

Glosar englez-român de termeni si nume biblice (Semnificații în discursul literar)/An English-Romanian Glossary of Biblical Names and Terms (Significations in Literary Discourse). 2nd edition. By Doina Cmeciu. Bacău: Rovimed Publishers, 2022, 614 pp., ISBN 978-606-583-995-3

If linguistic dictionaries are commonly dubbed as 'books about words', then, glossaries may be tagged as 'complementary books'. In this light, the work under review here meets all expectations in more ways than one, besides filling an information gap¹ and making references to all the sixty-six books of *The Bible*. First, as the three opening lines of St. John's *Gospel* suggest, its whole concept is centred around: **a.** the biblical **Word** – '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*'; **b.** the relationship between the Creator and His creation; **c.** man's act of being (in the world) and his act of creating, both of them constituting the fundamental ground of any artistic achievement; second, it provides the reader with the Romanian equivalents of religious terminology and biblical names (with references to the biblical and literary discourse); third, it taps into different literary genres and species in order to ferret out the ramifications and influences that sacred texts exercised on British literature and culture in the course of time; fourth, it underlines the idea that major literary themes draw their 'nourishment' from the biblical 'roots'; last, but not least to sum up, there can be easily observed the preference for the intertextual game of revealing the po(i)etic quality of the biblical W/word, characteristic of the religious and literary discourse alike. Given the breadth

¹ It is worth noting that religious-themed dictionaries and even less glossaries occupy a specialized corner of lexicography that, in the Romanian context, has only sparsely been populated with bilingual dictionaries. This makes the publication of a second, 2022 edition of this book (first issued in 2020 by PIM publishers, Iași) all the more relevant to the users' cognitive needs.

Book review

and depth of data supplied in-text and in the footnotes, the word 'glossary', in its title, seems to largely understate the complex nature of this reference work and, in my opinion, to do little justice to the magnitude of the research behind it (if we think of the great number of writers referred to and of the significations of biblical terms and names analyzed in the literary discourse). And yet, the subtitle – *Significations in Literary Discourse* – provides the elaborate framework of such a 'deed', projecting the study and analysis of the glossary items onto a discursive semiotic axis.

As stated in the Preface, this is an 'atypical glossary', since the choice of items follows the trajectory from the literary to the biblical discourse, the author being interested, throughout the whole work, in foregrounding the value and 'power' of linguistic signs able 'to signify the relations, relationships and the state of relatedness' (Cmeciu 2020: 127-130) establishing themselves between C/creator and the human being during the complex process of signification, of *creating/ making/ doing* something in the world.

How should one read such a reference book? In what follows, the *English-Romanian Glossary of Biblical Names and Terms (Significations in Literary Discourse)* by professor Doina Cmeciu will be discussed in terms of its structure, content, and function.

The book is delivered in print format. In its structural organisation there are, in sequence, a list of the abbreviations and graphical symbols used, two Prefaces (one for each edition) signed by the author herself, the glossary proper followed by maps (pp. 507-512), Appendix 1, containing historical facts and dates, and Appendix 2, showcasing a few sample texts by George Herbert, John Donne, William Blake and Dylan Thomas. Apart from these, the outside matter also includes a useful index of the British authors quoted in the glossary, and the bibliography which, although selective, is indicative of the wide array of sources that the author has drawn on for input and/or evidentiary support. The corpus listed here consists of Bibles and other religious texts, dictionaries, atlases, encyclopaedias, books, monographs and articles. Last, but by no means least, a special mention should be made of two texts by Nicolae Nicolescu: a Foreword that precedes the book author's Prefaces, and an Addendum titled (in translation) *The Bible: from cult to culture*, a substantial and erudite

Book review

survey of some landmarks of mostly, but not exclusively, Italian art (both religious and secular), literature, architecture, music and philosophy. The Addendum contextualizes, illustrates, and complements the glosses provided by the main entries.

In terms of its content, the book is a bilingual specialized reference work; of the 1800+ religious terms, concepts and names mentioned throughout the book, 1204 are treated as glossary entries. In order to find the best rendition of the English language biblical glossary items into Romanian, the author used two canonical translations of the *Bible* that are four centuries apart: The King James 1611 Version and, respectively, the Romanian 2011 version of the *Bible*, translated and emended by Metropolitan Bartolmeu Valeriu Anania. The wordlist consists of items extracted from British literature (from the Anglo-Saxon times to the 21st century), which make up the world of the Old and the New Testaments, all of them having a metaphorical or symbolic value, meant to reveal the C/creator's (logically organized) po(i)etic message within a contextualized spatio-temporal framework. This explains why the glossary items are individual words (belonging to major lexical classes: nouns – common and proper names –, adjectives, verbs i.e. *God, L/light, name, seed, time, word, will; to be/ being, to give, to know; un/clean, humble, wise*), phrases (e.g., *Fruit of the Spirit, Garden of Gethsemane, the act of naming, servant of the Lord, unleavened bread*), or, in one solitary case, a clause i.e., *I am...* (p. 247), designating the metaphorical identity of the Son of God.

This brings us to the internal design of the entries. Since this is a comprehension glossary, the grammatical information is kept to a comfortable minimum: metalinguistic information does occur, but only when the word/ verb is an irregular item whose paradigmatic forms might impede upon its findability. This is the case of, for example, verbs like *be, do, take, wit*, and a handful of nouns such as *ox* and *woman*. Apart from this, the units of information that the entry contains are, *overall*, etymological data, the number of the item's occurrences in the King James *Bible*, translations (referring to the biblical discourse), denotative and connotative meanings, exegetic information/glosses, collocations and idioms, intra- and extra-textual cross-references. All these elements are meant to map the

Book review

discursive universe of the individual lemmata, coming to a climax with the references to British literary texts and culture in the footnotes.

Zooming in on the types of explanation combined within the definiens (cf. Burada and Sinu 2016; Ilson 2010), one becomes fully aware of why this reference work goes far beyond the conventional boundary of a typical glossary. Besides the translations and the illustrations i.e., the visual support present in the inside and the outside matter, and the examples excerpted from the text of the *Scriptures*, the author's glosses, references, and additional information are encyclopaedic in nature. This is also evident in the scrupulous attention to detail, and accuracy of information, as well as in the amount of scholarly effort expended in order to trace the manner in which the biblical motifs have fared in the British literature across time. To keep this wealth of information manageable, the glossary employs the typical tools associated with the 'dictionarese': numbers, to distinguish among the denotative and connotative senses of the definiendum; letters, to list the different collocations in which it occurs; symbols, to signal the relations between different items of information; abbreviations, for the sources cited and for the directive language – all duly introduced at the very beginning, in the outside matter; and a consistently used system of cross-referencing to other entries in the glossary and to sources outside it that creates a web of connections linking the religious and the literary concepts and texts referred to.

As far as its function is concerned, it has already been mentioned above that the glossary is intended for comprehension; although scholarly, its scope and manner of approach make it accessible and appealing to both the specialist and the layperson: like with all great texts, it casts a wider net and successfully connects the dots between different areas – in this particular case, the biblical and the secular (arts, history, philosophy, discourse theory, semiosis). All it takes is some measure of faith and some imagination (preferably both) to understand, appreciate the complex nature of this endeavour and, most importantly, to be able to make associations of one's own. In this, I believe, lies the value of this work: beyond providing the reader with information, it is a *petri dish* that fosters the emergence of new ideas and metaphors in the reader's mind.

Book review

Overall, the publication of the *English-Romanian Glossary of Biblical Names and Terms* is a welcome addition to our dictionary culture. In order to complete it, professor Doina Cmeciu has tapped into her experience, expertise and encyclopaedic knowledge deriving from her threefold capacity: the teacher, the researcher, the scholar. This is manifest, *inter alia*, in the clarity of her exegeses, the strength of the data collected critically from the carefully curated corpus, and in the acumen in highlighting the points of convergence between two cultures.

References

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Marinela Burada
Transilvania University of Braşov