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WANDERINGS AND MOMENTS OF PAUSE:
BIBLICAL MOTIFS IN *MISTYKA GÓR* [MOUNTAIN MYSTICISM]
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INTRODUCTION:
THE PHENOMENON OF *MISTYKA GÓR* [MOUNTAIN MYSTICISM]

It is not easy to explain the phenomenon of *Mistyka gór* [Mountain Mysticism] by Roman Eugeniusz Rogowski – a book reprinted,¹ translated (Rogowski, *Mystika vrhov*), and described as “legendary”² – a famous work, enthusiastically received by readers, but without appeal to literary scholars. Even the most general classification of this publication is problematic. On one hand, these are loose notes from a journey to Israel. On the other, *Mistyka gór* contains excerpts from various texts (the Bible, other religious works, Polish and world literature, mountain-themed literary works, records of expeditions, diaries, and novels), making it an original anthology of quotes with commentaries. Above all, it is a reflective essay transforming into a meditation. However, readers may also see *Mistyka gór* as a treatise. The theologian author outlines his concept of mountain mysticism followed by an elaborated thesis, with suitable exemplification. Autobiographical elements

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¹ *Mistyka gór* by Roman E. Rogowski was published by Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej in 1983. After this 1st edition, this publishing house also released the 2nd edition in 1985, 3rd edition in 1989 – this edition was used in my paper, 4th edition in 1992, 5th edition in 1995, 6th edition in 1996. Also, vide *Mistyka gór*. Photos K. Gardyna and Z. Pytel, Znak 2004.

² Vide a biographical note appended to a paper by Rogowski: *Biblia i góry*.

are also essential here, as they focus on the author's calling – the fact that he is a priest and a theologian – and his passion – mountains.³ Therefore, Rogowski's book may be considered a hybrid work belonging to the range of religious literature (in a broad sense of this term). However, even this general categorization would require numerous reservations.

Undoubtedly, mountains are a central theme and connect different dimensions of the text, as reflected by their mention in both the title and the dedication; the book is offered to John Paul II, who was “captivated by the mountains, had to abandon them for bigger matters” (*Mistyka gór* 5). With the classification of different attitudes toward nature (and therefore, also to the mountains) in Rogowski's prose, proposed by Jacek Woźniakowski, it is possible to see a theocentric “enthusiastic attitude” (Woźniakowski, *Góry niewzruszone* 14-15). The theologian's deliberations show a conviction that the universe, as God's creation, is beautiful, with mountain ranges exceptional against this background. The author of *Góry niewzruszone* suggests that appreciation of nature was not as central in earlier Greek texts as it became in the Bible; therefore, it (i.e., *παγκαλιά* [*pankalia*]) can be considered a biblical motif (Woźniakowski, *Góry niewzruszone* 69). In *Mistyka gór*, the affirmation of and admiration for the mountains are central and become more pronounced and detailed due to numerous Biblical references. Hills, summits, and ranges mentioned in the Bible are the primary literary motifs of the text (Sławiński 298).⁴ These elements of the biblical landscape could be presumed static motifs (Sławiński 298). However, they repeat in many cultural texts, so they could also be called conventional motifs (nomadic motifs) (Sławiński 298). This is validated by the above-mentioned work of Jacek Woźniakowski and others, such as the anthology by Kazimierz Bukowski, *Biblia a literatura polska* [The Bible and Polish Literature].⁵

³ Roman Eugeniusz Rogowski was born in 1936 in Podolia. After the war he arrived in Zabkowice Śląskie. Next, he studied philosophy in Wrocław, later to join the seminary. He is a Roman Catholic priest and a professor of theology associated with the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław. He is interested in dogmatic theology and spirituality (vide Rogowski, *Teologia jako sztuka życia*; Rogowski, *Światłość i tajemnica. Z problematyki teologii egzystencjalnej*). Among his academic interest, a special place is held by theo-ecology (vide Rogowski, *Teoekologia. Mistyka wszystkich rzeczy*). Rogowski is also a mountain climber and a member of the Mountaineering Club (he has written several works concerning mountains, such as *Być w sercu świata. Człowiek, teologia i góry*; “*I uczynisz mi ołtarz z kamieni*”. *Eucharystia i góry*; *Matka naszych wypraw; Mistyka Tatr; Moja ewangelia, moje góry; Stary człowiek i góry*).

⁴ Vide entries: “góra” (mountain), “góry” (mountains) in Drabarek, Falkowski and Rowińska 133-137.

⁵ Vide also works in bibliography by Filipiak; Jelonek and Starowieyski.

Rogowski's deliberations begin with a verse from the Old Testament: "The Lord is God of the hills" (*Mistyka gór* 7), which leads to questions about the religious significance of mountains and to comments on mountain mysticism, and the hidden reality which can be found along the path of mysticism (*Mistyka gór* 8). Rogowski is interested in the theological dimension of the jagged landscape (Sakowicz, Stachowiak and Szwarc 1367-1369). For him, the mountains are icons, visible signs from invisible God – both sanctuaries and sacraments. The author of *Mistyka gór* also often refers to symbols established in cultural tradition where references to the sacred sphere play an essential role (*Mistyka gór* 72). Władysław Kopaliński notices that mountains symbolize, in cultural tradition (among other things) permanence, firmness, and immovability, but also mystique, loneliness, and wisdom. People have always perceived them as places of worship, meditation, and revelation (Kopaliński 100). This motif appears often in the Old Testament and the Gospels (Kopaliński 100-101): on Mount Sinai, God made a covenant with His people; on Mount Moriah, Abraham was to sacrifice his only son, Isaac; Moses looked at the Promised Land, standing on Mount Nebo; on Mount Horeb, God revealed Himself to Elijah who called the prophets of Baal to be judged by God on Mount Carmel; David reigned on Mount Zion; and in the New Testament – on mountains, Jesus Christ was tempted, gave a sermon, transformed himself, and presented to his disciples following the resurrection (Kopaliński 102-103). Researching Biblicalists and biblical geographers consider the enumeration of these summits and other hills from a quantitative perspective.⁶ The Hebrew word *הַר* [*har*] (mountain) appears in the Old Testament 686 times and the Greek word *ὄρος* [*oros*] (mountains) appears 63 times in the New Testament, including 44 times in the Gospels (Szczepanowicz and Szczepanowicz-Balon 64-65). Jacek Woźniakowski puts it shortly: "The Bible knows many mountains" (Woźniakowski, *Góry niewzruszone* 71).

In his cultural and theological exegesis of the biblical motifs of mountains, Rogowski does not avoid pathos but somehow breaks it up with references to his own climbing experiences and to what is ordinary. It is interesting to compare meanings traditionally associated with mountains, and the sacred dimension of the jagged landscape, with the tone of personal confession in *Mistyka gór*: "(...) I cannot imagine there being any mountains, this God's church, and the place of God's rest. I cannot imagine the Earth without the Alps and the Himalayas, without the Andes and the Tatras, without the Caucasus and

⁶ For example, in *Atlas biblijny* [Atlas of the Bible], the following ranges are mentioned: Mount Ararat, Zagros Mountains, Taurus Mountains, Mount Lebanon (*Atlas biblijny* 17-18).

the Rocky Mountains” (*Mistyka gór* 18). Due to the associative nature and metaphorical style of the discourse, the theologian’s essay becomes lyrical.

Mistyka gór is itself on the border, “in-between,” on a ridge dividing literature.⁷ I wish to draw attention to space, as it marks the second, more literary side of Rogowski’s work. It is difficult to separate the two slopes that form this ridge, especially since the peaks playing critical roles in the theologian’s work are well known from the Bible, including Mount Ararat, Mount Golgotha, Mount Horeb, and Mount Tabor (Langkammer 25, 63, 71, 143). These biblical mountains are both real and symbolic. In *Mistyka gór*, they are engines that create space in the essay; thanks to them, both literal and metaphorical meanings of locations become essential.

On the one hand, reminiscences of his journey to the Holy Land indicate concrete geography and the author’s own experience. On the other, quotes from the Old Testament and the New Testament invoke the symbolic meanings of many peaks.

Mountainous biblical motifs also fulfill a compositional function. Masada, Moriah, Hermon, the Mount of Temptation, Calvary, and other summits known from the Old and the New Testament determine the direction of the discourse (becoming the topics of subsequent chapters). They initiate theological reflection and constitute focal points for quoted excerpts from books, articles, and memoirs.

Using the findings and tools of spatial literary studies (*Spatial literary studies*, more precisely geopoetics), I would like to draw attention to the space created in *Mistyka gór* between biblical references and their geographical, cultural, and symbolic aspects. This article aims to analyze the functions of mountain motifs, pointing out three ways in which Rogowski’s work can be read: as a guide to the Holy Land, an autobiography, and a mountain narrative.

1. A MEDITATIVE GUIDE

Mistyka gór [Mountain Mysticism] is a record of pilgrimage to “the homeland of Christ” (*Mistyka gór* 10), along a route different from that typically chosen by pilgrims. The theologian ascends peaks described in the Bible,

⁷“(…) the contact line between two walls or slopes is called a ridge” (Żuławski 341). Vide: a collection of short stories by Michał Jagiełło *Za granicą granic*. Marek Pacukiewicz invokes a ridge of culture and nature, as a metaphor illustrating the essence of mountaineering in his book *Granicę kultury*.

comparing them to other mountains of his previous wanderings – hiking in the Tatras, Alps and other ranges. On the spaces familiar from verses of the Bible, and experienced during his journey, the writer imposes his life, experiences, and passions. For example, for him, Ararat is “a mountain of hope and deliverance born from failure” (*Mistyka gór* 51), Masada is “a mountain of heroism and freedom” (*Mistyka gór* 65), Moriah is “a mountain of trial and sacrifice” (*Mistyka gór* 66), Sinai – “a mountain of revelation, fascination and faith” (*Mistyka gór* 85), Carmel – “a mountain of consequence and idealism” (*Mistyka gór* 109), and Hermon – “a mountain of beauty and ecstasy” (*Mistyka gór* 121). We may also mention Hattin, Tabor, Golgotha, Nebo, Gerizim, Ebal, Golan, and other peaks named by Rogowski. The journey to the Holy Land described in his work proceeds from mountain to mountain. However, the representation of this pilgrimage in the work evolves from a biblical motif through a geographical concrete to a theological reflection and finally consideration of what is most important in life – contemplation – described as moments of pause in wandering.

Impressions from the pilgrimage, contrary to the tradition of travel literature, are not in chronological order but rather in a topographical order determined by other mountains mentioned on the pages of the Holy Scripture. Biblical summits are literal stops along the journey, and they are stops in the metaphorical sense – opportunities to pause and reflect deeply.

Rogowski emphasizes that pilgrims usually look at Israel through the prism of the Bible, see the Holy Land in it, and call it “the fifth Gospel” (added to the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) (*Mistyka gór* 10). However, in *Mistyka gór*, geographical factors are also important; the theologian points out the hilly nature of the region.⁸ The spatial descriptions of theologian-climbers can be analyzed in the context of the spatial/topographical turn in the humanities (vide Schlögel 56-68; Rybicka, *Zwrot topograficzny* 311-343), nowadays more and more often known as “spatial literary studies” (Tally 3)⁹. Researchers emphasize cultural, biological, historical, and geographical factors that influence perceptions of specific spaces. In the opinion of Elżbieta Rybicka, landscape formations (such as mountains) provide peculiar sensory impressions that may create the territorial identity of these areas (Rybicka, *Geopoetyka* 248). The influence of geographical environments on events represented in the Old and New Testaments,

⁸ The Holy Land’s hills, ranges, and mountains are elaborated in Szczepanowicz and Szczepanowicz-Balon 62-94.

⁹ Vide also *Spatial literary studies. Interdisciplinary approaches to space, geography, and the imagination*. Edited by R.T. Tally Jr. Routledge 2021.

is significant in research on the biblical world. The authors of *Przewodnik po Biblii* [Handbook to The Bible] mention the roles of the mountainous regions of the Holy Land first in connection with the fact that there is more rainfall in such regions than in the deserts, making fruit, and fruit cultivation, more abundant among the mountains. Mountains also provide better conditions for building fortresses (*Przewodnik po Biblii* 20). Rogowski presents geographical characteristics typical of guidebooks concerning the hill recalled in the *Song of Songs*:

The Carmel range spreads from the north-west to the south-east for some 25 km; its width is between 6 and 8 km, and the height is up to 546 m above sea level. At the north-western end, it wedges into the sea, where it forms a promontory. At the south-eastern end, its last peak, Al-Muhraqa, raises above the Jezreel Valley. (*Mistyka gór* 111)

The priest speaks of another biblical peak similarly: “Mount Sinai, 2285 m high, today called Gabal Musa, the Mount of Moses, or even more often Gabal at-Tur, i.e., simply the Sacred Mountain (...)” (*Mistyka gór* 100-101). Rogowski pays attention to the significance of oronyms (names of mountains) which he provides (as shown above) in multiple versions (e.g., “Gilboa Mountains – Gabal Faqqu’a” (*Mistyka gór* 269)).

The writer’s impressions, feelings, and thoughts involved in learning about a new (to him) mountain, are other vital elements. He often describes the atmospheres of the moment (*Mistyka gór* 71). In these, sometimes excessively poetic, “vivid” descriptions, sensual experiences, primarily visual, and auditory ones, play essential roles. In terms of auditory experiences, the author emphasizes the silence found away from the set pilgrims’ routes, such as right at the mountains’ tops. In terms of geopoetics, silence is often associated with unique, holy places (Rybicka, *Geopoetyka* 251), highlighting the sacred dimension. Rogowski exposes the sacred nature of these places even more, by writing not only about the “silence,” but rather also on the “stillness” of the mountains, which he has found in other regions as well, e.g. in the Caucasus Mountains: “the stillness of the mountains is not weakness. (...) It is rather a condensation of spiritual strength” (*Mistyka gór* 195). The motif of silence in the theologian’s poetic work gives preferential treatment to meditation,¹⁰ evolving towards prayer.

In *Mistyka gór*, silence is one of the determinants of the mountain-sanctuary concept. Mircea Eliade writes that even the names of the Babylonian temples

¹⁰ Zofia Zarębianka writes about the concept of “silence poetic” in the literature and the connections between silence and meditation (225-230).

and towers directly appealed to the symbolism of the mountain. They had such names as “The Domestic Mountain,” “The Mountain of the Storms,” and “The Connection between Heaven and Earth” (Eliade 48). Most religious traditions have their sacred mountains: in previous, pagan Poland, there were Łysa Góra and Ślęża; in Judaism – Sinai and Horeb; in Hinduism – Adam’s Mount; in Buddhism – Kailash, Emei, and Shan; in Polish Christianity – Grabarka and Jasna Góra (Kulik 9). For Rogowski, the mountain as a sanctuary is not only a concept but also his own experience. The theologian recalls certain moments in the Dolomites when he felt that he was actually in a sanctuary: “An atmosphere of silence and concentration. Although a stream hums somewhere in the distance, and the wind blows from time to time, bringing the smell of incense-like wormwood, this is also part of the temple atmosphere. Rock and silence” (*Mistyka gór* 73-74).

Impressions connected with temperature, body position, smell, and even touch, are essential in *Mistyka gór*. Rogowski outlines the Holy Land’s sensual topography,¹¹ which he later pairs with a map sketch based on the Bible. In this way, an unconventional, subjective, maybe a bit selective, but unquestionably original guidebook is created. The author of this meditative guide does not copy any known tourist routes. He does not give any practical information. In fact, Rogowski suggests mental paths to his readers – the tracks of spiritual wandering and moments of pause for prayer, consideration, and meditation.¹²

2. AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STORY

By referring to the biblical mountains and peaks that were the destinations of his wanderings, the writer does some autobiographical reckoning and summary.¹³ The priest writes about the masses he celebrated on various mountain tops (e.g., Mount Elbrus and Gran Paradiso, *Mistyka gór* 81). “From the mountain perspective,” he looks down on his life and achievements, “on failures and defeats, on the injustice of the just which hurts like red-hot iron touching a temple” (*Mistyka gór* 56). The theologian’s reflections on his own life are characterized by an attitude of affirmation and consent to his fate, based on faith.

¹¹ The term comes from E. Rybicka’s book *Geopoetyka* 247-266.

¹² Teresa Kostkiewiczowa elaborates the idea of meditation as concentrated rumination and consideration (9-11).

¹³ Another work by R. E. Rogowski – *Stary człowiek i góry* [The Old Man and the Mountains] – is more autobiographical.

The narrative of biblical mountains develops into a fragmentary and extraordinary story of the life of this priest and mountaineer. Mount Hermon, praised in the Psalms, is seen by Rogowski “in a pink shimmer of the sunrise, “enshrined” in mist, like a bride in an ephemeral veil” (*Mistyka gór* 124). This peak brings him back a recollection of moments of enchantment with the beauty of the mountains, the “diamond Tatras in winter” (*Mistyka gór* 127-128). A look at Mount Hermon begins a reflection about the nature of landscape beauty in general. According to Rogowski, it depends “on the time of day and the time of year, the light and perspective.” However, it also has a subjective dimension; it is born in a human being and connected with moods, experiences, and sensitivity (*Mistyka gór* 128). The biblical theme becomes an impulse for a personal confession: “For me, a child with Podolian roots extended indefinitely with a mysterious line of the far Carpathians, the utmost natural beauty is the beauty of mountains. Of all of them from Ślęża and Śnieżnik, to K2 and Fitz Roy” (*Mistyka gór* 132).

The biblical motifs of mountains become the beginning of an autobiographical story. Considering the author’s figure, meditation fragments, and the hybrid character of *Mistyka gór*, traces of spiritual autobiography pervade the book. Rogowski’s prose contains reports from spiritual and mystic experiences (Gołębiowski 1155). Nevertheless, this book above all can be considered an “auto/bio/geo/graphy” (Rybicka, *Geopoetyka* 282). Introducing such a complex term, Elżbieta Rybicka explains that in comparison to the traditional, chronologically ordered autobiographical discourse, in this case, the emphasis on spatial factors is significant. In such a work, “the story of a human is understood through geographical places” and stress is shifted from the time axis and temporal dimensions of auto-narration to the geographical framework of a story about oneself. Rogowski’s auto/bio/geo/graphy focuses on the biblical mountains that mark further sequences – stopping points in his life story. For example, the personal Mount Nebo for this priest and mountaineer is Matterhorn, which Rogowski attempted to climb twice, unsuccessfully (*Mistyka gór* 54-55). Life, in this autobiographical story, is wandering from one mountain to another. The summit achievement is important. However, the writer particularly appreciates stopping moments. Pauses on the way allow him to look not only around the area but also into his own life. Sometimes breaks are only moments for reflection and summary but at other times become points of existential return.

3. MOUNTAIN NARRATIVE

In the introduction, the author explains that the title *Mistyka gór* [Mountain Mysticism] also means “tracing human reflections on mountains and immersing oneself in the feelings and experiences of those who have come to love the mountains” (*Mistyka gór* 8). Digressions concerning mountain climbing and experiences are so complex in *Mistyka gór* that it seems reasonable to interpret them in the context of other mountain-themed written works. Concerning that background, Rogowski’s work is referenced by several researchers in literature and culture (Kolbuszewski 100; Pacukiewicz 29, 139, 142, 143). *Mistyka gór* is mentioned in the recollections of mountaineers and people fascinated by the jagged landscape, as an almost “classic” and “formative” title. Quotations from Rogowski’s book have become “words of wisdom” and can be found in collections of sayings: *Miłość gór* (5, 18, 20, 28, 76, 86, 93), *Tajemnica gór* (76). An important element of the theologian’s work comprises references to other mountain-themed pieces from *O ziemiorództwie Karpatów i innych gór i równin Polski* by Stanisław Staszic, through romantic and later literary images of the mountains after *Na przełęczy* by Stanisław Witkiewicz, documentaries by Wawrzyniec Żuławski, and short stories by Jan Długosz. In addition, Roman E. Rogowski pays attention to climbers’ stories and reports on mountain expeditions. If *Mistyka gór* had an index, it would include mountaineers and climbers such as George Mallory, Wanda Rutkiewicz, Walter Bonatti, Lioney Terray, and Maurice Herzog. The author of *Mistyka gór* also shares his own recollections of climbing trips. Rogowski visited the Tatras, the Alps, the Pyrenees, the mountains of Norway, Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece, the Caucasus, and the Himalayas.

Although the context of mountain-themed written works seems justified in this case, at the same time, *Mistyka gór* stands out against it. Rogowski’s work is not only focused on climbing achievements and the like. It differs from the multitude of accounts of expeditions and chronicles of mountaineering successes. The book is not yet another expedition monograph, and it does not offer a breath-taking record of extreme experiences.

Rogowski keeps his distance from the mountaineering glam and celebrity life (*Mistyka gór* 163-164, 192, 196-197, 245). In contrast to the trends demanding quicker, higher climbing or attempts to reach places never before seen, the theologian directs his attention to minor things, simple actions that he considers particularly valuable. One example is the impulse to wipe his

feet before stepping onto snow-white ice as if he were entering the ‘Holy of Holies’ in the Jerusalem temple” (*Mistyka gór* 101).

The mountaineer’s attention covers the highest mountains and those that professional climbers deem unattractive. For him, “every mountain counts” (*Mistyka gór* 21), including the smaller ones such as Radunia, Wielka Sowa, and Śnieżka (*Mistyka gór* 21).

“Romantic climbing,” with Wawrzyniec Żuławski as its patron, is dear to Rogowski (*Mistyka gór* 78). The author of *Alpine Hiking* wrote (with great sensitivity) about the beauty of mountains and stressed the necessity of helping other people in the mountains. Żuławski died during a rescue operation in the Alps. The distinction between sport climbers (who think of mountains as a kind of sports field/ place of competition) and “romantic climbers” (who contemplate mountain landscapes and are sure that the mountains have additional values) went on in Poland before the Second World War (vide *Czarny szczyt*). Nowadays, it keeps returning after tragic events in the mountains. The author of *Mistyka gór* also writes about the “solidarity of the rope,” about the sense of brotherhood and closeness to hiking partners, about sacrifice for another person (*Mistyka gór* 147-151, 153); climbing, and being in the rocky world have particular values for him. The attitude of the author of *Mistyka gór* could even be additionally called spiritual mountaineering.

In his deliberations, the theologian attempts to clarify the meaning of the “man of the mountains,” a term often used in mountain literature and related academic reflection (Sebesta 21-36). It is already mentioned in the introduction (prepared for the second release), in which the author dedicates his work “to the attention of all, but especially the people of the mountains, starting with those with whom I climbed mountain tops, tied to them with a rope,” (*Mistyka gór* 10). However, the author of *Mistyka gór* values his hiking companions; he also mentions “lonely recollections in the mountains” (*Mistyka gór* 17). The theologian explains: “(...) a man of the mountains is not only one who can hike and who likes climbing, but one who can be absorbed in the mountains in the valleys, after coming down from the mountains, one who can be absorbed in them every day” (*Mistyka gór* 107). The way and wandering have crucial meanings for him, but the moments of pause and “common life” are also important.

Mistyka gór contains a recurring question about why one climbs mountain tops and why men have come to love the mountains, which is the most widespread theme of mountaineering (*Mistyka gór* 89, 105). At the very beginning of his story, Rogowski quotes the well-known answer given by

George L. Mallory, who made three attempts at climbing Mount Everest – “man must climb the mountain, because it is there” (*Mistyka gór* 15). However, this statement, often quoted, is not enough. The author of *Mistyka gór* also quotes answers given by other mountaineers and literary figures, suggesting that it is an adventure, escape, sport, friendship, necessity, curiosity, dialogue with nature, and way to learn about oneself (*Mistyka gór* 89-90). Rogowski confesses himself more connected with slow looking around than with crazy climbing to the top: “For me, the answer is written with a fantastic line of peaks against the morning sky and the speedy gusts of wind at dusk, lifting plumes of snow on high ridges. The essence of this answer is one word: MYSTERY” (*Mistyka gór* 91).

What makes the theologian’s meditations particularly stand out among mountain-themed literature are these moments of pause. They have both literal and metaphorical dimensions: “I am standing bewildered, staring into the Cascade Brook in Ordesa and the powerful stream of Adyr-Su, the Tatra’s Siklawa, and the Red Stream in the Sierra Nevada” (*Mistyka gór* 37); “I am standing on Mount Carmel” (*Mistyka gór* 116); “I am sitting in a chalet on Ślęża” (*Mistyka gór* 151); “I am standing on a hill” (*Mistyka gór* 157); “We are standing on Gabal Quruntal, which is the Mount of Temptation, or in other words, the Mount of Forty Days” (*Mistyka gór* 158). Similar stops occur on numerous tops (e.g., *Mistyka gór* 288). In this way, the life attitude of *homo religiosus* is expressed: “I am standing here, aware that the magnificent mount before me is the image and sign of another mountain – ‘the everlasting mountain’” (*Mistyka gór* 277); “There are other mountains. They are always in front of us (...) unshakeable” (*Mistyka gór* 265). Standing on a mountain top means concentration in silence and solitude. The biblical motif of Mount Carmel is re-presented in many ways in *Mistyka gór*, as is the Carmelite tradition, which sees the mountains as a hermitage – a place for prayer, adoration, and contemplation (Woźniakowski, *Góry pielgrzymów* 332-334). Rogowski’s book exposes the “mysticism of standing” – “To stand in the face of the mountains is the same as standing in the face of God, whose icon and sacrament are the mountains” (*Mistyka gór* 301).

Another keyword in *Mistyka gór* is, therefore, “contemplation” (*Mistyka gór* 132), understood as “coming to a halt, concentration and looking at one thing, forgetting about oneself” (Bolewski 39). Rogowski writes about the moments of contemplation: “I merge with the landscape; I willingly become part of it. I absorb it, and it absorbs me. There, I find God, myself, my brothers, and values which, down there, become blurred like dewdrops on

my windowpanes. I contemplate the beauty which seizes me and makes me forget” (*Mistyka gór* 129).

However, contemplation has not only a religious dimension here. It also means a pause in the daily race, in the pursuit of achievements, a pause for thought and attention, a slowdown of hasty reading, a stop “at” or “in” a place that may be our personal Mount of Olives, Mount Sinai, or Golgotha.

CONCLUSION: THE MYSTICISM OF PAUSE

The author of *Mistyka gór* does not transform the motifs of biblical mountains innovatively. Nevertheless, they are more than mere sources of inspiration and compositional axes. The undoubted value of the book is the confirmation of the continuing significance of such summits as Sinai, Carmel, and Golgotha in modern culture. *Mistyka gór* broadens knowledge of their symbolisms too. Biblical mountains have precise geographical limits, felt sensual, but these peaks in Rogowski’s considerations mean much more. They account as topics of a journey, spaces that determines the sequence of a story of a person’s life, and points of reference for a story about mountain experiences. By combining the literal and metaphorical meanings of the biblical mountains, and diverse stories and perspectives, Rogowski stands on a ridge in literature.

The literary orders suggested above (a meditative guide, an autobiographical story, and a mountain narrative) have in common wandering and moments of detention. The silence, related to breaks during climbing, promotes perception of the beauty of surroundings, and realizes the meanings of an individual life and climbing experiences. An exciting junction of two life concepts is characteristic in Rogowski’s book: on the one hand, wandering, mountaineering, and achieving peaks (*vita activa*), and on the other hand, moments of stopping, slowing down, and calmly just-being in one place (*vita contemplativa*).

However, this book particularly persuades one of the importance of stopping moments during travelling, life, climbing, thinking, and scientific research – on various roads and tops (literally and metaphorically). At the end of his considerations, Rogowski writes about a “mysticism of standing towards the mountains” (*Mistyka gór* 301). It makes the work by this theologian original and gives it a unique, meditative nature. These moments of standing, above all connected with rest, prayer, meditation, and contemplation, are experiences of mystery – of nature, human life, and God. “Stand in the face of the mountain

and see” – it is necessary (*Mistyka gór* 301) because mountains – as Rogowski writes,

allow you to look at everything from a different perspective, at a different angle. Everything is seen in another light. Especially the essential issues: the sense and purpose of life, depth and uniqueness of existence, the essence of values and the non-recurrence of what is really eternal. (*Mistyka gór* 70)

Thumaczyła Daniela Szczygiel-Szumilewicz

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WANDERINGS AND MOMENTS OF PAUSE:
BIBLICAL MOTIFS IN *MISTYKA GÓR* [MOUNTAIN MYSTICISM]
BY ROMAN E. ROGOWSKI

S u m m a r y

Mistyka gór [Mountain Mysticism] is a book which has been reprinted several times, translated into several languages, and described as "legendary", especially for those readers who are lovers of mountains. The author – R.E. Rogowski – is a priest, theologian, scholar and mountaineer. *Mistyka gór* is of a hybrid nature, lying on the border between literature and theology. This article proposes an interpretation of this book from a geopoetics perspective, as a meditative guide to Israel, an autobiography, and a mountain narrative. In each of these cases, the biblical motifs of mountains play a crucial role. Peaks mentioned in the Bible mark the pilgrimage trail, order the story of the author's life, and stand as the mountaineer's goals. They also form pretexts for a broader existential reflection. Rogowski writes about his mountain wanderings and moments of pause, which have both literal and metaphorical meanings. He primarily draws attention to these pauses. They signify not only a chance to rest, but also to pray and contemplate. It makes Rogowski's book both unique and original.

Keywords: R.E. Rogowski; *Mistyka gór*; Mountain Mysticism; literature and theology; autobiography; mountain narrative.

WĘDRÓWKI I CHWILE ZATRZYMANIA –
MOTYWY BIBLIJNE W *MISTYCE GÓR* ROMANA E. ROGOWSKIEGO

Streszczenie

Mistyka gór [Mountain Mysticism] to książka wielokrotnie przedrukowywana, tłumaczona i określana jako „legendarna”, szczególnie dla czytelników, którzy są miłośnikami gór. Autor – R.E. Rogowski jest księdzem, teologiem, uczonym i wspinaczem. *Mistyka gór* ma charakter hybrydyczny, sytuuje się na pograniczu, pomiędzy literaturą i teologią. Artykuł proponuje interpretację tej książki z perspektywy geopoetyki, dowodzi, że jest to medytacyjny przewodnik po Izraelu, autobiografia, a także narracja górskiej. W każdym przypadku biblijne motywy gór odgrywają kluczową rolę. Wspomniane w Biblii szczyty wyznaczają szlak pielgrzymki, porządkują historię życia autora, są również celami wspinacza. Góry znane z Pisma Świętego stanowią tu także pretekst dla szerszej refleksji egzystencjalnej. Rogowski pisze o wędrówkach po górach, ale i o chwilach pauzy, które mają znaczenie zarówno dosłowne, jak i metaforyczne. Przede wszystkim zwraca uwagę na wspomniane przystanki. Przerwy oznaczają nie tylko odpoczynek, ale także modlitwę i kontemplację. To dzięki nim książka Rogowskiego jest wyjątkowa i oryginalna.

Słowa kluczowe: R.E. Rogowski; *Mistyka gór*; literatura i teologia; autobiografia; narracja górська.