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SAINT ADALBERT AS A RELIGIOUS HERO IN THE POLISH CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

This article is meant to show the cultural mechanism connected to the perception of Catholic saints through Campbell's concept of mythologisation. I have focused on Saint Adalbert who functions in the Polish culture not so much as a historical, but rather as a mythological figure. Saint Adalbert is the national Saint Patron of Poland, and thus holds the status of a religious hero. Only sporadically is he perceived as a popular saint. I have based my analysis on materials from the ethnological fieldwork on the cult of Saint Adalbert carried out on the whole territory of Poland in the years 1995–2001, as well as on publications by other authors who have looked at topics connected to Saint Adalbert. I have also used theoretical works concerning the process of mythologisation of this figure. My analysis focuses on the successive stages of mythologisation undergone by Saint Adalbert as seen from the perspective of Joseph Campbell's scheme. I have arranged this theory into a model. It shows the universality of the process during which a historical figure is transformed into a mythological hero. Moreover, it emphasized the qualities of a religious hero.

* * *

Celem tego artykułu jest ukazanie mechanizmu kulturowego związanego z postrzeganiem świętych katolickich poprzez pryzmat campbellowskiej mitologizacji postaci. Uwagę koncentruję w nim na św. Wojciechu występującym w kulturze polskiej nie jako postać historyczna, lecz mitologiczna. Św. Wojciech jest świętym narodowym, a więc posiada status bohatera religijnego i tylko sporadycznie uważany jest za świętego ludowego. Podstawą moich analiz są materiały z badań terenowych nad kultem św. Wojciecha przeprowadzonych na obszarze całej Polski w latach 1995–2001 oraz publikacje innych autorów podejmujących problematykę związaną ze św. Wojciechem, jak i teoretyczne rozważania dotyczące procesów mityzacji postaci. Miejsce szczególne w tych analizach zajmują kolejne etapy mityzacji św. Wojciecha widziane z perspektywy teorii Josepha Campbella, którą ujęłam w formie modelu. Ukazuje on uniwersalność procesu przekształcania postaci historycznej w bohatera mitologicznego oraz jej charakter jako bohatera religijnego.

Key words: mythologisation, sanctification, religious hero, saint, national hero, Saint Adalbert, Joseph Campbell

INTRODUCTION

Saint Adalbert is not only a historical and mythical figure but also a saint revered by Poles as a holy apostle, an ascetic and a teacher, as well as a patriot, a member of the ruling elite and a guardian of Polish tradition. The ethnological results of my fieldwork carried out between 1995–2001 prove that Saint Adalbert is treated by Polish society more as a religious hero than a typical saint stemming from popular culture and lower social groups.¹ Indeed, the canonically granted title of saint does not necessarily entail that universal social and religious relations should immediately arise and endure, similar to those relationships existing between society and a revered figure considered by the community as a saint. Indeed, beatification or canonisation either consolidate an already existing worship, or introduce a new, little-known figure into the official canon. This new saint may be accepted and included into the local or universal mythology in a ways which cannot not always be anticipated.

In the 10th century Poland was a newborn state. The elites ruling Poland from the end of the 10th to the 12th century knew that they needed to find new ways to integrate and consolidate the newly formed society. Christian religion, already adopted by Western and Southern European countries, was perceived as a means of integration. However, the religion was still new on Polish lands and had very shallow roots. There was a strong need for a figure which would convey the social aspects of religion and who would confirm, by the example of his or her life, the still strongly held, collective belief about the godly origin of power. Saint Adalbert (956–997, canonised in 999) was perfect for this purpose. The elites of that time found in the recently deceased and canonised saint the proper religious support for their political ideology. Since Adalbert came from the elite class and was related to many medieval European royal families, he could, on the one hand, consolidate the position of the Piast dynasty and, on the other hand, form an indirect link with the ethos of the celestial origin of rulers. The holy anointing of a Bishop who had led a life of pilgrimages and ascetic practices fit perfectly the image of a hero and a saint of that period and fulfilled all the related needs. At that time, new settlements and seats of power were formed, chapels and churches were built and cities were developed, which contributed significantly to a quick dissemination of knowledge about the missionary and his cult among the population gathered around those centres.² Saint Adalbert was the

¹ By the term 'genesis' I mean here all the cultural activities and phenomena which occur in society (for instance in a rural, small town, urban, parochial community etc.) without „top-down” steering, i.e. initiated by different kinds of institutional authorities (e.g. the church hierarchy, communal authorities, poviats, city administration, state authorities, school administration etc.)

² During the International Scientific Session “Social and political functions of the cult of Saints in society” H. Manikowska (Wiszeński 1997, p. 478) presented evidence for the existence in the seats of Bishops of the Archdiocese of Gnesen of a cult of city patrons who were often the same as the patrons of the Bishops' cathedras.

perfect character to be presented and brought into the medieval cultural landscape of the as yet unconsolidated society whose members very easily and rapidly passed from the position of Christian converts to reconverted Pagans.

In 13th century Poland, in view of the fragmentation of Poland and with no universal cult of a holy ruler, the figures of Saint Adalbert, Saint Stanislaus and Saint Hedwig of Silesia were used to awaken the cult of saints as political patrons in order to unite the country. The cult of these three saints already had a nation-wide dimension. Therefore, appointing them as a symbol of unity of the Polish society in order to consolidate the fragmented state was actually a natural move in the political and social sense: it was about designing tradition. After a dozen centuries, Saint Adalbert became part of Polish tradition in a way certainly unforeseen by the 10th century elites. In this article I present a system of contemporary human concepts reconstructed mainly on the basis of the materials I collected during interviews and observations in almost all regions of Poland. The statements that follow present the aware and sometimes unaware convictions of the Polish society.

The Patron of Poland has a specific contact with the Polish cultural and religious landscape, especially through locations such as the church under the invocation of St Adalbert, his sanctuary or chapel, a cross by the road where he presumably used to teach, but also the “magical” stone, a “miraculous” spring, the “cursed” lake, a tree “planted by the hand of the Saint” and a hill “where he used to bestow his teachings”. These sites delimit a holy space, but are also sanctified through their contact with the supernatural being, the mythologised Holy Wanderer. Thus, this relationship is bilateral, since the geographical sites strengthen the connection between the saint and the local community. Participation in religious ceremonies and pilgrimages to sites related to St Adalbert is tantamount to organizing space; for this purpose the Saint is merely a tool. On the other hand, since the natural elements who were in contact with a supernatural being form special sites endowed with extraordinary properties, Adalbert becomes a steward of *sanctity* (*sacrum*). Indeed, he organizes the world and protects it from the chaos brought about by dangerous activities of holy powers. Nonetheless, one should add that Saint Adalbert is not the main character who fulfils these tasks. This is clearly visible in the ethnological evidence gathered during fieldwork. His role is mainly limited to the initial delimitation of the holy space. These areas were defined when Adalbert was travelling around the country and converting pagans. Nowadays, this tradition has fallen into disuse. Saint Adalbert is currently perceived chiefly as the national patron. He is a saint who, thanks to the universal phenomenon of mythologisation, has become a religious hero and plays the role of a warden and representative of the Nation.

For any person to achieve a similar position as Saint Adalbert, namely the status of a religious hero connected through many ties with his community and a mythologised space, they must go through the mythologising cycle described by Joseph

Campbell (Polish editions: 1994 and 1997) as the Hero's journey. In this article I propose to analyse Saint Adalbert's biography from the perspective of Campbell's stages of the hero's journey in order to show, on the one hand, that this is a universal process, and, on the other hand, to present the qualities of this concrete character as a religious hero. I should add at this point that in my view the most interesting aspect is the social perception of the figure and the reactions between the saint and the group to which he belongs, as a religious and cultural element.

THE SAINT: A NATIONAL HERO AND A RELIGIOUS HERO

The necessary condition for a religious hero to exist in society is that he/she should follow the model of a mythical hero. In this article I use the following terms: *mythical, religious, historical, national and holy hero*. The word *hero* alone is far too general to adequately describe reality. This term needs to be further qualified by the epithets *mythical* or *historical*, which by themselves also have a rather wide definition. The hero is always to some degree mythologised by the society, he/she can be more or less connected to the historical prototype, or he/she may even have absolutely nothing in common with the authentic historical figure. A hero is a personage revered and set as an example for the younger generation in traditional and institutional education; he or she can also trigger the creation of models in line with the cultural and civilisational requirements of a given community. Who is the religious hero? In order to answer this question one needs to first present the characteristics of two figures: the saint and the national hero. For the religious hero is the product of the two aforementioned characters. He has the qualities of both the national and the holy hero. However, he/she has not been unequivocally assigned any cult or function typical of popular saints, such as for instance St Anthony or St Christopher. He does not either fully comply with the ecclesiastical definition of the term 'saint', namely a chosen individual who intercedes for believers in front of God (c.f.: Czarnowski 1956, p. 13). At the same time the religious hero is more than just a holy patron, a warden of everyday life, since he fulfils the functions that are among the duties of the national patron. However, the religious hero is too distant, too mythical, to be treated as a fully-fledged national hero on a par with Kościuszko or Piłsudski. The religious hero is the category which most fully embodies the relationship between the Polish society and St Adalbert.

The word 'ś w i ę t y' was given the ecclesiastical meaning of *sanctus* only thanks to Christianity. Its genesis goes back to ancient Slavonic times. This word was originally connected to the pagan pantheon and can be found in old names such as Svetovid – the name of a deity from Arkona on Rugia. The term ('święty' – 'saint') meant the same as 'heartly' ('jary'), i.e. strong (Brückner 1970, p. 537). The Latin word *sanctus*, which has a Greek (*hagios*) and a Hebrew equivalent (*quâdosh*), can refer to God,

people. When used to describe a man, it meant someone sanctified, consecrated, made "*Saint in front of God*", chosen to fulfil a holy cause or task (Attwater, John 1997, p. 7). One of the oldest Christian definitions of the notion '*saint*' can be found in the New Testament. Apostle Paul understood the saints as a community of believers, not necessarily all perfect, but striving to achieve the ideal of Christ's perfection. This term includes the martyrs, the first monks, but also the bishops and patriarchs.

As time went on, the population of Christian communes grew, the nation of '*saint*' was narrowed down and became a title used to express reverence and respect towards a person particularly devoted to Christ.

As a result saints started to be publicly revered. In the Christian terminology a '*saint*' is a person who has a connection with religion, sanctified by religion, revered and surrounded by worship. This definition can be completed by the canonical meaning: a saint is a canonised figure considered as worthy of worship and publicly venerated by the community of believers. Such understanding of a "*saint*" and "*beatified*" goes back to the 12th century (Kosowska 1985, p. 63n). A saint embodies the continuation of Christ as a universal hero, and therefore he/she holds only a part of His features and functions. For the saint is the founder of a new religion, a creator or the first advocate of a teaching which forms great cultures, but he/she is at the same time *only* the continuation of Christ and *as much as* His continuation, due to which he/she becomes a hero.

Martyrs served as the first saints. Originally they were worshipped at the sites where they had died and been buried. Every year, on the anniversary of the saint's death, believers would gather at his grave where a Holy Mass was held to commemorate the personage. With time, this practice spread to the whole Church. After the Edict of Milan passed by the emperor Constantine the Great in 313 which allowed to practice the Christian religion, the worship of saints started to include the Desert Fathers and eminent spiritual leaders no longer called martyrs, but "confessors". Apart from the Eucharist in honour of the saints, churches began to be dedicated to holy patrons, they were invoked in prayers, more and more relics started to appear, as well as other forms of reverence. Children were baptised with their names, there were pilgrimages organised to visit holy relics, historical and legendary places connected with the saints and to sites where miracles were presumed to have happened or where the saint had appeared after his/her death (*Sacred Places...* 1998, p. 10).

The teaching of the Catholic Church penetrates deeply into European culture,³ especially Polish culture. However, as Magdalena Zowczak (2000) and Joanna

³ One should also mention the contemporary understanding of a saint as an example of religious interpretation of the phenomenon, since it refers directly to the figure of Saint Adalbert as a Catholic saint. The Second Vatican Council in his *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church "Lumen Gentium"* (KK) devoted six paragraphs to saintly figures, teaching about their role in the Church (Vatican Council II 1967: paragraphs 49, 50, 51, 104, 108, 111). The Bible mentions this issue a few times

Tokarska-Bakir (2000) noted, the popular perception of the world and the saints may differ from the official version. In folk tradition, the saint has a number of basic features that set him/her apart from other figures. First and foremost, every saint has an attribute that is assigned to him/her and which is connected to their history or profile. Thanks to these attributes saints are easily recognised on figural representations. They have one or more functions in social and religious life of which they are the patrons, the actors, the wardens or the judges (c.f.: Uspieński 1985, pp. 76–89). A saint is credited with apparitions, miracles and miraculous cures, and he is permanently present and alive in the society. The saint defines for himself a geographical and sacral area (which is supposed to be confirmed by legends and tales) or such a domain is assigned to him on the territory inhabited by his worshippers, or outside this area. Many legends and tales about the saint are among the most common texts used for educational and moralizing purposes in traditional upbringing.

Edward Ciupak (1965, pp. 47–89, 97–108) presented a sociological approach to the cult of saints in mass religiosity. He noted that there was a relationship in Poland between the revival of religious life and interest in saints. He pointed to the different social functions fulfilled by saint patrons. However, he mainly focused on presenting a typology of the cult of saints on the basis of an analysis of hagiographic literature and sources published in Catholic magazines. He divided the saints into three groups, depending on their place of origin. The first group includes those saints whose cult is still alive, which can be confirmed by the numerous churches under their patronage, the fact that people are given their names, by the names of church fairs and a large number of biographies and legends (e.g. St Adalbert, St Stanislaus, St Andrew Bobola, St Hedwig of Silesia). They could be called National Saints. The second group consists of saints popular in the folk cult, but less prominently featured in the Church (St Roch, St Florian, St Agata, St Barbara). They started to be worshipped in Poland in the first centuries of Christianity and are still revered today. The third

as well (1971: Act. 17, 26–28; Ps 105, 3; Mt 5,48; 1 Cor 1, 2; 6; Gal 5, 22). That is why this issue is tackled in details in the *Catechism* (1994: paragraphs 28, 30, 492, 564, 2011, 2683). Paragraph 2011 provides for the religious interpretation of the mythical archetype describing the presence of supernatural beings in the life of the believers' community, while paragraph 2684 points to the fact that the teaching of the Church also mentions the cultural as well as temporal diversity of the saints' spirituality and religiosity. Contemporary moral theology of the Catholic Church follows the position that saints, as people of an exceptional moral perfection, are worshipped by the Church (Olejnik 1991, p. 85). That is why Catholics believe that saints in their life and after their death can perform miracles and cure diseases. The teaching of the Church stresses that religious reverence due to the saints is a universal phenomenon constant in history. This is supposed to be confirmed by the fact that the worship of martyrs and believers existed already in ancient Christian times. The Bible praises many saintly figures and gives examples of cases when God listened to the intercession of certain people. Drawing the believers' attention to these fragments of the Bible within the Catholic religious teaching is supposed to help in implementing a concrete social and cultural ethos.

and most numerous group is formed by those saints whose cult is only a liturgical one and who have hardly any ties with a local community.

According to Stefan Czarnowski, saints form a special category of heroes. "They are people of renown who by their deeds or death have earned a privileged position among the chosen ones. The congregation has a spiritual connection with them and perceives them as their advocates in front of God. They are, nonetheless, heroes of a special kind. For in their case sanctity is subordinated to a moral and religious ideal set by theology" (1956, p. 30n).

The national hero, on the other hand, is a historical figure who supported an idea considered later on as a just cause from a social and historical point of view. Such an individual does not have to be ethically irreproachable. Very often controversies concerning their private life are commonly known. The national hero is directly connected to power if he holds one of the functions of authority, or indirectly if he defies authority and enforces social grievances or demands. This hero contributes to different kinds of breakthroughs in the history of a nation, in politics, in internal affairs, or by fostering, consolidating and revealing a new social idea or need which is already universal, but which has not yet been expressed; he is in a way the "ombudsman" of social requirements and needs. Society's opinion of his actions must be positive, both in the eyes of his contemporaries and in later times.

Czarnowski "defines the hero by his social function in the social awareness. This theory brings into one common category both the undefeated hero from Troy and the quiet Christian ascetic, the legendary potter Keramos, Tristan and Amundsen, Prometheus and Pasteur; it could even include warriors of modern revolutions such as the *archegetes* of Greek cities" (Ossowski 1956, p. 6). It is an initial definition with a wider range of meaning than the term 'saint'. Czarnowski derives the final definition from the popular understanding of the term 'hero': "A hero is a man who, through the merits of his life or death, has ritually acquired effective power specific for the group or the cause which he or she represents and whose basic social values he embodies" (1956, p. 30n). He draws attention to the difference between heroes and deities or saints. He treats them as some kind of anthropomorphised gods. For the author, St Patrick is not only a saint, but also a hero in the true sense of the word.

Czarnowski believes that any analysis of the term hero should be based on its relationship to the term 'sanctity' and on the functions which the hero fulfils. Joseph Campbell, however, believes that one must first ascertain the stage of mythologisation at which a given character is. Nonetheless both scholars separate the hero from the saint. The basic difference between the two are, on the one hand, the performed deeds of a national character (integrating society), and on the other hand, ethically perceived sanctity and intercession in obtaining privileges between God and society (exchange function). Campbell accurately describes the evolution of the hero. The

historical national hero changes with time into a mythical national hero. His historicity is mythologised so that he can, following Durkheim's concept, efficiently realise his tasks of sustaining social ties and the universal order (Durkheim 1903, pp. 36–39). It is difficult to assess how much time such a transformation would take, how many epochs and generations must pass.⁴ It is certainly an individual issue, but there may be no doubt as to the fact that when a historical hero has undergone a transformation, the generations accepting him as a mythical hero are already very distant from his time. There are no direct ties between him and the new generations, no personal accounts passed on by parents and grandparents, through school education, or in any other form of patriotic and historical upbringing. This "gap" in the collective awareness is necessary so that the mythical time circle can start functioning. For there is no continuity between mythical time and the time in which current events take place (Szacka 1985, p. 483). A myth takes place in the closed circle of its own internal time, where the beginning and the end are one and the same. That is why mythical time can be reversed. Mythical reality is a dimension of a qualitatively different type than everyday reality of linear time (see: Campbell, Moyers 1994, p. 31). During the transformation process, the figure is gradually stripped from its individual traits and deprived of a personality, vices, and controversial aspects. The only thing left is the function he/she fulfilled in the history of the nation and thanks to which he/she has been named a hero. At the same time the identity of the hero as a human character and historical figure becomes obliterated. This gap is filled by the personified templates assigned to the hero. The socio-cultural task of the hero is to disseminate them and in turn fulfil related educational objectives.

This is where we touch upon the *r e l i g i o u s h e r o*. This is a term with a wider meaning than the saint since a saint is a type of religious hero endowed additionally with some supernatural traits and accepted by the Church. In Polish culture most religious heroes are saints, although these terms are not interchangeable (c.f.: Baranowski 1971, pp. 41–51). Indeed, a religious hero can only be a person which has been deemed a hero in the public opinion (a national hero already subjected to mythologisation). His/her function and role are connected to religion and faith, but also to a concrete stage in the history of a nation, by a connection with the ruling elites or by opposing them. This person may not have been sanctified by the

⁴ Many scholars have dealt with the issue of mythologisation of reality. Mircea Eliade (1993, p. 43–55, 125–131, 249–290) should be mentioned here, since he described, among other things, the issue of time mythologisation. He uses the term *of immemorial mythical thinking* which is used to turn history into myth. The mythical system which puts order into things assimilates historical reality and adapts it to the needs of society. The problem of the mythologisation of time was also raised by Vladimir Toporov (1977, p. 103–131), Krzysztof Pomian (1968). Holy time as the time of sacral activities was described among others by Emil Durkheim (1903, p. 12; 1990, p. 238), Rudolf Otto (1968), Eliade (1966; 1993), Gerardus Van der Leeuw (1978).

Church.⁵ His/her life does not have to be accompanied by supernatural events and after his/her death people do not customarily assign them any household functions or other tasks connected to the everyday life of the faithful.

We learn about mythical, religious and holy heroes mainly from oral accounts, songs, proverbs, but principally from tales that are turned into legends and myths. From legends and myths emerges a hero who usually is a martyr of the faith, a saint, and a character from the Old Testament, a converted sinner etc. Events from his life demonstrate his direct connection with transcendence.⁶ Therefore, in order to ascertain which individual is a mythical hero, one should analyse the tales about this person and the relationship of the believers to him/her from the perspective of the scheme of a mythical figure. The necessary condition for a religious hero to exist in society is that he/she should follow mythical structures. Campbell in his *Hero with a Thousand Faces* half a century ago presented the scheme that I have used to analyse the figure of St Adalbert. One should add at this point that Campbell was strongly influenced by the analysis of the magical tale by Vladimir Propp, especially in terms of the isolation of the hero, the stages of his journey and the tasks he should perform (Propp 1976, 2003).

SAINT ADALBERT AS A RELIGIOUS HERO

We should mention here that Róża Godula made a temporal analysis of the origin myth in the tales about the Polish patron (1999, pp. 195–220; Godula, Węclawowicz 1997, pp. 11–89). She interpreted St Adalbert's legend as a collective novel and not as isolated short stories. In the collective novel there is an implicit conviction on the "value of the origin" in a category ordering different forms of culture such as time. In the case of St Adalbert, time has a sacred value. Godula interprets different elements and versions of the legend as motives of the holy beginnings of the mythical and

⁵ As it was mentioned above, we should keep in mind that the canonically granted title of saint does not necessarily entail that universal social and religious relationships shall arise and endure, similar to those existing between society and the revered figure considered by the community as a saint. Beatification or canonisation either confirm the worship that already existed or introduce a new, little known figure who does not have to be accepted in the local or universal mythology.

⁶ Ewa Kosowska (1985, pp. 45–62), following Vladimir Propp, Wiktor Gusiew, and W.P. Anikin, mentions a category which separates the myth, the legends, and the folk tale. One of the most important criteria is relationship with reality. The content of a myth and legend is treated as reality, while the folk tale is perceived as fiction, that is why in the folk tale time, place and character play no role. Mythical time is perceived as a distant past, and legends are set in the more recent past. The myth takes place in worlds that are perceived as *different* or *ancient*, while the legend is set in historical time, known to men. Both narrations, in contrast to the folk tale, have a religious perspective, however the character of the myth is mainly non-human, while legends have a more human character.

religious perception of time for Poles, Hungarians, and Czechs.⁷ This is an interpretation of history through categories of the holy “time of origin” determined by the figure of St Adalbert. In this way he was assigned a potential power in fighting paganism and introducing Christianity, independently of further history. The legend of St Adalbert helped in integrating the idea of the origins of the state and the dynasty with the idea of the beginning of Christianity, in the Polish and Czech or Hungarian versions (Godula, Węclawowicz 1997, p. 79). One of the main reasons for such a strong connection of this saint with the stately cult and the “top-down” character of this cult among the believers result exactly from this process. The time of Saint Adalbert is sanctified by the hero, the person who goes beyond the *profanum* sphere thanks to his miraculous deeds. For the time to be sanctified by the figure of Saint Adalbert, it had to be transformed in the collective imagination, which is a continuous process. It turns out that Adalbert was perceived by contemporary elites (state power, Church hierarchy, politicians, artists and journalist, and also some scholars) in a way very similar to the perception from thousands of years ago: Saint Adalbert is meant to sparkle and maintain a feeling of community among the individuals who form the society.⁸

⁷ The author analyses chosen legendary-mythical texts from Długosz until the 20th century (Godula 1999, pp. 199–210). One should mention one example here. Legend has it that the Czech destroyed the altar in Gnesen in order to reach St Adalbert’s tomb and that for this impious deed they lost their speech, sight and feel “for almost three hours”. After having experienced this sign they swore to renounce heathen beliefs and practices and to adopt Christian principles. They did so in Gnesen in front of the tomb of the martyr, thus in a holy place next to relics. The symbolical value of this deed, as Godula stresses, is telling: a spectacular vow taken next to the grave was supposed to resurrect Christianity in Bohemia. This event was sanctioned by a *rite of passage*. The ceremonies started when the Czech entered the church in Gnesen. First they were punished: they lost their speech, sight and feel, which in the ritual language means that they were separated from their previous condition, a pagan lifestyle. Then it took them three days to make penance (fasting and prayers). Following the ritual rule they were in a *liminal situation*: they had already been severed from their previous state, but did not yet belong to the new one. Finally the Czech were ceremonially sworn in, which is a symbolic way of renewing their baptism. This is, therefore, a symbolic inclusion into the Christian world (Godula, Węclawowicz 1997, pp. 74–75). The presence of St Adalbert gave the ritual sacral power since the saint “led the actions of the Czech in a supernatural way and sanctified the successive stages of the rite of passage *by his signs*”. Experiencing every year until this day the transfer of the relic in the form of *Translatio Sancti Adalberti*, renews the rite of passage which has a symbolic meaning. This is, namely, a constant re-sanctification of the Czech nation and state.

⁸ As we can see when a figure is turned into a hero, we are dealing with a phenomenon which consists in creating tradition for the actual socio-cultural or political needs, although this is not a conscious mechanism. The tradition which was born in this way is placed in the past as historical or legendary data legalised by time and authority. When looking at the beginning of our own history, higher social classes stress the uniqueness of the worship of certain saints by the rulers. This state of affairs is interpreted as an element strengthening the royal power of the ruling family in society. The fact that this relation was constantly emphasized points to the way in which contemporaries see their own origins and how certain rules which regulate the social actions of the community resulted from unchanged universal values.

Although now Adalbert is a historical and mythologised figure, he is nonetheless worshipped by Poles not only as an apostle, ascetic and teacher (Paradowska, Urbańska 1996, p. 49), but also as a patriot (Paradowska 1999, p. 394), a member of the ruling elite and a guardian of Polish tradition.

It should be noted that people have little knowledge about him, and some respondents had no opinion about the saint. However, most people interviewed during the ethnological research had heard of Adalbert. He functions in the collective subconsciousness as a symbolic connotation with feelings of patriotism, Polishness and Catholicism. Results of historical and archaeological studies which tried to find evidence to prove the actual existence of this character and his deeds, have no major impact on the image deeply rooted in the awareness of the Polish contemporary society. The image of St Adalbert, as an element of this vision, has already been formed and successive, newly discovered facts or historical hypotheses do not change the relationship between the community and the saint. Indeed, Adalbert is already too strongly set in his mythical framework for that to happen. For this reason he is perceived as a saint, but, which was often stressed in our conversations,⁹ also as a lofty character far from down to earth matters of everyday life, unlike other saints; here my respondent listed without much hesitation: St Anthony, St Christopher, St Judas Thaddaeus, and the Holy Virgin. Adalbert has no practical tasks needed by people on an everyday basis. His function, as universally believed, consists in being the patron of the country, which is rather an occasional position, performed occasionally. This does not mean, there are no mentions of Adalbert having a connection to household tasks or connected to the family hearth. These duties remain, however, in clear minority in comparison to the national and patriotic image of the saint (Paradowska, Urbańska 1998, p. 284).

Such a distant approach to St. Adalbert results from a number of reasons. The first one consists in the fact that Adalbert was a historical figure with a well-documented biography. Adalbert was for some time "too close" to the consolidating Polish medieval society. In contemporary times, in the collective consciousness his biography is perceived as historically documented, thus marking a continuity between the origins of the Polish State and the contemporary world. The second reason lies in the numerous ties between Adalbert and the ruling elite. The third consists in the fact that the elites that came after his time would promote him as the all-Polish national patron. Such were the requirements of that epoch. As already mentioned people generally know that such a figure existed (although those knowing the details of his historical/legendary biography remain in clear minority), and in the collective

⁹ Materials from ethnological research on the cult and perception of Saint Adalbert in Poland, carried out in 1995–98 and 2000–2001, can be found in the Archives of the Ethnological Laboratory of IAE PAN O/Poznań.

awareness his ties to patriotism, Polishness and unity of the State, although occasional, are widely recognised. This knowledge is rather part of the collective subconsciousness, from where it is occasionally brought to light by external factors such as symbolic associations. It is true that St Adalbert could hardly be called a popular saint, however, he is a typical religious hero. Although the legends about Adalbert present sometimes miraculous events, such as those assigned to holy figures, these events concerned rather the fulfilment of a task than concrete interventions in everyday life, as it is in the case of popular saints. St Adalbert plays the role of such a typical "folk saint" only in a few regions of Poland. The results of ethnological studies show that Saint Adalbert is treated by Poles more like a mythologized religious hero than as a typical popular saint connected to the society by concrete ties.

The strict connection between members of a social group and "their" Saint and the fact that he is assigned to a given place results from a deeply accepted faith of the believers in the reality and efficiency of the exchange which occurs between the figure and the congregation, as well as in his/her ineluctable and swift action. This faith in the exchange of duties is necessary for the saint to become a real holy figure close to people's hearts – a "folk saint". It stems from pagan beliefs, with their protective deities of the home hearth. The most representative examples of this kind of saint are: "Saint Anthony of lost things", John Nepomuk of the water, St Florian of the fire, St Judas Thaddaeus of desperate cases. Unfortunately St Adalbert did not find his place in this system of exchange of duties. Research shows, nonetheless, that he is a more general saint, the patron of Poland, which means that he is too distant from everyday life. Saint Adalbert is considered as a folk saint in only a few localities, where his worship has a long tradition. However, in the general perception he is regarded as an elite saint: the patron of the country, diocese, parish – a Polish and Catholic saint. He is associated with Polish traditions and values, with patriotism and the Catholic faith. As one of my respondents put it: "He is more of a general saint".

Adalbert represents the model of the so-called religious hero – keeping to the medieval signification of a saint in the sense of Saint Paul. Adalbert is also a good example of Campbell's mythical hero model which fully reflects the relation which joins Polish society with St. Adalbert.¹⁰

¹⁰ This scheme may be introduced by the statement by Arnold Toynbee that Campbell quoted: "The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms. Such a one's visions, ideas, and inspirations come pristine from the primary springs of human life and thought. Hence they are eloquent, not of the present, disintegrating society and psyche, but of the unquenched source through which society is reborn. The hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man – perfected, unspecific, universal man – he has been reborn. His second solemn task and deed therefore (...) is to return then to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed" (Campbell 1968, p. 19–20).

CAMPBELLIAN THEORY OF HERO MYTHISATION

The hero is considered as endowed with power and is assigned exceptional qualities, which he could have possessed already at birth and even since his conception. The oldest legends, historical accounts and children's stories state that Adalbert was an exceptionally good looking child (c.f.: Kanapariusz 1997; Wiewióra 1996; Sobczak, Śmigiel 1997; Ziemia 1996) and a person endowed with many talents. Many stories about Adalbert which were later written down stress how easily the saint learned and emphasize his rare gift of piety.¹¹ The hero's entire life is often shown as a succession of miracles which finds its climax and central point in his great expedition. The hero who undertakes such a challenge is considered as predestined to perform heroic deeds. In Adalbert's case, his predestination already becomes apparent during his childhood by the will of God.¹²

Even if the hero makes his own decisions and the different stages of his life are ruled by accidents and coincidences, the interpretation of these facts oscillates towards predestination, and thus towards an interference of the supernatural world with which he will either enter into conflict or cooperate in order to fulfil his task. If you start treating an authentic historical figure as a hero, the creators of this kind of image will interpret the biographical strands as connected to an unknown world inaccessible to all, the underground, heaven, or other domains existing outside everyday life and in which the community believes. The hero must sail over the ocean of life and during his journey his task is self-discovery and self-improvement.

The hero is often held in high regard but also treated with disdain by the community to which he belongs. "He and/or the world in which he finds himself suffers from a symbolical deficiency. (...) The hero of myth (achieves) a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph" within the boundaries defined by society (Campbell 1968, pp. 37–38). The victorious hero is allowed to watch the visions of the creation and

¹¹ „During his whole school education he did not compete with rogues and he did not either connive with those who idled their time away and undertook childish activities (...). There, he would pray, when he had time and before his master came, he would sit at his place again. Since he wanted to avoid praises for his good deeds, he would go to see the poor, the disabled and blind at night (...). In his tireless endeavour he would urge himself to constantly train all his virtues, and among his colleagues he made the greatest progresses" (Kanapariusz 1997, p. 23–24).

¹² „As no one knew whom he would turn out to be in the future, his parents, guided by the fact that he had a handsome figure and appearance gave him to the world. But this fair mistake made by the parents or rather their misled intention was soon discovered and righted by the sword of God's wrath. For you could see that the body of the infant suddenly grew, and the swollen belly was larger than the rest of the body. (...) And thus they came to Church with great humility and humbleness of heart, distressed they laid the boy on the altar of the Holy Virgin Mary and they devoted him to the Lord, as an imploring sacrifice. And when they did so, God's wrath turned away and when the belly shrunk, the baby regained its grace" (Kanapariusz 1997, p. 20–21).

destruction of the world. Some scholars perceive the actions of the mythical hero as a direct impact on the dynamics of the cultural process (c.f.: Perszon 1928, p. 144). Such a figure is, therefore, a constructive part of culture, since myth as a *different* reality constitutes its morphological sphere.

The hero may be a holy healer, a vagrant or an ascetic. He has renounced the world. He is worthy of merging with the immutable, and therefore with a reality that is not subject to linear time, but follows the closed mythical cycle. However, the intention of this kind of figure is not to learn and understand the paradox of a double perspective,¹³ but to renounce all worldviews and to sink into the unseen and invisible. Campbell believes that the saints as heroes, since they are outside of the circle of life, are also outside of the mythical circle. "Neither do they treat of it any more, nor can the myth properly treat of them" (1968, p. 355). I do not fully agree on this with Campbell. After all, the myth is not the reality of the saint himself but a reality created by society which perceives the hero in a certain way. Not every legend trivialises lofty issues and even if they do, it does not mean that the hero leaves the mythical circle. The best example here are Polish Christmas carols, with their simple language and yet with a very deep theological truth about Christ which has become the subject of many debates by theologians. Legends, considering their cultural references, are distorted forms of mythical tales, and yet we can clearly perceive in them the image of a hero and the saint is often viewed in this context. Saint Adalbert is actually a good example of this trend, although his connection to history, still very strong, slightly blurs this image.

The hero's journey always follows a model divided into three parts:

1) "a separation from the world", 2) reaches "a penetration to some source of power", 3) "a life-enhancing return" (Campbell 1968, p. 35). This journey symbolically resembles three stages of a pilgrimage: preparations to set off and leave home, the road itself, and finally reaching the destination – sanctity. It has, therefore, also a sacral value, just as a holy pilgrimage does. In its classical scheme it extends the model which we can find in rites of passage: separation, initiation and return. This *life-enhancing return* represents the core of the monomyth (1968, pp. 30, 35).

The first part of the expedition is generally called by Campbell "separation" or "departure" (1968, p. 36). It is divided into four stages:¹⁴

- a) The Call to Adventure;
- b) Refusal of the Call or the folly of the flight from the God;

¹³ Concerning mechanism of double sight – see: the publication by René Girard, also Urbańska (1997, pp. 21–45).

¹⁴ Joseph Campbell also included the fifth stage in the first part of the hero's expedition: "The Belly of Whale, or the passage into the realm of night". I have decided to move this stage to the second part of the journey as the first one, because the crossing of the first threshold is a typical moment of changing worlds (see: Campbell 1968, p. 36).

- c) Supernatural Aid;
- d) The Crossing of the First Threshold.

The initial stage of the journey is the call to adventure or in other words the signs which show that the hero has been summoned by destiny. Therefore, the most important part of the myth begins with the initiation of a mythological journey. The task of the hero is difficult and gains great importance once he has deeply reflected on it and undertaken it seriously. An impulse to undertake the journey, often found in heroic biographies, namely, is expulsion from home in early childhood or youth. This element of the monomyth, just like others, is transformed and distorted, but it can be found in almost every legend. Adalbert is forced to leave Prague and travels to the Benedictine Monastery for a period of seclusion. The expulsion element finds its confirmation in the history of the Saint's family which was murdered by a prince of the Premislid dynasty. In the legends he was pictured as an enemy, an evil foe. Adalbert is therefore expelled *in absentia* (during this event he was not in Bohemia). In the myth, fate finds the hero and transfers him from his own environment into an unknown area (Campbell 1997, p. 54). Adalbert is called upon in his childhood and leaves his community. First, he studies in a foreign country, later on he becomes a member of the clergy, and finally, he secludes himself in the Monte Cassino and Aventine monasteries.

Then the hero refuses the call or sees that there is no sense in running away from God (the second stage of the first part of the journey). This subplot is hardly present in Adalbert's biography. One could rather find the opposite situation when external forces (the Archbishop, the Pope) postpone the mission to be undertaken by Adalbert. In the next, third stage, comes the unexpected support, supernatural aid, in the realisation of the task entrusted to Adalbert by providence. First during his childhood, which has already been discussed, later on during the events in Prague and during his journey through Europe. Different hagiographies and local stories abound with descriptions of different types of helpful activities of supernatural powers. The figure of the Cosmic Mother appears very often at this stage. She is one that makes the hero safe. In Christian hagiographical legends, the role of such a caretaker is usually played by the Holy Virgin. Her intercession can obtain the Lord's grace. Saint Adalbert entrusts himself to the care of the Virgin Mary and addresses his prayers to her so that the will of God the Father is fulfilled and "godly order" is restored where it was impaired (Prague) or has not yet been established (Prussia).

The fourth stage of the first part of the journey is paramount. Indeed, this is the point where the hero crosses the first threshold, and by doing so leaves the known limits of his world and ventures away from his own life horizon. Beyond this barrier, behind the wall of tradition of his own community, far from this area (a city, a village or a palace) lurk many monsterst which have existed since ancient

times and now defy humans. The hero must face demons which are dangerous, on the one hand, but who also have the ability to grant him with magical powers. In the hagiography of Adalbert the first threshold is not clearly marked: is it the moment of his ordination, the first time he leaves Prague or perhaps the final departure from the bishop's capital and setting off on a journey that will end by his demise in Prussia? But perhaps, this stage appears later on, at the beginning of the expedition organised by Boleslaus the Brave? I am inclined to support the third proposal, namely when Adalbert finally left Prague. However, in his case we are rather dealing with two first thresholds. The Polish layer is superimposed on the Czech layer. In the local Polish consciousness the unknown world into which Adalbert is supposed to enter lies ahead of him. This is the domain of the "savage" Prussians. Therefore, the Polish first threshold is rather the time when the Saint leaves Gnesen and sets off on his mission to the North.¹⁵

Instead of monsters, the hero will encounter on his road tyrants who are responsible for human misery and poverty and who claim to have godly attributes. The world must be purged of them. "The elementary deeds of the hero are those of the clearing of the field" (Campbell 1968, p. 338). He encounters guardians of the threshold who are to drive away all those unworthy, i.e. those who are not predestined to be heroes. Stefan Żeromski, in his novel *Wind from the sea* (1970), describes the character of a devil hidden under the guise of a ferryman on St. Adalbert's boat. Could he be this threshold guardian. Perhaps though the guardians are the guards of the Prussian castle who do not allow Adalbert to enter on their territory? Nonetheless, the hero manages to vanquish the different obstacles. At the same time the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation.

This is where the second part of the mythical journey starts: „reaching a penetration to some source of power”. It is divided into three stages:¹⁶

¹⁵ We should quote here the reflections made by Godula (1997, pp. 70–71) who pointed to the medieval holistic perception of Poland, Bohemia and Hungary as a boundary territory: „Three countries of central and eastern Europe are defined by features which point to their separation from the pagan world and also their affinity with Western Christianity and the fact that they are not part of the barbarian world. This is, therefore, an ambiguous space, since it links and at the same time divides two antitetical worlds without being entirely any of them. This is a sphere called in cultural anthropology *transitional, liminal*. It is characterised by a mix of elements of both separates spheres and creates an image full of contradictions and chaotic. The task of Saint Adalbert is to put order into this existing chaos”. As Godula claims „collective mentality gives Adalbert a special role in the creation of the meaningful, holy space, reclaimed by him from the *heathen shadows* (...), that is to say the space ordered according to Christian rules and marked by the stay of Saint Adalbert”. In this perspective the whole area can be treated as the first threshold: passing from the Christian to the Heathen world.

¹⁶ This part of the expedition I have divided into three main groups, unlike Joseph Campbell who had 6 (see: Campbell 1968, p. 36).

- a) the passage into the realm of night (Belly of the Whale),
- b) the road of trials and victory in initiation,
- c) the ultimate boon, atonement with the father and achieving apotheosis.

The hero, after having crossed the first threshold, starts the stage when he has crossed into the domain of the unknown and transits into the sphere of rebirth. Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape where he must survive a succession of tests, trials, or ordeals (Campbell 1968, p. 97). His mortal shell may be cut up into pieces and thrown on land and sea. In this struggle, he is covertly supported by amulets in the form of a cross, a bishop's coat, advice from a mysterious Prussian helper and secret emissaries of the protective supernatural helper whom he met in some form before his entrance into this unknown region. This sphere is the area commonly known in mythology as the belly of the whale, the Leviathan, the kingdom of night, which can be accessed through a dangerous maze. This is where the entrance can be found – an entry into the abyss where an unknown resistance can be vanquished and where long lost and forgotten powers can be found with which one can transform the world. In the Polish mythical awareness Adalbert enters into this "kingdom of night" when he disembarks from the boat on the Prussian coast, in an unknown and inaccessible land. The source of the hero's power and at the same time his task to fulfil is the transformation of the central point of this dark domain (the holy orchard of the Prussians) into a centre of holy power thanks to the amulets of Christian faith: The Word of God (in the sense of the codified and sanctified book), the Cross and the Holy Water. Thanks to this he realises his objective: he renews the order of the world which was transformed a long time ago into the chaos of the pagan world by evil spirits.

The hero, whose ego has already been destroyed, enters into the maw of the dragon easily. The fact that he leaves and subsequently returns proves that the core of his being, as the indestructible element of every being is defined in philosophy, emerges victoriously from all the adversities of the world of matter and endures. Now, he has not been yet under the death power. Therefore, there is nothing to fear. This ease in crossing borders between worlds is a characteristic feature of all holy characters. It is commonly believed that after their biological death they still coexist with the community which considers them as their patrons. These characters appear as ghosts, bringing their own decapitated heads to the church, help in the fields, put out fires, heal the sick and dying.

The second stage of this expedition consists of the road of trials and victory in initiation. The hero overcomes obstacles and learns about the dangerous aspects of the gods. This is also where he meets with the Goddess or experiences the bliss of infancy regained. Myths very often give up the motif of a goddess in favour of the woman as temptress (Campbell 1968, p. 36, see examples: pp. 97–126). There are two versions of Adalbertian legends. The encounter with the

Goddess takes place during epiphanies, especially during sleep and the last Holy Mass. The motif of the woman-temptress is hidden in the episode which proves the purity of thought and deeds of Adalbert in his school time. Coomaraswamy (1944, p. 129) notes that the hero may be involved in problems of a sensual nature and can "free himself and even free others, thanks to his internal higher morale". This thread becomes especially visible in hagiographies.

The third stage consists of gaining the ultimate boon, atonement with the father, usually of a godly origin and achieving apotheosis (see examples: Campbell 1968, pp. 126–192). Thanks to this elevation of the hero, the tale as a myth becomes more understandable to the observer. The man crosses the final boundary of perilous ignorance; he is free from fears and beyond changes. Since he is not subject to time, he becomes deified in our eyes. He turns into a hero and is granted the ultimate boon. This final reward consists in fulfilling the task: obtaining what he set off to get or being granted immortality by the Gods, enlightenment or riches, understood differently depending on the cultural-religious environment of the myth. The reward has the power to transform life and is necessary to renew the community. Adalbert gains it through salvation: he returns to the bosom of the Father. Faith in the immediate salvation of saints, as a reward for their deeds, is paramount for the continuity of Christian tradition which includes the worship of religious heroes.

The last part of the journey is the „life-enhancing return” in which an important task is the reintegration with society. This act includes the hero's reinterpretation of society. This part of the journey can be divided into four stages:¹⁷

- a) decision to come back,
- b) the Magic Flight,
- c) the Crossing of the Return Threshold,
- d) return to the beginning, sanctification of the centre and renewal of the world.

Contrary to Campbell's suggestion, the death of the hero does not mean that the journey has come to an end and that the task has been fulfilled. Return is necessary in order to close the circle of the monomyth. When the hero has finished his quest and has reached the source (very often thanks to the grace of the deity), he must make the effort to come back to the beginning with his life-transmuting trophy in order to contribute to this salutary renewal (Campbell 1968, p. 193). However, it often happens that the hero refuses to come back or renounces the world. Finally, however, the Magic Flight takes place (second stage). If at the time of his triumph the hero gains the blessing of the deity (i.e. when he wins the aforementioned boon), and later receives an explicit order to come back to his world with some elixir, in the last stage of the journey he is assisted by powers

¹⁷ Original subheadings of this part of the hero's journey: see Campbell 1968, p. 37; examples: pp. 193–243.

subordinated to his supernatural patron. He can also obtain help from outside, i.e. from the world he comes from. Boleslaus the Brave helps Adalbert in this very way by ransoming his body. So does the converted Prussian, the monk and the knight who bring the head of the Saint to Gnesen.

Finally comes the third stage: *Crossing the Return Threshold*, i.e. return to the ordinary world, to the kingdom of humanity. Irrespective of whether he was helped by an outside intervention, seized by an external compulsion, or transported by deities, the hero must still return with his prize to world and fulfil its expectations. He must face his community which cannot fully understand him. "The first problem of the returning hero is to accept as real, after an experience of the soul-satisfying vision of fulfillment, the passing joys and sorrows, banalities and noisy obscenities of life. Why re-enter such a world? Why attempt to make plausible, or even interesting (...), the experience of transcendental bliss?" (Campbell 1968, p. 218). The problem involves maintaining this cosmic point of view in the face of worldly torments and joys directly experienced by the hero.

Mythical heroes, who may be called universal masters, such as Christ or the Buddha, can easily pass back and forth across the world division. They become masters of two worlds. This feature becomes also apparent in some myths on local heroes. It is common in hagiographies of Saints, which I have already mentioned. This feature exists because the power of the universal hero is extended to other mythical characters from the same cultural circle. The heroes experience freedom to live, become aware of the connection between the passing phenomena of earthly life and the indestructible life which endures and dies in every human being. This includes the character and function of the ultimate benevolence. One of the conditions for the hero to exist in the collective awareness is that he has to convince the community that he was internally reconciled with death. As a character acting in two worlds, the everyday world and the supernatural world, he knows what awaits him after death. The legends on the „Prussian Missionary” stress that Adalbert was aware of his imminent and martyrological demise and that he was at peace with it. He does not fear when he is attacked, hit with an oar, imprisoned, judged and expelled. He makes yet another attempt, although he knows he is going to die.

The end of the task is the return to the starting point (fourth stage of the third part of the expedition), to the centre which, thanks to the accomplished mission, is renewed and sanctified. Therefore, the death of Adalbert in the holy orchard of the Prussians does not end the task. He still has to come back to this point: in the Polish case it is the cathedral in Gnesen; in the Czech perspective – the cathedral in Prague. The dismembered corpse of the Saint alone or thanks to external help comes back, sanctifying the place and renewing the order of the world. Supernatural graces start to flow to the community, moving away foreign worlds and stopping evil which wreaks chaos and destruction. "The effect of

the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world" (Campbell 1968, p. 40). The deeds of the hero performed in his age of maturity fill the world with creative power. He has restored, to the place of origin of the hero or to the place where he departed on his expedition, the status of a focal point, the hub of the universe, where he returns and where in time the members of the community to which the myth of the hero belongs shall return. The places where the hero was born, active and where he passed away are sanctified, that is why temples are built there. They express the centre of the world; it is there that eternity was discovered by the hero. Those who enter the temple complex and go to the sanctuary repeat the deed of the hero worshipped there. They imitate a universal pattern in order to awaken in themselves the memory of a life-renewing form. In the allegorical sense of the term the situations when the hero enters the temple and when he is swallowed by the whale or another abyss are identical adventures which symbolise the renewal of the world.

To sum-up, the mythological hero when leaving his family home usually reaches the threshold of his own accord. However, he can also be lured or transported there. There, he encounters a spectral figure who is guarding the entrance. He vanquishes or tames this being and enters alive into the kingdom of darkness or is killed and brought to the Realm of Death (e.g. by being dismembered). Having crossed the threshold, he journeys through a world inhabited by unknown but strangely familiar powers, of which some frighten him (trials), while other grant him their magical support (helpers). The sense of the hero's expedition is to enter into contact again with powers considered to be pre-human. That is why he must descend into the underground world. When he reaches the nadir of this mythological circle, he is put to the final, hardest trial and is rewarded. This victory can take the form of a holy union, atonement with the father, sanctification (apotheosis), or else – if the powers of the world of darkness did not change their unfriendly relation to the hero – the theft of the goods for which the hero came. In reality this symbolises the widening of one's consciousness, also in the sense of the awareness of life (epiphany, metamorphosis, freedom). The last task of the hero is to return. If he was blessed by the powers of this realm, he is now under their protection. If this is not the case, he escapes and is being chased. Transcendental powers must stop at the return threshold, while the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of terror (return, resurrection, reincarnation). The gift he brings with himself saves the world.

Of course, as the author of this model himself notes, stories often elude all attempts at description, limiting some and extending other parts of the monomyth or else linking some independent cycles into one series. Different figures and episodes may be connected into one and one element may be repeated in many changed forms. Moreover, stories and myths constantly undergo transformations and deformations, are adapted to local conditions, customs or beliefs. The same is true of stories and

legends about St. Adalbert. Although, in spite of many distortions of the story, Saint Adalbert's is quite clearly perceived in the collective awareness as a mythical religious hero. Very often he is also partly deemed a national hero, due to the connection between his task and the history of a nation. For this reason he is often set as an imposed, institutional model. This results, obviously, from the needs of the time.

The way in which the figure of Adalbert was used by the media and institutions was visible during the celebration of the millennium of his death, canonisation and the Gnesen Gathering (1997–1999). The saint was then connected to the enlargement of the European Union. This figure was treated as a symbolic historical-political bridge between Poland and the European Union. Making Saint Adalbert the new patron saint of a unified Europe is an extremely far-fetched transformation of his mythologised history and is meant to obtain a transcendent (in this case mythical) argument confirming the inextricable affiliation of Poland with Western Europe. This claim, however, was not effective for two fundamental reasons. First of all, there was no dialogue between the Polish side, which at the beginning of the 21st century did not belong to the European Union, and the European Union concerning the perception of Western Europe's identity, based on the Christian medieval heritage embodied by Adalbertus. Although Poles were very keen on this idea, any kind of dialogue was impossible because Western society did not know about Saint Adalbert. He was neither their hero nor their saint. Western countries had no sufficient symbolic background connected to this figure in order to be willing to even think about whether this saint could be, also for them, an all-European patron. Secondly, even Polish scholars dealing with the figure of Saint Adalbert admit that his cult did not spread widely beyond the western Slavonic boundaries and is currently limited only to Poland with a few outposts in the Czech Republic. That is why, understanding as we do the necessity to chose patrons known by all European Christians and answering to the contemporary needs for models, Pope John Paul II appointed in 2002 six patrons of unified Europe, three men and three women: Cyril, Methodius, Benedict, Catherine of Siena, Bridget of Sweden and Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, i.e. Edith Stein (*Patron Europy* 2002, pp. 8–9). Adalbert is not among them.

CONCLUSION

As time went by, Adalbert became part of the universal scheme of a mythical hero functioning in the collective awareness. Thanks to this he became part of a pantheon of mythical heroes inhabiting the "Polish heaven". As a result of the mythicisation process, this figure embodies the ethos and symbols used in social, religious and political life, depending on the need, conditions and time. This saint is present in the Polish collective consciousness mainly as a personified symbol of Polishness,

patriotism and Catholicism, which is used by the ruling elites in order to awaken the proper connotations and social reactions. Sporadically, though, he fulfils the functions typical of popular saints. That is how the figure of Adalbert survived until contemporary times, used from time to time by different social groups for their own purposes perceived – in the case of this saint – usually as patriotic or religious.

Apart from the national aspect of Adalbert, an important marker of the cult of this saint is his role in sanctifying space, which strongly confirms his connection with local communities and by so doing the fact that he is a mythologized historical figure. Places traditionally associated with Saint Adalbert are inextricably connected to the multifarious perception of the religious hero. In the cult of Saint Adalbert, a characteristic feature are the diverse connections and relations with chosen places and areas. His worship is usually secondary to the traditional sanctification of places connected to him. At the same time Saint Adalbert is strongly connected to the landscape and the places which, in the opinion of the local community, stand out in the surroundings as places marked by power and holiness. The social and national aspect of the relation with Saint Adalbert becomes often apparent in sanctified places, mainly in sanctuaries. The sanctity of the place is transferred to the participants of parareligious ceremonies, whose patron is Saint Adalbert. He blesses them and their activity irrespective of the character of the ceremony. Thanks to this the godly aspect of the place connected to the figure of the saint elevates the extra-religious ideas and actions, often of a political character.

The cult of Saint Adalbert is a common phenomenon, although not a continuous one, called upon periodically by different social groups or powers in order to use and manipulate the symbolism of the figure, which exists in the collective awareness of the Polish society. It is a phenomenon steered from the top, and only in some areas is it a typical popular movement of grass-roots religiosity. Saint Adalbert is, therefore, a good example of a mythologised historical figure having become a religious hero. He falls very accurately into the mould of the Campbellian scheme of the mythical hero.

Ethnological research carried out almost entirely in Poland unequivocally points to the fact that although some values and features represented by Saint Adalbert are treated as an obsolete ethos or an unrealisable ideal, nonetheless the figure of the hero himself functions as a religious hero in the collective consciousness, mainly as a mythical figure and less as a historical figure. Contemporary times have modified the perception of Adalbert and the symbolic connotations contained in his biography by renewing the mythical structure consolidating the religiosity of the local community. This phenomenon is imposed from the top by ecclesiastical institutions and educational activities, the purpose being to revive the Christian and patriotic ideas and, so far without major successes, to introduce to the collective awareness new ideas connected to European integration.

To conclude, one should add that the worship of Saint Adalbert in the Polish society is an old phenomenon, deeply rooted and inscribed in the religious and historical landscape of the country. At the same time this cult was imposed through actions inspired by the widely understood social elites. It is steered by the clergy both at the level of the parish and the whole country, and thanks to this keeps its national character. The increased number of activities propagating the figure of Saint Adalbert is connected to the celebration of the millennium of his death and canonisation, as well as the anniversary of the Gnesen Gathering. The territory of Poland is by no means homogenous in this respect. There are localities where the cult is quite lively and even could be considered as a popular phenomenon, but there are also areas where Adalbert remains completely unknown.

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