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The Spoken Word, the Book and the Image in the Work of Evangelization

Little is known about the equipment of the early missionaries who set out to evangelize pagans or apostates. Even when the missionaries did leave behind some accounts or memoirs of their missions, which, anyway, did not happen frequently, they omitted these matters; the hagiographers rarely, if at all, reported on that aspect, and if so, they did it rather casually, vaguely and in a stereotypical way. After all, the writers from whom we gain the knowledge about the missions were interested in the missionaries' successes, in the hardships and obstacles in the way leading them to their aim, and sometimes also in their failures, as long as those were of transitory character. It should be added that on the whole the authors of the sources were not interested, fortunately with some exceptions, in the details of beliefs or in the way of living of the objects of the missions. And scarcely ever, not to say exceptionally, is the 'infrastructure' of the missionary activity revealed in the sources.

It is not my intention to attempt to present in greater detail that complex subject, which is undoubtedly important but difficult to grasp. It includes, for example, such aspects as transportation (the roads and the means of transport used by the missionaries) or practical ways to communicate with the locals (the role of interpreters), etc. If we wished to answer the question what the missionaries used to take or are supposed to have taken with them when they set out on a missionary journey, we could intuitively hazard a guess that above all it must have been some even the most modest supplies of food and drink and the indispensable objects of worship (a cross, a chalice, a paten, a chasuble, perhaps a portable altar). When

it was possible, it could have been good to have some kind of gifts which would facilitate receiving a positive welcome from the rulers or people who were dominant in the communities to be evangelized.

Undoubtedly, some holy relics which the missionaries carried with them in order to ease the magic contact with the pagan environment and protect themselves against the evil forces raised their spirits, but sometimes they also made an impression on the evangelized. Occasionally, as in the case of St. Winfried – Boniface, the missionaries were equipped with an axe or other tools useful for destroying pagan idols or sacred trees.

There is no doubt that out of the three terms mentioned in the title of the present contribution the key role in the process of evangelization must have been played by the spoken word preached indirectly or through an interpreter, at least in the areas and environments remote from the centers of ancient civilization. It could not have been otherwise in the face of communities which did not know the art of reading and all the more of writing. This is so clearly evident that it does not seem necessary to substantiate that. A little bit more attention (but only a little bit) will be devoted to the two remaining media, that is, the written word and the image.

The former is quite frequently mentioned in the sources or found in the mediaeval iconography. Christianity was a religion of the book, the principles of faith remained unshaken in the canon of the Holy Scripture which was being slowly shaped; they were deepened, specified and interpreted within the range approved of by the Church; sometimes, though, without its 'official' acceptance (e.g. the Apocrypha). It would be difficult to imagine a missionary who did not have in his travelling bag, if not the full text of the Bible (high costs of the manuscript, unwieldy weight and bulky volume), at least the texts of the Gospels and (or), let us say, the Psalms as well as the most indispensable liturgical 'aids'(the Missal, the Evangeliary?), although we must not forget that for many missionaries, particularly those of monastic provenance, it was obvious that they had to commit the most important texts of the Holy Scriptures to memory. What a longer loss of access to the written word could have led to (due to inability or negligence) can be illustrated by the experience of Winfried-Boniface in the course of his missionary or pastoral activity in the territory of Bavaria. As we find out from the letter written in 746 by Pope Zachary to Boniface (who, after his arrival at the continent, used the Christian name only), there were some complaints about Boniface which had reached the Pope's ears that he reputedly demanded a repeat baptism of those Bavarians who had

been baptized by a certain clergyman who had pronounced a nonsensical formula: "I baptize you in the name of the fatherland, daughter and the Holy Spirit" ('Baptizo te in nomine patria et filia et spiritus sancti'). Apparently not knowing Latin, the said priest did not understand the formula which he pronounced and contorted the words in a caricatured way. By the way, the Pope acknowledged the legitimacy of the complaints and advised Boniface about the groundlessness of his demand, since the baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity is valid even in the case when it is administered by an undoubted heretic, so the more it remains valid when performed by a poorly educated or unintelligent priest.¹

There exists quite a lot of information about possessing manuscripts by the missionaries. Apart from the fundamental theological or pastoral value of the holy books, it is not infrequently that we encounter other aspects of their usefulness as means of magical power.² The books played a particular role in the life and activities of Winfried-Boniface. According to tradition, in the face of death he shielded himself from a pagan Frisian's blow with a copy of the Evangeliary, which can be considered symbolical.³ A tale included in *The Life of Anskar*, the apostle of the peoples of Northern Europe,⁴ written by Rimbert in the 860s or 870s⁵, clearly demonstrates the force of the holy books in the missionary activity and, at the same time,

1. Briefe des Bonifatius. *Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius nebst einigen zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*, ed. by R. Rau (*Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe*, v. IVb), Darmstadt 1968, p. 210 (Latin), 211 (German translation).
2. E. Potkowski, *Książka w kręgu sacrum – przykład Irlandii we wczesnym średniowieczu*, „Przegląd Humanistyczny” 40 1996 1, pp. 53–68, in: by the same author, *Książka i pismo w średniowieczu. Studia z dziejów kultury piśmiennej i komunikacji społecznej*, Pułtusk 2006, pp. 211–240.
3. E. Potkowski, *Moc księgi – przykład św. Bonifacego*, in: *Scriptura custos memoriae. Prace historyczne* [memorial book dedicated to B. Kürbis], Poznań 2001, pp. 203–216, *Moc księgi – męczeństwo św. Bonifacego*, in: idem, *Książka i pismo w średniowieczu*, pp. 241–256. In the so-called Codex Bonifatianus 2 (or Ragyntrudis-Codex) in Fulda, which is indeed dated to the first half of the 8th c., there are visible blow marks from a sword or an axe. However, it is not an evangeliary; hence, the attempt to identify it with the book which Boniface was accompanied by in Frisia does not seem accurate.
4. On Anskar see: J. Strzelczyk, *Apostołowie Europy*, Warszawa 1997, Poznań 2010, pp. 128–140.
5. Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, c. 16, 18, ed. by W. Trillmich, in: *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches* (*Ausgewählte Quellen* [as in footnote 1], 11, Darmstadt 1978, pp. 52–55 (Latin and German translation).

the losses caused by the plundering raids of the Norsemen. At the beginning we learn that during a destructive raid on Hamburg in c. 845 not only was the cathedral and all the liturgical equipment destroyed, but also "the splendid Bible, which was given to our Father [Anskar] by His Majesty the Emperor, was burnt alongside other numerous books". Besides this quite routine description of facts, however, we find in Rimbert's work also other, much more interesting information:

God, however merciful, justly punishes evil deeds, which the wrongdoers learned the hard way in different manners. "There are a lot of stories to be told about that", writes the hagiographer, but he limits himself to giving just one example. One of the robbers brought to his parental home the rich spoils of the plunder, and soon all kinds of disasters began to strike the household and the family: the cattle and the household servants died one after another and so did the son – perpetrator, the wife of the master of the household, his other son and his daughter. When only one little son remained from his family and property, he realized that he must have fallen victim to revenge of one of the gods. Therefore, "as was customary there", he turned to the soothsayer so that he would reveal to him which god he had offended and how he could compensate for that. After performing the usual rituals the diviner stated that all the gods were favourably inclined towards him, except for the god of Christians, who was hostile to him. "It was Christ", he said, "that has ruined you. The disaster has struck you because there is something in your house that is devoted to Him; as long as this thing stays in your house, you will not get rid of the disaster". After consideration the hapless father came to the conclusion that it might have concerned some book which had been brought by his son among the loot. However, he did not know how to get out of trouble: the soothsayer had not told him that and none of the local people he had asked for advice had any idea. Finally, he tried solving the problem in the following way: he hung the book on the fence and announced that it could be taken by anybody who would want to and he himself would be doing penance for the misdeed to Jesus Christ. "A certain Christian, whom I heard the story from, took the book to his house. He later showed such a zeal of faith that he learned to sing psalms with us perfectly, although he could not read".

By contrast with the books, the images are very rarely mentioned by the writers in the context of the evangelizing missions. We shall omit here the otherwise important theoretical problem of the superiority of the written word over the image, which was particularly hotly debated, as it seems,

during the period of controversy about the veneration of holy pictures. There were numerous opinions putting the spoken word higher than the image, despite various reasonable voices (e.g. of Pope Gregory the Great) which pointed out the usefulness of plastic art representations, particularly as regards the effect they had on the illiterate people.⁶

Describing the arrival of the missionary Augustine at the court of the king of Kent Ethelbert (597) in his main historiographic work titled *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (Book I, chapter 25)⁷, Bede the Venerable mentioned the king's fears of the visitors' possible magic powers and stressed: "At illi non daemonica sed diuina uirtute praediti ueniebant, crucem pro uexillo ferentes argenteam, et imaginem Domini Saluatoris in tabula depictam [...]". When the monarch, convinced of the missionaries' good intentions, allowed them to enter the capital city of Canterbury, "Fertur autem, quia adpropinquantes civitate more suo cum cruce sancta et imagine magni regis Domini nostri Iesu Christi hanc laetantiam consona uoce modularentur[...]". In his another work called *Historia abbatum* Bede informs that the founder of the monastery in Wearmouth-Jarrow, Abbot Benedict Biscop (d. around 690), brought from the continent (mainly from Rome), apart from numerous books, also paintings, costly liturgical equipment and vestments.⁸

In the years 826–828 a gifted poet Ermoldus Nigellus, who was living at the Aquitaine court of King Pepin, Charlemagne's son (814–838), wrote an extensive epic dedicated to Louis the Pious (*In honorem Hludowici christianissimi caesaris augusti*).⁹ The last, Fourth book of the poem recounts the inauguration of the mission to the pagan Danes by Archbishop Ebon

6. For some more important source comments on this subject see: W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki, t. II: Estetyka średniowieczna*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1962, pp. 118–127, and (more extensively) J. Białostocki, *Myśliciele, kronikarze i artyści o sztuce od starożytności do 1500 r. (Historia doktryn artystycznych. Wybór tekstów, cz. I, t. 1)*, Warszawa 1978, pp. 190–210.
7. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave, R. A. B. McNors, Oxford 1969, pp. 74–75 (Latin and English translation).
8. *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by C. Plummer, vol. I, Oxford 1896, pp. 369, 373.
9. Generally: F. Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, vol. I, München 1975, pp. 390–394; D. Schaller, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 3, Br. 10, Zürich-München 1986, col. 2160–2161. See E. Dümmler's edition: *Ermoldus Nigellus, In honorem Hludowici christianissimi caesaris augusti*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Poetae*, vol. 2, Berolini 1885, pp. 5–79.

from Reims (823), another expedition against rebellious Bretons, Danish king Harold's stay at the court of Louis in Ingelheim, his baptism and alliance entered with the emperor. The account of the circumstances and the ceremonies accompanying the act of baptism of a pagan ruler constitutes an exceptionally important source of information by virtue of its exactitude, despite some minor inaccuracies.¹⁰ It also includes a poetical description of the paintings which could be seen on the walls of the palace church and the presence chamber of the Ingelheim residence.¹¹ The ones in the church are reported to have depicted numerous scenes and episodes from the Old and New Testament, from the Paradise and the sin of the First Parents to Ascension of Christ (except for His passion and death), whereas the frescos in the presence chamber were of secular content and portrayed characters and acts of ancient rulers (Ninus, Cyrus, Phalaris, Romulus and Remus, Hannibal, Alexander the Great) and (according to reconstruction) Constantine, Theodosius (I), Charles Martel, Pepin of Aquitaine and Charlemagne. The selection of Christian rulers demonstrates clearly the aspect of supporting and spreading Christianity. Thus, in connection with Mayor of the Palace Charles Martel we read:

Hinc Carolus primus Frisonum Marte magister | Pingitur, et secum
grandia gesta manus,

and with reference to Charlemagne:

Et Carolus sapiens vultus praetendit apertos, | Fertque coronatum
stemmate rite caput; | Hinc Saxona cohors contra stat, proelia
temptat, | Ille ferit, domitat, ad sua iura trahit.

Obviously, the description provided by Ermoldus Nigellus, although unmatched by any other in early mediaeval writing as far as its exactitude

10. See: A. Angenendt, *Kaiserherrschaft und Königstaufe. Kaiser, Könige und Päpste als geistliche Patrone in der abendländischen Missionsgeschichte* (Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung. Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster, 15), Berlin—New York 1984, pp. 215—223.
11. For an attempt at reconstructing and a thorough analysis of Ermoldus Nigellus' source see: W. Lammers, *Ein karolingisches Bildprogramm in der Aula Regia von Ingelheim*, in: *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag am 19. September 1971*, vol. 3, Göttingen 1972, pp. 226—289, W. Lammers, *Vestigia mediaevalia. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur mittelalterlichen Historiographie, Landes- und Kirchengeschichte* (Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen, 19), Wiesbaden 1979, pp. 219—283.

is concerned, gives only a faint idea of the particular historical pictures shown in Ingelheim, but although none of the Carolingian frescoes has survived to the present day¹² or has left any later traces in the sources (as a matter of fact, only modest relics of this early stage of Carolingian residential architecture have been preserved in this centre which was important for the Carolingian, Ottonian and Hohenstaufen dynasties¹³), the iconographical relationship between the cycle and the missionary ideology and policy of Louise the Pious is clearly evident. Although Ermoldus Nigellus places the baptism of Harald and his family in Ingelheim, while according to other sources, which are more reliable in this case, it took place in Mainz, the presence of the Danish ruler in Ingelheim is beyond the question.

I should also like to draw the readers' attention to two other works of wall painting of the secular content which are documented by the sources but have not been preserved, one of which is earlier, and the other later than the paintings in Ingelheim. The former, which is not related to the missionary issues, though, is described by Paul the Deacon, the chronicler of the Langobards (*Hist. Langobardorum* IV, 22):

There [in Monza] also the aforesaid queen [Theodelinda, d. 627] built herself a palace, in which she caused to be painted something of the achievements of the Langobards. In this painting it is clearly shown in what way the Langobards at that time cut their hair, and what was their dress and what their appearance. They shaved the neck, and left it bare up to the back of the head, having their hair hanging down on the face as far as the mouth and parting it on either side by a part in the forehead. Their garments were loose and mostly linen, such as the Anglo-Saxons are wont to wear, ornamented with broad borders woven in various colors. Their shoes, indeed, were open almost up to the tip of the great toe, and were held on by shoe latches interlacing alternately. But later they began to wear trousers, over which they put leggings of shaggy woolen

12. Archaeological excavations discovered remains of painted wall plaster (including remains of some figure depictions) on the site of the Carolingian palace (see: W. Lammers, *Ein karolingisches...*, op. cit., p. 224).
13. For a concise discussion see: H. Grewe, *Ingelheim*, in: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 15, Berlin—New York 2000, pp. 420–423 (with some more important literature of the subject).

cloth when they rode. But they had taken that from a custom of the Romans.¹⁴

The other description mentioned above is very succinct and it was written by Liudprand of Cremona (*Antapodosis* II, 31). Having described a fierce battle fought by King Henry I with the Hungarians near Merseburg which was ultimately victorious for Christians, he added:

Hunc vero triumphum tam laude quam memoria dignum ad Meresburg rex in superiori cenaculo domus per ζογραφεϊαν, zografian, id est picturam, notare praecepit, adeo ut rem veram potius quam veri similem videas.¹⁵

At this point, it is worth mentioning that some missionaries could have also encountered paintings (or, even more often, sculptures – idols), with the content hostile to them, among the pagans. For example, with reference to the Slavs, in the famous description written by Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg (*Chronicon* VI, 23) of the main sanctuary of the Lutici – Veleti – the mysterious (since it has not been found as yet, despite numerous researchers' efforts) Rethra (Radogoszcz), we read:

In eadem est nil nisi fanum de ligno artificiose compositum [...]. Huius parietes variae deorum earumque imagines mirifice insculpte, ut cernentibus videtur, exterium ornant; interius autem dii stant manu facti, singulis nominibus insculptis [...].¹⁶

Not wishing to engage in the discussion about the credibility and interpretation of Thietmar's account¹⁷, it is still worth noting that his another account (VII, 64), concerning a certain episode from the last clash with Bolesław I the Brave (Bolesław Chrobry) in 1017, which was rather unfortunate for the Germans, is a confirmation of the theory that at the beginning of the

14. Paweł Diakon, *Historia rzymska. Historia Longobardów*, przekł. i oprac. I. Lewanowski, Warszawa 1995, p. 268; [the English translation from: Paul the Deacon, transl. W.D. Foulke, Philadelphia 1907, pp. 166–167 – translator's note].

15. *Quellen zur Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit* (Ausgewählte Quellen [as in note 1], vol. 8, Darmstadt 1977, p. 324.

16. *Kronika Thietmara*, red. M.Z. Jedlicki, Poznań 1953, p. 345 (Latin), p. 344 (Polish translation).

17. For balanced arguments of Stanisław Rosik see: *Interpretacja chrześcijańska religii pogańskich Słowian w świetle kronik niemieckich XI–XII w.* (Thietmar, Adam z Bremy, Helmold), Wrocław 2000, particularly pp. 101ff.

eleventh century the Polabian Slavs not only erected statues to their gods (which is well-certified by source materials and beyond dispute¹⁸), but also made paintings of them. The Veleti, whom Emperor Henry II allied with against the ruler of the Polans,

redeuntes irati dedectus deae suimet illatum quaeruntur. Nam haeci nvexillisformata¹⁹ a quodam Herimanni marchionis socio lapide uno traiecta est; et dum hoc ministri eius imperatori dolenter retulissent, ad emendationem XII talenta perceperunt. Et cum iuxta Vurcin civitatem Mildam nimis effusam transire voluissent, deam cum egreio L militum comitatu alteram perdidere,

which they considered a bad omen and so part of the Veleti warriors demanded a break of the alliance with the emperor.²⁰

In conclusion, I would like to present a certain episode from the later (the very beginning of the thirteenth century) history of Christian missions. It concerns an attempt to give a performance of a stage dramatization about Old Testament prophets by the local pioneers of the Christian faith in the recently settled Baltic town of Riga. The relevant and, actually, concise account written by the chronicler Henry of Latvia (*Chronicon Livoniae* IX, 14)²¹ is worth quoting 'in extenso':

De ludo magno, qui fuit in Riga Eadem hyeme factus est ludus prophetarum ordinatissimus in medio Riga, ut fidei christiane rudimenta gentilitas fide disceret oculata. Cuius ludi materia tam nephitis quam paganis, qui aderant, per interpretem diligentissime exponebatur. Ubi autem armati Gedeonis cum Phylisteis pugnant, pagani timentes occidi fugere ceperunt, sed caute sunt revocati. Sic ergo ad modicum tempus siluit ecclesia in pace quiescendo. Iste autem ludus quasi preludium et presagium erat futurorum. Nam in eodem ludo erant bella, utpote David, Gedeonis, Herodis; erat et doctrina Veteris et Novi Testamenti, quia nimirum per bella

18. See.: L. P. Ślupecki, *Slavonic pagan sanctuaries*, Warszawa 1994, particularly chapter 3; L. P. Ślupecki, *Słowiańskie posągi bóstw*, „Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej” 1993 1, pp. 33–69.

19. Thietmar's emphasis.

20. *Kronika Thietmara*, op. cit., pp. 558–561 (Latin and Polish translation).

21. Heinrich von Lettland, *Livländische Chronik*, ed. by A. Bauer (Ausgewählte Quellen, [as in note 1], vol. 24, Darmstadt 1959, p. 44.

plurima que sequuntur convertenda erat gentilitas et per doctrinam Veteris et Novi Testamenti erat instruenda, qualiter ad verum pacificum et ad vitam perveniat eternam.

Henry of Latvia's testimony is unique and noteworthy for a number of reasons.²² From our point of view the most interesting is the missionary and pastoral aspect. Indeed, it was an extraordinary idea to attempt to instil the Christian teaching at the outermost periphery of Western Christianity to the Livonians, both those newly-converted and those still remaining with paganism, by the use of a combination of the image and live words, that is, by the theatrical performance. Although there is no information about it, it can be assumed that the spectators were not forced to arrive, at the very most they might have been encouraged to come. The language of the performance must have been either Latin or Low German, since the missionaries and merchants arriving in Riga came from northern Germany, and so the content must have been interpreted simultaneously to the locals for whom the performance was intended (it is quite likely that the chronicler Henry himself may have been the interpreter). Thus, it was not a pantomime. 'In the centre of Riga' should be understood as the central square inside the developing town. Were the originators and performers of the play local clergymen, who most probably were not too numerous, or rather some scholars and seminarians newly arrived from one of the spiritual centres in northern Germany (as Albert, the founder of Riga and Bishop of the city since 1199, had previously been a canon and head of the cathedral school in Bremen)? It is striking that the entire event is reported to have taken place in winter and undoubtedly outdoors, so it can be presumed that the performance was not supposed to last too long. As for its content, the chronicler informs only that it dealt with both Old and New Testaments; it was about certain episodes connected with the characters of Judge Gideon and Kings David and Herod. The most interesting perhaps was the reaction of the spectators who, beyond doubt, had seen a theatrical performance for the first time in their lives, which also testifies to considerable acting skills

22. For the most detailed and in-depth study, see: R. Schneider, *Straßentheater im Missionseinsatz. Zu Heinrichs von Lettland Bericht über ein großes Spiel in Riga 1205*, in: *Studien über die Anfänge der Mission in Livland*, ed. by M. Hellmann (Vorträge und Forschungen Hg. vom Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte, Sonderband 37), Sigmaringen 1989, pp. 107–121.

or persuasive talent of the originators and performers of the play. When Gideon's army was fighting with the Philistines, the spectators got into panic – obviously they were not able to distinguish the theatrical fiction from reality and therefore feared that they, too, like the Philistines, would or might be killed. "Anecdotes about the spectators who are affected by the events on the stage as if those were adventures of real people could fill out a tome".²³ They could not have got far, however, since after a while they were stopped and – apparently calmed down – returned.

The chronicler's commentary on that event is equally interesting. "That performance turned out to be as if a prelude and harbinger of future events, since it contained wars, such as Gideon's, David's and Herod's, as well as the teachings of the Old and New Testament. Indeed, the pagans had yet to be converted through many future wars and taught by the instructions of the Old and New Testament in order to reach The One who brings true peace and to obtain eternal life". Is it possible to discern in that interpretation, as suggested, for example, by R. Schneider, the chronicler's (or other promoters' of the Baltic missions) opinion of low effectiveness of the previous practice of 'gentle', persuasive Christianization and the announcement of changing over to more decisive steps, including coercion?²⁴

23. A. Dąbrówka, *Teatr i sacrum w średniowieczu. Religia – cywilizacja – estetyka*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 55/56.

24. For more on the early stages of the mission among Livonians, see: J. Strzelczyk, *Apostołowie Europy*, op. cit., pp. 260–275.

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Abstract

Jerzy Strzelczyk

*The Spoken Word, the Book and the Image
in the Work of Evangelization*

Little is known about the 'material' equipment of the early missionaries who set out to evangelize pagans and apostates, since the authors of the sources focused mainly on the successes (or failures) of the missions. Information concerning the 'infrastructure' of missions is rather occasional and of fragmentary nature. The major part in the process of evangelization must have been played by the spoken word preached indirectly or through an interpreter, at least in the areas and milieus remote from the centers of ancient civilization. It could not have been otherwise when coming into contact with communities which did not know the art of reading, still less writing. A little more attention is devoted to the other two media, that is, the written word and the images. The significance of the written word was manifold, and – at least as the basic liturgical books are concerned (the missal, the evangeliary?) – the manuscripts were indispensable elements of missionaries' equipment. In certain circumstances the books which the missionaries had at their disposal could acquire special – even magical – significance, the most comprehensible to the Christianized people (the examples given: the evangeliary of St. Winfried-Boniface in the face of death at the hands of a pagan Frisian, the episode with a manuscript in the story of Anskar's mission written by Rimbert). The role of the plastic art representations (images) during the missions is much less frequently mentioned in the sources. After quoting a few relevant examples (Bede the Venerable, Ermoldus Nigellus, Paul the Deacon, Thietmar of Merseburg), the author also cites an interesting, although not entirely successful, attempt to use drama to instruct the Livonians in the faith while converting them to Christianity, which was reported by Henry of Latvia.

Keywords:

Christian missions, 'Infrastructure of missions', Books, Images, Winfried-Boniface, Anskar, Thietmar of Merseburg, Ermoldus Nigellus, Paul the Deacon, Bede the Venerable, Henry the Latvian, 'Street theatre' in Riga.

Abstrakt

Jerzy Strzelczyk

Słowo, księga i obraz w dziele ewangelizacji

Słowa kluczowe:

Misje
chrześcijańskie,
„Infrastruktura”
misji,
Księgi,
Obrazy,
Winfryd-Bonifacy,
Anskar,
Thietmar
z Merseburga,
Ermoldus Nigellus,
Paweł Diakon,
Beda Venerabilis,
Henryk Łotysz,
„Teatr uliczny”
w Rydze.

Niewiele wiadomo o „materialnym” wyposażeniu misjonarzy wyruszających do pogan czy apostatów, autorzy źródeł koncentrują się bowiem na osiągnięciach (ewentualnie niepowodzeniach) misji. Informacje o „infrastrukturze” misji pojawiają się raczej sporadycznie i mają fragmentaryczny charakter. Największa rola w procesie ewangelizacji, przynajmniej na obszarach i w środowiskach oddalonych od ośrodków cywilizacji antycznej, musiała przypaść żywemu słowu, głoszonemu bezpośrednio lub za pośrednictwem tłumaczy. Nie mogło być inaczej w obliczu społeczności nieznających sztuki czytania, tym bardziej pisanania. Nieco więcej uwagi mam zamiar poświęcić dwóm pozostałym mediom: słowu pisanemu i obrazom. Znaczenie pisma w procesie ewangelizacji było różnorakie. Było ono, przynajmniej w elementarnym zakresie (mszał, ewangeliarz?), niezbędnym elementem wyposażenia misjonarza. W pewnych okolicznościach księgi znajdujące się w dyspozycji misjonarza mogły nabierać znaczenia szczególnego, nawet magicznego, najbardziej zrozumiałego dla chrystianizowanych (przykłady: ewangeliarz św. Winfryda-Bonifacego w obliczu śmierci z ręki pogańskiego Fryza, epizod z księgą w opowieści o misji Anskara pióra Rimberta). O wiele rzadziej źródła wspominają o roli wyobrażeń plastycznych (obrazów) w trakcie misji. Po przedstawieniu kilku przykładów z tego zakresu (Beda Venerabilis, Ermoldus Nigellus, Paweł Diakon, Thietmar z Merseburga) autor przypomniał jeszcze interesującą, zanotowaną przez Henryka Łotysza, niezupełnie udaną próbę wykorzystania sztuki teatralnej dla pouczenia w wierze aktualnie chrystianizowanych Liwów.