

## The research project: **'Dissemination of the Latin Conceptual Metaphors in the Old Norse-Icelandic literature as a Cognitive Manifestation of Christianization and Europeanization of the Mediaeval Scandinavia'**

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Under this research project, I analysed two main civilisation processes taking place in the medieval Europe, namely Christianization and Europeanization, from the theoretical perspective of historical cognitive linguistics. The analysis was carried out in the psycho-linguistic micro-scale on a research sample of the society of medieval Iceland, and was an attempt to answer the following questions: how were medieval Icelanders becoming Christians and Europeans? How was their worldview changing under the influence of Christianity and Latin culture? How was it manifested in the Old Icelandic language and literature?

These civilization processes were analysed in the field of language and literature. Such profound processes of social change leave deep traces in literature, language, and mentality. Conceptual metaphors, in the form of which the mentality of such a society is being manifested in its language and literature, can serve as markers for the occurrence of these processes in the society.

A conceptual metaphor is not a poetic entity, but an entity of thought and understanding, a molecule of mentality, which is present in language and fossilised in literature. When a man of the past, alike a contemporary man, was pondering about what a god, human, ruler, society, life, fortune, or fate is, he was trying to explain it to himself with the use of familiar objects of the material world, which was directly accessible to the senses and experience. By comparing the data coming from the sensual experiencing the material world with the abstract world, that was inaccessible to the senses, he was transferring the sense from the objects of the material world onto the abstract concepts.

As such abstract concepts as god, life, fortune, fate do not commonly occur in nature, they require a man to think metaphorically. This helps to complete such abstract concepts with a metaphor available for the senses such as the creator, father, shepherd, and wheel, or fabric. To people living in ancient societies who were seeking the understanding of such abstracts, god was pictured as the smith of heaven or the shepherd of people; fortune was pictured as a spin of wheel set in motion by supernatural beings; life and fate were pictured as a fabric woven by supernatural creatures; society was pictured as a body of many hierarchical structures combined altogether; ruler was a father of the motherland, a family.

The isolation of conceptual metaphors coming from the Christian and Latin conceptual worlds in the language and literature of medieval Iceland allows capturing the dynamics of civilisation processes of Christianisation and Europeanization as changes that take place in the mentality of the society of this language and literature. Conceptual metaphors are subject to cultural transfer between languages and

literature when the social interaction and intercultural communication between societies intensify. New ideas disseminated in the mentality of medieval Icelandic society during the Christianisation process, through Christian preaching and classical education, appeared and became common in literary texts and documents created by members of this society in the form of conceptual metaphors. They indicate how the world-view of society changed: how their members began to perceive the essence of the experienced reality and the basic existential experiences (life, its meaning, death, fate, being in the world, being a human and a member of society, forces ruling the world) from Christian and Greco-Roman perspectives. Christian and Latin conceptual imagery present in Old Icelandic language and literature means that the society began to think in the Christian and European manner, and the process of the assimilation of cognitive elements of Christianity and Latin culture has occurred.

The following papers have been published within the project:

- *The Biblical Metaphor of "Governing as Shepherding" and Catholic Biopolitics in Medieval Icelandic Contexts.* "Maal og Minne" 2022, vol. 114 [in press].
- *Graeco-Roman Metaphor of Human Fate as a Fabric Woven and Thread Spun by Supernatural Beings in Medieval Icelandic Contexts.* "Studia Scandinavica" 2022, vol. 26 [in press].
- *Himna smiðr : the Ancient Hebrew Conceptual Metaphor GOD IS THE MAKER OF HEAVEN in the Old Icelandic Language and Literature as a Marker of Christianization in Iceland.* "Scandia: Journal of Medieval Norse Studies" 2020, vol. 3, pp. 64-101.
- *Himna smiðr. Starożytna hebrajska metafora konceptualna BÓG TO TWÓRCA NIEBA w języku i literaturze średniowiecznej Islandii.* In: *Studia hebraica. Księga pamiątkowa Seminarium Wiedzy o Hebrajszczyźnie Biblijnej dedykowana Pani Profesor Kamilli Terminińskiej.* Ed. M. Zając, I. Kida. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2019, pp. 37-67.
- *Cultural Transfer of Cognitive Structures of Fortune in the Latin and Old Icelandic Literatures and Languages: The Case of the Metaphor Fortune is a Wheel.* In: *Social Norms in Medieval Scandinavia.* Ed. J. Morawiec, A. Jochymek, G. Bartusik. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press - Amsterdam University Press, 2019, pp. 103-138.