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«Res sane mira»: Orthodox Saints and Relics Described by Protestant Pastor John Herbinus (1675)

Іоанн Гербіній (1633–1679) був відомим лютеранським богословом і письменником. Живучи на території Речі Посполитої, він зробив опис київських печер, який був опублікований 1675 році в Єні. В цій книзі знайшло відображення багато популярних культів руського духовного життя першої половини XVII століття. Важливо підкреслити, що Гербіній не критикував прославлення та імітацію святих. Він коротко згадав про їхню посмертну роль, опустивши, однак, поширені у Православній Церкві молитви до подвижників. На думку Гербінія, помилкою православних було прославлення людських вчинків (а не заслуг Христа) і бачення у них причини святості та чуда. Однак ця дуже важлива богословська відмінність була єдиною різницею, яку Гербіній вказав між православними та протестантськими традиціями шанування святих. Шанування мощей також не критикувалося Гербінієм. Навпаки, протестантський автор вважає, що мощам послідовників Христа можна і потрібно поклонятися, через них Бог виконує чудеса. Проте Гербіній не поділяв православну ідею про чудесну нетлінність останків святих в Печерському монастирі. Реліквії, як він писав, є частково зітлілими і лише почасти збереженими через систему вентиляції в печерах; голови святих мироточать внаслідок поглинання спеціального повітря. Наводячи ці аргументи, Гербіній, заперечує центральне місце православного вчення, згідно з яким київські реліквії збереглися незруйнованими через великі заслуги та гідності, якими володіли печерські отці в очах Бога. Очевидно, що сама ідея заслуг, зароблених монахом завдяки своїм подвижницьким зусиллям, не могла бути прийнята протестантським автором. Це суперечило його конфесійним поглядам і однозначно розглядалося ним як ідолопоклонство.

Ключові слова: Іоанн Гербіній, Києво-Печерський монастир, святі, реліквії.

John Herbinus (1633–1679) was a well-known Lutheran theologian and writer. Living long time on the territory of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, he wrote a description of the Kyiv religious caves, which was published in 1675 in Jena. In this book, Herbinus, being deeply connected with the West-European Protestant world and at the same time living in multicultural and multi-religious Vilnius, tried to maneuver between the religious tolerance and confessional loyalty, the adherence to the ideas of German reformation and a personal friendship with the Orthodox clergy: Martin Woloszowycz and Innocent Gizel.

The reason why the Lutheran author got interested in the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra is trivial from the first sight. At the very beginning he was interested only in the origins — natural or man-made — of the caves. Nevertheless, there is a wide range of issues raised in his treatise: relics conservation (in this case he made a good use of his knowledge of the Egyptian mummification techniques), the character of Ruthenians¹, Orthodox religious practices and even linguistic connections between the Slavic languages and the Biblical Hebrew. Kyiv Pechersk *Πατερικον*, which was popularized in Kyiv Pechersk Monastery through several editions, was broadly used by John Herbinus. In his possession were two editions of this medieval monument: one in Polish language, edited in 1635 by Sylvester Kossov and another in Old Ukrainian, published in 1661. Although Kyiv Pechersk abbot Innocent Gizel advised Herbinus to use the most recent edition, mainly he was using the edition of 1635.

The question whether Herbinus visited Kyiv has long time been remaining open to discussion. Some researches claim that Herbinus himself was in the Kyiv region. This statement is actively supported by Dmytro Chyzhevsky in particular. The scholar criticizes Heinrich Bendel for his statement that Herbinus' knowledge was gained in the course of his trips across Western Europe only. According to Chyzhevsky, Herbinus travelled much more and actually visited the Ukrainian lands². Later the statement that Herbinus visited Kyiv was repeated for several

¹ Under Ruthenians I mean often used in the seventeenth-eighteenth century sources name for inhabitants of contemporary Ukraine and Bielorrussia. With the term «Russian» I mean related to the times of Kyiv Rus'; for the early-modern period, the terms Ruthenian and Muscovite are used.

² Dmytro Čyževskýj, «Magister Johannes Herbinus. Ein Gelehrtenleben aus dem XVII. Jahrhundert» by Heinrich Bendel,» *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 5, 3/4 (1928): 490–492.

times in serious scholarly works. Thus, the editor of reprint of *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae* in *Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature* Paulina Lewin alleges that after the personal invitation of Innocent Gizel Herbinus visited Kyiv caves and observed the relics there³. However, in the preface to his edition Herbinus writes that he received information about Kyiv, first of all from Martin Wolossowycz and Innocent Gizel. Gizel's letter, sent to Herbinus and published in *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae* is finished with the Bible verse (Jo 20,29): «blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed»⁴ that it also an indirect hint about Herbinus' absence in Kyiv.

Saints and their virtues in *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae*

Approaching the question of Herbinus' attitude towards saints and sanctity, it must be underlined the great importance of the cult of saints in the seventeenth-century Ukrainian lands. That importance is reflected in the *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae* as well. Herbinus receipted the popular in Ukrainian early-modern narratives story about the Christianization of Rus', in which saints took a prominent role. Among those saints Herbinus specially highlighted St. Cyril and Methodius (ninth century) spreading their preaching activity on the Polish lands as well: «[...] a quibus Sclavorum ac Polonorum Apostolis Cyrillo et Methodio religio, cultusque sacer linguam Sclavonum vernacular conscripta [...]»⁵. It is clear that the images of Slavic missionaries and translators of sacral texts are very important for the Protestant author. However, the main attention is paid by Herbinus to Prince Vladimir — he described in details his life, conversion and provided by him baptizing of Rus'⁶. Discovering the relics of St. Vladimir, his glorification as a baptist of Russia

³ Paulina Lewin, «Introduction,» in *Seventeenth-Century Writings on the Kyivan Caves Monastery* (Cambridge (Mass.), Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University 1987), XXIX.

⁴ Johannes Herbinus, *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae, Sive Kijovia Subterranea: In quibus Labyrinthus Sub Terra, Etin eo emortua, à sexcentis annis, Divorum atque Heroum Græco-Ruthenorum, & nec dum corrupta, corpora, ex nomine atque ad oculum, è Παινεπικω Sclavonico detegit* (Jena 1675), 46.

⁵ Ibidem, 19.

⁶ Ibidem, 20–24.

and a patron of education and the Church, the attitude towards the saint as a personal patron of the Metropolitan Mohyla — all this makes the figure of the saint extremely important for the *Πατερικον* and therefore for Herbinus as well.

Besides the saints-baptizers, the saints of the caves took a significant place in the creation of Kyiv early-modern pantheon. Herbinus gave the general list of the Kyiv hermits⁷ whose *vitas* were in the 1661 edition of the *Πατερικον*. He listed 43 saints, adding to his source two names: Nicolaus and Dionysus who were mentioned in the *Πατερικον* only as witness of one of the miracles, but have never been considered as saints themselves. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that in the *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae* we can find only those saints, which are clearly mentioned in the *Πατερικον* and, therefore, in the old manuscript texts. From the *Πατερικον*, Herbinus borrowed also the narrative, which compares Pechersk monks to celestial bodies: St. Anthony is the Sun, St. Theodosius the Moon, St. Moses the Hungarian Mars, St. Hilary Venus, St. Simeon Mercury, St. Nicolaus Jupiter: «Quia (in quiunt in Πατερικω) sunt in Horizonte nostro Planetae illustrissimi I. Saturnus, Sanctus Johannes, cujus anima eo erat in peccando frigore, ut castitas ejus nullis illecebris ad libidinem carnalem incendi potuerit. II. Habet Kijovia nostra suum Jovem S. Michaelem Swiatossium Ducem Czernichoviensem, qui et Natalium splendorem et Dignitatis Ducalis celsitudinem, cum tenui vitae Monasticae conditione, fortunas cum paupertate, purpuram cum cilicio, epulas unctiores cum pane et aqua, metamorphosi stupenda ultro commutavit. III. Triumphat inter nos Mars Victor, S. Moses Hungarus, qui eo animo cum Polona quadam foemina Principe, ceu Verus Christi athlete, de castitate certabar, ut ab ea neque blanditiis ullis; nec promissis lautioribus, multo minus exquisitis corporis cruciatibus ad matrimonium cum ea ineundum adigi potuerit. IV. Praesidet Kijoviviae Sol et Patronus eminentissimus S. Antonius Roxolanus, qui dura et austera vita multorum corda et animos serenabat, et amore Christi omnes incendebat. V. Gaudemus nostra quoque Venere aut Phosphoro S. Hilarione, qui ante exortum in Russia solem Antonium, Cryptam in Berestovia effoderat, in qua etiam religiose ac pie vitam egit, et absolvit. VI. Spectatur apud nos admirabilis raraeque in coelo ostentationis Mercurius S. Simon Episcopus Susdalensis, qui ea in studiis erat industria atque labore, ut

⁷ Ibidem, 81–83.

Vitas S. Patrum Crypto-Kijoviensium prolixè ac bona fide conscriptas Orbi Christiano traderet. VII. Claret in Coelo nostro Luna illustrissima S. Theodosius, qui, acceptis asole suo serenissimo S. Antonio austere vitae Legibus atque exemplo, prae coeteris Planetis, in tenebris mundanae luxuriae, vitae piae et bonorum operum facem Mundo praefererat. Sunt praetera in Cryptis ac Coemiteriis Kijoviensibus centenae hominum clarorum stellulae, obtutui Spectatorum obviae. Hactenus Rutheni e Πατερικω»⁸.

Thus, *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae* repeats Kossov's allegorical interpretations of Kyiv as the Heaven («Kijovia nostra coelum est»⁹) that is decorated with the bright stars — saints of the Caves. Herbinus' acceptance of this metaphor is approved by the publishing in his book the depiction of the Kyiv Heaven that was received from Kyiv. Here St. Anthony is depicted as the Sun, St. Theodosius as the Moon and each following star is underwritten with a certain name of cave saint translated into Latin; as a small star is marked Innocent Gizel that was a kind of Herbinus' thanksgiving to his correspondent¹⁰. In another engraving, Herbinus highlighted the Old Testament quotations that must have justified the allegory in the eyes of the Protestant authors. These were the verses Ps. 147,4 («He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name») and Sir. 44,7 («all these were honored in their generations, and were the glory of their times»).

Thus, Herbinus did not criticize the popular in Orthodox tradition of glorification of saints; he did not demonstrate any negative attitude towards the idea of Christian perfection and sanctity. Moreover, Herbinus justified the Orthodox practices of the veneration of saints, did not consider them any kind of superstition and compared them to the low Lutherans' respect towards Martin Luther: «Quod quidem modo absit superstitio, longe ardentiore faciunt pietate, quam nos Lutherani erga B. Lutherum nostrum [...]»¹¹. He considered Martin Luther to be

⁸ Ibidem, 110–113.

⁹ Sylvester Kossov, *Πατερικων abo żywoty SS. Oycow Pieczarskich. Obszynie Słowieńskim ięzykiem przez Świętego Nestora Zakonnika y Látopiscá Ruskiego przedtym nápisany. Teraz záś z Græckich, Lácińskich, Słowiáńskich, y Polskich Pisarzow obiáśniony, y krocey podány* (Kyiv 1635), 10.

¹⁰ Тетяна Люта, *Imago Urbis: Київ на стародавніх мапах* (Харків-Київ: Видавець Олександр Савчук, 2017), 95.

¹¹ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 27.

a Christian saint as well¹². Besides Luther, Herbinus glorified the martyrs of Reformation¹³ and several other historical figures that were not always in the Western calendar but were familiar to Herbinus because of his reading circle.

Herbinus position on the question of venerations of saints was not a common one. While Jan Seklucjan in the first in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth edition of Lutheran Catechism (*Katechizm więkwszy, Królewiec 1547*) unambiguously called those who honor the saints as heretics¹⁴, Herbinus appealed to venerate and imitate saints: «Veneremur igitur, laudemus solenniter, atque imitemur cum B. Luthero sanctorum in coelo triumphantium pietatem atque in fide Jesu Christi constantiam [...]»¹⁵.

It is important that not only the saints' faith but their deeds as well were considered by the Protestant author to be worth for imitation. E.g. the three wise men that were equal, to Herbinus mind, with the Biblical Patriarchs, «primorum Christi clientum»¹⁶, «Canone sacro clarissimos Viros»¹⁷, deeded a lot for the public good and because of this became a holy example for the imitation¹⁸.

He paid little attention to the virtues of holy monks of the caves; however, he described the virtues of the pious life of his grandfather Christoph Süssenbach: «[...] conversus ad populum, hoc ipso die mortem sibi obeundam, praedixit, factaque ad constantiam in Fide Jesu Christi, mutuam charitatem, et ad pietatem adhortatione, singulis Ecclesiae membris, Ministerio, Magistratu et plebe valere jussis, domum suam, multorum lachrymis comitibus, quo vaderet, ne sese orphanos Pater, pupillos Patronus desereret, inclamantibus, abiit [...]»¹⁹. Actually, these features of his grandfather, active preacher, family and community member, and not a monastic ideal, praised in the *Πατερικον*, were the virtues of real saint according to Herbinus' belief.

¹² Ibidem, 28.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Jan Kracik, «Staropolskie polemiki wokół czci obrazów», *Barok* 11, 2 (2004): 12.

¹⁵ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 29.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 117.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 118.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem, 53.

Πατερικον stories especially highlighted God's power and grace, given to saints and resulting in the miracles. For example, in the vita of St. Agapit it is emphasized that the saint's healing practices worked only due the Christ's grace²⁰. Obviously, the editor of 1635 *Πατερικον* Sylvester Kossov stressed this divine intervention in order to deflect Protestant accusations of exaggerating the cult of saints. That is why Herbinus accepted most of the miraculous stories. The same as Luther he criticized only the misuse of saints' miracles but not the idea of miracles itself.

Special attention in Orthodox Baroque hagiographic literature was paid to miraculous death of saints. In the *Πατερικον*, Kossov did not deviate from this tradition. Given in the Second Cassian's redaction descriptions of saints' pious death and miracles he describes in particular details. Herbinus shared with the Orthodox tradition the idea that the death of saints is not a usual one, pious, full of harmony and without of agony. Here he provided an example of the pious death of St. Anthony, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bohemian princess Eurosia, the unknown bishop of Spanish Compostella, Alfonso II of Asturias and others²¹. In some of Herbinus' examples saints were taken to the Heaven by angels²². The most interesting question, however, is how did Herbinus imagine saints' posthumous fate? He was sure that the Holy Fathers of the Caves have been living on the bosom of Abraham²³. In the New Testament (Luk. 16, 22–30) the bosom of Abraham is the place for deceased, however Abraham cannot intercede for them. According to St. Paul (Gal. 4,21–31, Rom. 4,13–25, 9,6–9), on the bosom are placed those who accept God's promise²⁴. In the other place of his treatise he wrote about the saints in the Heaven where they recognize Christ's merits: «Cumque sancti in coelo non sua, sed unice Agni Jesu Christi ad dextram Patris sedentis merita agnoscant [...]»²⁵. Probably, Herbinus followed here the eschatology of Luther who had equated the bosom of Abraham with the bosom of Christ — the place where the deceased are waiting for the Last

²⁰ Ibidem, 97–100.

²¹ Ibidem, 48–52.

²² Ibidem, 55.

²³ Ibidem, 88.

²⁴ Harold Attridge, «Abraham. II. New Testament,» *Religion. Past and Present* 1 (2007): 13–14.

²⁵ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 29.

Judgment²⁶. This place where the Old-Testament patriarchs, prophets, apostles and saints are staying is, according to Herbinus, a desired place of salvation for all Christians²⁷.

All saints in Heaven should be venerated and imitated because of the piety and persistence following Luther's example, stressed Herbinus: «Veneremur igitur, laudemus solenniter, atque imitemur cum B. Luthero sanctorum in coelo triumphantium pietatem atque in fide Jesu Christi constantiam [...]». However, the Protestant author also did not repeat the appeals, common in Orthodox vitas, to pray to Cave Fathers. Herbinus also fully shared Luther's position about the vainness of the *invocatio* of saints; moreover, he called it one of the biggest mistakes of the Orthodox Church proving his position with the Holy Scripture and trying to find the roots of this mistake in the rhetoric constructions of patristic literature: «Homines miseri, dum nimio Patrum studio tenentur, Christum aeternitatis Patrem unicum salutis fontem, atque juratum Deo Mediatorem Psal.110. in Mundum introductum universum solenniter inauguratum, eumque ab Angelis adoratum, Psal.97.v.7. Hebr.1.v.6. et laudatum Hiob.38.v.7. aut negligunt, aut partito cum Sanctis honore ejus, non toto eum animo colunt, nec cogitant, non esse praeter Jesum Christum aliud honoris, aut salutis nomen Esa.42.v.8.Act.4. ut supra monui. Haec Sanctorum apud Graecos invocatio ex Orationibus Panegyricis, Basilii, Nysseni et Nazianzeni sua traxit initia»²⁸.

Thus, in the *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae* plenty of popular cults of Ruthenian spiritual life of the first half of the seventeenth century are reflected directly. It is important to underline that Herbinus did not criticize the glorification and imitation of saints. He briefly noticed their post-mortem waiting role in the place of salvation and omitted the Orthodox prayers to them. The great Orthodox mistake for Herbinus was glorifying human and not Christ's merits as a cause of sanctity and miracle. This very important theological difference was, however, the only one distinction that Herbinus saw between the Orthodox and Protestant traditions of the veneration of saints.

²⁶ Markus Mühling, «Eschatologie,» in *Das Luther Lexikon*, eds. Volker Leppin e. a., 2nd ed. (Regensburg: Bückle & Böhm, 2015), 202.

²⁷ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 30.

²⁸ Ibidem, 161–162.

Relics and their miracles described by the Protestant author

Miracles that took place near the relics were considered in the Russian Orthodox tradition to be one of the main evidence of the sanctity and the main reason for the canonization. The Russian Church immediately after the Christianization (ca. 988) started to create their own pantheon of saints paying particular attention to their relics²⁹. Along with the usual for the Western and Byzantine Christianity parts of saints' bodies, the East-Slavic Christendom venerated the whole uncorrupted bodies. Byzantine tradition had different attitude to the issue — the body of a saint must be corrupted, the main sign of sanctity were considered the yellow bones. The Catholic tradition also did not pay much attention to the problem; the uncorrupted body was not the main argument in the process of canonization. The veneration of uncorrupted bodies in the medieval Rus' probably goes back to the Scandinavian roots of medieval Russian military and ruling elite³⁰. By the middle of the nineteenth century, idea of uncorruption of relics of saints had developed theologically and was considered to be a proof of the resurrection of the body on the Day of the Last Judgment. Preserved body was seen as a great miracle performed by God. At the same time, Church leaders had to fight constantly against the popular idea that immortality is paramount and indisputable sign of holiness. According to Robert Greene, during the last decades of the existence of Russian Empire holy relics had been playing the main role in the moral teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church. Church widely had been using people's reverence to the relics in attempt to refocus popular piety from the healing properties of the relics to their role in the process of salvation³¹.

The veneration of relics generally did not meet any critic from Herbinus' side. Moreover, he repeated Sylvester Kossov's justification of

²⁹ Jean-Pierre Arrignon, «Le rôle des reliques dans la Rus' de Kiev,» in *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symboles. Actes du colloque international de l'Université du Littoral-Côte d'Opale (Boulogne-sur-Mer), 4-6 septembre 1997*, eds. Edina Bozóky e. a. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 57-63.

³⁰ Федор Успенский, «Нетленность мощей: греческая, русская и скандинавская традиции,» в *Реликвии в искусстве и культуре восточнохристианского мира*, ред. Алексей Лидов (Москва: Прогресс-Традиция, 2000), 42.

³¹ Robert H. Greene, *Bodies Like Bright Stars. Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2010), 10-28.

veneration of relics and his biblical argumentation: «Quin et post ipsam mortem, in religiosorum Christi servorum corporibus atque ossibus, haud leviora Deum edere miracula, mirifica Elisaei ossa docent, 2.Reg.13. Quo Sanctorum honore posthumo Deus, et pretiosam sibi esse ipsorum mortem, Psalm.116. declarat, et ad ipsorum fidei vitaeque sanctitatem nos hacce tam gravi religione invitat»³². Moreover, the Protestant author looked for more appropriate biblical examples and demonstrated the doubtless respect towards the Old Testament prophets' tombs (Math. 23,29) and Jesus' funeral cave (Mar. 16,1–2). Another group of examples belongs to the Protestant tradition: respect to the relatives' tombs in the Copenhagen Protestant community (in 1669–1670 Herbinus was in the Copenhagen Academy several times), Martin Luther's tomb in Wittenberg, his manuscripts «in raris habent deliciis»³³ (Luther's manuscripts has long time been venerating as relics³⁴) and his cell in the Augustinian monastery in Magdeburg (Luther as a vicar of Augustinian Order visited this monastery in 1524)³⁵. However, the habit to scratch a splinter from Luther's bed in Magdeburg was blamed by Herbinus as caused by «supertitiosam stultitiae»³⁶.

Unexpectedly, Herbinus also demonstrated a great private respect towards the cult of the Three Wise Men whose relics he had visited in Cologne in 1664. It is important to mention that this cult, extremely popular in medieval Germany since Fredrick Barbarossa (1122–1190) had presented relics to the archbishop Rainald von Dassel of Cologne, was being repeatedly criticized in the seventeenth-century Protestant writing³⁷. Herbinus knew it; nevertheless, he considered the remains of the Magi to be real remains of the biblical figures: «Etenim corpora ipsorum (quae vulgate est, quam nunc in medio relinquo, opinio) Coloniae Agrippinae ad Rhenum ipsimet Anno 1664 in temple Cathedrali Trium Regum in conclavi Altaris magni et eo quidem ardentiore desiderio spectabam, quia ab amplius sesqui mille annis a Nativitate Jesu Christi Θεανθρωπου incorrupta ibi ad miraculum superesse fando non semel acceperam»³⁸.

³² Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 55.

³³ *Ibidem*, 29.

³⁴ Martin Treu, «Reliquien Luthers,» in *Das Luther Lexikon*, 602.

³⁵ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 71.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, 27.

³⁷ Alain Joblin, «L'attitude des protestants face aux reliques,» in *Les reliques*, 125.

³⁸ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 116–117.

We cannot observe any critique in Herbinus' description of the veneration of Kyiv relics. Among them he particularly described the veneration of St. Theodosius' relics in the caves: «In quibus inter alia exequiae Theodosii Ihumenis seu Abbatis, Cryptae minoris Kijoviensis auctoris, facibus accensis, ac frequenti tum Clero, tum populo, solenniter instituuntur. Ubi in sandapila defuncti Theodosii corpus fasciis, adinstar infantis, circumvolutum, palamque spectandum a Monachis sui Ordinis in Cryptam solenniter deportatur»³⁹. This description is accompanied with the appropriate drawing depicting the death of the saint and the translation of his relics. It is interesting, however, that according to the *Πατερικον*, St. Theodosius' relics were transferred and deposited not in the caves as it mentioned by Herbinus but in the Dormition Church shortly after his death⁴⁰. In the caves, thereafter, only the empty tomb of the saint remained as an object of popular veneration. Probably, Herbinus did not read this part of the *Πατερικον* very attentively and simply made some conclusions from the drawing sent to him from Kyiv.

In the *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae*, Herbinus demonstrated a full support of the idea of wonderworking of Kyiv relics. Moreover, he wrote that saints in the Heaven have such a grace to perform miracles in the Christ's name: «eoque nomine Deo gratias agant»⁴¹. A miracle for him was a part of human everyday life. With His providence God performs miracles secretly and only some of them are performed openly («tum clam tum palam») ⁴². Because of the death of His faithful believers, God can openly perform miracles but only at certain places and at the time He wants⁴³. This understanding of a miracle noticeably contradicts the Catholic and Orthodox hagiographical writing tradition of didactic miracle that had been established by the seventeenth century. Among all miracles of *Πατερικον*, most of which told about healings as the result of praying or pious behavior, Herbinus chose the least didactic tale. He borrowed from 1635 edition⁴⁴ the famous Pechersk legend about the dead Kyiv Pechersk Fathers who had responded to the Easter greetings

³⁹ Ibidem, 67–68.

⁴⁰ Kossov, *Πατερικον*, 51.

⁴¹ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 29.

⁴² Ibidem, 48.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ Kossov, *Πατερικον*, 163.

(according to the legend, the priest Dionysius, having come down to the caves, proclaimed: «Sancti Patres et Fratres, hodie Christus fracto Mortis jaculo a Mortuis surrexit!» and received the answer from the Cave Fathers' relics: «Vere surrexit Christus Dominus»⁴⁵). This legend has not any didactic meaning but was regarded by Herbinus as «res sane mira»⁴⁶ («a truly astonishing thing»), so he might have wondered and believed in it at the same time.

Herbinus retold in details a large *Πατερικον*'s story about the oil-oozing heads and their miracles⁴⁷. Probably the translation of this text as well as verification and correction of biblical references belong to Herbinus himself. At the same time, however, Herbinus tried to explain the phenomenon of oil-oozing in the natural-philosophical way assuming that the liquid appears from the skulls because they are porous, absorb the air of the caves, and then distillate the oil: «Ossa cranii non solida, sed cariosa, porosa, facileque friabilia esse: hinc fieri, ut crania illa, poris undiqua versum hiantibus, aerem Cryptae effluviis aqueis, nec non pingvioribus cadaverum exhalationibus turgentem, jamque tot effluviis spissiore factum, perpetuo attrahant, attractum postea in pelvim aut discum, distillent, qui succus coagulatus speciem tandem olei aut opobalsami refert»⁴⁸. The main principle of Homeopathy, «like cures like», was the reason of healing power of the relics, concluded Herbinus: the balsam distilled from the air, saturated with the fumes from the relics, heals copper diseases⁴⁹. Herbinus was practically sure of his argumentation although he could not prove it himself. Nevertheless, he had been to other caves and could make some conclusions having visited them: «Eapropter, cum nec Patres Kijovienses in suo, nec Ruthenorum quispiam ad haec argumenta respondeant quicquam, et ego litem hanc facere meam nolo. Decernant eam, qui Cryptas illas salutarunt, et num, praeter crania illa oleifera, alia quoque ossa, scamna, ostia aliaque lapidea aut lignea aere humido madeant, tractando ea minibus sensu ipso perceperunt; quod ego quidem in aliis Cryptis ita esse, non una comperi experientia; sed in Kijoviensibus Cryptis hospes

⁴⁵ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 69.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 123–127.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 131.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 131–132.

sum»⁵⁰. Especially, the Protestant author did not trust that oil-oozing is the result of saints' merits: «Et haec est historia de capitibus oleiferis in Cryptis Kijovensibus ex *Πατερικω* Rutheno-Latine bona fide reddita; jam sequntur argumenta, quibus Rutheni, capita sive crania ista meritorum atque sanctitatis possessorum suorum virtute, oleum scaturire salutiferum evincere allaborant»⁵¹.

Herbinius strongly criticized the Orthodox theological position on the evaluation of human merits considering it to be an undoubted reason for accusation in idolatry: «Hoc ipsum autem quid aliud, quam Idololatricum illud atque virulentum in calice meretricis Babylonicae vinum est, quo inebriati homines atque gentes sua merita atque opera bona mirum quantum depraedicant; Christi vero Meritum coelo terraque et inferis potentissimum tanquam exoletum pudendo inter multos Christianos perit silentio?»⁵². Moreover, Herbinius called such views as shameful for the Christ's glory and His merits in the history of the human salvation: «Pudeat operarios istos Christi nominis! Indignus sane est gratia saluteque Christi, qui Meritum ejus sacratissimum putidis hominum meritis constuprat, et profanat»⁵³. From Herbinius' point of view, the recognising of Christ's merits denies the necessity of good deeds for the salvation not denying, however, their necessity for life in the Church community; here he referred to the Lukas' gospel (Luk. 17,10) that tells about the servants who fulfil the Lord's will and, nevertheless, should be called useless: «Utinam bonis vacantes operibus bene de Ecclesia mereamur, meritorumque gloriam in solum Deum transcribamus servi inutiles Luc.12. Sed ita justificata jam pridem est sapientia Dei a filiis hominum operibus manuum suarum gaudentium!»⁵⁴

Thus, Herbinius is very critical towards the believes in human merits and seeing them as a contribution for sanctity: «Profecto criminis idololatriae reus est, qui, quam sibi soli Meritoque suo absolutissimo Christus vindicat gloriam, alienis Sanctorum meritis acceptam ita fert, ut omnia bonis hominum operibus miracula attribuat, nulla vero in Christum transcribat: ubique merita Sanctorum crepat, nuspian Christi Meritum

⁵⁰ Ibidem, 132–133.

⁵¹ Ibidem, 128.

⁵² Ibidem, 119.

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ Ibidem. Instead of Luk. 17 Herbinius mistakenly gave the reference to Luk. 12.

auditor»⁵⁵. This is a main mistake that Orthodox and Catholics have in common⁵⁶ and that could not be accepted by the adherents of the pure Christianity⁵⁷, considered the Protestant author. The human deeds for him are dead and the fascination by them, that had been popular earlier, was an error rectified by Martin Luther: «Idem Sanctus Pater Lutherus, profligatis hominum meritis, certissimum nobis debitoribus in solius Filii Dei Jesu Christi vulneribus solutionis pretium atque peccatorum veniam, adeoque et omnem justitiae ac salutis viam in adorando solaque Fiducia apprehendendo Filii Dei Merito, sub Papatu illo tempore mortuis sanctorum operibus animas Christianorum fascinantibus, indice Apostolico, quasi postliminio demonstravit»⁵⁸.

Obviously, he disagreed also with the Orthodox position concerning merits as a reason of uncorruption of the saints' bodies and called it an absurd⁵⁹. If it had been so, argued Herbinus, the bodies of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaak, Jacob, Sara, Joseph would have stayed also uncorrupted. Why the remains of the Three Wise Men, whose deeds were much more valuable, were not released from the common law of human bodies corruption, asked Herbinus⁶⁰. The corruption of the body is a consequence of a human Fall, stressed the Protestant author; only Christ's body was remaining without changes while saints, touched by the original sin, have not had such a privilege; the only exceptions are the Prophet David who was «not moved» (Ps. 16,8), St. Henoch, and St. Elijah who were taken corporally to the Heaven⁶¹.

Thus, Herbinus did not believe in the supernatural reason for the uncorruption of Kyiv relics and looked for the natural explanation of this phenomenon. As a preliminary, he distinguished three stages of human bodies' corruption: the initial («inchoativa»), the following («continuativa») and the final («consummativa») ones. Kyiv relics are on the stage of the following corruption; they are pressed and dry, considered Herbinus⁶². The reason of such condition he tried to find in the Lavra's funeral ceremo-

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 115–116.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, 85.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, 116.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, 28–29.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 47, 115.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 116.

⁶¹ Ibidem, 57–58.

⁶² Ibidem, 56–57.

nies. In particular, he mentioned the similarity between funeral customs of Kyiv monks and Sami people who had also been burying their decedents in caves: «Hinc etiam Lappones sub Polo Arctico frigenteseo amoris erga suos demortuos calore ardent, ut parentes, conjuges, liberos, aut cognatos suos, etiam post mortem, incorruptos esse velint»⁶³.

Herbinus also noticed the similarity of Kyiv relics to Egyptian mummies as well. He was not the first author who did this. By the time Herbinus' book was written, several authors had been showing their skepticism regarding the uncorruptibility of the Lavra's relics and had been trying to explain them from the natural-philosophical point of view. The accusations of critics were summarized in 1635 *Πατερικον* of Sylvester Kossov who gave it as following:

- there is some natural explanation why the fathers' bodies were uncorrupted,
- there may be a comparison between the Lavra's bodies and Egyptian mummies, caves preserve human bodies in an uncorrupted state,
- bodies in the caves were embalmed, and that's why they were not corrupted⁶⁴.

Kossov gave the answers on these accusations basing on the natural-philosophical argumentation borrowed from Aristotle's *Physica*. In accordance with the laws of nature, he said, the fathers' bodies either have or do not have internal heat, that is why they are either alive or must be corrupted; in caves there are other, corrupted human bodies, so the caves are not the cause of non-corruption; and finally the bodies are not embalmed because there is no special odor in the caves⁶⁵. Herbinus repeated these answers in the *Religiosae Kijovienses Cryptae*, giving them the authority of «Ruthenorum Doctorum»⁶⁶.

However, several authors found Kossov's argumentation unconvincing. Among others, was French engineer Guillaume Levasseur de Beauplan who did not see any difference between Kyivan and Egyptian phenomena⁶⁷. Herbinus knew Levasseur de Beauplan's book and men-

⁶³ Ibidem, 92.

⁶⁴ Kossov, *Πατερικον*, 5–8.

⁶⁵ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 96.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 98.

⁶⁷ Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan, *Description de l'Ukraine depuis les confins de la Moscovie jusqu'aux limites de la Transilvanie* (Paris, 1861), 31.

tioned it. Moreover, he tried to enlarge Beauplan's argumentation using the knowledge in Egyptian mummification he had obtained during his stay at the University of Leiden⁶⁸. In particular, Herbinus noticed that Kyiv caves were well-ventilated, frankincense and torches had been often using there — all these reasons had been making the relics not-corrupted, concluded the Protestant author: «Etenim ibi, Cryptis saepe hiantibus, aër quandoque mutatur, atque crebris exterorum atque Monachorum ibidem inclusorum commutationibus, nec non facularum ardentium, aut etiam thuris Sacri in Visitationi Paschali etc. fumigationibus varie afficitur, aut inficitur potius; et tamen mortuorum corpora, aere tam varie affecto, permanent semper eadem formam, atque integerrima»⁶⁹.

Thus, the veneration of relics *per se* was not criticized by John Herbinus. On the contrary, relics of Christ's followers can and must be venerated, through them God performs miracles, considered the Protestant author. Here his position considerably differs from the famous in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Calvinist Jan Łasicki who strongly declines the practice of the veneration of saints and connected with it miraculous expectations: «Quae miracula si ad regulam verbi diuini exploraueris, nihil aliud efficiunt, quam homines insuperstitioso cultu Sanctorum cenfirmant, a Christo auocant»⁷⁰. However, Herbinus did not share the Orthodox idea of miraculous unperishability of saints' remains in the Cave Monastery. Those remains, as he wrote, are particularly corrupted and particularly preserved because of the existing ventilation system in the caves; saints' heads are oozing the oil as a result of absorbing of the special air as well. Trying to provide these arguments, Herbinus aimed to deny the core of the Orthodox believe that Kyiv relics preserved uncorrupted because of great merits and dignities possessed by the Cave fathers in the eyes of God. Obviously, the very idea of merits, earned by the monk due to their ascetic efforts, could have not been accepted by the Protestant author. It strongly contradicted his confessional views and was unambiguously treated by him as idolatry.

⁶⁸ Heinrich Bendel, *Magister Johannes Herbinus. Ein Gelehrtenleben aus dem XVII. Jahrhundert* (Bern e. a.: Bircher. 1924), 10.

⁶⁹ Herbinus, *Religiosae*, 97.

⁷⁰ Johannes Łasicki, *De Russorum Moscovitarum et Tartarorum religione, sacrificiis, nuptiarum, funerum ritu: Ex diversis scriptoribus, quorum nomina versa pagina indicat. His in fine quaedam sunt adiecta, de Livonia pacisque conditionibus* (Speyer, 1582), 31.

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Abstract

«Res sane mira»: Orthodox Saints and Relics Described by Protestant Pastor John Herbinus (1675)

John Herbinus (1633–1679) was a well-known Lutheran theologian and writer. Living for a long time on the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, he wrote a description of the religious caves of Kyiv, which was published in 1675 in Jena. Plenty of popular cults of Ruthenian spiritual life of the first half of the seventeenth century are reflected in the book. It is important to underline that Herbinus did not criticize the glorification and imitation of saints. He briefly mentioned their post-mortem waiting role in the place of salvation and omitted the Orthodox prayers to them. The great Orthodox mistake for Herbinus was glorifying human and not Christ's merits as a cause of sanctity and miracle. This very important theological difference was, however, the only one distinction that Herbinus saw between the Orthodox and Protestant traditions of the veneration of saints. The veneration of relics was not criticized by John Herbinus either. On the contrary, relics of Christ's followers can and must be worshiped, through them God performs miracles, the Protestant author believed. However, Herbinus did not share the Orthodox idea of miraculous unperishability of the saints' remains in the Cave Monastery. Those remains, as he wrote, are particularly damaged and particularly preserved because of the existing ventilation system in the caves; the saints' heads are oozing the oil as a result of absorbing of the special air as well. Trying to provide these

arguments, Herbinus aimed to deny the core of the Orthodox belief that Kyiv relics preserved undamaged because of great merits and dignities possessed by the Cave fathers in the eyes of God. Obviously, the very idea of merits, earned by the monks due to their ascetic efforts, could have not been accepted by the Protestant author. It strongly contradicted with his confessional views and was unambiguously treated by him as idolatry.

Keywords: John Herbinus, Kyiv monastery of the Caves, saints, relics.