

Magdalena Zowczak (2019)

The folk bible of Central-Eastern Europe

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translated by Anielsa Korzeniowska and Stefan Sikora

This work concerns the transmission of the Bible within Catholic and Orthodox tradition in rural communities from central Poland to Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine during the collapse of the USSR. The folk Bible is linked to Christian and Jewish Apocrypha, and biblical topics mingle with local legends and expressions of identity.

This is the first Polish ethnological monograph to present how biblical themes function in folk culture in the context of rituals, customs and iconographic records and is based on ethnographic sources collected in Polish rural communities from central Poland to diasporas in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine in 1989-96. It shows how biblical plots used to undergo interpretation, at the same time, infiltrating common sense knowledge. The novelty here is the joint analysis of themes from both Testaments, presenting the narrations in accordance to the way the local community perceived its identity. The biblical typology, influencing culture through tradition and liturgy, inspired a symbolic order adjusted to cyclic conceptions of time and space, characteristic of rural culture

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