

ІСТОРИЯ РЕЛІГІЇ І ЦЕРКВИ

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ЛІТЕРАТУРНО-БОГОСЛОВСЬКА ДОВІДКА ПРОПОВІДІ
ПРО ЗАКОН І БЛАГОДАТЬ

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Вказана стаття розкриває літературне і богословське тло *Слова про закон і благодать* знаменитої проповіді Іларіона (майбутнього) Київського митрополита, складеної у середині XI століття. Автор статті приділяє увагу також можливим патристичним взірцям для богословського та патріотичного осмислення Іларіоном нещодавньої східнослов'янської історії у світлі офіційного сприйняття християнства при дворі київського князя Володимира Святославовича. Головною рисою згаданої (само)свідомості, пов'язаної з концепцією історії, як історії спасіння, є ігнорування політичної та культурної переваги Східної Римської (Візантійської) імперії зі столицею у Константинополі і, водночас, підкреслювання Божої справедливості, котра дає свою благодать усім народам без різниці, що призводить до переконання про однаковість їхнього духовного рівня. Таке розмірковування не було особливістю давньоруської культури, а складало частину значного ширшого явища, визначеного апологетичним відчуттям, властивим усій релігійно-літературній традиції ортодоксальних (православних) християн упродовж X–XVI ст. Створюючи богословське виправдання історичного значення Русі зі столицею в Києві, Іларіон запозичує патристичні взірці зі Східної Римської (Візантійської) імперії, зокрема щодо пояснення (без)перервності між законом старозавітного пророка Мойсея і милосердям Христа, де, насамперед, спостерігається чітке наслідування творів Отця Церкви Григорія Богослова та константинопольського патріарха Никифора I, або ж сприйняття державного утворення на чолі із християнським володарем, де, переважно, можна впізнати вплив на конструкцію Іларіона текстів одного із перших істориків християнської Церкви – Євсевія Кесарійського

Ключові слова: *Слова про закон і благодать, Іларіон, література Русі, історія спасіння, патристичні взірці.*

Introduction

This article discusses the literary and theological background of the oration of the (future) Kyivan Metropolitan Ilarion titled, following the later historiographical convention, *Sermon on Law and Grace* (*Слово о законъ и благодѣти*). In this context, the author of the present article focuses also on potential patristic sources or models for Ilarion's theological and patriotic reflection on the recent East Slavic history of the time and adoption of Christianity in Kyivan Rus'. The studied sermon, written in the mid-eleventh century and composed in the Rus' redaction of Church Slavic, belongs to the corpus of most informative and rhetorically advanced sources of the Kyivan period of the East Slavic medieval culture. The mentioned source is particularly valuable in relation to the historical consciousness among the (ecclesiastical) elite of Rus', which was primarily created and promoted within intellectual monastic circles.

In terms of methodology, this article is based on the approaches of postmodern semiotic-discursive cultural history. Through deep analysis of narrative strategies and seeking symbolic expressivity, this method aims to reveal the self-perception of particular social groups in question (in this case, the elite of Kyivan Rus') which encouraged the establishment of particular narrative sources (in this case, *Sermon on Law and Grace*)¹. The concept of the history of salvation, widely used in this

¹ Burke P. *Kaj je kulturna zgodovina?* Ljubljana : Sophia, 2007. P. 39–50, 72–74, 132, 138–145; Lotman J. M. *Znotraj mislečih svetov.* Ljubljana : Studia humanitatis, 2006. P. 25–58, 123–169, 313–348, 383–388;



article, is based on the expertise of the German theologian Oscar Cullmann (1902–1999)². The passages from the *Sermon* are taken from the English critical edition prepared by the British cultural historian Simon Franklin in 1991³.

The *Sermon* was composed by Ilarion, the first Metropolitan of Kyiv of East Slavic origin⁴. Between 1051 and 1054/1055, he supervised a territorially vast jurisdiction with its center in the capital of Rus' which was formally part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Before being elected to the metropolitan's office, he was engaged as a priest (presbyter) at the Church of the Holy Apostles near the princely residence in Berestove south of Kyiv⁵. All facts and presumptions concerning Ilarion's life can be drawn from two sources only: his *Confession of Faith*, probably written for the occasion of liturgical festivity confirming his episcopal consecration and appointment to the metropolitan's office in 1051⁶, and the *Tale of Bygone Years* (*Повѣсть времѣнныхъ лѣтъ*, the so-called *Nestor's Chronicle*) from the beginning of the twelfth century⁷. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the vast majority of experts on Rus' literature have argued that the *Sermon* was composed between 1037 and 1050, i.e. before Ilarion's taking of the metropolitan's office⁸. The first year (1037) is conditioned by the mentioning of the Cathedral Church of Kyiv, dedicated to Saint Sophia (Holy

Успенский Б. А. Царь и патриарх : харизма власти в России (Византийская модель и её русское переосмысление). Москва : Языки русской культуры, 1998. 680 с.

² The concept of the history of salvation draws from the patristic biblical exegesis in late antiquity and Middle Ages. According to this notion, events, personalities, and processes of the ("empirical") past are presented in the light of the symbolically rich biblical history, which continues its relevancy far after the chronological completion of its direct consequences. Thus, history of salvation means a history of "encounters" between man and God, who is willing to give mankind access to eternal life. See: Cullmann O. Heil als Geschichte. Tübingen : J. C. B. Mohr, 1967. 328 + XVI pp.; Malmenvall S. Pojem zgodovine odrešenja : pomen in idejni razvoj. *Res novae*. Ljubljana, 2018. Vol. 3. No. 2. P. 39–58.

³ Franklin S. *Sermons and Rhetoric in Kievan Rus*. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1991. 326 p.

⁴ The first known Metropolitan of Kyiv was most probably Theopemptus (Феопемпт). In the chronicle *Tale of Bygone Years*, the main East Slavic source of the Kyivan period, he is initially mentioned in the section under the year 1037, when he led the liturgical celebration during the re-consecration of the Church of Mary's Dormition in Kyiv. However, this question is still under discussion in contemporary historiography. See: The *Povest' vremennykh let* : An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis / ed., trans. D. Ostrowski. Harvard : Harvard University Press, 2004. P. 1214–1215; Виноградов А. Ю. О хронологии русских митрополитов XI в. (по поводу новой гипотезы А. П. Толочко). *Slověne: International Journal of Slavic Studies*. Moscow, 2019. Вып. 8, № 1. С. 477–485. Until the mid-thirteenth century, the vast majority of the Metropolitans of Kyiv were of Greek (Byzantine) origin. In this period, only two native hierarchs are known – Ilarion and Kliment Smoliatic (1147–1155). See: Vernadsky G. *Kievan Russia*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1973. P. 151–152; Fedotov G. P. *The Russian Religious Mind : Kievan Christianity, the Tenth to the Thirteenth Centuries*. New York : Harper, 1965. P. 401; Franklin S. *Sermons and Rhetoric...* P. XIII, XXIII–XXV.

⁵ Des Metropolitien Ilarion Lobrede auf Vladimir den Heiligen und Glaubensbekenntnis / ed., trans. L. Müller. Wiesbaden : Otto Harrassowitz, 1962. P. 1–6; Ужанков А. Н. "Слово о законе и благодати" и другие творения митрополита Илариона Киевского. Москва : Академкнига, 2014. С. 9–11; Franklin S. *Sermons and Rhetoric...* P. XVII–XVIII; *Povest'*. P. 1230–1231; Malmenvall S. *Beseda o postavi in milosti metropolita Hilarijona kot primer osmišljanja preteklosti v Kijeviski Rusiji*. *Zgodovinski časopis*. Ljubljana, 2017. Vol. 71, no. 1–2. P. 10–11.

⁶ Des Metropolitien Ilarion Lobrede... P. 143; Franklin S. *Sermons and Rhetoric...* P. XXIX. However, according to the Russian-Serbian historian Alexander V. Soloviev (1890–1971), analyzing matrimonial relationships in the generation of Volodymyr's grandsons, the *Sermon* could have been written only after 1046, when the third great-grandson of Yaroslav Volodymyrovych could have been born (great-grandchildren were mentioned in the plural, not singular or dual form). Soloviev claims that at the time when the sermon was delivered there should have been no fewer than three grandsons. See: Soloviev A. V. Zur Lobrede des Metropolitien Ilarion. *Das heidnische und christliche Slaventum: Acta II Congressus internationalis historiae Slavicae Salisburgo-Ratisbonensis anno 1967 celebrati*. Wiesbaden, 1970. Vol. 2. P. 58–63.

⁷ Des Metropolitien Ilarion Lobrede... P. 2–6; Franklin S. *Sermons and Rhetoric*. P. XXIX.

⁸ Ужанков А. Слово... С. 11–12; Наумова Г. Р., Шикло А. Е. *Историография истории России*. Москва : Академия, 2007. С. 23; Franklin S. *Sermons and Rhetoric...* P. XIX–XX; Гай-Нижник П., Батрак О. *Догматика віри в Кафолічній Церкві й запровадження християнства у Давній Русі (кінець IX – середина XI ст.)*. Нарис історико-герменевтичної інтерпретації. Київ : МП Леся, 2015. С. 193; Горский В. С. *Философские идеи в культуре Киевской Руси XI – начала XII века*. Киев : Наукова думка, 1988. С. 55.

Wisdom), which was built in 1037, while the last year (1050) relies on the mentioning of Princess Irina, wife of the Kyivan Prince Yaroslav Volodymyrovych (“the Wise”), who died in 1050⁹. Concerning the location where the *Sermon* was recited, no definite answer can be given; however, there are four main possibilities related to four major church edifices in Kyiv or its environs: Cathedral of Saint Sophia, Church of Mary’s Dormition (the so-called Tithe Church), Church of Mary’s Annunciation above the capital’s Golden Gates, and Church of Holy Apostles in Berestove¹⁰.

Themes and structure

The basic structure of the *Sermon on Law and Grace* in terms of content can be discerned in the thematic order provided in the introduction to the sermon. According to the introduction, the *Sermon* consists of four main parts¹¹: 1. “the Law given by Moses and the Grace and Truth which came by Jesus Christ”; 2. “how the law departed, and grace and truth filled all the earth, and faith spread forth to all nations [literally: languages], even unto our nation of Rus’”; 3. “an encomium to our kagan Volodimer [/Vladimir], by whom we were baptized”; 4. “a prayer to God from all our land”¹². Each of these four main parts represents a thematic integral whole and also (apart from the fourth one) announces the theme of the next one, thus creating a meaningful interconnection between them¹³.

The first main part in terms of content provides a theological justification, derived from Ilarion’s exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, of the superiority of Christ’s grace and truth in relation to the Law of Moses. This emphasizes, on the one hand, the universality of Christianity, i. e. the validity of Christ’s redemptive utterances and actions for all peoples of the world, and on the other, the limitation of Judaism, i.e. the validity of the observance of the law (not complemented with grace) only for the Old Testament era and the Hebrew people of the time¹⁴. This part can be divided further into two chapters or communication units. The first chapter illustrates the relationship between law and grace with the image of Hagar and Sarah, two of Abraham’s wives from the First Book of Moses¹⁵. In the *Sermon*, Hagar and Sarah of the Old Testament are featured as typologies foretelling the New Testament outcome of biblical history – Hagar as the personification of the “disobedient” Hebrew people, which has not adopted Christ’s grace and truth, and Sarah as the personification of the “obedient” new Israel, namely the Christian Church, which spreads Christ’s grace and truth among all men¹⁶. Ilarion is convinced Christianity surpasses Judaism not only for its access to salvation, but also for its prevalence across the world. He proves that the new (Christianity) has surpassed the old (Judaism)¹⁷. The second chapter of the first part consists of an ode to Christ, through whom grace and truth have been realized as complementary to the law. First, the ode briefly presents Christ’s earthly life, which is followed by seventeen antitheses on the seeming theological paradoxicality of the person of the Son of God, i. e. on the contrast and simultaneous harmony between his human and divine nature¹⁸.

The second main part discusses the decline of Judaism and the spread of Christianity, which eventually penetrated Rus’ territory, dispelling the previous pagan “ignorance” with its “light”¹⁹. This part can be divided further into three chapters. In the first chapter, Ilarion tells of the fundamental change that happened in the context of biblical history and also had a decisive influence on the entire

⁹ Ужанков А. Слово... С. 238; Слово о законе и благодати митрополита киевского Илариона / ред., перев. А. М. Молдован, А. И. Юрченко. Библиотека литературы Древней Руси. Санкт-Петербург, 1997. Т. 1. С. 97–98; Повест’... Р. 1230.

¹⁰ Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... Р. XXI.

¹¹ Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... Р. 16; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... Р. XXVII.

¹² Слово... С. 26, 481; The Hagiography of Kievan Rus’ / ed., trans. P. Hollingsworth. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1992. Р. 3.

¹³ Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... Р. 20; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... Р. XXVII–XXVIII; Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... Р. 13.

¹⁴ Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... Р. 20; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... Р. XXXI–XXXII.

¹⁵ Cf. 1 Gen 15–16; 1 Gen 21–22.

¹⁶ Слово... С. 28, 30, 481–482; Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... Р. 13.

¹⁷ Слово... С. 30, 32, 482.

¹⁸ Там же. С. 34, 36, 482–483.

¹⁹ Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... Р. 20; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... Р. XXXII.



salvation history. This concerns how Jesus Christ initially approached the Jews, but these did not accept him as the Savior and Son of God, which led to God abandoning the Jews and allowing the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem while redirecting salvation to humbler pagans²⁰. The second chapter deals with Rus', which is said to have joined the group of Christian peoples "by the grace of God". Ilarion interprets the placement of Rus' in the Christian world as the realization of Old Testament prophecies or a modernization of biblical history through the recent East Slavic past, which, under the surface of specific secular events and processes, is said to have a hidden religious-universal meaning²¹. The third chapter provides twenty-one antitheses that highlight the differences between the previous pagan Rus' and contemporary Christian Rus' of Ilarion's time, evaluating the pagan era as negative and the Christian one as positive. In the context of evaluating the religious shift, a parallel is drawn between Judaism and paganism – just as the Law of Moses is a symbol of temporary imperfection within the wider salvation history, so paganism is a symbol of temporary imperfection within the specific Rus' history.²²

The third main part represents a solemn memory of the religious fervor and virtuous life of Volodymyr Sviatoslavich (Christian name Basil/Vasili), along with an expression of gratitude to Volodymyr for having been willing to become a "tool in the hands of God" and Christianize his homeland. This gratitude at the end of the third part segues into a request to the late grand prince to protect his son, Yaroslav "the Wise" (Christian name George), and the whole of Rus'²³. This part can be divided further into four chapters. The first chapter starts with a comparison of Volodymyr with the apostles, expressing the idea that Grand Prince Volodymyr Sviatoslavich is an apostle of Rus'. The rest of the first chapter recounts Volodymyr's life before the Christianization, his decision for his own baptism, and his order of the collective baptism of both Kyivans and all other Rus' people²⁴. The second chapter consists of praise for Volodymyr's virtuous deeds, which Ilarion explains as results of his sincere adoption of the Christian faith. Particular attention is given to charity to the poor, followed by the construction of churches and a concern for orthodoxy. The second chapter also includes a comparison of Volodymyr with Constantine the Great, claiming that Volodymyr is the "new Constantine"²⁵. The third chapter is characterized by the word "rejoice" (радуися in Church Slavic), which connects a set of rapturous calls on the late Volodymyr to set his gaze upon his prosperous heritage – both in the image of his son Yaroslav and in terms of the general advancements of Christianity in Rus' lands²⁶. The fourth chapter is a written prayer to the late grand prince, beseeching him to watch over Rus' from heaven and continue his former mission of ruling as an intercessor with God. Linking Volodymyr with heavenly protection and intercession is proof that despite the lack of an official canonization, Ilarion attributed saintly characteristics to Volodymyr²⁷. The fourth main part consists of Ilarion's prayer to God on behalf of all Rus'. The prayer is defined by a request for mercy towards sinners, for maintaining orthodoxy out of loyalty to Volodymyr the "Baptizer," and for general prosperity²⁸.

Self-affirmation between theology and patriotism

In terms of its message, the *Sermon on Law and Grace* belongs to the wider category of the medieval literature of Orthodox Slavs (Rus', Bulgarians, Serbs), whose educated authors often underscored the importance of historical events and personages of their own homelands by placing them in the context of salvation history. Thus, predominantly secular and regionally conditioned

²⁰ Слово... С. 36, 38, 483–484.

²¹ Слово... С. 38, 40, 484; Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 14.

²² Слово... С. 40, 42, 484–485; Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 14.

²³ Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... P. 19–20; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... P. XXXII–XXXIV.

²⁴ Слово... С. 42, 44, 46, 484–485.

²⁵ Там же... С. 46, 48, 50, 485–486.

²⁶ Там же... С. 50, 52, 485–486.

²⁷ Слово... С. 52; 486; Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... P. 18–20; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... P. XXXII–XXXIII; Гай-Нижник П., Батрак О. Догматика віри... С. 199, 215; Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 14–15.

²⁸ Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... P. 19–20; Ужанков А. Слово... С. 105–110.

events and personalities were ascribed a prestige that was valid throughout the entire Christian world²⁹. In this regard, the underlying theme of the sermon is focused on giving a religious meaning to the previous (secular) past of Kyivan Rus', primarily relating to the official Christianization at the behest of Grand Prince Volodymyr Sviatoslavich and the consolidation of Christianity under his successor, Yaroslav. This giving of meaning to the past is accompanied by a distinct patriotic tone serving the self-affirmation of the Rus' elite in relation to other Christian polities, especially the Byzantine Empire. The essence of Ilarion's placement of the Rus' historical experience in salvation history stems from acknowledging the infinite "grace of God". Through the incarnation of the Son of God, this is said to have heralded the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Testament era, in which the primacy of "God's grace" over human justice and observance of the law is shown as an inevitable constant in the entire New Testament history. The primacy of grace would continue all the way to the Last Judgment and influence all territories having adopted Christianity, including Kyivan Rus'³⁰.

The *Sermon* represents the first original creation of the Kyivan Rus' written culture that, as a whole, is conceived on the basis of the salvation history interpretation, which was already established in the Christian world³¹. With its praising attitude to Christianity and the rule of Yaroslav the Wise, it had a far-reaching contribution to the formation of the later perception of the mid-11th century as the "golden age"³² of East Slavic history, which is reflected in both medieval and modern historiographical works. In terms of its distinct religious-patriotic focus, only two early native East Slavic works most likely composed in the 11th century can compare with the *Sermon – Memory and Eulogy to the Rus' Prince Volodymyr (Память и похвала князю русскому Володимеру)*³³ by the monk Jacob (Iakov) and *Lesson on the Life and Death of Blessed Passion-Bearers Boris and Gleb (Чтение о житии и погублении блаженную страстотерпию Бориса и Гльба)*³⁴ by Nestor, a famous writer and monk from the Kyivan Caves Monastery. Following Ilarion's interpretation, the "golden age" of Kyivan Rus' is the blessed continuation of the voluntary baptism decided on by Grand Prince Volodymyr at the invitation of a "divine epiphany". This suggestive emphasis on the voluntariness and independence of Volodymyr's decision on Christianity acts as a veiled, but still apparent enough argument for the good reputation of Kyivan Rus' within the Christian world, while Byzantium – the leading Christian state of the time in terms of politics and culture – is ascribed no role of intermediary or "teacher". In this regard, Ilarion intentionally omits key facts favoring the interpretation that the official Christianization of Rus' took place due to intensive contact between the Byzantine Empire (intermediary, "teacher") and the pagan East Slavic territory (recipient, "student") in the 10th century³⁵.

In the *Sermon*, the assessment of the position of Rus' and the evaluation of Christianity is comparable to the view in the evangelical parable of the "workers of the eleventh hour", in which all

²⁹ Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 16.

³⁰ Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... P. XVII, XIX, XXI; Franklin S., Shepard J. The Emergence of Rus. London : Pearson Education Limited, 1996. P. 183–202; Picchio R. Slavia ortodossa e Slavia romana. *Letteratura della Slavia ortodossa*. Bari : Edizioni Dedalo, 1991. P. 28; Picchio R. La funzione delle chiavi tematiche bibliche nel codice letterario della Slavia Ortodossa. *Letteratura della Slavia ortodossa*. Bari : Edizioni Dedalo, 1991. P. 387–389; Топоров В. Н. Святость и святые в русской духовной культуре. Первый век христианства на Руси. Москва : Языки русской культуры, 1995. С. 58; Гай-Нижник П., Батрак О. Догматика віри... С. 33.

³¹ Гай-Нижник П., Батрак О. Догматика віри... С. 192–193; Горский В. С. Философские идеи... С. 57.

³² In terms of military successes, internal political stability, and cultural prosperity (monkhood, translation work, representative buildings).

³³ Память и похвала князю русскому Владимиру / ред., перев. Н. И. Милютенко. *Библиотека литературы Древней Руси*. Санкт-Петербург, 1997. Т. 1. С. 26–51, 480–486.

³⁴ Милютенко Н. И. Святые князья мученики Борис и Глеб : Исследование и тексты. Санкт-Петербург : Издательство Олега Абышко, 2006. С. 357–402.

³⁵ Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... P. XVI, LVIII; Pasini G. Il monachesimo nella Rus' di Kiev. Bologna : Edizioni Studio domenicano, 2011. P. 190, 193–194; Kossova A. G. All' alba della cultura russa : La Rus' kieviana (862–1240). Rome : Studium, 1997. P. 87; Picchio R. Slavia ortodossa... P. 188; Топоров В. Н. Святость... С. 264–265; Malmenvall S. Kijevska Rusija in Pripoved o minulih letih. *Pripoved o minulih letih*. Ljubljana : Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2015. P. 178–190; Слово... С. 480; Ужанков А. Слово... С. 35; Гай-Нижник П., Батрак О. Догматика віри... С. 33–34, 193; Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 16–17.



workers in the vineyard received the same payment from the landowner, despite arriving to work at different times – the last one no sooner than the eleventh hour. The workers in the vineyard are a metaphor for Christ's believers, the landowner is a metaphor for God the Father, and the payment is a metaphor for salvation and eternal life³⁶. According to Ilarion's interpretation, the "late hour" of the East Slavic adoption of Christianity is no obstacle to the equality of Rus' in relation to other lands and cultures that have been part of the Christian world for a longer time. The conviction about the irrelevance of the timing of embracing Christian culture is directly related to the theme of "God's grace". The latter is said to act unpredictably and often incomprehensibly to humans, as it is said to reach the people it wants to reach when it wants to reach them. In this spirit, Ilarion excludes the Rus' experience of the adoption of Christianity from the self-perception of the Byzantine Empire as an exemplary and leading Christian state created through "Divine providence". By characterizing its inhabitants as "Greeks"³⁷ – instead of "Rhomaioi" or "Romans" – and through the lack of the parallel between Christ and imperium, which was key to the Byzantine religiously characterized patriotism³⁸, the *Sermon* emphasizes the decisive role of grace, which disregards the political notions of the Christian empire. In general, Ilarion's attitude to the importance of the (secular) past thus did in fact follow the pattern of salvation history, which was essentially adopted from their Byzantine "teacher"; however, this pattern was not Byzantine-centric, but placed in a wider context of salvation history, within which Kyivan Rus' was able to justify its position of equality among the other polities³⁹.

When our land was parched and desolate, when the swelter of idolatry had desiccated it, then of a sudden the stream of the Gospels flowed and slaked the thirst of all our land. [...] We were blind: not knowing the true light, we strayed in the false light of idolatry. [...] Yet God had mercy upon us, and the light of understanding shone forth upon us, that we might know Him. As was foretold in the prophecy: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear"⁴⁰. [...] We were as the beasts and as the cattle, not knowing our right hand or our left hand, caring only for the things which are on earth, not caring at all for the things which are in heaven. But then God sent His commandments to us, which lead to the life eternal. As Isaiah foretold: "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will make for them a covenant with the birds of the sky and with the beasts of the earth, and I will say to that which was not my people, 'Thou art my people', and they shall say to me, 'Thou art the Lord our God'"⁴¹. And thus: we, who had been strangers, were called God's people; we, who had been His enemies, were called His sons^{42, 43}.

In this regard, Ilarion appears not so much as an interpreter of religious truths, but more as a conveyor of the theology of history characterized by apparent patriotic conclusions responding to the

³⁶ Cf. Matt 20: 1–16; Malmenvall S. *Beseda o postavi...* P. 17.

³⁷ Слово... С. 44, 48, 485. The use of the name "Greeks" (Гръци in Church Slavic) for the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire is a constant in the Kyivan period of East Slavic history. From the Rus' point of view, the inhabitants of the empire are identified based on language, not their political affiliation, which was more relevant from the Byzantine point of view. The Rus' did not explicitly acknowledge the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire as "Romans" or their successors, considering themselves as such. Instead, based on the language, the Rus' placed the inhabitants of the empire in a standalone context that, in addition to the Greek language, differed from pagan Rome also in Christianity – for which the synonym "Greek faith" was often used in Kyivan Rus'. The omission of the conceptual continuity with the Roman Empire and the mention of "Greeks" were part of the general lexicon and understanding of medieval Orthodox Slavs. See: Malmenvall S. *Kijevska Rusija...* P. 225–226.

³⁸ Such a parallel was first drawn by the Christian philosopher Origen in the first half of the 3rd century and was further developed by the theologian and historian Eusebius of Caesarea in the first half of the 4th century. See, Dvornik F. *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy. Origins and Background*, vol. 2. Washington : The Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1966. P. 604–605, 611, 614–615, 643, 684–685; Obolensky D. *The Byzantine Commonwealth : Eastern Europe, 500–1453*. London : Praeger Publishers, 1971. P. 272–277, 308–309.

³⁹ Malmenvall S. *Beseda o postavi...* P. 17–18.

⁴⁰ Cf. Is 35: 5.

⁴¹ Cf. Os 2: 16–23; 1 Pet 2: 9–10.

⁴² Cf. Ef 2: 19; Rom 5: 10; Coll 1: 21–23.

⁴³ Слово... С. 40, 484; Franklin, *Sermons...* P. 15.

needs of his time and social environment. The foundation of the equality of Kyivan Rus' in the Christian world is said to have been ensured with the acceptance of baptism by courtesy of the "Rus' apostle" and "new Constantine", Volodymyr Sviatoslavich⁴⁴. The primary message of Ilarion's sermon is thus the following: in (official) Christianization, timing does not play an important role, as both the personal and social life guided by the Christian faith does not depend on the prestige or length of the historical tradition of one particular Christian culture or another. In Ilarion's eyes, the conviction about Byzantium's spiritual precedence over other Christian lands (especially Rus'), defined by the criterion of early Christianization, is thus revealed as totally alien to the genuine Christian spirit⁴⁵.

Literary skill and patristic influence

While the *Sermon on Law and Grace* can be divided into four parts in terms of content, it can be divided into three in terms of genre. The first two parts in terms of content combined form the genre of biblical exegesis. In this case, the exegesis concerns the meaning of the Law of Moses, Christ's grace and truth, and their reflection through the previous Rus' history based on an extensive referencing and paraphrasing of biblical passages. The third part in terms of content constitutes a eulogy in terms of genre and concerns Grand Prince Volodymyr Sviatoslavich. Finally, the fourth part in terms of content is a prayer in terms of genre and is addressed to God on behalf of the entire Rus' people⁴⁶.

In literary history, Ilarion's *Sermon* is considered a great literary masterpiece of the Kyivan period of Rus' culture. From the literary perspective, Ilarion's sermon is characterized by two key features: lavish rhetorical ornamentation and distinct liturgical tone, which is particularly reflected in two prayers – one at the end of the third and one in the fourth part. Both the rhetorical ornamentation and the liturgical tone allow the *Sermon* to be categorized as a festive sermon. An abundance of anaphoras, antitheses, typologies, symbols, and rhythmic prose serves as an aesthetic substantiation of "deeper" Christian truths hidden behind the seeming unambiguity of biblical passages and events in (secular) Rus' history. The intertwining of different genres, their stylistic refinement, and their place in a meaningful whole in terms of content, which is accompanied by a creative rethinking of theological opinions of the (Eastern) Christian tradition, is proof not only of the intellectual prowess, but also of the individual talent of the *Sermon's* writer⁴⁷. On the one hand, the author is thus revealed in the role of an intermediary for the "eternal truth", and on the other, as someone capable of creatively reading existing biblical texts, patriotically making them topical, and combining them into a new whole⁴⁸.

Numerous comparisons between biblical and Rus' personages and events presupposed readers or listeners versed in literary modalities and Christian teachings, who would have been quick to understand the constant crossing of temporal and geographic boundaries⁴⁹. In this sense, Ilarion sets his interpretative framework stemming from the typological method and affirms the following: For as the Law brought to the Grace of baptism those who abided in the Law, so baptism brings its sons to eternal life. And as Moses and the prophets told of the coming of Christ, so Christ and His apostles told of the resurrection and of the age to come. Yet it is superfluous, verging even on vanity,

⁴⁴ Слово... С. 48, 50, 485–486; Гай-Нижник П., Батрак О. Догматика віри... С. 215.

⁴⁵ Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 18.

⁴⁶ Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 15; Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... P. 20–21; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... P. XXVIII; Ужанков А. Слово... С. 80.

⁴⁷ Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... P. 15; Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... P. 20–21; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... P. XIII–XV, XXVII, XXXI–XXXIII; Ужанков А. Слово... С. 51–52, 78–79; Толочко О. П., Толочко П. П. Київська Русь. Київ : Альтернативи, 1998. С. 148.

⁴⁸ Malmenvall S. Beseda o postavi... 15; Franklin S. Sermons and Rhetoric... P. XLIII–XLIV, XLVI–XLVIII, Picchio R. Slavia ortodossa... P. 52; Топоров В. Н. Святость... С. 263, 290–291, 293–295; Price R. Tradition and Innovation in Metropolitan Ilarion. *Ruthenica*. Київ, 2011. Vol. 10. P. 58–61; Толочко О. П., Толочко П. П. Київська... С. 156; Подскальски Г. Христианство и богословская литература в Киевской Руси (988–1237 гг.). Санкт-Петербург : Византинороссика, 1996. С. 154.

⁴⁹ Malmenvall S. Kultura Kijevske Rusije in krščanska zgodovinska zavest. Ljubljana : Teološka fakulteta, 2019. P. 139–140.



to recall in this work either the preaching of the prophets concerning Christ or the teaching of the apostles concerning the age to come. It is a type of presumptuousness and vaingloriousness to set forth here that which is written in other books and is known to you. For we do not write for the ignorant, but for them that have feasted to fulfillment on the sweetness of books! Not for the heterodox, not for the enemies of God, but for His very sons! Not for strangers, but for the heirs to the kingdom of heaven⁵⁰.

Ilarion's merits cannot be inferred merely based on in-depth analyses by (modern) literary historians, but also considering his importance in the context of medieval literature. The popularity of Ilarion's sermon is proven by numerous preserved copies (over fifty). These were made between the 13th and 18th centuries in various parts of the former Kyivan Rus' and subsequently spread to Orthodox South Slavs as well. With its motifs, as well as its praising formulations, Ilarion's sermon influenced a Rus' hagiography on Volodymyr Sviatoslavich (*Memory and Eulogy*) composed by the monk Jacob in the second half of the 11th century and a hagiography on Serbian monks of royal origin, Simeon and Sava (*The Lives of Saint Simeon and Saint Sava*), composed in 1264 by Domentian, a monk of Mount Athos⁵¹. The fine reputation of the *Sermon* in the Middle Ages as well as the early modern era is evident in the linguistic heritage of its entire manuscript tradition, which is characterized by minimal linguistic adaptation of the original text: the differences between individual manuscripts containing Ilarion's sermon are mostly small and coincidental – merely omissions of single words or phrases and changes to the word order of individual sentences⁵².

In his *Sermon*, Ilarion demonstrates his theological knowledge and mastery of the literary modalities typical of the most intellectually advanced Greek works of late antiquity and the Byzantine period⁵³. Individual modes of substantiation of the preacher's thoughts, symbols, and motifs in the *Sermon* allow a comparison with a considerable number of treatises by Eastern Church Fathers from the first millennium of Christianity. A passage on the co-existence of divine and human nature in the single person of Jesus Christ provides conclusions similar to those advocated by Ephrem the Syrian (306–373) in his *Sermon on the Transfiguration* or by Cyril of Jerusalem in his *Fourth Sermon*. In the same vein, the passage on Hagar and Sarah with Ilarion's interpretation of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments as the contrast between the "night" of the law and the "light" of the Gospel is consistent with the explanation by Andrew of Crete (c. 660–740) in his *Praise of Lazarus*⁵⁴. According to philological analyses of the preserved manuscript materials performed to date, none of the patristic treatises mentioned above had had a Church Slavic translation produced before the mid-13th century⁵⁵. It is thus possible to assume that Ilarion read these treatises in their Greek originals or was at least familiar with summaries of their content⁵⁶.

The knowledge, adoption, and adaptation of elements of Greek works of late antiquity and the Byzantine period that had not been translated to Church Slavic are especially evident in the parallel between Ilarion's *Sermon* and the *Major Apology* by Nicephorus I, patriarch of Constantinople and known polemicist against the heresy of iconoclasm⁵⁷. The *Major Apology* is one of Nicephorus' most

⁵⁰ Слово... С. 28; Franklin, *Sermons*... Р. 4.

⁵¹ Malmenvall S. *Beseda o postavi*... Р. 15; Des Metropolitan Ilarion Lobrede... Р. 33, 35, 39–41; "Слово о законе и благодати" митрополита Илариона / ред., перев. А. М. Молдован. Киев : Наукова думка, 1984. С. 8, 19–20; Franklin S. *Sermons*... Р. XIII–XIV; Слово... С. 480–481; Подскальски Г. *Христианство*... С. 152–154, Наумова Г. Р., Шикло А. Е. *Историография*... С. 24; Щапов Я. Н. *Письменные памятники истории Древней Руси*. Москва : Русско-Балтийский информационный центр "БЛИЦ", 2003. С. 179.

⁵² "Слово и законе"... С. 28; Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... Р. 140.

⁵³ Слово... С. 5; Thomson F. J. *Quotations of Patristic and Byzantine Works by Early Russian Authors as an Indication of the Cultural Level of Kievan Russia*. *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia*. Surrey : Ashgate, 1999. V. II. Р. 67; Щапов Я. Н. *Письменные памятники*... С. 178.

⁵⁴ Thomson F. J. *Quotations*... Р. 66; Щапов Я. Н. *Письменные памятники*... С. 178; Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... Р. 140–141.

⁵⁵ Thomson F. J. *The Nature of the Reception of Christian Byzantine Culture in Russia in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries and its Implications for Russian Culture*. *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia*. Surrey : Ashgate, 1999. V. I. Р. 108–139.

⁵⁶ Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... Р. 141.

⁵⁷ Щапов Я. Н. *Письменные памятники*... С. 178–179.

famous works, designed as an explication of basic Christian dogmas in relation to the rejection of heretical views, particularly iconoclasm. Like the *Sermon*, a substantial part of the *Major Apology* discusses the relationship between the law of the Old and the grace of the New Testament. In doing so, Nicephorus advocates the position that while the Law of Moses is worthier than pagan beliefs, in the context of biblical history, it only represents a temporary, already surpassed “divine means” through which humanity had gradually achieved the maturity to accept Christ’s teachings. The *Sermon* is similar to the *Major Apology* in its approach to addressing the contrasts between paganism and Christianity – it emphasizes the “ignorance” and “savageness” of pagans on the one hand and the “knowledge” and “wisdom” of Christians on the other. Like Nicephorus, Ilarion, too, ponders the quantitative (not merely qualitative) difference between Judaism and Christianity – Judaism is a faith limited to the time of the Old Testament and to the Hebrew people, and Christianity is a faith continuing to eternity and calling on all people to convert. The affinity between Nicephorus and Ilarion is further confirmed by certain almost identical phrases used in addressing the same motifs, together with the integration of certain identical biblical quotes they both use to substantiate their theological interpretations. The similarity at the level of biblical quotes suggests it likely that Ilarion did not take them directly from the Bible, but indirectly from theological literature available or known to him⁵⁸. While these similarities do not constitute proof that the creation of the *Sermon* itself was dependent upon the *Major Apology*, they do allow the conclusion that Ilarion was undoubtedly familiar with the themes, motifs and stylistic modalities of Byzantine polemical theological works such as Nicephorus’ *Major Apology*, which found an indirect reflection even in an original Rus’ sermon such as the *Sermon on Law on Grace*⁵⁹.

Ilarion’s creation also displays conceptual and thematic similarities to *Oration XXI* by Gregory Nazianzen (329–390), which, like the third part of the *Sermon*, belongs to the literary genre of eulogy⁶⁰. This oration by one of the greatest Eastern Church Fathers celebrates the virtuous life, committed to orthodox Christian teachings, of Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (298–373) – an advocate of Trinitarianism and Jesus Christ as “one in essence with the Father” in the polemic against the heresy of Arianism, according to which Christ cannot be acknowledged as equal to God the Father⁶¹. Gregory Nazianzen and the (future) Kyivan metropolitan praise their protagonists similarly in terms of substance. When Ilarion celebrates Volodymyr’s actions, he does not limit himself to praising Volodymyr as a historical personage but is primarily interested in the prince’s virtues and achievements by courtesy of the “divine epiphany”. Both with Gregory and Ilarion, God enters salvation history through people overcome by the “love of God”⁶². In this spirit, Gregory opens his oration with the following: In praising Athanasius, I shall be praising virtue. To speak of him and to praise virtue are identical, because he had, or, to speak more truly, has embraced virtue in its entirety. [...] Again, in praising virtue, I shall be praising God, who gives virtue to men and lifts them up, or lifts them up again, to Himself by the enlightenment which is akin to Himself⁶³.

Gregory Nazianzen and Ilarion thus also share an emphasis on God’s credit for successes in the defense or spread of the faith – in this, historically important decision-makers (such as Athanasius and the Kyivan prince Volodymyr) are seen merely as “tools” in the service of God. Just as Athanasius is said to have stopped the heresy of Arianism at the ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 through the workings of the Holy Spirit, so Volodymyr is said to have diverted Kyivan Rus’ from pagan ways into

⁵⁸ Молдован А. М., Юрченко А. И. Слово о законе и благодати и Большой апологетик патриарха Никифора. *Герменевтика древнерусской литературы*. Москва, 1989. Т. 1. С. 7–12; Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... P. 141.

⁵⁹ Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... P. 141–142.

⁶⁰ Gregory Nazianzen. *Oration XXI : On the Great Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria* / ed., trans. P. Schaff. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers : A Select Library of the Christian Church (Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen)*. Vol. 7. New York : The Christian Literature Company, 1894. P. 269–280.

⁶¹ McGuckin J. A. *The Orthodox Church : An Introduction to its History, Doctrine and Spiritual Culture*. Hoboken, NJ : Willey-Blackwell, 2011. P. 14–17, 145–157; Moreschini C. *Storia della filosofia patristica*. Brescia : Editrice Morcelliana, 2004. P. 507–512, 534–536, 625–628.

⁶² Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... 142.

⁶³ Gregory Nazianzen. *Oration XXI*... P. 269.



the Christian fold with the help of the Holy Spirit⁶⁴. Furthermore, both authors express a conviction about Christianity as a symbol of light. Like any other pagan, Volodymyr is said to have been “blind” before his conversion, but after that, he “saw the light”⁶⁵, having accepted the Truth itself⁶⁶.

It is also possible to compare Ilarion’s *Sermon* with *Oration XXXVIII* by Gregory Nazianzen. The *Sermon* and *Oration XXXVIII* can be compared by two key criteria: based on the finding that *Oration XXXVIII* was present in the time and space of Kyivan Rus’⁶⁷ and based on them both addressing a similar theme, as Gregory’s oration discusses the celebration of Jesus’ birth, which is an important symbol of the withering of the Old and the rise of the New Testament⁶⁸. Both Gregory and Ilarion base their line of thought on the same interpretative framework, which is defined by the idea about the end of the era of the Law of Moses. In the eyes of both, Christ represents the “light of comprehension” and the dispeller of the “darkness of ignorance”, and his incarnate arrival realizes the coming of the new (grace) and the leaving of the old (law)⁶⁹. For Gregory Nazianzen, the Law of Moses is just one of the means God has used to deter man from evil and thus reconcile with mankind. The same belief is integrated into the theological context of Ilarion’s *Sermon*. In all this, the “love of God” for mankind, not the absolutization of a particular “divine means”, is said to be crucial – in Ilarion’s view, it is exactly this that is the problem of Jews, who are unable to recognize Jesus Christ as the Savior of all men due to their preoccupation with the law⁷⁰. In a similar vein to Ilarion, Gregory has the following thought:

And having been first chastened by many means (because his sins were many, whose root of evil sprang up through divers causes and at sundry times) – by word, by law, by prophets, by benefits, by threats, by plagues, by waters, by fires, by wars [...] – at last he needed a stronger remedy, for his diseases were growing worse: mutual slaughters, adulteries, perjuries [...], and that first and last of all evils, idolatry and the transfer of worship from the Creator to the Creatures. As these required a greater aid, so also they obtained a greater. And that was that the Word of God Himself. [...], and took on Him flesh for the sake of our flesh. [...] He partakes of my flesh that He may both save the image and make the flesh immortal⁷¹.

Parallels can be drawn between the third part of the *Sermon*, the eulogy in honor of Volodymyr Sviatoslavich, and Eusebius of Caesarea, particularly his *Life of Constantine*, which, as an example to numerous writers, had a decisive effect on the (especially Eastern) medieval conception of a virtuous Christian ruler. Ilarion’s proclamation of Volodymyr as the “new Constantine” is thus based on the widely held Byzantine assumption, adopted from Eusebius and generally established since the early 9th century, about Emperor Constantine as the personification of a model Christian ruler combining a care for the political success of a state with efforts for the social power of the Church. In the given context, using Constantine’s example entailed a vital argument in favor of not only Volodymyr’s personal “maturity”, but also the entire Rus’ cultural-spiritual maturity, which is presented to have adopted and affirmed Constantine’s merits in its own way, thus joining the course of salvation history⁷².

A direct link between the *Sermon* and the *Life of Constantine* can be found in their praise of the good deeds of both rulers aimed towards the Church and the poor⁷³, and subsequently in the mentioning of the decisive role of “God’s grace” in the improvement of their moral lives following a

⁶⁴ Ibidem. P. 273.

⁶⁵ Слово... С. 40, 484.

⁶⁶ Malmenvall S. *Kultura...* P. 142.

⁶⁷ Thomson F. J. *The Nature...* P. 109.

⁶⁸ Gregory Nazianzen. *Oration XXXVIII: On the Theophany, or Birthday of Christ* / ed., trans. P. Schaff. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers : A Select Library of the Christian Church (Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen)*. Vol. 7. New York : The Christian Literature Company, 1894. P. 344–351; Malmenvall S. *Kultura...* P. 142.

⁶⁹ Malmenvall S. *Kultura...* P. 142–143.

⁷⁰ Ibidem. P. 143.

⁷¹ Gregory Nazianzen. *Oration XXXVIII...* P. 348–349.

⁷² Любарский Я. *Византийские историки и писатели*. Санкт-Петербург : Алетейя, 2011. С. 44; Malmenvall S. *Kultura...* P. 143–144.

⁷³ Eusebius. *Life of Constantine* / ed., trans. A. Cameron, S. Hall. New York : Oxford University Press, 1999. P. 163.

personal experience of the trueness of Christian faith. On the latter, Eusebius reports the following: Observing these things, one might well say that a fresh, new-made way of life seemed to have appeared just then, as a strange light after thick darkness lit up the mortal race; and one might confess that the whole achievement belonged to God, who had advanced the Godbeloved Emperor to counter the horde of the godless⁷⁴.

The relevance of both rulers for the wider context of salvation history is emphasized particularly at the beginning and end of both Eusebius' *Life* and Ilarion's *Sermon*. In both cases, there is a conviction about the continuation of Constantine's and Volodymyr's policy, respectively, through their descendants, which segues into the idea of them residing in heaven, where they are said to endeavor for the political and religious well-being of their homelands as intercessors. In this spirit, both Constantine's sons (Constantine, Constantius, Constans) and Volodymyr's son, Yaroslav, represent not only keepers of their father's faith, but also propagators of the already set political orientation, thus displaying the dignity of their succession⁷⁵.

So, for his part the Emperor guided his sons, and they, not simply obeying orders but of their own free will, exceeded their father's exhortation: they applied their own efforts strenuously to sanctification under God, and fulfilled the precepts of the Church in the palaces themselves along with all their households⁷⁶.

Wherever it casts its gaze, whether east or west, whether all over the earth or up to heaven itself, every way and everywhere it observes the Blessed One present with the Empire itself. On earth it perceives his own sons like new lamps filling the whole with his radiance, and himself powerfully alive and directing the whole government of affairs more firmly than before, as he is multiplied in the succession of his sons⁷⁷.

In comparing the *Sermon* with the *Life of Constantine*, an indirect typological connection between three co-creators of salvation history – Moses, Constantine, and Volodymyr – can be observed⁷⁸. Just as Ilarion compares Volodymyr to Constantine, so Eusebius compares Constantine to Moses. Just as Volodymyr is said to have outlawed the “darkness” of paganism and declared Christianity the official religion of Kyivan Rus', so Constantine is said to have delivered the new “chosen people” (the Church) from the servitude of pagan persecution and granted it freedom, following Moses' example. Both Volodymyr and Constantine are said to have even surpassed their role models from the past. This is because, according to Eusebius' typology, Moses freed only the single old “chosen people” (Hebrews) from Egyptian slavery, while Constantine brought an end to the persecution of Christians, who endeavored to encompass the whole humankind with their transcendence of ethnic boundaries. Since the “chosen people” of the New Testament was considered as complementary to its counterpart from the Old Testament and since Christ's grace was considered complementary to the Law of Moses, Constantine is presented as not merely an imitator of Moses' mission, but more as its complementing actor⁷⁹. Under the same interpretative mechanism, Volodymyr, in turn, is presented as a complementing actor to Constantine's rule, as he not only granted freedom to Christianity, but also elevated it to the status of official religion.

The above-mentioned similarities between the patristic Byzantine works and the *Sermon* are mostly not the result of Ilarion's direct integration of passages from those works, but more a reflection of general imitation of Church Fathers and other Byzantine writers – in terms of the existence of a common doctrinary, exegetic and literary framework. This framework formed the basis for various

⁷⁴ Eusebius... P. 121.

⁷⁵ Ibidem. P. 12, 67, 69, 87, 181–182; Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... P. 144.

⁷⁶ Ibidem. P. 173.

⁷⁷ Ibidem. P. 67.

⁷⁸ Similar conclusions can be compared in the works of the contemporary Ukrainian historian Taras Shumeiko. See: Шумейко Т. *Translatio imperii* у Іларіона Київського: символічні імплікації Слова о законі і благодаті. *Byzantium and East Central Europe = Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia*. Вып. 3. Kraków, 2001. С. 61–69; Його ж. Теологумен обоження в Слово о законі і благодаті: к вопросу о целостности произведения. *Ruthenica*. Киев, 2008. Вып. 7. С. 165–180.

⁷⁹ Eusebius... P. 73; Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... P. 144–145.



theological derivations in the *Sermon*, as Ilarion was well-versed in typological exegesis and was also no stranger to conveying and topically discussing the Church teachings as adopted by the Kyivan Rus' elite with the official Christianization intermediated by Byzantium⁸⁰.

Conclusion

The *Sermon* stands at the beginning of the historical self-reflection in medieval Rus' high culture relying on its supposedly independent achievements, particularly the turning point of the official adoption of Christianity under Volodymyr Sviatoslavich. According to this self-affirmative notion, the polity of Rus', already in the Kyivan period and through the unfolding of "Divine providence", not because of the vibrant political and cultural contacts with Byzantium, achieved its spiritual maturity and, consequently, became an integral and equal part of the international community of Orthodox Christians. The main feature of the mentioned position of Kyivan Rus' within the history of salvation is disregarding the Byzantine superiority and, simultaneously, emphasizing the justice of God, who brings his grace equally to all peoples, thus positioning them on the same spiritual level. This kind of theological and patriotic reflection is evidence of hidden polemics with Byzantium deriving from a sense of fear about Rus' own cultural-historical inferiority based on the fact of the relatively late Christianization. Under the surface of patriotic self-affirmation, there lies a kind of "inferiority complex" which can be, at least in general terms, superseded by the argument of the Gospel parable on the workers of the eleventh hour. This kind of reasoning was not a peculiarity of the Rus' culture but formed a wider phenomenon defined by apologetic attitude and was characteristic for the entire religious-literary tradition of the medieval East Orthodox Slavs between the tenth and sixteenth centuries⁸¹. In this context, Ilarion's stance towards Byzantium can be described as ambiguous. While trying to construct a theological justification of the historical value of Kyivan Rus' within the salvific framework of "Divine mercy", he used and adapted patristic patterns coming from Byzantium, for example, the explanation of (dis)continuity between the Law of Moses and Christ's mercy, particularly following Gregory Nazianzen and Patriarch Nicephorus I, or perception of a polity led by a Christian ruler, particularly following Eusebius of Caesarea.

LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SERMON ON LAW AND GRACE

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Summary

This article studies the literary and theological background of the Sermon on Law and Grace, a famous oration by Ilarion, the (future) Metropolitan of Kyiv, from the mid-eleventh century. The author of this article focuses also on potential patristic models for Ilarion's theological and patriotic reflection on the recent East Slavic history in the light of the official adoption of Christianity under Volodymyr Sviatoslavich, Prince of Kyiv. The main feature of the mentioned (self-)reflection, relying on the notion of history as the history of salvation, is disregarding the Byzantine political and cultural superiority and, simultaneously, emphasizing the justice of God, who brings his grace equally to all peoples, thus positioning them on the same spiritual level. This kind of reasoning was not a peculiarity of the Rus' culture but formed a wider phenomenon defined by apologetic attitude and was characteristic of the entire religious-literary tradition of the East Orthodox Slavs between the tenth and sixteenth centuries. While trying to construct a theological justification of the historical value of Kyivan Rus', Ilarion adapted patristic patterns coming from Byzantium, for example, the explanation of (dis)continuity

⁸⁰ Malmenvall S. *Kultura*... P. 145.

⁸¹ Malmenvall S. *Beseda*... P. 25. For more on the common cultural phenomena among medieval East Orthodox Slavs (the concept of *Slavia Orthodoxa*), including the mentioned "inferiority complex". See: Picchio R. *Slavia ortodossa*...

between the Law of Moses and Christ's mercy, particularly following Gregory Nazianzen and Patriarch Nicephorus I, or perception of a polity led by a Christian ruler, particularly following Eusebius of Caesarea.

Keywords: Sermon on Law and Grace, Ilarion, Rus' literature, history of salvation, patristic models

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