

Janusz Wilk

Katowice, Poland

j.wilk@katowice.opoka.org.pl

ORCID: 0000-0002-6488-527X

The Thought of Blessed John van Ruusbroec in the Writings of St Elizabeth of the Trinity

Myśl bł. Jana van Ruusbroeca w pismach
św. Elżbiety od Trójcy Świętej

ABSTRACT: The article contributes to the study of Elizabeth of the Trinity's readings (1880–1906) and their impact to her way of thinking and in consequence her style of writing. The search query was narrowed down only to one author – the blessed John van Ruusbroec (1293–1381) and his work which the nun had (*Rusbrock l'admirable*, transl. E. Hello, Paris 1902). The analysis was based against six leading topics to which the mystic from Dijon frequently came back. These are: 1. Love; 2. The abyss that is God; 3. The man simple and humble; 4. Free will; 5. Saint silence; 6. Eternal now. In *Rusbrock l'admirable* Elizabeth of the Trinity was discovering herself. Thanks to the reading of this book she perfectly specified what she herself was sensing and experiencing.

KEYWORDS: Elizabeth of the Trinity, John van Ruusbroec, mysticism

ABSTRAKT: Artykuł stanowi przyczynek w studium lektur Elżbiety od Trójcy Świętej (1880–1906) oraz ich oddziaływania na jej styl myślenia i w konsekwencji piśmiennictwa. Kwerendę zawężono do jednego tylko autora – błogosławionego Jana van Ruusbroeca (1293–1381) i jego dzieła, którym mniszka dysponowała (*Rusbrock l'admirable*, transl. E. Hello, Paris 1902). Opracowanie oparto na sześciu przewodnich tematach, do których mistyczka z Dijon najczęściej powracała. Są nimi: 1. Miłość; 2. Przepaść, którą jest Bóg; 3. Człowiek pokorny i prosty; 4. Wolna wola; 5. Święte milczenie; 6. Wieczne teraz. W *Rusbrock l'admirable* Elżbieta od Trójcy Świętej odnajdywała siebie. Dzięki lekturze tej książki doskonale sprecyzowała to, co sama wyczuwała i czego doświadczała.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Elżbieta od Trójcy Świętej, Jan van Ruusbroec, mistyka

“And according to the measure of its love,
each spirit possesses a more or less profound
search for God in its own depths”

St Elizabeth of the Trinity
Heaven in Faith, 21
[*Rusbrock l'admirable*, p. 35]

The way of thinking, and consequently also the style of writing by a given author in the field of spirituality, is naturally shaped by both internal factors (the influence of God's grace, prayer and sacramental life) and the external ones (life environment, spiritual direction). Among the latter, what a given author has read are of considerable importance. In his or her writings, they could have referred to them directly, quoting a given thought or paraphrasing it, citing its author. He could also use the thoughts or a particular line of thought of an author or a group of authors without naming them. This cannot be considered “theft of intellectual property” in the modern sense (so-called plagiarism), because the authors often recognised themselves, their spiritual experiences in the content of a publication, and the language and images of a given publication became a form of naming and expressing himself before God. Most often, however, these authors cited with admiration what book they had read and named its author, sharing with their recipients the fruit a given text had brought into their lives. It should also be remembered that many texts by spiritual masters were not originally intended for publication. Only due to the holiness of the author or his precision in describing certain phenomena in the spiritual life were their works prepared for print at a later time.

The study of the impact of spiritual reading on a particular saint is interesting for several reasons. First, it is possible to determine the availability of particular publications or even the “fashion” for a type of spiritual reading at a given time. Secondly, the content of a monastery or home library offers an insight into what was the leading direction of spirituality. Thirdly, it is worth knowing the interests and spiritual predispositions of the saintly reader.¹

¹ See: research on the publications that were read by St Teresa of Jesus – L. Wrona, *Bóg i człowiek. Obraz Boga i człowieka w procesie uświęcenia na podstawie pism św. Teresy od Jezusa* [*God and Man: The image of God and man in the process of sanctification based on the writings of St Teresa of Jesus*], Kraków 2017, pp. 100–107.

Such an analysis will be then performed with reference to St Elizabeth of the Trinity.² Because of the wealth of research material contained in her writings,³

² Elizabeth Catez – Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity, born on 18 July 1880 in France. She entered the Carmel of Dijon on 2 August 1901; died of the then incurable Addison's disease on 9 November 1906. Beatified on 25 November 1984 and canonized on 16 October 2016.

³ In this study we use the following collections of the writings of Elizabeth Catez – St Elizabeth of the Trinity: *Œuvres Complètes*, C. De Meester (éd.), Paris 2017. Polish edition: *Pisma wszystkie* [Complete Works], C. De Meester (red.), vol. 1: *Listy młodzieńcze* [Adolescent Letters]; vol. 2: *Listy z Karmelu* [Letters from Carmel]; vol. 3: *Pisma pomniejszych* [Minor Writings], transl. J.E. Bielecki, Kraków 2006; English edition: *The Complete Works*, C. De Meester (ed.), vol. 1: *General Introduction. Major Spiritual Writings*, transl. A. Kane; vol. 2: *Letters from Carmel*, transl. A. Englund Nash, Washington 2014. All abbreviations of Elisabeth's writings have been adopted from those used in *The Complete Works of Elizabeth of the Trinity*: L – Letters; P – Poems; D – Diary; PN – Personal Notes; GV – *The Greatness of Our Vocation*; HF – *Heaven in Faith*; LR – *Last Retreat*; LL – *Let Yourself Be Loved*. Note: ICS Publication. Institute of Carmelite Studies (Washington), which published the first volumes of Elizabeth of the Trinity, *The Complete Works*, C. De Meester (ed.), prepares volume 3 with: *Diary, Personal Notes, Letters of Her Youth, Poems*. In the various language editions of Elizabeth of the Trinity's works there are differences in the numbering of the letters and poetry. Since it is not feasible to unify these numbers on the basis of the ICS Publication (volume 3 is missing), in footnote 3 we adopt the numbering of the letters and poetry from the French edition of her works (*Œuvres Complètes*). The following texts have no longer references to *Letters of Her Youth*, so we make use of *The Complete Works*, op. cit. Even before entering Carmel, Elizabeth had been reading Teresa of Ávila (*The Way of Perfection; The Interior Castle; Spiritual Testimonies; Conceptions of Divine Love; Exclamations of the Soul to God; Soliloquies* – cf. L 95, 109–110, 131, 136, 156, 162, 169, 192, 197 bis, 203, 207, 218, 220, 247, 249, 255, 276, 291, 297, 299, 309; P 4, 6, 39, 55, 72, 85, 94; D 3, 13–15, 17, 27, 92, 111, 135, 143, 145; PN 9, 12–13, 15; HF 32–33; GV 4; LR 23, 26–27). She probably had her first access to the publications of St Teresa of Jesus in her mother's library. Beginning in April 1899, Elizabeth became familiar with the *The Story of a Soul* of Thérèse of Lisieux (see: e.g.: L 41, 44, 53–55, 87, 93, 97, 110, 116, 124–126, 129, 131, 168–169, 172, 178, 184, 190–191, 193, 199, 203–204, 206, 208, 210, 214, 219, 221–222, 224–225, 236, 239, 249–250, 256, 261, 266, 269–270, 273, 287, 292, 294–295, 298, 324, 330, 335; P 55, 77–78, 81, 94–95, 98, 105, 117; D 135, 138, 148–151, 156; PN 4, 11–12, 15; GV 7; LR 31, 33; LL 1–2). This book, published on October 20, 1898, she may have bought at the Carmelite convent in Dijon, in a bookshop in the city or received from one of her friends who supported her in her desire for the monastic life. These books also accompanied her in the novitiate. In addition, she becomes familiar with the breviary (see: L 94, 183; PN 13), *Constitutions* and the *Ceremonial* and the key book in Carmel *Manuel du chrétien. Nouveau Testament. Psaumes. Imitation [Manual of New Testament. Psalms. On the Imitation of Christ]*. It was from this book that she drew so richly on the thought of the Apostle Paul (cf. L 146, 151, 156, 158, 160–162, 164–165, 175, 179, 187, 190–192, 214, 216, 219–220, 224–225, 227–228, 230–232, 235, 237–241, 243–244, 246–247, 249–250, 252, 256–257, 259, 261, 263–264, 268, 273–274, 278, 280, 291, 293–294, 298–300, 303–304, 306–309, 312, 315, 323, 323 bis, 324, 326, 331–333; P 89, 96, 112; PN 16; HF 2, 4, 10–14, 20, 23, 26–28, 31, 35,

we limit the scope of this contribution to just one author whose thoughts inspired Saint Elisabeth: Blessed John van Ruusbroec.⁴ He considered his writing a pastoral ministry. In the national language (Dutch, the so-called Middle

41–42; GV 2–4, 7, 9, 11–12; LR 1–3, 5, 6–9, 11, 13, 16, 20–30, 32–34, 36–38, 40, 43). Her spiritual father and friend was also St John of the Cross. Before entering Carmel, she had already transcribed some of the Saint's thoughts and the poem *Dark Night of the Soul*. On entering Carmel, she brought with her his *Works* (cf. L 103, 106, 121, 131, 136, 160, 165, 172, 179, 184–185, 198, 207, 213, 220, 224, 231, 239, 241–242, 245, 248–250, 261, 269, 274, 278, 284, 289, 292–293, 299, 307, 322; P 77, 98, 100–101, 109, 114, 119; PN 15; HF 4–6, 10, 12, 19, 42; GV 6; LR 2–3, 8, 15, 19–21, 25–28, 34, 43). His writings are “all the food of my soul” (L 241). The writings of St Augustine of Hippo (cf. L 129, 168, 206, 214, 224, 236, 264; GV 4), the reflections of St Catherine of Siena, which she had heard or read (cf. L 50, 62, 73, 89, 115, 129, 131, 160, 181, 199, 231, 239, 291–292; P 106, 118; D 140; PN 12, 15; GV 7; LR 4–5), St Albert the Great (see: L 194; P 109; PN 15, 16; HF 25), St Ignatius of Loyola (see: L 91, 94) and Blessed Angela of Foligno (see: L 220, 292, 311, 313–314, 316–317, 320, 329; P 98, 113–115, 118; GV 5; LL 4, 6). She also became familiar with Pius X's first encyclical *E supremi apostolatus. On the Restoration of All Things in Christ*, Rome, 4 October 1903 (see: L 256; P 89). In identifying the authors of the works cited by Elisabeth, she made use of the knowledge available then to her, which often differed from what we currently know (e.g., she attributed the Letter to the Hebrews to the Apostle Paul or the treatise *De l'Union avec Dieu* to St Albert the Great, while in fact it is the work of a Benedictine monk, John von Kastl). Sometimes she even mistakenly attributed the authorship of a thought to another author (e.g., L 201). With simplicity of heart and purity of intellect, she made use of these works, pointing above all to the mystery of God's love for her and for every human being. See also: C. De Meester, *Święta Elżbieta od Trójcy Świętej. Biografia [Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity: Biography]*, transl. K. Rogalska, Poznań 2015, pp. 218–223, 266–278, 444–447, 455–457, 626–630.

⁴ John was born in 1293 in the village of Ruusbroec (today Ruysbroeck), nine kilometers from Brussels. From the age of eleven he was under the spiritual and material care of his relative, Master Jan Hinckaert, a canon regular at the Church of St Gudula in Brussels. There he probably received a comprehensive education in both philosophy and theology as well as in natural sciences, as his writings attest. In 1317 he was ordained a presbyter, subsequently taking up the ministry of vicar at the church of St Gudula in Brussels, where he continued to live with his uncle and Fr Franco van Coudenberg. In 1343 they left Brussels to take up the hermit life at Groenendael, in the forest of Zonienbosch. Two years after their arrival, their chapel began to serve as a parish church and their community had seven members. On 10 March 1350 they became canons regular by accepting the Rule of St Augustine and making their religious profession. Coudenberg became the provost and Ruusbroec the prior. John Ruusbroec died in the reputation of sanctity in Groenendael on 2 December 1381. The process of beatification did not start until 1624 and was successfully concluded in 1908. His relics are kept in the church of St Gudula in Brussels. He received a few nicknames of similar meaning: *Admirabilis, Doctor Mirabilis, Doctor Divinus, Doctor Ecstasticus* – see: M. Lew-Dylewski, *Wstęp [Introduction]*, [in:] Jan van Ruusbroec, *Dzieła [Works]*, transl. M. Lew-Dylewski, vol. 1, Kraków 2000, pp. 8–10; F. Arduino, *Beato Giovanni di Ruysbroeck*, <http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/91898> [access: 10.10.2020].

Flemish, in the Brabantian dialect), he tried to teach a sound pure doctrine, opposing the floristic and pantheistic tendencies.

The advantage of Ruusbroeck's writing seems to be above all his sobriety, his trust in reason, especially in subtle matters concerning mysticism and the inner life. He is an expert in human nature, especially in the aspect of its sinfulness.⁵

In his writings⁶ he pointed to the mystical state as the highest union of God and the human soul,⁷ warned against spiritual deviation and encouraged a good moral life. He inspired a combination of contemplative and active life.⁸ He made generous use of the Bible and the natural and astrological knowledge of the time. To varying degrees, he may have been familiar with the writings of: Bernard of Clairvaux, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the mystic Hadewijch, the Church Fathers and later Christian writers (Ambrose, Gregory the Great, Bede the Venerable, Thomas Aquinas). He was very familiar with the works on biblical archaeology by Peter Comestor (Petrus Trecensis) and on fauna and flora by Thomas of Cantimpre.⁹

Throughout the centuries the writings of John van Ruusbroec, translated into various languages, have influenced and continue to influence people who wish to remain faithful to God offering Himself to man and inviting him to a mystical union with Him. For Ruusbroec, this meant the contemplative life.

The work of John van Ruusbroec in the Carmel of Dijon

Elisabeth Catez probably first came into contact with the spiritual and literary legacy of Blessed Ruusbroec when she joined the Carmelite convent in Dijon.

⁵ A. Sulikowski, *Ruusbroeck jak katedra* [*Ruusbroeck as a Cathedral*], "Znak" 12/571 (2002), p. 160.

⁶ A full collection of them in Polish: Jan van Ruusbroec, *Dziela* [*Works*], transl. M. Lew-Dylewski, vol. 1: *Królestwo miłujących; Zaślubiny duchowe* [*The Kingdom of the Divine Lovers; The Spiritual Espousals*], Kraków 2000; vol. 2: *Namiot duchowy* [*The Spiritual Tabernacle*], Kraków 2002; vol. 3: *Dziela mniejsze* [*Minor Works*], Kraków 2003; vol. 4: *Dwanaście beginek; Inne pisma* [*The Twelve Beguines; Other Writings*], Kraków 2006.

⁷ Cf. L. Kowalewski, *Zjednoczenie mistyczne według Jana van Ruusbroeka* [*The Mystical Union According to John van Ruusbroec*], Sandomierz 2004.

⁸ Cf. J. Misiurek, *Jan Ruusbroeck, Ruusbroec, Ruusbroek*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka* [*Catholic Encyclopaedia*], vol. 7, J. Duchniewski (ed.), Lublin 1997, col. 819–821.

⁹ Cf. M. Lew-Dylewski, *Wstęp...*, op. cit., pp. 13–14.

His works, as the then superior of the community, Mother Germaine of Jesus, recalls, were made available to her in the convent library. There was only one copy, published in 1902, and it was very popular with the nuns.¹⁰

Full bibliographic description of this book preserving the original layout of the title page¹¹:

RUSBROCK
L'ADMIRABLE
(*Œuvres choisies*)
traduit
Par Ernest Hello
Nouvelle Édition
Paris
Librairie Académique Didier
Perrin et C^{ie}, Libraires-Éditeurs
35, Quai des Grands-Augustins, 35
1902

The book at the disposal of the Carmelite Sisters of Dijon has the dimensions of 120 × 187 and has LXIV plus 253 pages. It was published with soft covers, with a clear layout of the contents, without any ornaments either on the cover or on individual pages. The publication is not a complete collection of Ruusbroec's writings, not even a complete translation of one of his works, but merely a selection of various passages from particular writings. The French title *Œuvres choisies* is therefore most appropriate.

This book consists of eight chapters that are designed to present the essence (anthology) of the works of the Brussels mystic. However, it lacks information about the source text of the translation. In France, especially in the seventeenth century, thanks to the compilation of Ruusbroec's works prepared by the Flemish Franciscan Henry Herp (15th century), he was already partly known, but in the following centuries he fell increasingly into oblivion.¹² It is possible that Ernest Hello based his translation and style of compilation on the work of the aforementioned Franciscan.¹³

¹⁰ Cf. L 288 – *To her sister*, note 7.

¹¹ A copy from the same year of publication in the possession of the author of the text.

¹² Cf. *Jan van Ruysbroeck*, Wikipedia, [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Van_Ruysbroeck_\(religieux\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Van_Ruysbroeck_(religieux)) [access: 12.10.2020].

¹³ The first complete edition of Ruusbroec's works in French was only published after *Œuvres choisies* of 1902: *Oeuvres complètes de Ruysbroeck l'Admirable*, transl. Flamand par les Bénédictins de Saint-Paul de Wisques, vols. 1–6, Bruxelles–Paris 1917–1938.

In the 1902 publication presented here, not all the chapter titles correspond with the titles of Ruusbroec's treatises;¹⁴ sometimes additional subtitles have been introduced. The book is not a critical edition of all Ruusbroec's works, so the editorial measures do not affect the value and purpose of the book, which was to disseminate the thought of this Dutch theologian and mystic. The Carmelite community of Dijon was the best example of the impact of this publication.

Elisabeth of the Trinity's interest in the work of John van Ruusbroec

As we have already mentioned, it is likely that Elisabeth of the Trinity's first encounter with the works of Blessed John van Ruusbroec took place in Carmel. It is not impossible that the book *Rusbrock l'admirable* (*Œuvres choisies*) was brought to her by the Prioress herself, Mother Germaine, or one of the infirmary sisters, since we find references to Ruusbroec's thought in Sister Elisabeth's writings only from the last months of her life, which she spent in the infirmary of the Carmelite convent in Dijon.¹⁵

The Prioress, in her letter of 20 June 1906 to Marie Catez (Elisabeth's mother), who was on a short visit to Paris at the time, wrote: "in case you would like to bring her a memento of your trip," then the book *Rusbrock l'admirable*, which "captivates her," would be very useful.¹⁶ Mrs Catez complied with the prioress's suggestion and acquired a selection of Ruusbroec's writings.

Elisabeth of the Trinity, writing on 24 June 1906 to her sister Margaret, referred to this suggestion: "Our Mother [prioress] betrayed her child's desire by writing to Mama to bring back with her a book titled *L'Admirable*, and which is so in fact!"¹⁷ At the beginning of July she mentioned to her that "I'm reading magnificent things in the book from Mama (tell her that)."¹⁸ She personally informed her mother of the usefulness of her gift in a letter dated 18 July 1906: "I am reading your dear book, which is magnificent; you've made me a very

¹⁴ For example, the second chapter was given the title *De L'ancien Testament*. However, the original title of this treatise is *Van den Gheesteliken Tabernakel* [*The Book of the Spiritual Tabernacle; The Spiritual Tent*]. The sixth chapter is titled *Samuel*, whereas its full name is *Dat Boecksken der Verclairinghe* [*The Book of the Highest Truth; The Book of Enlightenment*].

¹⁵ From the end of March until 9 November 1906, that is, until his death.

¹⁶ L 288, note 7.

¹⁷ L 288 – *To her sister*.

¹⁸ L 292 – *To her sister*.

precious gift, my dear Mama; I have it beside me on the little table...”¹⁹ In September, in a short “spiritual treatise,” *The Greatness of Our Vocation*, addressed to her friend Françoise de Sourdon, seven years her junior, she described the book as “splendid pages”²⁰ and of its author “the pious author.”²¹

St Elizabeth of the Trinity referred to this publication in forty-one passages²²: L 288, 292–293, 298, 300, 306–307, 316, 330; PN 17; HF 4, 10–14, 17–18, 21–24, 32, 35–37, 40, 43; GV 2, 4, 8; LR 1, 3–5, 7, 10–11, 21, 25, 28, 44. These are quotations, paraphrases, indirect references. Judging by the dates of these writings and the frequency with which she included thoughts from *Rusbrock l’admirable*, we can conclude that this book was one of her main readings in the last months of her earthly life. We would therefore investigate which thoughts from this work were particularly close to her spirituality and which she believed worth sharing with others. As far as possible, we will try to systematize and analyse them. To this end, we will identify the key themes that the Saint of Dijon addressed based on her reading of *Doctor Mirabilis*.

The main thoughts of John van Ruusbroec in the writings of St Elizabeth of the Trinity

In the writings of Elizabeth of the Trinity, we see general references to Ruusbroec as well as extensive quotations from his works. The latter are sometimes slightly modified by the nun; she replaced some of the words with her own or omitted more difficult ones (e.g., transcendence).²³ However, a careful reading of the Saint’s writings allows us to distinguish six themes to which she returned several times. We define them on the basis of the most frequent issues that appear in them.

Love

Reading the statements of the witnesses called to testify in the process for the beatification of Elizabeth of the Trinity, we notice that Elizabeth’s heroic love

¹⁹ L 300 – *To her mother*.

²⁰ GV 2.

²¹ GV 2.

²² It is not possible to state “she referred to Ruusbroec’s works forty-one times,” since in some of her writings Sister Elizabeth quotes Ruusbroec’s thoughts several times or even compiles her own text on the basis of this mystic’s reflections (e.g., PN 17; HF 36).

²³ E.g., HF 21.

for God and, as a result, for her neighbours²⁴ is particularly striking. Throughout her life she wished to give love for love.²⁵ Hence her intense focus on this in the writings of Ruusbroec. She looked there for advice on how to make this desire a reality.

She wrote twice that “the one who is holiest is the one who is most loving” and at the same time she emphasised the practical and not the theoretical aspect of love. The one who loves most is “the one who gazes the most toward God and most fully satisfies the desires of His gaze.”²⁶ She saw love as “always giving and always receiving.”²⁷ In this sense, love becomes the desire to give to the one loved and to receive from the one loved. The nun related this desire both to God and to her fellow men. She did not limit it only to earthly life. Less than three weeks before her death, she assures Mrs Gout de Bize and her family that in heaven (“The Fire of Love”) she will be actively thinking of them.²⁸ This active thinking meant asking for favours from God, especially a grace of union intimacy with the Master.²⁹

The love of God animates and irrigates the soil of the soul, enabling it to live in the Holy Spirit.³⁰ The soil of the soul thus watered produces the fruit of the Spirit (see: Gal 5:22–23), love will give birth to love. However, its productivity depends on the measure of love that man bestows on God.³¹

Love enables man to come to God. It is through love that God draws man to Himself, into the “inner sanctuary” of the human soul, where the Creator wants to meet with His creature.³² Through it, man allows God to be in him and God allows man to be in him.³³ The power of love opens us up to receive the riches of God, among which the most important is His presence in the human soul.

²⁴ See: *Testimoni dai processi di beatificazione. Elisabetta della Trinità*, R. Fornara (éd.), série: *Collana Testimoni 2*, Roma 2009, pp. 29–38.

²⁵ Cf. See: *Testimoni dai processi di beatificazione...*, op. cit., p. 34. What the witnesses noticed in the process, Elizabeth of the Holy Trinity put as a heading in L 213, quoting the words of John of the Cross from *The Spiritual Canticle* 9:7: “For love is repaid by love alone.” See also: L 261 – *To Madame de Bobet*.

²⁶ L 288 – *To her sister*; L 293 – *To Clémence Blanc*; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 113.

²⁷ HF 18; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 151.

²⁸ Cf. L 330 – *To Madame Gout de Bize*; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 146.

²⁹ L 330 – *To Madame Gout de Bize*.

³⁰ Cf. PN 17; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 40–41.

³¹ Cf. HF 21; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 35.

³² Cf. HF 23; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 66.

³³ Cf. HF 23.

This love is constantly inflamed and renewed in mutual and eternal affection. It takes place “at every moment in the bond of love.”³⁴

The abyss that is God

In Ruusbroec’s mysticism, the supreme being of divinity is beyond all that can be comprehended. It resembles a desert, an ocean, an unfathomable abyss. It is the repose, unifying love from which all beings originate and to which they return.³⁵ Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity refers to these images;³⁶ the image of the abyss or abyss (*l’abîme*) was the closest to her. An intensification of this metaphor can be found in the spiritual work of early August 1906, *Heaven in Faith*, dedicated to Margaret – Elizabeth’s own sister:

“I pursue my course,”³⁷ exclaimed St Paul; so must we descend daily this pathway of the Abyss which is God; let us slide down this slope in wholly loving confidence. “Abyss calls to abyss.”³⁸ It is there in the very depths that the divine impact takes place, where the abyss of our nothingness encounters the Abyss of mercy, the immensity of the all of God. There we will find the strength to die to ourselves and, losing all vestige of self, we will be changed into love...³⁹

Margaret had already become familiar with the issue. Elizabeth first referred to the image in a letter to her in early July 1906, characterising the book she had recently received:

The book always speaks of that interior “abyss” in which we must immerse and lose ourselves, that abyss of love we possess within us where beatitude awaits us if we are faithful in returning there. Little sister, union in that very simple movement, in that descent toward our interior abyss.⁴⁰

³⁴ HF 13; cf. *Ruusbroec l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 72.

³⁵ Cf. L. Even, *Mistyka Jana Ruusbroec’a [The Mysticism of John Ruusbroec]*, transl. F. Blusztajn, “*Życie katolickie*” 11 (1985), p. 86.

³⁶ E.g., HF 13: “[Souls] freed from their prison, sail on the Ocean of Deity, and no creature is any longer an obstacle or restraint to them;” cf. *Ruusbroec l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 72–73.

³⁷ Cf. Phil 3:12–13.

³⁸ Ps 42(41):8.

³⁹ HF 4; cf. *Ruusbroec l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 52–53.

⁴⁰ L 292 – *To her sister*; cf. *Ruusbroec l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 52–53.

In the above passage, the nun wrote twice about the “interior abyss” (*abîme intérieur*) and once about the “abyss of love” (*abîme d’amour*). Meanwhile, Ruusbroec writes that “love is an abyss” (*l’amour est un abîme*). Elisabeth merely transcribed some texts of the Blessed, and expanded and interpreted others. In the letter under review, we are given an example of the latter phenomenon. Encouraging her sister to descend (work on herself) into the abyss of love, she again emphasised the active aspect of love and its dynamism.

In another letter to her sister (dated 16 July 1906), Elisabeth referred to one of the qualities of God’s love for man – its immutability. She also quoted Ps 42(41):8 (“abyss calls to abyss”), explaining that the abyss of man’s misery calls the abyss of God’s mercy.⁴¹ Although the saint did not develop this thought further, she echoed the writings of Ruusbroec, who stressed that Christ is always moved by the misery to which man humbly points and laments.⁴²

From her reading of *Rusbrock l’admirable*, Elisabeth of the Trinity also cited the issue of “the sacred darkness” (*la ténèbre sacrée*).⁴³ In the translation used by the Carmelite nun, Ruusbroec refers to this issue twice,⁴⁴ always relating it to the mystery of God. In the first description, he mentions the fathomless abyss and is holy darkness⁴⁵ and in the second, the desire to taste God. According to the Blessed, to be able to receive this grace, one needs “love” that carries us above and beyond all things, “into the sacred darkness,” when we are transfigured by the eternal Word.⁴⁶ In this case, Elisabeth’s thought (“I must immerse myself in ‘the sacred darkness’ by putting all my powers in darkness and emptiness”), although supported by Ruusbroec’s phrase, is closer to John of the Cross’s interpretation of “darkness.”⁴⁷

The Saint of Dijon also used the metaphor of the abyss, without referring directly to the specific pages of *Rusbrock l’admirable*, but taking over from him

⁴¹ Cf. L 298 – *To her sister*; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 2 and p. 53, where Ruusbroec quotes this psalm.

⁴² Cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴³ LR 10.

⁴⁴ See: *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 73, 145.

⁴⁵ *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 73.

⁴⁶ *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 145.

⁴⁷ See: John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, e.g., II.3.1–3; II.16.1. *The Doctor mysticus* understands it as the lack of proper “food” for particular faculties and activities of the soul – see also: A. Ruszała, *Ze świętym Janem od Krzyża ku zjednoczeniu z Bogiem. Afektywność na drodze do zjednoczenia z Bogiem według św. Jana od Krzyża* [*With Saint John of the Cross Towards the Unity with God: Affectivity on the Path to Unity with God According to Saint John of the Cross*], Kraków 1999, p. 192.

the idea and message of this image. This “bottomless abyss ‘within’”⁴⁸ is a space of contact with God; a great depth in which there is invincible perfect peace.⁴⁹ Leaning down, descending into this abyss (also into the depths of one’s own soul), man enters into the contemplation of God and His glory. This contemplation, like fire, descends from heaven, absorbs, devours and lifts up to heaven what it has devoured.⁵⁰ However, entering into this abyss requires humility.

A man simple and humble

The Carmelite saint of Dijon, following *Rusbrock l’admirable*, points to the most important characteristic of humble man, which is finding the “greatest pleasure of life in feeling his own ‘weakness’ ‘before God.’”⁵¹ This weakness does not mean spiritual paralysis or inactivity on the part of man. It is “beautiful simplicity”⁵² of life, without having one’s strength distracted by chasing after various desires or debating with one’s self.⁵³

Simplicity “gives the soul the repose of the abyss,” that is, “rest in God,”⁵⁴ where no one and nothing bothers the soul any more. The soul united to God receives peace and liberty from external desires. There is only one thing left – to be (live) in God.

The source of humility is also the awareness of one’s own sins.⁵⁵ With Blessed John of Ruusbroec, Elisabeth of the Trinity pointed to the antinomy between the love, immeasurability, fidelity and goodness of God and the monstrosity of man. What the soul should then do “is to complain to God, its Friend, of the strength of its self-love which betrays it by not letting it place itself as low as it would wish.”⁵⁶ However, the nun does not equate humility with self-hatred or self-loathing. She does not deny that humility is also about finding one’s own bottom. However, the most important face of humility – to be immersed

⁴⁸ HF 32.

⁴⁹ GV 2; LR 21; HF 36; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 98.

⁵⁰ Cf. HF 40; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 224.

⁵¹ GV 2; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 99.

⁵² LR 5; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 33–37.

⁵³ Cf. GV 3; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 33.

⁵⁴ Cf. LR 7, *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 55.

⁵⁵ Cf. HF 35; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 169–170.

⁵⁶ HF 36; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 97–98.

and plunged into humility – means being “plunged into God, for God is the bottom of the abyss;”⁵⁷ “humility, like charity, is always capable of increasing.”⁵⁸

With few omissions, the mystic, using Ruusbroec’s thoughts, explained the principle of this growth in greater detail:

Since a humble heart is the vessel needed, the vessel capable of containing the grace God wants to pour into it, let us be ‘humble.’ The humble can never rank God high enough nor themselves low enough. But here is the wonder: their weakness turns into wisdom, and the imperfection of their acts, always insufficient in their eyes, will be the greatest delight of their life. Whoever possesses humility has no need of many words to be instructed; God tells him more things than he can learn; such was the case with the Lord’s disciples.⁵⁹

Feeling one’s own physical, intellectual or moral poverty does not deprive a person of the possibility of being close to God. Human sinfulness must drown in the abyss of the mercy of God, who delivered us from our sins.⁶⁰ Humility should give man the confidence and consequently the courage to throw himself into the abyss of mercy, because that is where life is. However, the decision must be made by man and his will.

Free will

In the matter of the mastery of her own will, Elisabeth of Trinity found in *Rusbrock l’admirable* a principle which she had already applied for several years. Ruusbroec defined her inner feeling. Hence she wrote twice to enclose one’s will in the will of God.⁶¹ The soul then becomes “truly great, truly free”⁶² because it will be “led by the Spirit of God” (cf. Rom 8:14). The soul will do what is divine, eternal, in the image of the Unchanging One, already here on earth “in an eternal present.”⁶³ It will then seek to enclose all its powers in God.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ HF 37; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 99.

⁵⁸ Cf. HF 37.

⁵⁹ HF 37; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 100, 102.

⁶⁰ Cf. HF 35; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 1–2, 169; HF 12.

⁶¹ Cf. GV 8; LR 28; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 157.

⁶² GV 8.

⁶³ Cf. LR 28.

⁶⁴ Cf. LR 3; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 157.

God, who desires to dwell in the soul of man (see: Jn 14:23; Rom 8:10–11; Eph 2:22; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Pet 2:5),⁶⁵ carefully cares for “his dwelling.” Enclosing one’s own will in God’s will allows God to take full care of the soul as His temple. He never acts in a destructive way towards it – He does not destroy it, but beautifies it, transforms it “into the divine image,”⁶⁶ allows it to be conformed to the divine model.⁶⁷

Saint silence

A few days after entering the Carmelite convent of Dijon, Elisabeth Catez was filling in a questionnaire.⁶⁸ When asked “what point of the rule do you find more important than others?” she replied: “silence.”⁶⁹ Even at sixteen, she saw silence as a way of being with God.⁷⁰ However, she did not understand it only as an external silence. True silence is the silence of the soul in which God is found. In order not to introduce unnecessary noises into the soul, it is also necessary to silence the sight, the imagination, the mind, the will. The soul then wants to hear only God, it pushes away everything that is not related to God.⁷¹ This kind of spiritual attitude of Elisabeth of the Trinity led her to refer to the notion of “sacred silence” (*le silence sacré*) in the work *Rusbrock l’admirable*.⁷² John van Ruusbroec related it to the mystery of the Trinity. He never saw in it the end of the possibility of spiritual life, because in the realm of silence (and darkness) the Father is present. The silence of the Trinity is expressed in the eternal self-revelation of the Word. In the silence of God man is to hear the Word.⁷³

The mystic from Dijon listened attentively to the silence of the Trinity, she even enclosed herself within it. This enclosure did not isolate her from people,

⁶⁵ This issue is a key aspect of Elizabeth of the Trinity’s spirituality – see: J. Wilk, *The Metaphor of the Interior Cell for Jesus in Writings of Elisabeth Catez – St Elizabeth of the Trinity*, “Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny” 28/1 (2020), pp. 177–194.

⁶⁶ HF 14; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 144–145.

⁶⁷ Cf. LR 1; *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 44–46.

⁶⁸ Probably on 9 August 1901.

⁶⁹ PN 12.

⁷⁰ See: P 30.

⁷¹ Cf. M.-M. Philipon, *Trójca Święta w moim życiu. Doktryna duchowa siostry Elżbiety od Trójcy Przenajświętszej* [*The Holy Trinity in My Life: The Spiritual Doctrine of Sister Elizabeth of the Most Holy Trinity*], Poznań 2002, pp. 49–61.

⁷² *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 29.

⁷³ Cf. L. Dupré, *Głębsze życie* [*Deeper Life*], transl. M. Tarnowska, Kraków 1994, p. 109.

but embraced them, as Sister Elizabeth wrote to her first Prioress, Mother Mary of Jesus.⁷⁴ She enclosed her will “in God’s will” and consequently moved only “in this love and for the sake of this love.”⁷⁵ Neither noise or excitement, nor empty self-esteem or exterior things can ever “draw her out of her ‘sacred silence.’”⁷⁶ Even reason, though it senses the soul’s contact with God (it is not alien to it),⁷⁷ should keep silent and let love move on. In the face of the love of her coming Spouse, Elizabeth of the Trinity invokes silence three times.⁷⁸ Developing into the image of God⁷⁹ and allowing the immanence of God to penetrate her being ever more deeply, she falls silent in order to hear the Word of the Bridegroom.⁸⁰

Eternal now

The moment of reading *Rusbrock l’admirable* is for Elisabeth of Trinity a time that we can define as a “great journey,”⁸¹ “the novitiate for Heaven.”⁸² Originally the nun used these expressions to characterise her last retreat, which took place in the convent infirmary from 15 to 31 August 1906. In a broader sense, these two terms reflect very well her last months of earthly life and her immediate preparation for eternal life. Addison’s disease was systematically destroying her organism, and the suffering nun was aware of the further prospects of her existence, both on earth and in her heavenly homeland (see: Phil 3:20).⁸³ She

⁷⁴ Cf. L 306 – *To Mother Marie of Jesus*.

⁷⁵ Cf. HF 16.

⁷⁶ Cf. LR 4.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., p. 29.

⁷⁸ Cf. L 316. Ruusbroec calls for the silence of the human spirit and all creation – see: *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 107–108.

⁷⁹ “‘Our created essence asks to be rejoined with its principle.’ The Word, ‘the Splendor of the Father, is the eternal archetype after which creatures are designed on the day of their creation.’ This is ‘why God wills that, freed from ourselves, we should stretch out our arms towards our exemplar and possess it,’ ‘rising’ above all things ‘towards our model’” – HF 23; cf. *Rusbrock l’admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 67–68.

⁸⁰ Cf. L. Dupré, *Głębsze życie...*, op. cit., p. 108.

⁸¹ L 306 – *To Mother Marie of Jesus*.

⁸² L 307 – *To Sister Agnès of Jesus-Mary*.

⁸³ See: J. Wilk, *Zagadnienie „ojczyzny w niebie” w Liście św. Pawła do Filipian i w pismach św. Elżbiety od Trójcy Świętej* [*The Issue of “Homeland in Heaven” in St Paul’s Letter to the Philippians and in the Writings of St Elizabeth of the Trinity*], “Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne” 33 (2018), pp. 215–231; J. Wilk, *Zagadnienie życia wiecznego w listach świętej Elżbiety od Trójcy Świętej, datowanych od końca marca do 9 listopada 1906 roku* [*The Issue*

did not separate her life into before and after death but emphasised its continuity. The thoughts contained in Ruusbroec's work helped her to express this. For she made use of his expression "an eternal 'now'" (*un éternel maintenant*),⁸⁴ to show her inner conviction of the infinity of time and at the same time of an encounter (encounters) with God here on earth and there in heaven. Ruusbroec himself considered this question in two aspects. The first as the coming of God to the soul of man, which is independent of time, because with God there is an "eternal now," and man's eternal desire (longing) for Him renews in the soul the eternal joy of His every coming, as if He had never come to the soul before.⁸⁵ The second as the contemplation of God by oneself, defining it as a simple looking into oneself, without before or after, in the eternal now.⁸⁶

The first description of the "eternal now" was practically transcribed by the mystic in her spiritual work *Heaven in Faith*, while traces of the second meaning can be found in *The Last Retreat*, where she explained her understanding of the "now" by quoting Ps 72(71):15: "because of Him, that I may adore Him always."⁸⁷ Understanding the "eternal now" as the self-contemplation of the Trinity, Elizabeth wished "like my Unchanging One [to] live even here below in an eternal present," that is, by constantly contemplating God.⁸⁸

There is another important feature of the realisation of the "eternal now" in the life of this Carmelite woman. Entering into the "eternal now," one does not lose the sense of the "present now," that is, all that is connected with concern for others.⁸⁹ All the correspondence of Elizabeth of the Trinity points to her concern for others. By sending them letters or leaving "spiritual treatises" specially prepared for them, she was with them and helped them. Sensitivity to the eternal makes one sensitive to the temporal, not necessarily the other way round.

of Eternal Life in the Letters of St Elizabeth of the Trinity, Dated from the End of March to 9 November 1906, [in:] *Jest nadzieja, bo jest życie wieczne [There Is Hope Because There Is Eternal Life]*, B. Kulik, W.J. Pałęcki (red.), Lublin 2018, pp. 209–237.

⁸⁴ Cf. HF 17; LR 25; *Ruusbroec l'admirable...*, op. cit., pp. 64 and 67. In LR 25 (two versions), 28, 44 she wrote *un éternel présent*.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Ruusbroec l'admirable...*, op. cit., p. 64.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Ruusbroec l'admirable...*, op. cit., p. 64.

⁸⁷ LR 25, 44.

⁸⁸ LR 28.

⁸⁹ Balthasar von H.U., *Duchowość Elżbiety z Dijon [The Spirituality of Elizabeth of Dijon]*, [in:] J.I. Adamska, H.U. von Balthasar, *Błogosławiona Elżbieta od Trójcy Przenajświętszej. Biografia – duchowość [Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity: Biography – Spirituality]*, transl. J.I. Adamska, Kraków 1987, p. 220: "Dusza wchodząca w nieskończoność Boga, w Nieskończonym nie napotyka na żadne przeszkody, by skutecznie pomagać innym" [*The soul entering into the Infinity of God, does not encounter in the Infinite One any obstacles to effectively help others*].

Conclusions

John van Ruusbroec is probably the first in Western Christianity in the field of mysticism to have clarified the inner relationship of the Trinity and the invitation that man receives to enter into the fathomless abyss of the love (relationship) of the Triune God. His vocabulary, lacking the precision and richness of the Latin language (he gave up this language in favour of his mother tongue), but nourished by the word of God and sound teaching, formed a language of comparisons, images, sounds of nature, in the midst of which he spent almost forty years of his life. With this language he humbly described what he inwardly experienced and sensed. Although at times his human reason had to remain outside the door to the mystery of God, his love of God longed to go further. His soul, loving and striving towards God, went beyond everything rational to dwell in God, thus allowing God to dwell in it (Ruusbroec repeatedly described this experience). The love that comes down from God, not leaving God, fed the intellect of *Doctor Mirabilis* with the abundance of Trinitarian truth, which he described so insightfully.

The discovery of *Rusbrock l'admirable* by Elizabeth of the Trinity was for her like finding a new textbook or dictionary (as we have mentioned, she was already familiar with the classics of Carmelite literature and outstanding ascetic authors) with which she could perfectly specify what she herself experienced. She drew abundantly on Ruusbroec's images (e.g., love that animates and irrigates the soil of the soul, the inner abyss, sacred darkness). As "inhabited by God" (see: e.g., D 140; PN 5, 8; L 124, 161; LR 1), the question of the "inner sanctuary" and the coming and dwelling of God in the human soul was particularly close to her heart. In this context, she highlighted the process of conforming the soul, inhabited by God, to Him (as the divine Exemplar).

The writings of the Saint of Dijon in the context of Ruusbroec's works reveal her simplicity and beauty of life and her total freedom and trust in God. She was externally and internally so free that, with complete sincerity and transparency, she was able to confess and, at the same time, to encourage others to "enclose their will in God's will." This was not a decision based on fear or life incompetence. Deep trust in God is never rooted in fear, but in faith and love nourished by a constant relationship with the Creator. The soul naturally seeks unity with Him who is the source of its being. It seeks inner silence in order to be able to hear the voice of its Creator, which the Carmelite nun expressed in her writings by the term "Spouse," so dear to her. In order to express the constancy and, at the same time, the newness of her encounters with Him, Elizabeth used Ruusbroec's expression "the eternal now." The theme with which Blessed John

sought to portray the intrinsic Trinitarian relationship and the relationship of God to man (His coming), for Elizabeth and her relatives it also became the image of hope. Her death (and the death of every follower of Christ) is “only” another form of the realisation of the “eternal now.”

In *Ruusbroek l'admirable*, Elizabeth of the Trinity recognised herself. She also saw the usefulness of this work for her relatives, hence numerous quotations in her various writings. An essential feature of her “writing” in the last months of her earthly life was the emphasis on the need to conform “to the Image.” Ruusbroec explicitly rejected the spiritual life understood as stagnation or the search for “spiritual repose.” This aspect was strongly emphasised by the nun (after Ruusbroec). Even intense suffering and the inability to do anything did not slow down the dynamics of her interior life. The presence of God in the soul, still new, as if encountered for the first time, enlightens man, even if “sacred darkness” comes with it – it is there that man best perceives every light, every gift of divine grace.

Blessed John van Ruusbroec, through his writings, offered to Elisabeth of the Trinity above all the confirmation that the unity of life with God does not lie somewhere “outside God,” but in Him. Man (by grace received) is constantly invited to enter into a relationship of love with the divine Persons. Although for the human reason it is a bottomless abyss, love has the courage to undertake the effort of descending into it along the path of contemplation.

References

- Élisabeth de la Trinité, *Œuvres Complètes*, C. De Meester (éd.), Paris 2017.
- Elizabeth of the Trinity, *The Complete Works*, C. De Meester (ed.); vol. 1: *General Introduction. Major Spiritual Writings*, transl. A. Kane; vol. 2: *Letters from Carmel*, transl. A. Englund Nash, Washington 2014.
- Elżbieta od Trójcy Świętej, *Pisma wszystkie* [*Complete Works*], C. De Meester (red.), vol. 1: *Listy młodzieńcze* [*Adolescent Letters*]; vol. 2: *Listy z Karmelu* [*Letters from Carmel*]; vol. 3: *Pisma pomniejszych* [*Minor Writings*], transl. J.E. Bielecki, Kraków 2006.
- Arduino F., *Beato Giovanni di Ruusbroeck*, <http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/91898> [access: 10.10.2020].
- Balthasar von H.U., *Duchowość Elżbiety z Dijon* [*The Spirituality of Elizabeth of Dijon*], [in:] J.I. Adamska, H.U. von Balthasar, *Błogosławiona Elżbieta od Trójcy Przenajświętszej. Biografia – duchowość* [*Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity: Biography – spirituality*], transl. J.I. Adamska, Kraków 1987, pp. 185–264.
- De Meester C., *Święta Elżbieta od Trójcy Świętej. Biografia* [*Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity: Biography*], transl. K. Rogalska, Poznań 2015.
- Dupré L., *Głębsze życie* [*Deeper Life*], transl. M. Tarnowska, Kraków 1994.

- Even L., *Mistyka Jana Ruusbroeca* [*The Mysticism of John Ruusbroec*], transl. F. Blusztajn, "Życie katolickie" 11 (1985), pp. 85–90.
- Jan od Krzyża, *Noc ciemna* [*Dark Night of the Soul*], [in:] Jan od Krzyża, *Dzieła* [*Works*], transl. B. Smyrak, Kraków 1995, pp. 403–520.
- Jan od Krzyża, *Pieśń duchowa* [*Spiritual Canticle*], [in:] Jan od Krzyża, *Dzieła* [*Works*], transl. B. Smyrak, Kraków 1995, pp. 521–714.
- Jan van Ruysbroeck, Wikipedia, [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Van_Ruysbroeck_\(religieux\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Van_Ruysbroeck_(religieux)) [access: 12.10.2020].
- Kowalewski L., *Zjednoczenie mistyczne według Jana van Ruysbroeka* [*The Mystical Union According to John van Ruusbroec*], Sandomierz 2004.
- Misiurek J., *Jan Ruusbroeck, Ruusbroec, Ruysbroec*, [in:] *Encyklopedia Katolicka* [*Catholic Encyclopaedia*], vol. 7, J. Duchniewski (red.), Lublin 1997, col. 819–821.
- Oeuvres complètes de Ruysbroeck l'Admirable*, transl. Flamand par les Bénédictins de Saint-Paul de Wisques, vols. 1–6, Bruxelles–Paris 1917–1938.
- Philipon M.-M., *Trójca Święta w moim życiu. Doktryna duchowa siostry Elżbiety od Trójcy Przenajświętszej* [*The Holy Trinity in My Life: The Spiritual Doctrine of Sister Elizabeth of the Most Holy Trinity*], Poznań 2002.
- Philipon M.-M., *The Spiritual Doctrine of Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity*, transl. Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, Westminster MD 1951.
- Pius X, Encyclical *E supremi apostolatus. On the Restoration of All Things in Christ. Ruusbroek l'admirable* (*Ceuvres choisies*), transl. E. Hello, Paris 1902.
- Ruusbroec J., *John Ruusbroec: The Spiritual Espousals, The Sparkling Stones, and Other Works*, transl. J.A. Wiseman, New Jersey 1985.
- Ruusbroec J. van, *Dzieła* [*Works*], transl. M. Lew-Dylewski, vol. 1: *Królestwo miłujących; Zasługiny duchowe* [*The Kingdom of the Divine Lovers; The Spiritual Espousals*], Kraków 2000; vol. 2: *Namiot duchowy* [*The Spiritual Tabernacle*], Kraków 2002; vol. 3: *Dzieła mniejsze* [*Minor Works*], Kraków 2003; vol. 4: *Dwanaście beginek; Inne pisma* [*The Twelve Beguines; Other Writings*], Kraków 2006.
- Ruszała A., *Ze świętym Janem od Krzyża ku zjednoczeniu z Bogiem. Afektywność na drodze do zjednoczenia z Bogiem według św. Jana od Krzyża* [*With Saint John of the Cross towards the Unity with God: Affectivity on the Path to Unity with God According to Saint John of the Cross*], Kraków 1999.
- Sulikowski A., *Ruusbroeck jak katedra* [*Ruusbroeck as a Cathedral*], "Znak" 12/571 (2002), pp. 155–161.
- Testimoni dai processi di beatificazione. Elisabetta della Trinità*, R. Fornara (éd.), série: *Collana Testimoni* 2, Roma 2009.
- Wilk J., *The Metaphor of the Interior Cell for Jesus in Writings of Elizabeth Catez – St Elizabeth of the Trinity*, "Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny" 28/1 (2020), pp. 177–194.
- Wilk J., *Zagadnienie „ojczyzny w niebie” w Liście św. Pawła do Filipian i w pismach św. Elżbiety od Trójcy Świętej* [*The Issue of "Homeland in Heaven" in St Paul's Letter to the Philippians and in the Writings of St Elizabeth of the Trinity*], „Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne” 33 (2018), pp. 215–231.
- Wilk J., *Zagadnienie życia wiecznego w listach świętej Elżbiety od Trójcy Świętej, datowanych od końca marca do 9 listopada 1906 roku* [*The Issue of Eternal Life in the Letters of St Elizabeth of the Trinity, Dated from the End of March to 9 November 1906*], [in:] *Jest nadzieja*,

bo jest życie wieczne [*There Is Hope Because There Is Eternal Life*], B. Kulik, W.J. Pałęcki (red.), Lublin 2018, pp. 209–237.

Wrona L., *Bóg i człowiek. Obraz Boga i człowieka w procesie uświęcenia na podstawie pism św. Teresy od Jezusa* [*God and Man: The image of God and Man in the Process of Sanctification Based on the Writings of St Teresa of Jesus*], Kraków 2017.

JANUSZ WILK (PHD) – Presbyter of the Archdiocese of Katowice; PhD in the field of biblical studies. His book publications from recent years include: „*Zacznijcie, wargi nasze, chwalić Pannę świętą*”. *Komentarz biblijno-duchowy do Godzinek o Niepokalanym Poczęciu Najświętszej Maryi Panny* [“*Come, my lips, and wide proclaim, The Blessed Virgin’s spotless fame.*” *A Biblical and Spiritual Commentary on the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*] (Katowice 2019); *Listy Pasterskie. Pierwszy List do Tymoteusza, Drugi List do Tymoteusza, List do Tytusa. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz* [*Pastoral Letters. First Letter to Timothy, Second Letter to Timothy, Letter to Titus. Introduction, Translation from the Original, Commentary*] (Katowice 2018). Scientific editor of the *Biblia Impulsy*.