

# Reinterpretation of Ukrainian apocryphal literature in chronotope

by Solomiia Yaroslavivna Pavlovska

This article is devoted to the linguistic and cultural analysis of the regional peculiarities of Ukrainian apocryphal literature in the context of modern socio-cultural paradigms. Through the concepts of cultural code and intertextuality, the hypotheses that formed the paradigmatic basis of the study are substantiated: first, the apocryphon is a form of cultural code with an immanent semantic field that contains a system of code units (symbolism, allegory, parables, miracles, and apocalyptic images); and second, the apocrypha are open signs and symbolic systems in which texts with different cultural codes coexist. The intertextual relations within this system can then be interpreted as a dialogue of cultures.

In this paper, based on criteria such as historical context, confessional affiliation, language, and themes, the regional specificity of the apocrypha of Ukraine's western and eastern regions is determined. Within the framework of the cultural communication theory, the regional peculiarities of transcoding the apocrypha text into a visual work (icons, frescoes) are revealed. The specifics of the spiritual and socio-cultural life of Ukraine's western and eastern regions are explained. The study results show that each regional culture in Ukraine (whether western or eastern) is distinctive and valuable and has its own periods of progress and regression. This argument gives grounds for recognizing the multiplicity of independent but interconnected models of cultural development in Ukraine.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In the twenty-first century, Ukrainian society is undergoing significant transformations in all spheres of public life. These phenomena are caused by both global factors and those specific to the post-Soviet space. The change in the sociocultural paradigm has led to an intensive search for new content orientations to optimize social processes in Ukraine and consolidate the nation. One of the problems of modern Ukrainian society is the division of the country into western and eastern regions, which goes back centuries.

**Solomiia Yaroslavivna Pavlovska** is a Bachelor of Arts Student at the University of Alberta, (Department of Arts and Design, 3-98 Fine Arts Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2C9) [solomiia@ualberta.ca]).

The goal of this study is to comprehend the spiritual life of western and eastern Ukraine through the prism of Ukrainian apocryphal literature<sup>2</sup>. The emphasis is not on finding discrepancies between two cultures, but on what unites the regions and brings regional cultures closer to each other. The object of the study is Ukrainian apocryphal literature, including religious texts, gospels, legends, and traditions, which is not considered part of the generally accepted canon of Scripture. Ukrainian apocrypha are interpreted not only as a heritage that should be preserved and studied, but also as a form of cultural code that reflects the spiritual values of the Ukrainian people in a particular historical period. This paper considers the nature of the

<sup>1</sup>All the quotations from sources in languages other than English have been translated by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Apocryphal literature is religious works that contain a deviation from the official doctrine that is therefore denied by the church. The texts of the apocrypha are explanatory of the canonical text of the Bible.

apocrypha, the main patterns of their development, and their role in the socio-cultural regulation of society from the perspective of postmodernism.

The analysis of the apocrypha as sign formations is complicated by the intertextual nature of the phenomenon, which implies the perception of the text as an open system. In this work, the problem of the relationship between "one's own" and "another's" in an apocryphal text is solved within the paradigm of the relationship between different cultures and cultural traditions. The transmission of the content of the apocrypha is a process that fixes the relationship between the text as a sign formation and the subjects of textual activity, that is, the author of the apocrypha and the addressee. The need for their dialogic understanding actualizes the problem of recoding the content of the apocryphon from the code of the author's culture into the code of the addressee's culture. The problem of choosing a decryption code is especially complicated when recoding apocrypha into another form of artistic creation, such as paintings. The disclosure of these problems allows us to comprehend apocryphal literature as a phenomenon of interpretation of the content of Ukrainian culture in its regional manifestations.

The conceptual and methodological ground of the study is a linguistic and cultural approach to the analysis of Ukrainian apocryphal literature. The methodological basis for the study of apocryphal literature is formed from concepts such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, dialogistic, semiotics, intertextuality, cultural communication, and historical and cultural approaches. This broad scope allows us to go beyond a narrowly ontological understanding of the apocrypha and rise to the level of generalizing it as a phenomenon of interpreting the meanings of Ukrainian regional cultures.

### ***History of the Study of Ukrainian Apocryphal Literature***

As an object of scientific research, Ukrainian apocryphal literature began to be considered in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first stage of its study (the second half of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century) had a mainly empirical character. In particular, as a result of field research of Ieronymus Kalitovsky (1866–1926), Omelyan Kaluzhnyatsky (1845–1914), Oleksandr Nazarevsky (1887–1977), unique historical and cultural material was obtained, which formed the basis for further research of the phenomenon. During this period, the multi-volume edition "Apocrypha and Legends from Ukrainian Manuscripts" (Franko 1896–1910) was published, which includes texts from manuscript collections of apocrypha of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries.

The second stage (the first half of the twentieth century) is empirical and theoretical. The study of Ukrainian apocrypha was limited mainly to the study of their genesis from the point of view of ethnography and art history. The manuscript traditions of apocryphal monuments were studied, and artifacts were systematized and classified (Adrianova-Peretz 1941; Kolesa 1926; Voznyak 1924; Yavorsky 1927).

At the third stage (the second half of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century), attention is focused on the theoretical aspects of the study of Ukrainian apocryphal literature. The genre forms and functions of the Ukrainian apocrypha are defined. The phenomenon is analyzed through the prism of connection with Byzantine and Old Slavonic texts (Sventsitska and Trofimova 1989), as well as in the context of the national worldview (Dunayevska 2000). The problem of reception and interpretation of the apocrypha is also studied (Melnik 2006).

## The Connection of Apocrypha with Cultural Code

Each culture establishes inherent values that determine constants in human behavior. Each epoch forms its own paradigm that allows communities to create an immanent model of cultural identity. Firstly, we will analyze this phenomenon through the prism of cultural code and identify the invariant foundation that ensures the integrity of its structure amidst external and internal changes. Secondly, we will investigate the variable component of Ukrainian apocrypha in the spatio-temporal coordinate system (chronotope) and determine the factors of this variability. Using the concept of cultural code will allow us to reveal through apocryphal literature the regional peculiarities inherent in the west and east of Ukraine and understand the nature of the relationship between them.

Essentially, cultural code is information about the culture of a particular community in a specific historical period, encoded in a sign-symbolic form. The cultural code underlies both individual and group cultural identity and is formed within a specific historical period and a historically determined type of human thinking. It is determined by historical-cultural, socio-historical, ethnopsychological, and geopolitical processes that occur in a particular society. The cultural code determines a whole range of systemic characteristics of culture such as mentality, worldview, value orientations, and universal perceptions of the world that are characteristic of the community and that determine the direction of its evolution.

As a form of cultural code, apocryphal literature creates its own semantic field that includes a system of code units such as symbolism, allegory, parables, miracles, and apocalyptic images. The use of the symbolic in apocryphal literature can be seen as a form of

encoding specific values in the text to convey deep meanings related to religious concepts. For example, the symbol of the virgin gates in "The Life of Mary," representing Mary's virginity and purity, is reflective of the central tenet of Christian faith about the immaculate conception. Whereas allegory in the apocrypha is used to represent abstract ideas and serves as a warning of the danger of temptation, apocalyptic imagery focuses the believer's attention on the importance of repentance in the face of imminent death. Miracles are also an important element of apocryphal texts. They demonstrate the power of God and show how a person's faith can lead to divine intervention in human destiny.

We can consider apocryphal texts as a combination of invariant and variable components. In this study, the invariant complex will be understood as texts that remain unchanged in the chronotope. Their antipodes, the variable elements, introduce new accents into the work, leading to the modification of the apocryphal text. The invariant component is centered around key Christian paradigms concerning the reality of God and the existence of earthly and otherworldly spheres of being (the doctrine of the universe), the beginning and end of the world, and the Holy Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit). It should be noted that the doctrines of the reality of God, who created the world, and of the beginning and end of the world would not raise doubts among believers, while the concept of the unity of the transcendent and earthly created certain difficulties in understanding and led to sharp debates in the Christian world. To explain the connection between the earthly and afterlife realms, Athenian thinker Dionysius the Areopagite (2002) developed the theory of cosmology. According to this theory, the communication between God and believers is achieved through spiritual light,

which overcomes the boundary between heavenly and earthly and is manifested in the mysteries of the Church, artistic images, symbols, and signs.

The doctrine of the three hypostases of the Holy Trinity also forms the paradigmatic basis of the invariant complex of apocrypha. According to the Orthodox doctrine, God is one in essence but triune in the person of God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (1910) explained the essence of the Holy Trinity at the Second Ecumenical Council:

The Unoriginate, Beginning, and Essence with the Beginning is one God . . . The name of the Unoriginate is the Father, the name of the Beginning is the Son, and the name of the Essence with the Beginning is the Holy Spirit. (108)

So, the invariant complex of apocryphal literature includes the canonical texts that determined the cultural code of the times of the emergence of Christianity as a world religion and the formation of its dogmatic system. We will now turn to the variable component of Ukrainian apocrypha. By analogy with the Bible, apocryphal literature is traditionally differentiated by chronological criteria into Old Testament, New Testament, Church Slavonic apocrypha, and Ukrainian apocrypha of the modern era. Pseudo-church apocrypha of modern Ukrainian history should also be included. Each of these groups belongs to a certain cultural-historical epoch with its characteristic cultural code.

Old Testament texts are the oldest apocryphal monuments of the Hellenistic period (400–100 BCE) of esoteric character. They appeared in the Jewish milieu and reflected the religious, moral, and social trends of the late Judaic worldview. These texts, written in ancient Hebrew or Aramaic, contain information about Old Testament characters such as Abraham, Adam

and Eve, Enoch, Jacob, and Melchizedek that did not enter the canonical literature.

New Testament apocryphal literature emerged in the first century AD in the era of the formation of Christianity, the first ecumenical councils, and the formation of the Christian dogmatic system. It had an explanatory character of the canonical text of the Bible, which over time grew with new legends about the earthly life of Jesus Christ, the life of Mary, and the deeds of the apostles. New Testament apocrypha, originally written in Greek, came to Ukrainian lands in Old Church Slavonic translations and reflected Near Eastern, Byzantine, and Balkan worldviews, along with various religious views and literary and folklore traditions.

Church Slavonic apocrypha are texts of apocryphal content written in the Church Slavonic language introduced by Cyril and Methodius in the Slavic countries in the ninth century. Church Slavonic apocrypha arrived in Ukrainian lands almost simultaneously with canonical books and introduced new believers to Christian dogmas, supplementing them with explanations and vivid stories about characters and events of the Old and New Testaments. Writers were attracted not only by the theological, but also by the narrative aspects of Christian texts.

Canonical literature, written in Greek, Hebrew, or Latin, remained incomprehensible to the Ukrainian people. Church Slavonic translations of sacred books in the South Macedonian dialect were also foreign to Ukrainians. In the fourteenth century, the Church Slavonic texts began to approach the living language of the people in the Slavic regions. This process occurred at different times for different peoples: among the Czechs in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, among the Poles in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, and among the Ukrainians in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Apocrypha were

supplemented with stories that reflected the life of a particular people and the ideas that prevailed in society during this historical period. For example, Czech and Polish apocrypha often contain information about the Protestant Reformation movement, while the Ukrainian apocrypha reveal the problem of the transition of the Carpathian region to the Greek Catholic faith.

I. Vozniak (1924) gives examples of Teacher's Gospels, created for the assimilation and popularization of the Holy Scripture (Skotarske (1588), Yasynykivske (1640), Danylevske (1646), Nyahivske (1758), and the Gospels of Ivan Kapishovsky (1660), Stepan Plavyansky (1668), Petro Kolochavsky (1737), and others). The use of the vernacular in the teaching and interpretation of sacred texts made religious thought accessible for the people to understand and learn. As Y. Yavorsky (1927) notes, "For the dark and only listening public, it was probably enough to have simple, popular excerpts or paraphrases from the Bible on a lively and more or less accessible and colorful background of solemn and oral teacher interpretations" (140). In addition, the apocrypha played an important role in the development of Ukrainian literature. As Ivan Franko (2006) argues, "The apocrypha were the bridge that directed the development of national literature from the exclusive domination of the church and more or less dead church language to a freer movement, to secular themes and interests" (XXIV). Thus, the emergence of national apocryphal literature was driven by the desire to adapt it to the folk environment through the use of the vernacular language.

Research on the variable component of apocrypha in the chronotope is based on the paradigm of differentiation of Ukrainian lands into eastern and western regions. The reasons for this division are manifold, including the different historical fates of the eastern and western regions,

as well as the existence under the rule of different imperial systems with different religious orientations. Differences in the dynamics of socio-economic development, in the character and orientation of intercultural contacts, and in physical natural conditions also played an important role. This division not only determined the immanent features of western and eastern regions of Ukraine, but also led to different vectors of development of apocryphal literature. The key factors that led to the division of Ukrainian apocrypha into western and eastern are, first and foremost, confessional affiliation, the peculiarities of local language, and different criteria for choosing religious plots.

### *Religious Aspect*

The discrepancies between the east and west in Ukraine were particularly evident in a religious context. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Carpathian region was under significant pressure from the Catholic Church. Rome sought to compensate for its losses in the struggle against the Reformation at the expense of the Orthodox Church in western Ukraine. Rome's efforts were successful. The Transcarpathian priests signed the Union of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in the castle chapel of the Druget family in Uzhhorod on April 24, 1646. This led to the formation of two regional cultures in Ukraine.

The meaningful core of both cultures is the Ukrainian version of Christianity, based on pagan-Christian syncretism. However, western Ukraine is characterized by an orientation toward Western culture and the western European branch of Christianity, where Catholicism and Greek Catholicism predominate. The east retains a kinship with Orthodoxy and Orthodox culture. At the time, there were sharp debates for and against the Union of the Orthodox and Catholic

Churches, which was reflected in the polemical literary. As Igor Teslenko (2020) notes, the publication of the Jesuit Peter Scarga's work "On the Unity of the Church of God under One Shepherd," in which he called for the complete submission of the Orthodox Church to the Roman Pope through union, caused outrage among the Orthodox. In particular, Michael Andrelli from Transcarpathia wrote, "Why do they forcefully drag our Church? They would be happy to destroy me, they beg and plead for me to accept their faith. For what? For their union? No way! . . . I don't want their God!"<sup>3</sup> (Mykytas 1984: 116–117).

In his debates with Jesuits Zhambor, Camellis, and Kornitsky, Andrelli noted that all the troubles came from people abandoning the faith of their fathers and joining the Catholic camp. In support of the Orthodox faith, Hryhorii Smotrytskyi, the rector of the Ostroh Academy, and Christophor Philaret from Volyn, known as the author of the polemical work "Apokrisis," spoke out. An alternative position was taken by Meletius Smotritsky, Stefan Zizanii, and Job Boretsky, who formulated their vision of the principles on which the unification of the Orthodox and Catholic churches should take place.

The break with Orthodoxy in western Ukraine was determined not only by Roman pressure, but also by the decline of the prestige of the Orthodox Church, resulting from what was understood as deteriorating morals among the ministers of the faith. In particular, Archimandrite Kyrilo Tranquillion-Stavrovetsky of Chernigov notes "Deceitful men, drunkards, greedy, covetous, working more for their wives and children than for God, caring more for them than

for Christ's flock and teaching. Their wives and daughters have light clothes and gold ornaments, while the books in the church are ragged, and some do not have any at all"<sup>4</sup> (Maslov 1984: 119). Similarly, the author of the Skotarsk Gospel mentions that "They seize other people's property and rob churches"<sup>5</sup> (Vozniak 1924: 116).

Archbishop Meletius Smotrytsky (1987) of Polotsk also writes about the corrupt life of the Orthodox clergy:

Oh, lights of the Church! Oh, shepherds of Christ's sheep! Oh, teachers and guides of your smallest brothers! How you have grown fat and forgotten your God, your Savior! Your sheepfolds are being destroyed, while the sheepfolds of the enemies of God and yours are expanding. . . Your wisdom, your skill, your idle talk is senseless, vain, and dissolute, your amusements are indecent, in them you perish together with those who follow you.<sup>6</sup> (80–83)

The desire to raise the prestige of the Christian Church was the decisive factor that determined the reorganization of the Orthodox Church in Western Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> Original text: "А чому ж волокут, тягнут силою нашу церков? И рады бы они мнѣ погибнути, скоро, барзо, просят, молят мя обратися. На що? На унѣю их? Прге! Плюю на ню! Не потребно мнѣ бога их!" (Mykytas 1984: 116–117).

<sup>4</sup> Original text: "Человѣцы лукавыи, пияницы, сребролюбцы, плотолюбцы, найпаче женѣ и чадом работает, нежели богу, и наибольше о сих прилежит и промишляет, нежели о стадѣ Христовѣ и о науцѣ збавленной. На женах их и дщерях ризы свѣтлыи, пасы златокованны, а в церкви книги подраныи, а в иной и сих не найдем" (Maslov 1984: 119).

<sup>5</sup> Original text: "Чужее берут, церкви драпят, много жонѣ поймут" (Voznyak 1924: 116).

<sup>6</sup> Original text: "О церкви світочі! О пастирі овец Христових! О вчителі і майстри молодшої вашої братії. Як же ви отилили й розтовстїли, і забули бога, спасителя вашого?! Ваші вівчарні знищили, а вівчарні ворогів божих і ваших ширяться. . . Мудрість ваша, майстерність, розмова – безглузді, даремні і розпусні, забави – непристойні, в них самі ви разом з тими, котрі вам наслідують, гините" (Smotrytsky 1987: 80–83).

However, the hopes of the newly converted Uniates for a better life were not fulfilled. The Latins considered the Uniates to be only semi-Catholics, and the union to be only a transitional state to Catholicism, and thus the terms of the union were practically not fulfilled. In particular, Ukrainians were promised the preservation of their native rite, but in June 1718, the Sacred Congregation issued a decree that ordered all Ukrainians to observe the holy days of the Latin Church. Ukrainians were also promised the election of their own bishop; however, according to a letter from Pope Clement XI (1719), the bishops of Mukachevo lost their title, were deprived of their residence, and were placed under the authority of the Catholic bishop (Pekar 1997: 51). Additionally, Ukrainians were promised privileges for the clergy, but Uniate priests lost their tithes and were required to work on the land, hardly differing from serfs despite the catechism of J. Camellus (1698) noting that "Landowners cannot . . . treat clerics as simple serfs, forcing them to act as subjects and hirelings"<sup>7</sup> (Voznyak 1924: 110).

### *Language Aspect*

The language of the apocrypha as a cultural code unit is the key to understanding the binary nature of Ukrainian society and its differentiation into western and eastern regions. Throughout history, the Carpathian region has been inhabited by various ethnic groups, including Ukrainians, Hungarians, Romanians, Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles. This led to the openness of western Ukrainian apocrypha to the perception of "foreign" linguistic elements. According to Yavorsky (1927), some components of the Czech

language can be traced in the Ukrainian translation of the "Song of Songs" (the beginning of the sixteenth century) and the Bible of F. Skorina (1517–1519). Traces of Polish and Czech can be found in the Peresopnytsia Gospel (1556–1561), the Krekhiv Apostle (1581), and the Apocalypse of John (the second half of the sixteenth century).

Many Polish words are found in the Volyn Gospel (1571), the Gospel of Valentin Negalevsky (1581), and the Old Testament Bible (the beginning of the seventeenth century). Meanwhile, elements of the Russian language actively penetrate in the apocryphal literature of the eastern Ukrainian territories. At the same time, as Yavorsky (1927) notes, in Ukrainian apocryphal works of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries in both the western and eastern regions there is an active process oriented towards the local vernacular. Such a tendency can be traced, for example, in the Herliakiv Apostle of the late seventeenth century, and in the teacher's retelling of the Apocalypse.

### *The Plot Aspect*

The specifics of the social development in the eastern and western regions of Ukraine can also be traced in the plots of the apocrypha, which reflect the customs and traditions of their inhabitants. The Ukrainian eastern rite is dominated by the cult of the Resurrection of the Savior, while the western regions are prevailed by the cult of Calvary, Mysticism, and the Passion of Christ.

The appearance in Ukraine in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of polemical works dealing with the socio-political problems of Ukrainian society had a significant impact on apocryphal literature. The apocrypha contain various reflections on human existence; for example, M. Gorbiansky, the author of the Nyakhivsky

<sup>7</sup> Original text: "Панове земніи не можуть . . . трактовати клириковъ якъ простыхъ хлоповъ, примушаючи ихъ, абы робили яко подданіи и наємники" (Voznyak 1924: 110).

Gospel, wonders "Why is there no truth in the world? Why do the wicked not think of their brothers and of the poor? How can it be understood that the good are trampled underfoot and the wicked are respected?"<sup>8</sup> (Voznyak 1924: 117). This leitmotif of the human share runs through many Carpathian apocrypha. In the Teacher's Gospel from Danyleve, the author asks, "For what reason does the Lord God punish us with evil masters, barrenness, and other various punishments?"<sup>9</sup> (Franko 1981: 241). Due to drought and crop failure, people were starving and cattle were dying. The Huklyvsky Chronicle states that "In 1787, throughout Hungary, there was a great famine and disease, with a third of the people dying from typhus and hunger because they ate harmful grass. That year . . . vest was average, and the summer was good, but people sowed very little, and the following year, the famine in the Verkhovyna region was even worse, so besides weeds and straw, people bought grain from Jews, boiled it into jelly, and consumed it"<sup>10</sup> (Bilenky 1911: 73).

The people interpreted the causes of their misfortunes in their own way. They did not question the absolute moral norms that had been formed over centuries and were enshrined and

sanctified by Christianity, but their ethics did not fit into the Procrustean bed of the Ten Commandments. People themselves determined what was a sin. In particular, in the Teacher's Gospel from Danyleve, the author explains the reason for blindness was because of people drinking, not celebrating Sundays and holidays, and not fasting (Franko 1981: 239). This same author also mentions the spread of card games in villages as an evil: "When Sunday or other holy day comes, we do not spend it in praising God, but think of how to gossip about each other or play cards, and so spend the whole day . . . And the devil has long learned and continues to learn how to destroy the praise of God, and has invented his own gospel, contrary to the four evangelists, that is, the cursed cards, to lure people into a trap and lead them into his kingdom, into eternal hell"<sup>11</sup> (Franko 1981: 241-242). Echoes of everyday life can thus be traced in the apocryphal texts of both the western and eastern regions of Ukraine, giving them a local flavour.

### Apocrypha as Intertextual Dialogue

The term "intertextuality" was introduced by Julia Kristeva (2004: 136) to denote intertextual relations in a literary work. Kristeva argued that no text is created in isolation, but is a product of a complex interaction of linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts. We will apply the concept of intertextuality onto apocryphal literature and will try to shed light on the relationships between

<sup>8</sup> Original text: "Чомъ на сюмъ свѣтѣ не есть тай не была нѣкая правда? Чомъ лихыи не гадають за братію свою, за убогихъ людій? И за своимъ иманіємъ они суть у чести великуй у другихъ людій. Як розумѣме сесе, чомъ тоты люде добрые, они суть пометани, а тоты злыи суть у чести великуй?" (Voznyak 1924: 117).

<sup>9</sup> Original text: "За що юж и нас господь-бог покортал и карет, то ест злыми панамы и неурожаем поля и иншими розмаитыми карностями?" (Franko 1981: 241).

<sup>10</sup> Original text: "1787 р. Того року всей краине угорской великій голод і хворобы тяжке проходили; народа до третей части умерло на глуханю (тиф) из голоду, бо преишлого року сечков и бурянами были ся нагазянили (наїлися шкідливої трави). Тогожде року . . . врожай посредный був, и лето благо было; еднакож люде мало посеяли были, и следующего року со взором на Верховину еще болшіи глад був, бо кроме буряну и соломы и збрагу люде от жидов купували и из того киселицю варили та сербали" (Bilenkyi 1911: 73).

<sup>11</sup> Original text: "Коли прийде недѣля или празник инший божій, то мы его не перепровадимо на божій хвалѣ, але май мыслимо, як бы един другого даяк спотварити, правотити, албо у карты грати а на том вшиток день стратити, А діявол з давна ся научил и учит ся, як бы хвалу божію знищити, и такжей вымислив против четырех євангелистов свою євангелію четверой масти, то ест оных проклятих картов, штобы также люди ловили и до своего панства приводили, до пекла вѣчного" (Franko 1981: 241–242).



texts in the apocrypha and cultural contexts. The analysis is based on the paradigm that apocrypha is an open symbolic system in which texts with different cultural codes coexist.

In apocryphal literature, intertextual dialogue is achieved by including canonical and apocryphal texts from other eras in the apocryphal field. Essentially, intertextual relations boil down to a dialogue of cultures through imitations or allusions to well-known facts and events. Yuri Lotman (1992) identifies two motivational reasons for interest in a foreign text: "The first reason can be defined as the search for oneself, the second reason as the search for the other" (111). The donor text is used by the author of the apocrypha as a starting point for developing the theme, as well as for confirming, refining, and specifying their own ideas. As noted by Mikhail Bakhtin (1979), "The contact between [texts] is dialogical, but not a mechanical contact of oppositions" (373). The mechanisms of interaction are code units. They are always present in apocryphal literature, but their content can change over time. Knowledge of Christian symbolism and its evolution in chronotope is very important for the analysis of intertextual relationships.

The most enduring symbols are those based on the Bible. They serve the function of preserving and transmitting apocryphal traditions, but with a change in cultural code, their meanings can transform. It is enough to recall the evolution of the symbol of Christ. In early Christian literature, it materialized in the form of a fish. The five Greek letters that form the word "fish" are the first letters of the words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." Later, Jesus came to be identified with the Lamb of God, because He sacrificed himself for the sake of atoning for the sins of humanity (the lamb was a sacrificial animal among the Jews, and its ritual slaughter was done

to atone for sins). In the Ukrainian apocrypha, the traditional attribute of Christ is the vine as a symbol of Christian faith and Holy Communion, which points to his atoning sacrifice.

Another important factor in shaping the sign-symbolic system of the apocrypha is the local traditions and linguistic features of the region. For example, in Slavic languages, the word "death" is feminine, while in German it is masculine, so the symbol of death in Slavic cultures is an old woman with a scythe, while in the Catholic world the personification of death takes a male form. It should be noted that the western European tradition is observed in particular in the Carpathian region of Ukraine.

Not only local traditions, but also religious factors introduce variability into Christian symbolism. Such a feature can be observed, for example, in the materialization of the symbol of light as a symbolic expression of Christ. In the Orthodox tradition, its carrier is gold (golden background, halos around the heads of saints in icons), while the Catholic West realizes this theological idea in stained glass, through which sunlight pours.

The memory of the people preserves the most important symbols that reflect the worldview of the era. However, older symbols do not disappear, but rather transition into potentiality, remaining in consciousness as elements of national culture. This applies in particular to pagan elements that entered the arsenal of Ukrainian apocrypha as echoes of the past and that serve as a reminder of Christian-pagan syncretism. Pagan symbols create established semantic associations that were formed and fixed in the folk consciousness in the pre-Christian period of history. The system of pagan symbols, which has organically entered Ukrainian apocrypha, is not only an artistic-stylistic concept, but also a worldview concept that is associated with the peculiarities of

people's mythological thinking and is determined by their mythological worldview and understanding of the world. It expands the boundaries of the Christian text, linking it to folk traditions.

In Christian interpretation, pagan ideograms are transformed and acquire new meaning. For example, the symbol of the sun becomes an attribute of personified truth. The idea of the circle in folk Christian art is also associated with pagan perception and represents a symbol of sacred space and the image of the world. It should be noted that centrism has always been associated in folk consciousness with the form of world formation.

Knowing the meaning of symbols, as well as understanding Christian allegories, parables, and apocalyptic imagery, provides the key to identifying donor texts. In the process of writing an apocryphon, the author may use donor texts in full or in part, transforming them in accordance with his ideological intent. However, they always interpret them within the cultural code and socio-cultural paradigm of their era, giving the texts a new meaning.

### **Apocryphal Literature in the Context of Cultural Communication**

Folk artists often wove apocryphal texts and everyday motifs into the plot canvas of religious paintings, which was repeatedly discussed at Orthodox church councils. Despite the active opposition of the official church, the use of stories from apocryphal sources to decorate church interiors is firmly rooted in the Ukrainian folk tradition. This is not surprising. The visual perception of the Holy Scriptures, supplemented by everyday pictures, was more accessible to understanding the Christian idea than comprehending the theological truths of the New and Old Testaments.

The whole history of humanity from the beginning to the end of its existence appears in images and symbols before the eyes of a believer who enters the temple. The connection between folk religious painting and apocryphal literature is most clearly manifested in the interpretation of the scenes of the Last Judgment. In Christianity, the doctrine of Judgment Day is one of the most foundational. According to Christian teaching, on Judgment Day the Son of God will judge the living and the dead according to their works. The righteous will be raised from the dead, but sinners will be sent to hell for eternal torment. Artists try to reveal the problem of good and evil on the basis of Christian morality, as well as their national and social views. In the scenes of hell, they depict tyrants and kings along with drunkards, tempters, and adulterers.

Traditionally, the artist adheres to the principle of compositional solution, focusing on preserving the identity of the pictorial interpretation of the content of biblical and apocryphal texts. At the same time, they bring their own worldview to the picture. This paper comprehends the process of transition from the semantic field of the apocrypha to the field of sacred painting through the prism of a dialogue between the author of the apocryphal text, the artist, and the recipient.

#### ***The First Stage: Dialogue between the Author of the Apocrypha and the Artist***

In what follows, we consider the algorithm of the transition of an apocryphal text into a pictorial one. The analysis is conducted along the line of contact between two sign systems, such as language and painting. The paradigmatic basis of the study is: first, Herchanivska's (2011) statement that Ukrainian folk painting is a synthesis of Byzantine artistic canons, folk traditions, and artistic styles of the era; second, Lotman's (1990) thesis that literary and pictorial

texts are systems of signs and symbols; third, each art form has an immanent code that changes in space and time. In addition to specific features such as color, line, and composition, the painting code reflects the peculiarities of Ukrainian folk religious painting as an open artistic system that changes in chronotope.

Artistic canons arose and developed in close connection with the cult idea. With the advent of Christianity on Ukrainian lands, people adopted not only the iconography of the new religion, but also a system of views on painting and its perception. A set of biblical subjects, rules for depicting characters, symbolism, attributes of holiness, and the color palette of the work were canonized. The artists inherited the Orthodox understanding of religious images, on the one hand, as evidence of the truthfulness and reality of biblical events and legends, and on the other hand, as a reminder of a prototype that cannot be painted from life. The artistic canon made it possible to overcome the unreality of the religious idea by transforming it into real images. Adhering to the Christian doctrine of the eternity and immutability of the supernatural world, folk artists created static images of biblical characters as carriers of the spiritual and eternal. As John Damascene (2007) writes, "Artistic images are visible things that bodily express those things that are invisible and lack form, so that they may be vaguely comprehended by the mind" (176).

Herchanivska (2011) focuses on the fact that, "The canons are a purely Orthodox phenomenon; there were no iconographic schemes in the art of Western Christianity. It is characterized (especially for Catholicism) by a formally stable system of reproducing religious subjects" (329). The aesthetic significance of religious art for Western Christianity, especially the Catholic trend, was decisive, which led to an extraordinary rise in artistic thinking and an active search for

innovative painting techniques such as open linear perspective, a way of conveying movement, air, and volume.

The Christian canon and folk traditions formed the basis of Ukrainian folk painting. At the stage of its crystallization, the canonical artistic concept in Ukraine was quite fruitful, but the powerful artistic impulses from Byzantium gradually weakened, causing other artistic values to come to the fore. As Herchanivska (2011) emphasizes,

The loss of the spiritual and semantic basis of the image creates an objective basis for rethinking the meaning and principles of writing religious works. The canon is already perceived as a 'Procrustean bed', a brake that hinders the further development of art. (191)

In the eighteenth century, then, the aesthetic factor becomes a criterion for evaluating Ukrainian official art. As L. Uspensky (1958) notes,

A period of conscious break with the principle established by the Seventh Ecumenical Council, according to which the artist should be responsible only for the artistic side of the matter, begins. At the same time there is a transition to the principle formulated by Carolingian books, according to which the icon is a product of the artist's imagination. (307)

Although folk artists gave preference to spiritual beauty, they did not stay away from the new trends of the era, imitating the main stylistic trends of Western art. The most active processes of inclusion of Ukrainian culture in the European orbit occurred in western Ukraine. This deepened the localization of the development of Ukrainian culture and led to a variation in the code of not

only apocryphal literature, but also religious painting.

***The Second Stage: Dialogue between the Author of the Apocrypha, the Artist, and the Recipient***

The dialogical chain "author of the apocrypha – artist – recipient" is closed by the personage which we call the "recipient." Thanks to the artist's ability to give symbolic meaning to the original image, and the recipient's ability to perceive these symbols and transform them into sensual images, religious art has overcome the barrier that exists between these participants in the dialogue. By embodying celestial images in a real form, the artist excites the recipient's consciousness, creating the illusion of their presence. For a non-believer, the aesthetic impression of a work of art dominates the religious one. For believers, the perception of the illusory divine essence of the phenomenon prevails. In a religious work, they perceive primarily the mystical content, and only secondarily its aesthetic side. The visual perception of Sacred Scripture through painting, as well as the use by artists of apocryphal texts in folk religious painting, has contributed to the comprehension of the Christian idea for many centuries.

The analysis allowed us to test a number of hypotheses. First, the process of translating an apocryphal text into a visual form can be described as a dialogue between the author of the apocryphal text, the artist, and the recipient. Secondly, this process is equivalent to a dialogue between cultures with different codes. Thirdly, the code of Ukrainian folk religious painting, in addition to its species features, is also determined by the synthesis of Byzantine artistic canons, folk traditions, and artistic styles of the era. Lastly, the change of the socio-cultural paradigm in Ukrainian society in the chronotope caused the

transformation of the code of Ukrainian painting not only in time but also in space, which led to the formation of its western and eastern variants.

**Conclusions**

On the basis of linguistic and cultural analysis of Ukrainian apocrypha, the peculiarities of the spiritual and socio-cultural life of the eastern and western regions of Ukraine are being comprehended. The main results of the research are contained in the following provisions. In the context of the concept of cultural code, a few hypotheses are substantiated and verified. Firstly, apocryphal literature is a form of historical existence of the Ukrainian ethnic group. Secondly, apocrypha are one of the forms of cultural code that provides an idea of the culture within which it was created and functioned during a specific historical period. Thirdly, apocryphal literature forms its own semantic field, which includes a system of code units, such as symbolism, allegory, parables, miracles, and apocalyptic images. Lastly, Ukrainian apocryphal literature is guided by Byzantine models, as well as by the traditions and aesthetic ideals of the people. The people creatively reinterpreted and adapted key aspects of Christian doctrine to their everyday life, forming an immanent worldview and artistic system.

Based on the analysis of the religious, linguistic, and narrative components of Ukrainian apocryphal literature in the chronotope, the determinants of differences in the worldview and socio-cultural life of the inhabitants of the east and west of Ukraine are identified. It is shown that the substantive core of both cultures is the Ukrainian version of Christianity based on pagan-Christian syncretism. However, western Ukraine is characterized by an orientation toward the western European branch of Christianity and Western culture. It is dominated by Catholicism

and Greek Catholicism. The east continues to maintain affinity with Orthodoxy and Orthodox culture. The recognition of the fact of multi-vector development of Ukrainian culture and a tolerant attitude towards other regional cultures is an important condition for intercultural communication in Ukraine.

The analysis of the apocrypha from the point of view of intertextuality, that is, intertextual dialogue, led to a number of conclusions. Firstly, the apocrypha are an open symbolic system in which texts with cultural codes from different historical epochs coexist. Secondly, the author of the apocrypha uses donor texts to confirm, clarify, and specify their own ideas, but always interprets them within the cultural code of their era. Thirdly, intertextual connections are reduced to a dialogue of cultures through imitations or allusions to known facts and events. Fourth, transforming the donor texts in accordance with their ideological intent, the author uses them in the context of the socio-cultural paradigm of their era, giving them local significance. This statement gives grounds to interpret the apocryphal text as an interpreter of the regional peculiarities of the west and east of Ukraine.

The genetic connection between the apocrypha and Ukrainian folk religious painting is shown. The use of plots from apocryphal sources in church interiors is firmly rooted in the Ukrainian folk tradition, despite the active opposition of the official church. The transition of an apocryphal text into a visual form is interpreted as a dialogue between the author of the apocryphal text, the artist, and the recipient.

The analysis carried out in this context has revealed the factors of heterogeneity in the field of Ukrainian religious painting and its regional differentiation. It is substantiated that the correlation coefficient, which determines the degree of correspondence between the

information sent by the author of the apocrypha and received by the recipient, depends on the effectiveness of the chosen codes of communication between the participants of the dialogue. The change of the socio-cultural paradigm in Ukrainian society leads to the transformation of these codes not only in time, but also in space. Identifying these codes provides the key to understanding the peculiarities of local cultures in Ukraine.

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