

Pap Levente
Tertulliani Adversus Iudaeos

I. The objectives of the thesis

The first and most important objective of the thesis is to present Tertullian's *Adversus Iudaeos* as an integral whole. By adopting this approach, we challenge a point of view that has been widely accepted since the 18th century, which questions the originality of this work.

Therefore, it is of major importance to present an inventory of the studies written about Tertullian's work. Although it is true that H. Tränkle has already made an exacting synopsis of these writings¹ (published in the last and one of the most appropriate issues of *Adversus Iudaeos* in 1964), the standpoint adopted in that study has undergone several changes. The knowledge of these changes is also indispensable for an exhaustive presentation of Tertullian's work.

Furthermore, it seemed important to define the place this work occupies within the *Tertullian corpus*. It is also important to analyse the attitude of the Church and posterity towards the opus, and to highlight on the different opinions that appeared on this topic in the literature.

One who has carried out research into classical literature is aware of the fact that Tertullian's language is not easy to read, and it is quite difficult to be interpreted from a linguistic point of view.

As a result, the translation of the text proves to be a real challenge. This might be the reason why *Adversus Iudaeos* has not been translated into Hungarian, not even during the period of Hungarian history when this work could have been very much in vogue – it is true, not because of its literary value, but rather because of its title.

A rhetorical analysis of the writing is of primary importance because it can lead to the identification of structural unity, which is interpreted as evidence supporting our reasoning, whereas if the analysis proves that the structure of the writing is muddled, it provides evidence for the strengthening of the dominant approach in literature.

It is also interesting to find out who this speech was written for, who the author considered his target audience when he was writing this piece of work, or did he actually have in mind any potential target-audience at all? If he did, who were these people? The Jews – as it appears in

¹ TRÄNKLE, H. (Hrsg.): *Q. S. F. Tertulliani Adversus Iudeos. Mit Einleitung und kritischem kommentar.* Wiesbaden, 1964.

the title -, the Christians, the pagans or all of them? The question requires a complex answer. Another objective of the thesis is to alter the morose, ascetic image of Tertullian by highlighting on a segment that has not received particular attention in literature, and which is analysed in the present paper: irony and humour in Tertullian's works.

II. The methods applied

1. Structural and figural analysis

The research is focused on *Adversus Iudaeos*. Basing on an analysis of ancient rhetoric theories, a new scheme has been worked out. The analysis of this scheme throughout the whole work is important because the presence of structural unity can prove that the writing was constructed following a consistent structural guideline. The present thesis does not make an attempt to provide a detailed inventory of the already existing refutations of early theories. They are only mentioned to prove the real existence of the problem. The analysis (the translation) of the text is carried out according to the principles mentioned above.

Hardly any typological analyses of *Adversus Iudaeos* have been written so far. An analysis of this kind contributes to form a comprehensive and uniform picture of the whole writing. In the history of biblical hermeneutics typology is a method used in exegesis that hypothesizes a close relationship between the Old and the New Testament; thus, some events, characters or things related about in the Old Testament are interpreted as harbingers of happenings that were to be fulfilled in the New Testament².

2. Source analysis

Source analysis is meant to identify the sources modern research has at disposal, and the sources that were available for Tertullian. After Tränkle published his seminal work, the negative image that questioned the unity *Adversus Iudaeos* is regarded outdated. However, it still remains a question for most of the researchers to what extent this piece of writing is similar to or different from *Adversus Marcionem*. These analyses, however, do not seem to have the need for an overall approach to the text, in spite of the fact that Tertullian has outstanding achievements in mastering literary techniques and in structuring his works. Having in view the objectives of this thesis, the question of Tertullian's authorship is of primary importance.

² KERÉKES, E.: A Biblia tipológiai/figurális értelmezése – Tipológia és posztmodern. *Kellék* 15-16 (2000), 205-223.

3. *Elements of style*

The analysis of the rhetorical units is followed by an investigation of the elements of style. Basing on these analyses we can prove that from a stylistic point of view there is no difference, no caesura between the long disputed two parts.

Tertullian's work is special not only from a structural point of view, it also comprises a large number of novelties related to the history of culture and mentality, and they are not restricted only to the first capita.

The part about the Book of Daniel, Chapter 9 has been extensively analysed in the literature, but – owing to the one-sided approach based mostly on following the numbers and events – leaves plenty of field for further research. The analysis of this part proposed in the present thesis is different from what can be found in literature.

Source analysis also entails a historical approach towards Tertullian's age. Apart from the data available in the *Tertullian corpus*, some archaeological results are used, as well. The analysis of the Tertullian humour and polemic is also a focal point in the paper, because they reflect on two aspects often neglected, totally avoided or superficially treated in previous studies.

III. The results of the research

a) Although *Adversus Iudaeos* is not the most analysed work within the *Tertullian corpus*, it cannot be said that it is totally neglected in the literature. It was read in the ancient times, it was widely known both in the Middle Ages and in the modern times. Since the issue of Herman Tränkle's work, it has been even more thoroughly researched. One can read about it in different literary encyclopaedias, where, depending on the writer of the entry, Tertullian is either fully or partially recognised as the author, but we cannot find researchers who totally deny Tertullian's authorship. Researchers (Capelle, Hoppe, etc.)³ are always committed to the originality or falseness of formal, linguistic analyses. So far, research has focused on the problem of originality and on the analysis of dogmatic works.

³ SEMLER, J. S.: *Dissertatio de varia, et incerta indole librorum Q. Septimii Florentis Tertulliani* Halle, 1776; BURKITT, F.C.: *The old latin and the Itala*. Cambridge 1896 ; HARNACK, A.: *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius, part II: Die Chronologie, vol. 2: Die Chronologie der Literatur von Irenaeus bis Eusebius*. Leipzig, 1904, 288-292.; AKERMAN, M.: *Über die Echtheit der letzteren (sic!) Hälfte von Tertullians Adversus Iudaeos*. Lund, 1918; HOPPE, H.: *Beiträge zur Sprache und Kritik Tertullians*. Lund, 1932; CAPELLE, P.: *Le texte du psautier latin en Afrique*. Rome, 1913; CLASSEN, C.J.: *Der Stil Tertullians: Beobachtungen zum Apologeticum*. *Voces* 3 (1992) 93-107.; DUNN, G.D.: *Tertullian's Adversus Iudaeos: a rhetorical analysis*. Washington, 2008.

b) The translation of the text is rather challenging – this might be the reason why the translation of this work is not included into the series entitled “Ókeresztény latin írók (Ancient Christian Latin Writers)” edited by Vanyó László⁴. Of course, the editors’ hesitation about whether to include this work in the series or not can also be explained by the debates on the authenticity of the work.

A scientific investigation on the text also helps the researcher to contemplate on its spirit, unity, or even on its muddled style. Reading this way – like an amateur – it is striking how readable the work is. The reader does not have the feeling of double structuring, in spite of the fact that some repetitions do indicate the lack of final structuring.

c) Struggle seems to be an essential feature of Tertullian’s character. According to Altaner, each of his writings is actually an indictment⁵. The polemic between Christians and Jews began during Christ’s lifetime. Jesus himself argued with the Pharisees, the scribes and the Sadducees. The polemic between Jews and Christians was not unknown to Tertullian, who often used the elements of this polemic in *Adversus Iudaeos*. There were different themes that kept the polemic alive, such as the general character of the divine law, the circumcision, the Sabbath and the advent of Christ.

d) Like other Christian writers of his age, Tertullian mastered the figural interpretation, and in his work he used different types and antitypes. The word *figura* appears in Tertullian’s works several times⁶. He usually turns to figural interpretation when he discusses delicate problems. In *Adversus Iudaeos* the word also appears in several places⁷. Tertullian makes use of the possibilities offered by the typological interpretation, especially in the process of demonstration. The most elaborated element is the type of Cain and Abel, who have their antitype in the New Testament: Tertullian argues that the counterpart of the duality and sacrifice of Cain and Abel manifests itself in the duality between Jews and Christians. Although it seems slightly tendentious, Tertullian’s explanation truly mirrors the relationship between early Christians and Jews: they were brethren, since they both worshipped the one and only God, but they were also rivals when their privileges for salvation were discussed. It can be stated that this interpretation of the duality of Cain and Abel’s story was elaborated in full details by Tertullian, and only after that did it appear in literature and fine arts.

⁴ VANYÓ, L. (szerk.): *Tertullianus művei* (Ókeresztény írók 12). Budapest, 1986.

⁵ ALTANER, B., STUIBER, A.: *Patrologie. Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter*. Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1978, 131.

⁶ More exactly 82 times

⁷ *Adv. Iud.* 2.5; 9.15; 9.20-22; 10.1; 14.10

e) The *Confirmatio* deals with a problem that is equally important both for the history of mentality and for the history of civilisation: the prophecies in the Book of Daniel (chapter 9). A thorough analysis of this chapter leads us to important conclusions.

As far as Daniel's prophecies are concerned, Tertullian had in mind one important problem: to prove the true nature of salvation and the hardships the Jews went through, so he did not particularly focus on historical accuracy. Christ stands in the middle of this enumeration, which is a proof of outstanding importance. This is also a reference point in the prophet's predictions, which divides the prophecy into two parts, inserting it between the building and demolition of the temple. Moreover, it has to be mentioned that the demolition of the temple of Jerusalem was also prophesized in the Book of Daniel: the Jews shall suffer for their sins, they shall lose the divine grace, an important sign of which is the demolition of the temple. This is a historical fact that could not be denied by the Jews in Tertullian's time. Another historical fact that serves as a reference point was the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylon captivity. Between the two events Christ's advent must also be regarded as a historical fact that is predicted by Prophet Daniel.

f) As mentioned above, an analysis of the rhetorical structure can hardly be found in the studies on *Adversus Iudaeos*. First I had to study in what stage of development rhetoric was in the second century A. D., what kind of trends existed, and to what extent the tradition of Ciceronian rhetoric was followed. The ideal of formation outlined by Cicero could be easily passed on from the republican age into the age of the emperors. In Tertullian's time rhetoric had already gained a political and social background as a result of which it became the most important medium of formation. Thus, rhetoric did not go into decline. Although the way of doing politics and the practical conditions of rhetoric had changed, it still had an important role in the imperial bureaucracy, foreign affairs, as well as in the standardised and codified legal practice. So, from a certain point of view it was applied in more areas than before. Sider points out that Tertullian was skilled in rhetoric. This is not surprising at all if we consider the milieu in which he lived. Rhetoric had an important role not only in Tertullian's works, but also in the whole early Christian literature, therefore its influence can be identified in the works of almost all writers of that age. Apart from having to spread the faith, Christians living in Tertullian's time had to gain victory over those who fought against Christianity, or they had to persuade them. And this is what Tertullian does: he does not describe how he defeated the proselyte, but he writes about how each Christian should act in a similar situation, what kind of attacks they are likely to face and what are the possible reactions to those attacks. He gave the Christian reader not only a simple description of events, the work is rather a real

enkheiridion. However, *Adversus Iudaeos* is not only for Christians because if we look at it from a different perspective, it is the Jews and not the Christians that Tertullian tries to persuade of the Christian truth.

g) Basing on the conclusions outlined above, it has been proved that the rhetorical structure of *Adversus Iudaeos* has close links to the Ciceronian ideal. In the thesis we tried to pinpoint the structure and stylistic elements of classical rhetoric.

Exordium: The exordium in *Adversus Iudaeos* is quite short, comprising 1.1-3. This part introduces the reader to an event - a debate between a proselyte Jew and a Christian – which inspired Tertullian to write this work.

Narratio: In *Adversus Iudaeos* the narratio lasts from 1.3 to 1.4a. Its fundamental features are: *brevis, aperta, probabilis*, and provides answers to the following questions: *quis? quid? quibus auxilii, cur?*

It is God who promised that two peoples will be born: Abraham and Rebecca's offspring. Both of them were called *gens* for fear one of them – basing on the name - should claim the privilege of grace.

Partitio: Beginning with 1.4.b the writing continues with the partitio. It is true, however, that the part stretching to 2.1 can be regarded as a narratio, as well. The author starts with a simple question (*quaestio simplex*): *Cur...?*⁸ He presents how God fulfilled his promise to Rebecca: *Duae gentes in utero tuo sunt, et duo populi de utero tuo dividuntur*, then: *et populus populum superabit, et maior serviet minori*. After that he briefly mentions what the refutatio is about: the cessation of the ancient law's validity. In the confirmatio he is to speak about the birth of a new law.

In fact, Tertullian pins down two things: first, that the Jews have fallen out of the heritage; second, that owing to their commitment to Christ, the Jews were replaced by pagans.

Refutatio: The *refutatio* begins at 2.1.b and lasts up to 6.1. In this part Tertullian tries to defeat the standpoint according to which divine grace and salvation were accessible only to Jews. Four of the Jews' arguments for supporting their point of view are analysed in details. While doing so, he reaches the conclusion that these arguments are not unequivocal; they are biased and ignore a number of biblical arguments. The four pieces of evidence are: the Law⁹, the circumcision¹⁰, the Sabbath¹¹ and the sacrifices¹². In each case Tertullian refers to the

⁸ *Adv. Iud.* 2.1. *Cur etenim deus universitatis conditor mundi totius gubernator hominis plasmator universarum gentium sator legem per Moysen uni populo dedisse credatur et non omnibus gentibus adtribuuisse dicatur?*

⁹ *Adv. Iud.* 2.1.-10.

¹⁰ *Adv. Iud.* 2.10.-3.6.

¹¹ *Adv. Iud.* 4.1.

Jews' standpoint (2.1.10.; 3.1.; 4.1. 7.; 5.3.), questions its truth, then he tries to refute it highlighting on the inconsistencies that are evident when their affirmations are compared with other texts from the Bible. He summons the Jews to answer his questions, although he is convinced that they are unable to give a proper answer to his arguments.

It is worth noting that Tertullian does not follow the order of items stipulated at the beginning of the *refutatio*. It is highly probable that Tertullian tries to avoid artifice, although it can just as well be the outcome of mere accident or carelessness.

Confirmatio: In *Adversus Iudaeos* the confirmatio begins at 6.2. with the repetition of the ideas introduced in the *partitio*. Tertullian wants to prove that the old law is over, and it is the beginning of the new, promised law, which is discussed in details in the confirmatio: *ostendere... operari* (*Adversus Iudaeos* 6.2.). In the introduction two questions are set which, directly or indirectly, influence the whole process of demonstration:

(1) Has the advent of Christ been revealed?

(2) Has Christ arrived yet?

At the beginning he does not get into details when he wants to prove that the old law has been replaced by a new one, because it is much more important to clarify whether the new law has arrived or not, and if the new law has arrived, it naturally overwrites the old one. It is the second question that is discussed in details (7.1), which, on its turn, is subdivided into four points:

1. the time of Christ's advent, as predicted by the prophets
2. proving that he is to come at the end of times
3. general prophetic themes about Christ's advent
4. the link between Christ's advent and the new law

Apart from all these, there is a small *digressio* (7.3.-8.1.), where Tertullian argues that Christ has already arrived, because the faith in his name has already spread all over the world.

Peroratio: Although the peroratio is not sharply distinguishable, in this part one can find all the necessary means for ending the writing. It is also true that the muddled structure of the previous *caput* continues in the *peroratio*, as well. Tertullian thinks that it is enough what he has covered up to this point (14.11). What is it, actually? Christ's appearance, the holy writings, and the fulfilment of the prophecies. Tertullian does not expound on the holy writings because they comprise everything, and he tried to prove everything (birth, sufferance, resurrection, realm, etc.) basing on biblical texts. That is to say, if the peoples

¹² *Adv. Iud.* 5.1.-7.

miraculously rise to Christ, there is nothing to wonder at (14.12.). Then an *amplificatio* follows, as nothing can be more important than what God said about his son: I gave birth to you from myself, I will give you the whole world (14.12). The following parts can be regarded as sarcastic *commiserationes* (14.13-14.14).

Although the usual features of concluding parts of rhetorical writings are somewhat difficult to identify, it can be asserted that the present research contributes to the demonstration of the fact that *Adversus Iudaeos* has to be analysed as an integral whole.

f) Little has been written about Terullian's humour. Research focused mostly on the polemic tone of his writings. I consider it necessary to analyse these two aspects, too, because if we analyse the writing from a rhetoric point of view, the polemic components are indispensable, as they contribute to the transformation of an amateur reader into an adequate one. Whether humour exists in this writing, can be a question. Of course, it cannot be asserted that the writing is full of joy and cheer, but here and there one can find humorous parts, too. When it comes to the wording of ironic and humorous passages, the author is unusually careful.

g) The approach adopted in the present thesis is new in literature because the title *Adversus Iudaeos* refers to the fact that the whole writing is regarded as an integral whole and fully Tertullian. While other analyses of this work studied only segments of the work from a certain cultural-historical point of view, this thesis investigates Tertullian's work from a broader perspective that includes history, literature and the history of literature.

Finally, it can be observed that *Adversus Iudaeos* is a piece of work that has been preserved in its original form to our days. We can follow in it the whole process of creation in it: we can observe Tertullian's way of thinking, we can identify the pattern according to which he structured his writing, or the way he quoted from the Bible. In conclusion, earlier research was not useless, because basing on those studies, on the conclusions that can be drawn from them, we have access to a new variant: the *Adversus Iudaeos* mirrors Tertullian's way of thinking in its integrity, and it is the only Tertullian work that offers an insight into the 'crude' process of creation. In other words, in *Adversus Iudaeos* we can see Tertullian himself in the process of creation, and not only the work he is creating.

IV. Publications

Pap, L.: Dániel könyve Tertullianus Adversus Iudaeosában. *Studia Theologica Transsylvaniensia* 13 (2010) 121-129.

Pap, L.: A klérus fogalma Tertullinausnál. *Studia Theologica Transsylvaniensia* 12 (2009) 225-236.

Pap, L.: Káin és Ábel értelmezése Terullianus Adversus Iudaeosában. In: Takács, L. (szerk.) *Speculum*. Debrecen, 2009, 87-93.

Pap, L.: Gyilkosok voltak a keresztények? *Keresztény Szó* no. 19 (2008) 26-28.

Pap, L.: Tertulliani Adversus Iudaeos. In: Pap, L., Tapody, Zs. (szerk.) *Közösség, Kultúra, Identitás*. Kolozsvár, 2008, 89-103.

Conferences

Sapientia EMTE, 2010. 04. 14. *Zsidók és keresztények Tertullianus korában*

RHT, București, 2008. 04. 9-10. *Humor és irónia a klasszikus és korakeresztény latin irodalomban (Cicero és Tertullianus)*

VII. Magyar Ókortudományi Konferencia, Debrecen, 2006. 05. 26-28. *Tertulliani Adversus Iudaeos*