictionary] Москва: Международные отношения. 2009, pp. 581-582.

¹¹ Ženuch, P. – Beľakova, E. V. – Najdenova, D. – Zubko, P. – Marínčák, Š.: Užhorodský rukopisný Pseudozonar [Uzhhorod Pseudozonar Manuscript], op. cit., pp. 45-69.

Хрѣтіанѣ зѣ быхѣ на ѣншо^м мѣстѣ: котрѣе называе^тсѣ ѡхлѣноу пекелю. перѣ ты^м тѣе мѣстѣе называно дѣномъ ѡбраамовымъ. гдѣ хрѣтіанѣ жѣноу мѣки не тѣпѣхѣн.

There were two kinds of people in the world before Christ came: some were pagan, others Christian. The heathens were the Egyptians, Philistines, Moabites and other nations because they did not believe in Christ, who was to come into the world. But Christians from the beginning of the world were: Adam, Noah and Melchizedek, for they believed in Christ who was to come into the world. But there were also other Christians, who were prophets and prophesied Christ's coming. When they all died before Christ was born, they went to a special place in hell. The heathens were in Gehenna, where they suffered torments, the Christians, on the other hand, were in another place, which is called 'otchlañ' – 'the mouth of hell' [limbo, vestibule or anteroom of hell]; before that, this place was called Abraham's bosom, where the Christians suffered no great torments.

Otchlañ, the mouth of hell, in medieval Catholic terminology *limbo*, or *the vestibule or anteroom of hell*, is the state or abode of those souls who are neither in heaven, nor in hell, nor in purgatory. According to medieval ideas, the souls of those who did not deserve eternal horrible torments but could not be admitted to heaven ended up in limbo. Limbo houses the souls of unbaptised children and the souls of righteous non-Christians (for example, the souls of biblical prophets) who died before the birth of Christ. In Dante's work, *limbo* represents the first circle of hell.

In the manuscript of the Uglian Didactic Gospel, there is an apocryphal account of the descent of Jesus Christ into hell. It reads that all the holy fathers who dwelt in limbo were overjoyed because they believed they would be saved soon after the coming of Christ into the world. Among those are not only all the witnesses of Christ's birth and his earthly life such as the prophet Simeon or John the Baptist, who after their deaths went to limbo to announce the coming salvation to everyone there as well. After his Passion and physical death, Christ also descended into hell. However, in three days he emerged and brought with him the souls of the holy fathers, Adam, Noah, Lot, Melchizedek and the other prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament, and ushered them into heaven, leaving the Egyptians, the Philistines and other nations in hell.

Just as *law* is a set of norms and customs that govern relations among people, so the notion of *justice* in man's perception has been inextricably linked to God. This is what the concept of the Last Judgment is based on. *Just* in this context means nothing other than 'true, correct and objective'. People turned to God, enumerated their sins in confession and expected just retribution for them, hoping not for vengeance but for mercy and forgiveness of sins. Like many others, the concept of *justice* is both religious and ethical. Belief in God's justice compelled people to judge their actions in accordance with the rules of morality and ethics.

Since a human being has a soul and a body, spiritual growth presupposes physical action: fasting is therefore always accompanied by prayer. A prayer is essentially every expression of reverence for God; it is the fundamental activity of religion. The culmination of Christian prayer is the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments. The prayer of the gathered community includes the private prayer of the individual, since an individual is behind every communal prayer. Prayer as communication with God requires total concentration. Prayer accompanies fasting, which serves as an expression of humility before God: one petitions the Lord from a position of total devotion and dependence, and God mercifully listens to one's supplications. The faith of a person praying that they will be heard is the condition for prayer: *if anyone does not doubt in their heart, but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them* (Mark 11:23).

ω цю вѣдѣ^а просити єго Сѣоу мѣти. єно вѣдѣса
 вѣ ѡпѣкѣж ѡ вѣ мо^и прѣ вѣрѣ своѡ. ѡ прѣ полагѣшенствѡ.
 єдномѡ сътворителеви своемѡ гѣж вѣж. тебѣи пекѣлны^а
 моца не вчинитѣ тобѣ ниць. дѡфаючи оу гѣж вѣѣ. тѡ
 видѣшиз ѡко єго сѣла мѣти ѡвѣцѣѣ^и ти рѣговѣти. вѣ
 вѣшнѣкѣи фрѣжнѣкѡ. ѡ вѡронѣти ѡ чѣкого не прѣтѣла.

What shall I ask of his Holy Grace? One thing: place yourself under the care and rule of your Creator and Lord God, through your faith and obedience. And then the infernal powers will not harm you. Trust in the Lord God, for you see that he promises to defend you from all temptations and to protect you from the enemy.

The fast itself consists of giving up food, drink and sexual intercourse for one or more days. For reasons of asceticism, supplication, mourning and purification, fasting has an important function. The feeling of hunger and

thirst is an expression of the necessities of life; the conscious renunciation of physical needs raises the spiritual life to a higher level. Hunger and thirst is a positive reality only when one approaches fasting with the aim of opening one's heart to God, a different kind of hunger is considered evil, and since the time of the Old Testament, there has been a commandment to feed the hungry and give water to the thirsty.¹² Jesus, too, says that the hungry and thirsty shall be filled (Luke 6:21). There may be various reasons and causes for fasting, but the main one is always the attitude of humility and the determination to accept God's actions and thus to place oneself in the presence of God.

Fasting was also required by Jewish tradition. We know from Scripture about the forty-day fast of Moses (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8). It also served as a model for the forty-day fast of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-2), who began his messianic mission by putting himself into the hands of God the Father. The example of Jesus' fast is a model for all Christians.

* * *

The didactic commentaries, collections of sermons and morals on the texts of Holy Scripture reflect the value system of the Christians who used them and for whom such texts were intended. The Ugljan Didactic Gospel also elucidates the everyday life of the Orthodox Christians of the Mukachevo eparchy at the turn of the 17th–18th centuries, who were tested by various unfavourable social situations.

In this study we examined selected expressions of religious life that were associated with issues about dogmatics and faith, which is conveyed in various expressions of piety. The value system of Christian life described in the studied source texts from the 17th–18th centuries still constitutes an integral part of the spiritual paradigm of the faithful of today's church of the Byzantine rite. In the current situation of a crisis of values, even such a conservative view on spiritual tradition may represent an opportunity for progressive thinking to preserve the traditional cultural values of society.

As expected, the didactic Cyrillic records of Carpathian origin, create an image of right living and warn against falling from God's grace because of sin. The morals offer the only reliable way to overcome any crisis through the avowal and protection of one's own values, which are God, goodness and faith.

¹² Léon-Dufour, X. et al. (eds.): *Slovník biblickej teológie* [Dictionary of Biblical Theology]. Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1969. Transl. Ján Dieška SJ, Emil Krapka SJ, Alojz Litva SJ, Vojtech Mikula SJ. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1990, pp. 287-290.

The crisis and its solution: Examples from Slovak homiletic works

Erika Brtáňová

Arrival of locusts

An integral part of Slovak literature is also the Slovak Lowland literature, which originated in the first half of the 18th century. It is the result of the migration of Slovaks from the overpopulated and less fertile north of Hungary to its more southern parts, the Lowland (today the territory of Hungary, Romania and Vojvodina in Serbia). The resettlement intensified when the Ottoman Turks were driven out from Hungary and a peace treaty was concluded with the Ottoman Empire (1699). The internal situation became stable, which was also partly thanks to the end of the estate rebellions caused by the centralisation and recatholicisation policy of the Habsburgs (Treaty of Szatmár in 1711). By 1750, approximately fifteen to twenty thousand Slovak serf families had left the territory of Slovakia.¹ ‘Almost from the moment of their immigration to these plains, the Slovaks of the Lowland began to create and consolidate their own ethnic and cultural identity. In this they had enormous help from intellectuals, mostly priests and teachers, from Slovakia, who laid the foundations of the Slovak Lowland culture.’² Scholars who were called to the newly established Slovak villages integrated ‘this breakaway community into the nationwide cultural sphere by many means, raising the awareness in the Lowland that these parts of the nation also form a unity with the part of the nation at home.’³ An effective means of maintaining ethnic and cultural unity was the preached and printed word.

¹ Mrva, I.: Novoveké Uhorsko [Modern Hungary]. In Segeš, V. – Mrva, I.: Dejiny Uhorska a Slováci [History of Hungary and the Slovaks]. Bratislava: Perfekt, 2012, p. 205.

² Harpáň, M.: Dolnozemska básnická vetva [The poetic branch of the Lowland]. In Harpáň, M.: Ars Poetica Pannonica. Nadlak: Vydavateľstvo Ivan Krasko, 2014, p. 47.

³ Mráz, A.: Rozhovory o juhoslovanských Slovákov [Conversations about the Yugoslav Slovaks]. Bratislava: Pravda, 1948, p. 21.

Slovak Lowland literature is connected with the Slovak literary whole by a common spiritual tradition manifested in language.⁴ On the other hand, the works created in the Lowland also have their own specifics; the authors often portray different life experience in them.⁵

This thematic otherness characterises works of the earlier period inspired by the natural features of the Lowland.

An unusual natural phenomenon, the arrival of locusts, which appeared in the Lowland in 1748 and 1749, paralysed the life of the resettled Slovaks, so much so that it became the subject of the works of two evangelical pastors, Matej Markovič Sr. and Bohumil Mezibrodský.

The literary historian Štefan Krčméry drew attention to Markovič whom he viewed as a remarkable authorial personality: 'There is more in Matej Markovič, a Szarvas priest and author of many didactic compositions in verse, than meets the eye.'⁶ Markovič arrived in the Lowland town of Szarvas in the Békés County in 1734 and two decades later, the seniorate convention elected him as the senior of Pest and Békés. To this day, he is also recognised as the first historian of the region and known for his Slavic awareness, which he demonstrated in his history textbook in verse *Kratičká historie království uherského ve versších* (*A Short History of the Kingdom of Hungary in Verse*, 1745).⁷ On the other hand, all we can say for certain about Mezibrodský's work is that he was from Modra and that he was a parish priest in the village of Eška (Öskü in Hungarian) in the Veszprém County.⁸

Markovič and Mezibrodský recorded a critical temporal event, which caused existential fears and great confusion among the inhabitants, in texts of different genres. Markovič captured it in his verse composition *Píseň*

⁴ Harpáň, M.: Niekoľko poznámok o literatúre juhoslovanských Slovákov [Some notes on the literature of the Yugoslav Slovaks]. In Harpáň, M.: Zápas o identitu [The Struggle for Identity]. Nadlak: Vydavateľstvo Ivan Krasko, 2014, p. 34.

⁵ Harpáň, M.: Singulár a plurál slovenskej literatúry na Dolnej zemi [Singular and plural of Slovak literature in the Lowland]. In Harpáň, M.: op. cit., p. 24.

⁶ Krčméry, Š.: Osemnásťe stolie [The eighteenth century]. In: Literárny archív, 1967 [Literary Archive, 1967]. Martin: Matica slovenská 1967, p. 32.

⁷ Kníchal, O.: Zvony dolnozemske (Portréty a úvahy) [Bells of the Lowland: Portraits and Reflections]. Budapest: Celoštátna slovenská samospráva a Združenie slovenských spisovateľov a umelcov v Maďarsku, 1996, p. 8; Jančovic, J.: Vyoralí hlboké dolnozemske brázdy [They Ploughed the Deep Furrows of the Lowland]. Nadlak: Vydavateľstvo Ivana Krasku, 2009, p. 13.

⁸ MEZIBRODSZKI (GOTTLIEB) (entry) in Horányi, A.: Nova memoria Hungarorum et provincialium scriptis editis notorum. Pars I, A-C. Pestini: Kilian, 1795, p. 609.

truchlivá o kobyolkách (*Mournful Song of the Locusts*, 1749).⁹ The analysis of Markovič's composition that we made some time ago,¹⁰ will serve as a model for us in analysing Mezibrodský's occasional sermon *Věrné probuzení k pravému pokání a modlení* (*Real Awakening to True Repentance and Prayer*, 1749).¹¹ Mezibrodský took up considerably more space than Markovič covering the unusual natural phenomenon in a sermon that he did not consider extensive enough to illustrate all the circumstances.

Both authors created their contributions with the same intention. They were not only concerned with capturing the outward aspects of the natural disaster and its catastrophic consequences, but they channelled their efforts mainly into revealing the spiritual causes of this watershed event and into pointing out a reliable way out of the crisis in which they and their parishioners suddenly found themselves. Their texts illustrate very well one of the essential ideological elements of the baroque period, which was the clergy's attempt at the moral ennoblement of the members of the church communities through the effective implementation of religious education.¹²

For Mezibrodský, this is the first publication in the vernacular because the dedication of his sermon reads that he dedicates his first literary work in Slovak to the Modra parish priest Pavel Jakobei as '*his esteemed patron and helper in Slovak language*' out of gratitude for the language skills acquired. Mezibrodský's sermon is a product of contemporary language usage and literary culture. In terms of the history of literature, it is important to note that in the 17th and 18th centuries, printed sermons were

⁹ Pseň truchlivá o Kobyolkách, které L. P. 1748. do Vher přiletely Skrze Matěge MARKOWITZE složená, a s Modlitbau proti nim wytisštěná. Wytisštěná w Presspurku v Frantisska Antonjna Royera [A Mournful Song of the Grasshoppers that Flew to Hungary in 1748 A.D. Composed by Matěg Markowitz, with Prayer against Them. Printed in Pressburg by Frantisek Antonjn Royer], 1749, [8] p.

¹⁰ Brtáňová, E.: Niekoľko poznámok k časovej veršovanej skladbe Mateja Markoviča, st. [Some notes on the time verse composition of Matej Markovič, Sr.] In Brtáňová, E.: Na margo staršej literatúry [On the Subject of Older Literature] Bratislava: Kalligram – Ústav slovenskej literatúry, 2012, pp. 61-75.

¹¹ Wěrné probuzenj k prawému pokánj a modlenj za odwráčenj pokut Božských w Vhřjch se zgewugjcejch a z částky giž zgevených w nezčislném množstwj kobylek neslýchaných. [...] Wykonané mjsto kázanj nedělnjho, w Neděli XVII. po S. Trojici, skrze M. Teofila MEZYBRODZKÉHO, tohoto času Cjrkwe Essčanské Ewangelické Nácý Slowanské y Německé S. B. Služebnjka. Wytisštěné w Presspurku v Frantisska Antonjna Royera, 1749, [32] p.

¹² Vašica, J.: České literární baroko. Příspěvky k jeho studiu [Czech Literary Baroque. Contributions to its Study]. Brno: Atlantis, 1995, p. 264.

a popular form of devotional reading. They usually underwent considerable modifications before publication. Scholarly quotations and references were added.¹³ Their recipients were the clergy as well as the wider public. With that in mind, Mezibrodský conceived and published the text of his sermon. The sermon pursues four key objectives: it seeks to teach about salvation, to warn against sin, to call for conversion to God and finally to comfort with the hope of victory over the enemy.

The sermon is characterised by baroque poetics. Mezibrodský incorporates the initial ideas already into its title. Its content focuses on the state of crisis that the southern part of Hungary got into and on the way out of the crisis, which lies in repentance and prayers for the averting of God's punishment, which he sincerely encourages: '*Věrné probuzení k pravému pokání a modlení za odvrácení pokut Božských v Uhřích se zjevujících, a z částky již zjevených v nezčíslném množství kobylek neshláchaných (Real Awakening to True Repentance and Prayer for the Averting of God's Punishments Appearing in Hungary, and in Part Already Revealed in Myriad of Unheard-of Locusts)*.' On the title page, he also gives information about the locations and times of the locusts. Locusts appeared as early as in 1748 in some counties, but in the Veszprém County and in Öskü in considerably greater numbers only in the summer of 1749. The sermon was delivered by Mezibrodský on the 17th Sunday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity, i.e. 28 September, replacing the Sunday sermon. Consequently, it is not a sermon based on a traditional passage from a Gospel and an Epistle text.¹⁴ Mezibrodský has created an occasional sermon whose textual basis is a verse from an Old Testament book, Deuteronomy, the fifth book of Moses (28:38), indicating a swarm of locusts.¹⁵ From the compositional aspect, he divided it into four thematic elements: *Předmluva – Text – Přístup – Výklad (Prologue – Text – Approach – Exposition)*, which he connected with short prayer sighs and supplications.

¹³ Strom, J.: Pietism and Revival. In Eijnatten, J. van (ed.): *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2009, pp. 176-177.

¹⁴ 'Lutheran churches still followed the traditional lections for the Gospels and Epistles that were to form the textual basis for sermons on Sundays and church holidays, but other sermons offered ample opportunities for preaching on texts outside the lections. The demands on the clergy for preaching were considerable, usually requiring several sermons a week, and often many more.' In Strom, J.: op. cit., p. 175. Julius Filo also writes about the pericopic system in his article *Perikopické poriadky, ktoré používame...* [Pericopic Orders We Use...] In: *Služba slova [The Ministry of the Word]*, vol. 69, 2020, issue. 1, pp. 6-8.

¹⁵ You will sow so much seed in the field, but you will harvest little because locusts will devour it.

The Prologue or preface serves as a kind of general introduction. In it Mezibrodský presents a rough draft of the sermon. On the one hand, he speaks broadly about the sin committed by believers in not accepting God's grace, distracting themselves with earthly things, and thus provoking God to anger and to retribution for their sins; on the other hand, he appeals to his parishioners not to forget the blessing God has shown them by providing sustenance in the land that has become their new home. It reveals the motif of God's retribution for sin. He explains that the natural disaster occurred because of disrespect for God's word and its teachers. This well-deserved punishment can only be averted by sincere confession of sin and prayer. In the *Exposition*, the main thematic component of the sermon, he elaborates further on the issues raised. This part shows best the logical order of Mezibrodský's reasoning and the choice of the arguments employed. He considers the temporal event from three perspectives: from the spiritual aspect, from the aspect of historical experience and from the point of view of the people directly involved. The constitutive elements of the exposition are not only biblical texts, but, given the practical needs of the listener, it is also backed up by the statements of learned authorities and testimonies. In this regard Mezibrodský's approach coincides with Markovič's authorial strategy.

In the first part of the *Exposition*, Mezibrodský describes the locusts. In the spiritual sense, he defines them as God's army that obeys God's commands and has a permanent place in the earthly army. He sees the divine origin of the locusts, which is manifested in supernatural power and strength, in counterpoint with their physical appearance, with their tiny, frail and weak bodies. In describing the external features, he does not go into detail, unlike Markovič who depicted the locusts so thoroughly and accurately that they were easily identifiable. Mezibrodský justifies the invasion of the locusts by divine commission. He supports this claim with authentic experience. The initial idea of the inhabitants of Öskü that the locusts would die owing to high winds and cold rain, turned out to be naive and misleading, for the newly hatched locusts, in one night, grazed almost all the grain in the fields and the mown grass in the forest, even attacking the personal belongings of the inhabitants, their horsehair bags, which they had with them in the fields.

Mezibrodský strives for the persuasiveness and impressiveness of his preaching by amplifying the text. In order to highlight the unusual power of locusts even more, he illustrates it with two exempla about equally aggressive insects, flies. The episode by the Greek prose writer Claudius

Aelianus (*Varia historia*) is about the inhabitants of Megara, who were driven out of the city by flies. In the second case, Mezibrodský refers to the Italian cardinal and ecclesiastical historian Caesar Baronius (*Annales ecclesiastici*), from whom he takes an account of a miracle that took place in the Spanish city of Girona (1285).¹⁶ When the French soldiers opened the tomb of Bishop Narcissus, swarms of flies flew out of it and attacked them so violently that most of them succumbed to their injuries. Mezibrodský also applies brief historical excursions used as exempla in explaining the destructive action of locusts, which attack and damage trees and other vegetation. Testimonies about various species of locusts that appeared in the past in Bohemia and France are to inspire even greater respect for the aggression of locusts. Locusts ‘as large as a sparrow’ flew to Bohemia in 1473 and locusts ‘with four wings’ in 1527. In 874, the inhabitants of France encountered ‘locusts with six wings of different colours’. The references to ‘other lamentable examples’ given in the handbooks of the German humanist scholars Andreas Hondorff (*Promptuarium exemplorum*) and Wolfgang Franz (*Historia animalium sacra*) may be understood as inputs intended exclusively for preachers to become more familiar with this unusual phenomenon. Mezibrodský also briefly informs about the situation in Hungary, whose inhabitants also encountered the destructive power of locusts several times in the past (in 1348, 1542, 1661, 1684 – 1686, 1709). He likens the locusts’ punishing power to the Ottoman expansion into Hungary, but considers the impact of the latter to be much more devastating. The same motif is also present in Markovič’s composition.

Mezibrodský explains that God does not intend to destroy all crops and livelihood through locusts, but only wants to lead people to repentance. So, he warns them that if there is no corrective action in their behaviour and attitudes, he will allow an even greater punishment, which will be death.

Locusts are a sign of other calamities: war, dearth, famine and pestilence. To illustrate these threats, Mezibrodský again selects examples from the historical memory of European countries. After the locust swarms, Spanish troops appeared in Bohemia (1542), and war with the Ottoman Turks began in Hungary (1663). Famine struck in Milan when it was besieged by the French (1527), in Bohemia when the German King Rudolf I of Habsburg defeated the Bohemian King Přemysl Otakar II (1278) and also at the time of the power struggle with Otto V of Brandenburg (1283).

¹⁶ Mezibrodský gives the year 1286 incorrectly.

Mezibrodský illustrates the plague as a consequence of famine with a naturalistic scene of Jerusalem besieged by its enemies, whose inhabitants were forced to also seek sustenance in unclean places (places used for relieving oneself) and to consume very unusual food (tree bark, belts, shoes, waste, human and cow excrement) and to eat unclean animals (snakes, mice, spiders and venomous reptiles). We have discovered that Mezibrodský took this passage from the treatise *Historia o hrozné a strašlivé zkáze... Jeruzalema (The Story of Horrific and Terrible Destruction...of Jerusalem, probably 1617)* by the Calvinist preacher Havel Žalanský-Phaëthon, who was one of the popular authors read in the Lowland as late as the first half of the 20th century.

In the second part of the *Exposition*, Mezibrodský identifies the causes of the crisis. He states that it was clearly due to the ungodly life of the inhabitants that the locusts found their way to Hungary, therefore their wilful and deliberate persistence in sin must be punished by God, which he supports with the words of the prophet Amos (4:9).¹⁷ The effect of his narrative is heightened by Pliny the Elder's statement (*Naturalis historia*) about the locusts as 'a sea of angry gods (*pestem irae deorum*)'. In his anamnesis of the crisis, Mezibrodský proceeds to distinguish between the sins committed, of which he regards as the greatest sin the dishonouring and belittling of the Word of God, which signifies the true salvation of mankind. So, if God takes away the physical food from people who disparage the spiritual food and persecute the teachers of religion, he acts justly. Mezibrodský refers to avarice and the desire for gain as the second most common infraction of God's commands. Even rich people thus lose their food because they value movable possessions (gold, silver) more than immovable property (fertile fields). In times of dearth, they are punished by having to spend all their means on livelihood. The third transgression for which God sends the locusts is an opulent lifestyle and pride.

We can see that Mezibrodský does not avoid social criticism either, which he not only levels at the wealthy people, but also quite surprisingly, at the end of his sermon, he directs that criticism at the urban community, where everything literally '*stinks and reeks of pride*'. He reproaches the townspeople with no longer observing the rules of the social etiquette ('*there is no difference between ladies and maids*'), with failing to protect the needy ('*Where are the foster parents and nursemaids of poor wid-*

¹⁷ Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, / destroying them with blight and mildew / Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees / yet you have not returned to me, / declares the Lord.

ows and orphans?'), with neglecting the care of the poor ('*Oh, how many people give the leftovers from the table to the dog rather than to the poor beggar!*') and with leading an extravagant and godless life. ('*Moreover, how shamefully God's gifts and fruits of the earth are wasted on gluttony, drunkenness and other godlessness.*')

In the last part of the Exposition, Mezibrodský advises on how one can crush a feared and powerful enemy, who abounds with supernatural power. He refutes the opinion that the locusts can be defeated with human strength and the use of conventional means (shooting, noise, yelling, drumming). He considers this effort futile and useless, even sinful, because it involves other sins such as cursing and anger. The right way out of the crisis lies in '*true repentance*' and '*fervent prayer*', through which one can gain favour with God, who alone can stop the locusts' attacks.

In depicting the crisis situation represented by a real event, the arrival of the locusts, Mezibrodský draws on the value framework of the evangelical denomination he represents, which is outwardly manifested in the structure of his sermonic speech and in the use of language. He created the text of the sermon in the spirit of stylistic syncretism so that it fulfils an informative function while also being emotionally and aesthetically compelling. He views the depiction of the temporal event as an opportunity to highlight the devaluation of traditional Christian values and morals. He sees the path to redress in religious discipline.

Cholera epidemic

A worldwide cholera pandemic broke out in the early 1830s when it spread from Asia to Europe, from where it spread to North America, North and Central Africa.¹⁸ It was brought to Europe by Russian soldiers sent from Persia to Poland to help suppress an uprising of the Polish nobility against tsarist Russia.¹⁹ After the outbreak of cholera in Poland, in a decree issued by the monarch Francis I of Habsburg on 2 November 1830, the borders were immediately closed and all roads and paths leading through

¹⁸ Jiroušková, M.: Zdravotnícke opatrenia proti cholere v roku 1831 [Health measures against cholera in 1831] in *Roľnícke povstanie 1831* [Peasant Uprising 1831]. Ed. Viliam Šulc. Košice. Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo 1984, p.116. According to Liška, A.: *Cholera epidémia z roku 1831 a jej priebeh v Prešovskej eparchii*. [Cholera Epidemic of 1831 and its Course in the Prešov Eparchy]. Prešov: Prešovská univerzita, 2012, p. 14.

¹⁹ Rapant, D.: *Sedliacke povstanie na východnom Slovensku roku 1831. Diel prvý – Dejiny* [Peasant Uprising in Eastern Slovakia in 1831. Part One – History]. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1953, p. 33. According to Liška, A.: *op. cit.*, p. 14.

the border areas were put under military guard.²⁰ Cholera appeared in the north-eastern regions of Hungary in June and in the south-eastern regions in July 1831.²¹ Between 13 June 1831 and 14 February 1832, a total of 536,517 people contracted the disease in Hungary, of whom more than half (298,876) were cured.²²

Anti-cholera measures introduced by the state government and by the county government at regional level such as restricting the free movement of inhabitants by guards and cordons, chlorinating wells, administering anti-cholera medication, digging mass graves, estimating the possible number of victims by county officials and increased mortality among the lower classes were viewed by the broader masses of the population as attempts by the upper classes to eliminate them. For that reason, the legend of the lords' poisoning of the subjects soon began to spread. The regulations banning wakes, titular feasts and pilgrimages, restricting religious services and closing churches, and burying plague victims at night in designated places without a priest or family present had a particularly negative impact.²³ The response to the measures was a peasant revolt in eastern Slovakia in the summer of 1831.

However, cholera also spread in central and western Slovakia. Two Slovak clergymen, the Roman Catholic priest Michal Rešetka and the Evangelical preacher Matej Kosec, gave testimonies of coping with the epidemic in these regions in their sermons. A well-known collector of Slovak and foreign manuscripts and printed literature, Rešetka published in print several of his own sermons (1832, 1836, 1839) and two volumes of occasional Slovak sermons by various preachers, *Kázňe prihodné* (Occasional Sermons, 1831, 1834).²⁴ He analysed the epidemic situation in two Sunday sermons which he delivered in August and September 1831 as chaplain in Dubnica nad Váhom, which was under the territorial governance of the Trencsén County [Trenčín County], situated in the north-western part of

²⁰ Bokesová-Uherová, M.: Zdravotníctvo na Slovensku v období feudalizmu [Healthcare in Slovakia in the Period of Feudalism]. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1973, p. 246. According to Liška, A.: op. cit., p. 15.

²¹ Liška, A.: op. cit., p. 18.

²² Linzbauer, X. F.: Codex sanitario-medicinalis Hungariae. Tomus III. Sectio IV. Budae 1861, pp. 489-490.

²³ Liška, A.: op. cit., pp. 26-28.

²⁴ Fordinállová, E.: Rešetka, Michal (entry). In: Lexikón katolíckých kňazských osobností Slovenska [Lexicon of Catholic Priest Personalities of Slovakia]. Bratislava: Lúč, 2000, pp. 1150-1151.

Slovakia. Kosec who was a parish priest in Poniky, a village in central Slovakia, published only two sermons in print, *Nábožné i vlastenecké dvě kázně aneb řeči (Two Religious and Patriotic Sermons or Speeches, 1832)*,²⁵ which ‘stand out with their logic, clarity and comprehensibility’.²⁶ In his sermon *Na nový rok 1832 (On New Year’s Day 1832)*, he explains the problem of cholera to his parishioners. In terms of language, Rešetka’s and Kosec’s sermons show significant differences, which is the result of a struggle for a literary linguistic standard. The content of the sermons is determined by the course of the epidemic they depict.

Rešetka preached on cholera in a time span of six weeks, the first time on the 12th Sunday after the Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit (14 August 1831), when the infectious disease was sweeping his parish, and on the 18th Sunday after the Pentecost (25 September 1831) when the cholera was already on the wane. Following the anti-pandemic measures taken by the secular and ecclesiastical superiors, Rešetka had to deliver his first *Spiritual Discourse* outdoors, in front of the church, where an altar, adorned with the image of Our Lady of Sorrows, had been erected.²⁷ He points out the importance and significance of the measures in the prologue of the sermon.²⁸ Using the parable of the Good Samaritan recorded in the Gospel

²⁵ Nábožné y vlastenecké dvě kázně aneb řeči. Prwnj při přijležitosti dáwánj mladých wogakůw ned. 2 postnj r. P. 1831. Druhá řeč po wystálých uzkostech bjdy a nemocy cholera w den sláwný noworočnj 1852. W Chrámě Ewang. Městečka Pojniky při B. Bystricy, skrze Matěge KOSEC, tamegssj Cyrkwe A. W. Slowa Božjho Kazatele, držané, a s přjměrnými proměnámi a přjměrnými proměnámi a přidawký cílem dobročinným, nákladkem wydawatelovým, na swětlo wydané. W Banské Bystricy, wytisštěn v Štěpána Mihálik 1832. 43 p.

²⁶ Michalko, J.: Kázňové smery [Preaching Orientations]. Liptovský Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 1955, p. 63.

²⁷ The information about the closure of the church is given in the second sermon Duchowná Reč, kterou při sláwném Poďekuwání za Odwraťení Nemoc Cholery Bohu nagmilosrdnegšému wzďáwaném, w Nedeľu XVIII. Po Sw. Duchu. Dňa 25. Žári Roku 1831 w Chráme Bozkém Dubnickém powedal Michal REŠETKA kaplán Dubnickí. W Trnawe, witlačená u Jána Jelínka Krstiteľa. Rok 1832. [The Spiritual Discourse, Which at the Glorious Thanksgiving for the Reversal of Cholera Illness to God the Most Merciful Was Delivered by Michal Rešetka, Chaplain of Dubnica, on the 18th Sunday after the Pentecost on 25 September 1831 in the House of God in Dubnica], p. 20.

²⁸ Duchowná Reč, ktorú, kdiž sa Nemoc Cholera we Färe Dubnickég započala, w Neďelu XII. po Sw. Duchu Dňa 14. Srpna Roku 1831. Fárnikom Dubnickím prednesel Michal REŠETKA kaplán Dubnickí. W Trnawe, witlačená u Jána Jelínka Krstiteľa. [The Spiritual Discourse, Which Was Delivered by Michal Rešetka, the Chaplain of Dubnica to the Parishioners of Dubnica after the Outbreak of the Cholera in the Dubnica Parish on 12th Sunday after the Pentecost on 14th August 1831] 1832, pp. 1-15.

According to Luke (10:30-37), he interprets the measures as evidence of the exemplary care of the inhabitants taken by secular and ecclesiastical superiors. He likens the situation in his parish, which was struck by the epidemic, to the condition of the man who was attacked by robbers on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho. Rešetka does not regard the disease, which demands sacrifices in the form of the dead and the sick, as the work of man, but considers it clearly the work of God. He compares the superiors concerned about the health of the population to the Samaritan who took care of the wounded man. The monarch Francis I acts as a Samaritan, who, in order to prevent the contagion from spreading, sends physicians around the country and covers all the expenses connected with the treatment of the sick. István Illésházy, the administrator of the Trenčín County, is also likened to the Samaritan, ensuring enforcement of the relevant royal decrees at regional level and free medical aid and the distribution of medicines. The third authority, Jozef Vurum, Bishop of Nitra, is also the Good Samaritan, who sees to it that services are held only outdoors in places affected by cholera and that the deceased are buried without a priest or other members of the public and he also allows the faithful to eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays.

Rešetka says that in the crisis caused by cholera, spiritual comfort should be sought first and foremost. According to the Catholic doctrine, illness is a godsend, not a disruption to human life. So, God allows sickness for the good of mankind and brings the necessary comfort in stressful situations. These two premises form the basis of this sermon. Rešetka concentrates on a more thorough elucidation of the positive outcomes of sickness, which he summarises in three points: sickness leads to God, in sickness personal virtues are tested and refined, in sickness we pay God for our sins. Rešetka responds to the two fundamental questions that his listeners must have asked him most often, illustrating his answers with examples from the Bible. Why does God allow sickness? So that humans may *'awake from the dream of their iniquities'*. By sickness God tamed the proud and cruel King Antiochus, who persecuted the Jews and destroyed their temples.²⁹ Antiochus' realisation of his sinful actions is graphically described by Rešetka through the king's physical changes: the deflation of his puffed-up countenance, the weakening of his strong veins and also a change of heart, his decision to abandon his habitual display of cruelty and anger. Why does God allow sickness on righteous people? Is it to test and raise their moral

²⁹ See 2 Maccabees 9.

qualities? Examples of such a test of character are Job struggling with skin disease, Tobit tried by blindness and Paul the Apostle tried by muteness.

Rešetka further explains that through sickness and weakness, which serve as purgatory in the earthly world, the believer gains access to eternity. For sinful actions the human soul and body certainly deserve punishment: the soul is punished with anguish and fear of God, the body with physical weakness and wounds. Here Rešetka supports and expands on his interpretation by psychologising the sinner, in whose memory, preoccupied with *'sinful pleasures'*, *'sad and terrible images'* suddenly appear; *'scales fall from the eyes' of the mind 'like scales from Paul's eyes and it sees its faults'*³⁰; the will dazed by the vanities of the world *'now lacks all that it formerly took delight in'*. He identifies the senses as the gateway to sin. Pleasure entered the soul through the eye, the ears listened to offensive language and songs, the tongue was guilty of swearing, cursing, slander and defamation of character, the hands touched foreign property and forbidden things, the feet led on to sin and hastened to do evil. Therefore, the senses now endure punishment, the eyes see the heralds of death, the ears hear the weeping, the complaints of friends and the sound of the trumpet of death, the tongue is rendered mute, the body trembles, the skin grows pale, the feet sink and the arms become flabby. Rešetka concludes his psychologising excursus inspired by Bernard of Clairvaux stating that this human suffering is punishment enough for the sins committed. He recommends parishioners to look at cholera with the *'eye of religion'*; this is how they will find spiritual comfort and help in it.

In the second part of his speech, Rešetka focuses on explaining two propositions: God comforts the sick with his grace and helps them through the church. An example of how God shows his grace towards humans is the personal situation of Job. Job, who found in God a faithful friend, was able to patiently endure all the adversities and the sickness for which his wife left him and his whole family shunned him. Rešetka teaches his parishioners that they fear illness because of the pain and death associated with it. But the righteous view God as a comforter who cheers them up and see a strong God who encourages them spiritually. Therefore, he recommends bolstering and multiplying confidence in God's actions by remembering the image of the martyred Jesus Christ. God is also helpful through the church's care for the sick person, ministering to them the sacraments, prayers and

³⁰ 'Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptised.' Acts 9:18.

the presence of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the liturgical rite. In his sermon, Rešetka is mainly concerned with the spiritual encouragement of the faithful, but in its epilogue, he strongly stresses that in addition to the spiritual comfort given by God, practical help in the form of the medical care and medicines offered is also important, which they should not refuse, but accept with confidence.

It is only the second *Duchovná reč (Spiritual Discourse)*³¹ that informs about the time and the epicentre of the outbreak (*'In 1817 in Asia'*) and describes its journey to Hungary via Russia, Poland and Galicia. Rešetka delivered the speech when the pandemic was in decline. He also gives the number of victims, which by then totalled 71,256 in Hungary. He thoroughly corrected this figure in the attached note in which he had inserted data taken from the *Prešporské noviny (Pressburg Newspaper, published on 27 December 1831)*, which he got only just before the sermon went to press. The report stated that since the outbreak of cholera, on 13 June, 455,954 people had fallen ill, of whom 196,837 had died, 237,339 had recovered, and 21,778 remained under medical supervision. It informed about the situation in the parish of Dubnica nad Váhom, which also had suffered losses, with 201 deaths between 5 August and 25 September. Because of cholera, the church had to be closed and services and the preaching of the word abandoned for some time as the clergy had to take care of the sick and dying. In view of the fact that the cholera subsided, gratitude should be shown to God for this boon. For that reason, Rešetka puts at the heart of the sermon a short teaching on the three gradations of gratitude from Thomas Aquinas, which he applies to the situation in his parish.

The first stage is the recognition of the benefit provided, which is the foundation of all gratitude. God showed kindness to the parishioners by warding off a contagious disease and giving them a more peaceful time: sacraments could be administered to the dying relatives and acquaintances, Count Illésházy provided the sick with physicians, medicines, food and drink and gave financial support to widows and orphans, and

³¹ Duchovná Reč, která při slávném Poděkuvání za Odvrátení Nemoc Cholery Bohu nagmilosrdnegšému vzdávaném, w Nedělu XVIII. Po Sw. Duchu. Dňa 25. Žári Roku Roku 1831. w Chráme Bozkém Dubnickém powedal Michal REŠETKA kaplán Dubnickí. W Trnawe, witlačená u Jána Jelínka Krstiteľa. Rok 1832 [The Spiritual Discourse, Which at the Glorious Thanksgiving for the Reversal of Cholera Illness to God the Most Merciful Was Delivered by Michal Rešetka, Chaplain of Dubnica, on the 18th Sunday after the Pentecost on 25 September 1831 in the House of God in Dubnica], pp. 16-32.

God drew sinners to himself through cholera and the hardships caused by it, putting the righteous to the test. The second stage of gratitude requires praising the benefactor and giving thanks to him. Although God does not need verbal praise, every believer owes him a debt of gratitude. The best expression of gratitude is prayer. The third stage of gratitude is the act, which is the faithful's holy service, i.e. the believer's keeping of God's commandments, for if people remain in the wrong, neither their prayers, nor their alms count, God will not answer their supplications. If sinners want to show true gratitude to God, they should repent. The righteous show their gratitude to God by staying on the path they have begun. Rešetka points out that gratitude should be expressed to the secular as well as ecclesiastical hierarchs, not only to Ferdinand V, King of Hungary (Ferdinand I, also called Ferdinand the Benign), but also to Bishop Jozef Vurum and Count István Illésházy.

In his sermon, Matej Kosec comments on cholera several months after its peak. A retrospect of the overcoming of the disease is already hinted at in the subtitle and thematic focus of his New Year's sermon, *Nábožné na bídu a nemoc skrze nás vystálou zpět se ohledání (Religious Retrospect of the Misery and Sickness Suffered)*.³² Compositionally, Kosec divides the sermon into three thematic parts. In the first part, he recaps two events. In addition to the pandemic, he draws attention to another temporal event that preceded the pandemic. To the material deprivation caused by the crop failure in the previous year because of which, one part of the population was starving. The other part of the population suffered less serious harm, but was unable to provide food for the rest of the fellow citizens. Kosec refutes the assumption that the cholera would not have broken out if there had not been the problem with food shortages. Responding to public opinion is indicative of Kosec's speech. The time lapse since the event does not lead Kosec to describe the symptoms of the disease, but to point out the pitfalls of combating the outbreak that the people of Hungary coped with differently depending on their spiritual maturity and state of mind. Some were fooled by false claims, others were gripped by fear, which was eventually overcome by duty. Kosec commends the work of the provincial authorities and the measures taken by them against the spread of cholera. In order to protect the health of the population, guards and cordons were posted and

³² NÁBOŽNÉ Y WLASTENECKÉ DWĚ KÁZNĚ ANEB ŘEČI. [Two Religious and Patriotic Sermons or Speeches] W Banské Bystricy, wytisštěné v Štěpána Mihálik. 1832, pp. 23-39.

hospitals were established. Doctors and pharmacists, teachers and preachers were involved in the fight against cholera. Equipped with knowledge, medical advice and supplies, the inhabitants had to confine themselves to the privacy of their homes.

However, Kosec is critical of the fact that the cause of many an epidemic victim was initially insufficient or inadequate assistance. He draws attention to misinformation, to false reports on the poisoning of the people by upper classes, which domestic journalism also helped spreading. He blames the journalists for the fact that, with their efforts, this news together with reports on Hungary in turmoil, got across the border, as a result of which an image of a dehumanised Hungary began to be created in Europe. He mentions the initial confusion and lack of understanding of the situation and the '*Magisterium Vizmut*', the medicine preferred by the foreigners, the administering of which did more harm than good. But he does not see only the drawbacks of the crisis. In his view the silver lining was that there were individuals who would not be intimidated and showed their generosity and philanthropy, having a major influence on others who stopped being afraid and stood together and united against the epidemic regardless of social status and religious beliefs.

In the second thematic part of the sermon, Kosec speaks of God's sovereign action, which was behind the cholera, for despite the efforts of the secular authorities to counteract the disease as effectively as possible through various measures, they were unable to suppress it completely. The physicians, too, could not prevail over it although they did all that they deemed necessary and were diligent in the performance of their duties, trying to protect those who were attacked the most, the elderly and the weak, reminding them of the importance of hygiene principles and healthy diet, and prescribing medicines. However, people realised that not everything could be found out about the disease, nor could it be said in advance who would be affected and who would not, and that this situation only confirmed how imperfect and limited human knowledge is. In the end, the sovereignty of God's rule, wisdom, goodness, love, and fatherly care was manifested. Religious conviction and togetherness proved very helpful in surviving the dramatic moments caused by cholera. In the last part of the sermon, Kosec reveals God's intention with respect to the epidemic. God allowed the disease not only to assert his power and authority, but also to awaken his people and lead them out of immorality, out of worldly affairs and out of their sins. To achieve this, he could not use gentle means such as common sense, a clear conscience, speaking directly to the heart of man, spreading the

revealed word and proving his existence in the daily course of life. But he had to use more effective instruments such as crop failure, anguish, poverty, famine, wars, contagious diseases and pestilence. God thus spoke to believers in the previous period through crop failure and cholera, which claimed the lives of the inhabitants of towns and villages, causing a severing of ties between parents and children, between spouses and between friends and an increase in the number of orphans and widowed people. According to Kosec, the results of God's disciplination, have already made themselves felt. As for those who have not submitted to it, he admonishes and leads them to reformation, regardless of their social class.

'...even among the upper classes, there are many who do not yet stand on the level of human dignity because they simply sacrifice their income, their possessions, to the pleasures of the flesh and to vain splendour and to God knows what other things. But meanwhile, such people let the honest craftsmen, who serve them and lent money to them or their ancestors in times of need, and the posterity of those craftsmen needlessly write to them and come to them; perhaps it was over this that our Saviour used to say the excruciating "woe". They devour and devoured modest possessions of widows and orphans along with the alms which mercy placed for them on the altar of love, and, they do not orderly recompense them for it or even refuse to do so, showing a long way of justice in our country to the weeping widows and to the starving and naked orphans. O may God who speaks to us now terrify and humble those people, but also raise them up again for the better! Even the true ornaments of the homeland, the people in high positions, agreed to be led by your spirit and, as such, to whom much more is entrusted than to others, yet from whom also, according to the word of God, much more will be required than they have received, that they may strive as much as possible, to achieve the greatest benefit for themselves and their surroundings, for their neighbours, for the homeland and the king, for mankind in general and for the glory of God. And you too, people of the middle class, artisans, master craftsmen, merchants, also continue willingly and faithfully advancing after the higher classes in all that is good and possible for you. If many of you so readily resemble them in appearance,

that the once humble and simple burghers are now hardly to be distinguished from people of higher status, do not differentiate yourselves especially in those things in which a human does not and cannot differ from another human. By true, honest and virtuous actions, strive to become equal to those whom their own merits and those of their ancestors have separated from the lower and middle classes and elevated already in the countries here on earth. As members of your estate, make efforts that the work may always praise its master, that the bravery of man may honour the craft, that the merchant, in every purchase and sale, may try to obtain the most precious pearl for the fact that they have neither deceived, nor wronged their neighbours, but have traded bravely and laboured justly. The one who will also be resplendent with other ornaments of morality and live in a modest dwelling and in simplicity, will be esteemed by all who understand to whom which honour belongs, such person will also be loved and blessed by God as one who thinks no more than is fitting and controls one's soul by moderation.³³ But I also want to say a few words to you now, you people of the lowest class in this world, farmers, peasants, servants, labourers, who are the most numerous on earth and who clearly must be the most numerous, and from the midst of whom, both long ago and recently, there sprang up high-born and noble men, even kings and monarchs themselves. To you, who have your earthly masters, superiors, spiritual shepherds, who instruct you in what is necessary, who indicate and show you the way of the end, to you here I only say this: think always of those words of the Saviour, that many in some respects are the first, in others last, many, then last, are and will be the first; therefore, surpass your outward lowliness with inward dignity. Do not say that in concern for this life of yours and the life of others, you must lose and neglect your souls, but know that it is possible to align the concern for the necessities of this life with the concern for higher things, just as the proper and honourable care of this life also includes the care of our higher and eternal life, and the life here will end the same as

³³ 'Be moderate in everything you do and you will never get sick.' Sirach 31:22.

the work being done here, either in a good or bad way; as it is here also, especially depending on how people seek the things of the kingdom of God, those people may receive other things as well. But you eat your own bread by the sweat of your own brow, while also making it for others; yet they in turn by their works and gifts serve you. And you, in your hard work, are healthy, cheerful, and long-lived, as others are in their work, unless something else hinders it. In the midst of you, the complaints about hard times, about bad days, about the impossibility of fulfilling all the obligations imposed on you, are heard most of all, yet the source and origin of your miseries and deficiencies is quite elsewhere than where you seek and find it. You are not overburdened in your dear Hungarian homeland, especially where God gives philanthropic masters and justice-loving superiors. Surely for some years now, it has been hard for you to give back to the emperor what is his, the yearly taxes in coin, harder than it has been for more than twenty years, during which you have very easily supplied the king and the army, our guards, with paper money, more easily earned. But acknowledge that those times were in truth golden for taxpayers as those who knew to take advantage of those times, became more powerful, grew stronger and rich, so much so that though the taxes are again the same as before, they know how to manage also in these times, and give their share properly as befits loyal subjects. If you ask for calm, better times, do only this: reduce the expenses, the unnecessary spending, to which you have become accustomed during the calm years; exercise prudence, more consistently than is usually the case with you; do not slacken off in your work. What you ask for will happen to you, something which, without your contribution, you cannot have a part in. May you experience a conversion here, an improvement of yourselves and of many people from other classes; may we accordingly desire to understand and be open to that teaching of the apostle: enough to have on what we have just now, thus to be in accord with the times. If only, after the end of misery and sickness, after our weeping turns into joy, we glorified God in this way, better times would come without a doubt, other moral ills of our age, the unrest, the transgressions and sins that appear in our midst would

*diminish, and more joyful days would come for pure Christian morality.*³⁴

Like Rešetka, Kosec sheds light on the spiritual background of the epidemic, placing the main emphasis on the religious disciplinatio of the community. He draws the listener's attention to their personal moral code and the quality of their earthly life. At the same time, he subjects all social strata to constructive criticism.

The sermons of Mezibrodský, Rešetka and Kosec are of considerable historical value because they document the course, symptoms and consequences of exceptional events in which the preachers and their parishioners were involved. The culturological dimension of the texts lies in the assessment of the crisis, in finding its cause and solution. The preachers identify the cause of the crisis sparked off in the first case by a natural phenomenon and in the second case by an epidemic as the personal failure of the individual, in the stagnation of their attitude to faith. They see the solution in the deepening of the religious education of the community and its return to the basic Christian values that give human life its true content and meaning.

The study was prepared within the project APVV-18-0032.

³⁴ Nábožné y vlastenecké dvě kázně aneb řeči, prwnj při přjležitosti dáwánj mladých wogakůw ned. 2 postnj r. P. 1831. Druhá řeč po wystálých uzkostech bjdy a nemocy cholera w den sláwný noworočnj 1852. W Chrámě Ewang. Městečka Pojniky při B. Bystricy, skrze Matěge KOSEC, tamegssj Cyrkwe A. W. Slowa Božjho Kazatele, držané, a s přjměrnými proměnámi a přjměrnými proměnámi a přidawký cílem dobročinným, nákladkem wydawatelovým, na swětlo wydané. W Banské Bystricy, wytisštěné v Štěpána Mihálíka, 1832, pp. 35-37.

Tangents of Latin-Byzantine coexistence to the south of the Carpathians as an opportunity for the revival of values

Peter Zubko

Western and Eastern Christians have lived side by side for centuries to the south of the Carpathians. During this time, a coexistence has developed that has been beneficial for both sides: an exchange of values, opinions and spiritual heritage along with material enrichment. The area and its inhabitants were not isolated, nor did the mutual tangents have an explicitly local context and meaning. They belong to the mosaic of the great world story of relations between the Latin (Western) and Byzantine (Eastern) worlds and their cultures. Although some relations are interpreted as strained, paradoxically they have always advanced the quality of life, spirituality and culturality.

The early Christians had a great tolerance for difference. We already find a variety of perspectives on the same issue in the biblical texts of the New Testament. Different or divergent views were not a pretext for division because mutual unity was important.¹ However, it should be added that Christians were distinct from the community from which they came (the first Christians were distinguished from their surroundings, they were called a Jewish sect), from the heathens (in several martyrologies, the non-worship of pagan deities is described as ‘impiety’ and was the reason for the death sentence for the first martyrs) and from traditions (Easter was celebrated essentially at a time different from the Jewish calendar). These differences reinforced a distinctive Christian identity. Nevertheless, the Christian community was diverse within itself.

Christians were not a uniform mass; circles of two great ecclesial communities formed naturally already in antiquity, originating in different geo-

¹ Cf. e.g. Acts of the Apostles 15:1-35 and Galatians 2:1-10. These are two views on the apostolic council in Jerusalem (around 50 AD), the Petrine and Pauline versions of the same event.

graphical circumstances. They were not isolated, for the circulation of persons, material and spiritual goods and power influences contributed to the interest in the other. The differences between the Latin/Roman West and the Greek/Byzantine East are well known,² they usually caused major and minor tensions, not only in their own time, but on account of the memory effect, they were also later emphasised artificially, even deliberately. These tensions depended on the severity of the problem, but also on the personalities involved in the solution. Although many might seem negative, most of them positively moved the times forward, contributed to mutual knowledge and the consolidation of unity in differences, or enriched the other with their own spiritual richness.³ The primary nature of the problems was theological or religious; both sides liked to stress the other's own orthodoxy and the other's unorthodoxy (heresy, schism, sectarianism) in defining theological views, religious truths and their application in practice and adherence to church discipline.

Other problems, such as cultural issues, have often been interpreted as theological. The sacralisation of everyday life was beneficial until it turned into militant fundamentalism without inner freedom. These differences can be divided into liturgical, customary and theological, some of which overlap and complement each other. Among the best-known liturgical differences are the rite/ritual and the liturgical regulations and customs related to it, especially the calendar (Julian or Gregorian), the date of Easter, different liturgical feasts, the Lenten discipline (fasting days and forbidden foods), the eucharistic matter (leavened or unleavened bread). Customary differences include e.g., the (non-)wearing of beards and celibacy. The best-known theological differences encompass the question of papal primacy, the Filioque issue, for some time they also included the views and practice of the Marian cult and the cult of icons/images, and finally the doctrine of purgatory. Some of the differences have a cultural context; the distinctions have resulted from pastoral accents and approaches (administering of

² Cf. Chadwick, H.: *Historia rozłamu Kościoła Wschodniego i Zachodniego od czasów apostołskich do Soboru florenckiego* [The History of the East-West Schism in the Church from the Apostolic Times to the Council of Florence]. Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2009; Špirko, J.: *Cirkevné dejiny s osobitným zreteľom na vývin cirkevných dejín Slovenska I – II*. [Church History with Special Reference to the Development of the Church History of Slovakia] Martin: Neografia, 1943.

³ For example, the exchange of feast days: the West took over the Feast of the Epiphany and the East the Feast of the Nativity. Furthermore, the West took over the Marian cult.

the sacraments of initiation, spiritual guidance, dealing with moral issues, spiritual priorities). The issues that caused real controversy and division were political and power-related in nature linked to the high ambitions of the originators.

Tangents, contacts, clashes between East and West occurred regularly from one side and the other. In the first millennium of Christianity, these were various tensions used as a pretext for condemnation, distancing and accusations. They culminated in 1054 in the clash between Humbert and Cerularius and mutual excommunication. This date is a symbol of division to this day. Subsequently, in the second millennium, several dialogues took place, more or less successfully. In the first millennium, they concerned all religious and social areas, in the second millennium, they predominantly revolved around theological issues and ecclesiastical discipline. It was precisely these common interests of restoring ecclesial unity which were beneficial for the development of dogmatic theology. This led to the definition of the seven sacraments, purgatory, trinitarian doctrine, ecclesiology, canon of biblical books and the understanding of primacy. These doctrines were last defined at the 17th ecumenical council in Florence: Bull of Union with the Greeks *Laetentur caeli* (6 July 1439), Bull of Union with the Armenians *Exultate Deo* (22 November 1439), Bull of Union with the Copts and Ethiopians *Cantate Domino* (4 February 1442), Bull of Union with the Syrians *Multa et admirabilia* (30 November 1444), Bull of Union with the Cypriot Chalcedonians and Maronites *Benedictus sit Deus* (7 August 1445).⁴ This resulted in another practice; the Roman Church recognised Orthodox saints who had died before the adoption of these bulls, except for saints in the rank of bishops.

In the modern ecclesiastical history of Central Europe, two important unions are mentioned, which survived their formation and early crises, and their consequences are still evident today; they have heirs in several countries. The first was the Union of Brest in 1596 and the second the Union of Uzhhorod in 1646. There is no direct causal relationship between them, but several related cultural and social circumstances that are similar can be identified. Some phenomena from the Polish environment inspired the

⁴ Alberigo, G. et al. (eds.): *Conciliarum Oecumenicorum Decreta*. Bologna: EDB, 2013, pp. 523, 534, 567, 586, 589; Baron, A. – Pietras, H. (eds.): *Dokumenty Soborów Powszechnych III (1414 – 1445)*. [Documents of General Councils III (1414 – 1445)]. Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM – Księży Jezuici, 2003, pp. 458, 492, 570, 628 (the date of 30 September 1444 is mentioned here), 636.

Hungarian environment. The relations and tangents of the Catholic-Orthodox or rather Latin-Byzantine neighbourhood have two distinct and separate stages: before and after the conclusion of the union. In the first phase, a strong affinity of the East with the West can be registered while in the second phase, periodic critical events occurred. These were sporadically revisited and reinterpreted by the East according to the needs of the time. This is how the East sought to reinforce its own identity when it found itself or felt to be in crisis or danger. The Latin Church played a decisive role, especially in raising and maintaining awareness of the union, because the union allowed it to justify the emergence of a new ecclesiological entity.

According to the testimony of the canonical visitation of Franciscus Barkóci, Bishop of Eger, in the middle of the 18th century, the union as such was generally ignored by the Eastern milieu to the south of the Carpathians, which attempted to achieve its own independence. Ignoring the state of the union led the Latin milieu to take an increasing interest in the Uniates. The efforts of the Uniates to achieve outward equality with the Latin Church provoked a reciprocal reaction on the part of the Uniates, aimed at intellectual (spiritual, dogmatic and cultural) equality with the Latin milieu. It was always possible to identify Byzantine milieu religiously by rite and liturgical discipline. The prevalent Latin milieu referred to them by the following religious terms: *Rutheni*, *the Ruthenes*, (in the religious sense Rusnaks, not in the ethnic sense of Rusins), the schismatics (the Orthodox), the Disuniates (the non-unionists or those who left the union or, in a minority position, opposed the union). To this day, this issue sparks off terminological disputes, which have a positive impact on the identity of the Eastern Church itself.

The Uniates were not a linguistically homogeneous community as they spoke several languages (Slovak, Ruthenian, Hungarian, Romanian). During the Wallachian colonisation, the Orthodox Wallachians dominated the Ruthenians, and according to the sources, it can be assumed that these were not ethnographic terms, but ethnic names; while the Ruthenians have preserved their own identity to this day thanks to their distinct language (clearly different from the majority language), the Wallachians were Latinised (they became Roman Catholics or Latin Catholics) in the first or second generation after the settlement. In this context, it would be possible to interpret the origin of some of the depictions on medieval frescoes (the Nativity of Christ in the Latin churches in the villages of Kostol'any pod Trábečom, Ludrová, Vizsoly), which have a typical Eastern appearance. On the other hand, this proves a closer connection and unity between Eastern and

Western culture before the Reformation, which is also exemplified by the embroidered Virgin Mary (the Mother of God) as an orant on the coronation robe of Hungarian kings.⁵

Without knowing, understanding and comparing the key events of unionism in Poland, it is impossible to have a good understanding of unionism to the south of the Carpathians. The Union of Uzhhorod and some other events have been identified with developments in Poland, namely the Union of Brest, or put in direct relationship with the Synod of Zamość. The comparison confirms the Polish union as a moral model, but the Uzhhorod Union developed and went on in a completely different direction so it is incompatible with the Polish union; the Hungarian result was not a conventional church union, but a personal union, which was created after the oath of loyalty to the Bishop of Eger in 1646 and was renewed several times (1649 and 1652), the last time in 1726/7 in connection with events in Poland. The influence of the Synod of Zamość is not demonstrable in the sources; it is only perceived indirectly. The exact date of the union was for a long time not important for the Uniates, oscillating between 1649 and 1646, but more general opinion leaned towards 1649.⁶ In fact, for a long time, it was not doubted at all,⁷ although some historians have also argued in favour of 1652.⁸ It was only research associated with the search for its own roots and identity that helped fix the year of its foundation for 1646, but the philosophical and theological decision to search for God in Ruthenian history played a greater role; this principle is called the *locus theologicus*.

From the foundation of the Uzhhorod Union until the canonical establishment of the Greek Catholic bishopric of Mukachevo (1646–1771), the regular local ordinaries were the Eger bishops of the Latin rite. For the faithful of the Eastern rite, a rite vicar was appointed, who was a con-

⁵ Tóth, E.: A magyar szent korona és a koronázási jelvények. Budapest: Országház könyvkiadó, 2018, pp. 284–285.

⁶ This ambiguity of the beginning of the union still existed in both 1950 and 1960 (cf. Lacko, M.: Gréckokatolíkom. Výber z diela [To the Greek Catholics. Selected works]. Košice: Byzant, 1992, pp. 43, 52).

⁷ Cf. Sirmaj, A.: Historické, topografické a politické poznatky stolice zemplínskej [Historical, Topographical and Political Knowledge of the Zemplín County]. Michalovce: Zemplínska spoločnosť, 2004, p. 63.

⁸ Marianov, I.: Aby všichni jedno byli. Výklad unijní otázky a sbírka modliteb za sjednocení církví [So That All May Be One. Interpretation of the Union Question and Collection of Prayers for the Unification of the Churches.] Olomouc: Apoštolát sv. Cyrila a Metoděje, 1939, p. 23.

secrated bishop, chosen from among the Uniate presbyters. Bishops of the Eastern rite existed here before the union, although there is no direct and unequivocal evidence of a properly organised eparchy. The position of the rite vicar was not a sign of Latin arbitrariness, but respect for canon law and the proper integration of the Eastern faithful into the structures of the Catholic Church. Created by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), this appointment was known to people at the time when the Uniate presbyters took the oath of loyalty (1646) as well as in the 18th century. The establishment of a Greek Catholic bishopric was within the exclusive competence of the pope. The reluctance to support such a solution did not lie in the prejudices of the Eger bishops towards the Eastern milieu; there was the same reluctance to dismember one's own Latin Eger bishopric into new dioceses between 1746 and 1804, a period of almost 60 years. The Eger bishops, especially Bishop Barkóci, protected the Eastern rite⁹ from Latinisation, which came only in the 19th century on the initiative of the Greek Catholic bishopric of Mukachevo. It was largely linked to the Magyarisation, which was intensely manifested under Bishop Štefan Pankovič (1820–1874, Bishop of Mukachevo from 1867)¹⁰ after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. This apparently did not sit well with some of the Greek Catholic clergy, which was reflected, for example, in Lučkaj's views of the common Byzantine-Latin past, and that was already an apologetic reinterpretation of events. In fact, the period of the existence of the rite vicariate disciplined the Eastern community, opening the way for quality Latin education and culture, which gave rise to a generation of priests who put their education to good use to build the newly established

⁹ A similar phenomenon of protecting the Eastern heritage from uncritical imitation of the Latin milieu was also addressed by the Polish bishops of the Latin rite in the same period (Vilinskij, V. S.: *Unionizmus [Unionism]* Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1932, pp. 80-81).

¹⁰ Pankovič's creed was as follows: 'We live under the rule of the Hungarians and we must become Hungarians.' (Pop, I.: *Malé dejiny Rusínov [A Little History of the Ruthenians]*, p. 55; Pop, I.: *Podkarpatská Rus [Subcarpathian Ruthenia]*, pp. 184-185). On political and linguistic developments, research and related reflections in the second half of the 19th century: Švorc, P.: *Krajinská hranica medzi Slovenskom a Podkarpatskou Rusou v medzivojnovom období (1919–1939) [The Regional Border between Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia in the Interwar Period (1919–1939)]*. Prešov: Universum, 2013, pp. 11-62; Švorc, P.: *Zakliata krajina (Podkarpatská Rus 1918–1946) [The Enchanted Land (Subcarpathian Ruthenia 1918–1946)]* Prešov: Universum, 1996, pp. 14-37; Švorc, P.: *Zakletá zem. Podkarpatská Rus 1918–1946 [The Enchanted Land (Subcarpathian Ruthenia 1918–1946)]*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2007, pp. 33-56.

Mukachevo Greek Catholic bishopric; this period is called the ‘golden’ age of the bishopric.

The cultural comparison shows that the Eastern milieu was lagging behind the Western one, but it also shows a search for inspiration in the Western milieu. The supposed tensions between Western and Eastern Christianity in the Carpathian Mountains were in fact a creative demiurge for the cultural, thought and spiritual life¹¹ and growth of the Eastern Church in Hungary. In the Middle Ages, Eastern Christians sought out Latin pilgrimage sites (Košice, Spišská Kapitula) and converted to Roman Catholicism. During the Reformation they were rather sympathetic to Calvinism. In the 18th century, the Eastern cultural milieu attempted to achieve the same cultural level as the Latin milieu, in the 19th century, these attempts were manifested in the imitation of Latin theology, art (icons resembled Latin paintings, the so-called Theresian churches were built) and Hungarian patriotism (a euphemistic name for Hungarian nationalism), in the 20th century, the focus was on the search for ethnic roots by stressing Ruthenian, Ukrainian or Slovak autochthony and emphasis was placed on the common task of sharing the burden of the state’s anti-religious policy. In the 21st century, spiritual roots are being sought.¹² Slovak Greek Catholics have embraced the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, which at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was still viewed more as part of the Latin heritage, despite being espoused by Greek Catholics in several countries all over the world.

The Cyrillo-Methodian idea led to the creative birth of the idea of direct continuity with the Great Moravian Church; however, this is a cultural phenomenon called interculturation, which has theological and pastoral goals, it is not a historical interpretation.

The mutual relations between Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics are characterised by an address connected with the statement of several realities by the Bishop of Košice Jozef Čárský on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Uzhhorod Union of 1946, published by the Bishop of Prešov Peter Pavel Gojdič in the magazine *Blahovistnik*:

¹¹ The Eastern theological heritage is also inspiring for the Protestant milieu. Cf. Svatoň, R.: *Doteky křesťanského Východu v protestantské teologii 20. století*. Schlink, Pelikan, Torrance, Mannerman, Moltmann. [Tangents of the Christian East in the Protestant Theology of the 20th Century.] Červený Kostelec : Pavel Mervart, 2018, 245 p.

¹² Cf. Taft, R. F.: *Katolicizmus východného obradu. Jeho dedičstvo a poslanie* [Catholicism of the Eastern rite. Its Heritage and Mission.] Košice – Bratislava: Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka – Teologická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity, 2007, 48 p.

“(...) For the Catholics of the Latin rite here in eastern Slovakia, this jubilee is all the more precious because the faithful of both rites live in the same territory, in the same towns and villages; they share a common political, economic and social destiny, a common prosperity or misery; they have rejoiced together and suffered together for centuries. In many places they share churches or allow the worshippers of the other rite to hold services in them; believers distant from their church perform their Sunday duty in the church of the other rite.

The clergy of both rites help each other with sermons, confessions, care of the sick, etc.; the bishops of both rites go to the church of the fraternal rite on their official visits. Misunderstandings, which, praise God, seldom occur, do not come from the worshippers, but from tactlessness or misunderstood zeal on the part of the clergy for their own rite, are avoided and resolved by the episcopal offices of both rites. We regard ourselves as children of the common mother, the universal (Catholic) church, who profess the same faith, receive the same sacraments and acknowledge the same Holy Father as the head of the church. Only the rite (vestments and language of worship) is different, but we have one and the same love for Christ and loyalty to his church. On behalf of the clergy and faithful of the Latin rite of the Apostolic Administration of the Diocese of Prešov and the Diocese of Košice, on the occasion of this jubilee, I send to my brother in the apostolic office, H[is]. E[xcellency], the M[ost] R[everend], Bishop of Prešov and the Apostolic Administrator of the parts of the diocese of Mukachevo, the V[ery] Rev[erend] clergy and all the faithful of the Eastern rite, greetings and the wish, accompanied by prayer, that the hearts of all may be filled with the spirit of Christ and devotion to the Mother Church, that everyone may observe the commands of God and of the church as conscientiously as possible, that each one also publicly profess Christ, the church and its teaching, and that they may not be separated from it, neither by promises nor by threats, so that their zeal, their piety and their dedication may be an example to the faithful of the Latin rite. (...)”¹³

¹³ Čársky, J.: Spolu jubilujeme. [Celebrating a jubilee together]. In: БЛАГОВѢСТНИК (Blahovistnik) I (1946), issue 7, p. 4. (The spelling in the transcription has been adapted

In 1950, the Greek Catholic Church was ‘abolished’ after the so-called Prešov Sobor (sobor, church gathering or assembly of members of the Orthodox Church) as part of the so-called Action P (the abbreviation ‘P’ means ‘pravoslávny’ in Slovak language, i.e. Orthodox). Subsequently, the Latin Church played a key role in the universal Catholic communion by accepting and taking care of the Greek Catholics who refused to become Orthodox. These were believers who considered their faith to be Catholic; they did not “just” care about the rite, which in this context was an attribute of culture. Key figures of the Greek Catholic intelligentsia were unjustly imprisoned, or they had to go into exile in the Czech borderlands as part of Action 100, or they withdrew from public life for health and emeritus reasons. This absurd period lasted until the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church in 1968, but all the wrongs could no longer be righted. The consequences of the Prešov Sobor did not initially manifest themselves in any way in the agenda of the Košice bishopric (of the Latin rite).¹⁴ Shortly after 28 April 1950, official conversions from the Greek Catholic rite to the Latin rite continued to take place, based on the consent of the Greek Catholic Ordinariate and the indult from Rome. These were, for example, the cases of the theologians Jozef Repko from Dulova Ves (parish of Kokošovce),¹⁵ Ján Džatko from Vranov¹⁶ and Michal Janočko from Barca in Košice.¹⁷

By the end of autumn 1950, Bishop Jozef Čársky began to appear passive in his relations with the state, apparently realising that any resistance was futile and even counterproductive. According to the literature, in this state of mind, he reportedly published a confidential circular on the re-

to the current rules of Slovak orthography; archaic words are left in the original wording because they are sufficiently comprehensible.)

¹⁴ Cf. Zubko, P.: Dôsledky tzv. Prešovského soboru v agende Jozefa Čárskeho a Štefana Onderka. [The consequences of the so-called Prešov Sobor in the files of Jozef Čársky and Štefan Onderko] In: *Cirkev v okovách totalitného režimu. Likvidácia Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi v Československu v roku 1950.* [The Church in the Shackles of the Totalitarian Regime. The Elimination of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in 1950]. Coranič, J. – Šturák, P. – Koprivňáková, J. (eds.). Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej univerzity, 2010, pp. 209-219.

¹⁵ Archív Košickej arcidiecézy (Archivum Archidioecesis Cassoviensis = AACass). Administratívne spisy [Archives of the Archdiocese of Košice. Administrative Files], sign. 661/1950, 29 April 1950; 971/1950, 29 April 1950; sign. 991/1950, 3 May 1950.

¹⁶ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 452/1950, 3 May 1950; 991/1950, 3 May 1950.

¹⁷ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 453/1950, 3 May 1950; 991/1950, 3 May 1950.

lations with former Greek Catholics¹⁸ on 10 November 1950. So far, the aforementioned circular has been found neither in the archbishop's archive nor in the parish archives. From the context of the other agenda, it appears that it did exist, it did not recognise the Prešov Sobor and its consequences, and the resulting situation was taken note of only in a purely formal way. Roman Catholic priests followed the will of their bishop until 1968, although by then the bishop was no longer alive. This approach of the bishop was extremely important; the bishop was aware of the universality of the Catholic Church and of the current historical responsibility of the Latin Church not only for its own faithful, but also for the Greek Catholics who had lost their shepherd and their own church. In the earlier past, a similar Latin approach had proved counterproductive; this time it was needed not only in conscience, but there were insurmountable obstacles to free access to the sacraments (and thus to salvation) in their own rite. Given the extraordinary nature of the situation, an extraordinary but simple solution was needed, one that the regime had not anticipated: the Latin Church took care of the Greek faithful, which led to their rapprochement. God brought good out of evil. The emergency measure was not only applied until 1968, but it also had later consequences in the mixing of believers of both rites.

The state authorities intercepted the secret circular and Bishop Jozef Čársky was forced to issue an official statement, which did not contest the already issued decree, but it only sort of stated the situation. The bishop's official circular letter of 15 November, 1950, reads as follows:

'Subject: Interfaith Law – compliance. To V[ery] rev[erend]... Rom[an] Cat[holic]. parish offices! I am informing the V[ery] Rev[erend] clergy that after 28 April 1950, the state public administration considers all former Gr[ee]k Catholics to be Orthodox. Consequently, it applies to them as well as to their relations with the Rom[an] Catholics the laws (regulations) in force regarding the relationship between the various denominations. A number of clergymen who did not comply with these regulations were greatly inconvenienced. I remind the Very Reverend clergymen that they should be aware of this in

¹⁸ Cf. Vnuk, F.: Vládni zmocnenci na biskupských úradoch v rokoch 1949–1951. [Government Commissioners in Episcopal Offices in 1949–1951] Martin: Matica slovenská, 1999, pp. 179-180.

their practice. Precibus commendatus + Jozef, in his o[wn]. h[and], Bishop, Apostolic Administrator."¹⁹

The practice was that the Roman Catholics administered sacraments and sacramentals to Greek Catholics as well; they were recorded in the Roman Catholic registers (of births, marriages and deaths). In order to distinguish Roman Catholics (referred to as 'r. cath.' in the registers) from Greek Catholics ('gr. cath. '), some parish priests included in the registers the abbreviation 'cath.' with the understanding that one day it would be possible to add 'gr.' Only exceptionally were former Greek Catholics referred to as Orthodox ('orthod. '). The most serious problem when it was necessary to deal with the rite affiliation officially was with weddings, which were not private; weddings were publicly known ceremonies with numerous guests. If a Roman Catholic was marrying a former Greek Catholic who was officially designated as Orthodox, it was a mixed marriage and a dispensation was required to marry in the Latin rite. The bishop's office thus had an extremely increased administrative burden, yet dispensations were routinely granted.

On 15 May 1953, the Church Department of the Regional National Committee (Slovak abbreviation: KNV) in Prešov stated that 'Bishop Jozef Čársky is obstructing the successful work of the regime among the Greek Catholics who have become Orthodox.'²⁰ His stance at that time therefore appears to be one of conscience, not lawlessness. It was an act of courage on his part for which he could have been penalised; fortunately, in these cases, it remained only a statement.

The official agenda of the Košice bishop's office until 1955 records almost no official documents on the subject of relations with the Orthodox Church (with the exception of the aforementioned dispensations from the *religio mixta*). This does not mean that the bishop did not have unofficial or confidential information. He obtained it from personal meetings with priests, but also from personal letters. Something similar happened in other pastoral matters. Documents on relations with the Orthodox have not been preserved in Čárský's estate. Only one letter from 1953, which was a response to a request from the Eparchial Council of the Orthodox Church

¹⁹ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 2676/1950, 15 November 1950 (circular), p. 1.

²⁰ Pešek, J. – Barnovský, M.: Štátna moc a cirkvi na Slovensku 1948–1953. [State Power and Churches in Slovakia 1948 – 1953]. Bratislava: VEDA, 1997, p. 269.

in Michalovce dated 19 September 1953 (No. 1583/1953.-II/1.-Va), has remained in the official files:

“We have asked the Slovak Office of Church Affairs to supply us with the form ‘Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the Period from ... to ...’; since the office [currently] does not have this form in stock, they recommend us to ask to the Most Rev[erend] episcopal offices for some copies. We would need about 300-400 copies of the aforementioned form. We ask you, therefore, to kindly lend and send us this form depending on the quantity of your stock. We thank you in advance for your kindness and will gladly return the favour.’

The reply of 25 September 1953 describes the nature of mutual relations at that time:

‘We do not have the requested forms in stock. Our clergymen type these forms themselves.’²¹

However, the situation was very serious, many former Greek Catholics were unable to come to terms with the orthodoxification and saw the way out in the ‘conversion’ to the Roman Catholic Church. It was also important to take a stand on the former sharing of churches, which the Orthodox continued after the Greek Catholics. Sometime shortly before 12 May 1955, bilateral Roman-Catholic-Orthodox negotiations were held in the KNV in Prešov. The representatives of the churches met to resolve the contentious issues between the believers of the Latin rite and the Orthodox. Many Greek Catholics refused to accept the situation so they joined the Roman Catholics for conscientious objection. In order to avoid further problems, a joint record of the meeting was made, the addendum to which was written personally by Bishop Jozef Čársky on 2 June 1955, explicitly stating that the joint record of the meeting was valid only with the attached instructions (clause, directives), ‘which is an integral part (sic!) of this record.’ The Roman Catholic Church was represented by Vicar General of Košice Štefan Onderko and Deputy Vicar General Štefan Benkö; the Orthodox Church

²¹ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 2320/1953, 25 September 1953.

was represented by Vicar General of Michalovce Peter Spišiak, Director of the Eparchial Council in Prešov Andrej Mihal'ov, Dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Prešov ThDr. Kernašovič and Chair of the Missionary Department of the Eparchial Council in Michalovce A. Tóth.²² Bishop Jozef Čársky was not present in person; he received the document from the meeting for approval and signature. The bishop realised and pointed out to the KNV that if the agreement was to be signed, other Roman Catholic bishops from eastern Slovakia had to do so as well, since Orthodox believers lived not only in the territory of the Košice bishopric, but also in the bishoprics of Spiš and Rožňava. As the record of the negotiations only laid down general principles, Bishop Jozef Čársky asked for detailed instructions in the form of an addendum to the record so that in the future, there would not be different interpretations of the agreement. And as a third comment, the bishop stated that the conversion of believers from one church to another cannot depend on the consent or disapproval of one or the other church, but on the free will of the converting person. The target Ordinary *ad quem* is competent to make this will legitimate.²³

According to the established dates of other archival sources, the detailed guidelines were in fact drawn up within two weeks, apparently by Bishop Čársky himself or by people in his circle. The record of the aforementioned meeting and the addendum, the drafted directives, were signed by Jozef Čársky only on 2 June 1955. Both Orthodox bishops subsequently signed them on 3 June 1955. Bishop Čársky sent a letter of information about the agreement with the Orthodox Church to the Roman Catholic ordinariates in Spišská Kapitula and Rožňava. Both of the vicars capitular involved agreed without comment²⁴ to everything negotiated by Bishop Čársky and signed the directives without indicating the date, but next to the signature of the Bishop of Košice, which implies that their consent should be dated back to 2 June 1955,²⁵ although this apparently happened a day later.²⁶

²² AACass, Episcopalia – Jozef Čársky (E–JČ), sine sign. (original); Zubko, P.: Dejiny Košickej cirkvi v prameňoch (1803–2006). [History of the Košice Church in Sources (1803–2006)]. Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2006, document no. 117, pp. 382–385.

²³ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 1089/1955, 12 May 1955.

²⁴ Cf. Archív Spišského biskupstva, Administratívne spisy [Archive of the Bishopric of Spiš, Administrative Files], sign. 686/1955, 3 June 1955.

²⁵ AACass, E–JČ, Pravoslávna otázka, Záznam a Smernice (originály) [The Orthodox Issue, Record and Directives (originals)].

²⁶ AACass, E–JČ, sine sign. (original); ZUBKO, Peter: Dejiny Košickej cirkvi v prameňoch [The History of the Košice Church in Sources] (1803–2006), document no. 117, pp. 382–385.

The Roman Catholic priests of the Košice diocese were informed about the agreement at retreats on the following dates and locations: on 16 June 1955, the deaneries²⁷ Prešov and Sabinov; on 20 June 1955, Humenné, on 21 June 1955, Sobrance and Michalovce; on 22 June 1955, Vranov nad Topľou and Trebišov; on 23 June 1955 Kráľovský Chlmec; on 24 June 1955 Giraltovce; on 27 June 1955 Košice-Juh and Košice-Sever; on 28 June 1955 Moldava nad Bodvou; on 30 June 1955, Bardejov.²⁸ This *modus vivendi* was intended to bring satisfaction and remedy the situation and contributed to the consolidation of the state of affairs.²⁹

The official protocol of Čársky's office in the following period registers only one fourfold complaint by the Orthodox eparchy of Michalovce, dated 19 August 1955, about the failure to follow the directives on the part of the Latin Church. According to the summaries in the filing protocol, these were about baptisms in Čemerné, in the district of Vranov nad Topľou,³⁰ the use of churches in Sliepkovce-Judkov³¹ and Biel³² and a general statement of violation of the directives.³³ Officially there were not more of such complaints.

Bishop Čársky died in March 1962 and Štefan Onderko was elected as the Vicar Capitular, who made it possible for the Greek Catholics to restore the Greek Catholic Church on the premises of the Roman Catholic bishop's residence in 1968. The Vicar Capitular Štefan Onderko had earlier written in one of his circulars:

'Dear altar brothers, the renewal process of our whole public life affects the holy church and us and our faithful. After all, we live here in this homeland. It is my duty to inform you all, and through you our faithful as well, about all that has happened or is happening in the domain that touches our church

²⁷ The deaneries corresponded to the political districts of that time.

²⁸ Cf. AACass, E-JČ, Pravoslávna otázka, Záznam a Smernice (obal spisu). [The Orthodox Issue, Record and Directives] (file cover).

²⁹ Marek, P. – Bureha, V.: Pravoslavní v Československu v letech 1918–1953. Příspěvek k dějinám Pravoslavné církve v českých zemích, na Slovensku a na Podkarpatské Rusi. [Orthodox in Czechoslovakia in 1918–1953. A Contribution to the History of the Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia]. Brno: CDK, 2008, p. 433.

³⁰ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 2072/1955, 19 August 1955.

³¹ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 2073/1955, 19 August 1955.

³² AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 2074/1955, 19 August 1955.

³³ AACass, Administratívne spisy [Administrative Files], sign. 2075/1955, 19 August 1955.

life. In a way the process of democratisation is taking place in all branches of public life as well as in the church.³⁴

Vasil' Hopko described the current social and political situation in a letter of 19 March 1968, written in Osek and addressed to the Orthodox bishop's office in Prešov and to the Roman Catholic bishop's office in Košice:

*"(...) I therefore consider it my civic duty, after long years of imprisonment, to demand that the aforementioned government decree be revoked as soon as possible, that the Greek Catholic Church be rehabilitated, along with its bishop, Pavel Gojdič, who perished in prison, and that its legitimate rights be granted anew, as are those of other churches. After so many years of trials and wrongs suffered, we want to live in this state as equal citizens... I do believe that the National Assembly will give due attention to these matters and resolve them in the spirit of the initiated democratisation to the full satisfaction of all citizens of the Greek Catholic denomination."*³⁵

A copy of the letter was sent from Osek on 26 March 1968 together with another cover letter to the Ordinary of Košice, Štefan Onderko, as to 'a neighbour of the Greek Catholic bishopric of Prešov'. In this accompanying letter, Vasil' Hopko wrote:

'First: Thank you for having served our faithful, conscientiously in the spirit of charity and in the spirit of Catholic law. May the Lord bless you! I, the undersigned Greek Catholic Bishop of Midila, Auxiliary Bishop of Prešov, respectfully and lovingly send you our submission to the National Assembly. I do this, firstly, to keep you informed, as a Hungarian poet says: 'Megfogyva bár, de törve nem'³⁶ – we are weakened, but not broken, we profess life because the Lord of Life has given us the right to life too. It is written in the H[oly] Scripture that the last will be the first. We want to preserve that primacy

³⁴ AACass, Circulares, Obežník 544/1968 [Circular 544/1968], 1 April 1968, p. 1.

³⁵ AACass, Administratívne spisy 1968/514 [Administrative Files 1968/514] (GR, 1968–1970, fasc. 1).

³⁶ The verse comes from the Hungarian romantic poem *Szózat* (*The Word*), written in 1836 by Mihály Vörösmarty (1800 – 1855). It is considered one of the key patriotic hymns of the Hungarian national revival.

*in our love for God and in our love for the Catholic Church, which is now restored at the Council... We suffer only because we are faithful to the will of Christ the Lord, who said at the Last Supper (that is, before his death, as a testament): That all may be one; I wrote recently to the H[oly] Father, Paul VI, when I expressed my gratitude for a great gift, I mentioned this saying to him that is passed down from generation to generation: When the Greek Catholic pilgrims came to Rome, the Holy Father welcomed them saying, "Oh, you poor Greek Catholics, whom the Latins do not love and the Orthodox hate" – These are now "tempi passati", I wrote to the Holy Father, and we are pleased about this distinction that they look on us that way as it is purely for Catholicism that we suffer. (...) "Tempi passati", it is all a thing of the past. And now a bright, joyful future lies ahead of us. We want to work together as Uniates, but in doing so we want to preserve everything that Catholic law has prescribed about the rites. This means that when the father is Roman Catholic, all the children are Roman Catholic, when the father is Greek Catholic, all the children are Greek Catholic. Be assured that this is holy to us and will remain holy. And we are confident that a post-Council Catholic Roman Catholic parish priest and a post-Council Greek Catholic pastor will not steal (unlawfully rebaptise) children. If we are now to be brothers with Lutherans, etc., how much more are we Catholics to be brothers, and sincere brothers, among ourselves. When I have agreed to write this to you very sincerely, be assured that I will not put nationality first and then the Eastern rite. But Catholicism will come first, rite second and nationality third. We are to be good patriots, but first good Catholics. I pray for our dioceses that God may help you sort out everything in a Catholic spirit.*³⁷

After eighteen years of illegality, the Greek Catholic Church was officially restored in 1968.

³⁷ AACass, Administratívne spisy 1968/514 [Administrative Files 1968/514] (GR, 1968–1970, fasc. 1).

The Roman Catholic Church played an important role in this regard. On the Wednesday of the Holy Week, 10 April 1968, representatives of Greek Catholics met with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Košice at his residence to lead their church out of illegality. The favourable sociopolitical climate worked to the advantage of this effort; on 13 June 1968, the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic issued a decree on the economic security of the Greek Catholic Church by the state,³⁸ which legalised this church and allowed it to operate publicly again. In this case the state for the first time implicitly acknowledged the wrong it inflicted through the so-called Prešov Sobor, which it now partly redressed; the second time was in the early 1990s when the government financially compensated those Orthodox parishes that had given up their churches and returned them to the Greek Catholics. Between 1950 and 1968, the Greek Catholic Church was outlawed, actually operating illegally. The government felt obliged to make amends for the once immoral decision, even though the remedy could not be and was not ideal. It is common knowledge what happened in 1950 and after in Slovakia and other Soviet bloc countries.³⁹ However, few people now realise that it was a time not only of the martyrdom of the Greek Catholics,⁴⁰ but also of the paternal or maternal embrace of the Greek Catholics by the Roman Catholic Church.

The time was truly ripe and the situation favourable. On 10 April 1968, 133 priests and members of religious orders and 66 laypersons from all over Czechoslovakia met and, founded the Action Committee of Greek Catholic Clergy, following the Roman Catholic Prague model. Its activities were backed by the authority of the Work of Conciliar Renewal established on 14 May 1968⁴¹ on the initiative of the Second Vatican Council, and it successfully operated in the Košice diocese at that time, enjoying authority among the clergy. It was also morally helpful to the developments in the Greek Catholic Church. On 29 April 1968, the Action Committee in Košice approved the Memorandum on the Rehabilitation of the Greek Catholic

³⁸ Vládne nariadenie 70/1968 Sb [Government Regulation 70/1968 Coll.]

³⁹ Wolf, J. M.: Být katolíkem je zločin [It is a crime to be Catholic]. Translatio: 18 01. [Samizdat], 244 p.

⁴⁰ Cf. Babjak, J.: Zostali verní. Osudy gréckokatolíckych kňazov. [They Remained Faithful. The Fates of Greek Catholic Priests. Volumes I–II (Parts 1–8). Prešov: Petra, 2009–2011, 638 + 590 p.

⁴¹ Hlinka, A.: Sila slabých a slabosť silných. Cirkev na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989. [The Strength of the Weak and the Weakness of the Strong. The Church in Slovakia in the Years 1945–1989.] Zagreb: Grafički zavod Logos, 1989, p. 122.

Church.⁴² On 13 June 1968, the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic adopted a resolution on the resumption of the activities of the Greek Catholic Church.

On the memorable 10 April 1968, in the bishop hall in Košice, the priest of the Košice diocese and judicial vicar Anton Harčar spoke on behalf of the Roman Catholics and said at that time:

'Beloved Very Reverend brothers! The Action Committee of the Conciliar Movement of the Catholic Clergy has authorised me to participate in your meeting. I consider it a great honour and a special grace to be able to greet you on his behalf in this historic moment and to wish you a successful discussion. Beloved brethren, today is a historic milestone in the life of the Greek Catholic Church in our state, for after 18 years of violent silencing, with this gathering the church announces that it is alive, that it lived in you and in your faithful believers. Today, through you, it joins the revival movement for the welfare and happiness of all the citizens of our state. In this historic moment, let us first and foremost thank the Lord God, Father of all comfort and mercy, and for the 18 years we have lived. Let us give thanks that the Lord has allowed us to suffer positively with Christ. I am convinced that the ongoing renewal of

⁴² Lipták, R.: Znovuzrodenie Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi v roku 1968. [The Rebirth of the Greek Catholic Church in 1968]. Prešov: Universum, 2016, 192 p.; Katolícke noviny. 21 April 1968, issue 16; Kalendár gréckokatolíkov 1969 [Calendar of Greek Catholics 1969]. Bratislava: Spolok svätého Vojtecha v Trnave, 1969, pp. 46-49; Vnuk, F.: Popustené putá. Katolícka cirkev na Slovensku v období liberalizácie a normalizácie (1967–1971) [Loosened Bonds. The Catholic Church in Slovakia in the Period of Liberalisation and Normalisation (1967–1971)]. Martin: Matica slovenská, 2001, p. 187; Šturák, P.: Dejiny Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi v Československu v rokoch 1945–1989 [The History of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in the Years 1945–1989] Prešov: Petra, 1999, pp. 138-143; Šturák, P.: 45 rokov od obnovenia činnosti Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi v Československu [45 years since the restoration of the activity of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia]. In: Gréckokatolícka cirkev na Slovensku vo svetle výročí III. [Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia in the Light of Anniversaries III]. Coranič, J. (ed.). Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej univerzity, 2013, pp. 409-422; Borza, P.: Proces legalizácie Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi v Československu. [The Process of Legalisation of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia]. In: Gréckokatolícka cirkev na Slovensku vo svetle výročí [Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia in the Light of Anniversaries III]. Coranič, J. – Šturák, P. (eds.). Prešov: Gréckokatolícka teologická fakulta, Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, 2009, pp. 112-119.

our social life is above all the fruit of this suffering of many, and foremost among them are you and your faithful. The suffering for many has changed people's mindset, transformed things and people's destinies. Therefore, let us give thanks! Thank God that the suffering has passed away, but its fruit remains, it is our wealth. In this regard, the words of St. Paul to the Philippians take on a comforting meaning: "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him" (Philippians 1:29). We bless the life of today, born of suffering, the fruit of which is love and mercy... We Catholic Christians, with these values in mind, volunteer to work in this state because we are convinced that the moral values represented by Christianity are indispensable to the creation of the material values sought by our state... Beloved brothers! Eighteen years of difficult visitation have enabled us to grasp more firmly many Christian truths, including the truth of the unity of the church of Christ. Instructed by the past, we carry out Christ's wish with our minds and hearts: "Ut omnes unum sint – That all may be one". Let us not emphasise what divides us, but what unites us. We are children of one mother, the bride of Christ. Let us strive for what is salvific: "Sentire cum Ecclesia – To feel with the church" so that the world may know that we are disciples of Christ. Let it be a symbol and a challenge to us that the manifestation of the Greek Catholic Church takes place in the building of a Roman Catholic bishopric. In this sign of mutual love and trust, I wish success to your discussion. Sláva Isusu Christu [Glory to Jesus Christ]!"⁴³

The Roman Catholic Saint Adalbert Society in Trnava proposed to set up a subcommission for the Greek Catholic Slovaks so that they could publish their religious books until they had an organisation of their own. Such books were indeed published (prayer books, calendars). It was another step on the part of the Catholic Church of the Latin rite towards the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church.

It is known from several oral accounts that in many places, after the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church, a welcoming of Greek Catholic priests

⁴³ Harčar, A.: Žil som v Košiciach [I lived in Košice]. Košice: Vienala, 2008, pp. 448-449.

took place. An authentic description of one such event has been preserved. It was written by the Greek Catholic curate Juraj Zubko and signed by thirteen other believers from Nacina Ves on 18 October 1968, and we also learn from it a testimony of the Roman Catholics' involvement in a difficult time:

*'Since time immemorial, Greek and Roman Catholic believers have coexisted in absolute harmony and love in our village. There has always been and still is today a sincere and good relationship between us. We have all attended Greek as well as Roman Catholic services together. Together we have contributed to the repair and maintenance of the Roman Catholic church and its facilities. We are bound by sincere Christian relationships. In many cases we live in mixed marriages, the wife being Roman Catholic and the husband Greek Catholic or vice versa. (...) This nice relationship and coexistence prevailed and was well established until 1950 when our spiritual father did not bow to the pressure of the time, but rather chose the path of exile and disgrace. Following his example, we, the Greek Catholic faithful, did not falter, but attended exclusively Roman Catholic churches, received Roman Catholic worship and are truly grateful from the bottom of our hearts to the Roman Catholic clergy and the Roman Catholic faithful for accepting us among them, for strengthening us in our faith, and for fulfilling our spiritual needs. We overcame the denominational difficulties of the years 1950 – 1968, and in July of this year [1968], our Reverend Dezider Tink returned to us after 18 years of hardship and suffering. At that time, the Most Reverend deans of the Roman Catholic Church, Dean [Vojtech] Kmec, the clerk of the Roman Catholic parish in Strážske (and thus also of our branch church) and District Dean [Ján] Tokár, clerk of the Michalovce parish, were present in brotherly understanding at the welcoming reception in the Greek Catholic parish church in Voľa. To all of us present, the way of welcoming the returned Reverend D. Tink was deeply moving, and with tears in our eyes, we felt immense joy at the fact that we would once again be able to enjoy together and freely the celebration of the Roman and Greek Catholic services in Nacina Ves, as it had been until 1950.'*⁴⁴

⁴⁴ AACass, GR, 1968-1970, fasc. 32.

The restoration of the Greek Catholic Church was a resurrection that naturally brought problems in relations with the Roman Catholic Church as it took several years to clarify, above all, the legal positions on the existing situation. Until then, there would be natural conflicts, not because of bad intentions on the part of those involved, but because of ignorance or lack of clarity of canon law. Sometimes the formal problem was exacerbated by the personal prejudices of the clergy.

An overview of the problems is given in the notes from the retreats of the priests of the Košice diocese. In 1968 the following observations were made:

*'If the believers of the Gr[reek] C[atholic]. religion would like to hold services in a Rom[an] Cath[olic] church, the clergy of the former should apply through the parish authorities to the D[iocesan] Office for the use of the church building. The request should state which church is to be used and when the services will be held.'*⁴⁵

*'In the discussions in Košice and Prešov, the clergy put forward a number of practical ideas, among them being: (...) The clergy of the Greek Catholic rite and the Orthodox issued a joint statement calling on their faithful to embrace the spirit of ecumenism. Should their negotiations fail to reach an agreement on the use of the common church if the Orthodox also ask us, let us forward the request to the ordinariate and let it decide.'*⁴⁶

*'Before the discussion, the District Church Secretary of Vranov suggested that by reasonable actions, the priests contribute to the consolidation of the conditions in their parishes and avoid all misunderstandings, especially where there are mixed faiths.'*⁴⁷

⁴⁵ AACass, Obdobie vakancie (1962–1990), Zázpisnica z liturgických dní, ktoré boli v Košiciach 25. septembra 1968 a v Prešove 26. septembra 1968 [Period of Vacancy (1962–1990), Minutes of the Liturgical Days held on 25 September 1968 in Košice and on 26 September 1968 in Prešov], p. 2.

⁴⁶ AACass, Obdobie vakancie (1962–1990), Zázpisnica z liturgických dní, ktoré boli v Košiciach 20. novembra 1968 a v Prešove 21. novembra 1968 [Period of Vacancy (1962–1990), Minutes of the Liturgical Days held on 20 November 1968 in Košice and on 21 November 1968 in Prešov], p. 3.

⁴⁷ AACass, Obdobie vakancie (1962–1990), Zázpisnica z liturgickej porady konanej dňa 22. októbra 1968 vo Vranove n/T za účasti kňazov vranovského a humenského dekanátu [Period of Vacancy (1962–1990), Minutes of the Liturgical Consultation held on 22 October

In 1971:

*'In the discussion the question was raised who should be considered an Orthodox Christian. Is it the one who has been baptised and brought up Orthodox, or the one who has been baptised but no longer brought up Orthodox? [...] The following questions were also asked: Is the marriage of two Greek Catholics contracted before a Roman Catholic clergyman invalid or only illicit? Can assimilation change the rite? How should a Roman Catholic clergyman act when he is asked by Greek Catholic parents to baptise their child and they are fundamentally opposed to the baptism being reported to the proper Greek Catholic parish authority? The Very Reverend Vojtech Jenčík, clerk of the parish of Žalobín, pointed out that the casus or cases concerning the two Catholic rites could be resolved legally and psychologically, but we have to bear in mind that the Holy See always prefers the minority rite. The Very Reverend Tibor Umstädter encouraged all priests to show sympathy to the priests of the Eastern rite and live with them like brothers, to put themselves in their shoes and to regard the Eastern rite as Catholic. The Very Reverend Anton Szekely, clerk of the parish of Kamenica nad Cirochou, said that in some parishes, by acculturation of the Greek Catholic faithful, individual villages were considered to be purely Roman Catholic even in times of the Orthodox action, and a Roman Catholic clergyman, with the consent of the regional state officials, could serve all of them; now, at the insistence of some Greek Catholic clergymen, this acculturation is being forcibly eliminated. The Very Reverend Ján Zbojovský, clerk of the parish in Sol', outlined the difficulties he has in his mixed parish and demanded in particular an explanation as to why he still does not have the state's approval to teach religion in school. The district church secretary said that the state authorities do not want to meddle in internal church affairs, but where this culminates in unrest among the citizens in individual villages, they are forced to intervene.'*⁴⁸

1968 in Vranov nad Topľou with the participation of the priests of the Vranov nad Topľou and Humenné deaneries], p. 1.

⁴⁸ AACass, Obdobie vakancie (1962–1990), Zázpisnica z liturgickej porady rím. kat. duchovných humenského a vranovského dekanátu konanej vo Vranove n/T dňa 17. februára

*'The Very Reverend [Jozef] Szócs raised the issue of those who left the Orthodox Church over the past years, according to the CIC, they are Greek Catholics, but they want to be recognised in everything as Roman Catholics. The comments of several people present indicated that these are not isolated cases, but this is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed.'*⁴⁹

In the light of the above-mentioned quotes from Roman Catholic priests from diocesan retreats, it is clear that the mixing of rites after the Prešov Sobor affected the district of Vranov nad Topľou the most, but these problems occurred in the agenda of the Košice bishop's office in all districts, only they had a rather specific local dimension, which concerned rite affiliation and the resulting consequences, or it concerned the use of churches. Much greater problems existed in relations with the Orthodox Church.⁵⁰

Several of Roman Catholic priests closely observed the milieu of the restored Greek Catholic Church, meeting Greek Catholic clergymen. In various Roman Catholic parish archives, for example, the Ordinariate Letter of the Prešov bishopric and assigned administrations of the Greek Catholic

1971 [Period of Vacancy (1962–1990), Minutes of the Liturgical Consultation of Roman Catholic clergy of the Humenné and Vranov nad Topľou deaneries held on 17 February 1971 in Vranov nad Topľou], pp. 1-2.

⁴⁹ AACass, Obdobie vakancie (1962–1990), Zázpisnica napísaná na kňazskej rekolekcii v Prešove dňa 16. februára 1971 [Period of Vacancy (1962–1990), Minutes written at the priestly retreat on 16 February 1971 in Prešov], p. 1.

⁵⁰ Cf. Lupčo, M.: Gréckokatolícka a pravoslávna cirkev na Slovensku v rokoch 1968 – 1980. Hľadanie spoločného 'modus vivendi' [The Greek Catholic and Orthodox Church in Slovakia in 1968 - 1980. The search for a common 'modus vivendi']. In: Gréckokatolícka cirkev na Slovensku vo svetle výročí II. [Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia in the Light of Anniversaries II] Coranič, J. – Koprivňáková, J. – Šturák, P. (eds.). Prešov Gréckokatolícka teologická fakulta, Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, 2012, pp. 165-177; Borza, P. – Mandzák, D. A.: Sonda do života Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi v Československu v období normalizácie [Probe into the life of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in the period of normalisation]. In: Velehrad volá! [Velehrad Calling]. Doležalová, M. (ed.). Prague: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2017, pp. 22-240; Pešek, J. – Barnovský, M.: V zovretí normalizácie. Cirkvi na Slovensku 1969 – 1989 [In the Grip of the Normalisation. Churches in Slovakia 1969–1989]. Bratislava: VEDA, 2004, pp. 159-185; Marek, P. – Lupčo, M.: Nástin dějin pravoslavné cirkve v 19. a 20. století. Prolegomena k vývoji pravoslaví v českých zemích, na Slovensku a na Podkarpatské Rusi v letech 1860–1992 [An Outline of the History of the Orthodox Church in the 19th and 20th Centuries. A Prolegomenon to the Development of Orthodoxy in the Czech Lands, Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia in the Years 1860-1992]. Brno: CDK, 2012, pp. 327-390.

Church no. 2/1969 of 13 May 1969,⁵¹ has been preserved, in which Ján Hirka reminded of Bishop Gojdič and the rehabilitation of Bishop Hopko and proclaimed the Marian year. The mutual relations were largely influenced by the sociopolitical situation: the experience of persecution after Action P and Action 100, the state church policy, the danger of state intervention in the event of disagreements, for which the faithful would ultimately pay the price if they lost their clergyman.

Eighteen years of the official non-existence of the Greek Catholic Church is a period of one human generation, but it has affected all living generations and both Catholic rites. Figuratively speaking, an unprecedented and violent intervention has tested the Catholic Church on both banks of the same river. Orthodoxification was supposed to make the imaginary river into an impassable border, but instead bridges, passageways and fords were created. The Roman Catholic Church virtually demonstrated universality and drew on the historical experience known from church history because it practically manifested itself as a mother who (1) has a great heart to love her children; (2) is guided by her conscience and acts freely; (3) has the fullness of means of God's grace, which is necessary for salvation, since the salvation of souls is its main mission; (4) is willing to help those who need help, especially if they are in need; (5) cared practically for the spiritual and sacramental life of Greek Catholics; (6) provided material support for Greek Catholic clergy (e.g. Roman Catholic priests gave Mass scholarships to Greek Catholic priests, the Saint Adalbert Society printed religious books for Greek Catholics). It was a special time, which called for a special measure. Catholicity and loyalty to the pope was put before the rite. On both sides it was a matter of conscience, which they felt equally. Certainly, it is absurd to view this time and situation as Latin ruthlessness, domination or even Latinisation – there were no such intentions; the Roman Catholic Church did only what it was obligated to do and did it gladly. This situation led to some confusion in inter-rite relations, which still persists today, but this is the result of the diabolical action of the totalitarian regime, the attack from outside that caused it. The Roman Catholic priests of the Košice diocese adhered to the will and guidance of their bishop, even at a time when Jozef Čársky († 1962) was no longer alive, and in many places, they sustained the Greek Catholics in their faith and practical Christian life. That is why in 1968 it was also possible to quickly as well as practically

⁵¹ Ján Hirka assumed the office of Ordinary on 23 April 1969, the same day the Action Committee was dissolved. VNUK, František: *Popustené putá [Loosened Bonds]*, p. 203.

consolidate and restore the Greek Catholic parishes. While on the Greek Catholic part, we speak of martyrdom, on the Roman Catholic part, we can also speak of heroism and sacrifice, which was not easy because of the state (anti-)church policy and the capacity constraints of the Roman Catholic clergy. However, divine providence prevailed over the enemies of the Catholic Church because instead of mutual estrangement, a closer bond was forged and brotherhood deepened, not only among the priests of the two rites, but also among the faithful. The Roman Catholic Church indirectly supported and encouraged the Greek Catholics through its own renewal process, which took place at the time of the Prague Spring and the Second Vatican Council: The Action Committee, which was formed in Prague, was instrumental in the end of the previously pro-state tendencies of the church because it contributed to the demise of the Peace Movement of Catholic Clergy; in the same spirit, the Action Committee, but regarding the Greek Catholics, was formed in Košice, on the premises of the Roman Catholic bishop's office and it played a part in the renewal of the Greek Catholic Church. This Action Committee was under the umbrella of the Work of Conciliar Renewal, which worked successfully in the Košice diocese.

The specific situation after the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church is captured by several authentic documents. Their substance was not so much the legitimate renewal of the Greek Catholic faithful and their return to the practice of the rite, but nationalisation, especially in the northern regions of eastern Slovakia. Probably at the beginning of July 1969, Bishop Hopko sent a letter to the Roman Catholic parish priest Štefan Koromház in Plavnica. On the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June) 1969, Bishop Vasil' Hopko's letter was read in the church during the Greek Catholic services in Hromoš (the seat of the Greek Catholic parish and at the same time a branch of the Roman Catholic parish of Plavnica). This and another letter led Koromház to write an extensive seven-page reply to Bishop Hopko. The reply is respectful but at the same time realistic, identifying several issues that arose after the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church and concerned inter-rite relations.

The relationships between Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics were very tempestuous in several places, but they were established by priests who were 'trying to find themselves and not Christ'. He saw this selfishness in impatience and materialism. In the 18 years of the ban of the Greek Catholic Church, the faithful of both rites created 'a very warm relationship', a *modus vivendi* based on understanding and unity:

'This has been buried in less than a whole year. Again, suspicions, distrust, even hostility followed. How the priests got along with each other not long ago, helped, encouraged, strengthened one another, and now, watching what is being done and said, I admit that I would be ashamed to look in the eyes of those many with whom I have maintained a brotherly relationship for so many years, and sought them out at least once in a while.' He continues, *'If we have begun as in the old ways, it is a pity so much suffering has been caused.'*

A personal passage is followed by an analysis of the origins of the unrest, which then tackles questions of culture, language and customs that are not related to religion, but to nationality. Customary law, which was placed above canon law, was misused for this nationalisation:

'Why then do you unlawfully demand that the sacrament of marriage in mixed ceremonies take place before the parish priest sponsae (of the bride) when the church law requires the celebration of the sacrament of marriage in various rites before the parish priest sponsi (of the groom). (...) Whoever is of the Greek or Roman rite is prescribed by ecclesiastical law. But who is Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Hungarian or Slovak is not stipulated by law; it is each person's own conviction. (...) Why, in a village where Slovak is spoken, does the parish priest preach in Ukrainian, even though they ask for sermons in Slovak? If missionaries want to win over someone in Japan for Christ, they first learn Japanese.' He continues with his own experience, *'When, after introducing the vernacular into the Roman rite, a dispute arose among the priests as to the merits of it, I asked the faithful at Sunday services, "Who is in favour of Latin? Raise your hands." No one raised their hands. Nor is Old Church Slavonic an exception. The spirit of Cyril and Methodius is to render the liturgy in an intelligible language. Cyril and Methodius brought the Greek rite, but not the Greek language. The Old Church Slavonic was modern a thousand years ago. Today it is just as intelligible as Latin or Greek. The Council directs us to introduce the language of the people.'* After analysing the liturgical reform in the Latin rite, the letter continues, *'There are Greek Catholics as well*

as Slovaks in Slovakia. Not only in Canada, but also at home, they wish for a Slovak bishop.' The letter ends with an observation that concerned both churches: *'The superiors are not role models. There are still obvious conflicts in the ordinariates. A large section of the clergy distrusts the superiors. The latter do not know, nor do they try to learn about the situation in the bishopric. They act arbitrarily without the cooperation of the clergy and people. Cars are only for trips. Though today in two or three days with fatherly love, he could run around the whole diocese. Let the people in the highest positions be the finest the diocese has. Freely ordained by the church in accordance with ecclesiastical laws. We reap what we sow.'*⁵²

The faithful of Hromoš shared a similar view, which they justified by their own historical testimony.⁵³ Bishop Vasil' Hopko himself was also aware of the problem of the advanced Slovakisation and the preference for Slovaks in the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church.⁵⁴

The restoration of the Greek Catholic Church in 1968 ushered in a new era of relations with the Roman Catholic Church. In many places Roman Catholic priests with the faithful spontaneously welcomed Greek Catholic priests returning to their parishes. Many Greek Catholic parish priests shortly asked to be allowed to hold their services in Roman Catholic churches, usually in accordance with pre-1950 customs. The agreement was always concluded by the Ordinaries of both churches after the parish priests in question had expressed their views. The Vicar Capitular of Košice, Štefan Onderko, dealt with these cases individually, but always reciprocally. He asked for the possibility to celebrate Mass in Greek Catholic churches in other places of the diocese. The priests were the key figures who influenced their parishioners in a positive or negative sense. On both sides, various cases of manipulation often occurred, escalating into unwanted village divisions. If a side failed to win over the church superiors, it used the pressure

⁵² AACass, Administratívne spisy 1969/1698 [Administrative Files 1969/1698]. (GR, 1968–1970, fasc. 20).

⁵³ AACass, Administratívne spisy 1969/1698 [Administrative Files 1969/1698]. (GR, 1968–1970, fasc. 20).

⁵⁴ Bujda, S. Jr.: *Náš zlatý muž. Rozhovor s o. Františkom Dancákom o bl. hieromučeníkovi Vasiľovi Hopkovi* [Our Golden Man. An Interview with Father František Dancák about Blessed Hieromartyr Vasil' Hopko]. Uzhhorod: RIK-U, 2017, pp. 70-71.

of state's party authorities when complaining about its discontent. The frequent anonymous letters addressed to the church and state hierarchy played a particularly negative role. The Greek Catholics tried to acquire their status ('their rights', as Ján Hirka put it) following 1950, but eighteen years had passed in the meantime and a new generation of believers had grown up who, despite canonically belonging to the Greek Catholic Church, did not know its rites or discipline. Today, several uncritical writers blame the Roman Catholic Church for the so-called Latinisation, but according to the sources, this claim is absurd. Roman Catholics had no interest in absorbing other believers. It was a very unusual time, which in 1950 no one foresaw when or if it would ever end. The Greek Catholic priests themselves, who had been eliminated by the state in 1950, urged their parishioners at that time to remain faithful to the pope and only the Roman Catholic Church was the guarantee of catholicity. There was a lack of sensitivity on the Greek Catholic part and the north of eastern Slovakia took on a nationalist dimension. After two years, the two Ordinaries decided that the inter-rite issues would be addressed on the spot by authorised experts. This meant a significant decrease of problems as objective information was almost immediately obtained and presented in duplicates to both Ordinaries.

After the Second Vatican Council, there was a growing interest of the Roman Catholic Church in the Christian East at the highest level. The Congregation for Eastern Churches was created, which primarily covers all the Eastern Church communities. A key task was the codification of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, which was promulgated in 1990.

In Slovakia after 1989, the Greek Catholic Church went through a new stage of development. It includes external renewal, the constitution and improvement of the church organisation and the search for its own roots. For the time being, it appears to be a search for external signs (robes according to Orthodox patterns, building new churches and painting icons according to Greek patterns, all this for the purpose of distinguishing it from the previous development) and the establishing of its own authority based on the recent martyr past (beatification of martyrs from the period of communist unfreedom). As an added value, this has kindled interest in Eastern patrology, although the West did the same long ago (many of the lessons of the second reading in the Liturgy of the Hours, the breviary, come precisely from the Fathers of the Eastern Church). The authentic local Carpathian tradition, however, is still little explored and not that well established. These sources are systematically made scientifically accessible by the Ján Stanislav Institute of Slavistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. These

are, for example, the Uzhhorod Pseudozonar,⁵⁵ Statutes of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Bishopric,⁵⁶ Handbook of Church History,⁵⁷ and A Picture of Monastic Life. These point to the one and only spiritual lineage that was neither interrupted nor destroyed by the Uzhhorod Union, but it continued and advanced. History bears witness to the progress when the two communities, Eastern and Western, approached each other or touched as tangents. But this was only possible when they themselves fostered their own spiritual and cultural heritage, which they then used to enrich the other. In the end, the common tangents and overlaps of the interests of the Latin Church and the Western Church to the south of the Carpathians have always been mutually beneficial, leading to intellectual, religious and cultural enrichment, to the purification of the historical memory and to the revival of moral and spiritual values.

⁵⁵ Uzhorodský rukopisný Pseudozonar. Pravidlá mníšskeho a svetského života z prelomu 16.–17. storočia. Ужгородський рукописний Псевдозонар. Правила монашеской и светской жизни рубежа XVI–XVII вв [Uzhhorod Pseudozonar Manuscript. Rules of monastic and secular life from the turn of the 16th–17th centuries]. Monumenta byzantinoslavica et latina Slovaciae V. Žeňuch, P. (ed.). Bratislava – Moskva – Sofia – Košice: Veda, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied – Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV – Институт российской истории РАН – Кирило-методиевски научен център БАН – Slovenský komitét slavistov – Centrum spirituality Východ-Západ Michala Lacka Teologickej fakulty TU, 2018, 448 p.

⁵⁶ Diecézne štatúty Michala Manuela Olšavského z rokov 1752 – 1758 [Diocesan Statutes of Michael Manuel Olšavský from 1752 – 1758]. Zubko, P. – Žeňuch, P. (eds.). In: Slavica Slovaca 54 (2019), 3-4 (supplement), pp. 5-100.

⁵⁷ Žeňuch, P. – Zubko, P.: Michal Bradač – Rukoväť cirkevných dejín [Handbook of Church History]. Михаилъ Брадачъ – Спутомъ Истории церковныя. Monumenta Byzantino-Slavica et Latina Slovaciae VIII. Žeňuch, P. – Zubko, P. (eds.). Bratislava: Veda – Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2021, 464 p.

Conclusion

by Peter Žeňuch & Svetlana Šašerina

From the denominational aspect, linguistic and cultural diversification of Europe is a rewarding subject of study in several scientific disciplines. For a better knowledge and deeper understanding of the complexity of this diversity, it is not possible to limit oneself to a single research area of Slavistics. Comprehensiveness and interdisciplinarity are important because such a method of Slavist research is also one of the major contributions of axiological exploration of European culture and civilisation. The complementarity of scientific disciplines such as linguistics, culturology and historiography is nowadays a generally accepted and applied working method, therefore the uncovering and interpretation of axiological linguistic and cultural processes ranks among the major contributions of philological and historiographical research with such orientation. The description and characterisation of linguistic and cultural and denominational processes affects both the building and development of cultural and denominational awareness and the understanding of those identification processes that enable flexibility, mobility and identification of individuals and communities with particular value attitudes.

Interdisciplinary perspectives on the cultural vicissitudes of societal development through historical written sources is a scientifically challenging but distinctive methodological approach. Using historical sources, this approach allows to verify the validity of values, which offer a critical view on learning about a cultured society.

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Crisis as an Opportunity for the Revival of Values

Peter Žeňuch – Svetlana Šašerina, Eds.

First edition.

Place of publication: Bratislava

Date of publication: 2022

Number of pages: 96

ISBN 978-80-89489-52-7 (Print)

ISBN 978-80-89489-53-4 (e-Pub)

<https://doi.org/10.31577/9788089489534>

Translation: Mgr. Monika Križanovičová

Layout and typography: Bc. Martin Žeňuch