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Strategic Perspectives on the Reconstruction and Diachronic Interpretation of Stereotypical Theolinguistic Matrices in Religious-Popular Discourse

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Olesya Cherkhava / Yan Kapranov /
Maksym W. Sitnicki / Bożena Iwanowska

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Insights from English, German, and Ukrainian within Indo-European and Nostratic Frameworks

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Preface

In the rapidly evolving global communication landscape, the interaction between language, religion, and culture remains a vital field of scholarly inquiry. This monograph, Strategic Perspectives on the Reconstruction and Diachronic Interpretation of Stereotypical Theolinguistic Matrices in Religious-Popular Discourse, delves into one of the most intricate and essential aspects of human expression: religious language. As societies become more interconnected and religious discourses increasingly transcend borders, understanding the underlying linguistic structures and their evolution has never been more pertinent.

The focus of this monograph is centered on the complex interplay between religious thought and linguistic systems, particularly within English, German, and Ukrainian contexts. By examining religious-popular discourse through the lens of theolinguistics, we aim to unravel the cognitive and semantic mechanisms that shape how religious ideas are communicated, preserved, and transformed over time.

As one of the most enduring forms of human communication, religious discourse carries layers of historical, cultural, and spiritual significance. This monograph undertakes the ambitious task of reconstructing these layers, drawing from diachronic and synchronic analyses, to map out how religious meanings have been adapted and reinterpreted across generations. By employing advanced cognitive-semantic methodologies and incorporating comparative linguistic studies, this work explores the metaphorical and archetypal frameworks that underlie religious language.

This volume is the result of **extensive interdisciplinary collaboration.** Contributions from scholars across linguistics, cognitive science, theology, cultural studies, and historical linguistics offer a rich diversity of perspectives. The methodology is grounded in traditional comparative linguistics and innovative cognitive approaches, creating a unique framework for understanding the dynamics of religious language.

The theolinguistic matrices are at the heart of the monograph—conceptual frameworks that organize and transmit religious knowledge. These matrices

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serve as vessels through which religious beliefs, doctrines, and ethical systems are encoded into language. In this work, we reconstruct these matrices by meticulously examining religious texts, tracing their origins, transformations, and adaptations across different cultural and linguistic contexts.

The strategic perspective of this research not only illuminates the pathways through which religious concepts migrate between languages and offers a methodological blueprint for future studies in theolinguistics. Through this analysis, we identify the archetypal meanings that remain central to religious discourse while exploring the variations that emerge through cultural exchange and linguistic evolution.

While rooted in historical linguistics, this monograph is acutely aware of contemporary issues. As religious discourse continues to influence modern society—whether through political rhetoric, social movements, or digital communication—it is crucial to understand the historical roots of these discourses and how they adapt to new communicative environments. This work addresses these questions by offering a diachronic interpretation of religious discourse, shedding light on the long-standing connections between religious language and cultural identity.

Particular attention is given to the cognitive-linguistic mechanisms that enable religious language to function as both a preserver of tradition and an agent of change. By investigating these mechanisms, we uncover how religious concepts are metaphorically and semantically expanded to accommodate new contexts without losing their foundational meanings.

The research presented here extends beyond theoretical linguistics and has significant implications for theology, cultural studies, and applied linguistics. For theologians, this monograph offers a deeper understanding of how religious language conveys complex spiritual ideas across different cultures. For linguists, it provides a comprehensive model for analyzing the intersection of language and belief systems. At the same time, for cultural historians, it offers insights into the role of religion in shaping national and cultural identities.

Furthermore, this work serves as a resource for educators and religious leaders seeking to communicate religious ideas in a way that is both faithful to tradition and relevant to contemporary audiences. The exploration of metaphorical extensions and the reconstruction of religious matrices offer practical strategies for adapting religious teachings to modern contexts without losing their spiritual essence.

This monograph is not merely an academic endeavor but a bridge between disciplines and cultures. It underscores the importance of understanding religious discourse as a dynamic and evolving form of communication that reflects the deepest convictions of human societies. The findings presented here provide a foundation for further research into the intersection of language, culture, and

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religion, with the hope this work will inspire new approaches to studying religious language in the future.

As authors, we sincerely thank the institutions and colleagues who have supported this project. We also wish to acknowledge the scholars whose groundbreaking work in theolinguistics, cognitive semantics, and comparative linguistics has paved the way for this volume. We hope this monograph will contribute to the academic field and offer valuable insights to anyone interested in the profound connection between language and the sacred.

Prof. Dr. Olesya Cherkhava
Prof. Dr. Yan Kapranov
Prof. Dr. Maksym Sitnicki
Dr. Bożena Iwanowska

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Chapter 1.
Strategic Perspectives on Reconstruction and Diachronic Interpretation of the Stereotypical Theolinguistic Matrix of Religious-Popular Discourse in Linguistic Comparative and Macrocomparative Studies

1.1 Strategic Perspectives on Reconstruction in Linguocomparative Studies

In historical linguistics, the phenomenon of reconstruction is examined not only in the narrow sense as a methodological approach to establishing proto-language forms but also as a theoretical and methodological doctrine. From this perspective, the key term of the monograph—religious-popular discourse—has been interpreted primarily through cognitive and linguocomparative processes and mechanisms that reflect it in the religious consciousness of English, German, and Ukrainian speakers. This analysis spans from the classical stage of reconstructing archetypes, which contain the primordial, pre-Christian religious meanings, to the modern stage of the stereotyping of these meanings in religious-popular discourse (RPD) texts, which contributed to the development of a comprehensive methodology for their analysis.

The methodology of the research is based on the principles of 1) *classical linguocomparative studies*—historicism, chronology, diachrony, genetic, and areal principles, and 2) their *cognitive vector*, driven by principles of anthropocentrism, cultural determinism, discourse-centrism, and functionalism. This dual-vector orientation of the monograph's methodological base formed the foundation for developing a comprehensive analysis methodology for the object of study, including its two stages: first, the construction of the theolinguistic matrix of RPD, and second, the reconstruction of the already constructed matrix, i. e., matrix reconstruction proper.

The procedure for constructing the theolinguistic matrix consists of the stages of reconstructing 1) the deep archetypal meanings of religious texts of two types: religious-informative and religious-propagandistic (encoded in the hyperconcept of the Old Testament War [OTW] and its metaphorical concepts); 2) the mechanisms of their metaphorical actualization during perception (as discursive formations); 3) the semantic structure of the lexicon expressing these

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meanings, the results of which enable the construction of a matrix model of RPD as a cognitive and linguistic structure. The procedure of matrix reconstruction involves analyzing the mechanisms of reflection in the consciousness of English, German, and Ukrainian speakers of the reconstructed and presented biblical meanings within the theolinguistic matrix.

1.1.1 Evolution of Strategic Perspectives on Reconstruction Methodologies in Linguocomparative Studies

The hypothetical reconstruction of extinct linguistic forms and systems, considering possible development paths, has been interpreted as *the linguistic reconstruction procedure for restoring the original forms of words* (establishing phonetic patterns and grammatical analogies in related languages)[1]. During the structuralist era, this was supplemented by the analysis of systemic relationships between linguistic units, leading to the formulation of semantic principles for developing the lexicon of *genetically related languages* [90].

The main methodologies of linguistic reconstruction analysis involved developing **techniques for restoring the previous stages of a language.** This included historically interpreting the correlation of regular changes, shifts, and alternations recorded in the actual data of genetically related languages to construct archetypes (protoforms/etymons), as well as the **diachronic interpretation** (procedures for restoring chronologically more distant stages of protolanguages and diachronic interpretation of the resulting typological state)[2].

Let us recall that the traditional methodological procedure of reconstruction involves the following steps: 1) selection of cognates (words that share a common origin and have similar sounds in two or more languages); 2) establishment of sound correspondences; 3) reconstruction of proto-sounds; 4) identification of the nature of similar correspondences (if the correspondence is found in all cases, it is considered spontaneous, while if it occurs only in certain positions—considering stress—it is combinative); 5) verification of the plausibility of the reconstructed sounds through the lens of linguistic universals and typological expectations; 6) formulation of a conclusion hypothesis: languages that share a common sound-ancestor can be considered to have descended from a common proto-language with a shared sound-ancestor[3].

1 Greenberg J. Language Typology: A Historical and Analytic Overview. Netherland: Mouton & Co., 1974. 82 p.

2 Климов Г.А. Реконструкция и диахроническая интерпретация в компаративистике // *Вопросы языкознания.* М., 1988. № 3. С. 9–16.

3 Семереньи О. Введение в сравнительное языкознание. М.: Едиториал УРСС, 2002. 400 с.

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The method of prehistoric ethnography is a historical comparison approach that remains popular and recognized today. It is characterized by a retrospective movement from one linguistic state to an earlier one. It continues until a linguistic state is reached, from which all historically attested related linguistic systems can be studied. This process assumes a series of successive transformations that determine the "diachronic derivability" of the system [90, p. 145–157].

The early methodological applications of the aforementioned reconstruction algorithm underwent continuous improvements. For example, the step-by-step technique of formulating sound laws, developed in the works of F. Bopp, R.H. Rask, J. Grimm, and W. von Humboldt, was revised by the Neogrammarians of the mid-19th century (J. Wackernagel, K. Verner, K. Brugmann, B. Delbrück, G. Osthoff, P.F. Fortunatov, and others). These revisions combined the principles of historicism and psychologism, which allowed for corrections in understanding the nature of language, the subject of linguistics, and the comparative-historical research methodology itself.

Their assertion that "all language changes depend solely on linguistic individuals, and that the psychological and physical activities of a person during the acquisition of an inherited language and the reproduction and transformation of sound images perceived by consciousness remain unchanged throughout time"[4], contributed to the refinement of the identification of phonetic laws, specifically the regularity and uniformity of sound changes that occur mechanically, under the "ease of articulation"[5].

The Neogrammarians refined the methodology for identifying sound correspondences between different languages and within a single language. This automatically introduced the concept of the social determination of linguistic laws—language's internal development was termed its trend. The changing sound matter, which occurs without consciousness, was contrasted with the semantics of the word and its form. It is closely connected to the human psyche and is formed based on the association of ideas and perception (K. Brugmann, B. Delbrück).

In 1879, the theory of the Indo-European root, particularly the Neogrammarians' rejection of the existence of laryngeals and sonants in the Proto-Indo-European language, was further developed in Ferdinand de Saussure's work Memoire on the Primitive Vowel System (French: Mémoire sur le système primitif des voyelles dans les langues indo-européennes). This work is considered

4 Цит. за пр.: Звегинцев В.А. История языкознания XIX–XX веков в очерках и извлечениях. М.: Государственное учебно-педагогическое издательство Министерства просвещения РСФСР, 1960. Ч. 2. С, 92–97.

5 Curtius G. Zur Chronologie der indogermanischen Sprachforschung. Salzwasser-Verlag Gmbh, 2011. 84 p.

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a linguistic hypothesis based solely on structural reasoning, as it was only confirmed by J. Kurylowicz in 1972 during the study of the reconstructed Hittite language[6]. The innovative aspect of this method of reconstruction at the time was the involvement of morphological data in reconstructing the proto-language's phonological system.

The idea that "each unit of a proto-language (phoneme, morpheme, word form, word combination, or syntactic construction) can be determined through the correlation of genetically equivalent elements of individual languages descended from the proto-language" [LƏC] inspired A. Meillet to **formalize the methodological procedure of proto-language reconstruction** for its use in electronic computing machines and for automatic data processing. A. Meillet suggested that "each phoneme (or other unit) of the proto-language could be regarded as a condensed entry in a table of correspondences between proto-language phonemes (or other units) and could be replaced by the row number in this table (matrix)"[7]. This marked the first step in constructing linguistic matrices.

A. Meillet noted the imperfections of the early reconstruction methodologies as early as the beginning of the 20th century in his work Comparative Method in the History of Linguistics (French *La méthode comparative en linguistique historique*). He stated, "Indo-European studies' methodological apparatus had not yet addressed establishing historical correspondences and determining the time vector in language history". Instead, the focus was on the necessity of reconstructing the system of correspondences among Indo-European languages as a formal structure of connections between the languages of the Indo-European family. This approach sought to resolve the temporal and spatial localization of the Indo-European proto-language and its sources (archaeological and linguistic data). According to A. Meillet, the existing methodological arsenal at that time could not reliably reconstruct the proto-language.

He proposed that "two languages can be called related if both result from two different evolutions of the same earlier language […]", which could be shown by expanding comparative methods within a single language family that shares a common system of correspondences. This includes incorporating intergroup correspondences into the historical analysis of the development of all languages (comparing the Indo-European "proto-language" with similar reconstructions of proto-languages from other linguistic families, such as the Semitic, Turkic-Tatar, and Uralic-Finnish proto-languages that underpin their respective language

6 Kuryłowicz J. Internal Reconstruction // *Current Trends in Linguistics* / eds T.A. Sebeok, H.M. Hoenigswald & R.E. Longacre. Berlin; N.Y.: Mouton; The Hague, 1973. Vol. 11. 658 p.
7 Meillet A. Les origines indo-européennes des mètres grecs. Paris: Hachette, 1923. 61 p.

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families, whose relatedness is determined by the same methods used in Indo-European comparative grammar)[8].

The V. A. Dybo linguistic school became a center for comprehensive structural reconstruction methodologies. This school developed the theory and methodology of specific language relatedness and the reconstruction of paleo culture based on linguistic data. It was the first to present a holistic concept of Slavic comparative-historical accentology and paradigmatic type[9] accentual systems typology.

The main contributions of the scholar and his followers were presented in materials published for the 60th anniversary of his birth (April 30, 1931) in 1991. The topics focused on issues such as the reconstruction of early forms of *the Indo-European etymon* [184, pp. 26–33], *Indo-European accent* [112; 165], *case systems* [263], *number category* [12], vowel *harmony* (synharmonism) [206], *vocalism* [270], *consonantism* [193], *verbs with noisy roots* [209], *nominal class indicators* [83], and *the structure of the root morpheme.*

Simultaneously with V. A. Dybo, the linguistic school of L. G. Herzenberg emerged, which continued the development of methodological issues regarding the testing of *accentological reconstruction procedures* [93, pp. 29–47] and initiated new methods of analyzing *Indo-European prosody* [92]. The scholar's valuable contributions were presented by his followers in 2014 in the collection of scientific works Colloquia Classica et Indo-Germanica [369]. Around the same time in Germany, a collection of works titled *Das Germanische und die Rekonstruction der Indogermanischen* [377] was published, which included a discussion surrounding the methodological error of equating the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European with the concrete Proto-Indo-European and placing it into a time/space model[10].

As a result of this discussion, B. Schlerath published two works: *Sprachvergleich und Rekonstruktion: Methoden und Möglichkeiten*[11] in 1982 and *Probleme der Rekonstruktion: Schlusswort und Ausblick*[12] in 1989.

Each stage in the development of linguistics refined the primary techniques of reconstruction methods developed by Indo-European studies and presented a

8 Там само. P. 37.

9 Дыбо В.А. Славянская акцентология: Опыт реконструкции системы акцентных парадигм в праславянском // *Институт славяноведения и балканистики АН СССР*. М.: Наука, 1981. С. 53.

10 Schlerath B. von. Ist ein Raum / Zeit–Modell für eine rekonstruierte Sprache möglisch? // *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung.* Berlin: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (GmbH & Co. KG), 1981. S. 175–202.

11 Schlerath B. von Sprachvergleich und Rekonstruktion: Methoden und Möglichkeit // *Incontri Linguistici 8.* Berlin: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (GmbH & Co. KG), 1982. S. 53–69.

12 Schlerath B. von Probleme der Rekonstruktion: Schlusswort und Ausblick // *Incontri Linguistici 10.* Berlin: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (GmbH & Co. KG), 1987. S. 11–18.

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