A semiotic perspective on the biblical parable

Adina Elena COCLICI (TELESCU)

Vorliegende Studie versteht sich als eine kontrastive Analyse eines biblischen Gleichnisses aus zwei konfessionellen Gesichtspunkten. Wir nehmen uns vor, eine interdisziplinäre Erörterung des biblischen Textes aus linguistischer und semiotischer Perspektive durchzuführen. Das Gleichnis, exzerpiert aus dem Evangelium Matthäus 20: 1-16, stellt unseren Untersuchungskorpus dar, indem die Semiotik des biblischen Passus als Beschreibung des religiösen Diskurses im Bezug zu einer Grammatik und einem Fachwörterbuch betrachtet wird. Die Semiotik des religiösen Textes setzt sowohl eine linguistische, als auch eine pragmatische Perspektive des biblischen Textes voraus und assoziiert mannigfaltige Blickwinkel aus dem Bereich der Sprachwissenschaften. Da der untersuchte Text verschiedene Formen hat, je nach der Konfession (sei es evangelisch oder orthodox), ist die Interpretation auch unterschiedlich, je nach den religiösen Prinzipien. Dieses eskatologische Gleichnis überliefert eine kodifizierte Auskunft, während die semiotische Analyse bestrebt ist, die inhaltliche Form dieses Textes als semantisches Mikro-Universum zu beschreiben.

Stichwörter: die Bible, die Parabel, die Semiotik, die Diskursanalyse

I. Theoretical and methodological aspects of research

This study proposes a front contrast analysis of a text of Scripture confessional, seen from two perspectives: *The Holy Bible* translated by Dumitru Cornilescu in 1921 and the Orthodox version, printed a second time under the guidance of His Beatitude Justinian in 1975, plus the interpretation of both Evangelical and Orthodox text as well. The text chosen is a parable: *The parable of the workers* in the vineyard (or *The parable of the workers hired for the vineyard*, in Orthodox version) book of *Matthew* 20: 1-16. If the approach of the biblical text was until now a linguistic perspective, such as the *Our father prayer*, both at G. Ivanescu and Eugen Coseriu as well as Eugen Munteanu's work, in this paper we propose another way of investigation, a interdisciplinary approach from two perspectives, the linguistic and semiotic approach. So we embrace the view of A. J. Greimas and consider the semiotics of the biblical text as being the description of religious discourse in relation to a specialized grammar and dictionary. Regarding the working method used to analyze the biblical text, we took the suggestion offered by Adriana Stoichitoiu Ichim (*Semiotica discursului juridic*, 2006), which addresses legal normative discourse of semiotics perspective from the „convingerea că demersul semiotic reprezintă cea mai adecvată modalitate de

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

analiză pentru o realitate atît de complexă cum este comunicarea juridică”[1]. The arguments in favor of this view are the interdisciplinary nature of semiotics and its ability to include other types of investigation.

The modern semiotics was established as an interdisciplinary field, with the basic directions of the logical - philosophical research, represented by Ch. S. Peirce and Ch. W. Morris, and linguistic structuralism (semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure). The integrative capacity of semiotics that interfere with anthropology, sociology, social psychology, philosophy, linguistics etc., can be explained by the many openings for the communication space. Therefore, our research belongs to the sphere of semiotics applied, namely semiotics religious texts, within the theoretical and methodological framework and that being the semiotics offered by American researcher Charles W. Morris, consists of semantics, syntax and pragmatics. This analysis has the advantage to investigate all religious speech from a double perspective, as an institutionalized religious practice and as discursive/textual type. We believe that the relationship between semiotics of the religious text and the linguistics of the biblical text is as one of inclusion, the linguistics of the biblical text having religious speech as a subject under the three aspects that define (specialized vocabulary, structures declarative and stylistic features). The semiotic of the religious texts includes the Biblical text linguistics, expanding the analysis by introducing pragmatics field that takes into account the human factors (transmitter/receiver), but other aspects such as: subject, speech acts, purpose, situation of communication. Due to the complexity of the studied text we have adapted the analysis tools, We have associate different approaches to the semiotic approach from the field of language sciences (discourse analysis, text grammar).

Semiotics is a theory of meaning and processes of analysis for description of signification. An important distinction must be made between the sign and significance. Semiotics is still not biblical, it is a science of meaning attached to the study systems. For this reason it is suitable for literature, so written texts, regardless of membership of a certain culture or historical period, respectively geographical area. For semiotic analysis, the Biblical text is a possible field of study, even a part of all literature. It has great interest by the variety of the discursive forms that takes, enriching the description, through particular issues which propose, sometimes allowing refinement of the theory. For us, the readers of the sacred text, semiotics is an appreciated tool. Even if we follow the theorized approach through semiotics, we propose a strictly scientific and comprehensive approach of the supporting text, but rather an intelligent reading. And because it is a science of the meaning, semiotics help this method and allows a close and controlled reading. The comprehension is very important because it is the interpreting and organizing information provided by the text and not the accumulation of knowledge about what text or reader suggests. Reading the text

[1] Adriana Stoichiţoiu Ichim, *Semiotica discursului juridic*, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucureşti, 2006, p. 31.

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

requires careful reading to the smallest details, because the meaning is arising from observation and reading it. Reading requires the formulation of rigorous controlled semiotic theory, occurs as a „rule of the game" favoring the research. Our goal is to make a coherent reading of the principle of autonomy of language and structure.

The autonomy of the language involves the principle of immanence, since semiotics is the study of the content, and any recourse to extralinguistic facts should be excluded. Therefore, we examine the text to take account of the internal meaning. Such a principle implies some attitudes, especially our habit to resist to reconstruct and to represent the message. According to the knowledge of having historical and psychological, we try to reconstruct the scene or to turn our probability for reference, namely to the world that text sends to, and history and geography approaches can confirm. The text is, of course, a function representative who gives originality, singularity, which in fact we seek, and not conformity that we already know. To examine the text according to the semiotics, leads us to consider a universe of particular significance. It speaks, of course, about the world (the referential function), but also offers a private world, a world organized, ready to be discovered and contemplated. Reading means to enter into a „posible world".

Structural principle founds the structural linguistics, after which there is no way than in and through difference. That means that we give priority to relations, not items, we try to build a relational network (as contents) starting from the meaning of the text. Our readings propose is for reflection and construction. The data used are tools that we use to get to text. Those are not hidden in the text, but must be discovered. Is a scientific type method which invites readers to observe, propose hypotheses and operating checks. For semiotics, all text is first of all an object of study, but also an object to build method processes.When we look at the biblical text from a linguistic perspective, diachronic aspect, we notice that the formation and evolution of religious language is closely linked with the history of literary Romanian language and terminology is defining the shape of this type of language. Religion is an area of social and cultural life, which it acquired by the institutionalized church vocabulary, words, phrases and their own rules of organization of the statement, the transformation of language or the language style. Synchronic approach to religious language belongs to the traditional structural linguistics through new lines of research: functional stylistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, text grammar, the theory of speech acts. Therefore, our research has integrated multiple ways of investigation, examining the religious language defining three levels: discursive, syntactic, lexical.

The support[2] text, chosen for this interdisciplinary approach is the biblical parable of the vineyard workers *The parable of the workers in the vineyard* (*Matthew* 20: 1-16). The parable (from lat. *parabola*, fr. *parabole*) is a narrative with lessons from daily life. Biblical parable is an example or the story with a religious or moral content, which explains the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ,

[2] Evangelical version is included as a reference, and references are made to the Orthodox.

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

in a clear way, through examples from everyday life. The support text has different forms, that changes from one religion to another, the message is the same, but the interpretation could be different based on the cult principles. This text tells a story linked to a problem posed by the Apostle Peter in a previous chapter about those who have left everything: „Iată că noi am lăsat tot, şi Te-am urmat; ce răsplată vom avea?" (*Matthew* 19:27) or „Iată noi am lăsat toate şi Ţi-am urmat Ţie. Ce oare va fi nouă?"(orthodox ver.). The narration is introduced through a comparison: „Fiindcă Împărăţia cerurilor se aseamănă cu un gospodar…". Therefore, this definition appears as a parable or an illustration of the kingdom of heaven and ends with the assertion: „Tot aşa, cei din urmă vor fi cei dintîi, şi cei dintîi vor fi cei de pe urmă; pentru că mulţi sînt chemaţi, dar puţini sînt aleşi"(*Matthew* 20:16).

To illustrate the analysis procedures of semiotic we study essentially narrative-parable, that will evaluate the functioning of the significance of this small narrative, and we notify the coherence. We will try to give a formal representation of the text content, seen as a semantic micro-universe. Talking about semantic micro-universe, is to consider the text as a whole significance, aiming to describe the shape and content analysis, that is the structural organization that allows content to express.

II.1. Discursive component analysis

The narration from *Matthew* 20 is presented first as a history of relationships between various characters. How these relationships are built? The discursive component is structured around three axes which directs many human figures, it is not about interpretation, but rather the assessment of rules. The three axes are the topic, spatial evidence and temporal evidence. Therefore discourse has formed around the some players, places and times. The first verse enters in scene a protagonist „landowner" or „home owner" defined by the work carried on: to hire workers to his vineyard. We notice here a report, described by a figurative device, between actors: a vineyard owner and his employees. The first parts of the „decor" reveals protagonist figures. Nothing it says what will be with the relationship between actors than minimum of information: relationship between employer and employee. As for the economic situation of this relationship, the text gives us no information.

It is mentioned a temporal indicator that will have more importance when it will join other indices that will occur in the text: „early in the morning". Relating to the space, it appears first in a statement signifying an output or a shift: the manager „came aut" from a place, to get into an environment where workers are willing to commit, and he sends them in his vineyard. The space will be organized around these two poles: the employment „market" (verse 3) and the work place „vineyard". Therefore, the first three verses of the text establishes a first discursive situation, defined by the protagonists position in a given location and time, in a given situation common to the two versions of *the Holly Bible*.

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

Verse 2 specifies the relationship between actors: a kind of employment contract based on the wage, „a penny" or „a denarius". We notice the Orthodox conservatory version that keeps *denarius* term borrowed from the original text, unlike evangelical version that adapts the notion to Romanian reality. Beyond these remarks, is an agreement between employer and employee, the first offered a contract and the last become employee. The vineyard will be redefined as employment for the workers, but is also a property of the person seeking workers. Nothing specifies the type of work: cutting or grape harvest. Verses 3-5 presents a new discourse situation, comparable to the previous one: „3. A ieşit pe la ceasul al treilea şi a văzut pe alţii stînd în piaţă fără lucru.

4. „Duceţi-vă şi voi în via mea", le-a zis el, „şi vă voi da ce va fi cu dreptul." şi s-au dus.

5. A ieşit iarăşi pe la ceasul al şaselea şi al nouălea, şi a făcut la fel."

What changes in this passage is the time: starts in the morning, and then at third, sixth, ninth hours later. It appears there a rhythm, regular hours between which the activities are taking place. One protagonist remains the same dimension figurative, owner of the house, which returns at regular intervals for new workers to bargain. He comes out, sees and speaks to workers to offer them a contract or promise them wages. The other protagonists are slightly different: they are without work at the third hour, sixth and ninth. There is a mediation between the look and word which is explained in the text: he saw them and said to them. Therefore, there is datas of the offer and the terms of an employment contract, while in the first part only result was shown: *was consented* and *sent them*. The space is given by the play of movement. The owner output and shift of workers, divides the space in two poles: market and vineyard. We note here a significant difference between initial contract and the agreement with the others workers: the first was consented trough an agreement, and the others were sent to work through a single word.

Verses 6-7 reveal a situation similar to the previous discourse:

„6. Când a ieşit pe la ceasul al unsprezecelea, a găsit pe alţii stînd în piaţă şi le-a zis: „De ce staţi aici toată ziua fără lucru?"

7. Ei i-au răspuns: „Pentru că nu ne-a tocmit nimeni." „Duceţi-vă şi voi în via mea", le-a zis el, „şi veţi primi ce va fi cu dreptul." The time appears in the dimension of ancestry, but the „eleventh hour" signals a short distance in relation to the rate at which the discourse has taught us, it is not in ccordance with previous intervals. The relationships between the protagonists are in some way different. There is first an interpellation of the owner and it establishes a short dialogue between partners. The workers answer is like an ascertainment, workers are seen as a collective, none stands out. Notice how in fact a sign of temporality „all day" sign of globally, that is not broken down into intervals. In the protagonists dialogue, the day is considered completed, owners question and vineyard workers answer ends as follows: one day without work ended for those who were standing in the market. The formula by which the owner sends the workers in his vineyard is

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

similar to that in verse 4, but not specifying the conditions of contract and how to be payed, but we can deduct those terms.

The Orthodox version differs by a few changes in grammar and syntax: „6. Ieşind pe la ceasul al unsprezecelea, a găsit pe alţii stînd fără lucru, şi le-a zis: De ce aţi stat aici toată ziua fără lucru?

7. Zis-au lui: Fiindcă nimeni nu ne-a tocmit. Zis-a lor: Duceţi-vă şi voi în via şi ce va fi cu dreptul veţi lua." First, we note that time clause in the sentence through the participle verb and present form of the verb to stay is replaced by the perfect form which anneals the idea of globally time, where the action is completed. At the semantic level, the noun *market* means „without work", that is a place where it is expected, which is repeated in the owners question. The form, present perfect appears in inverted auxiliary form, an old form, which betrays the existence of an archaic biblical language at syntactic level. The lack of quotation marks indicates an absence at the formal level of the text, which does not hinder the understanding.

Verse 8 begins with the index of temporality that marks a new discursive situation, the rest of the text is placed into this time notation, "Seara, stăpânul viei a zis ispravnicului său: „Cheamă pe lucrători şi dă-le plata, începînd de la cei de pe urmă, pînă la cei dintîi."

Together, with the index of the first verse, form two poles: early morning/evening, in which the action takes place. Comes a new protagonist: the foreman with the task of assigning the workers. If until now the relationship between the owner and the workers was directly, in this verse it is mediated for the allocation of the wages. The household is now owner of the vineyard, he gives orders, and this figurative change, allows the distinction between the two qualities: the employer and the foreman. The discussion with the foreman shows how payment will be: from last to first, reorganizing the employees into two categories. In the other version the same changes were noted: preference for the present participle with function of time clause and the substitution of the noun foreman/caretaker, Orthodox version replacing the noun of Slavic etymology with one formed on the Romanian language ground: „Făcîndu-se seară, stăpînul viei a zis către îngrijitorul său: Cheamă pe lucrători şi dă-le plata, începînd de la cei de pe urmă, până la cei dintîi."

Verses 9-10 indicates the progress of the action: „9. Cei din ceasul al unsprezecelea au venit şi au luat fiecare cîte un leu. 10. Cînd au venit cei dintîi, socoteau că vor primi mai mult; dar au primit şi ei tot cîte un leu de fiecare." The entry into the scene is made in the eleventh hour, completed with the first workers. The text provides at the same time what they were thinking and how the pay was made. It is hoped a surplus, but it is not obtained. From this time the protagonists are the poles that provides the communication. In the Orthodox version the coordinating copulative conjunction is a connector linking verses, but is also an adverb that indicates the temporality „9. Venind cei din ceasul al unsprezecelea au luat cîte un dinar. 10. Şi venind cei dintîi, au socotit că vor lua mai mult, dar au luat şi ei tot cîte un dinar." The present perfect „are considered" deemed payment

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

action completed, while the imperfect gives a hint of narrative that flows continuously. So we believe that evangelical version has not only a biblical story, but stage a story that takes place in front of the reader.

In verses 11-12 the relationship between the protagonists is changed: „11. După ce au primit banii, cîrteau împotriva gospodarului 12. Şi ziceau: „Aceştia de pe urmă n-au lucrat decît un ceas, şi la plată i-ai făcut deopotrivă cu noi, care am suferit greul şi zăduful zilei." The verbal exchanges and babbles suggests the discontent of the workers for the working time and wages. The position that is being built here is between the owner and the first workers and is similar to that of „the first born son" from the parable *The prodigal son* (*Luke* 15: 11-32). The first born also critical of how his father acted and reclaims his surplus property, depending on the work done. What we notice in this example is the comparison that makes it possible to semiotic analysis. Not the terms of vocabulary or lexical expressions are important, but positions in a system. Therefore the relationship between workers and owner is compared to the relationship of the „firstborn son" with his father. The other version verses maintains the characteristics mentioned above, plus the absence of negation in the form of verbal and preference for the Latin form heat to the detriment of Slavonic swelter. „11. Şi după ce au luat, cîrteau împotriva stăpînului casei, 12. Zicînd: Aceştia de pe urmă au lucrat un ceas şi i-ai făcut asemenea cu noi, care am dus greutatea zilei şi arşiţa."

Verses 13-15 establish the relationship between actors, workers murmur clearly opposing the answer of the owner: „13. Drept răspuns, el a zis unuia dintre ei: „Prietene, ţie nu-ţi fac nici o nedreptate; nu te-ai tocmit cu mine cu un leu?

14. Ia-ţi ce ţi se cuvine şi pleacă. Eu vreau să plătesc şi acestuia din urmă ca şi ţie.

15. Nu pot să fac ce vreau cu ce-i al meu? Ori este ochiul tău rău, fiindcă eu sînt bun?"

The owner addresses even to one of them very friendly trough an act of communication, a customized report by interpellation „friend". The claim about the injustice of equality of treatment, the owner recall them about the initial contract conditions. The owner adds righteousness and another condition at his *right of will*, which denotes an individual who leads us to a moral evaluation to the idea that the eye has a flaw, as if it have an important role to play. Generous and good, the owner addresses a reproach, but that is not a moral evaluation of the worker. A question arises: Why text remains to: what you see that i am? or your eyesight is bad?

In the Orthodox version we can observe the archaic form of the adversative conjunction *au* resumed however by literary form *and*, the role of connectors in the early verses: *and*, *or*. „13. Iar el, răspunzînd, a zis unuia dintre ei: Prietene, nu-ţi fac nedreptate. Oare, nu te-ai tocmit cu mine cu un dinar? 14. Ia ce este al tău şi pleacă. Voiesc să dau acestuia de pe urmă ca şi ţie. 15. Au nu-mi este îngăduit să fac ce voiesc cu ale mele? Sau ochiul tău este rău, pentru eu sînt bun?" Pronominal forms are more numerous in the evangelical version, and the phrase is clear. Plural

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

possessive *of mine* substitutes a neutral name. The last verse, repeats verse 30 of chapter 19, exemplified by the text of the parable, that gives to *the Holy Bible* a spheroid shape: „16. Tot aşa, cei din urmă vor fi cei dintîi, şi cei dintîi vor fi cei din urmă; pentru că mulţi sînt chemaţi, dar puţini sînt aleşi."

In conclusion, the schematization of the text after the space, time and protagonists have similarities in the two versions, noting the differences in the organization of the phrase, the role of connectors, the presence of archaic forms and keeping the old phrase pattern from the Metropolitan Dosoftei. There is no „recipe" that defines once and for all the semiotic analysis of the texts. Discourse analysis is progressive, because speech requires the retention figures who joins permanent and it gains thematic value.

II.2. Narrative component analysis

The narrative component is the statements that suggest state and transformation into a text, that is a kind of grammar that defines the rules to combine phrases and determine the type of relationship between it. The narrative analysis is based on the organization of narrative form. We chose a scheme that provides the manner in which a text binds situations and actions through speech. We assume that two narrative sequences provides narrative glue: verses 1-7 and 8-15. In fact the discursive analysis allowed the divide: between morning moment and the eleventh hour.

Verses 1-7 could be summarized by the term *handling* and *choosing the right topic*. Narrative form of this sequence reveals *the handling*, the inaugural phase of the narrative establishment. Looking for workers for the vineyard, the contract and the promised wage, focuses us on this phase. The narrative scheme designates the organization of the narrative component. This scheme articulates four stages: handling, competence, performance and reward. Our text focuses on the inaugural and terminal phases of the scheme and gives a particular color to the handling by repeating of this persuasion made by speaker. There are two roles that gives narrative density to the characters of this narration:

The speaker (the owner), which establishes the contracts with other actors and send them into his vineyard, promising them a fee.

The operator - subject (workers) as plural, represented by different characters: employees hired in succession during the day.

Prime narrative time of the text consists on Speaker-Subject relationship.

However, discourse analysis sends us to distinguish two types of subjects, in correspondence with the distinction „the first" and „the last": there is a subject - workers recruited by the rules of socio-professional and a subject - workers recruited in addition and an unexpected manner. In narrative terms, this is manifested by the absence of an explicit agreement and by the promised retribution. Therefore we have here two different discursive forms of handling. The subjects manifests itself in an original manner, not their competence distinguishes them, but how they are handled by the speaker or how they enter into the narrative

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

program. We do not know if during the narrative they had made performance or were competence. Do not say anything about the work of employees, we notice just a ridiculous character, of one of them, from how is lamenting „we have borne the burden of the work and heat of the day". These narrative remarks allow the assumption of organizing discourse.

Verses 8 -15 describe *the reward* given by speaker and is the second sequence, the final stage of the narrative establishment. Pay distribution is presented as a sign highlighting the gratitude for the work done and accomplished. Depending on the conditions defined in handling, the subject receives his reward. The narrative could be completed quickly, as a simple story, through the reward given for the subject performance, but is problematic in the evaluation of reward. In this regard, the statement of work conditions („burden and heat") is interesting. According to the basic rules of the story, the hero manifests features (qualities) which distinguish it. But the reward system works here as a different system of values than one that takes into account the visible features and dramatic of the hero. This system is not denied, but another one is taken into account. There is a true system of values according to the speakers perspective. It is a new Speaker-Subject report which sets out in this passage, the speaker who set the reward (which provides trial and evaluate behaviors) and the subject. In this report between Speaker-Subject the activities are interpretative manifested by the action of retribution ordered by the values of the owner of the vineyard: distribution of each penny for every worker, the same fee for different intervals of time.

The text ends with the owners action of persuasive that will give reasons for its decision. In the middle of reward appears a type of conflict of interpretation, or oppose conflict of values. The point problem is „value of values", which is the value that constitutes the stake of activities and which is the matter of the will or desire.

This narrative, focuses its significance on rewarding and handling, and within these two phases, stands out a report that is presented as a conflict of values and evaluation systems. Polemical dimension takes place essentially in the text, from the cognitive and the reward level.

II.3. Logical - semantic organization

Semiotic analysis implies the existence of a deep level that articulates the basic values of significance. These ongoing projects can be found by organizing narrative text and the discursive component figures. The organization of the basic values provides discourse coherence. The text chosen is a micro-universe of meaning and logical-semantic organization seeking to represent the text.

The opposition named presentation vs Word, is fundamental in two reasons or two criteria:

At discursive level, this opposition summarize and characterize two attitudes and behaviors, relative to the main actors who are the owner and the worker from the first hour.

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

At narrative level, this position characterizes value systems that are in conflict for reward.

Opposition called rights vs good pleasure, is less strong than the previous to the extent that a term does not exclude another. It is not an incompatibility. If the rights are opposed to the mercy, the reason is that those rights are imagined by the workers.

Opposition called socio-professional report vs custom report, works somewhat similar to the first opposition, and the last regular opposition vs failure keeps account the appearance of the values. By breaking, the program well calculated of actions and relations, manifests in the eleventh hour the recruitment of workers, pay last as first, the word of the owner laid down the agreement. This opposition appears therefore as an adjustment of previous oppositions in the following manner: regular (presentment, professional report), failure (word, custom report). Semiotic square gives a formal representation content, or logical device, the basic values of meaning.

We emphasize that this method of work on text, in providing the relationship of these values, provides an assessment of a positive or truth values, in relationship with other levels of meaning which are affected by negativity or false value.

Conclusive verse refers to the whole parable, forcing a perusal. Between the „Kingdom of heaven is like ...” and that „Even so ...” takes place a small story and this story tells what is the kingdom and how it operates the inversion of the first with the last. But this inversion is not a court of a sovereign owner, it is understood, or rather the effect of a word said by an allusive performance.

III. Pathways to theology

A semiotic approach to *the Holy Bible* is not possible without the intervention of theological reflection questions. Report of semiotics of *the Bible* seems to put aside the historicity of the text and intent of the authors, the texts become fables or myths. Semiotics requires definitely questions about history: past history (facts), history narrated, studied history and make history report a problem to specialists. If we attach a meaning to the „history”, it is not because the events took place, but mainly because they became stories, traditions, in terms of significance, language precedes the facts in order to make history. Semiotics does not deny history, it interest is in placing the facts in the speech text. Placed into the speech, the facts are communicable, interpretable, easy to read. Biblical tradition, which is an extensive work of history implemented in speech, allowing to a community, to people, the interpretation of its existence to make a communicable experience, a memory in which the others will find and will read their own existence.

Is a unique significance of the text at the intention of the author, to what does he mean or wants to communicate? Many Bible studies are from this perspective. Current experience shows that, often what we say or write is more than just we had the intention to say. We admit that the significance of the biblical texts that we read exceeds the desired intention of the author.

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

From a theological perspective, the text is a parable of the trial - those called in the morning becomes critics, they murmur, by an attitude of self-justification. Therefore, they wrath the owners anger and reach the position of the last workers. Apostle Matthew fits the parable in the context of the discussion with the disciples, on their position in heaven, and the parable would suggest overturns of the ranks and positions that will happen at the resurrection (the last part of the text is important for morality of the parable – *so the last wil be first, and the first will be last*). The parable suggests equal reward in the Kingdom of Heaven, all receive eternal life, no matter when they came, because it comes by grace. As an impact, this parable would be playable not trough „equal pay for all" but trough „more so, payment for the last". Those five hours of shout would be times from salvation history of the human kind, from Adam to the resurrection. As the numbers used in instance, it shows a difference between the workers contact early in morning and those who come later, respectively in the third hour, sixth, ninth and eleventh. The biblical numerology is a key in revealing the mysteries of the Scripture. It also, requires a little logic in the analysis when the workers are hired „fiind" in the market, at different times as well as in taking account of other aspects of the Bible that relates to redemption. Reaching to discern the spiritual part in the parable is a required part, first, to understand the significance of these numbers in the present context and beyond. These two numerological boundaries it shows that the first three numbers are related to the understanding matter of the Old Testament Law, and the last one to the New Testament teachings.

Therefore, the workers called to *the vineyard*, at dawn, represent *the workers* in the pre-law, like Abraham, in Melchizedek order. They were able to work all day, without being forced by any *weight*.

The numbers 3, 6, 9 shows clocks (time) when *the workers* were found, from the Old Testament law when they have worked hard under the weight of law and therefore under of those ten commandments. It also, those clocks can mean the three categories of *workers* who are under the law. The first of those workers revolts (like the Jews led by Moses) because the payment that they considered it unfair compared with the payment for those arrived at the eleventh hour. Is important to say that only the third hour workers are revolted and not the others from sixth or ninth hours. Number 11 refers to *the last ones workers* of God who come to work by the power and teaching of the Holy Spirit. They work the vineyard in *the last hour*, receiving the same payment as other *workers*, in the Old Testament that could be meaning a reward that leads to salvation. Moreover, they can work in an hour as others have worked in many hours, which it shows their strength in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit. All these numbers are found in other verses of the Gospels, reinforcing the significance of the above. Therefore, the numbers 3, 6, 9 and the hours *are referring* to the time when Jesus was crucified. In that sense one can understand the appearance of weight, pain, in working on the vineyard of God, in the heat of the day, in the light of teachings of

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

the Old Testament given the fact that Jews were under the law, under the authority of the Ten Commandments, and the resurrection of Christ had not yet taken place.

Number 11 is connected with the eleven disciples of Jesus, later become apostles (in the eleventh hour), that shall reach *the first* for salvation, although they came *last* at the work, because of their *strength* to accomplish in one hour what they were asked in order to receive the payment.

As a conclusion, behind the biblical text, is a lesson that is encrypted through metaphor, metonymy, allegories, rhetorical devices used in writing *the Bible* that requires a careful analysis of the reader. Most times an inadvisably reader will not reach on its own, the meaning of the sacred text. Semiotic analysis, undertaken in this paper, provides another unique way of interpreting *the Bible*. Selected versions of *the Bible* are similar, the differences being in the lexical, grammatical and topics level. The Orthodox version is somewhat poetic and close to the first translations of the Scripture. Instead, the Evangelic version is distinctive in phrase, Cornilescu paying more attention in choosing the right words in contexts that involves ambiguity. Verses of the Orthodox version are bonded trough the connectors (like: *and, or, so*), sometimes redundantly (verses 2-4), but this gives to the text coherence and cohesion. The preference for the gerund form (*coming, arriving*) is replaced in Evangelic version by temporal circumstantial sentences necessary for a story.

References

Von Allmen, J, J, et coll., *Vocabulaire biblique*, Paris-Neuchâtel, 1954

Banks, D., *La langue, la linguistique et le texte religieux*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2008

Barr, J., *Sémantique du langage biblique*, Cerf, Paris, 1971

Baubérot, J., *ABC du protestantisme: mots clés, lieux, noms*, Genève : Labor et fides, 1990

Baylon C., Mignot X., *Sémantique du langage*, Éditions Nathan, Paris, 1995

Biblia, în trad. de Dumitru Cornilescu, 1921

Biblia, în versiune ortodoxă, tipărită a doua oară sub îndrumarea Prea Fericitului Părinte Justinian, 1975

Bican, Rémy, J., *Bibliographie biblique*, Centurion, Paris, 1981

Bidu-Vrânceanu, A., Călăraşu, C., Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, L., Mancaş, M., Pană-Dindelegan, G., *Dicţionar de ştiinţe ale limbii*, Ed. Nemira, Bucureşti, 2005

Brandt-Bessire, D., *Aux sources de la spiritualité pentecôtiste*, Labor et Fides, Genève, 1986

Brutsch, Ch., *L'Apocalypse*, Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel, 1957

Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du protestantisme français, vol. 146, iulie-august-sept, Paris, 2000

Champion, F., Hervieu-Léger, D., *De l'émotion en religion. Renouveau et tradition*, Paris, Le Centurion, 1990

Chevalier, J., Gheerbrant, A., *Dicţionar de simboluri* (vol.1-3), Ed. Artemis, Bucureşti, 2010

Corten, A., *L'Expansion des pentecôtismes*, în „Problémes d'Amerique Latin", nr. 24, ian-martie, 1997

Cosmao, V., *Evangélisation et langage*, în „Lumière et Vie", nr. 88, 1968, p. 81-83

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

Craddock, F., C., *Prêcher*, Labor et Fides, Genève, 1991
Dodd, Ch., *La Prédication Apostolique*, Éditions Universitaires, Paris, 1964
Dufour, L., X. et coll., *Vocabulaire de Théologie Biblique*, Cerf, Paris, 1970
Dumais, M., *Le langage de l'évangélisation*, Desclée-Paris-Tournai, 1976
Dumas, F., *Gest şi expresie în liturghia ortodoxă. Studiu semiologic*, Institutul European, Iaşi, 2000
Eliade, M.,Culianu, I. P., *Dicţionar al religiilor*, Polirom, Iaşi, 2007
Ellul, J., R., *L'Apocalypse. Architecture en mouvement*, Labor et Fides, Genève, 2008
*** *Encyclopédie du Protestantisme*, Cerf, Paris, 1995
Fath, S., *La diversité évangélique*, Excelsis, Paris, 2003
Giroud, J., C., *Sémiotique: une pratique et l'analyse des textes bibliques*, 1987
Grelot, P., *Le langage symbolique dans la Bible*, Cerf, Paris, 2001
Groupe d'Entrevernes, *Signes et paraboles. Sémiotique et texte évangélique*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1977
Hauser, H., *La Naissance du protestantisme*, Leroux, Paris, 1940
Hollenweger, W., *Le pentecôtisme, avenir du christianisme dans le Tiers-Monde?* în „Cahiers de l'IRP", Institut Romand de Pastorale, nr. 39, avril, 2001
Ivănescu, G., *Studii de istoria limbii române literare*, Junimea, Iaşi, 1989
„Langages", 6 éme année, juin 1971, nr. 22, *Sémiotique narrative: récits bibliques*, Paris
Maingueneau, D., *Pragmatică pentru discursul literar*, trad. de Raluca-Nicoleta Balaţchi, Institutul European, Iaşi, 2007
Maingueneau, D., *Lingvistică pentru textul literar*, trad. de Ioana-Crina Coroi, Nicoleta Loredana Moroşan, Institutul European, Iaşi, 2008
Maingueneau, D., *La difficile émergence d'une analyse du discours religieux*, în „Langages et société", nr. 130, dec., 2009
van Noppen, J., P., *Metaphor and religion*, Bruxelles, 1983
Oprea, I., *Comunicare culturală şi comunicare lingvistică în spaţiul european*, Institutul European, Iaşi, 2008
Picon, R., *L'art de prêcher*, Editions Olivétan, Lyon, 2008
Prévost, J., P., *Pour lire l'Apocalypse*, Cerf, Paris, 2006
Prigent, P., *L'Apocalypse*, Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1998
Prigent, P., *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, Labor et Fides, Genève, 2000
Ricœur, P. *Eseuri de hermeneutică*, vol. 1-2, Ed. Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1995
Rovenţa-Frumuşani, D., *Analiza discursului*, Tritonic, Bucureşti, 2005
Sinclaire, C., *Actualité des protestantismes évangéliques*, Strasbourg, 2002
Stoichiţoiu Ichim, A., *Semiotica discursului juridic*, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucureşti, 2006
Turckeim, de Geoffrey, *Comprendre le protestantisme*, Eyrolles, Paris, 2006
Verghèse, Paul, Leplay Michel, Marcus, Emile, *Prêtres et pasteurs*, Eglises en dialogue, nr. 6 Mame, 1968
Vergote, A., *Interprétation du langage religieux*, Seuil, Paris, 1971
Viau, M., *Le Dieu du verbe*, Cerf, Paris, 1997
Vincent, A., *Lexique biblique*, Castermann, Paris, 1961

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)

Willaime, J., P., *Sociologie du protestantisme*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2005

Acknowledgment: This paper was supported by the project "Knowledge provocation and development through doctoral research PRO-DOCT-Contract no. POSDRU/88/1.5/S/52946 ", project co-funded from European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources 2007-2013.

BDD-A167 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 18.97.14.81 (2026-11-15 00:35:09 UTC)