

TESTIMONIA THEOLOGICA

Open Access | Peer-Reviewed Journal

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Testimonia theologica – published by the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty of the Comenius University, Bartókova 8, 811 02 Bratislava, Slovakia (ELTF CU). The journal has been established on the basis of the decision of the Academic Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty of the Comenius University on October 17, 2007 and appears in at least two volumes a year. The last actualization of a volume is presented on the front page and the last actualization of a contribution is stated in the content of an edition.



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QR-Code/TESTIMONIA THEOLOGICA

ISSN 1337-6411
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TESTIMONIA THEOLOGICA

VOLUME XV | ISSUE 2 | 2021

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FUTURE SALVATION OF THE HISTORICAL ISRAEL AT THE PAROUSIA: INTERPRETATION OF ROM 11:25–32¹

Mgr. Daniela Stehlíková

Abstract:

The passage (Rom 11:25–32) by which Paul closes his discussion about the issue of Israel presents a lot of problems for any interpreter. It contains many ambiguous words and even more possibilities for their interpretations. One of the most prevailing interpretation of this passage among the contemporary scholars is the “future salvation of historical Israel at the parousia” also called “eschatological miracle”, supported by scholars such as James G. D. Dunn (1939 – 2020) or Ernst Käsemann (1906 – 1998). The aim of this paper is to survey the text of this passage to see where the possibilities for different interpretations are, briefly present some of them and then at the end present the important remarks of Beyond the New perspective on Paul and their contribution toward this passage.

Key words:

“All Israel”, Restoration, Hardening, Deliverer, Covenant

1 Introduction

One of the difficult problems that the early Christians had to cope with was the question of Israel. Her restoration was part of the vision in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, but he was executed at the initiative of the Jewish authorities and his status as the awaited Messiah that came to form the identity of the Christian movement remained a minority opinion within Judaism. This naturally provoked questions about the meaning of such situation. What does the rejection of Jesus as Messiah by the majority of the Jews reveal about the intentions of God? Are the Jews persisting in their rejection of Jesus still part of God’s plan? Apostle Paul, a former persecutor of the followers of Jesus, dealt with these questions extensively in chapters 9–11 of his Epistle to Rome. Paul was convinced that God did not abandon Israel (Rom 11:1). He hardened her, in order that the Gentiles could come in, and in the end, all Israel will be saved (Rom 11:26a). The passage Rom 11:25–32 can be taken as a climax of his argument on this issue, presenting Paul’s vision of the restoration of Israel.

¹ The present paper is a part of the research project “Pavol a obnova Izraela”, (“Paul and the restoration of Israel”) project GA UK n. 258218. The author is grateful to the Grant Agency of Charles University and to the Charles University, Protestant Theological Faculty for their support.

At the same time this short passage is full of ambiguities and lends itself to multiple interpretations. The first part of this paper attempts to interpret Rom 11:25–32 with the emphasis on the future salvation of the historical Israel at the *parousia*. Due to the many ambiguities in the text there is no full agreement between scholars about a variety of details. Therefore, the second part of the paper presents a brief overview of opinions and suggestions of various scholars that are held to the present time.

2 Interpretation of Rom 11:25–32 pointing to the future salvation of historical Israel at the *parousia*

This passage is the climax of a larger part of Romans (chapters 9–11), where Paul deals with the problem of Israel.² In this passage Paul presents his hope for the salvation of Israel. In the preceding passage Paul uses the image of an olive tree and of grafting and cutting off the branches (Rom 11:16–24) and follows it with a *hymn* (Rom 11:33–36). The structure of the text is simple: The disclosure of the mystery (v. 25–26a), proof from the Scripture (v. 26b–27) and its theological explanation (v. 28–32).

2.1 The Disclosure of the mystery: v. 25–26a

Paul addresses this passage to the Gentile Christians in Rome (Rom 11:13). He attaches special importance to the words he is going to say. His purpose for writing this text is to prevent the temptation of Gentile Christians in Rome to be “wise in their own conceits”, to avoid relying on their own (human) wisdom (see Rom 11: 20; Rom 12:16; 1 Cor 4:10; 2 Cor 11:19). Paul presents “a mystery” that was revealed to him. The background for his presentation is to be sought in the Jewish apocalyptic rather than in the Graeco-Roman mystery cults.³ It involves a revelation of a divine secret by a divine agency. The basic matrix for this presentation is the salvation history and its climax, fulfilling God’s purpose for his people. Paul presents it as an eschatological mystery, a revelation concerning the events of the end of time. It concerns the Jews and the Gentiles alike, God’s purpose to include the

² This passage is a continuation and a brief summary of Paul’s thoughts developed in Rom 9–11 and therefore I do not see a reason to suspect, that the verses 25–27 could be a later interpolation, as Ch. Plag assumed. See Christoph Plag, *Israels Wege zum Heil: eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9 bis 11* (Stuttgart: Calver Verlag, 1969).

³ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, Word biblical commentary 38 (Waco: Word Books, 1988), 678.

Gentiles with the Jews as his people (see Rom 16:25–26), or possibly the mystery could be Christ, in whom Jews and Gentiles are united.⁴

Paul presents himself as a mediator, an apocalyptic. It is a conventional part of the apocalyptic texts that the revelation of a mystery comes in response to some kind of anguish or cry. Here the mystery provides the answer to Paul's anguishing cry expressed in Rom 9:1–3 and 10:1.⁵ What was the means by which Paul gained the insights into this mystery? Was it his spiritual interpretation of the Scripture, or the moment of his conversion, or something else? Scholars opinions differ about this.

Another problem is the translation concerning the phrase ἀπὸ μέρους. Is it a "partial hardening" or blindness that has come over Israel or "part of the people" suffer the hardening? Dunn takes the ἀπὸ μέρους adverbially with the word πῶρως rather than with the words τῷ Ἰσραὴλ and translates "partial hardening" has come over Israel. According to him Paul considers himself as a part of a single people and Israel as a unified whole.⁶ Cranfield is convinced that the phrase ἀπὸ μέρους modifies the word γέγονεν and so it refers to the fact that not all Jews were hardened and he translates "that hardening has affected part of Israel" (see Rom 11:5, 7, 17).⁷ And similarly Jewett agrees that hardening has come upon a part of Israel because in the image of the olive tree (Rom 11:16–24), only some of the branches of Israel had been cut off.⁸ Paul does not have a clear answer on the final events, their strict sequence or how final salvation of Israel is related to the coming of "the deliverer from Zion", that was mainly interpreted as *parousia* of Christ. He assures his readers that God foreknew all events. The "full number" of Gentiles is presumably an equivalent to that of Israel in Rom 11:12. The equivalence is probably not in the exact number of both groups, but rather expresses the lack of importance attributed towards their ethnic origin.⁹ But certainly the "full number" of Gentiles is something larger than Paul's planned evangelization of the pagans in Spain. Paul does not specify what he means by the "coming into". It may refer to entering "the kingdom" or "life" along the lines of Jesus' tradition or, more specifically to the metaphor

⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, 678.

⁵ Dunn, *Romans*, 679.

⁶ Dunn, *Romans*, 679.

⁷ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: Clark, 1975), 575.

⁸ Robert Jewett, Roy D. Kotansky, and Eldon Jay Epp, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 700.

⁹ Dunn, *Romans*, 680.

of the branches that have been “grafted in”. The motif of the coming of Gentiles to Zion (see Isa 2:2–4; 25:6–8; Mic 4:1–3; Zech 8:20–23, Tob 13:13) was well-known. “Coming into” therefore could be used by Paul as transforming the traditional Jewish expectation that God’s final acceptance of the Gentiles would be a physical pilgrimage of Gentiles to Jerusalem.¹⁰ Paul was convinced that the conversion of the Gentiles, or maybe better word for it would be their turning to the one God, will provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom 10:19; 11:11.14).

Paul says that in that manner all Israel shall be saved. The phrase καὶ οὕτως can have modal but also temporal meaning. And who is “all Israel”? Käsemann claims that “all Israel” is a fixed Jewish formula that designates the people „which establishes the individuality of its members [...] as a fellowship of the elect.”¹¹ “All Israel” then means most likely Israel as a whole, but not necessarily every individual member.¹² Cranfield presents four main interpretations of the phrase “all Israel”: 1) all the elect of Jews and Gentiles; 2) all the elect belonging to the nation of Israel; 3) the whole nation Israel, including every member; 4) the whole nation Israel, but not necessarily every individual member.¹³ The most likely interpretation is the last one if compared to the use of “all Israel” in the Old Testament (see 1 Sam 7:5; 25:1; 1 Kgs 12:1; 2 Chr 12:1; Dan 9:11). The phrase “all Israel” in the Old Testament is always used for the historic, ethnic Israel.¹⁴ Paul uses the phrase in the ethnic sense too and with the eschatological perspective he thinks of all Israel diachronically (considering every generation).¹⁵ “All” is a broad characterization of Israel in contrast with the “remnant” (11:15) and “some” (11:17). “All Israel” is parallel to the “full number” of the Gentiles “coming in” (11:25). Restoration of Israel will be a consequence of the Gentiles “entering into”.

2.2 Proof from the Scripture: v. 26b–27

In quoting Isa 59:20 Paul modifies the reading ἕνεκεν Σιων (“for the sake of Zion”) to ἐκ Σιῶν (“from Zion”). Paul could base this modification on Ps 14:7, 53:7 or Isa 2:3. Most likely he makes the change because of his mostly Gentile Christian audience and his thesis that there

¹⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 680.

¹¹ Ernst Käsemann and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Commentary on Romans*, 1st paperback ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 702.

¹² On the contrary, Jewett disputes that the word πᾶς (all) does not allow any exceptions. Jewett, Kotansky, and Epp, *Romans*, 702.

¹³ Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 576.

¹⁴ Fitzmyer, *Romans*. 623. Fitzmyer notes that the phrase “all Israel” occurs 148 times in the OT and always designates historic, ethnic Israel, usually in the synchronic sense of the generations of Israel contemporary with the author, but in Mal 3:22 it has a diachronic sense, “all Israel of every generation.”

¹⁵ The eschatological perspective is also signaled by the verb σωθήσεται in the future tense.

is no distinction between Jews and Greeks.¹⁶ In the original sense of the quotation “the deliverer” to come was probably a reference to Yahweh himself. What does it mean for Paul? According to Dunn it is Christ in his *parousia* (see 1 Thes 1:10). Behind the words “from Zion”, Paul could see Christ’s eschatological appearance in Jerusalem (see 2 Thes 2:4.8), or his coming from the heavenly Jerusalem (see Gal 4:26).¹⁷ Similarly, Käsemann sees here a precondition of the *parousia*. For him, the reference is “to the return of the exalted Christ from heavenly Jerusalem of Gal 4:26”.¹⁸ Both Dunn and Käsemann relate the salvation of all Israel to his conversion. Käsemann explains his conviction as follows: “Whereas Christianity is already living in the new covenant, Israel will begin to do so only at the *parousia*, and it will do it through the same Giver, Christ, and with the related gift (see Jub. 22:14f.) of forgiveness of sins. Only the time, not the salvation, is different.”¹⁹ Fitzmyer is convinced, that Paul interprets the quotation christologically but without reference to Christ’s *parousia*. He thinks that not even the word ἥξει that is indicative future active does necessarily imply the *parousia*. He argues that in the chapters 9–11 there is no reference to *parousia* and this text could be taken as a *futurum propheticum* already being fulfilled (see 9:33, 11:28 with 15:8).²⁰ The deliverer will “turn away the ungodliness”, the impiety. This impiety is condemned in Rom 1:18 as a characteristic of pagans. In Jewett’s interpretation Israel’s impiety and sins consist in zealous hostility against the gospel.²¹ “Turning the ungodliness from Jacob”, from the people of Israel, indicates the nature of the deliverance.

In the next verse (27), Paul connects the quote from Isa 59:21 with Isa 27:9. “The covenant” is usually seen as a reference to the renewed or the more effective “new covenant” promised in Jer 31:31 (with possible allusion to Ezek 36:27 or 1 Cor 11:25). Paul’s change of the singular “his sin” to the plural “their sins” in the quotation could refer to particular deeds against the gospel and its messengers and not to the sins in general (see 1Thess 2:15–16). Paul presents his conviction of the divine salvation plan in Jewish terms, expressing his hope in theological rather than christological language. Forgiveness of sins was in Jewish thought connected with the renewal of covenant (Jer 31:31–34; Jub 22:14–15). Israel’s zeal, its clinging

¹⁶ Jewett, Kotansky, and Epp, *Romans*, 703.

¹⁷ Dunn, *Romans*, 682.

¹⁸ Käsemann and Bromiley, *Commentary on Romans*, 314.

¹⁹ Käsemann and Bromiley, *Commentary on Romans*, 314.

²⁰ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 33 (New York (N.Y.): Doubleday, 1993), 625.

²¹ Jewett, Kotansky, and Epp, *Romans*, 704.

to its own piety (Rom 10, 1–4) will be overcome by the deliverer and Israel's sins will be forgiven before the covenant will be restored.²² Dunn assumes that by the transposition of the hope of forgiveness from the cultic and ritual form to the eschatological sphere Paul emphasizes that the salvation is not based on national or ethnic foundations but on grace and faith.²³ Paul presents the "mystery" as a solution to the issue of the reception of the gospel.

2.3 Theological explanation of the mystery: v. 28–32

Verse 28 is a rhetorical parallelism. God has chosen Israel freely and graciously. They were his beloved because of his promises and blessings to their fathers, they were the seed of Abraham. But on the other side, "the false evaluation of that inheritance sets them in opposition to God."²⁴ What puts Israel into enmity with God is their rejection of the gospel.²⁵ In Paul's formulation the gospel and the election of Israel stand in opposition. Cranfield translates that "as regards the progress of the gospel they are enemies for your sake."²⁶ For him, the Jews are certainly beloved with regard to the gospel message and its content. They are enemies with regard to the progress of the gospel in the world, which means "surely, the actual accomplishment in the ministry, passion and resurrection of Jesus of the events which are the basis of the gospel message, the subsequent preaching by the Church, the acceptance or rejection of the message by man."²⁷ The parallelism "on account of fathers" gives no ground for the doctrine of merits as the promise to the fathers has a gracious character, enabling Paul to consider "even enemies as beloved".²⁸ Israel's enmity "regarding the gospel" benefits the Gentiles, (Rom 11:28 δι' ὑμᾶς), so that they can also share in the salvation promised to Israel.

Paul deduces from the Jewish hope that the dispersed Israel, and fallen into error, will be in the last days returned to the promised land and restored to righteousness. He emphasizes irrevocability God's purpose of salvation and underlines God's faithfulness. By the "gifts" (χαρίσματα), Paul refers to the gifts listed in Rom 9:4–5 and by the "call" (κλήσις)

²² Jewett, Kotansky, and Epp, *Romans*, 706.

²³ Dunn, *Romans*, 684.

²⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, 685.

²⁵ A. Katherine Grieb notes that Israel is described as enemies of the gospel and not as enemies of God as NRSV, RSV, and many others translate on Rom 11:28. They are enemies for your sake. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans*, 1st edition. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 111.

²⁶ Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 572.

²⁷ Charles E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 284.

²⁸ Dunn, *Romans*, 685.

he refers to the promise (Rom 9:8) and election (Rom 9:11) of Israel. It is also possible to understand these words as a *hendiadys* in the sense of “benefits of calling” or to take “calling” as one of the most important gifts.²⁹ The term κλήσις alludes to the verb καλέω and Paul has most likely in mind the specific election of Israel by God (in the previous verse mentioned as ἐκλογή in particular the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1–2) and his seed through Isaac (Rom 9:6–13).³⁰ In this respect verse 28 is related to Rom 11:1 and gives a resolute answer to the question of abandoning Israel by pointing to God’s irrevocable gifts and call. At the same time ἡ κλήσις could also be a more general reference to the calling of Jews and Gentiles (see Phil 3:14).

Verses 30–31 form a skillful chiasmus with six protases and six apodoses that fit together and with the dative phrase (τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἔλεει) that can be connected to either ἠπειθήσαν or ἐλεθῶσιν which leads to different meanings.³¹ These verses work with a division of two epochs (Adam’s and Christ’s), which is signaled by the placement of the words ποτε and νῦν. Both epochs, the time of disobedience and the time of divine mercy, include Israel. The “now-time” is divided into two phases: mercy to Gentiles alongside the disobedience of Jews and mercy to Jews. Disobedience of Jews as a manifestation and a result of disbelief makes possible the salvation of Gentiles. Dunn interprets Israel in the following way: “Israel would be saved being made jealous at the sight of Gentiles enjoying what had been their privileges (9:4–5) and so provoked into abandoning their unbelief in Jesus their Messiah and into acceptance of the gospel (1:16).”³²

The last verse of the passage (v. 32) presents a conclusion not only for the two previous ones, but also for the chapters 9–11. It takes the themes of human disobedience ἀπειθία and divine mercy ἔλεος into relation. God has allowed people to use their freedom and hardened them (see Rom 11:7) which brings about their imprisonment³³ in their own disobedience

²⁹ Jewett, Kotansky, and Epp, *Romans*, 708.

³⁰ Jewett, Kotansky, and Epp, *Romans*, 708.

³¹ For a general discussion of these possibilities see: Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 285–287; for more detail see: Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 582–586. Assigning of this dative phrase leads to different interpretations of Israel’s disobedience. When the words τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἔλεει are related to the ἠπειθήσαν it could mean for example: because of or as a result of the mercy shown to Gentiles; for the sake of mercy shown to Gentiles; in the interest of the mercy shown to Gentiles etc. When the words τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἔλεει are related to the ἐλεθῶσιν the translations could be that they have been now disobedient, „in order that they too may now receive mercy by the mercy shown to you”. Taking τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἔλεει is taken with ἐλεθῶσιν makes for an exact correspondence between the two clauses in the *prothesis* and *apodosis*, with the structure 3:3 and 3:3.

³² Dunn, *Romans*, 691.

³³ God has imprisoned συνέκλεισεν all people τοὺς πάντας. The other variations are τὰ πάντα (P^{46vid} D* latt) or πάντα (F G; Ir) all (things) or everything (see Ga 3:22). See: Eberhard Nestle et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28. rev. Aufl. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

(ἀπειθεία) and the only possibility for escape is God's mercy ἔλεος.³⁴ In a way this verse sums up Paul's main argument in the whole letter: God's wrath and handing over of all to their own free choices, God's mercy to the disobedient, mercy and blessing extended from Israel to all the nations, God's hardening directed to of the salvation of all, and faithfulness of God to all (Gentiles as well as Jews).³⁵ Both groups, Jews and Gentiles, were unfaithful to God, but God used this unfaithfulness for showing his mercy to all.

3 A short overview of different interpretations

We have seen that our passage poses several questions where an interpreter must make a choice. Who is Israel? What does the phrase "all Israel" mean? What does the "full number" of Gentiles mean? Who is the deliverer? By whom is Israel going to be saved? How does the deliverer come? What is Israel's ungodliness? Does Paul think that there is any special way for the salvation of Israel? Is the acceptance of the gospel and Jesus Christ an inevitable condition for their salvation?

There is a "theological" type of interpretation. The verb σωθήσεται "will be saved" is a divine passive, so Israel will be saved by God. Israel would be delivered by its partial hardening by the Deliverer, who is God (Yahweh) himself. This is independent of any acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah or a conversion to the gospel. This interpretation is based on the everlasting covenant that God has made with Israel. One of the arguments for this interpretation is that in the whole part from Rom 10:18 (where Paul is pondering the future of Israel) to the doxology of Rom 11:33–36, there is no mention of Jesus Christ. This interpretation is held by Stendahl, Getty, Lapide, Stuhlmacher.³⁶ Stendahl prefers to call his position God's "traffic plan"³⁷, remarking that God may change his plan, or that his plan can differ from what we are expecting.

Another interpretation is the "Christological" one. According to it the salvation of Israel cannot be apart from Christ who is the "deliverer". Fitzmyer distinguishes two subtypes of this interpretation: In the first one the salvation is related to the *parousia* of Christ

³⁴ Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 589.

³⁵ Dunn, *Romans*, 696.

³⁶ Zoccali adds here Gaston, Gager and Stowers. See: Christopher Zoccali, "'And so All Israel Will Be Saved': Competing Interpretations of Romans 11.26 in Pauline Scholarship*," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30.3 (2008): 297., <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X07088405>.

³⁷ Krister Stendahl and Jaroslav Pelikan, *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 7.

and the covenant is taken as a reference to Jer 31:33. Israel will be saved at the *parousia* without turning to the gospel. This means a “Sonderweg” (a special way) for Israel through the parousiac Christ. Among the proponents of this interpretation Fitzmyer counts Mussner, Gager, Mayer, Jocz. The second sub-type of this Christological interpretation insists that faith in Jesus Christ is indispensable for all human beings, both Gentiles and Jews also. For this interpretation it is of much more importance that the Letter to Romans as a whole and Paul’s gospel in general is addressed to all, Jews and Gentiles. Christ is the deliverer of Israel and the covenant (of Jer 31:33) is realized in Christ and not postponed to *parousia*. The proponents of this interpretation see nothing in the passage that would refer to *parousia*.³⁸ Fitzmyer places here scholars like Hvalvik, Campbell, Davies, Dahl, Hübner.

Apart from these general types there are other individual interpretations that are based on various other exegetical decisions. Quite early there appears to be the understanding that Israel for Paul consisted of Jews and Gentiles believing in Christ, or, to put it succinctly, that Paul substituted the church for Israel. This approach can be also called “ecclesiological”, or “replacement theology”. The possible basis for it could be Paul’s expression “Israel of God” in Gal 6, 16, recognized by many scholars as a reference to Jews and Gentiles “in Christ”, or some other Paul’s redefinitions (e.g., circumcision, “seed of Abraham”). The proponents of this interpretation are Calvin, Barth, and others. Against it there is the fact that in Romans there is no such redefinition of Israel³⁹. In our passage Paul rather puts Gentiles and Jews into contrast so it seems more probable that at least in this place Israel means the historical nation.

Another position reckons with an “eschatological miracle”: the future salvation of the historical Israel at *parousia* is envisioned in the same or similar manner as Paul’s conversion, i.e. through a direct revelation of Christ. In that way Israel will come to faith in him, so this is not a “Sonderweg”. This interpretation is held by e.g., Käsemann, Dunn, Jewett. “Total national elect”⁴⁰ is an interpretation that refers to the „complete number of the elect from the historical/empirical nation“. It was given this name by one of its proponents, Zoccali.

³⁸ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 620.

³⁹ Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul’s Letters*, First Edition. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 256.

⁴⁰ Christopher Zoccali, “‘And so All Israel Will Be Saved’: Competing Interpretations of Romans 11.26 in Pauline Scholarship*,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30.3 (2008): 289–318, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X07088405>.

An interesting interpretation is proposed by Nanos regarding the Roman mission. Paul's intention is to bring Romans back to the two-step pattern, beginning first with the restoration of Israel and then turning to Gentiles. Gentiles are saved before the second part of Israel that has been hardened. Israel would not be jealous of Gentiles being saved, but of Paul's ministry, watching in that ministry the eschatological privilege of Israel to be the light to the Gentiles is being fulfilled. According to Nanos the deliverer does not need to be interpreted christologically.⁴¹ I will pay closer attention to this interpretation in the next part.

4 Beyond the New Perspective on Paul and their remarks

The article could end with these abovementioned interpretations⁴² and the proponents of the traditional interpretations would be somehow comfortable. But what if we are changing the perspectives and continue with the newest one? Scholars, united in the platform Beyond the New Perspective on Paul, emphasize that Letter to Romans should be interpreted as Paul's words addressed to Non-Jews⁴³ and they are also against the thoughts that this letter is Paul's universalistic theological teaching. That Paul's addressees are Non-Jews is supported by various facts, that in the introduction Paul is depicting himself as an apostle of the Nations, in a dedication of the letter (Rom 1:5), in an apology (Rom 1:13), in chapters 9–11 (see 11:13) and in 15:14–19.⁴⁴ Paul's intention is to solve a tense situation between Non-Jews and Jewish cobelievers and gain their support for his Spanish mission project.⁴⁵

Ábel in his study "The Role of Israel Concerning the Gentiles in the Context of Romans 11:25–27," describes different treatments of the non-Jewish nations in Jewish eschatological traditions and notions and concludes that

⁴¹ Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, 238–288.

⁴² Except the one proposed by Nanos, that one is of the new interpretations.

⁴³ František Ábel, *List apoštola Pavla Rimanom: čítanie, exegéza a výklad listu v kontexte judaizmu obdobia druhého chrámu. Prvá časť, Prolegomena* (Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, Evanjelická bohoslovecká fakulta, 2021), 38. Ábel stands with Campbell (*Nations*) and Das (*Solving the Romans Debate*) in the issue of the addressee, that they were exclusively non-Jewish addressees, while Stenschke, Jewett, Wolter claims that Letter to Romans is addressed to the communities of Jesus-believers in Rome, Jewish as well as Gentile (see 1:7). See: František Ábel, "Elijah in the Message of Paul the Apostle. Typology of the Elijah Figure in Paul's Missionary Zeal for the Gospel" *Studia Biblica Slovaca* 13 (2/2021): 266–295. For interpreting of our place, (Rom 9–11), we can be more open, since our passage is directed to Gentiles in Christ and we do not have to be so strict about the rest of the letter considering the potential addressee or listeners. Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ábel, *List apoštola Pavla Rimanom*, 151.

⁴⁵ Ábel, *List apoštola Pavla Rimanom*, 151.

“what is novel, and to a considerable extent even contradictory to all known Jewish notions about the eschatological restoration of Israel, is Paul’s assertion that the salvation of Gentiles is not a side effect or consequence of Israel’s redemption – which was to happen first – but quite the opposite. As he [Paul] words it, first the full number of the Gentiles will come in, and only then, and in such a manner, will all Israel be saved.”⁴⁶

4.1 The question of identity

We have here some points that are crucial for our survey. One of them is the question of identity, Jewish as well as non-Jewish. Previous studies weren’t so sufficient in defining the meaning of the terms depicting the identity of Israel, all Israel, remnant, etc. Although not all scholars within the new perspective on Paul have the same view, the majority of them are in agreement about the identity terms used in our text. Gentiles remains gentiles. Paul envisages the continued existence of the identity of Gentiles in Christ that remain Gentiles of a special sort, “since they have adopted Jewish attributes, meaning that they have acquired a new identity by a new manner of life.”⁴⁷ Paula Fredriksen depicts this new identity brilliantly:

“Paul’s gospel itself demanded a radical degree of ‘Judaizing.’ Paul absolutely insisted that his gentiles-in-Christ assume the two uniquely *Jewish* behaviours that were the most socially conspicuous in a diaspora setting. These people were to make an exclusive commitment to the Jewish god, and they were to desist, absolutely, from making offerings before images of their native gods. Paul’s ex-pagan pagans, in short, were to kept (at least) the first two of Sinai’s Ten Commandments: No other gods, and no idols.”⁴⁸

Through reception of spirit they have become the adopted sons thanks to Christ. The nations do not join the Israel and those stumbling Jews are still Israel. As Ábel points out:

“Their temporary unbelief should be considered rather in the context of Jewish Deuteronomic theology, not as their dismissing of the promises. They remain in covenantal standing, but, as Mark Nanos notes, “in need of ‘safe-keeping’: if

⁴⁶ František Ábel, “The Role of Israel Concerning the Gentiles in the Context of Romans 11:25–27,” In: *Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting. From the First to the Seventh Century*. (2020), https://www.academia.edu/44643216/The_Role_of_Israel_Concerning_the_Gentiles_in_the_Context_of_Romans_11_25_27. 26–53.

⁴⁷ Ábel, “The Role of Israel Concerning the Gentiles in the Context of Romans 11”, 26–53.

⁴⁸ Paula Fredriksen, *God Is Jewish, but Gentiles Don’t Have to Be: Ethnicity and Eschatology in Paul’s Gospel*. in *The Message of Paul the Apostle within Second Temple Judaism*, ed. František Ábel (Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2020), 3–20. Then she continues to explain: “these uncircumcised pneumatic ex-pagan gentiles remain distinct *kata sarka* from ethnic Israel. Pneumatic lineage is not fleshly – and that is the point. Gentile *adelphoi*, now adopted, are also sons of Abraham. As such, they are now enabled through spirit to fulfill Israel’s laws (Rom 13:8–10; see Gal 5;14–18; 1 Cor 7:20). But adopted *adelphoi* are still not Israel.” *Ibid.*

punished, however severely, this would represent discipline according to covenantal (family) terms *as Israel*, which is not the same as being dismissed from standing Israel."⁴⁹

"All Israel" means all twelve tribes, itself an eschatological idea. And in the case of Gentiles, "Paul's language here echoes that of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, with its traditional count of seventy nations, the global human census of seventy kinship groups distinguished by family, language, land and peoples."⁵⁰ The full number of Gentiles most probably include Paul's prospective Hispanic converts and the financial collection has primarily a theological significance proving the real character of a community between Gentile nations in Christ and Israel. By giving this monetary gift Gentiles are participating in the worship of the God of Israel.⁵¹ Ehrensperger even says that Paul does not have a necessity to define the identity of "all Israel" (which indicates clarity on Paul's side) and he creates a vacant space that is directed to God's sovereignty and the wisdom.⁵² Here I strongly agree with Ehrensperger. Moreover, my hypothesis, since Paul is so great at playing with words, images, even the emotions, making conundrums that are throughout the whole letter, is that Paul could have made this intentionally, and deliberately left these places around the mystery foggy, although I agree with the majority of scholars from *The Beyond the New Perspective on Paul* that when Paul is talking about Israel he has the Jewish people in mind.

4.2 Nanos and his new exegetical approach

Here I would like to briefly examine again the perspective and exegetical notes of Mark Nanos. He is a proponent of the New perspective on Paul within Judaism and interprets Paul's texts within Judaism. He notices that in Rom 11:25–26 Paul uses a language that is similar to planting.

According to Nanos, Paul writes in Rom 11:25 about the time "when the "fullness [πλήρωμα]" of the nations will arrive, which is just the way that full blooming or fruitfulness is described for plants" and in Rom 11:26 "the ultimate goal is described as the "salvation [σωθήσεται]" of all Israel, in metaphorical plant terms, its being "kept/made safe,"

⁴⁹ František Ábel, "Elijah in the Message of Paul the Apostle. Typology of the Elijah Figure in Paul's Missionary Zeal for the Gospel" *Studia Biblica Slovaca* 13 (2/2021): 266–295.

⁵⁰ Fredriksen, "God Is Jewish, but Gentiles Don't Have to Be: Ethnicity and Eschatology in Paul's Gospel" in *The Message of Paul the Apostle within Second Temple Judaism*, ed. František Ábel, 3–20.

⁵¹ Ábel, "The Role of Israel Concerning the Gentiles in the Context of Romans 11", 26–53.

⁵² Kathy Ehrensperger, *Searching Paul*, 1st ed., Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 334.

“protected,” “healed” or “restored”.⁵³ His interpretation of Rom 11:25–26 follows the image of olive tree and although it seems to contradict this metaphor, according to him, Paul is instructive in the image of the olive tree by not explaining or naming what is the trunk or branches or the tree, but only the branches. Paul’s aim with the use of this image of olive tree is not to create a picture of Israel or the church, but rather „to explain the unusual and precarious place of the Christ-following non-Jews among the Israelites, so that they will humbly understand their own role is by God’s design to live on behalf of all Israel’s restoration, not to (mis)judge those Israelites in a temporary state of suffering.”⁵⁴ These Israelites have been temporarily “enemied”, that is according to Nanos “alienated” or “estranged” by God for the sake of the non-Israelites. If part of the Israel is suffering vicariously “for your (nations) sake” that ought to induce empathy⁵⁵. What is really interesting is that Paul does not use the word for hardening Pharaoh’s heart (σκληρός), but instead he chooses the word πώρωσις, which is usually used as a medical term referring to (a) callus.⁵⁶ Callus involves hardening, but in this case it is for a positive purpose, since calluses promotes healing. Callus is used also positively in planting terminology.

Nanos also suggests a literal translation of Rom 11:25–26 in this way:

“(25) For I do not want you to be unperceptive regarding this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you would not be mindful (only) for yourselves, that a callus temporarily has formed for Israel, until (the time) when the fullness of the nations should commence, (26) and in this way (or: and then) all Israel will be restored [or: made safe], just as it was written.”⁵⁷

I found Mark Nanos’ perspective really stimulating. He harmonizes and explains the discrepancies between the series of metaphors and finds new interconnections. His connection to botanical terminology seems excellent. Concerning his literal translation, which is really precise and new, I still need to ask whether the nuances presented in his literal translation of this passage are not attainable and visible in the works of scholars classified as traditional perspectives.

⁵³ Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism: Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos, Vol. 2* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018), 194.

⁵⁴ Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism*, 163.

⁵⁵ Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism*, 196.

⁵⁶ Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism*, 192.

⁵⁷ Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism*, 176.

5 Conclusion

I have presented the interpretation of Rom 11:25–32 pointing to the salvation of historical Israel at the *parousia*. As it can be seen the views of the scholars differ because of Paul's unclear vision and numerous ambiguities in this text. In addition to the overview of a couple of other positions of various scholars that mingle and compete with each other, I have shortly presented views and remarks of The Beyond the New Perspective on Paul with a focus on the new exegetical approach by Mark Nanos, surveying the plant terminology and the discrepancies between Paul's multiple metaphors. The aim of this contribution was to examine Paul's passage of Rom 11:25–32 and present the prevalent interpretations. While traditional perspectives gave us a foundation, the newest one is oriented on the accuracy of concrete terms and I would say that they better equipped to interpret the identity of Israel and their present state and restoration in Rom 9–11.

I strongly agree with the scholars from Beyond the New perspective on Paul that when Paul is talking about Israel, he has the Jewish people in his mind. The metaphor of the olive tree, wonderfully analyzed by Mark Nanos is not about Israel, but rather God's people. I would say that Romans, or at least Rom 9–11, is addressed to non-Jewish "Christians". I agree with some of the proponents that there is still a possibility that others, such as Jewish "Christians", could get to hear Paul's letter. However, I think that Paul would have been aware of this possibility. Moreover, the ambivalence in which Paul is using the terms around Israel, and the present state and future restoration is striking. Therefore, I think that Paul used his words in this way intentionally.

Paul confirms that Israel's stumble was in God's plan or in God's purpose for the world. Divine control is overall. God's faithfulness to Israel would be demonstrated in the end. And not only to Israel, but to all. Both Gentiles and Jews have the same position – disobedience and both have the same solution from that disobedience – divine mercy. Paul ends up the present passage with great doxology on God's wisdom and knowledge of God, that underlines the majesty of God who has mercy.

The interconnection of multiple themes from the whole letter makes this passage an integral part of Paul's theology and very important for interpreting Paul. Some scholars even consider this passage as not only the climax of the chapters 9–11 but as a climax of the whole letter. By inquiring into a different interpretation we can see how often interpreters are influenced by their past or present time and what these distinctions are.

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[Published online January 30, 2024]



BECOMING LIKE CHRIST: THE CHALCEDONIAN LUTHER AND HOLINESS

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Abstract:

Lutheran Theology is commonly accused of having a “weak” doctrine of sanctification, resting primarily on the doctrine of justification by grace through faith apart from works of the Law. Recent attempts at rehabilitating a properly Lutheran doctrine of sanctification attempt to restore an understanding of holiness as personal and progressive without compromising a Lutheran commitment to the primacy of justification. Such explorations of a properly Lutheran doctrine of holiness cannot be divorced from a robust Christology, recognizing Christ’s own person as the nexus where human nature and divine holiness coalesce. This paper will explore Luther as a Chalcedonian theologian, and his use of Christological language to speak intelligibly about human sanctification.

Key words:

Luther, Sanctification, Holiness, Chalcedon, *Communicatio Idiomatum*, Relationship

Introduction

It has been something of increasing interest to explore what a truly Lutheran doctrine of holiness looks like. In Lutheranism, justification of course predominates sanctification, and the second use of the Law over the third. Good works and sanctification always must be taught in view of justification, in view of what God has done *for us*. Contemporary Lutherans seem almost afraid of the word “sanctification” or of the concept of the third use of the Law. It is feared that any talk of progress in the Christian life leads into Evangelicalism, Reformed Theology, or Pietism. Preaching preferably utilizes a Law-Gospel paradigm without any exhortation unto good works. For such a reason Lutherans have historically been vulnerable to accusations of antinomianism. A realistically dismal anthropology seemingly suggests that everything humans do being sin, there is no real impetus for good works.

Perhaps much of the trepidation among Lutheran theologians to speak boldly about holiness arises from the fear that to speak of holiness is to speak about human work and thus deemphasize the work of God. Luther himself has been vulnerable to critique that his theology is too dependent on satiating the human conscience. Such critique seems to arise out of disdain for Enlightenment individualism, and hinges on Luther’s own tormented

conversion experience. In his controversial 1966 book *Das Ich im Glauben bei Martin Luther: Der Ursprung der Anthropozentrischen Religion*,¹ Paul Hacker interpreted Luther's concept of faith "seizing" salvation as something ego-driven.¹ For Hacker, Luther understands salvation as resulting from one's individual belief, an exercise which begins and returns to the self. Such, as his subtitle pithily asserts, establishes an anthropocentric religion. While this interpretation is far from Luther's intent, one may simultaneously safely say that Luther's religion is indeed anthropocentric; it just happens that ὁ ἄνθρωπος at the center of Luther's religion is also ὁ Θεός.

This paper will explore some ways in which Luther's Christological convictions regarding the true and perfect union of God and humanity in Christ give him a framework within which to speak about human holiness.

Luther's Christology

That Luther's theology rests on the integrity of the God-Man, and that he is worth taking seriously as a Chalcedonian theologian, is not lost on other critics of Luther, notable among them, Yves Congar. Likewise writing on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, Congar suggested that Luther's Christology presents Christ's humanity as merely a "location" for God to effect salvation. He writes, "Luther tends to see this humanity not as the cause of our salvation, but instead as a place and situation (*lieu et situation*) where 'God' alone operates salvation."²

Congar questions what exactly Luther considers the "contribution of the man Jesus in the work of salvation."³ Doing so, he seems to have the opposite concern of Hacker. If the value of the union of human and divine natures in Christ is, for example, entirely in its utility in the work of salvation, then the person and mission of Christ appear lopsided. Congar does not intend to open Luther up to accusations of Nestorianism, but rather to highlight what is perhaps an over-emphasis on the operation of God in Christ, at the expense of any mystery that as mediator Christ stands on the side of humanity as much as he as savior stands on the

¹ Paul Hacker, *Das Ich im Glauben bei Martin Luther: Der Ursprung der Anthropozentrischen Religion* (Graz: Styria, 1966) republished in English on the occasion of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation as *Faith in Luther: Martin Luther and the Origin of Anthropocentric Religion* (Steubenville, Ohio, 2017).

² Yves Congar, "Regards et réflexions sur la christologie de Luther," in *Chalkedon heute: Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 3 (Wurzburg: Echter, 1954), 457–86. See Vidar L. Haans, "Christological Themes in Luther's Theology," *Studia Theologica* 61 (2007): 26–27.

³ Yves Congar, *Martin Luther, Sa Foi, Sa Réforme: Études de Théologie Historique* (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 130.

side of God. This critique imagines that for Luther the human nature in Christ is as ineffective as that of every human being. According to Congar, Luther's Christology is a Christology of "God's sole efficacy" (*Christologie de l'Alleenwirksamkeit Gottes*).

These vastly divergent readings of Luther address a real concern regarding his preoccupation with human (in)capacity in salvation. If human beings do not contribute towards their salvation in any respect, then how can Christ be said to accomplish salvation as one who is truly human as well as truly divine?

What Luther does in essence is shift away from a medieval understanding of grace as a supernatural substance to one of understanding grace as a relationship, as a stance before God. This is truly a Chalcedonian move. Luther uses the Chalcedonian pattern to suggest how human righteousness is possible. The pervasive employment of a Chalcedonian pattern by Luther has received little attention. Johannes Zachhuber's Marquette Lectures investigate the topic at some length.⁴ George Hunsinger draws attention to Karl Barth's indebtedness to Luther's Chalcedonian structuring in his treatment of grace and freedom coexisting "without confusion or change." The analogy is perhaps most blatantly used by Luther in his treatise *Against Latomus*. For Luther here, the justified sinner is corollary to the Chalcedonian Christ, as in both instances, we predicate "both natures, with all their properties, of the whole person"⁵ and yet care is taken so as not to neither confuse nor separate the two. Just as Christ is at once fully human and fully divine, so also is the believer at once completely a sinner and yet also completely a righteous person. As long as sin remains in me, Luther believes, it in some sense determines my person as a whole; and yet by faith my person and all my works are always also determined by something greater than my sin—both in reality and in hope.

Let us dive deeper into Luther's Chalcedonian mind.

For Luther, the internal freedom that is the result of justification is manifest in external works of love for one's neighbor. With this in mind, an investigation into Luther's understanding of holiness will ask the question, "From where come spontaneous acts of love towards one's neighbor?" Luther's interest in the Christian's motivation for good works give us insights into what sanctification looks like for him.

⁴ Johannes, Zachhuber, *Luther's Christological Legacy: Christocentrism and the Chalcedonian Tradition* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2017).

⁵ Luther's Works, American Edition (Hereafter "LW") 32:257.

Luther's discussions of good works that a believer performs invariably return to the topic of that person's salvation. In this context, he shows his hesitancy to ascribe moral virtue to any good works that are done apart from Christ.⁶ In his sermon of 1521 *On the Three Kinds of Good Life for the Instruction of Consciences*, Luther addresses the question of why a Christian does good.⁷ He answers that the failure of attempts to justify oneself by good works lies in the unrighteousness that motivates those works. While one is moved to genuine goodness by love, acts that are unrighteous are the product of self-interested or self-serving motivations:

"We do not really want to be righteous; we only pretend because we are afraid of being punished or disgraced, or because we seek our own ends and pleasure in these works. And no one is righteous solely and alone for God's sake, the way it ought to be. The natural man wants to and has to seek something whereby he may be righteous. He is not able and has no desire to be righteous for righteousness' sake. He does not allow himself to be content with righteousness, as he ought to do, but it is determined by means of it either to earn something or escape something. [...] We ought not be good to earn something or avoid something, for that is to behave no better than a hireling, a bondsman, a journeyman, and not as willing children and heirs who are righteous only for righteousness' sake, that is, for God's own sake alone, for God himself is righteousness, truth, goodness, wisdom, holiness. He who seeks nothing other than holiness is the one who seeks God himself, and he will find him. He who seeks reward, however, and avoids pain, never finds him at all and makes reward his God. Whatever it is that makes a man do something, that motive is his god."⁸

Luther does two things in this text. First, he presents an assessment of fallen humanity that precludes any claim to virtue as achieving righteousness before God. In doing so he upholds his claim made in the *Heidelberg Disputation* about the total incapacity of the human will. Second, Luther equates God with righteousness itself. This is an important claim for several reasons. Luther is establishing that righteousness is not an object or quality to be possessed so much as a relationship to be entered into. Therefore, righteousness is not a kind of "thing" acquired from God who possesses, or something outside God that God may observe the human being pursue and obtain. Likewise, righteousness cannot be attained apart from God, since to desire righteousness is identical with desiring God. Thus, for Luther,

⁶ Relevant to our overall purposes, Simo Peura makes this point when he says that Luther "typically refuses to distinguish between the question of salvation and the question of ethics." See Simo Peura, "What God Gives Man Receives: Luther on Salvation," in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 78.

⁷ LW 44:231-42.

⁸ LW 44:241.

to desire righteousness, holiness, or other divine attributes for the sake of reward or otherwise for one's own sake is not only fruitless but is also idolatrous. Even the joy of heaven or the blessing of God, when it is desired for oneself, reveals that the goal is really self-interested. Following the principle that whatever serves as a motive for human action is god for the actor, the logic of Luther's position forces the conclusion that one who does things for love of self is his own god.

A Good Motivation for Good Works

Rather than the result of any form of self-interested love, Luther sees genuine good works and holiness as the consequence of a self-emptying that disregards one's own gain and profit. This does not mean that achieving righteousness necessitates that the individual is working against her own self-interest. Neither does it negate the objective value of certain acts of civil righteousness that one may accomplish. It is rather to say that righteousness before God is achieved apart from preoccupation with one's own self.⁹ Luther's *Freedom of a Christian* explains that this is possible because the believing Christian already possesses the fullness of love and joy by faith and thus lacks nothing else that it should desire.¹⁰ The Christian, herself being an image of Christ, is like him "content with this form of God which [s]he has obtained."¹¹ As works come naturally for the human person, the works of a Christian are undertaken with the contentment of faith, so that knowing she lacks nothing she can direct her works outwards. Such a person is able to serve free from self-interest because she by faith is like Christ, already knowing God, and enjoys God in such a way that she is entirely content. Luther describes this as a "confidence towards God."¹² This confidence excludes any lack that might drive an individual to act in her own self-interest. Indeed, it is the very compulsion to act in this way from which Luther holds the Christian is freed. As a result, the Christian "knows all things, can do all things, ventures everything that needs to be done [...] gladly and willingly [...] because it is a pleasure for him to please God in doing these things."¹³ Reward simply

⁹ Jennifer Herdt explains Luther's requirement of the law as being that "we put our trust in God rather than in ourselves." See Jennifer Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 176.

¹⁰ LW 31:367.

¹¹ LW 31:366.

¹² LW 44:6.

¹³ *Ibid.*

cannot motivate righteousness in Luther's mind. What drives righteous behavior is that Christ lives in the believer (see Galatians 2:20).¹⁴

In short, for Luther faith not only justifies but also is the source of holy living. Thus, Paul Althaus is correct in asserting that justification by grace through faith "presupposes" the ethical life.¹⁵ In his *Treatise on Good Works*, Luther clarifies what makes a work good. First, Luther would have us understand that God has plainly instructed human beings regarding good works: that which is God-pleasing and holy has been commanded in scripture, and that which is sinful has been condemned. "Therefore, whoever wants to know what good works are as well as doing them needs to know nothing more than God's commandments."¹⁶ However, if a commandment is kept out of fear or for personal gain, it remains a sin *coram deo*, even though it may outwardly accomplish good. As Jennifer Herdt explains, "The kind of purity of intention central to Christian virtue is not something we can create in ourselves."¹⁷ Thus, unless these commandments are kept in faith, they are not kept rightly. To put it differently, for Luther only a Christian can fulfill the commandments righteously, because only a Christian can be said to fulfill them in faith. In his study of early Luther on the conscience, Michael Baylor describes the way in which faith shifts the center of moral concern away from the self and locates it in God:

"[...] it is faith which confers on the conscience the ability correctly to judge, as God judges, persons before actions and actions in the light of persons. Or, perhaps more accurately, faith is the power of the conscience to accept God's judgements about the person rather than those which the conscience arrives at naturally, or by inference from actions."¹⁸

Baylor is arguing that for Luther faith allows the conscience to shed its preoccupation with the self and accept the judgment that God makes. The concern is no longer any result which the individual will himself draw about his own actions, because the actions are delivered from the taint of self-interested motivation.

Luther locates the source of all Christian righteousness in Jesus's command to believe in him (see John 6:28–29): "When we hear or preach this word, we hasten over it and deem it

¹⁴ LW 31:353.

¹⁵ Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 3.

¹⁶ LW 44:16.

¹⁷ Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 182.

¹⁸ M. G. Baylor, *Action and Person. Conscience in Late Scholasticism and the Young Luther* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 228.

a very little thing and easy to do, whereas we ought here to pause a long time and to ponder it well. For in this work all good works must be done and receive from it the inflow of their goodness, like a loan"¹⁹ Luther calls this faith in Christ "the first and highest" of all good works. Yet here he does not simply suggest that faith in Christ inaugurates in the Christian a newfound ability to do good works. Rather every good work is located in and receives its merit from this act of faith "like a loan." Previously we saw that Luther understood the Christian as being freed from the law *for* good works. Here we see that this freedom for good works does not signify a shift in the believer's natural capacity to do meritorious works, but a new availability for fulfilling the law in love by virtue of her being in Christ. Indeed, in Luther's mind it may be the same outward actions that are undertaken, but the inward disposition, according to which they are done in faith, is that which transforms the works and makes them good. Thus, faith becomes for Luther the "criterion of every good work."²⁰

Finally, the way in which these good works are manifest further helps us reconstruct Luther's sense of how good works are willed. As we have seen, the nature of true righteousness precludes the possibility of the self as the "object" of good works; instead, they must be directed towards God and towards one's neighbor. Both the *Treatise on Good Works* and the sermon *On the Three Kinds of Good Life* criticize preoccupation with the performance of religious works (those directed towards God) when such a preoccupation is a calculated attempt to garner spiritual advantage or favor for the one performing them. Luther otherwise takes for granted, however, that right worship of God is inherent in the fulfillment of the commandments in faith. Therefore, rather than focus on the ritual manifestation of good works, Luther instructs on the opportunity to serve one's neighbor, having a conscience that before God is clean.

Good Works ... But for Whom?

Luther contrasts works that are done for one's own benefit with the commandments of God that "drive us to our neighbor's need, that by the means of these commandments we may be of benefit only to others and their salvation."²¹ Concern for one's neighbor becomes a recurring theme in the treatise. Faith creates a reality in which preoccupation with the self is

¹⁹ LW 44:2.

²⁰ Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 285.

²¹ LW 44:71.

not only illogical but also unimaginable: "For if faith does not doubt the favor of God, and a man has no doubt that he has a gracious God, it will be quite easy for him to be gracious and favorable to his neighbor."²² Similarly, he frames the freedom to serve one's neighbor in terms of selflessness while discussing the seventh commandment:

"Faith teaches this work of itself. If the heart expects and puts its trust in divine favor, how can a man be greedy and anxious? Such a man is absolutely certain that he is acceptable to God; therefore, he does not cling to money; he uses his money cheerfully for the benefit of his neighbor."²³

Faith, for Luther, frees the heart from being concerned with oneself and one's individual needs. As a result, the desire and will of the Christian naturally becomes for the neighbor.²⁴

As love for one's neighbor and desire for her well-being is not grounded in the worthiness of the recipient, the Christian does not undertake to judge her neighbor. Instead, as described by Baylor, in faith there is a new "power of the conscience to accept God's judgments about the person rather than those which the conscience arrives at naturally."²⁵ Just as faith removes the impediment of the will's subjective judgment from the self (freeing one from the compulsion to direct works to one's interests), so also faith removes the will's judgments of the neighbor (freeing one from the compulsion to withhold works that benefit the neighbor). Faith affecting the desire of the will to differentiate and decide in one's own interest thus removes any competitive drive that restricts the individual from willing according to God's command.

Luther describes this new, non-competitive way of living in Pauline language of "faith active in love" (see Galatians 5:6). "Here faith is truly active through love, that is, it finds expression in works of the freest service, cheerfully and lovingly done, with which a man willingly serves another without hope of reward; and for himself he is satisfied with the fullness and wealth of his faith."²⁶ Althaus explains the shift in the object of our good works succinctly, saying that "teleologically, our deeds are done not for God but for our neighbor and for him alone. Whatever we do, we are to concern ourselves only with our neighbor's needs and not worry about our own salvation."²⁷ As a result, the goal of a Christian's life

²² LW 44:108.

²³ LW 44:102.

²⁴ The Christian *desires* to do that for which she is *freed*.

²⁵ Baylor, *Action and Person*, 228.

²⁶ LW 31:365.

²⁷ Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 5.

becomes entirely one of service to her neighbor.²⁸ In this way of living, the Christian imitates Christ's own selfless life, lived not for himself but for others. Such devotion to one's neighbor identifies a Christian, one who lives in faith. Luther writes as much in *The Freedom of a Christian*, describing a life compelled to share in Christ's mission:

"Just as our neighbor is in need and lacks that in which we abound, so we were in need before God and lacked his mercy. Hence, as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbor through our body and its works, and each one should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another and Christ may be the same in all, that is, that we may be truly Christians."²⁹

Luther's *imitatio Christi* appears as more than simply an ethical mirroring of Christ's life. To be a Christian means not only being a "Christ" to one's neighbor but that in doing so Christ will be "the same in all." With this clause, Luther precludes any "respect of persons" among Christians in regard to the performance of good works. One cannot help his neighbor according to his own preferences, but only in the manner that Christ has. "He does not distinguish between friends and enemies or anticipate their thankfulness or unthankfulness, but he most freely and most willingly spends himself and all that he has, whether he wastes all on the thankless or whether he gains a reward."³⁰

For Luther preoccupation with the performance or the result of works goes against the rule of faith, which is defined by selfless orientation towards one's neighbor. Faith thus creates a reorientation of the moral center away from the concerns of the self and, in and through Christ, centers it in God. Christians "willingly" and "cheerfully" do good works because they are not judging actions according to their own interests. Rather the Christian wills to do good in an un-calculating way: spontaneously and out of love. Thus, the Christian is indeed both a perfectly free lord and a perfectly dutiful servant, but also a *selfless* servant, one who in faith is moved by that which moves Christ and not by the individual, peccable motivations.

²⁸ While his understanding of vocation is outside the scope of this project, it is necessary to note that Luther's writing on vocation engages in detail how faith manifests as love for one's neighbor in the Christian life. Significantly, Luther identifies all Christian vocation as being cruciform and an imitation of Christ, breaking down the medieval distinctions between religious and secular vocations in the process. See Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957).

²⁹ LW 31:367-68.

³⁰ LW 31:367.

In Luther's treatment of good works, we find a vision of a Christian whose motivations are transfigured by the new life of faith. There is a surrender of self-interest and an advent of blessed spontaneity that can be viewed as a proleptic experience of eschatological reality that is experienced as growth and progress.

In Luther's account, the spontaneity of willing that which is good is contrasted with the culpable motivations that, apart from faith, drive human beings to do good works (viz., seeking reward, either from God or from others, or avoiding punishment).³¹ We may briefly mention here the question of natural law without straying too far from our discussion of the will, inasmuch as for Luther this law, manifest both in creation and through revelation, "is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"³² Luther contends that even the love of self that fallen humans experience is an "inward reminder" of this commandment.³³ Thus the revealed law expands and explains what one knows naturally or intuitively.³⁴ Those who suppress this natural knowledge of God's law are described as people who "purposely stop their ears or pinch their eyes shut to close out sound and sight."³⁵ This describes a willfully diminished capacity to acknowledge that which God has not only explicitly commanded, but also endowed the creature with an innate (though now corrupted) desire for. Thus, one can say that for Luther disobeying God's law is unnatural.

Yet in his alternative to sinful desire to fulfill the demands of the law, Luther speaks of a willing that seemingly lacks any motivation, except that it is done gladly – because it is a "pleasure ... to please God."³⁶ This spontaneity suggests a type of ease indicative of a nature freed from the bondage incurred by the fall. In the *Treatise on Good Works*, Luther gives his clearest explanation of this. Having proposed that in faith the distinction between various types of works falls away (because, as we have seen, it is not the work itself, but the quality of its being done in faith that gives it merit), Luther uses the biblical examples of Saul, Hannah, and Paul to show that faith produces an effortless approach to works: "It further follows that a Christian who lives in this faith has no need of a teacher of good works, but

³¹ LW 44:242.

³² LW 27:349. Natural Law as its own category in Luther is more debated than what we have presented in its relationship to volition. See Robert C. Baker and Roland Cap Ehlke (eds.), *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (St Louis: Concordia, 2011).

³³ LW 27:351; "*Hoc autem exemplum intus sentitur.*" WA 2:577, 31.

³⁴ LW 40:98. Luther goes so far as to claim that "the natural laws were never so orderly and well written as by Moses."

³⁵ LW 19:54.

³⁶ LW 44:231-42; LW 44:6

whatever he find to do he does, and all is well done."³⁷ Luther supports this with an example of a loving human relationship. "When a man and a woman love and are pleased with each other, and thoroughly believe in their love, who teaches them how they are to behave, what they are to do, leave undone, say, not say, think? Confidence alone teaches them all this, and more."³⁸ Luther proposes that the Christian likewise is propelled purely out of their confidence in God. One neither needs to be taught how to act, nor to convince oneself of the benefit of one's actions. Faith makes good works once again natural to the human being.

Luther describes the life in Christ in ideal terms. Such expectation often runs counter to worldly experience. Although this idea remains unattained, this way of being is proleptically experienced inasmuch as the believer participates in it now. Even though she is in Christ, the Christian remains a sinner, such that by nature she cannot initiate good works of her own volition. She remains herself powerless to act contrary to her sinful nature. A Christian for Luther may grow and increase in good works that flow out of love, but these works will not necessarily look any different externally from those of the non-Christian, since it is the underlying faith and the transformed motivations that propel such external works that differentiate the Christian. Luther writes, "For although we have become a new creature, nevertheless the remnants of sin always remain in us."³⁹

This remnant of sin demonstrates the complexity of the new state of the Christian for Luther. It is certainly not the case that Luther eschews all talk of improvement in Christian life. He can say, for example, that "a Christian is not yet perfect, but he is a Christian who has, that is, who begins to have, the righteousness of God."⁴⁰ Likewise, in a sermon on 1 Peter, he contends that purification, though completed in glory, begins in this life: "It is characteristic of a Christian life to improve constantly and to become purer. When we come to faith through the preaching of the Gospel, we become pious and begin to be pure. But as long as we are still in the flesh, we can never become completely pure."⁴¹ We see that while Luther remains pessimistic about human capacity for improvement, he is not opposed to speaking of progress in faith, albeit cautiously. He is able to speak "moving and progressing towards

³⁷ LW 44:5.

³⁸ LW 44:6.

³⁹ LW 30:228.

⁴⁰ LW 17:224.

⁴¹ LW 30:17. These sermons on 1 Peter are somewhat early in Luther's career (1522), but nevertheless follow the *Heidelberg Disputation* and Luther's established views on the will and human capacity for good works.

[perfection] every day ... when the spirit is master over the flesh, holding it in check, subduing and restraining it, in order to not give it room to act contrary to this teaching."⁴²

Progress is possible for Luther because the conscience made clean by faith allows the believer to consider her neighbor differently and desire rightly. Such living responds to and upholds the rule of the spirit over the flesh, so that the point Luther has previously argued may be proven true: namely, that a Christian can "willingly serve another without hope of reward; and for himself he is satisfied with the fullness and wealth of his faith."⁴³ Because the key here is faith, there is "not much difference externally" between the Christian and a morally upright unbeliever.⁴⁴ Yet still the language of progress is clear: "This life, therefore, is not godliness, but the process of becoming godly, not health, but getting well, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way. The process is not yet finished, but it is actively going on."⁴⁵

As Luther primarily presents the new, selfless disposition of the will through faith as the logical conclusion of one's new life in Christ. Where he does attempt to provide more systematic division between stages of personal growth, these are given in a pastoral context to help the Christian reflect on what kind of conscience propels her works. In *On the Three Kinds of Good Life*, for example, he presents such a struggle as one in which the Christian grows from a false good life "concerned only outward works" to that of a well-developed conscience, to that kind of life characterized by self-denial and the Holy Spirit. The most important distinction for our purposes is that between the second and third kind of good life. In the former, one understands "humility, meekness, gentleness, [etc.]" but "set[s] about them in the wrong way."⁴⁶ Luther says that "God does not just want such works by themselves. He wants them performed gladly and willingly. And when there is no joy in doing them and the right will and motive are absent, then they are dead in God's eyes."⁴⁷ In the latter, the Holy Spirit "makes a pure, free, cheerful, glad, and loving heart, a heart which is

⁴² LW 21:129.

⁴³ LW 31:365.

⁴⁴ Christians hold the conviction that a tree can be known by the fruit it bears (Matthew 7:20) in tension with the subsequent revelation that not everyone who does deeds of power (or good) even in the name of Jesus is necessarily "known" by him (Matthew 7:22-23). That some do not bear good fruit will be obvious in this life. Yet whether even seemingly good fruit is born of a right heart and a selfless disposition is known only by God and invites us to self-examination.

⁴⁵ LW 32:24.

⁴⁶ LW 44:240.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

simply gratuitously righteous."⁴⁸ The transition from the second kind of good life to the third is beyond human potential. The fallen human cannot will himself to be selfless. It is instead the result of the Spirit's arrival and operation to make the heart so. Thus, the difference between the Pharisaic works of the first kind of good life and the flawed piety of the second kind is not external but in the inner quality of the works. The third kind of good life stands apart because its works are undertaken "seeking no reward, fearing no punishment."⁴⁹ Luther's belief that we must daily die and rise anew does not mean that we must always begin at the same place.⁵⁰ Rather the progress made is always one of a return to the third kind of good life in spite of whatever achievements one may have attained in the second kind.

Holy Living as Christic Living

In both Luther we see that the transformation that takes place in the believer can be understood as a surrendering of the self – particularly the self-preoccupation of the will. This surrender of the will to God makes the Christian available to participate in God's own will and thus transforms the Christian's efforts, overcoming the willful self-assertiveness that defines the fallen human's relationship to their neighbor and to God. Luther frames what we understand as the rehabilitation of the will in terms of faith. Faith creates a clean conscience before God, freeing the Christian to willingly and gladly serve. In comparison, Chalcedon does not describe the healing as a response to faith; instead, it stresses the incarnation as its cause on account of the nature being assumed and divinized in Christ. It is as a result of the incarnation that the believer may cooperate with grace to surrender her particular desires so that they become increasingly changeless as they are rehabilitated to God's own will.

The changes that occur as the will is transformed lead us to ask how these particular traits of the redeemed will (selflessness, virtuous desire, etc.) are communicated to the human being. This is an important question, because for Luther the will has in itself no capacity in itself be truly virtuous, and imputation of virtuous desire is the result of cooperation with grace.

⁴⁸ LW 44:241.

⁴⁹ LW 44:242.

⁵⁰ "*Qui incipient et non proficiunt, ponunt manum ad aratrum et respiciunt.*" WA 56:485, 28.

The joyful exchange (*commercium admirabile, fröhlich wechßel*) is not an uncommon theme in Luther's writings.⁵¹ The concept originates in Luther from Augustine's sermons via his mentor in the Augustinian friars, Johan von Staupitz. Augustine had written that "what is properly God's (namely, life) becomes man's; and what is proper to human nature (namely death) becomes God's."⁵² Burnell Eckardt and others have situated Luther's interest in the exchange in the medieval emphasis on Christ's death as vicarious satisfaction.⁵³ Whether this is the origin of its importance or not, Luther (following Staupitz) broadens the exchange into a nuptial metaphor. This transition is significant because it does not frame the exchange between Christ and believer in terms of strict transaction, as models of vicarious satisfaction or substitutionary atonement would imply. The nuptial metaphor emphasizes more the ongoing relationship and even tension between the two parties. As such it is not a saccharine or romanticized understanding of the relationship between Christ and the believer. Volker Leppin argues for the influence of medieval mysticism on not only Luther's use of nuptial metaphor but his entire theology of the cross.⁵⁴ It is in this intimacy of relationship that the true difference between partners becomes apparent. However, it is not merely a contrast of the mystic and her divine spouse, but of the Christian with Christ, and even of the "old Adam" and of Christ within her. While the relationship between the two partners is transformative, the bride does not become the groom, and vice-versa.

In a letter to Georg Spenslein (April 8, 1516) Luther writes, "Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, just as I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given to me what is yours. You have taken upon yourself what you were not and have given to me what I was not."⁵⁵ This often-quoted prayer that Luther commends to Spenslein describes a certain transaction, but only subsequent to the assertion "you are my righteousness, just as I am your sin," so that any transactional exchange is predicated on a continuing context of relational dependence. In short, the Christian is not simply the beneficiary of grace transferred from Christ to her; such a commodification of grace is foreign to the reformer.

⁵¹ A *commercium admirabile* is described between Christ and creatures (WA 5:253, 10-11), and in exchanging human sin for Christ's righteousness (WA 5:608, 5-22), as well as a *feliciter commutans* (WA 40, 1:443, 23); and the phrase *fröhlich wechßel* is found in WA 7:25, 34.

⁵² David C. Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1980), 29.

⁵³ Burnell Eckardt, *Anselm and Luther on the Atonement: Was It "Necessary"?* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

⁵⁴ Volker Leppin, *Die fremde Reformation. Luthers mystische Wurzeln* (München: C. H. Beck, 2016), 60–63.

⁵⁵ LW 48:12-13.

Rather, what defines the exchange between Christ and the believer (indeed, what makes it “happy”) is not simply that the believer benefits disproportionately, but that the exchange is a definite sign of the new relationship between the two. It is for this reason that the nuptial approach to this metaphor becomes so strongly developed in Luther’s thought.

In *The Freedom of a Christian*, Luther distinguishes between three “benefits” of faith.⁵⁶ The first is identified as the “union” of the soul with the promise of God, which Luther illustrates by employing the classical patristic image of iron glowing like fire because of the union of fire with it.⁵⁷ The qualities of the God’s word (that is, what is promised by faith) are transferred to the soul by virtue of proximity like fire and iron.⁵⁸ The second is the “office” of faith which Luther calls “the very highest worship of God.”⁵⁹ Luther says that “we ascribe to him truthfulness, righteousness, and whatever else should be ascribed to one who is trusted.” Were the exchange to be understood in purely transactional terms, here we would see a clear imbalance. God provides faith, which enables right worship, and then rewards the effect of his gift: “Faith works truth and righteousness by giving God what belongs to him. Therefore God in turn glorifies our righteousness.”⁶⁰ The third benefit is that of the soul’s union with Christ, beyond that kind of union the soul was aid to have with the promise of God. Faith “unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom” (*quod animam copulat cum Christo, sicut sponsam cum sponso*).⁶¹ Here Luther explains how precisely relationship between the parties is the basis of exchange, providing also the foundation for the first two benefits he enumerated. The embrace of nuptial union as a metaphor concisely explains Luther’s understanding of the relationship. The two parties in a marriage become “one flesh” by their union – not only the nominal union of promise but the actualized union of their marital relations (hence *animam copulat*).

The nuptial metaphor points to the establishment of goods now shared in common that were once proper to separate parties. In their physical union a bride and bridegroom share themselves with one another in a way that transcends mere transaction. Thus, Luther establishes his model of exchange as one of intimacy and selflessness, according to the

⁵⁶ More appropriately rendered “graces of faith” (*gratiae fidei*), as “benefit” in English favors a purely transactional interpretation.

⁵⁷ LW 31:349.

⁵⁸ LW 31:349.

⁵⁹ LW 31:350.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ LW 31:351; WA 7:54, 31.

example of marriage.⁶² “Everything they have they hold in common, the good as well as the evil.”⁶³ In this understanding there is not *trade* of goods or services between the parties, but a *sharing* of all things among them. This sharing transforms the sharer so that the economy of the exchange is inseparable from the being of those involved. For Luther it would be a “fragile love” in which a husband did not give over control of everything that was his to his bride. Commenting on 1 John, Luther affirms this understanding of sharing between spouses as the substance of the happy exchange. “We share his good things; he shares our wretchedness. I believe in Christ. Therefore, my sin is in Christ.”⁶⁴ It is in this way that everything that Christ has can be claimed by the Christian.

Luther’s account of the joyful exchange is not devoid of struggle. Luther considers the “most pleasing vision” as encompassing both “a happy exchange *and struggle*.”⁶⁵ Luther continues the nuptial metaphor by addressing the impact of this exceptional union on the sinful human being experiencing it. For this reason, he doesn’t rely solely on the blissful side of the marriage metaphor, but on the struggle which once solely belonged to the sinner but which Christ now also shares “by the wedding-ring of faith.” Because the struggle with sin is now part of the common property between the sinner and Christ, Luther can call this a “blessed struggle” (*salutare bellum*) and “mighty duel” (*stupendum duellum*).⁶⁶ In her relationship to God, the Christian counts this struggle as completed because it is given up to Christ. *Coram Deo*, the union means the Christian is already free. In her outer person, however, she carries this struggle into her vocation and life of faith:

“Here the works begin; here a man cannot enjoy leisure; here he must indeed take care to discipline his body by fastings, watchings, labors, and other reasonable discipline and to subject it to the Spirit so that it will obey and conform to the inner man and faith and not revolt against faith and hinder the inner man, as it is the nature of the body to do if it is not held in check.”⁶⁷

In this way it is possible to conclude that Luther’s perspective is grounded in the Christological foundation exchange as a benefit of faith. This unity is applied metaphorically

⁶² The marriage of Christ and the soul is a “true marriage” (*verumque inter eos matrimonium*) which is approximated by the “feeble type” of human marriage. WA 7:54, 33f.

⁶³ LW 31:351.

⁶⁴ LW 30:225.

⁶⁵ “Frölich wechßel und streytt.” WA 7:25, 34.

⁶⁶ LW 31:351; WA 7:55, 8; LW 31:352; WA 7:55, 16.

⁶⁷ LW 31:358-9.

to the union of Christ and the soul: sharing all things, yet without confusion. This is demonstrated in the central Christological declaration of *The Freedom of a Christian*:

“Christ is God and man in one person. He has neither sinned nor died and is not condemned and he cannot sin, die, or be condemned; his righteousness, life, and salvation are unconquerable, eternal, omnipotent. By the wedding ring of faith he shares in the sins, death, and pains of hell which are his bride’s. As a matter of fact, he makes them his own and acts as if they were his own and as if he himself had sinned he suffered, died, and descended into hell that he might overcome them all.”⁶⁸

Luther understands the struggle as primarily that of Christ. It is this struggle that makes the inner person free, and only subsequently does the outer person struggle in faith. In his *Theses Concerning Faith and Law*, Luther writes, “True faith has as its end use of Christ’s passion, life, and salvation.”⁶⁹ Christian righteousness is for Luther passive, and the creation of the faith that unites one to Christ requires allowing him to work in us.⁷⁰ This is the essence of a Christian not living in himself but in God and his neighbor.

Some Conclusions

In observing Luther’s constant return to Christology in matters of holiness we see that Christ’s person is for him the very essence of how humans are made holy. The rehabilitation of the human is a consequence of faith and a manifestation of inseparable union with Christ establishes between God and human beings in his own person. Lutherans cannot have a weak doctrine of sanctification unless they believe that holiness is a human work. Something Luther would not claim. If God alone is in the business of making human beings holy, then it cannot be a weak work. Indeed, holiness is for Luther forged in the relationship of the human and the divine, a relationship which for him does not exist apart from Christ, and only through him.

Just as Luther shifts away from a medieval understanding of grace as a supernatural substance to one of understanding grace as a relationship, his conception of holiness correspondingly shifts. It is in this shift that we see not only a Christological, but specifically Chalcedonian vision. The substance of Christ is one of relationship between God and humanity. Such is also the substance of holiness. Holiness is the description of a relationship.

⁶⁸ LW 31:351-2.

⁶⁹ LW 34:110.

⁷⁰ “Ibi enim nihil operamur aut reddimus Deo, sed tantum recipimus et patimur alium operantem in nobis, scilicet Deum. Ideo libet illan fidei seu Christianam iustitiam appellare passivam.” LW 26:4f.; WA 40/1:41.

Far from being a property to be attained and wielded by human beings, holiness cannot be properly spoken of apart from the union of the human with the Man who is God and Human.

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[Published online January 30, 2024]



ECUMENISM AND TRADITION: HERMENEUTICS OF THEOLOGICAL AND NON-THEOLOGICAL FACTORS¹

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Abstract:

This article offers an answer to the question, why on the one hand the ecumenism between churches from the similar cultural and linguistic environment is perfectly functional despite their theological differences, but on the other hand, once we cross the ethnical and national borders towards believers of other nations, ecumenism becomes almost impossible. The main thesis is that the theological and non-theological (national, cultural, racial, historic, economic, moral) identities, contexts, and factors in ecumenism always mutually interact.

Key words:

ecumenism, tradition, identity, culture, hermeneutics, Gadamer, Popović

Introduction

In this text I will try to solve the following Gordian knot: how is it and why does it happen that on the one hand the ecumenism between, for example, Romanian speaking Churches is perfectly functional, including Protestants, Catholics and even Unitarians, despite their theological differences, but on the other hand, once we cross the ethnical and national borders towards believers of other nations, for example German or Hungarian speaking believers, ecumenism becomes almost impossible?

The solution is given in the title of this text, specifically, that the theological and non-theological (national, cultural) identities, contexts, and factors in ecumenism mutually interact. This will be elaborated closely in the following order: by explaining what ecumenism is, or more precisely, what ecumenism is not anymore; by introducing into the discussion the notion of tradition; by explaining what non-theological factors are; by giving examples how confessional, national and cultural contexts build a Christian identity; and finally, by explaining the hermeneutics working behind the process.

Let us start with two illustrative stories, that will show that the ecumenical situation has recently changed so fundamentally that one can talk about a shift of paradigms in ecumenism, a shift from comparative ecclesiology to ecumenical hermeneutics.

¹ This work has been supported by Charles University Research Centre program No. UNCE/24/SSH/019.

1 Events in Canberra and responses to the Lima document

At the Seventh General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, Australia (1991), Chung Hyun Kyung, professor of systematic theology at Ewha Women's University in Seoul, South Korea, who had just published her book *Struggle to be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (1990)² had a lecture about the Holy Spirit that she announced with dance and music. Calling upon the Holy Spirit, to whom she referred as female, Kyung drew inspiration from her East Asian religious and cultural heritage, from East Asian shamanism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.³ Her speech caused an uproar. In the discussion that followed, she was accused by Orthodox participants of syncretism.⁴ This is not a new term in the ecumenism, it is commonly understood in context of translating/adaption the Christian message into different cultural environments, more precisely to describe a situation in which this translation has gone "too far" and has even compromised the authentic Christian faith.⁵ The lecture of Chung Hyun Kyung was the result of such translating of the perception of the Holy Spirit in the cultural context of South Korea, especially in the situation of women. The audience criticized her approach for going too far.

The second example comes from a similar period. In 1982 a Faith and Order Commission published a momentous document under the title *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, also known as the Lima Document. This text was sent to churches worldwide along with four questions, each church was asked to answer them.⁶ The questions were:

In support of this process of reception, the Commission would be pleased to know as precisely as possible
 – the extent to which your church can recognize in this text the faith of the Church through the ages;

² Hyun Kyung Chung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990).

³ See Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Expanding Contexts, Breaking Boundaries: The Challenge of Chung Hyun-Kyung," *CrossCurrents* 42, no. 2 (1992): 236–237. The speech itself can be found here: Chung Hyun-Kyung, "Welcome the Spirit; hear her cries," <https://web.archive.org/web/20060104021822/http://www.cta-usa.org/foundationdocs/foundhyunkyung.html>, accessed December 29, 2022.

⁴ For reactions of the Orthodox participants see Michael Kinnamon (ed.), *Signs of the Spirit: Official Report of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1991), 279–282. On this event see also Zdenko Širka, "Quo Vadis Ecumenical Hermeneutics: Challenges of the New Ecumenical Situation," *Revista Ecumenica Sibiu* 12, no. 1 (2020): 107–108.

⁵ In this meaning is the term used in the document *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* (1979), see <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/interreligious-trust-and-respect/guidelines-on-dialogue-with-people-of-living-faiths-and-ideologies>, accessed December 29, 2022. See also Širka, "Quo Vadis Ecumenical Hermeneutics," 107.

⁶ The questions are set out in the preface.

- the consequences your church can draw from this text for its relations and dialogues with other churches, particularly with those churches which also recognize the text as an expression of the apostolic faith;
- the guidance your church can take from this text for its worship, educational, ethical, and spiritual life and witness;
- the suggestions your church can make for the ongoing work of Faith and Order as it relates the material of this text on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry to its long-range research project 'Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today.'⁷

What followed was unanticipated. The responses from Churches were unexpected, even shocking. Instead of answering the questions, the churches mostly pointed out where the document was flawed and inconsistent with what their church confesses and believes.⁸ However, this was the complete opposite of what they were supposed to prepare! The churches were not asked to compare the Lima text with their own catechisms and theological manuals, but they did exactly that: they reinforced their own confessional identity.⁹ Respondents worked within the frame of comparative ecclesiology, which is the exact opposite of what the Lima Document tried to achieve.

This led to two main discoveries. First of all, no one expected that the gap between traditional settings and a new generation of Christians in the Third World and Global South, was so huge. The second discovery was that the main problem and reason for division between churches worldwide does not lie anymore in the diversity of confessions and theological teachings, as has been the case for centuries. Since the responses of the churches to the Lima Document were based on their cultural, social and political contexts, it turns out that the greatest diversity lies in factors that were previously called non-theological and were considered marginal.

These two illustrations showed that since beginning of the 90s we can talk about a new type of ecumenism, but also showed the importance of so-called non-theological factors (cultural, social and political contexts, ethnical, racial, political, economic, historical), that were until now ignored.

⁷ The text can be accessed here: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text>, accessed December 29, 2022.

⁸ On reactions see six volumes of Max Thurian (ed.), *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1986–1988).

⁹ See Anton Houtepen, "The Faith of the Church through the Ages: Christian Tradition and Postmodernist Challenges," in *The Living Tradition*, eds. Kurt Schori et al. (Utrecht: Interuniversitair Instituut voor Missiologie en Oecumenica, 1995), 40–41.

2 The new ecumenical situation and non-theological factors

The new ecumenical situation is a result of the clash between traditional and contextual theologies. Indeed, the modern ecumenical movement is challenged by a situation where Christian communities are spread all over the world, on all continents, in all cultures and civilizations, which brings many problems and challenges. One of these is the need to have a common framework, a platform that would support suitable communication between traditional and contextualized forms of Christianity.¹⁰

The goal of this new approach (which we call “ecumenical hermeneutics”, opposed to “comparative ecclesiology”) is not to decide which position is right or better, correct or wrong, nor it is even to seek common features. The new type of ecumenism is really more about gathering around a table with an open Bible, where we can listen to others and learn from each other how to become better readers than we already are. In other words, it does not seek commonality (to think same, to be same), but it seeks mutual recognition and understanding. Pablo Andiñach, an Argentine biblical specialist, concluded his speech in Kuala Lumpur (2004) with prophetic words:

“I believe that, in the ecumenical journey towards a shared hermeneutics, we should aspire first to understand, then to respect, then to appreciate and finally to love the interpretations, rites, symbols and practices that are dear to the hearts of our Christian brothers and sisters.”¹¹

The new ecumenical situation is characterized with an increased awareness of non-theological factors. By non-theological factors we mean those influences which “have their source in the geographical, historical, cultural and political context in which the Church’s life and work are set.”¹² Therefore, for example, basic cultural differences between Orthodoxy and Protestantism are rooted in general differences between the cultural worlds in which the two confessions developed and in which they exist today. These differences have arisen in the course of the different historical development of the churches in East and West and “involve different speech and thought patterns and different understandings of the nature of man, of the church, of tradition, of the sacred, of authority,”¹³ different scales of moral values,

¹⁰ For more on this and the following thoughts, see Širka, “Quo Vadis Ecumenical Hermeneutics,” 107–108.

¹¹ Pablo R. Andinach, “Interpreting Our Faith: The Ecumenical Journey and Its Consequences”, in *Faith and Order at the Crossroads: Kuala Lumpur 2004, The Plenary Commission Meeting*, ed. Thomas F. Best (Geneva, WCC Publications, 2005), 277.

¹² R. David Stevens, “Non-Theological Issues That Divide Us,” *The Furrow* 39, no. 9 (1988): 589.

¹³ Erich Bryner, “Stumbling-blocks to Ecumenism,” *Religion, State & Society* 26, no. 2 (1998): 87.

racial and national differences, differences in economic or political interests. We claim that non-theological factors always play a major part in reinforcing divisions. The fact that they are often unobserved makes their influence all the more significant. The social, cultural and community dimensions of a Church are as significant as theological teachings.

In this sense it is obvious that in a wider sense those things which divide the Churches are neither theological nor non-theological, but a "mixture of both"¹⁴. Usually it is claimed that *theology influences our society* (for example that Christianity shaped European civilization), but it is also opposite: *society shapes our theology* (i.e. Christianity is being shaped by European civilization), and therefore European Christianity is different from South American or Asian Christianity. If the problem lies in the theology, and we solve the theological problem, the problem still remains, because beside theology, there is also non-theology that matters. This can be illustrated by the following example. The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ) is a document created and agreed to by the Catholic Church's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999. Since the reformation era, the "justification issue" was the crucial difference between two churches, but solving the justification (in 1999) did not actually solve anything in relations between Catholic and Lutherans, as there are also non-theological factors that matters (500 years of history), which cannot be simply ignored or erased.

3 Tradition as a hermeneutical key

If we remain with our last illustration (Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification), it can be seen that non-theological factors develop diachronically, within the history. This is the reason why it is needed to talk about the tradition, because tradition is the space between what *was* and what *is*; is a space where theological and non-theological factors emerge, develop, interact, change, die; is a space where past and present co-exist.¹⁵

The dispute about tradition has existed since the Reformation (between Protestants and Roman Catholics). The Post-Reformation era simplified the term as something dealing with the past, rather than referring to the whole of the Christian faith, and so created a difference between the *tradition*, which is used for apostolic teaching, and the *traditions*,

¹⁴ Claims Stevens, "Non-Theological Issues," 589.

¹⁵ See more on tradition in Zdenko Širka, *Transcendence and Understanding: Gadamer and Modern Orthodox Hermeneutics in Dialogue* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2020): 153–158.

which are used for the process of the delivery of this primary event. The term *traditions* therefore designate different forms in which the primary Gospel is expressed and received. Protestants still maintain this distinction. For the Orthodox position, the act of (apostolic) tradition and the process of delivering this tradition through history is one and the same Tradition and Orthodoxy uses the capital "T" for that.¹⁶

The normative ecumenical document on this issue comes from the Fourth *World Conference on Faith and Order* in Montreal, Canada (1963). This Conference shaped a report that included (in Part Two, Sections 38-73) a document called *Scripture, Tradition and traditions*.¹⁷

The breakthrough occurred primarily in the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, when the document "clearly under the influence of the Orthodox presence"¹⁸ says:

"In our report we have distinguished between a number of different meanings of the word tradition. We speak of the Tradition (with a capital T), tradition (with a small t) and traditions. By the Tradition is meant the Gospel itself, transmitted from generation to generation in and by the Church, Christ himself present in the life of the Church. By tradition is meant the traditionary process. The term traditions is used in two senses, to indicate both the diversity of forms of expression and also what we call confessional traditions, for instance the Lutheran tradition or the Reformed tradition."¹⁹

The main implication of the Montreal Document is the threefold discovery that Tradition is not static, that it is dynamic, and that it always changes. It is something that is given, it cannot be owned, but it exists as an ongoing sequence of events, as a living Tradition, and it consists of a whole mosaic of activities, from preaching and ministering to the sacraments, to missions and witness.

In order to get a methodological frame, we will make use of the concept of tradition and history as shaped in the philosophical hermeneutics of German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002).²⁰ In his understanding, hermeneutics is a fundamental way in which human beings *are* in the world and *experience* it. This implies that the one who understands

¹⁶ See Vladimir Lossky, "Tradition and Traditions," in *The Meaning of Icons*, ed. Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982), 10–22. See also Širka, *Transcendence and Understanding*, 153.

¹⁷ Published in Patrick C. Rodger and Lukas Vischer, eds., *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal 1963* (New York: Association Press, 1964), 50–61.

¹⁸ Dirkie Smit, "Ecumenical Hermeneutics? Historical Benchmarks and Current Challenges of a Concept", in *Being (the Church) beyond the South-North-Divide: Identities, Otherness and Embodied Hermeneutics*, ed. A. Frochtling (Münster: LIT, 2003), 27.

¹⁹ *Scripture, Tradition and traditions*, §39.

²⁰ For more, see Širka, *Transcendence and Understanding*, 55–80.

does not stand *aside* from the world and history, but is involved in the ongoing interaction, while both influencing and being influenced. This involvement means that the interpreter (viewer, reader) is not an autonomous subject, but is a radically historical and finite being. Therefore, Gadamer's theory brings a recovery of the idea of historicity as a hermeneutical principle, where all events (past, present and future) build a tradition in which every interpreter stands. As he writes: "In fact, history does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live."²¹ For Gadamer, understanding is participation in the event of transmission, and interpreters cannot ever transcend their own historicity. There is no a-historical position that enables one to approach history objectively. This brings a different dimension of historicity, for which Gadamer uses the terms *Wirkungsgeschichte* (effective history) and *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*. *Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*, translated as "effective historical consciousness" or "historically effected consciousness" is the consciousness of an operating past in the present time.²² When Gadamer asserts that we always approach the past from a certain position, he implies that the past consists of two parts. The first is a historical event, the second is its effective history and both affect the interpreter, who stands in the present. Gadamer coins these two aspects (the reality of history and the realization of this history) in order to describe the process in which human beings both participate and interpret historical traditions.²³ This leads to two conclusions: (i) the reader cannot leave his own present position in order to approach the historical object objectively and (ii), that the historical phenomenon itself no longer exists neutrally in its own original context, but exists only in its effects during history.

This also admits that the reader, or the one who interprets, is not located in a fixed, neutral and isolated position, but exists as a part of history and, even more, exists as a part of the history of effects.²⁴ There is a nice example from David Hoy who says that we can now read Plato differently than Kant understood him, but we also read him differently because of

²¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2004), 278. Further on abbreviated as „TM“. Reference to German text: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*. 6th ed. (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 281. Further on abbreviated as „WM“.

²² The key word in these terms is *Wirkung*, an effect that history continues to operate even if no one realizes this (silent work of history). The word is similar to *wirken* (knit, weave, integrate), and to *verwirklichen* (realize, make real).

²³ "Understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event" (TM 299; WM 305).

²⁴ See TM 301 (WM 306).

Kant's reading of Plato.²⁵ Or, we can now read Paul differently than Luther did, but we also read Paul differently because of Luther's reading and interpretation of Paul. Reading authoritative texts of religious traditions always shows that our reading is invariably affected by the history of the text's effects on our consciousness.

Let us move one step further. When stating that the act of understanding takes place in the history of effects, this does not suspend the space between past and present. Moreover, the possibility to understand the otherness of the text is even conditioned by the *difference* created by its temporal distance (*Zeitabstand*), which is a "positive and productive condition enabling understanding."²⁶ Temporal distance is not an alienating historical distance or an empty abyss that simply separates us from the world of the text, or which must be bridged in order to reach a historical objectivity. This distance is not in the sense of emptiness, but is filled with "the continuity of custom and tradition."²⁷ The present and past are both part of the continual tradition through which the past operates in the present.

In hermeneutics, a temporal distance is transformed into an interpretative distance which then cannot be overcome. As Gadamer writes, "Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged because it separates; it is actually the supportive ground of the course of events in which the present is rooted. Hence temporal distance is not something that must be overcome."²⁸ An interpretative distance is a situation experienced as "polarity of familiarity (*Vertrautheit*) and strangeness (*Fremdheit*)."²⁹ This means that the polarity exists between our belonging to a certain tradition, and between the otherness of the interpreted works.

This leads to two conclusions: (i) the reader cannot leave his/her own present position in order to approach the tradition objectively and (ii) that the original historical event (crucifixion, resurrection) no longer exists neutrally in its own original context but exists only in its effects during history. The present and past are both part of the continual tradition through which the past operates in the present.

²⁵ See David Couzens Hoy, *The Critical Circle: Literature, History and Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 42.

²⁶ TM 297 (WM 302).

²⁷ TM 297 (WM 302).

²⁸ TM 297 (WM 302).

²⁹ TM 295 (WM 300).

4 Christian tradition in Serbia and Bohemia

Let us introduce two examples, where it is illustrated how these theological and non-theological traditions build a particular Christian identity, that is both catholic (universal) and contextual.

The first example comes from Serbia, where the tradition of Orthodox church is known as *svetosavlje* (in English referred as St. Savaism³⁰), a neologism consisting of two words: the name of Saint Sava (*Sveti Sava*) and Orthodoxy (*Pravoslavlje*). It is especially Father Justin Popović's book *St. Savaism as a Philosophy of Life* (Светосавље као философија живота)³¹ that presented *Svetosavlje* as a term for the distinctive tradition of Orthodoxy in Serbia.

What is *Svetosavlje* exactly? The most refined characterisation was given by Nikolai Velimirović in the prologue to Justin's book, where he defines *svetosavlje* as the "Orthodoxy of Serbian experience and style."³² Velimirović's definition points out that Orthodoxy has developed within the Serbian nation, within Serbian history and within a certain geographical area, it is influenced by these circumstances and results in the 'Serbian experience of Orthodoxy.' Still, this title (Serbian Orthodoxy) could be understood also exclusively if the emphasis is placed on the adjective 'Serbian'. In a sense, as if 'Serbian Orthodoxy' would be something different (better?) than Christianity in other countries and in other times. Justin uses the term 'Serbian Gospel' (српско еванђеље),³³ which, if understood literally, denies that there is only one true Gospel.

Svetosavlje is a concept, where historical and theological works together. Historically, Saint Sava (1175-1236, civil name was Rastko) with his brother Stefan the First-Crowned (Првовенчани) became the founders of the independent Serbian church and independent Serbian Kingdom. He himself was the first Archbishop of the "Church in Serbian and Lithoral territories" (as they called it then) with his seat in Žiča. His activities were not only oriented towards the organisation of the church, but also spreading the ecclesial culture throughout the entire Serbian population.

³⁰ Also "Saint-Savaism," or "St Sava-ism."

³¹ The book was originally published in 1953 in München. Now in Justin Popović, *Sabrana dela: Pravoslavna crkva i ekumenizam – Svetosavlje kao filozofija života*, vol. 4. (Belgrade: Naslednici oca Justina i manastir Čelije kod Valjeva, 2001), 175–266.

³² Nikolaj Velimirović, "Predgovor," in *Sabrana dela: Pravoslavna crkva i ekumenizam – Svetosavlje kao filozofija života*, vol. 4, Justin Popović (Belgrade: Naslednici oca Justina i manastir Čelije kod Valjeva, 2001), 176.

³³ Popović, Justin, "Predgovor," in *Ohridski prolog*, Nikolaj Velimirović (Kragujevac: Duhovni lug, 2013), 5.

Although there is a historical framework, its meaning is dominantly theological. *Svetosavlje* is not a historical or nationalistic category, but a sacral category. Hence, for the sake of clarification, whenever Father Justin mentions *svetosavlje* or Orthodoxy, we can read it simply as 'Christianity'.³⁴ When Justin returns to St. Sava, there is only one reason – to say that St. Sava recovered for the Serbian nation an understanding of the world centred around *bogočovečanstvo* (God-manhood). *Svetosavlje* for Justin is a philosophy of the world with *Logos* in its centre, everything in it has its meaning and goal only in and through *Logos*. It is the world where the invisible is the basis of all visible things, and the world, where mankind as the image of God is the most important thing, "Behold, the great God framed his image, his icon in the muddy human body. Hence each man is, a little god in the mud."³⁵ This *Logos* is not an abstract, transcendent *Logos*, but it is a historical real and eternal Person. God *Logos* for Justin is the only creative and life-giving power present in all beings and shapes, "everything radiates logos, because everything is logos-ed (логосно) and logical,"³⁶ everything, except evil. Only evil in this world is "logos-less (безлогосан), illogical, meaningless." Why is God-man the fundamental truth? Because God *Logos* entered this world to "logos-y (ологоси) it", to cast sin out of it and to give it meaning. He answered all the questions that torture the human spirit, especially the question of the relationship between man and God. He brought down all divine perfections from heaven to earth, he magnifies man, elevates him to God, makes him a god by grace. Only in him does man, tormented by all tragedies, find God who truly gives comfort in every misfortune and sorrow.³⁷

When Justin returns to St. Sava, there is only one reason – to say that St. Sava recovered for the Serbian nation an understanding of the world centred around *bogočovečanstvo* (God-manhood).³⁸ In its very essence, *svetosavlje* is nothing other than the personality of the God-man, extended across all ages, extended as the Church, as Justin writes: "All the truths of Orthodoxy emerge from one truth and converge in one truth, infinite

³⁴ For more on St. Savaism from theological perspective, see: Zdenko Širka, "Transformation in the Theology of Tradition: A Study of Justin Popović and His Hermeneutical Presuppositions," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 67, no. 1-2 (2018): 325–344. See the studies from Neven Vukić, especially "Saintsavaism(s) and Nationalism: An Overview of the Development of the Serbian Orthodox Phenomenon of Saintsavaism, with a Special Focus on the Contribution of Justin Popovic (1894–1979)", *Exchange* 50 (2021): 77–98.

³⁵ Popović, *Svetosavlje kao filozofija života*, 185.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

³⁷ Justin Popovich, *Man and the God-man* (Alhambra: Sebastian Press, 2009), 14.

³⁸ "There is no God without the God-man, nor is there is man without the God-man". Atanasije Jevtić in Popovich, *Man and the God-man*, p. 7.

and eternal. That truth is the God-man Christ (...). Hence another name for Orthodoxy is God-manhood".³⁹ There is an apparent similarity with the definition of tradition used in the 'Faith and Order' document *Scripture, Tradition, and Traditions* (Montreal, 1963)⁴⁰, where the concept of tradition is taken as a term meaning the Tradition of the Gospel testified in Scripture and transmitted in and by the Church through the power of the Spirit in history. Justin would call it *svetosavlje*. *Svetosavlje* is therefore Justin's description of the world and Orthodox identity, it is historically and therefore permanently connected with the spirituality and faith of St. Sava, but at the same time it is *not* an alternative way of Christianity, it is simply Orthodoxy developed within the Serbian nation (time and space), exclusive (*Serbian Orthodoxy, Serbian Gospel*) and inclusive (*Serbian Orthodoxy, Serbian Gospel*) at the same time.

Another example comes from Bohemia, where Christian identity developed as the St. Wenceslas tradition (cze. svatováclavská tradice). There are similarities to and differences from the Serbian illustration, but the point remains the same: connection of faith with a different setting (time, space, history) resulting in a specific form of Christianity, exclusive and inclusive at the same time.

Medieval saint St. Wenceslas (907–935, or 929) was a Czech prince and saint who is the main patron of the Czech nation and a symbol of Czech statehood. After his death, he came to be venerated as a saint for his legendary piety, his care for the spread of the Christian faith in the nation, his care for the poor, the sick, slaves and prisoners, his building of churches, the destruction of pagan shrines etc., and his posthumous miracles. He became a symbol of Czech statehood because of his conviction of preserving the sovereignty of the Czech state, which he sufficiently ensured during his reign. He contributed to the foundations of the ecclesiastical structure in the Principality of Bohemia.⁴¹

The tradition associated with St. Wenceslas, especially in the modern Czech past, acquired not only spiritual but also very strong political connotations. Respect for him was present during the whole history of the Czech Lands, starting with the father of the country, Charles IV. Also, in the following Hussite revolution, which suppressed the veneration of

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁰ For an overview of ecumenical hermeneutical documents see Zdenko Širka, "Výzvy ekumenické hermeneutiky v současnosti a okolnosti jejího vzniku," in *Domov jako most*, ed. Zdenko Širka (Jihlava: Jan Keřkovský – Mlýn, 2016), 99–119.

⁴¹ For more about prince Wenceslas see Petr Charvát, *Václav, kníže Čechů* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2011).

saints, St. Wenceslas was not forgotten. In the times of national revival, the linguistic identity of the nation was built on the Czechism of the great men of our history, starting with St. Wenceslas.⁴² The St. Wenceslas motif came to the fore during the autumn of 1938, when it mobilized against Nazi aggression. The communist regime, in turn, claimed that there was no St. Wenceslas tradition. The memory of the nation, containing the legacy of St. Wenceslas, was rekindled in the revolutionary period of 1989 and after, as it always has been at crucial moments in history. October 28th, St. Wenceslas day, is declared to be a day of Czech statehood by parliament.

Unlike in Serbia, we see that, over the centuries, the St. Wenceslas tradition has been used, misused and manipulated by the various state governments, and so over that period shaped both the identity of the Czech statehood, Czech society, and the Czech Church. The St. Wenceslas tradition and cult has many reminders – the St. Wenceslas Crown, the equestrian statue on Wenceslas Square, the statue of St. Wenceslas on Charles Bridge. Religiously, pilgrimages, worship and celebrations are organised every year in honour of St. Wenceslas, the national St. Wenceslas Pilgrimage is an annual celebration of the martyrdom of the patron saint of the Czech nation.

Both examples (Serbia and Bohemia) have some common features and some differences but both show how various theological and non-theological factors emerged, interacted and disappeared in the wide space between *then* and *now*, which we call *tradition*. This tradition is not something we can avoid, neither escape, nor observe from the *bird's-eye* view. We are always inside it, it builds our identity, our preunderstanding, with which we enter the ecumenical dialogue. Hence, Serbian Orthodox Tradition cannot equate Romanian Orthodox Tradition. The Czech St. Wenceslas Catholic tradition cannot be identified with German Catholic tradition, all because of the different *Tradition*: different identity, different history, different context; it is not only language barriers, but different prejudices, and different preunderstanding.

5 Transformations of tradition

In light of this, when talking about ecumenism, we claim that diversity is not an enemy of unity, but provides a starting point from which we can begin to seek common perspectives.

⁴² See Veronika Kolaříková, "Czech National Identity and the Elements Through Which is Constructed," *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal* 12, no. 2 (2020): 66–96.

In 2009 Rev. Susan Durber at one of the WCC consultation meetings, added in this direction that even if the Church was united, it would still not provide a clear reading of biblical texts and church teachings.⁴³ The problem, she said, does not lie in the diversity of the Church, but it lies in the diversity of reading itself, as no reading can ever be objective.⁴⁴ Durber used an example from Jonathan Magonet, who asked what a donkey would search for when reading the Bible, if he could read it. The answer is: *stories about donkeys*. At the same time, the donkey will be tempted to skip and ignore other parts. We can recognize that donkeys have the right to read the Bible as they wish, but their Bible reading will be specific and special, reflecting their own perspective. But a good reader must also be led to stories that are not about him, or perhaps even contradict his own experience or deny it.

This will work only if we accept the transformation of tradition and its double character. On one side tradition is inclusive, open and universal, *catholikos*, converging one God, one faith, one church; on the other side tradition is exclusive, closed, interpreted and applied in a concrete time and place, receiving tangible form and shape. However, none of these are automatically authentic: various contextual readings may justify abuse; non-contextual attitudes may bring violations. We assume that the authentic theology of ecumenism will have to preserve the hermeneutical circle between inclusive and exclusive approaches. A hermeneutical circle is understood when a whole is established by reference to the individual parts and understanding of individual parts is established by reference to the whole, they can be understood only in reference to one another.

This is very nicely explained in a document of Commission on Faith and Order *Treasure in Earthen Vessels* (1998), as the interaction between the *contextuality* and *catholicity*.⁴⁵ The document assumes that seeking unity between churches is a hermeneutical task. The primary purpose of this document is to formulate ecumenical hermeneutics, which are perceived here as "hermeneutics for the unity of the Church."⁴⁶

⁴³ For more see Zdenko Širka, "Quo Vadis Ecumenical Hermeneutics: Challenges of the New Ecumenical Situation," *Revista Ecumenica Sibiu* 12, no. 1 (2020): 126–128.

⁴⁴ Susan Durber, "On Ecumenical Hermeneutics," in *Faith and Order at the Crossroads: Kuala Lumpur 2004, The Plenary Commission Meeting*, ed. Thomas F. Best (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 279.

⁴⁵ *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, Geneva, WCC Publications 1998, §44-45. Available also online: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/iv-interpretation-the-meaning-of-our-words-and-symbols/a-treasure-in-earthen-vessels>, accessed December 29, 2022. References in this article will refer to paragraphs in this document.

⁴⁶ *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, §5.

The document acknowledges that its interpretations always come from specific historical-cultural circumstances of those who interpret, and it is therefore necessary for churches to examine their own initial interpretative positions, the influence of power structures on interpretation and their pre-understandings. The discovery of false applications is an important goal of this concept, specifically the selective reading of the Bible that could justify apartheid.⁴⁷ The document also presents the Church as a hermeneutic community where ecumenical hermeneutics not only interpret texts, symbols and practices, but also interpret *interpreters*, or in other words, it interprets the interpretative community.⁴⁸

This is related to the fact that ecumenical hermeneutics, as part of theological hermeneutics, is much more than an interpretation of Scripture. The interpretation of Scripture is not even possible if we isolate the Bible from other texts. These "other" texts include the creeds of the early church, the works of the Church Fathers, documents from the Reformation period, confessional documents, papal encyclicals and documents resulting from bilateral or multilateral ecumenical dialogues. Symbols, used in Christian art, sermons, music, worship, sacramental acts and repentance can also be considered to be the subject of ecumenical hermeneutics. All of this, not only Scripture, has been transmitted and shaped in the tradition of faith throughout the ages.⁴⁹

Ecumenism is achieved by distinguishing between catholicity and contextuality. Contextuality refers to the interpretation and proclamation of the Gospel in the life and culture of a particular community. Catholicity, on the other hand, means the fullness, integrity and totalitarianism of life in Christ, as the wholeness of the Christian community, across time and space. It is the interplay of contextuality and catholicity that unites the Church in its quest for unity, while allowing the revelation of one-sided interpretations of Scripture. The interaction of contextuality and catholicity in this ongoing dialogue characterizes the Church as a hermeneutic community that shifts the emphasis from documents and traditions, scientific methods and questions of plurality towards seeking ways to interpret together.

Ecumenical hermeneutics thereby dissociates itself from comparative ecclesiology, that is, when churches interpret Scripture (creed, symbols and rituals) through the lens of

⁴⁷ *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, §28.

⁴⁸ *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, §28.

⁴⁹ This part of the text uses some of the conclusions published in the: Širka, "Quo Vadis Ecumenical Hermeneutics," 120–124.

their own understanding of the texts and symbols and try to determine the extent to which the interpretations of other churches coincide with their interpretations. Following the comparative ecclesiology, if they agree, then their interpretation is good, if not, then the interpretation is automatically considered incorrect.

This approach was evident in the responses to the Lima document. Unlike comparative ecclesiology, ecumenical hermeneutics, like any other dialogue, includes accepting that the other may be right, and that opinions of others can enrich or correct one's own opinion. Hans-Georg Gadamer in his interview for *Spiegel* expressed it in the following way: "A conversation assumes that the other person might be right [Ein Gespräch setzt voraus, dass der andere Recht haben könnte]."⁵⁰ It thus admits the possibility of *metanoia* and transformation as a part of authentic dialogue. Therefore, the document states that: "Any church that is unwilling to listen to the voices of other churches is at risk of failing to perceive the truth of the Spirit operating in other churches."⁵¹ Thus, ecumenical hermeneutics does not assume that one church can claim the full truth, but that each church brings something. At the same time, it acknowledges that the Church as a whole will be impoverished if the diversity and diversity of Christian perceptions of texts, symbols, practices and rituals are harmonized into singular uniformity.

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[Published online January 30, 2024]

⁵⁰ Thomas Sturm, "Rituale sind wichtig: Hans-Georg Gadamer über Chancen und Grenzen der Philosophie," *Der Spiegel*, no. 8 (2000): 305, online here <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-15737880.html>, accessed December 29, 2022.

⁵¹ *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, §58.



ALBERT SCHWEITZER UND DER ORTHODOXE KULTURRAUM

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Martin Tamcke

Abstract:

Schweitzer developed an intensive network around the world with the goal to find partners in his fight for the renewal of culture and ethics on the ground of his concept of reverence for life. For this goal he jumped over borders and confessional and religious limitations. Besides Russia he also interacted with representatives of the Orthodox Churches at the Balkans. The idea was to find people with similar ideas by facing the violence, wars and destruction in his time and to overcome this by a joint responsibility and action.

Key words:

Albert Schweitzer, violence, culture, ethics, orthodox, action, reverence for life

Einleitung

Albert Schweitzers theologische und philosophische Werke waren stets umstritten; seine Lebensleistung als Mensch in den Diensten der Humanität weniger, wenngleich ihm sein Engagement gegen die Atomwaffen massive Anfeindungen einbrachte.¹ Während Martin Werner beispielsweise als Schüler Albert Schweitzers gesehen werden kann², so distanzierte sich Karl Barth von Schweitzer als Theologen geradezu herablassend. Was er lehre, sei „saftige Werkgerechtigkeit“ – also aus seiner Sicht mit dem Protestantismus unvereinbar. Er sei ein Mensch des 18. Jahrhunderts, also vollkommen rückständig und theologisch überholt.³ Bereits Schweitzer hatte seinerseits Barth gegenüber bei einem Treffen in Münster ca. 1930

¹ Seine Reden gegen die Atombewaffnung: Albert Schweitzer, *Friede oder Atomkrieg* (München: C.H. Beck, 1984).

² Vgl. Lucius Kratzert, *Theologie zwischen Gesellschaft und Kirche: zur nationalen Prägung von Gesellschaftslehren deutscher und schweizerischer Theologen im 20. Jahrhundert, Christentum und Kultur*, Band 14, Zürich 2013 (Diss. Basel 2012). Zu Werners Auseinandersetzung mit Albert Schweitzer vgl. bes.: Martin Werner, *Das Weltanschauungsproblem bei Karl Barth und Albert Schweitzer. Eine Auseinandersetzung* (Bern: C.H.Beck, 1924). Sein Briefwechsel mit Albert Schweitzer: Albert Schweitzer, *Werke aus dem Nachlass, Theologischer und philosophischer Briefwechsel 1900-1965*, hrsg. Werner Zager (München: C.H.Beck, 2006), 742–903.

³ „Vor 8 Tagen habe ich unsern Zeitgenossen Albert Schweitzer hier in meinem Studierzimmer und in seinem Lambarenevortrag erlebt. Ich teilte ihm freundlich mit, das sei ‚saftige Werkgerechtigkeit‘ und er sei ein Mensch des 18. Jahrhunderts, und im übrigen unterhielten und verständigten wir uns dann sehr gut. Es hat keinen Sinn, mit ihm zanken zu wollen. Er sieht auch sich selber relativ wie alles und alle, und dass man mitleidig sein soll, ist ja sicher wahr und auch für uns immer wieder zu bedenken.“, Karl Barth in einem Brief an Eduard Thurneysen vom 15. November 1928, in *Karl Barth-Eduard Thurneysen, Briefwechsel Band 2, 1921-1930* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1974), 628.

diesem auseinandergesetzt, wie verschieden ihrer beider Wege seien.⁴ Immerhin zeugt Barths Zuweisung Schweitzers in das 18. Jahrhundert davon, dass er verstanden hatte, dass Schweitzer die liberale Theologie, in deren Spuren er angetreten war, zurückließ um zu neuen Ansätzen vorzustoßen, die rationale Ansätze in die Mystik münden ließen.⁵ Rudolf Bultmann rückte ihn gar in die Nähe der Gnosis, als er auf Schweitzers Hauptwerk zur Mystik reagierte, was Schweitzer zwar verstand, aber dagegen doch begründete, warum er „Mystik“ als den ihn zutreffend erscheinenden Begriff gewählt habe.⁶ Mystik drücke die Idee der Gemeinschaft mit Christus aus. Und eben dieses Verständnis mystischer Gemeinschaft mit Christus ist zentral für Schweitzers Verständnis.⁷ Den theologischen und philosophischen Verwerfungen rund um Schweitzers Werken nachzugehen, würde aber seinen Ansatz geradezu zwangsläufig verfehlen. Gerade seine entschiedene Abwendung vom akademischen Lehrbetrieb und sein Wechsel hin zu einem identischen und tätigen Leben⁸, das nun nicht einfach der Ratio entsagte, sie aber als Instrument sah, weil sie, wenn sie konsequent zum Zuge komme, Mystik werden müsse, ist einer der wesentlichen Schlüssel für das Verständnis dieses seinerzeit weltweit anerkannten Mannes.⁹ Er blieb, aller Bemühung um Mitkämpfer für seine Ethik in grenz- und konfessionsüberschreitender Weise, weiterhin der Theologie auch in seinem literarischen Schaffen verbunden und scheute sich nicht, von seinen täglichen Bibelstunden zu sprechen, suchte aber andererseits stets eine philosophische oder allgemeinmenschliche Sprache, die seinen aus christlicher Religiosität

⁴ Barth referiert in einem seiner Briefe an Schweitzer die Begegnung kurz und datiert sie auf 1930/32, Albert Schweitzer, *Theologischer und philosophischer Briefwechsel*, 69.

⁵ Dieses enden in der Mystik sei ein „Hindurch-Gegangensein durch den Rationalismus“, Albert Schweitzer, *Theologischer und philosophischer Briefwechsel*, 439.

⁶ Brief Albert Schweitzers an Rudolf Bultmann aus Lambarene vom 11.10.1931, Albert Schweitzer, *Theologischer und philosophischer Briefwechsel 1900-1965*, hrsg. von Werner Zager in Verbindung mit Erich Gräßer, 183.

⁷ Schweitzer formulierte im Anschluß an sein Verständnis des Apostels Paulus sein diesbezügliches Credo: „Christentum ist also Christismystik, das heißt gedanklich begriffene und im Erleben verwirklichte Zusammengehörigkeit mit Christo als unserem Herrn.“, Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), 367.

⁸ „Als ob das mein Ziel wäre, die Karriere eines Professors! – Nein, ich will leben, mein Leben leben.“, Brief Albert Schweitzers an Helene Bresslau aus Straßburg vom 26.11.1903, in Albert Schweitzer/Helene Bresslau, *Die Jahre vor Lambarene, Briefe 1902-1912* (München: C.H.Beck, 1992), 50–51. „Ich habe nicht mehr den Ehrgeiz, ein großer Gelehrter zu werden, sondern mehr – einfach ein Mensch.“, Albert Schweitzer/Helene Bresslau, *Die Jahre vor Lambarene, Briefe 1902-1912*, 83. Was seiner späteren Frau gegenüber mehrfach thematisiert wurde, findet sich auch im Briefwechsel mit Professorenkollegen. „Langsam stieg in mir die Sehnsucht auf, schon in den Studentenjahren, einmal für das Evangelium nur mehr schweigend handeln zu dürfen, nicht mehr darüber zu reden und zu schreiben.“ Albert Schweitzer, *Theologischer und philosophischer Briefwechsel*, 206.

⁹ Dies gilt gerade auch vom konsequenten Denken, das „zu einer lebendigen, für alle Menschen denknotwendigen Mystik“ führe, Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik* (München: C. H. Beck, 1990), 70.

kommenden Anschauungen Gültigkeit über die engen Grenzen europäischen Theologietreibens hinaus verschaffen sollten.

Albert Schweitzer und die Länder des Balkans

Wie wenig Schweitzer daran interessiert war, hier zu trennen zwischen Theologen, Philosophen oder gar Königen, wird immer wieder erkennbar, wenn aus seinem weltweiten Netzwerk einzelne Regionen in den Blick kommen und dabei darauf geschaut wird, wie er sich dort einließ auf Kontakte und Dialoge. So verhält es sich auch bei einem ersten Blick auf seine Korrespondenz mit Briefpartnern auf dem Balkan oder in Beziehung zum Balkan. Dass die rumänische Königin Elisabeth (1843–1916) sich intensiv um ihn bemühte, faszinierte den noch jungen Schweitzer und er scheut sich nicht, deren Einladung an ihn zu nutzen, um seine spätere Frau damit zu beauftragen, seinen künftigen Schwiegereltern davon zu berichten, um so deren Achtung zu gewinnen.¹⁰ Noch 1962 bekannte Schweitzer. "Mein schönster Briefwechsel war der mit Carmen Silva"¹¹; Carmen Silva war der Künstlernamen der schriftstellernden rumänischen Königin Elisabeth. Sie machte nur eine Bedingung für ihre Einladung, Schweitzer möge bei ihr seine Ferien verbringen: er solle täglich zwei Stunden Orgel für sie spielen.¹² Wo immer seine Werke übersetzt wurden in die Landessprache, etwa in Jugoslawien oder Ungarn, und er davon in Kenntnis gesetzt wurde, da ging es ihm in seinen Antworten nicht darum, den Empfänger seiner Antwortbriefe spüren zu lassen, dass sie beide aber ein religiöser oder ideologischer Graben trenne, sondern er suchte seine Briefpartner zu gewinnen, mit ihm aus derselben Gesinnung heraus für eine Erneuerung der Kultur – ein in seinem damaligen Wortsinn nicht einfach in den heutigen Sprachgebrauch zu übersetzender Begriff – zu kämpfen, gerade weil für ihn spätestens mit dem Ersten Weltkrieg sich Staaten

¹⁰ Albert Schweitzers Brief an Helene Bresslau aus Günsbach vom 9.8.1911, in: Albert Schweitzer/Helene Bresslau, *Die Jahre vor Lambarene, Briefe 1902-1912*, 313–314, vgl. zum Brief zudem Helene Bresslaus Brief aus Bad Schwartau vom 4.8.1911, in Albert Schweitzer/Helene Bresslau, *Die Jahre vor Lambarene, Briefe 1902-1912*, 311 und 314–315 (Brief Helene Bresslaus an Albert Schweitzer aus Bad Schwartau vom 12.8. 1911). Die Königin von Rumänien war zugleich als Schriftstellerin tätig und hatte bei Clara Schumann Klavierstunden erhalten während diese sich am Hof der Eltern aufhielt. Schweitzer sollte Hildegard Emille Schmidt: Elisabeth, Königin von Rumänien, Prinzessin zu Wied, „Carmen Sylva“. Ihr Beitrag zur rumänischen Musikkultur von 1880 bis 1916 im Kulturaustausch zwischen Rumänien und Westeuropa. Bonn, 1991; Silvia Irina Zimmermann und Edda Binder-Iijima (Hrsg.) *Ich werde noch vieles anbahnen. Carmen Sylva, die Schriftstellerin und erste Königin von Rumänien im Kontext ihrer Zeit*, Stuttgart 2015, (Schriftenreihe der Forschungsstelle Carmen Sylva – Fürstlich Wiedisches Archiv, Band 2).

¹¹ Brief Albert Schweitzers aus Lambarene vom 24.11.1962 an Hans Walter Bähr, Tübingen, in Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken, mitgeteilt in seinen Briefen* (Heidelberg: Verl. Lambert Schneider, 1987), 315–316, hier: 315.

¹² Albert Schweitzer und Helene Bresslau, *Die Jahre vor Lambarene, Briefe 1902-1912*, 392 Anmerkung 24.

und Kirchen, die doch dem Christentum hätten verbunden sein sollen, Bankrott gemacht hatten. Sein Neuanfang, war nicht ein Versuch neuer theologischer oder philosophischer Systeme, sondern eine Frage des Lebens, der Lebenserhaltung und der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben, wobei sich diese Gedanken zu bewähren hatten im handelnden Leben und nicht in der Schlüssigkeit der Begriffe allein. Das wird auch an seinem Umgang mit seinen griechischen Partnern deutlich. Auch hier bildet einerseits die Rezeption Schweitzers – wie die griechische Biographie zu ihm von Dr. Tassas Athanassiadis (1913–2006)¹³ – einen gewissen Ausgangspunkt für seine Angebote zu gemeinsamen Handeln angesichts der Herausforderungen, die die Entwicklungen der Welt für ihn darstellten. Andererseits zeigte sich hier stärker noch der Wunsch zu direkter Begegnung, um auszuloten, wie weit vermutete Gemeinsamkeit reichen könnte. Das führte nun zu einander widersprechenden Gesprächsansätzen. Der griechisch-orthodoxe Erzbischof wurde ebenso sein Gesprächspartner wie der griechische Schriftsteller Nikos Kazantzakis (1883–1957), der von orthodoxer und katholischer Kirche aufgrund seiner Werke zu Christus und seiner Kirchenkritik zurückgewiesen wurde.¹⁴ Kazantzakis durchlief philosophisch und politisch einen Wechsel seiner Anschauungen, hatte aber philosophisch sich tiefer auf Nietzsche eingelassen, den Schweitzer meinte hinter sich gelassen zu haben.¹⁵ Dennoch lernen sich beide kennen und hoffte Schweitzer, dass es möglich werden könne, dass sie im Bereich des Humanen würden sich gemeinsam an die Menschen wenden können.¹⁶ Und sichtbar wird da Schweitzers tiefe Verankerung in dem klassischen Theologietreiben mit seinem Erlernen der griechischen Sprache und seiner Bezogenheit auf die griechische Philosophie, die er dem griechisch-orthodoxen Erzbischof in Zentralafrika gegenüber ins Feld führt, um eine

¹³ Vgl. Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 345. Tassas Athanassiadis bekam für die 1963 erschienene Biographie zu Albert Schweitzer den National Biography Preis, vgl.

https://de.qwe.wiki/wiki/Tasos_Athanassiadis

¹⁴ Pius XII setzte „die letzte Versuchung Christi“ 1954 auf den Index, aber auch in Deutschland wurde der Roman für Kinder und Jugendliche verboten, vgl. Jürgen Kniep: „Keine Jugendfreigabe!“. Filmzensur in Westdeutschland 1949–1990, Göttingen 2010. Zur Rezeption von Kazantzakis in der Theologie vgl. etwa: Daniel A. Dombrowski, *Kazantzakis and God* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Darren J. N. Middleton, *Novel theology. Nikos Kazantzakis's Encounter with Whiteheadian Process Theism* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2000); Lewis Owens, *Creative Destruction. Nikos Kazantzakis and the Literature of Responsibility*, Macon: Mercer University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Kazantzakis studierte bei Henri Bergson in Paris Philosophie und promovierte über Friedrich Nietzsche, vgl. Nikos Kazantzakis, *Friedrich Nietzsche on the Philosophy of right and the State* (New York: Sunny Press, 2007); Richard Reschika, *Rebellen des Geistes. Sieben Profile* (Neustadt an der Orla: Arnshaugk Verlag, 2014), 199–242.

¹⁶ Brief Albert Schweitzers an Nikos Kazantzakis vom 29. Juni 1955, Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 250–251.

gemeinsame Basis zu schaffen.¹⁷ Er geht da so weit, Kultur als solches überhaupt auf die Bemühungen der Griechen zurückzuführen.¹⁸ Ob er überhaupt um die philosophischen Werke von Katanzakis wusste, muss offen bleiben. Es war ihm nicht um eine mögliche Gemeinsamkeit im Philosophischen zu tun, sondern um eine gemeinsame Handlung und Haltung gegenüber der Welt. Ob nun Helene Kazantzakis gegenüber¹⁹ oder in einem Brief an den griechisch-orthodoxen Erzbischof in Usumbara (Burundi)²⁰: stets bedauert er, nicht in Griechenland gewesen zu sein. Umso mehr bedeutet ihm das Erscheinen seiner Werke in Griechenland.²¹ Und es berührte ihn, dass der Erzbischof „eine Reihe von Artikeln“ über ihn und sein Werk schreiben wollte.²² Doch der Umstand, dass der Erzbischof ihm ein Metallbild des Hippokrates sandte, macht es wahrscheinlich, dass der Erzbischof dabei nicht das Gespräch von Theologe zu Theologe suchte, sondern in Schweitzer den menschenfreundlichen Arzt verehrte, der mit seiner Tat seine Lehre zu leben suchte.²³ Das Verständnis, das Katanzakis von Schweitzer öffentlich bekundete, als er zur Schweitzer-Biographie Jean Pierhal das Vorwort schrieb, setzte diesen in Verlegenheit, die nicht als gekünstelte Demut zu verstehen ist.²⁴ Schweitzer meint, sich Katanzakis gegenüber erklären zu müssen, der in mit Fanz von Assisi verglichen hatte. Tatsächlich sei er als Student 1894 mit Franz von Assisi näher bekannt geworden. „Ich war von Kindheit auf auf demselben Wege und zu demselben Geiste gekommen. Aber ich habe eigentlich nie von ihm und mir zusammen sprechen oder schreiben können. Ich beziehe mich nie auf ihn. Eine Scheu hält

¹⁷ Brief Albert Schweitzers vom 20.2.1965 aus Lambarene an der griechisch-orthodoxen Erzbischof von Zentralafrika in Usumbara (Burundi), Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 345.

¹⁸ Brief Albert Schweitzers vom 25.12.1964 aus Lambarene an Helene Katanzakis, Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 341.

¹⁹ „Ich bedauere immer, nicht in Griechenland gewesen zu sein, dem Land der Denker, die die Schöpfer der wahren Kultur gewesen sind. Ich muss mich damit begnügen, für diese Kultur zu kämpfen.“, Brief Albert Schweitzers vom 25.12.1964 aus Lambarene an Helene Katanzakis, Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 341.

²⁰ Brief Albert Schweitzers vom 20.2.1965 aus Lambarene an der griechisch-orthodoxen Erzbischof von Zentralafrika in Usumbara (Burundi), Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 345, wo er schreibt, dass er gerne einmal nach Griechenland gekommen wäre.

²¹ „Das ist ein großes Ereignis für mich, dass manche meiner Bücher in Griechenland erscheinen.“, Brief Albert Schweitzers vom 20.2.1965 aus Lambarene an der griechisch-orthodoxen Erzbischof von Zentralafrika in Usumbara (Burundi), Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 345.

²² Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 345.

²³ Schweitzer stellte das Bild zunächst auf seinem Schreibtisch auf. Dauerhaft sollte es seinen Platz im Operationssaal der Klinik in Lambarene finden, Brief Albert Schweitzers vom 20.2.1965 aus Lambarene an der griechisch-orthodoxen Erzbischof von Zentralafrika in Usumbara (Burundi), Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 345.

²⁴ Jean Pierhal, *Albert Schweitzer* (München: Kindler Verlag, 1955). Englische Fassung: Jean Pierhal, *A. Schweitzer. The Story of his Life* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957).

mich davon zurück. Er ist ein berühmter Heiliger, ich ein gewöhnlicher Mensch.“²⁵ Dennoch scheute er sich später nicht, der franziskanischen Oberin Madre Maria gegenüber sich in einer direkten Linie von Franziskus her zu sehen. Als er seinen Gedanken von der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben als Grundidee der Ethik erfasste, schien es ihm, dass er da etwas formulierte, „das dem heiligen Franz gehörte“.²⁶ Seine Scheu an dieser Stelle zeigt, wie empfindlich er hier war, wo nicht die handwerkliche Ratio regierte, sondern die fromme Scheu und Verehrung.

Gemeinsames Handeln der Einzelnen an den Menschen

Das gemeinsame Handeln suchte Schweitzer keineswegs nur in interkonfessionellen Sinn zu erlangen, wenn er die gemeinschaftliche Gesinnung mit orthodoxen Partnern um eine gemeinsame Botschaft an die Menschen und die Schöpfung rang. Sie waren aufgrund der politischen Lage der Welt und seines Weges zwischen Europa und Afrika die Ausnahme. Weishi Yuan wird zeigen, wie sich der Gedanke der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben gerade an einer jahrzehntelangen Beschäftigung mit chinesischen Denkern wenigstens gedanklich von dort her Weggefährten suchte. In der westlichen Welt hingegen ereignete sich etwas, was Schweitzer zum „Mythos“ werden ließ und ihm neben vielen Ehrungen auch den Nobelpreis einbrachte. Die vom Bankrott der Kultur und dem Versagen von Staaten, Völkern und Kirchen erschütterten Menschen akzeptierten ihn als Hoffnungsträger, der in einer sich als gefährdet erlebenden Welt begehbbare Wege aufzuzeigen schien. Stets schloss Schweitzer dabei auch die Tiere und die Natur mit ein und wies darauf hin, dass ein verändertes Handeln sich nicht nur auf die Menschen beschränken könne. Nur um der Kürze und Zweckdienlichkeit willen beschränken sich die folgenden Bemerkungen auf die Menschen. Schweitzer kann jungen Schülern gegenüber ganz elementar äußern, dass Jesus Christus die Menschen brauche. „Ach, er braucht euch alle, damit die Sonne der Liebe Gottes in dieser Welt scheine.“²⁷ Dass es in der Philanthropie um die Liebe Gottes zu den Menschen zu gehen habe, war ihm selbstverständlich. Was ihn unter den zeitgenössischen Theologen aber fragwürdig werden ließ, war, dass er den Menschen zum Träger dieser Liebe Gottes machte. Jugendlichen macht er daraus eine Handlungsforderung: „Möge jeder von Ihnen erkennen, in welchem Helfen ihn

²⁵ Albert Schweitzers Brief an Nikos Kazantzakis vom 29.6.1955, Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 251.

²⁶ Albert Schweitzers Brief an Madre Maria, Eremo Francescan, Campello, Umbien (Italien) aus Lamabrene vom 27.7.1950, Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 200–202.

²⁷ Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 140.

Jesus hier braucht, und auch das Unscheinbare in Freudigkeit tun.“²⁸ Sein Werk verstand er als Versuch, die Gedanken Jesu im Geiste seiner Zeit zu denken. „Wir alle müssen Jesu dienen und durch ihn, durch die Liebe, mit Gott in Gemeinschaft kommen.“²⁹ Gottes Liebe zeigt sich trotz aller Unnahbarkeit in unseren menschlichen Versuchen, Liebe zu leben. Dem für die Protestanten zentralen Predigen empfand er selbst als Prediger Unbehagen gegenüber. Er hatte Angst, Dinge zu sagen, die nicht vertieft genug waren, die er nicht gelebt habe.³⁰ Paulus verdankte er sein Einstimmen in die „Mystik von dem Sein in Christo“.³¹ So wird das Leben in der Liebe ein Reifen des Menschen in seine Zusammengehörigkeit mit Christus.

Begründung der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben

Seitdem Albert Schweitzer den Begriff der *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben* 1909 zum ersten Mal in einer seiner Straßburger Predigten erwähnt hatte, beschäftigte er sich weiter mit dieser Lehre, die nach seiner Auffassung eine welt- und lebensbejahende Ethik ist. Diese Ethik fußt auf eigenem Erleben, dem das Hindurchgehen durch den Rationalismus vorgeschaltet bleibt. Das Leben sei „der letzte Gegenstand allen Wissens“³². Es ging ihm um eine universale Begründung für ein Leben in Verantwortung³³. Als jemand, der vom Rationalismus des 18. Jahrhunderts herkam, überrascht Schweitzers These, dass das Wesen allen Lebens nicht durch Vernunft, sondern durch das Erleben erfasst wird. Der Willen zum Leben des Einzelnen sei die elementare Kraft, die schließlich zur Mystik führe³⁴.

Der Wille zum Leben liegt seiner Ethik der *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben* also voraus und bedeutet auf der Ebene des Individuellen, dass dieser Wille die Kraft ist, die leben lässt. Im

²⁸ Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 140.

²⁹ Albert Schweitzer, *Leben, Werk und Denken*, 139.

³⁰ Albert Schweitzer und Helene Bresslau, *Die Jahre vor Lambarene. Briefe 1902-1912* (München: C.H.Beck, 1992), 50–51; 197.

³¹ Albert Schweitzer, *Vorträge, Vorlesungen, Aufsätze. Werke aus dem Nachlaß* (München: C.H.Beck, 2003), 373f

³² Albert Schweitzer, *Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur. Kulturphilosophie. Erster Teil* (München: C.H.Beck, 1923), 56.

³³ Kurz bevor Schweitzer im September 1965 verstarb, hat er seine lebenslange Suche nach dem Sinn des Lebens in einem Interview mit dem amerikanischen Journalisten Roland Gammon geäußert. Der volle Text wurde in der Zeitung „Midland (Michigan) Daily News“ am 7. September 1965 veröffentlicht.

³⁴ „Die Fortschritte des Wissens haben eine unmittelbare geistige Bedeutung, wenn sie im Denken verarbeitet werden. Immer mehr lassen sie uns erkennen, daß alles, was ist, Kraft, das heißt Wille zum Leben ist, immer weiter ziehen sie uns den Kreis des Willens zum Leben, den wir in Analogie mit dem unsrigen erfassen können.“ Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik. Kulturphilosophie. Zweiter Teil* (München: C.H.Beck, 1923), 264. Auf der einen Seite möchte Schweitzer den Rationalismus verteidigen. Auf der anderen Seite glaubt er, dass sich alles rationale Denken endlich in die Mystik wandeln werden. „Das letzte Wissen, in dem der Mensch das eigene Sein in dem universellen Sein begreifen, ist, sagt man, mystischer Art.“ Albert Schweitzer, *Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur. Kulturphilosophie*, 56.

kosmischen Ganzen führt der Wille zum Leben als dem Urgrund allen Seins zum Verlangen, den Einzelnen so zu verstehen, dass der Mensch mit allen anderen Lebewesen unmittelbar verbunden ist. Der Mensch wird so erlebend in ein Verhältnis zur Welt gebracht. Anstatt von außen erlebt er sein eigenes und ihm begegnendes Leben von innen. Anstatt durch theoretische Analytik wird das Leben auf mystische Weise begriffen. Es wird nicht rational erkannt, sondern intuitiv erlebt.

Das führt zu einem der zentralen Sätze der Ethik Schweitzers „Ich bin Leben, das leben will, inmitten von Leben, das leben will.“³⁵ So erläutert er die Verbundenheit von Menschen und Natur und die Universalität seines Ansatzes. Im äußeren Sein der Natur offenbart sich der Wille zum Leben als Schöpferwille oder Urkraft, die sich in allen Lebewesen widerspiegeln als der unendliche Willen zum Leben. Dieser Wille zum Leben wird im inneren Sein des einzelnen Menschen transformiert zum Willen der Liebe³⁶.

Nun hat der Mensch eine ethische Direktive³⁷ in sich. Er befindet sich mit allen auch von dem Willen zum Leben beseelten Lebewesen in der Welt und ist allen Formen des Lebens verbunden. „Das höchste Wissen ist es so, zu wissen, daß ich dem Willen zum Leben treu sein muß.“³⁸ Die Treue zum Lebenswillen führt in ihrer ethischen Anwendung im Umgang mit anderen dazu, deren Leben entweder zu befördern oder es einzuschränken. Dem trägt er Rechnung mit der elementaren ethischen Definition, dass es gut sei, das Leben zu bewahren und zu fördern sei, böse aber, es zu vernichten oder zu hemmen.³⁹

Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben: eine religiös-ethische Mystik

So schritt er vom rationalen Denken zur Mystik weiter, die er theologisch fasst als „Mystik von dem Sein in Christo“⁴⁰ führt er schließlich in seinem letzten größeren theologischen Werk zur Mystik des Apostels Paulus (1930), in die er das Einsseins fasst als das Sterben mit Christus

³⁵ Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik. Kulturphilosophie*. Zweiter Teil, 239.

³⁶ „In der Welt offenbart sich uns der unendliche Wille zum Leben als Schöpferwille, der voll dunkler und schmerzlicher Rätsel für uns ist, in uns als Wille der Liebe, der durch uns die Selbstentzweiung des Willens zum Leben aufheben will.“ Albert Schweitzer, *Aus meinem Leben und Denken* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1931), 204.

³⁷ Albert Schweitzer, *Aus meinem Leben und Denken*, 204.

³⁸ Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik. Kulturphilosophie*. Zweiter Teil, 210.

³⁹ „Gut ist, Leben erhalten und Leben fördern, böse ist, Leben vernichten und Leben hemmen.“ Albert Schweitzer, *Vorträge, Vorlesungen, Aufsätze*, 143.

⁴⁰ „Paulus hat die Tatsache, dass die messianische Welt mit dem Tode und der Auferstehung Jesu eigentlich schon angebrochen ist, in die Mystik von dem Sein in Christo gesteigert.“ Albert Schweitzer, *Vorträge, Vorlesungen, Aufsätze*, 373.

und Auferstehen mit Christus des ethisch handelnden Menschen. "Das Christentum ist also Christumystik, das heißt gedanklich begriffene und im Erleben verwirklichte Zusammengehörigkeit mit Christo als unserem Herrn."⁴¹

Die „Mystik *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*“⁴² erweist sich dabei auch außerhalb dieses exegetischen Bezuges bei Schweitzer als eine höhere Form der Lebensbejahung, weil er sie zudem als ein Einswerden mit allen anderen vom Willen zum Leben hervorgebrachten Lebewesen verstehen kann. Liebe ist dabei Kern ihres Willens. Selbstvervollkommnung und Hingabe kennzeichnen den menschlichen Willen⁴³. Das mystische Einssein mit dem Urgrund des Seins zeigt sich als Wille der Liebe und erfordert Selbstvervollkommnung. In der liebenden und helfenden Hingabe wächst die Selbstvervollkommnung und schließt das Einswerden mit dem universellen Willen zum Leben eschatologisch ab.

Schweitzers Ethik fußt auf seiner Theologie, etwa seiner *konsequenten Eschatologie* und seinem Reich-Gottes-Verständnis. In *Christentum und die Weltreligionen* (1923) betont Schweitzer, dass sich Gott im Menschen als ethischer Wille zur Liebe erweist. Gott wird als Wille zur Liebe erfahren und Gotteserfahrung durch die Nachfolge in der Liebe ermöglicht. Dabei korrespondiert das Erleben des Urgrunds allen Seins bzw. des universellen Willen zum Leben in seinen philosophischen Werken dem mystischen Erleben der Einheit mit Gott in seinen theologischen Werken.

Schweitzer meldete sich als Beschützer der Natur und des Tierreiches zu Wort, bekämpfte die Atomwaffen, galt als Inbegriff sozialen Engagements. Zu all seinen Anliegen suchte er Gesinnungsgenossen über Konfessions- und Religionsgrenzen hinweg im Geiste der Ethik der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben. Die Orthodoxen, die ihm darin die Hand reichten, belegen: auch Orthodoxe hatten Zugang zu seiner Auffassung vom menschlichen Leben im Einklang mit dem Absoluten, mit Christus. Die Zeit war für eine tiefere Interaktion dazu besonders aus weltpolitischen Gründen nicht reif. Sein Ruf zu gemeinsamen Handeln angesichts von Gewalt und Zerstörung des Lebens hat an Aktualität nichts eingebüßt. Hier Denker aus allen großen christlichen Konfessionen zusammenzuführen, womöglich auch

⁴¹ Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), 367.

⁴² „Hoffentlich bringe ich bis dahin die ‚Mystik der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben‘ im Rohbau fertig“, Albert Schweitzer in seinem Brief an Martin Buber am 3. Dezember 1932. In Hans Walter Bähr (Hg.) *Albert Schweitzer. Leben, Werke und Denken 1905-1965 mitgeteilt in seinen Briefen* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1987), 123.

⁴³ Albert Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik. Kulturphilosophie*. Zweiter Teil, 225–236.

Menschen außerchristlicher Lebenswelten mit sich im Handeln einig zu wissen, ist heute unvermindert ein Gebot der Stunde.

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[Published online January 30, 2024]



IN MEMORIAM DR. HERBERT PATZELT, B. D., STM (1925 – 2023)

Univ.-Prof. Dr. theol. Dr. h. c. Karl W. Schwarz

Pastor in Ruhe Dr. Herbert Patzelt ist am 15. Februar 2023 im hohen Alter von beinahe 98 Jahren in Lübeck verstorben. Er war einer der Gründerväter des Instituts für Kirchengeschichte des Donau- und Karpatenraumes / Inštitút pre cirkevné dejiny v oblasti Dunaja a Karpát an der Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Comenius-Universität Bratislava.

Dem Karpatenraum war er seit seiner Geburt am 1. April 1925 in der Umgebung von Teschen/Těšín/Cieszyn eng verbunden. Eine durch ihre Lage am Schnittpunkt der polnischen, tschechischen, slowakischen und deutschen Kultur so interessante Stadt, am äußersten Zipfel Schlesiens gelegen, eine Brücke zwischen dem Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation und dem Königreich Ungarn, für die europäische Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte bedeutsam, durch die Grenzziehung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg geteilt. Herbert Patzelt hat schon in seiner Kindheit erfahren können, was dem Luthertum dieser Region nachgesagt wird: *twardy jak Luther s pod Cieszyna* – „hart“ im Sinne von: entschlossen, entschieden zu sein, wie ein Lutheraner aus Teschen: Das meint nicht nur ein konfessionelles Profil, sondern diese umgangssprachliche Redensart im Polnischen bringt die gesamte Geschichte des Protestantismus in seinem schweren Existenzkampf mit der übermächtigen katholischen Umgebung auf den Punkt. Diese Geschichte hat Patzelt geschrieben, ihr ist der Großteil seines literarischen Schaffens gewidmet. Hier ist zuerst auf seine Dissertation hinzuweisen, mit der er den Doktorgrad der evangelischen Theologie an der Fakultät in Bratislava erwarb: *„Der Pietismus im Teschener Schlesien.“*¹ Dass es 2010 in tschechischer Sprache (*„Pietismus v těšinském Slezskú“*, Cieszynie 2010) erschien, hat ihn sehr gefreut.² Darin zeigte sich auch die Wertschätzung seiner vielfachen literarischen Bemühungen um diese einzigartige

¹ Herbert Patzelt, *Der Pietismus im Teschener Schlesien 1709–1730* (Göttingen: Kirche im Osten Bd. 8, 1969).

² Herbert Patzelt, *Pietismus v těšinském Slezskú 1709 – 1730* (Cieszyn : Polskie Towarzystwo Ewangelickie, Oddział w Cieszynie, 2010).

Kulturlandschaft. Der entsprechende Abschnitt im Quellenbuch zur Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Schlesien (1992) wurde ebenfalls von ihm gestaltet. Seine zahlreichen einschlägigen Studien gipfelten in der Monographie *„Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Österreichisch-Schlesien“*³, die ihn nicht nur als kenntnisreichen Chronisten seiner Kirche ausweist, sondern auch als einen sprachlichen Stilisten, der stets an den Werken der deutschen Literatur Maß genommen hat.

Der familiengeschichtliche Anker lag in dem sudetendeutschen Dorf Tschermna (heute Čermá) in der Umgebung von Arnau an der Elbe (heute Hostinné); von dort stammt die Familie Patzelt. Die einschlägige Dorfmonographie *„Tschermna im Riesengebirge: Die alte Heimat. Die Geschichte eines Dorfes im Vorland des Riesengebirges“*⁴ aus seiner Feder zählt zu seinen persönlichsten Arbeiten. Sie blickt zurück bis zu Martin Patzelt, der dort als Richter in den Jahren 1640 – 1654 nachgewiesen ist.

Nach russischer Kriegsgefangenschaft studierte Herbert Patzelt evangelische Theologie in Tübingen, Fremont/Nebraska und Philadelphia; daran schloss sich eine mehrjährige Tätigkeit als Seemannspastor und im Gemeindedienst in New York (*„Die Deutsche Seemannsmission im Hafen von New York 1907 – 2001, o.J.“*)⁵ an, ehe er nach Deutschland zurückkehrte und dreißig Jahre als Pastor in Barskamp bei Lüneburg und in Lübeck (1958 – 1988) wirkte (*„Von New York nach Barskamp“*, 2020) danach als Urlauberpfarrer am Gardasee, schließlich 1993-1999 als Pfarrer der evangelischen Pfarrgemeinde A.B. in Triest.

Wie sehr sich Herbert Patzelt als Altösterreicher verstanden hat, wird an dieser letzten pastoralen Wirkungsstätte deutlich. Denn auch diese Tätigkeit war mit einer Buchpublikation verbunden: *Evangelisches Leben am Golf von Triest*⁶, ein reich illustriertes Buch, das die Geschichte der evangelisch-lutherischen Pfarrgemeinde samt deren Ausstrahlung nach Abbazia/Opatja, Görz/Gorizia, Fiume/Rijeka und Pola/Pula nachzeichnet. Dass sich Patzelt 68-jährig dieser Herausforderung stellte und diesen soziologischen Prozess des sprachlichen und kulturellen Wandels der Gemeinde Triest gleichsam auf einer historischen Schiene

³ Herbert Patzelt, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Österreichisch-Schlesien* (Laumann: Dülmen, 1989).

⁴ Herbert Patzelt, *Tschermna im Riesengebirge: Die alte Heimat. Die Geschichte eines Dorfes im Vorland des Riesengebirges* (s.l.: Marktoberndorf, Heimatkreis Hohenelbe, 2008).

⁵ Herbert Patzelt, *Die Deutsche Seemannsmission im Hafen von New York 1907 – 2001* (s.l.: Druckerei Theiss GmbH, 2002).

⁶ Hebert Patzelt, *Evangelisches Leben am Golf von Triest* (München: Evang. Presseverb für Bayern, 1999).

dokumentierte, kann nur in dem größeren Kontext seiner Biographie verstanden und bedankt werden.

Der Ostkirchenausschuss der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, dessen Vorsitz Patzelt zwischen 1972 und 1980 wahrgenommen hat, der Verein für Schlesische Kirchengeschichte, der Verein für ostdeutsche Kirchengeschichte, die Gesellschaft für die Geschichte des Protestantismus in Österreich, das Ostkircheninstitut in Münster und das Institut für die Kirchengeschichte des Donau- und Karpatenraumes in Pressburg/Bratislava haben Herbert Patzelt anlässlich seines 80. Geburtstages eine Festschrift herausgebracht: „Über Schlesien hinaus: zur Kirchengeschichte in Mitteleuropa“.⁷ Auf diese klassische Weise wurde Patzelt gedankt: für seine lebenslange Beschäftigung mit der Kirchengeschichte, für seine begeisterte Anteilnahme und für seine ansteckende Freude an dieser Arbeit. Als es galt, im europäischen Integrationsprozess die Achsen zwischen Polen, Tschechien, der Slowakei, Ungarn, Deutschland und Österreich zu schließen, war seine hellwache Zeitzeugenschaft ein großer Gewinn. Sein beharrliches Insistieren auf die notwendige und bisweilen not volle Beschäftigung mit der Vergangenheit hat ihn nicht ruhen lassen. Bis ins hohe Alter hat er daran gearbeitet. Dafür gebührt ihm unser aller Dank und Respekt.

Requiescat In Pace.

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[Published online January 30, 2024]

⁷ Dietrich Meyer und Christian-Erdmann Schott und Karl Schwarz (Hgs.), *Über Schlesien hinaus: zur Kirchengeschichte in Mitteleuropa Festgabe für Herbert Patzelt zum 80. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Bergstadtverlag Wilhelm Gottlieb Korn, 2006).



BOOK REVIEW

MEGHAN HENNING: EDUCATING EARLY CHRISTIANS THROUGH THE RHETORIC OF HELL¹

PUBLISHED BY MOHR SIEBECK, 2014

Mgr. Michaela Prihracki, PhD.

Evanjelium podľa Matúša obsahuje množstvo apokalyptických obrazov. Autor tohto spisu využíva terminológiu súdu, odmien a trestov a pekla na viacerých miestach, pričom sa im venuje v oveľa väčšej miere ako ostatné synoptické evanjeliá. Rétorika pekla sa tak stala významnou súčasťou tohto evanjelia, ale následne aj učenia kresťanskej cirkvi, pričom formovala kresťanské myslenie o posmrtnom živote a Božej spravodlivosti. Otázka pekla je však aj veľmi kontroverzná. V modernej dobe je s ňou spájaných viacero otázok – Existuje vôbec peklo? Ako je možné si ho predstaviť? Je potrebné chápať obrazy v evanjeliách doslovne alebo skôr metaforicky? Moderné bádanie tak do výskumu prinieslo viacero nových impulzov. Aj samotná problematika pekla bola totiž niektorými autormi spochybňovaná ako príliš mýtická, v dnešnej dobe prekonaná a pre Ježišovu zvesť neautentická, chápaná iba ako výsledok neskoršej redakcie raného kresťanského prúdu. Vyzdvihovaný zvykne byť práve jej metaforický význam. Na druhej strane stoja samozrejme tí, ktorí zdôrazňujú doslovný význam, čo tiež spôsobuje viacero problémov pri interpretácii textov a ich aplikácii.

Autorka Meghan Henning si je vedomá tejto diskusie, avšak vo svojej knihe *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetoric of Hell* hovorí, že takéto otázky a hypotézy vychádzajú z moderného post-osvieteneckého rozmyšľania. Keďže existencia iných svetov bola pre ľudí žijúci v judaizme obdobia druhého chrámu predstaviteľnou, nezaujímala ich natoľko otázka či peklo existuje, ale dôležitejšia bola otázka: „Kto je v pekle?“, „Prečo sú

¹ Meghan Henning, *Educating Early Christians through the Rethoric of Hell* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 294 s.

tam? ' alebo 'Čo sa tam deje?' Pre raných kresťanov boli popísané detaily charakteristickými znakmi trestov iného sveta, pomocou ktorých bola sprostredkovaná správa o tom, ako má človek v tomto svete žiť.² Autorka sa teda odkláňa od bádania po potvrdení existencie pekla a hodnovernosti správ o ňom a presúva sa do inej oblasti – pýta sa na to, aký mali tieto texty význam a čo ním chcel autor vysvetliť. Samotnú diskusiu tak smeruje skôr do teologickej a etickej roviny.

„Aby bolo možné ukázať, akú rétorickú funkciu plnilo 'peklo' pre starovekých kresťanov, je nutné vziať do úvahy dve veci: 1. obrazy podsvetia, ktoré boli bežne používané a zrozumiteľné pre poslucháčom prvého storočia, a 2. typické spôsoby, akými boli tieto obrazy používané aj v okolitých kultúrach.“³

S ohľadom na tento cieľ sa venuje problematike rétoriky a známym rétorickým prostriedkom v helenistickom svete. Knihu pozostáva z 8 kapitol. V prvej si všíma rétoriku smrti a pekla všeobecne, následne predstavuje jej konkrétne príklady v židovskej Biblii (druhá kapitola), v gréckej a latinskej literatúre (tretia kapitola), v židovskej apokalyptickej literatúre (štvrtá kapitola), v Novej zmluve (piata kapitola), v Evanjeliu podľa Matúša (šiesta kapitola) a v raných kresťanských apokalypsách a v ranej cirkvi (siedma kapitola). 8. kapitola predstavuje zhrnutie problematiky a jej aplikáciu do myšlienkového sveta raného kresťanstva.

Na otázku, či majú byť texty chápané doslovne, alebo ako obrazy preto odpovedá dvojako. Na jednej strane nie je možné vylúčiť, že ľudia chápali tieto texty doslovne a podobným spôsobom si predstavovali posmrtný život, avšak predsa zdôrazňuje, že to kľúčové, čo je v textoch možné nájsť, sú skôr implikácie, ktoré posmrtné predstavy vyvolávali. Za dôležitú zvesť týchto textov preto pokladá to, aký obraz pekla ponúkajú, a čo ich zvesť hovorí o tom, ako majú ľudia konať v prítomnosti. V týchto textoch sú tí, ktorí sa ocitli v pekle či v *šeoli*, zobrazení ako negatívne prípady pre čitateľov a poslucháčov. Týmto spôsobom kladú obrazy pekla pred poslucháča etickú voľbu, pričom vykresľujú jej prípadné následky.

V takomto zmysle preto podľa M. Henning je možné povedať, že texty o poslednom súde a pekle slúžili ako akýsi pedagogický nástroj (v súlade s grécko-rímskym edukačným prostriedkom παιδεία), pomocou ktorého bolo možné poslucháčov správne motivovať

² Meghan Henning, *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetorics of Hell*, 2.

³ Meghan Henning, *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetorics of Hell*, 14.

k etickému konaniu, ako aj konkrétne objasniť, aké konanie je požadované a nutné. Texty o pekle tak predstavovali konkrétne obrazy, ktoré vyvolávali urgentnosť správneho rozhodnutia a následného eticky zodpovedného života. Totiž postoje človeka boli postavené pod kritérium blížaceho sa súdu a prípadného trestu. Týmto spôsobom vyvolávali v poslucháčovi emócie, ktoré mali byť pretavené do etických implikácií.

„Prví kresťania rozvíjali svoju vlastnú *paideiu* v dobe, keď rétorika podsvetia už bola obľúbeným pedagogickým nástrojom. Takéto chápanie podsvetia uľahčovalo komunikáciu ranokresťanskej *paideie*, pretože sa dotýkalo rozšírenej kultúrnej konvencie používať živé vizuálne obrazy na presvedčivé účely. Rétorický model, ktorý bol vytvorený gréckymi a rímskymi zobrazeniami Hádes, sa ukázal ako užitočný prostriedok na vytvorenie a posilnenie kultúrnych a etických hodnôt.“⁴

Z tohto dôvodu preto nie je zarážajúce ani problematické, že vzhľadom na problematiku trestu s pekla nachádzame v Novej zmluve, ako aj v židovskej tradícii rôzne predstavy. Nebol totiž vytvorený komplexný koncept posmrtného života, ale skôr rôzne predstavy, ktoré spoločne v textoch figurovali.⁵

Meghan Henning argumentuje, že spôsob, akým biblické, ale aj grécko-rímskej texty v staroveku používajú obrazy pekla poukazujú na to, že tieto texty mali dôležitú rétorickú funkciu. Práve preto je veľmi silnou stránkou tejto monografie, že na jednej strane neopomína doslovný význam obrazov o súde a pekle, ale taktiež kladie dôraz na ich pedagogický význam. Dodáva, že je samozrejmé, že dôležitým prvkom týchto textov bolo aj ponúknutie povzbudenie chudobným, utláčaným a trápeným. Predstavy o poslednom súde a pekle sa následne udomácnili v teológii a filozofii aj v neskoršej dobe, avšak pri ich interpretácii sa často zabudlo na ich pôvodný rétorický účel. Tieto texty sa tak stali problematické (najmä od obdobia osvietenectva), keďže ich obrazy sa nemenili spolu s dobou, ale ostali zachované a v tomto procese bol opomenutý ich primárny zmysel. Autorka preto apeluje ktomu, aby sa bádanie týchto obrazov a ich významu bližšie sústredilo na jednotlivé známe predstavy súdu a pekla v židovskej aj grécko-rímskej literatúre, ako aj ich význam v dobovom kontexte. Práve toto je aj cieľom predstavenej knihy *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetoric of Hell*.

⁴ Meghan Henning, *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetorics of Hell*, 225.

⁵ Meghan Henning, *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetorics of Hell*, 28.

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[Published online January 30, 2024]



BOOK REVIEW

VIKTOR KÓKAI-NAGY, ÁDÁM VÉR (EDS.)
PEACE AND WAR IN JOSEPHUS¹

PUBLISHED BY DE GRUYTER, 2023

Mgr. Dávid Cielontko, Ph.D.

Recenzovaná kniha predstavuje publikačný výstup z medzinárodnej konferencie venovanej téme *War and Peace in Josephus*, ktorú zorganizoval v roku 2022 bádateľský inštitút *Josephus Research Institute* (Josephus Kutatóintézet) Univerzity J. Selyeho v Komárne. Ide o vôbec prvú medzinárodnú konferenciu organizovanú týmto inštitútom, ktorý v roku 2020 založil Viktor Kókai-Nagy, docent Novej zmluvy na Reformovanej teologickej fakulte tej istej univerzity. Cieľom inštitútu je vytvárať odbornú platformu, v rámci ktorej by bolo možné rozvíjať bádanie o osobe a diele Jozefa Flavia v stredoeurópskom kontexte. I keď je primárnym jazykom komunikácie pre tento inštitút maďarčina, určite ide o pozoruhodnú snahu, ktorá si zaslúži väčšiu pozornosť. Mimo iného aj preto, že ide o iniciatívu na jednej zo slovenských univerzít.

Okrem zmienenej zahraničnej konferencie sa na pôde tohto inštitútu už odohralo viacero lokálnych sympózií a vyšli prvé publikačné výstupy.² Druhá medzinárodná konferencia, ktorá sa bude venovať téme *Josephus and the Maccabees* je plánovaná na jar 2024. Do budúcnosti by bolo určite zaujímavé vidieť väčšie prepojenie tohto bádateľského inštitútu s ďalšími slovenskými a českými teologickými fakultami.

Recenzovanú knihu tvorí celkom jedenásť štúdií od autorov ako z Maďarska, tak aj zahraničných prispievateľov (Izrael, Kanada, Česká Republika, USA a Nemecko). Jednotlivé

¹ Viktor Kókai-Nagy, Ádám Vér (eds.), *Peace and War in Josephus*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 52 (Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter, 2023). 227 s.

² Por. Viktor Kókai-Nagy (ed.), *A sokoldalú Josephus* (Komárno: Selye János Egyetem Református Teológiai Kar, Josephus Kutatóintézet, 2020); Viktor Kókai-Nagy (ed.), *Josephus tanulmányok* (Komárno: Selye János Egyetem Református Teológiai Kar, Josephus Kutatóintézet, 2021) a Viktor Kókai-Nagy (ed.), *Heródes* (Komárno: Selye János Egyetem Református Teológiai Kar, Josephus Kutatóintézet, 2022).

štúdie sa venujú širokému spektru otázok, od analýzy textov, cez porovnávacie štúdie, lingvistické analýzy až po tematické prehľady.

Po krátkom úvode od editorov knihu otvára štúdia „Five Speeches in the Fourth Book of Josephus' *Judaeen War*“, ktorej autorom je Steve Mason, profesor starovekej histórie z Univerzity v Gröningene, jeden z najvýznamnejších súčasných jozefovských bádateľov a hlavný editor projektu nového prekladu s komentárom celého Jozefovho diela vydávaného nakladateľstvom Brill.³ Mason si všíma, že štvrtá kniha *Židovskej vojny* je nápadne opomínaná v rôznych akademických rekonštrukciách historických udalostí židovskej vojny. Napriek tomu je veľmi dôležitá pre pochopenie dynamiky medzi jednotlivými židovskými skupinami (s. 6). Postupne analyzuje päťicu prejavov, ktoré chápe v kontexte starovekej rétoriky ako dielo Flaviusovej kreativity a zručnosti (s. 8–9). Reč Vespasiána v Gamale (IV,40–48), bývalého veľkňaza Ananusa II (IV,162–192), Ježiša syna Gamaly v Jeruzaleme (IV,238–269), idumejského veliteľa Šimona (IV,271–283) a anonymného zélotu (IV,345–352). Výsledkom jeho analýzy je záver, že hoci tieto reči všetky napísal Jozef, tak ich nevyužil na prezentáciu vlastnej ideológie, ale ako zručný historik usiloval o vytvorenie dôveryhodnej reči vhodnej pre konkrétneho rečníka a jeho charakter (s. 24). Súčasťou tejto štúdie aj *apendix* obsahujúci nový preklad všetkých piatich rečí do angličtiny.

Autorom druhej štúdie, s názvom „Considerations on Oaths of Loyalty under Augustus in Josephus“ je Tibor Grüll, profesor starovekých dejín na Univerzite v Pésci. V tejto štúdii sa venuje otázke skladania prísah v Ríme cisárskeho obdobia. Jozef Flavius poznamenáva, že viacerí starovekí vládcovia tvrdili, že židia sú obzvlášť verní prisahám, ktoré zložili. Pravdepodobným dôvodom pre takúto vernosť prísahám bol ten, že v staroveku sa prisahalo často na mená bohov (s. 47). Z toho dôvodu pokiaľ židia boli ochotní prisahať, tak takú prísahu brali veľmi vážne, alebo – ako Grüll ukazuje – viaceré židovské (a kresťanské) texty prísahy zakazujú (tak napr. Filón, Kumránska komunita, Mišna, Talmud, ale taktiež Ježiš v Evanjeliu podľa Matúša). Špecifický problém v dobe cisárstva potom predstavovalo všadeprítomné prisahanie lojality cisárovi, ktoré mohli mať taktiež podobu náboženskej prísahy Augustovi, ktorý sa tituloval ako *divi filius*. Grüll venuje pozornosť predovšetkým dvom epizódam z Jozefa, konkrétne *Ant.* 17,41–43, kde sa

³ Projekt s názvom *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary* (ed. Steve Mason) vychádza od roku 1999 a doposiaľ vyšlo deväť zväzkov z plánovaných devätnástich, viď: <https://brill.com/display/serial/CFJ?language=en>

popisuje ako farizeji odmietli prisahať lojalitu cisárovi a kráľovi (Herodesovi) a *Ant.* 18,1–5, kde je popísaný súpis ľudu v Judei za senátora Quirinia. Zatiaľ čo v prvom prípade bolo umožnené farizejom a esejom prejaviť svoju lojalitu iným spôsobom, ako sľubom, v tom druhom takáto možnosť nebola, pretože Judea v tejto dobe bola už rímskou provinciou (s. 49).

Ďalšou štúdiou je príspevok Tal Ilan, profesorky židovských dejín na Slobodnej univerzite v Berlíne, s názvom „The ‘Coalition’ Government of Jerusalem (66–67 CE) in Josephus’ *Bellum* and in Rabbinic Literature“. Ako autorka uvádza, táto štúdia vychádza z rozsiahlejšej kolektívnej práce, ktorá monograficky vyšla v hebrejčine v roku 2017. Ilan porovnáva informácie o „koaličnej“ vláde v Jeruzaleme z diela *Židovská vojna* a zo zmienok v rabínskej literatúre. Poznamenáva, že v rabínske texty nejavia žiadne známky toho, že by Jozefovo dielo poznali a citovali, avšak s ohľadom na popis tejto konfliktnej jeruzalemskej vlády nachádza množstvo paralel (s. 54–55). Tie tak môžu slúžiť ako nezávislý dodatočný materiál, ktorý nám umožňuje hlbšie porozumenie dôležitých postáv tejto vlády a zároveň pomáha osvetliť niektoré menej zrozumiteľné časti z *Bel.* Celkovo Ilan analyzuje tradície o piatich osobách, ktoré sa (i keď občas pod iným menom) objavujú ako u Jozefa, tak v rabínskych textoch.

Vo štvrtej štúdií nazvanej „Die vielschichtige Entwicklung des Verständnisses der Prophetie bei Flavius Josephus und seine Dilemmata“ sa Jiří Hoblík, docent Filozofickej fakulty Univerzity Jana Evangelisty Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem, venuje vývoju proroctva u Jozefa. Popisuje základné uchopenie proroctva v Jozefovom diele, ktoré pokrýva predovšetkým obdobie biblických prorokov, avšak v istom zmysle zasahuje až do doby hasmonejského vládcu Jána Hyrkána a taktiež do Jozefovej súčasnosti. Hoblík postupne skúma vzťah Jozefa k biblickému proroctvu a jeho premeny, ako aj jazykové zvláštnosti, ktoré Jozef pre proroctvo používa. Za dôležitú rolu prorokov považuje predovšetkým ich schopnosť pomáhať prekonávať konflikty. Zaujímavou je aj jeho diskusia o tom, či sa Jozef sám považoval za proroka. Hoblík uvádza, že hoci Jozef o sebe ako o prorokovi nehovoril, tak fakticky sa za proroka považoval, pretože sa v duchu starozákonných prorokov staval do role Božieho posla (s. 91–92).

Autorom nasledujúcej štúdie „Coalitions and Alliances in 8th Century B.C.E.“ je Ádám Vér, doktor klasickej filologie z Eötvös Loránd Univerzity v Budapešti. Vér si všíma, že Jozefov príbeh o kráľovi Acházovi z *Ant.* 9,252 obsahuje na rozdiel od predlohy z 2Kr 16,7–9

zmienku o tom, že Acház prosí asýrskeho kráľa Tiglat-Pilesera o pomoc ako spojenca (συμμαχίαν αὐτὸν παρασχεῖν). Zbytok štúdie venuje skúmaniu blízkovýchodných klinopisných dohôd o spojenectvách z 8. storočia pred n. l., do ktorého je epizóda z biblického príbehu zasadená. S ohľadom na to, že na jednom kráľovskom nápise Tiglat-Pilesera III. je uvedený ako poddaný aj judský kráľ Acház, je veľmi pravdepodobné, že sa v duchu uvedených dohôd Acház zaviazal spojenectvom a prísahou svojmu asýrskemu pánovi (s. 110–111). Z toho Vér odvodzuje, že Jozef zmienkou o spojenectve je historicky bližší realite, než jeho biblická predloha.

Ďalšou v poradí je štúdia „Jewish Troops in Foreign Wars in the Hellenistic Period According to Josephus“ od Józsefa Zsengelléra, profesora judaistiky na Židovskom teologickom seminári v Budapešti. Ako napovedá názov, Zsengellér si všíma zmienky o účasti židovských vojakov v armádach nežidovských národov a ich vojnách, konkrétne v armádach Alexandra Veľkého, Ptolemaia I., Seleuka Nikatora, Antiocha Veľkého a obce v službách Egypta. V jednotlivých epizódach sa opakuje dôležitý dôraz, že židovskí vojaci sú schopní, dôveryhodní a predovšetkým lojálni pre svoju zbožnosť a vieru v Boha (s. 122–123). Taktiež si všíma troch špecifických prípadov, kedy židia stáli proti iným židom. Za vlády hasmonejca Alexandra Jannaia sa niektorí židia vzbúrili a bojovali proti nemu na strane Demetria III. Jozef taktiež zmieňuje dezertérov a odpadlíkov za Makabejského povstania, ktorí spoločne so seleukovskou armádou usilovali o potlačenie makabejských povstalcov. Posledným takýmto prípadom je vojenský stret jednotiek Julia Caesara, ktorému asistovali aj židia pod vedením Antipátera a egyptských vojsk, za ktoré bojovali taktiež židia pod vedením Oniáša. Jozef sa k týmto konfliktným situáciám nijako nevyjadruje a usiluje sa radšej prezentovať židovských vojakov ako vzorových hrdinov, vždy statočných a lojálnych.

Autorom siedmej štúdie je István Karasszon, profesor Novej zmluvy z Univerzity J. Selyeho v Komárne. Jeho štúdia „Frieden bei Josephus. Esra und die jüdische Restauration in den *Antiquitates*“ sa zaoberá tým, ako Jozef, ktorý sa inak obsiahlo venuje popisom vojen, prezentuje obdobie mieru v židovskej spoločnosti v Judei. Pre túto analýzu zvolil obdobie obnovy Judei (resp. perzskej provincie Jehud) za doby Ezdráša a nasledujúcich desaťročí. Všíma si však aj vnútorné konflikty, ktoré toto obdobie sprevádzali, predovšetkým konflikt Zerubbábela a Šešbaccara či rozkol so Samaritánmi. Karasszon však venuje pozornosť aj historickej práci Jozefa, ktorý kreatívne dopĺňa chýbajúce pramene o „slepých“ miestach biblickej histórie 5. a 4. storočia z iných prameňov a textov: dopĺňa dvorský príbeh

o Zerubbábelovi alebo príbeh o Ester. Tým však taktiež vytvára nové interpretácie týchto textov a taktiež dejín analyzovaného obdobia.

Ďalšia štúdia „The Greek Semantics of War and Peace: Between εἰρήνη and πόλεμος in Flavius Josephus“ sa venuje rozboru dvoch gréckych slov označujúcich vojnu a mier a jej autorom je Carson Bay, postdoktorand na Univerzite v Berne. Ako aj viacerí ďalší autori v tejto knihe Bay poznamenáva, že Jozef výrazne častejšie píše o vojne ako o mieri. Cieľom jeho štúdie je lepšie porozumieť ideám spojeným s pojmami πόλεμος a εἰρήνη. Taká štúdia by mohla byť samozrejme veľmi rozsiahla a preto sa Bay limituje iba na *Židovskú vojnu* a na analýzu slovných spojení, kde študované slová sú v genitíve singuláru bez člena. Takže ide o také výskyty, ktoré z logiky odkazujú na atribúty a aspekty vojny a mieru. Konkrétne v študovanom korpuse sleduje spojenia ako: hrôzy vojny, rozhodujúci činiteľ či zlomový okamžik vojny, zákon vojny, snaha o vojnu či (teoretické) uvažovanie o vojne, vojenské skutky alebo povery o vojne a na strane druhej, služobníci mieru, túžiaci po mieri či garancia mieru. Výsledky tejto analýzy nie sú nijak prekvapivé a obsahujú viaceré truizmy. Zaujímavý koncept avšak Bay zmieňuje v diskusii o zákone vojny, ktorý u Jozefa znamená akési nepísané pravidlo vojnových konfliktov, že víťazi môžu (alebo skôr musia) zničiť miesta, ktoré dobyli a to aj za cenu neúmernej a zbytočnej miery násilia (s. 153). Príkladom realizácie tohto zákona je úplné zničenie Jeruzalema a jeho chrámu, ktoré nastáva potom, čo sa Titus rozhodne tento zákon nasledovať vo všetkých svojich skutkoch (*BJ* 3,280–281).

Autorom nasledujúcej štúdie „Στάσις und ὄχλος in der Geschichtsschreibung bei Josephus“ je Martin Meisner, profesor Novej zmluvy zo Saarland Univerzity v Saarbrücken. Ako názov prezrádza, témou je Jozefovo uchopenie pojmov στάσις (teda vzburá, rebélia) a ὄχλος (dav, „divoká“ masa ľudí). Meisner najprv sleduje sémantické pole týchto pojmov v gréckej literatúre a taktiež v gréckom preklade Starej zmluvy. Všíma si, že ὄχλος v gréckej literatúre na rozdiel od δῆμος, πλῆθος či οἱ πολλοί neoznačuje neutrálny dav, ani skupinu vzdelaných elít, ale spája sa s politicky nestabilným rozbúreným davom (s. 162). V Septuaginte ὄχλος neoznačuje vzbúrený dav, ale dav odmietajúci Mojžišovú autoritu a Božie zákony (s. 164). Na základe analýzy vybraných pasáží Meisner tvrdí, že Jozef používa στάσις a ὄχλος ako charakteristiku židov v rôznych historických a kultúrnych kontextoch, kedy sa svojím chovaním rozchádzajú s Mojžišovými zákonmi zjavenými Bohom. Práve pre tento dôvod sú židovské masy zvädzané k vzburě, čo však Jozef chápe ako zlyhanie predovšetkým vo vzťahu k židovskej tradícii.

Aj predposledná štúdia sa zaoberá témou vzbury, konkrétne je nazvaná „The Theme of *Stasis* in Antiquities: Josephus' Political Philosophy and Periodization of History“ a jej autorom je David R. Edwards z Florida State University. Edwards si všíma, že terminológia spojená so vzburou sa vyskytuje v *Židovských starožitnostiach* predovšetkým v niektorých konkrétnych obdobiach, pričom v poslednej tretine jej počet výskytov výrazne narastá (s. 182–183). To naznačuje jednoznačný postupný úpadok židovského politického života. Ako Edwards ukazuje, tieto momenty korelujú s ústupom politického zriadenia odpovedajúceho Mojžišovej „ústave“ v podobe aristokratickej kňazskej vlády, ktorej predsedajú zbožní a spravodliví vodcovia. Na opačnej strane spektra stojí monarchické zriadenie, ktorého najhoršia podoba je tyrania bezbožného kráľa.

V poslednej štúdii nazvanej „Der Begriff ἐλευθερία im *Bellum Judaicum*“ skúma Viktor Kókai-Nagy teologicky a filozoficky nabitý termín ἐλευθερία („sloboda“) v diele *Židovská vojna*. V rámci tohto spisu hrá pojem slobody kľúčovú rolu predovšetkým v dvoch rečiach: reči Agrippu (2,345–402) a v reči Eleazara (7,323–388). V nich sa vyskytuje 19krát, pričom v celej *Židovskej vojne* iba 34krát. Okrem nich Kókai-Nagy analyzuje taktiež Jozefovu reč v galilejskej Jotapate. Sloboda sa objavuje predovšetkým ako náboženský a politický ideál (s. 197). Politický rozmer je vidieť v reči Agrippy, ktorý ukazuje, že sloboda je v súčasnosti nedosiahnuteľná a orientuje sa na budúcu nádej. V Eleazarovej reči má sloboda výraznejší náboženský rozmer, pretože je spojená s vierou v posmrtnú odmenu pre tých, ktorí si zvolia slobodu v podobe samovraždy tvárou tvár zotročeniu od Rimanov. V druhej časti tejto reči Eleazar nadväzuje na platónske uchopenie duše a tela a argumentuje v prospech oslobodenia duše od telesných útrap. V protiklade k tomu stojí Jozefova reč v Jotapate, v ktorej odporuje predstave nevynútenej smrti, ktorú považuje za zbabelú, rovnako ako odmietanie zomrieť, keď si to nutnosť žiada. Celkovo sa ukazuje, že sloboda je pre Jozefa predovšetkým nábožensko-politický ideál a skutočnú slobodu môže dať iba Boh. Filozofické špekulácie o vnútornej slobode síce poznal, ale nezdieľal.

Vidíme teda, že recenzovaná kniha ponúka bohatý pohľad na zaujímavú tému vojny a mieru v diele Jozefa. Nepochybne prináša nové podnety pre ďalšie bádanie a monotematické zakotvenie môže pomôcť interdisciplinárnemu rozhovoru, pretože vďaka nahromadenému materiálu bude Jozefovo myslenie dostupnejšie aj ďalším historikom staroveku, ktorí sa touto témou zaoberajú.

Pokiaľ ide o jednotlivé štúdie, je možné poukázať na niekoľko nedostatkov. Grüll pri interpretácii Quirinovho súpisu ľudu pracuje s tvrdením, že Herodesovo kráľovstvo bolo povinné odvádzať Rímu tribút (tzv. *stipendaria*), ako tomu bolo po anexii za cisára Pompeia (s. 48–49). Avšak ako dokladajú novšie štúdie (ktoré Grüll taktiež zmieňuje!), tento štatút sa zmenil s vymenovaním Herodesa za kráľa židov, predovšetkým po bitke pri Actiu. Od tejto doby bolo jeho kráľovstvo najskôr oslobodené od priamych daní cisárovi.⁴

Za nešťastné taktiež považujem to, že Tal Ilan takmer vôbec neodkazuje na sekundárnu literatúru, ktorú si podľa autorky môže čitateľ dohľadať v jej knihe vydanéj v hebrejskom jazyku, v ktorej sa téme venovala podrobnejšie (tak s. 53, pozn. 1).

Príspevok Ádáma Véra prináša množstvo zaujímavého klinopisného materiálu, ktorý ukazuje na zaujímavú zhodu medzi povahou týchto blízkovýchchodných dohôd a príbehom o Acházovi. Tato zhoda sa však týka iba *jedného slova* z Jozefa a autor neponúka žiadnu interpretáciu alebo hypotézu tejto zhody.

Taktiež mám rozpačité dojmy zo štúdie Carsona Baya, ktorá pôsobí trochu ako cvičenie v lexikálnej analýze, ktoré však nevedie k žiadnej významnej téze. Autor sám pripúšťa, že výsledky jeho analýzy môžu čitateľovi prísť ako zoznam banálnych truizmov (s. 157). Bay tvrdí, že jeho štúdia nad to ešte ukázala, že „Jozef písal o (...) regiónoch, obdobiach a národoch, ktoré sa vyznačovali vojnou, konfliktom a násilím, nie mierom“ (s. 157). To je však ťažko objavné tvrdenie.

Napriek niekoľko málo výhradám môžem recenzovanú knihu vrelo odporučiť každému záujemcovi o štúdium diela Jozefa, starovekých vojenských konfliktov alebo židovskej historiografie.

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[Published online January 30, 2024]

⁴ Prehľadne vid' Fabian Udoh, *To Caesar What is Caesar's* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), 118–159.