

tures. One of them was Nikola Frankopan of Trieste who confirmed that “these books are printed in our true Croatian letters and in true Croatian language, and that every Croatian can easily read and understand them...”

Jembrih provides two supplements to the book. The first contains a *Glagolitic autograph of Stipan Konzul: An Illustrative Translation of the New Testament, Jn 9 and Acts 1 from 1560*, transliterated by Dr. Vesna Badurina-Stipčević. The other is the *Preface of Primož Trubar to the Glagolitic New Testament (1562/1563)*, translated from German by Dr. Marina Miladinov.

The reprint of the first printed translation of the New Testament in Croatian history offers to the public the pearl of the Croatian Protestant literature and Croatian culture. The original print of the *New Testament* has been denied and ignored for centuries, probably because it was produced by Croatian Protestants, although it has been accessible in the Collection of ancient books and manuscripts of the National and University Library in Zagreb. Because of this we extend our congratulations to the editor Dr. Jembrih and all collaborators as well as the publisher, the Theological Faculty „Matthias Flacius Illyricus,“ on this excellent accomplishment and great efforts invested in it. It is a pity, though, that the publication in addition to the extensive historical-linguistic afterward, does not provide a historical-theological supplement which would illuminate the translation from the historical-spiritual and theological perspectives. This task now awaits students of indigenous and foreign Protestant spirituality and theological reflection.

Stanko Jambrek

Translated by Davorin Peterlin

Krešimir Šimić

Literary – Theological Essays

Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2005, 327 pages

After completing his studies of the Croatian language and literature at the Pedagogical Faculty (today the Faculty of Philosophy) in Osijek, Krešimir Šimić defended his MA thesis at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek and earned the MA degree in Theology. In March 2006 he enrolled in the Postgraduate doctoral programme at the Faculty of Philosophy [School of Humanities] at the University of Zagreb in the area of Croatian culture. He has published twenty academic articles and the book *Literary – Theological Essays*.

In this study the author presents his views about the objectivity of religious

experience on the personal level, but also about the artistic perception of reality and philosophical reflection. Considered from the philosophical or theological viewpoint, personal experience embodies a certain mysteriousness because the line between objective and subjective is very thin, often imperceptible. Through the essays included in the book Šimić seeks to fathom the tensions between personal experience and the nature of that experience. Conducting his thinking through art and philosophy, the author attempts to open a dialogue between theological and philosophical thought.

In the first chapter *Poetry (Heidegger) as the supporting pillar of history* Šimić emphasises that the experience of beauty is one of the most privileged human experiences through which one discovers Christian message. Art is elevated to the level of the protector of human perfection. The author underlines that in today's "desacralised and secularised world art alienated from the Spirit becomes the space of post-modern religiosity."

In the second chapter, *Literary-Biblical approach to issue of theodicy*, Šimić attempts to demonstrate that evil, even though the experience of unprovoked and unjust suffering may present a stronger argument against the faith in God from all theological arguments which seek to prove his existence, manifests an inherently contradictory character. Šimić emphasises that a sinner lives despite sin and thus demonstrates that love has embraced even sin, and in this way justified the sinner and overcome evil. Through the theodicy of the cross the author stresses the almighty God's willingness and ability to enter suffering and death without perishing.

The truthfulness of the fictional in the light of pneumatological theology of truth is the title of the third chapter in which the author tries to show that „the pneumatological theology of truth is the foundation for the demythologisation of discourse.“ The author here substantiates the opinion of the church teachers about the truthfulness of that which is related to the inspiration of the Spirit of Truth. In this way the author tries to clarify the notion of the truthfulness of Biblical texts, the notion which would be simultaneously acceptable to the post-modernists.

Father Abraham's path of faith in the light of contemporary philosophical hermeneutics is a chapter in which the author considers the phenomenon of the turn of thought, language and metaphor which only in faith receives its true definition. In this chapter the author pays special attention to Abraham who represents the anatomy of faith because he is „the father of all who believe.“ It is really the faith of Abraham which represents the tool to attain to the Truth and Love and which is used by humans to recognise the markers of God as they tread along their path.

In the chapter entitled *The myth as anthropological constant* Šimić underlines

that hermeneutics can be defined as the skill and the theory of interpretation, particularly as at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century witnesses the demythologisation of Biblical texts. The author then seeks to etymologically define the word „myth“ which extends from a story about gods and heroes to a form of knowledge and thinking. Šimić concludes, however, that true demythologisation occurs in the imitation along the path of love towards God and love towards humans because the observation of God does not happen in an unknown and hidden space, but in/through imitation.

The pneumatological theology of conscience, conscience as the original hermeneutical locus, is a chapter in which Šimić analyses conscience in the light of a pneumatology which includes a door fully open to the postmodern conversationists. The author stresses that the theology of conscience seems particularly significant, especially after Nietzsche's talk about the death of God, Foucault's talk about the death of man, Barthes' talk about the death of the author, and the appearance, according to Camus, of the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, the death of conscience.

In the *Epilogue* Šimić concludes that the word from the Book of Genesis gave birth to the painter's vision through Michelangelo's masterpiece in the Sistine chapel, and the painter's vision gave birth to the poetic utterance through the poetic pen of the head of the Roman Catholic church, John Paul II. Through these two visions, opines the author, one can reach theology of embrace and theology of intimacy. The author refers to the theology of embrace as conceived and described by Miroslav Volf which is manifested in four elements: opening one's arms, waiting, embracing and opening one's arms again. In this way God yet again awaits a response from a human being. The theology of intimacy is realised, Šimić emphasises, through following and love – „to practice the Word of God means to follow Jesus, means to gaze at God.“

The work of Krešimir Šimić represents a significant contribution of the Croatian literary historiography turned to religious inspirations, which has through the centuries been conditioned by specific cultural and geo-political factors. With this work Šimić attempts to touch the lyrical components of human personality and experience through the interpretation of their Biblical-theological aspects.

Robert Bogešić

Translated by Davorin Peterlin