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I. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE *EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS*. A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

OLIMPIU NICOLAE BENEĂ*

ABSTRACT. The purpose of the present study is to offer an overall perspective of the historic of Epistle to the Colossians' interpretation. Ever since the 2nd century, we can remark an intense debate regarding the contents of the epistle, in the context of Gnosticism's development, reaching a peak in the 4th century, where the dispute revolved around the Christological accent. In the philokalic times, the focus of the interpretation will transit from the first two chapters of the Epistle, onto the third, chapter dedicated to understanding the Christian's mystical relationship with God in Christ. Starting with the Reform, especially in the last two centuries, the focus of the interpretation is determined by the new debates in the field of the epistle's isagogy.

Keywords: Colossians, Pauline Letters, Deutero-pauline Letters, Christological Hymn, Colossian "philosophy".

The first interpretations of the *Epistle to the Colossians* can be indirectly deduced from the contents of the Epistle. St. Apostle Paul asks his recipients, the believers from the Church of Colossae, to read this letter and then to make possible its reading in the Church of Laodicea (Col 4, 16). The reading of the Epistle in the Church must have been followed by lively debates regarding its contents, for, through its nature, a new-testamentary epistle¹ was a circumstantial

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¹ More details on the originals of the New Testament in Pr. Lect. Dr. Stelian Tofană, *Introducere în Studiul Noului Testament. Volumul I: Text și Canon. Epoca Noului Testament* (Bibliotheca Theologica 1), (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1997), 101-118.

document, written as a response to an existing problem in a specific Church, having the purpose of clarifying the theological aspects that generated it.² The timeliness of an epistle's message, owing to the work of the Holy Spirit,³ has caused throughout the history of the Church the necessity of its interpretation, due to the fact that the Holy Scriptures are used within the liturgical space.⁴

This is one of the reasons why this study is trying to outline an overall perspective on the focuses of the epistle's text interpretation throughout Church history. We are grateful to the papers of some contemporary biblical scholars: W. Schenk,⁵ Vicent A. Pizzuto and Ian Cristopher Levy,⁶ Harry O. Maier,⁷ mostly to J. B. Maclean⁸ and Larry Kreitzer⁹, on which we based the entire perspective of interpreting the *Epistle to the Colossians*. We have details on interpreting the *Epistle to the Colossians* ever since the beginnings of church's history, from Marcion of Sinope¹⁰

² In this regard, Pr. Prof. Dr. Stelian Tofană claims that St. Paul the Apostle's epistles "are *occasional letters*, written under the pressure of urgent missionary necessities, under special circumstances and for clarifying certain issues regarding faith, morals, church discipline or individual conduct. Without any literary stylistics concern, they are letters of the moment, some of an extreme emergency, but, nevertheless, they are timeless, with each generation of Christians. Their timeless is due, first of all, to the works of the Holy Spirit, Who assisted and coordinated both the kerygmatic and the missionary work of Paul the Apostle (Pr. Prof. Dr. Stelian Tofană, *Studiul Noului Testament. Curs pentru anul II de studiu*, [manuscris, 2006]). Also see the debates regarding the nature of the epistles in New Testament in "The Epistles – Learning to Think Contextually" and "The Epistles – The Hermeneutical Questions" from Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, (London: Scripture Union, 1989), 43-56, 57-72.

³ Pr. Prof. Dr. Stelian Tofană, *Studiul Noului Testament. Curs pentru anul II de studiu* (manuscris).

⁴ See more details on the Holy Scripture's hermeneutics in the Eucharistic community in Savvas Agouridis, "Premise pentru o ermineutică ortodoxă", in Pr. Dr. Constantin Coman, *Erminia Duhului*, (București: Ed. Bizatină, 2002), 303-338.

⁵ W. Schenk, "Der Kolosserbrief in der neueren Forschung (1945-1985)", *ANRW II Principat* 25 (1987): 3327-3354.

⁶ Vicent A. Pizzuto & Ian Cristopher Levy, "Epistle to the Colossians", in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* 5, (Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 502-509.

⁷ Harry O. Maier, *Picturing Paul in Empire: Imperial Image, Text and Persuasion in Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles*, (London – New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

⁸ J. B. MacClean, "Letter to the Colossians", in John H. Hayes, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 206-210.

⁹ L. Kreitzer, "Colossians and Philemon", in R. J. Coggins & J. L. Houlden, *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, (London: SCM Press, 1990), 125-128.

¹⁰ Marcion (fl. 144, d.c. 154) was a heretic of the mid second century who rejected the Old Testament and much of the New Testament, claiming that the Father of Jesus Christ was other than the Old Testament God. See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 498.

and the Valentinian Gnostics.¹¹

Characteristic to his theology, Marcion leaves out Col 1,15-16 from his Canon, assiduously focusing, in his commentaries, on Col 2,16-17.²¹ To argument rejecting the Mosaic Law.¹² The Valentinians have considered Col 1,15-17 and 2,13-15 proofs for the spiritual origins of Christ and His triumph on the rulers and the authorities, the spiritual hosts in the heavenly places.¹³ Irenaeus¹⁴ and Tertullian¹⁵, reinterpreting the texts, rejected the opposition between God and the material world, or between the Christian Gospel and the Mosaic law.¹⁶ Irenaeus's theological accents, both cosmological and ecclesiological, together with the atonement model, have their origins in the *Epistle to the Colossians*.¹⁷ Irenaeus is the first ecclesiastical writer explicitly mentioning the letter, identifying it as Pauline.¹⁸ Thus, we find many texts of Colossians mentioned in the second century and early third century. St. Justin Martyr¹⁹ cites: Col 1,15,²⁰

¹¹ J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206. Valentinus (fl. c. 140) was an Alexandrian heretic of the mid-second century who taught that the material world was created by the transgression of God's Wisdom, or Sophia. His secret catechism, for those who were to be initiated into the Valentinian version of gnosis, provided an exposition of the origin of creation and was also concerned with the process of how our salvation is achieved in light of the myth of Sophia. See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, p. 506. Mature Gnosticism is constituted of a series of models promoted in the 2nd century by great teachers, such as Valentinus and Basilides. It refers to a great number of heavenly intermediates, or eons, emanations of the divinity that connect the good and high God with the material creation. There is usually a contrast between the spirit (which is good) and the matter (which is bad). The Gnosticism is an eclectic system, which combines teachings from many sources, and we must not doubt the fact that some of these teaching were present in the first century. However, the ones that defined it, as the ones mentioned beforehand, did not exist back then. At the base of the *Epistle to the Colossians* are surely some of the teachings that have shown up later on in diverse forms of Gnosticism, but this does not mean that the Gnosticism itself was the problem in the city of Colossae.

¹² J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206.

¹³ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.3.4, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) 1447.001.

¹⁴ Irenaeus (c.135-c.202), was bishop of Lyons who published the most famous and influential refutation of Gnostic thought. See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, 495.

¹⁵ Tertullian of Carthage (c.155/160-225/250) was a brilliant Carthaginian apologist and polemicist who laid the foundations of Christology and Trinitarian orthodoxy in the West, though he himself was later estranged from the orthodox tradition due to its laxity. See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, 504.

¹⁶ Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.19, *CCL* 1, p. 720. See J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206.

¹⁷ Rolf Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1994), 377-378.

¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.14.1.

¹⁹ St. Justin Martyr of Neapolis (c.100/110-165) was a Palestinian philosopher who was converted to Christianity, "the only sure and worthy philosophy". See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, 497.

²⁰ Iustinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 84.2, *PG* 6,673B = *PSB* 2, 192; 85.2, *PG* 6,676C = *PSB* 2, 193; 100.2, *PG* 6,709B = *PSB* 2, 210; 125.3, *PG* 6,768A = *PSB* 2, 240; 138.2, *PG* 6,793A = *PSB* 2, 253.

Col 2,11-12,²¹ Col 3,9,11;²² Irenaeus: Col 1,14,²³ Col 1,15, Col 1,18;²⁴ Tertullian: Col 1,5-6,²⁵ Col 1,15-17,19-22,24,²⁶ Col 1,15,²⁷ Col 1,16,²⁸ Col 1,18,²⁹ Col 1,21,³⁰ Col 2,8,³¹ Col 2,9,³² Col 2,11-13³³, Col 2,16-19,³⁴ Col 2,20,³⁵ Col 2,21-22,³⁶ Col 3,1-2,³⁷ Col 3,3,³⁸ Col 3,5,³⁹ Col 3,8,⁴⁰ Col 3,9-10,⁴¹ Col 3,13,⁴² Col 3,16,⁴³ Col 4,2;⁴⁴ Hippolytus,⁴⁵ disciple of Irenaeus:⁴⁶ Col 1,15,⁴⁷ Col 1,16,⁴⁸ Col 1,18,⁴⁹ Col 2,9,⁵⁰

²¹ Iustinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 43.2, PG 6, 568A = PSB 2, 138.

²² Iustinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 28.4, PG 6, 536B-C = PSB 2, 122.

²³ Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Fragmenta varia* 2, TU 36.3, 123.

²⁴ Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Demonstratio* 22.39-40, TU 36.3, 64.94; *Fragmenta varia* 2, TU 36.3, 60.

²⁵ Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.19, CCL 1, 720.

²⁶ Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.16.2-4; 5.19.3-4.6, CCL 1, 457-458,721-722,724.

²⁷ Tertullianus, *Adversus Hermogenem* 18.5, CCL 1, 412.

²⁸ Tertullianus, *Adversus Valentinianos* 16.1, CCL 2, 766.

²⁹ Tertullianus, *De virginibus velandis* 1.2, CCL 2, 1209.

³⁰ Tertullianus, *De resurrection mortuorum* 23.1, CCL 2, 949.

³¹ Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.19.7-8, CCL 1, 722; *De anima* 3.1, CCL 2, 785; *De praescriptionibus adversus haeresesomnes* 7.7, 33.9, CCL 1, 193,214.

³² Tertullianus, *Adversus Praxean* 14.2, CCL 2, 1176.

³³ Tertullianus, *De resurrection mortuorum* 7.6, 23.1-2, CCL 2, 930,949; *Adversus Marcionem* 5.19.9, CCL 1, 722.

³⁴ Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.19.9-10, CCL 1, 723.

³⁵ Tertullianus, *De resurrection mortuorum* 23.2, 46.15, CCL 2, 949,984.

³⁶ Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.19.10-11, CCL 1, 723.

³⁷ Tertullianus, *De resurrectione mortuorum* 23.4, CCL 2, 949.

³⁸ Tertullianus, *De resurrection mortuorum* 23.5, CCL 2, 950.

³⁹ Tertullianus, *De idololatria* 11.1, CCL 2, 1110; *De pudicitia* 17.18, CCL 2, 1317.

⁴⁰ Tertullianus, *De pudicitia* 17.18, CCL 2, 1317.

⁴¹ Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.19.11, CCL 1, 723; *De pudicitia* 20.7, CCL 2, 1324; *De resurrection mortuorum* 37.9, CCL 2, 970.

⁴² Tertullianus, *De pudicitia* 2.2, CCL 2, 1284.

⁴³ Tertullianus, *Ad uxorem* 2.8.8, CCL 1, 394.

⁴⁴ Tertullianus, *De ieiunio (adversus psychicos)* 10.3, CCL 2, 1267.

⁴⁵ Recent scholarship places Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235) in a Palestinian context, personally familiar with Origen. See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, 495.

⁴⁶ See the remark of patriarch Photios the I of Constantinople (810-893 / 858-877; 877-886) in Photius Constantinopolitanus, *Myriobiblon sive Bibliotheca* 121, PG 103, 401D-404A.

⁴⁷ Hippolytus Romanus, *In Daniele* 4.11.5, SC 14, 284; HIPPOLYTUS Romanus, *In Elcanam et Annam (In Reg. 1,1)*, GCS 1, 121.

⁴⁸ Hippolytus Romanus, *In Daniele* 2.30.6, SC 14, p. 176.

⁴⁹ Hippolytus Romanus, *De benedictionibus Isaaci et Iacobi et Moysis* (georg.et arm.), PO 27, 4.112.181; *De resurrection ad Mammaeam imperatricem* (fragm.1), GCS 1, 253; *Demonstratio de Christo et Antichristo* (Peritouantichristou) 46, GCS 1, 29; *In Daniele* 4.11.5, SC 14, 284.

⁵⁰ Hippolytus Romanus, *De benedictionibus Isaaci et Iacobi et Moysis* (georg.et arm.), PO 27, 38.

Col 2,10,⁵¹ Col 2,14,⁵² Col 2,15,⁵³ Col 2,20,⁵⁴ 3,2,⁵⁵ 3,9,⁵⁶ 4,1.⁵⁷ Although Origen's⁵⁸ and Clement of Alexandria's⁵⁹ works on the *Colossians* cannot be found anymore,⁶⁰ we can observe that the cosmic drama of creation in Origen's writings can be largely inspired by the words in the "Christological hymn": "ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται – the image of the invisible God through whom and for whom all things have been created" (1,15.16), Christ's omnipresence being a characteristic of Origen's works.⁶¹

Athanasius the Great recalls the *Epistle to the Colossians*, when referring to Paul's epistles, placing it between Philippians and 1 Thessalonians.⁶² The 60th Canon from the Council of Laodicea maintains the same order.⁶³

Starting with the middle of the fourth Christian century, we have copied and edited manuscripts, quite often, of Ambrosius⁶⁴, St. John Chrisostom⁶⁵, Severian of Gabala⁶⁶, Pelagius⁶⁷, Theodore of Mopsuestia⁶⁸ and Theodoret of

⁵¹ Hippolytus Romanus, *De benedictionibus Isaaci et Iacobi et Moysis* (georg.et arm.), PO 27, 112.

⁵² Hippolytus Romanus, *In Daniele* 4.31.4, SC 14 p. 326; *In Genesim (frg. lat.)*, CSEL 54, 284.

⁵³ Hippolytus Romanus, *De benedictionibus Isaaci et Iacobi et Moysis* (georg.et arm.) 1, PO 27, 74.

⁵⁴ Hippolytus Romanus, *Demonstratio de Christo et Antichristo* (Peritouantichristou) 30, GCS 1, 20.

⁵⁵ Hippolytus Romanus, *In Canticum canticorum (fragm. 1)* 21.3, CSCO 264, 42.

⁵⁶ Hippolytus Romanus, *In Daniele* 1.17, SC 14, 107; see also M. RICHARD, "Les difficultés d'une édition du commentaire de S. Hippolyte sur Daniel", *Revue d'histoire des textes* 2 (1972):7.

⁵⁷ Hippolytus Romanus, *In Daniele* 3.4.4, SC 14, 200.

⁵⁸ Origen of Alexandria, (c.200-254) was an influential exegete and systematic theologian. His extensive works of exegesis focus on the spiritual meaning of the text. See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, 500.

⁵⁹ Clement of Alexandria (c.150-215) was a highly educated Christian convert from paganism, head of the catechetical school in Alexandria and pioneer of Christian scholarship. See Thomas C. Oden (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Introduction and Biographical Information*, 489.

⁶⁰ J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206.

⁶¹ See Peter Gorday, "Paulus Origenianus: The Economic Interpretation of Paul in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa", in William S. Babcock (ed.), *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, (Dallas: SMU Press, 1990), 151.

⁶² See *Pidalion* (1844), 436.

⁶³ *Pidalion*, 329.

⁶⁴ Ambrosius, *In Epistolam Beati Pauli ad Colossenses*, PL 17, 443D-466C. Ambrosiaster, *In Epistolam ad Colossenses*, CSEL 81/3, 165-207.

⁶⁵ Johannes Chrysostomos, *In Epistolam ad Colossenses*, PG 62, 299-392.

⁶⁶ Severian von Gabala, in K. STAAB (ed.) *Paulus Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche: Aus Katenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* (Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church: Collected and Edited CatenaWritings) (NT Abhandlungen 15), (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), 314-328. More details in James Hastings (ed.), *A Dictionary of the Bible. Vol 5: Supplement – Articles*, (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2004), p. 524.

⁶⁷ A. Souter (ed.), *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul. Texts and Studies* 9.1-3, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922-1931).

⁶⁸ Théodore de Mopsueste, *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii: the Latin version with the Greek fragments*, (H. B. SWETE (ed.), Bd. 1, Cambridge: University Press, 1880), 253-312.

Cyrus⁶⁹. St. John Chrysostom's homilies reflect his concern as Archbishop of Constantinople to make the text of the *Epistle to the Colossians* to have a pastoral relevance for Christians.⁷⁰ In opposition to this, Ambrosius and Theodoret of Cyrus have interpreted each verse in the light of the whole argument of the Epistle.⁷¹ All of the Church Fathers mentioned beforehand have used the exegetical method of the Antiochian School;⁷² there are some exceptions, though, for example when Theodore of Mopsuestia allegorizes "σύνδεσμος" from Col. 1,19 as being "the apostles, the prophets and the teachers".⁷³ Details regarding the interpretation on the *Colossians* in the Alexandrine School have not been preserved, except the fact that Origen had identified in Col. 2,17 the justification for the typological reading of the Old Testament.⁷⁴

Augustine refers to Col. 2,8 when speaking of Platonist philosophy.⁷⁵ In his works, he mostly relates to Col 1,13;⁷⁶ Col 1.21;⁷⁷ Col 3,1;⁷⁸ Col 3,1-3;⁷⁹ Col 3,3⁸⁰ and Col 3,19.⁸¹

Important aspects regarding the isagogy of the epistle have been debated by Church Fathers: whether Arhippus or Epaphras were among the first to preach to the Colossians and if Paul knew them before writing the epistle – all

⁶⁹ Theodoret de Cyr, *Interpretatio epistolae ad Colossenses*, PG 82, 591-628.

⁷⁰ The twelve homilies from Johannes Chrysostomos, *In Epistolam ad Colossenses*, PG 62, 299-392, are also translated into Romanian in the book of Saint Ioan Chrisostom, *Comentariile sau explicarea epistolei către Coloseni, I și II Thesaloniceni*, (trad. de Arhim. Theodosie Athanasiu, București: Atelierele grafice I.V. Socescu, 1905). A history of the homilies can be looked up in John REUMANN, "Colossians 1:24 ('What is Lacking in the Afflictions of Christ'): History of Exegesis and Ecumenical Advance", *Currents in Theology and Mission* 17 (1990): 454-461.

⁷¹ Ambrosius, *In Epistolam Beati Pauli ad Colossenses*, PL 17, 443D-466C. Ambrosius insisted on the idea that all men were created free and their slavery is the result of the committed sin. Theodoret of Cyrus always emphasizes the argument of "His love [the Son's]" from Col 1,13. Further details in J. B. MACLEAN, "Letter to the Colossians", 206.

⁷² More details in Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, (Leicester: IVP, 1996), 77-128.

⁷³ Théodore de Mopsueste, *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii*, 253-312 (289).

⁷⁴ Origen, *De Principiis*, 4.1.13. In Romanian, look up Origen, *Scrieri alese, partea a III-a: Despre principii, Convorbiri cu Heraclide, Exortatie la martiriu*, (PSB 8, studii introductive, trad. și note de Pr. Teodor Bodogae, Pr. Constantin Galeriu, București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1982), 262-275.

⁷⁵ Augustini, *De Civitate Dei* 8.10.1, PL 41, 234.

⁷⁶ Augustini, *De Civitate Dei* 20.7.3, PL 41, 669.

⁷⁷ Augustini, *De Civitate Dei* 22.18, PL 41, 780.

⁷⁸ Augustini, *De Civitate Dei* 20.10, PL 41, 675.

⁷⁹ Augustini, *De Civitate Dei* 17.4.5, PL 41, 529-530.

⁸⁰ Augustini, *De Civitate Dei* 20.15, PL 41, 680.

⁸¹ Augustini, *De Civitate Dei* 14.22, PL 41, 430.

conclusions being built on different versions of the text Col 1,7,⁸² then the location of St. Paul's detention during the writing varied between Ephesus and Rome.⁸³ Whereas the Marcionite Prologue supports the idea that the Church of Colossae had been attacked by false prophets, St. John Chrysostom describes the doctrinaire errors to have been influenced by Greek and Jewish teachings.⁸⁴ Theodore of Mopsuestia identifies the Judaizers among the opponents, while Ambrosius has concluded that Col 2,16-17 and 2,18-19 reflect their beliefs in the celestial elements and Jewish celebrations.⁸⁵

The interpreting of Col 1,15-17 has been extensively debated in the Arian and Christological controversies of the 4th century AD. Theodore of Mopsuestia has dedicated a third of his commentary on the *Epistle to the Colossians* to the text 1,13-20, motivating that in 1,15 "the image" must be seen as the human nature of Christ, so that the text would be referring to redemption, rather than to creation.⁸⁶ In the same way, we can observe the interpretation of St. Athanasius.⁸⁷ Other points of debate were the ones which intended to define "πρωτότοκος" (Col 1,15), either as involving a temporal priority, either pre-eminence; or those which claimed that the baptism wipes away sins or mortality.⁸⁸

The reference of another Pauline Epistle in Col 4,16 has led to a lively debate regarding the veracity of the canonical validation of the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*.⁸⁹ The philocalic literature has intensely cited the third chapter of *Colossians*, especially the texts regarding the mystical union with Christ (3,1-4), but also those which comprise the lists of virtues and vices (3,5-8), respectively the status of "the old self" and "the new self" (3,9-10). In the Middle Ages, we can observe a conservative orientation of the biblical researchers, who tried to

⁸² J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206. Further details can be found in Olimpiu N. Benea, „Paternitatea paulină a Bisericii din Colose – repere și dileme in isagogia modernă”, in *Analele Științifice ale Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă. Tomul XIII (2009-2010)*, (Cluj-Napoca: Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, 2012), 181-200.

⁸³ See Olimpiu N. Benea, "Paternitatea paulină a Bisericii din Colose – repere și dileme in isagogia modernă", 181-200.

⁸⁴ J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206.

⁸⁵ J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206. Ambrosius, *In Epistolam Beati Pauli ad Colossenses*, PL 17, 455C-456C.

⁸⁶ Théodore de Mopsueste, *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii*, 253-312 (260). J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 207.

⁸⁷ Olimpiu N. Benea, "Cruce și Jertfă in Epistola către Coloseni. O perspectivă a teologiei patristice și românești contemporane", in Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Alexandru Moraru și Drd. Paula Bud (coord.), *Crucea – Semn, simbol și putere*, (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea, 2008), 105-122; Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Peter Gorday (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on the Scripture. New Testament IX. Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, (Downer's Grove: IVP, 2000), xxvi-xxviii.9-21.

⁸⁸ J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 207.

⁸⁹ J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 207.

renew some of the Church Fathers' commentaries in order to compile new commentaries with long paraphrasing of the Epistle's texts or with quotations from the Fathers.⁹⁰ The most important commentaries of the period 650-1000 AD are those of Theophylact⁹¹ and of Euthymius Zigabenus.⁹² Short commentaries on the *Epistle to the Colossians* were also written by Oecumenius, Sedulius Scotus, Rabanus Maurus, Photius the Great,⁹³ Atto de Vericelli, Lafranc and Haervaeus de Bourg-Dieu.⁹⁴

Scholasticism brings back a new interest for clarifying Paul's theology in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and Peter the Lombard. The two, both in writing and in lectures, have noted the divergent interpretations of the patristic times. A special interest in the debates was Col 2,8, Peter the Lombard questioning the role of philosophy in the theological speculation of the scholastic debates. In his response, concerning the reduction of the Trinity to a philosophical issue, in the case of Abelard, Peter the Lombard warns, just as Paul the Apostle, against the *deceiving philosophy*.⁹⁵ Thomas Aquinas did not condemn philosophy as a whole, but considered it should be used to apply and subordinate it to Christ.⁹⁶

In the 16th century, the commentaries were focused on textual criticism: preoccupying of the Antiochian exegesis to the detriment of the Alexandrine exegesis and a critical approach of the Fathers. Erasmus's footnotes from the critical editions of the New Testament (1516 and 1535),⁹⁷ begin by underlining the location the city of Colossae, criticizing the general opinion about them – such as they were descendants of Rhodes, home of the famous Colossus. Citing classical authors in the commentary of Col 1,1, examining different versions of the text (1,7), the call to philology (1,1; 2,18), a special attention to idiomatic phrases (1,13) illustrate the scholar research influence on biblical interpreting.

⁹⁰ See J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 206; L. KREITZER, "Colossians and Philemon", in R. J. Coggins & J. L. Houlden, *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, (London: SCM Press, 1990), 125-128.

⁹¹ Theophylact von Ancyra, *Epistolae divi Pauli ad Colossenses expositio*, PG 124, 1205-1278.

⁹² J. B. MacClean, "Letter to the Colossians", 207.

⁹³ Photius of Constantinople - *Fragmenta in epistulam ad Colossenses* (in catenis).

⁹⁴ J. B. MacClean, "Letter to the Colossians", 207.

⁹⁵ Look up L. Kreitzer, "Colossians and Philemon", 125-128.

⁹⁶ J. B. MacClean, "Letter to the Colossians", 207. Also see St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Colossians*, (trad. Fabian Larcher, Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2006); D' Aquino S. Tommaso, *Commento al Corpus Paulinum (expositio et lectura super epistolas Pauli apostoli). Lettera agli Efesini. Lettera ai Filippesi. Lettera ai Colossesi: expositio et lectura super epistolas Pauli apostoli*, (traduzione e introduzione a cura di Battista Mondin, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 2007), 551-716 (635-637).

⁹⁷ Further details in Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraphrases on the Epistles to the Corinthian, the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, (Collected works of Erasmus 43), (Robert D. Sider (ed.), traducere și anotare Mechtil de O'Mara și Edward A. Philips, Jr., [= *In epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Colossenses paraphrasis*, Louvain, 1520] Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 393-431.

Among the protestant reformers, we mention the commentaries of Philip Melanchthon and Jean Calvin; Martin Luther's interpretation of the *Epistle to the Colossians* was purely occasional, in his sermons. In his *Scholia* on the *Colossians* (1527), Melanchthon used the classical rhetorical categories to analyse the structure and the meaning of the epistle. The commentary on Col 2,8 reflected the debate between Luther and Erasmus regarding the freedom of will.⁹⁸ For J. Calvin, his commentary on the *Colossians* (1548) has illustrated the torments of the separation between the Protestants and Rome, so that the Epistle has been read by the Reformers as a dispute against medieval Catholicism.⁹⁹ Based on Col 1,12, Calvin has accused the Catholics of ignorance towards the Christology from 1,12-14,¹⁰⁰ ignorance, which created a false support for using indulgences, misinterpreting the idea of insufficiency of Christ's sufferings (Col 1,24).¹⁰¹

Following M. Luther, J. Calvin motivates that "the worship of angels" (Col 2,18) is referring to the Catholic Church, especially, worshiping the saints¹⁰² and Col 2,23 is a critical description of monastic life in very clear terms.¹⁰³ Except the Eucharist, J. Calvin has blamed all religious ceremonies as being the "shadows" cancelled by Christ (Col 2,14.17).¹⁰⁴ In the 17th and 18th centuries, we must consider a benchmark commentary, J. Davenant's, bishop of Salisbury,¹⁰⁵ whose two volumes of research on the *Colossians* have been reprinted in many editions of the XIX century's research.¹⁰⁶ Davenant's lecture – initially structured on six university sessions¹⁰⁷ – comprises numerous debates against the catholic teachings of apostolic succession (1,1) and the righteousness through acts (1,12).¹⁰⁸

⁹⁸ J. B. MacClean, "Letter to the Colossians", 208.

⁹⁹ J. B. MacClean, "Letter to the Colossians", 208.

¹⁰⁰ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (translated and edited from the original Latin and collated with the French version, by rev. John Pringle, Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society, 1851), 145-149.

¹⁰¹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* 163-167.

¹⁰² John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 194-196.

¹⁰³ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, 201-204.

¹⁰⁴ J. B. MacClean, "Letter to the Colossians", 208.

¹⁰⁵ J. Davenant, *Expositio epistolae D. Pauli ad Colossens*, (Genf, 1627).

¹⁰⁶ J. Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians with Dissertatio de Morte Christi*, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1831); J. Davenant, *Colossians*, (Geneva Series of Commentary), (Geneva: Banner of Truth, 2005). See J. B. Maclean, "Letter to the Colossians", 208.

¹⁰⁷ More details in Patrick Collinson, Richard Rex, Graham Stanton, *Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Professors of Divinity at Cambridge: 1502-1649*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 80-83.

¹⁰⁸ It is noteworthy that to prove that Reform was just a reform of the Church, not a transformation into something new, but into what it had always been, the author opposes cardinal Bellarmine and the Trent Council's documents, arguing in favour to the *Epistle to the Colossians*, with arguments from Tertullian, Jerome, Augustine and the scholastics Tomas Aquinas and Peter the Lombard. See J. Davenant, *Colossians*, 158, 167, 456.

As for the approach, he continued the rhetorical analysis started by Melanchthon.¹⁰⁹ We should also remember in this context the „Preadosloviia cãtrã colaseani” of the New Testament from Bãlgrad (modern Alba Iulia, Transylvania), 1648,¹¹⁰ which offers a general view of the Epistle, emphasizing aspects regarding the recipients, the purpose of its writing, its whole and its sections.

In the last 160 years, the *Epistle to the Colossians* has been and still remains a major source for the theological debates and disputes of the commentators who have focused on the writings of St. Paul the Apostle.¹¹¹ Not only the doctrinal message of the epistle, centred on the Christological hymn from Col 1,15-20, but also the questions regarding the literary connection with the other epistles from the *Pauline corpus*, particularly with the *Epistle to Philemon* and the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, have been the subject of many biblical conferences on this domain.¹¹²

Modern investigations of the 19th and 20th centuries have focused on aspects regarding the authenticity of the epistle, on identifying Paul’s opponents from Colossae, on how in which the author has used traditional material in the making of the *Epistle*, respectively the manner in which he put together the theology of the Epistle. Another largely debated issue is the one of authorship of the epistle, whether or not is a genuine work of St. Paul. Contemporary biblical scholars are trying to prove that the authorship of the epistle is an unimportant aspect. Most of them agree that it has some sort of connection with the writings of Paul; or, at least, the author was one of Paul’s devoted followers and that he has imprinted this epistle with a Pauline perspective.¹¹³ These commentators tend to give special attention to the manner in which the epistle adapts Paul’s position to the situation in which the author is.

In the past few years, the interest of the studies was the manner in which Paul the Apostle was perceived in the *Epistle to the Colossians*. Both the making

¹⁰⁹ L. Kreitzer, “Colossians and Philemon”, 125-128.

¹¹⁰ *Noul Testament – 1648*, (printed for the first time in Romanian in 1648 by St. Simion Ștefan, Metropolitan of Transylvania, republished 340 years later, at the initiative and the care of His Holiness Emilian, Bishop of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia: Editura Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române a Alba Iuliei, 1988), 499.

¹¹¹ Details regarding this period of time can be found at L. Kreitzer, “Colossians and Philemon”, 125-128.

¹¹² See P. Müller, (ed.), *Kolossier-Studien*, (BThS 103), (Göttingen: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2009).

¹¹³ A recent study came up with an even more challenging diving that of the two groups: the seven genuine epistles remain characterized by the eagerness, teaching and the specific pastoral caring of Paul the Apostle, the other six, however, suggest three authors: *Deutero-Paul*, who continues and extends the writing of the Apostle with the epistles to the Colossians and to the Ephesians; *Trito-Paul*, author of 2 Thessalonians; and *Tetrato-Paul* author of the Pastoral Epistles. All the three authors are seen in their intention as having the same purpose as *Proto-Paul*: to keep the churches on the right path. Further details can be found in Derek Edwin Noel King, “The four Pauls and their letters: a study in personality-critical analysis”, *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 15,9 (2012): 863-871. Derek Edwin Noel KING makes use in his study of the analysis of critical individuality, applying the theory of the psychological type to the author of the investigated epistle. However, the analysing the author is insufficient for the immense volume of research in the works in this domain.

of the epistle and the content of its motivation, emphasizes, as Udo Schnelle believes, that the author of the epistle was familiarized with Paul's theology, therefore belonging to the Pauline school. Paul is attributed a defining role in the process of writing (cf. Col. 1,25), because the person of Paul the Apostle belongs to the Pauline preached gospel. The epistle is making out of this emphasis a focus both on the person of the Apostle and on his theology. The contents of the Epistle do not involve a development of Paul's theology, but rather the traditions of Jewish-Greek Christianity being taken by the author of the *Colossians* and harmonized with the ones of the Apostle. This "paulinization" of the traditional material is intended to secularize the Gospel's identity. It opens innovative perspectives meaning, for example that in *Ephesians*, the cosmical Christology becomes a "concept of an ecclesiological Christology".¹¹⁴

Udo Schnelle believes that the issue of authorship unpauline of the *Epistle to the Colossians*, in the biblical scholar's interpretations, with few exceptions, is in an agreement that becomes more and more certain.¹¹⁵ *The hypothesis of a possible secretary* who would have written the epistle, supported by Eduard Schweizer, is still in the attention of researchers. If for the specialists there are no doubts that the real purpose of the epistle is the answer to the false teachings in the Church, the manner in which heresy is understood is still at unrest. Recent debates on this topic have outlined three significant interpretative patterns: the philosophy in Colossae appears because of the syncretistic orientation of Hellenistic Judaism,¹¹⁶ of the neo-Pythagorean influence¹¹⁷ or of the powerful influences of syncretistic Gnosticism.¹¹⁸

As Childs emphasizes, the epistle to the Colossians is strongly anchored in the Gospel preached by Paul the Apostle.¹¹⁹ He does not allege flatly Paul as the author of the epistle, but rather that, no matter if he wrote or not its text, there is a strong connection between the apostle and the epistle. We cannot assume Timothy or Epaphras wrote it, either, he continues, but the epistle identifies itself with Paul, both in the opening and ending, but also in its contents (1,23-2,5). He emphasizes the manner in which the Colossians are told to stick to the tradition that Paul represents, which was also transmitted to them. Childs claims that the conservative theologians have rushed to assign Paul as the author of the epistle.

¹¹⁴ Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology*, (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1998), 299.

¹¹⁵ Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology*, 298-299.

¹¹⁶ E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Hermeneia), (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 41-61; Joachim Gnilka, *Der Kolosserbrief* (HTKNT), (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 15.

¹¹⁷ E. Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 13.

¹¹⁸ P. Pokorný, *Colossians: A Commentary*, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991), 8.

¹¹⁹ Brevard S. Childs, *Colossians, The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 344.

More important, he believes, is the fact that “in the Colossians, a false teaching has generated a certain reaction from the apostle, reaction which used this heresy as a way to display a new testimony regarding the truth of the Gospel”.¹²⁰

The false teaching in Colossae was studied with high interest. The problem is how to enclose everything Paul says in regard to these heresies in coherent model. In the past decades, the general opinion was that the *Epistle to the Colossians* is trying to fight some sort of Gnosticism – the more so as Gnosticism was a syncretic current, based on more sources. Actually, W. G. Kümmel make the following statement “nowadays, there are not many differences regarding the basic idea. Paul, being right, with no questioning, sees in the heretical teaching Gnosticism, a secret wisdom of a syncretic nature (2,8.18), which combines the ascetic and ritualistic worship towards nature with Jewish ritualism and the Jews’ speculations regarding angels”.¹²¹ The author is rash in affirmations, thou. In our times, Gnosticism is mainly known as a religion developed in the 2nd century; moreover, syncretism was not imperative to wait for its apparition.¹²²

Childs is right when he states, “although we reached some sort of agreement regarding that it’s a form of Hebrew syncretism, there is still the debate on what is the exact nature of this adversity”.¹²³ Moreover, the Judaic elements in the teaching of which Paul is against, cannot be disregarded. As if trying to define a new standpoint, N. T. Wright claims that “all the elements of Paul’s [the Apostle] dispute in *Colossians* are best understood as a warning against Judaism”.¹²⁴

The problem here is that we are unaware of any teacher who would have combined all the elements that Paul disputes here. If one commentator picks up a few elements and claims that these are the basic teaching, the others disagree with his selection. The believers of Colossae had been Christians for a short while at the time. They hadn’t given up paganism long before (or Judaism, especially if some of them were people with fear of the Lord) and it was extremely easy for them to go back to the practices and thinking they were used to before becoming Christians and they were still struck by them, and the attraction to those could not be denied.

¹²⁰ Brevard S. Childs, *Colossians*, 346.

¹²¹ W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 239.

¹²² Brevard S. Childs, *Colossians*, p. 346.

¹²³ Brevard S. Childs, *Colossians*, p. 343.

¹²⁴ N. T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon* (TNTC), (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 27. Wright believes Paul’s writing is addressed to former pagans in order to warn them against the dangers of Judaism. Although his reasoning explains the Hebrew elements, approaching the Greek ones and even the magical ones it seems to go a bit too far. Focusing also on the Jewish side, Thomas J. SAPPINGTON, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae* (JSNT Sup 53), (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) claims that Paul is against an ascetic-mystical piety, which has strong roots in the Judaic ideology regarding the apocalypse.

Regarding the description and the identification of Colossian “philosophy”, according to Lightfoot’s commentary in 1875,¹²⁵ this has become a central topic of studies on the Colossians.¹²⁶ In contemporary studies, there is not a convergence of opinions on this topic, the academic background offering a diversity of approaches that is richer and richer with every new published commentary. In 1973, J. J. Gunther enumerates over forty-four suggestions made by different biblical scholars about the possible heresy of Colossae.¹²⁷ These suggestions can be classified in five

¹²⁵ J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistles to Colossians and Philemon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, [1875] 1995).

¹²⁶ Consult the collection of studies from the book of F. O. Francis and W. A. Meeks (eds.), *Conflict at Colossae* (SBL Sources for Biblical Study 4), (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); H. Hübner, “Der Diskussion um die deuteropaulinischen (Briefeseit 1970): Der Kolosserbrief I”, *Theologische Rundschau* 68 (2003): 263-285(263).

¹²⁷ J. J. Gunther makes an analysis of the biblical commentaries from the 19th and 20th centuries, until the year his commentary was published: J. J. Gunther, *St. Paul’s Opponents and their Background: A Study of Apocalyptic and Jewish Sectarian Teachings*, (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 35), (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 3-4: „[1] Essentially pagans (E. F. Scott); [2] Chaldeans or Magians (Hug); [3] Platonic & Stoic philosophers (Heumann); [4] Pythagorean philosophers influenced by Judaism (Grotius); [5] Speculative, ascetic Judaeo-pagan syncretists (Leclercq); [6] Pharisees (Eichhorn, Schoettgen); [7] Syncretistic, universalist Jews (Schneckenburger); [8] Non-gnostic, esoteric, apocalyptic, cultic-ritual, militant Jews (N. Kehl); [9] Heterodox Jews (Nock); [10] Cabbalists (Herder, Kleuker); [11] Alexandrians (Juncker, Schenkel, Koster, von Soden, Erbes); [12] Ascetic, non-legalistic, syncretistic Jews influenced by Alexandrian speculation (Huby); [13] Semi-Gnostic, syncretistic, esoteric Jews (J. B. Lightfoot, Moffatt, Kümmel, Meinertz); [14] Hellenistic Judaic incipient Gnostics (T. H. Olbricht); [15] Incipient Gnostics (von Dobschütz, J. Knox, Bruce); [16] Heretical pre-gnostic Jews (H. Hegermann); [17] Gnostics (Renan, Pfeleiderer); [18] Gnostic Ebionites (Baur, Lipsius, Hoekstra, Sabatier, Davidson, Blom, Schmiedel); [19] Ascetic Judaizers (Foerster); [20] Judaizing syncretists (Lyonnet); [21] Judaizing syncretistic gnostics (Goppelt); [22] Judaizing gnostics (S. L. Johnson, Marxsen); [23] Jewish Christian Gnostics (H.-M. Schenke); [24] Jewish gnostics (Bornkamm, Goppelt, E. W. Sanders); [25] Cerinthian Gnostics (Neander, Mayerhoff, Nitzsch, R. Scott); [26] Non-Jewish oriental gnostics (Reitzenstein, Bultmann); [27] Non-Jewish oriental-Hellenistic mystery cult, pre-gnostic syncretists (Dibelius-Greeven); [28] Pagan and Jewish mystery cult syncretists (Radford, G. H. P. Thompson, G. Johnston, Beare); [29] Syncretistic, pre-gnostic, dualistic, mystery cult ascetics (E. Lohse); [30] Syncretistic ascetics influenced by philosophy, myths and the mysteries (J. Lähnemann); [31] Pharisaic-legalistic, theosophic ascetics (Bleek, Reuss, Oltramare); [32] Jewish Christian mystic ascetics (Francis); [33] Jewish Christians appealing to Moses and natural philosophy (Hofmann); [34] A link between heterodox Jews and the Gnostics of Chenoboskion (E. Yamauchi); [35] Syncretistic Jewish Christians influenced by non-Gnostic Hellenistic philosophy and asceticism (Percy); [36] Judaeo-Hellenistic ascetic gnostics influenced by the mysteries (N. Hugedé); [37] Hellenistic Jewish Christians influenced by non-speculative, esoteric asceticism (Hort); [38] Esoteric Jewish Christians (Danielou); [39] Syncretistic Jewish-Greek gnostics worshipping Christ (Meyer, Goguel, Humphries, Guthrie, J. Stewart); [40] Jewish Christians combining Greek philosophical speculations and oriental mystical theosophy (McNeile-Williams); [41] Syncretists combining pre-Gnostic paganism and Jewish Christianity (Cerfaux); [42] Disciples of Apollos (J. Michaelis); [43] Judaizing disciples of Apollos and John (Heinrichs); [44] Pure Gnostics and pure Judaizers (Hilgenfeld).” J. J. Gunther composes the list, based on the works cited on page 3, footnote 6: Heinrich A. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875), 238-241; H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (J.C.B. Mohr-Paul Siebeck: Freiburg, 1872), 250; J. B. LIGHTFOOT, *St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, p. 74; James Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New*

distinct categories: Jewish Gnosticism, Gnostic Judaism, mystical Judaism, Hellenistic syncretism and Hellenistic philosophy.¹²⁸ With few exceptions,¹²⁹ contemporary commentators have abandoned the first two categories and focused on the connection between the philosophy in Colossae and Gnosticism. Recent findings tend to identify Colossian philosophy as a form of Judaism,¹³⁰ especially mystical Judaism.¹³¹ Other biblical scholars understand Colossian “philosophy” as a form of Judaic syncretism,¹³² of the visionary Christian ascetics¹³³, or a Christian syncretism made up of Phrygian public religion, which included magic, aspects of the Hebrew cult and initiations in the Phrygian mystical religions.¹³⁴ Some researchers identify the Colossian “philosophy” as belonging to the popular philosophical schools, such as Pythagoreanism¹³⁵, middle Platonism¹³⁶ or Cynism¹³⁷. Some specialists argue that the Scythians’ mentioning from Col 3,11 is an important textual clue for clarifying the identity of Colossian philosophy.¹³⁸

Testament (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1918), 153; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction: The Pauline Epistles* (London: Tyndale, 1961), 162-166. For further details with regard of these perspectives, see Elke Toenges, “«See, I am making all things new»: New Creation in the Book of Revelation”, in Henning Graf Reventlow, Yair Hoffman (eds.), *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (JSOT Supplement Series 319), (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 138-152; Henning Graf Reventlow: „Creation as a Topic in Biblical Theology”, in Henning Graf Reventlow, Yair Hoffman (eds.), *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, 153-171.

- ¹²⁸ See R. E. DeMaris, *The Colossian Controversy: Wisdom in Dispute at Colossae* (JSNTSS 96), (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1994), 38-39.
- ¹²⁹ H. W. Attridge, “On Becoming an Angel: Rival Baptismal Theologies at Colossae”, in Lukas Bornmann (ed.), *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 81-98; D. M. Hay, *Colossians* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries), (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 112; R. McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon* (ICC, London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 57.
- ¹³⁰ N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 27.
- ¹³¹ C. A. Evans, “The Colossian Mystics”, in *Biblica* 63 (1982): 188-205(204); P. T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, xxxviii; T. J. Sappington, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae*, 19-22; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 154; Ian K. Smith, *Heavenly Perspective: A Study of the Apostle Paul’s Response to a Jewish Mystical Movement at Colossae* (Library of New Testament Studies 326), (London and New York; T. & T. Clark, 2006), 39-73.
- ¹³² A. T. LINCOLN, *Colossians* (New Interpreter’s Bible 11), (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 567.
- ¹³³ J. L. Sumney, “Those Who ‘Pass Judgment’: The Identity of the Opponents in Colossians”, *Biblica* 74 (1993): 366-388(386).
- ¹³⁴ C. E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism* (WUNT 2.77) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 228-244.
- ¹³⁵ E. Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 132-133.
- ¹³⁶ R. E. DeMaris, *The Colossian Controversy*, 17.
- ¹³⁷ T. W. Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit: Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique* (JSNT Supplementary Series 118), (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 205-206.
- ¹³⁸ T. W. Martin, “The Scythian Perspective in Col. 3:11”, *Novum Testamentum* 37 (1995): 249-261; T. W. Martin, “Scythian Perspective or Elusive Chiasm: A Reply to Douglas A. Campbell”, *Novum Testamentum* 41 (1999): 256-264.

However, the growing variety of approaches regarding the heresy has generated a form of scepticism among some researchers, who have wondered whether there really had been teachers with false teaching in Colossae,¹³⁹ or if identifying the Colossian philosophy would ever be possible.¹⁴⁰

Although one can notice this diversity regarding the teaching to which Paul the Apostle responds through the *Epistle to the Colossians*, biblical scholars believe, that in the identification of this teaching, the approach should be, first of all from the text of the epistle, and only after that from the parallel, secondary literature.¹⁴¹ The benchmark is Col 2,16-23. Interpreting the text from Col 2,16-17 is crucial for understanding the practices with regard to “eating”, “drinking”, “a religious festival”, “New Moon celebration” and “Sabbath”.¹⁴² Col. 2,18 is defining for identifying whether the opponents of the Pauline Gospel were members of the church,¹⁴³ or not,¹⁴⁴ or if they were both members of the church and outsiders.¹⁴⁵ Despite the obstacles of translation, many commentators see this verse as being the key of identifying the Colossian “philosophy”.¹⁴⁶ For example, C. E. Arnold¹⁴⁷ translates the Greek text as follows: “Let no one condemn you by insisting on ascetic practices and invoking angels because he *entered the things he had seen*”. His translation uses the genitive ἀγγέλων more as objective, rather than subjective,¹⁴⁸ or as a source of the genitive.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, C. E. Arnold understands the participle θέλων (“insisting on”) as a Semitic construction,¹⁵⁰ the perfect verb ἑώρακεν as a past (“entered”) and the present participle ἐμβατεύων as past perfect (“had seen”). In T. W. Martin’s¹⁵¹ opinion Arnold’s translation is

¹³⁹ M. D. Hooker, “Were There False Teachers in Colossae?”, in B. Lindars and S. Smalley, *Christ and the Spirit in the New Testament*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 315-331.

¹⁴⁰ J. M. G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon*, 53-54; H. Hübner, “Der Diskussion um die deutero paulinischen (Briefe seit 1970): Der Kolosserbrief I”, 263-285 (263).

¹⁴¹ Troy W. Martin and Todd D. Still, “Colossians”, in David E. Aune (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to The New Testament* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 490-491.

¹⁴² T. W. Martin, “But Let Everyone Discern the Body of Christ (Colossians 2:17)”, *JBL* 114 (1995): 249-255; T. W. Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit: Colossians as Response to a Cynic Critique*, 116-134.

¹⁴³ J. M. G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon*, 39.

¹⁴⁴ M. Barth, H. Blanke, *Colossians*, 21-22; T. W. Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit*, 140-141.

¹⁴⁵ A. Standhartinger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Intention des Kolosserbriefs* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 94), (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 193.

¹⁴⁶ M. Dibelius, “The Isis Initiation in Apuleius and Related Initiatory Rites”, in F. O. Francis and W. A. MEEKS (eds.), *Conflict at Colossae*, 61-121 (83-84); F. O. Francis, “Humility and Angelic Worship in Colossae”, in F. O. Francis and W. A. MEEKS (eds.), *Conflict at Colossae*, 163-195 (163).

¹⁴⁷ C. E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism*, 123.

¹⁴⁸ F. O. Francis, “Humility and Angelic Worship in Colossae”, 163-195 (164).

¹⁴⁹ T. W. Martin, “Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Gal 4.10 and Col. 2.16”, *NTS* 42 (1996): 105-119 (118).

¹⁵⁰ T. W. Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit*, 137.

¹⁵¹ T. W. Martin, *By Philosophy and Empty Deceit*, 14.

determined by parallel text from secondary literature and not by rules of translating, these sort of imprecise interpretations leading to a variety of approaches regarding the Colossian “philosophy”.

Besides these two aspects, concerning the paternity of the epistle and the Colossian “philosophy”, the commentaries on the *Epistle to the Colossians* also focus on theological aspects. For example, the cosmology of the epistle is linked to the meaning of στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου from Col 2,8 and 2,20. Although some authors bring lexical evidence that this phrase refers to “land, water, air and fire”,¹⁵² others support the meaning as being elementary teaching,¹⁵³ primordial principles¹⁵⁴ or “law and flesh” as fundamental earthly aspects.¹⁵⁵ Even if C. E. Arnold interprets the word στοιχεῖα as spirits,¹⁵⁶ E. Schweizer believes that we have no evidence that this limited word τοῦ κόσμου to have a personal dimension.¹⁵⁷

Another recent debate is focused on the traditional and liturgical material that the author took and used to support his reasoning. The commentators have relied especially on the text from 1,15-20, which is generally considered as an adapted hymn by the author, having the purpose to pass on critical teachings concerning Christ and His attributes.¹⁵⁸ As for the Christological hymn in Col 1,15-20, there is a disagreement regarding the words that belonged to the original hymn. Although, most biblical scholars find the expressions τῆς ἐκκλησίας (1,18) and διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ (1,20) as editorial additions to the original hymn, there is no consensus concerning to why some editorial alterations are included in the present form of the hymn.¹⁵⁹

A special interest is expressed in the commentaries, apart from cosmology, in the Christology, eschatology and soteriology of the epistle.¹⁶⁰ Colossians is also a source for reflecting upon Christian ethics.¹⁶¹ The Christological hymn in Col 1,15-

¹⁵² E. Schweizer, “Slaves of the Elements and Worshippers of Angels: Gal. 4,3.9 and Col. 2,8.18.20”, *JBL* 107 (1988): 455-468 (456-464); J. L. Martyn, *Galatians* (AB 33A), (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 393-406.

¹⁵³ T. J. Sappington, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae*, 169.

¹⁵⁴ R. E. DeMaris, *The Colossian Controversy*, 73-87.

¹⁵⁵ A. J. Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World: An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul’s Teaching*, (Kampen: Kok, 1964), 68-72.

¹⁵⁶ C. E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism*, 176-183.

¹⁵⁷ E. Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 128.

¹⁵⁸ See the arguments against of J. C. O’Neill, “The Source of the Christology in Colossians”, *NTS* 26 (1979-1980): 87-100, who claims that it is not about a hymn, but a loan of traditional prosaic material.

¹⁵⁹ Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology*, 298.

¹⁶⁰ J. M. G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon*, 25-28.

¹⁶¹ W. A. Meeks, “To Walk Worthily of the Lord’: Moral Formation in the Pauline School Exemplified by the Letter to Colossians”, in E. Stump and T. P. Flint (eds.), *Hermes and Athena*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 37-58; W. A. Meeks, “The ‘Haustafeln’ and American Slavery: A Hermeneutical Challenge”, in E. H. Lovering, Jr. and J. L. Sumney, *Theology and Ethics in Paul and his Interpreters*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 232-253; see also J. P. Héring, *The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln in Theological Context: An Analysis of their Origins, Relationship, and Message*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

20 remains a benchmark not only for outlining the theological accents,¹⁶² but also for the ecological Christian standpoint.¹⁶³ Some biblical scholars have responded to the ethical problem of subordination, illustrated by the “Haustafeln” from Col 3,18-4,1, by emphasizing the immediate context of “equitability”¹⁶⁴ or the larger scriptural context of equality.¹⁶⁵

This brief historical overview on interpreting the *Epistle to the Colossians* was intended to understanding this Epistle’s importance throughout the Church’s history. The commentaries, the homilies, the scholiums have determined methods of perceiving the contemporary aspects for researchers, who, using the authority of the Holy Scriptures, have motivated the listeners in a pastoral way, especially in the patristic times, or missionary during the Reform. The fact that the text’s meaning was several times imposed with a contemporary significance has motivated the researchers of the past two centuries to approach the original meaning of the text.¹⁶⁶ The way in which this step was taken has been contoured in the light of biblical criticism diversification. The scientific approach started from the prerequisite that the Holy Scriptures can be interpreted just like any other book, with the help of historical and literary methods, which lead to releasing new judgements regarding the origin and the meaning of the text. In most critical commentaries, there is a potential loss of a specific theological interpretation of the text, as God’s Word.

¹⁶² V. A. Pizzuto, *A Cosmic Leap of Faith: An Authorial, Structural, and Theological Investigation of the Cosmic Christology in Col. 1:15-20* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 41), (Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

¹⁶³ R. J. Clifford, “The Bible and the Environment”, in K. W. Irwin and E. D. Pellegrino (eds.), *Preserving the Creation*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 1-26; J. J. Davis, “Ecological ‘Blind Spots’ in the Structure and Content of Recent Evangelical Systematic Theologies”, *JETS* 43 (2000): 273-286(275).

¹⁶⁴ A. Standhartinger, “The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians”, *JSNT* 79 (2000): 117-130(129).

¹⁶⁵ A. McGuire, “Equality and Subordination in Christ: Displacing the Powers of the Household Code in Colossians”, in J. F. GOWER, *Religion and Economic Ethics*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 65-85(72-85).

¹⁶⁶ As for deeper understanding of the concept “original text”, look up the study of Eldon Jay Epp, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ in New Testament Textual Criticism”, in Paul Foster, *New Testament Studies*, (vol. 1-4, SAGE Benchmarks in Religious Studies, SAGE Publications, 2010), 1-34 (the study was also published in *Harvard Theological Review* 92,3 (1999): 245-281). See also Andreas DETTWILER, “Mémoire et émergence d’une rhétorique renouvelée: l’exemple de Colossiens et Ephésiens”, *NTS* 59,1 (2013): 109-128, lectured at “The 65th General Meeting of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas”, 27-31 July 2010, Berlin.

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PSALM 4 – ISAGOGE, EXEGESIS AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION (PART I)

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ABSTRACT. In this research paper, we intend to offer the reader the possibility of becoming more familiar with the main types of biblical commentaries through an exegetic exercise centred round Psalm 4. The choice of the supporting text is not at all random since, even from ancient times, the psalms have benefitted from the attention of an impressive number of scholars and have been the beginning of both dialogue and controversy between religions (Christianity and Judaism) and Christian denominations. Throughout the exegetical analysis, we took into consideration the rigors of the Critical approach, which we correlated with the rabbinic and patristic commentaries in order to accomplish a very ample interpretation. Even if these commentators did not entirely agree, rather than bringing to relief their interpretative differences, we tried to underline the common elements existing in the specific manner of interpretation of each exegetical school. Thus, the complexity of this isagogic, exegetical and theological study resides in the fact that it approaches the text of the psalm from a literary, allegorical and spiritual point of view and it can become a hermeneutical paradigm for those who wish to study the Holy Scriptures with scientific and spiritual accuracy.

Keywords: psalm, rabbis, Church Fathers, critical interpretation, king, LORD, Messianic perspective

¹ TO THE CHOIRMASTER: WITH STRINGED INSTRUMENTS. A PSALM OF DAVID. Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

² O men, how long shall my honour be turned into shame¹? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah

³ But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

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¹ The expression עַד־מַה כְּבוֹדִי לְקִלְמָה (ʿad-meḥ kəḇôḏî liq̄limmā^h) – how long shall my honor be turned into shame was translated into Greek with ἕως πότε βαρυκάρδιοι – how long will your hearts be unmerciful. Cf. Peter Craigie, Psalms 1-50, in WBC 19 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 81.

⁴ Be angry², and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent³. Selah

⁵ Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.

⁶ There are many who say, "Who will show us some good⁴? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O, LORD!"

⁷ You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine⁵ abound.

⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O, LORD, make me dwell in safety⁶ (ESV).

When first reading this text, the reader may develop the impression that the psalm is rather a collage of independent notions⁷, than an individual lamentation or a prayer of trust as most theologians state⁸. This subjective opinion is greatly influenced by the plans developing within the dialogues between the psalmist and his two companions. Even if at first sight the ideas presented in his dialogue with God do not resonate with this apparently incoherent discourse that he presents in front of the *sons of men*, all the statements of the author have the purpose to underline the fact that only the one who settles his trust in God may truly have protection, spiritual peace, joy and welfare. This reflection, which offers coherence to the psalm, will be better emphasized when we present the historical realities that this hymn is based on.

Elements of isagoge

The event that generated the composition of the psalm. Having a musical character, the title of this psalm ascribed to David does not offer details regarding a certain event. Hence, the attention of the exegetes focused on the

² The Septuagint translates this verb with ὀργίζω – to get angry, replacing the action with the feeling that it is based on.

³ The meaning that the Greek text offers to the last part of this verse is this: "on your beds repent of those things spoken into your hearts".

⁴ M. Dahood translates the term טוב (tôb) – good with rain also because this was the utmost good in Israel. This is why he thinks that this psalm includes the controversy between a faithful servant of God and the Israelites who chose to sacrifice to the idols in order to obtain rain. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, in AB 19A (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), 25.

⁵ The translators of the Septuagint have also added oil besides wheat and wine (cf. Dt 28:15; Hos 2:10.24), but the insertion is not necessary. Cf. George Phillips, *The Psalms in Hebrew; with a critical, exegetical and philological commentary I* (London: J. W. Parker, 1846), 34.

⁶ The Septuagint translates the last part of the verb as follows: "because you alone, O Lord, settled me in hope".

⁷ Rabbi Benjamin Segal, „Psalm 4 – Of Words and Personality,” accessed 8 May 2013, <http://psalms.schechter.edu/2010/03/psalm-four-and-still-need-for.html>.

⁸ Craigie, *Psalms*, 79. Cf. Alois Bulai et al., *Psalmii. Traducere, note și comentarii* (Iași: Sapientia, 2005), 23.

content and the position that this psalm secures within the Book of Psalms in order to be able to offer a historical reference point to their interpretative approach. The traditional exegesis considered that the psalm was written after David's victory in his conflict with Absalom⁹. This opinion based on several linguistic and thematic elements that established a relationship between this hymn and the previous psalm that we know when it was written. The arguments brought in favour of their viewpoint are the following:

a. Both in this psalm and in the previous one occurs the idea that the author calls God on his side imperatively, and He answers him according to a custom based on the relationship built on trust and faithfulness (3:5/4:2)¹⁰;

b. Also, the two psalms refer to the fact that their author goes to rest and falls asleep peacefully, without him being disturbed by the agitation and excitement around him because of the impenetrable protection of God, which he enjoys (3:6/4:9)¹¹;

c. The expression רַבִּים אֹמְרִים אֹמְרִים (*rabbîm ʾōmrîm*) – *there be many that say* is used in both hymns to introduce the statements of those who are adversary to the psalmist (3:3/4:7)¹²;

d. The term *selah* which is used in both hymns indicates a similar metrical construction¹³;

e. In the trade literature these psalms are considered to be *paired psalms*¹⁴ because of the position they occupy within the cultic structures. Psalm 3 is used within the Matins (cf. v. 6), and psalm 4 which suggests a vesperal atmosphere is part of the evening rite (cf. v. 9). Even though in the initial stages these chants were not written with this purpose, their content determined their natural insertion within these liturgical moments¹⁵. In order to better consolidate the relationship

⁹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An introduction and commentary*, in *TOTC 15* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 72.

¹⁰ Albert Barnes, *Notes, critical, explanatory, and practical, on the book of Psalms I* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868-69), 33.

¹¹ Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary on The Psalms I*, trans. Fancis Bolton (Edimburg: T. & T. Clakk, 1871), 109. Cf. Ernst Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms I* (Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2010), 55.

¹² Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (Collegewille: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 12-3.

¹³ Peter Craigie considers that the term reflects rather a musical indication and consequently it cannot be considered as argument for the establishing of the identity of the two psalms. Craigie, *Psalms*, 80.

¹⁴ Barnes, *Notes*, 33.

¹⁵ Abraham Cohen, *The Psalms: Hebrew Text & English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (London: Soncino Press, 1945), 23. Cf. Craigie, *Psalms*, 79; Charles Briggs and Emilie Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms I* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906-07), 29; Gherasim Timuș, *Note și meditațiuni asupra psalmilor I* (București: Tipografia „Gutenberg” Joseph Göble, 1896), 44. Iuliu Olariu, *Explicarea Psalmilor din Orologiu* (Caransebeș, 1899), 146; Robert Davidson, *The vitality of worship: A commentary on the book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids/Edinburgh: Eerdmans/Handsel Press, 1998), 22.

between these psalms, the Church Fathers¹⁶ and some of the rabbis¹⁷ identify, besides the arguments mentioned above, other elements which confirm obviously that the psalmist refers in the two chants to different stages of the same event: Absalom's rebellion.

Some of the exegetes oppose to this tendency to fix the period for the creation of the psalm in the context of the mentioned events, because they think that the described historical situation is completely different from that presented in psalm 3, where a king finds himself under the pressure of a hostile people¹⁸. In the case of this psalm, a leader is presented to us, who is probably not the king, who has the people's support, but is in conflict with very powerful men, high-class persons. It seems that this hypothesis was first presented by Rashi, who situated this psalm in the context of David's escape from Saul's anger.

This moment was speculated by some of those who were part of the king's entourage, who started to accuse him of different things in order to discredit him. In Rashi's opinion, David tries with this chant to exonerate himself of the charges brought against him¹⁹. Because of this reason, the experience described in this psalm belongs rather to an innovator than to a monarch cast away from his throne. To support this opinion, Charles Briggs offers as arguments the fact that during Absalom's rebellion, David's enemies were common people, deceived by his Son (2 Sm 15:1-6), and not noblemen as the text of the psalm suggests and also the confused and uncertain state of the waif king (2 Sm 17:24 – 18:33) that does

¹⁶ "The third psalm was written by David during the war against Absalom. That is why it contained plights. This one, the fourth, he directs towards God, the one that gives victory, full of gratitude". Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor I (1-8)," trans. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Mitropolia Olteniei* 4 (1989): 45. The bishop of Cyrus states that psalm 4 is David's answer to those who are saying of him: "God will not deliver him" (Ps. 3:2). Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms. Psalms 1-72*, in *Fathers of the Church* 101, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 63. Cf. Eftimie Zigabenu și Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea în tâlcuirile Sfinților Părinți I*, trans. Ștefan Voronca (Galați: Egumenița, 2006), 81.

¹⁷ *Midrasch Tehillim*, trans. August Wünsche (Trier: Sigmund Mayer, 1892), 38-9. Rabbi David Kimhi, *The longer commentary of R. David Kimhi on the first Book of Psalms*, trans. R. G. Finch (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), 27. "This psalm is closely connected with the previous one. Verse 3 *O ye sons of men* is addressed to the rebels and asks them to give up on their rebellion. [...] Based on the same experience here, a more personal note than in psalm 3 is presented. Psalm 3 concludes that only from God comes men's deliverance. This psalm underlines the personal faith (trust) and spiritual peace of those who put their faith in God". Rabbi Solomon Freehof, *The Book of Psalms: A commentary* (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938), 17.

¹⁸ Ch. Briggs considers that the psalm may be better related to Zerubbabel (cf. Ezr 4). Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 30.

¹⁹ Mayer Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms* (Boston: Leiben, 2004), 185-6. Cf. Rabbi Chaim Dov Rabinowitz, *Da'ath Sofrim: Book of Tehillim (PSALMS)*, trans. Yehoshua Starrett (Jerusalem: Vagshal Publishing, 2010), 18 and J. M. Neale, *A commentary on the Psalms: from primitive and mediaeval writers and from the various office-books and hymns of the Roman, Mozarabic, Ambrosian, Gallican, Greek, Coptic, Armenian, and Syrian rites I* (London/ New York: J. Masters/Pott and Amery, 1869), 110.

not correspond with the confidence shown by the psalmist²⁰. Briggs' arguments may be easily contradicted if we take into account the fact that psalm was composed immediately after the repression of the revolt when David's triumph was proclaimed and peace was re-established²¹ and if we observe that the persons who supported and advised Absalom have also been part of David's governing system²².

Even if there is not an opinion unanimously accepted by the exegetes regarding the historical context that determined the composition of this psalm²³, we will assume within the exegetical approach the point of view accepted by the majority of the scholars, without trying to enforce it on the others.

The application of the content of the psalm to different contexts confirms the fact that the truths expressed by this hymn have a generally valid dimension and may be easily applied even to our lives. In fact, the Church Fathers state, besides the Christological approaches²⁴, the fact that the psalm offers an answer to all the sceptics who deny the divine providence and oppose to those who believe in God²⁵.

The author. Taking into account the early dating of the psalm²⁶ and the linguistic-thematic relationship with the previous psalm, the majority of the commentators ascribed this chant to David. However, there have been some positions that questioned the Davidic paternity and stated that the psalm is

²⁰ In the exegetes' point of view, the expression בְּנֵי אָדָם (*bənē 'āḏām*) – *sons of men* does not refer to common people indicated by the expression בְּנֵי אָדָם (*bənē 'āḏām*), but to dignitary, to noblemen, persons involved in governing. Robert Bratcher and William Reburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 42. Cf. Craigie, *Psalms*, 80.

²¹ Louis Jacquet, *Les Psaumes et le coeur de l'homme: Étude textuelle, littéraire et doctrinale I* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1975-9), 252.

²² It is sufficient to mention here Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor and Amasa, chief over Absalom's army.

²³ Some consider that the psalm was written after the Amalekites attacked the fortress Ziklag (cf. 1 Sm 30) and brought in captivity some of the members of David's family (Phillips, 30), and others, such as M. Dahood state that this chant is rather a *prayer for rain*, offered to God by a servant of the Temple or by a prophet. He draws attention and chides the noblemen who doubt God's power and direct their attention to idols. The psalmist asks them to trust God unconditionally, to repent for their sins and to bring sacrifices, for God will hear their prayer. Dahood, *Psalms*, 22. Cf. Bulai et al., *Psalmii*, 23.

²⁴ Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Tâlcuirea psalmilor*, 45-6. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 8, trans. Philip Schaff (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 8. Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms I*, trans. P. G. Walsh (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990), 73. Eftimie Zigabenu și Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 81.

²⁵ Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms 1-51*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Boston: Liden, 2005), 12. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81*, trans. Robert Hill (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 41. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 13. Thomas d'Aquin, *Commentaire sur les Psaumes*, trans. Jean-Éric Stroobant de Saint Éloy (Paris: du Cerf, 1996), 60.

²⁶ Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 29.

rather a collective creation prior to the period of prophet Jeremiah. To this respect, the mention מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד (*mizmôr ləḏāwīḏ*) – a psalm of David in the title, which presents the king as author, is a later addition²⁷.

The structure of the psalm. Influenced by the content, by the dialogues that the psalmist has with his two companions or by the use of the term *selah*, the exegetes have divided the psalm into two²⁸, three²⁹ or four parts, depending on the criteria taken into account. The most appropriate of these divisions that we also assume is the following: the title (v. 1); the request addressed to God (v. 2); the advice addressed to the opponents (v. 3-6); the contrast between the psalmist and the doubtful opponents (v. 7-8) and the conclusion (v. 9)³⁰.

Exegetical analysis

Verse 1 (The title)

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A psalm of David

Besides the information regarding the author and the lyrical category to which the text belongs, the title offers us several details of a musical nature.

The term לְמַנְצֵחַ (*lamnaššē^{ah}*) which can be found in the title of 54 psalms³¹ refers to the person to whom the chant is addressed, namely “the person who was in charge of the choir and had to practice with the Levites”³² within the divine cult (cf. 1 Chr 15:22), in order to sing the psalm that was offered to him³³. Although the majority of the exegetes attribute this meaning to the word *lamnaššē^{ah}*, its significance is yet uncertain. This may be easily noticed starting from the manner in which this term was translated in the old versions: the Septuagint renders it by εἰς τὸ τέλος – *to the end*³⁴, Aquila translates it with *begetter of victory*; Symmachus

²⁷ Jacquet, *Les Psaumes*, 252-3.

²⁸ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 74. Thomas d'Aquin, *Commentaire sur les Psaumes*, 60. Bratcher and Rebyburn, *The Book of Psalms*, 41.

²⁹ Alexander Kirkpatrick, *The book of Psalms* (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), 17. Craigie, *Psalms*, 79.

³⁰ Barnes, *Notes*, 33-4. Cf. Bulai et al., *Psalmmii*, 23.

³¹ Apart from the Book of Psalms, this term can also be found at the end of the chant of prophet Habakkuk (3:19).

³² Ioan Popescu-Mălăiești, „Suprascrierile psalmilor,” *Studii Teologice* 1 (1931): 75.

³³ Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 26. Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary*, 185. Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship II*, trans. James Crenshaw (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 212.

³⁴ From the Fathers' point of view, this translation that refers to the purpose and finality of things involves a prophetic, Christological and eschatological dimension. “This psalm has its title *in the end*, because the last verse is a prophecy for the resurrection of the dead, as I shall prove later on, which is a feature of the future times, which are the end of these ages”. Eftimie Zigabenu și Sf. Nicodim Aghiritul, *Psaltirea*, 81. Cf. Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa, „La titlurile Psalmilor,” în *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești* 30, trans. Teodor Bodogae, (București: IBMO, 1998), 169. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 13; *Septuaginta. Psalmii, Odele, Proverbele, Ecleziastul, Cântarea Cântărilor* 4/1, ed. Cristian Bădiliță et al. (București: Polirom, 2006), 47.

with *song of victory*; Theodotion with *for victory*, and Jerome translates it with *victori* or *pro victoria*³⁵. These nuances were possible because of the verbal root נצח (*nch*) from which the word comes which may mean *to make victory possible, to obtain victory for*³⁶ or *to be clean, to shine, as well as to be in charge* (1 Chr. 23:4). The scholars consider that the last two meanings must be considered in order to define the term מְנַצֵּחַ (*mənāṣṣēʿh*). The first of these meanings refers to his abilities that single him out and make him shine before the others, and the other refers to the dignity he holds within the Temple, namely that of supervising and coordinating the group of musicians³⁷.

The other term of the title בְּיָגִיןֹתָ (*binḡînôṭā*) refers to one of the categories of instruments (chordophones) used by the Levites within the cult³⁸. The word occurs five times within the psalms³⁹ and only once in Habakkuk 3:19 and it is translated either simple *for chords*, or *accompanied by chords*, or *to be played on chordophone instruments*⁴⁰. The use of this term in the title suggests the idea that the psalm was composed to be sung in the temple accompanied by some chordophone instruments⁴¹ under the direct supervision of a musician who was probably in charge with those who played this type of musical instruments⁴².

Verse 1

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

The defeat of Amasa's army and Absalom's death determined the Israelites who supported the usurper son, to turn yet again their hearts towards David, the one who had freed them from the Philistines' domination in the past and to wish for him to come back on the throne of Jerusalem. Unfortunately, a dispute occurred between the Israelite tribes and the tribe of Judah. They accused the Judeans that hastened to greet the exiled king of contempt for they did

³⁵ Popescu-Mălăiești, „Suprascrierile psalmilor,” 75-6. Contextualizing this possible translation of the term to the recommended historical context, the Fathers believe that David dedicated this psalm to the Lord, the *victory-giving*, Who helped him defeat his usurper son. Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Tâlcuirea psalmilor*, 45-6. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 13.

³⁶ Rabbi Samson Hirsch, *The Psalms. Translation and commentary* (New York: Samson Raphael Hirsch Publications Society, 1960-66), 19.

³⁷ Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary*, 111. Popescu-Mălăiești, „Suprascrierile psalmilor,” 76.

³⁸ According to some exegetes, the term *nəḡînôṭā* designates either a certain instrument or a melody that could be applied to other chants too. Cf. Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 26; Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 19; Phillips, *The Psalms*, 31.

³⁹ Pss. 4, 6, 54, 67 and 76.

⁴⁰ Popescu-Mălăiești, „Suprascrierile psalmilor,” 82.

⁴¹ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 73. Cf. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 8.

⁴² Barnes, *Notes*, 32. Cf. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 57.

not wait for them, since they should have had the privilege to speak the first word at David's return (2 Sm 19:41-42). This tension between the tribes was even more amplified by the attitude of Sheba, son of Bichri of the family of Benjamin, who made the people to revolt again and determined the Israelites' separation of the king and of the house of Judah. Thus, before David came back on the throne he faced an imminent civil war that could cause the disintegration of the kingdom, which was far worse than Absalom's rebellion (cf. 2 Sm 20:6). Hence, if we accept the opinions of the exegetes who state that the psalm was written after Absalom's defeat, then we may state that these are the events that determined the king to ask in the beginning of his chant for God's help and mercy⁴³.

Thus, taking into account the acts through which he was delivered from his son's hands, David prays to the Lord to listen to his prayer and deliver him from this trouble as well. The king was convinced that God will show mercy on him, that He will answer as soon as possible to his cry, and will offer him again the possibility to feel free⁴⁴ in this want made by Sheba. The reference to the previous salvation that David thinks about is expressed within the text by the form of the verb רָחַב (*rahab*) – *to deliver at large*⁴⁵ which indicates an action already accomplished as opposed to the other three verbs from this verse which are in the Imperative form⁴⁶. Some scholars think that the Perfect form of this verb expresses in fact also a completed future action, according to a practice used within the prophetic books where the authors, inspired by God's Spirit, referred to future events as if they were completed facts⁴⁷. To this respect, the psalmist's deliverance, by his removal to an enlarged place, was done simultaneously with his cry through which he required heavenly support⁴⁸.

⁴³ Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 59.

⁴⁴ Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 20. Cf. Freehof, *The Book of Psalms*, 17.

⁴⁵ "The expression describes the feeling of freedom that the migrant shepherd feels when he comes out of the want of the fortress' walls and from throng to the open field, facing the lawn extended to the mountains". Bulai, 21. It is important to observe the fact that between the verb *rahab* and יָשָׂה (*yasha*) – *to deliver* there is a semantic unity. The primary meaning of the second verb is *to be spacious* or *to enlarge the place*. The presence in a more spacious place offers a person who is in want, deliverance, redemption. In cases such as this the context commands an interpersonal relationship in which the presence of a superior person is highly necessary in order to achieve deliverance from a situation created by another hostile person. This term was used most often in a military context. Gerhard Kittel et al., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament V* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 973-8.

⁴⁶ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-150: A Commentary II*, trans. H. C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 166.

⁴⁷ Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 27. Cf. Schaefer, *Psalms*, 13.

⁴⁸ Asterius, bishop of Amasia, states that God enlarged the psalmist in two ways: "the first because He heard his prayer, and the second because He heard him quickly. It is a double gift not because he was heard, but because He did it quickly. To be heard at once in troublesome times is similar with what we call large place". Asterius the Homilist, „Homilies on the Psalms 4, 1,” – Craig Blaising et al., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Old Testament (Psalms 1-50) VII* (New York: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 27. The same idea is observed by Saint John Chrysostom, one of his contemporaries, who

For a better understanding of this dimension proposed by the exegetes it is important to emphasize the fact that the action of the verb *rahab* develops on two levels: firstly on a spiritual level, and then on a physical level. The already confirmed trust in the divine help offered David a spiritual peace⁴⁹ which determined him to believe that the victory over his enemies is no longer questioned, the only unknown element being the time and the manner in which this will be achieved. Supporting this double perspective, Saint John Chrysostom states that God first offers the psalmist the ease to suffer the troubles that still persist⁵⁰ and, and then He confirms his trust that He is always besides him. “And how – says he – could enlarging be in times of trouble?”

The same way it was in the fiery furnace and in the lion’s den. For He did not put out the fire, but then He enlarged them; nor did He kill the lions to protect Daniel from their fear, but the furnace burning heavily and the beasts ready to tear him apart, the righteous enjoyed even more easing⁵¹.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria completes Saint John’s statement by saying that God did not enlarge David only by delivering him from the troubles he confronted with but also offered him the necessary things, victory over his enemies and enlarged his heart in joy⁵².

The approach of this text from a spiritual point of view was encouraged by the Greek text which translates the verb *rahab* with *πλατύνω* – *to delight, to enchant*. This translation option was based on the fact that in the biblical language the delight is conceived as an enlarging of the heart in order for God to dwell inside it⁵³. To this respect, Saint Augustin considers that to be enlarged means to

states that “the prophet does not say that only for us to know that his prayer was heard, but to learn how those who call God can be heard immediately and can receive the fulfilment of our request even before the completion of the prayer. For he did not say *after I called on you* but *when I called on you*. This is God’s promise to the one that calls for His help: *Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I* (Is 58:9)”. St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988), 47.

⁴⁹ Origen states that God enlarges man not by blocking the action of the evil, but by offering a great soul to the faithful. Origen, „Selection from the Psalms,” in *PG* 12, 1136 – Blaising, *Ancient Christian*, 27. “But me, he says, in times of trouble and gloom, you enlarged me and you delighted me, O God, and you gave me such greatness of heart that I immediately commanded to my soldiers not to kill my son, the parricidal, saying to them: *Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake* (2 Sm 18:5)”. Eftimie Zigabenu și Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 82.

⁵⁰ “Sometimes God instead of comforting us in our troubles gives us the courage to endure it”. Didymus the Blind, „Fragments on the Psalms,” in *PG* 39, 1165 – Blaising, *Ancient Christian*, 28.

⁵¹ St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 53.

⁵² Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Tâlcuirea psalmilor*, 46.

⁵³ Timuș, *Note asupra psalmilor*, 45. God’s presence in a man’s heart supposes lack of sin: “But we are also speaking about another type of enlargement, such as that when the soul, sore by the multitude of temptations is delivered from passions and from many spiritual illnesses”. St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 53.

achieve the capacity to feel God's presence in your soul and to communicate directly with Him⁵⁴.

Based on this reasoning, the Western bishop stated that David addressed directly to God only after his heart became enlarged and felt that He is dwelling inside it, because up to that moment the psalmist spoke only in the third person⁵⁵.

The manner in which the psalmist addresses to God is not at all random. Calling Him צְדִיקֵי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*ʿēlōhê ṣīdīqī*) – *God of my righteousness*⁵⁶, he appeals to God's status of supreme judge⁵⁷ and to his spiritual innocence, justice being considered in the language of the Old Testament a sum of virtues⁵⁸. Diodore of Tarsus thinks that the psalmist does not refer to his life when he speaks about justice, but to the request he makes, suggesting by this that only they who make righteous requests receive immediate answer from God⁵⁹. Thus, "David cites his own case here to include all who have such an attitude – I mean righteous and blameless – and then in his wish to show what a right request it is: passing over many others he classes all right requests under this one [*hear me when I call*]"⁶⁰.

In fact, the hearing of the prayer is possible thanks to God who is righteous and, hence, does not amnesty any request that has as purpose reestablishing justice into the world and deliverance for the oppressed⁶¹. If the psalmist's prayer

⁵⁴ St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 8. Cf. Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 20.

⁵⁵ The text that Saint Augustin interprets is indeed in the third person: "When I called, the God of my righteousness heard me, in tribulations Thou hast enlarged med..." St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 8.

⁵⁶ Bishop Gherasim states that through this unique manner of addressing, David considered God author of the grace that makes him righteous or the avenger of his innocence or the judge of his behavior, The One that judges the state of his soul, who sees whether he is innocent or sinner. Timuș, *Note asupra psalmilor*, 45. Cf. Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary*, 112.

⁵⁷ Kidner, *Psalms*, 72. In the rabbinic writings, the name Elohim was associated with the state of incorruptible judge, and the tetragrammaton (YHWH) was associated with that of all merciful. Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 27. Cf. Abraham Cohen, *Talmudul*, trans. C. Litman (București: Hasefer, 2002), 65. *The Babylonian Talmud. A Translation and Commentary. Tractate Berakhot I*, trad. Jacob Neusner (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2005), 412-3.

⁵⁸ "But do not think justice only as a part of the virtue here, but consider it whole and complete, thus comprising all the virtues". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 47.

⁵⁹ Saint John stated that God did not listen to David for who he was, but for his righteous deeds. To this respect anyone can receive immediate help from the Lord provided that his request is righteous: "If you have deeds that will plead for you, you will always be heard. The same way, if you don't have them, even David if you'd be, you will not be able to convince God [...], because he loves justice, and the one who comes to Him in righteousness will not be sent away empty-handed, just as the one who is outside righteousness and involved in sins against nature, even if he'd pray a thousand times, he will not receive anything more [...] hence if someone wants to obtain something from God, let him come to the Lord in justice". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 47. Cf. Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 27.

⁶⁰ Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms*, 14.

⁶¹ Rabinowitz, *Book of Tehillim*, 19. Cf. Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 31.

had not been listened to, his reputation as an innocent man would have been stained⁶². That is why, the king waited anxiously for God to manifest immediately His justice and for this reason he uses the epithet *šidqî*⁶³.

Hence, of what we have already presented results the fact that the psalmist states from the beginning that all his righteousness, all his virtuous feelings are owed to God. Even the fact that he was listened to in the time of his prayer and that God enlarged him in his tribulations is nothing else than heavenly gifts. Based on this reason his following words are addressed to God as a sign of gratitude because He never delayed His action of deliverance from the tribulations the psalmist found himself in.

Although he came out victorious from the want generated by his son's rebellion, David continued to ask for the divine mercy, praying to God to protect him always, to listen to his prayer and to deliver him from the troubles generated by the sneaky Sheba⁶⁴. Saint Cyril sees in the cry at the end of the verse a precaution on the king's side, who does not know what awaits him in the future. The invocation of divine mercy constitutes the only way in which he can evade temptation: "Those who want to live a righteous life – says he – are continuously oppressed by tribulations in this life. That is why, although all his prayers were heard, [David] yet he is afraid for the future. For this he prays again for he knows the benefit he has from praying⁶⁵. For, although he was delivered from pains and sorrows, but as a man who is afraid of future, lest he not be able to conquer the trials that await him he asks to be enlarged and to pass over the tribulations that bear sorrows. That is why he says: *have mercy upon me*⁶⁶, meaning stop the war, help me escape from it"⁶⁷. In agreement with the Alexandrine hierarchy, Saint John Chrysostom states that God's mercy can be asked for in any situation and, that is why, he does not cease from advising the righteous to insist before God to obtain it: "And if we were to do thousands of deeds, we still are heard because God is merciful and loves humankind. And even if we reached the utmost virtue, we are still delivered by mercy"⁶⁸. Justice and virtue are not enough

⁶² Who will have the courage to fight David when they know that God helps him when he asks Him to? Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms*, 43.

⁶³ Thomas d'Aquin, *Commentaire sur les Psaumes*, 60. In Psalm 17 where this divine epithet is used again יְהוָה שְׁדֵדִיק (*yhwh šedeq – the Righteous God*), justice for the psalmist consists of the invalidation of the false accusations and the discovery of truth. Dahood, *Psalms*, 23.

⁶⁴ "If up until now you enlarged me, now is the time to show mercy on me". Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary*, 185.

⁶⁵ In other words, one may say that the psalmist presents here a certain type of therapy: continuous praying. Cassiodorus states that a prayer which follows another prayer which is accepted is the real prayer that places you in communion with God. Cassiodorus, *Explanation on the Psalms*, 74.

⁶⁶ This phrase represents David's cry to God, especially in the Book of Psalms, when he finds himself in a difficult situation. John Goldingay, *Psalm 1-41* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 119.

⁶⁷ Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Tâlcuirea psalmilor*, 47. Cf. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 10.

⁶⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 55. Cf. Cassiodorus, *Explanation on the Psalms*, 74.

for the man to defeat evil. To this respect, he offers David as example, who although found himself in both situations (righteous and sinner) never ceased to ask for God's mercy⁶⁹.

Verse 2

O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

Ending his lamentation in which he requests God's mercy and permanent protection, the psalmist directs his attention towards his opponents and reproaches them their attitude completely lacking wisdom. The text of the psalm lets us understand the gloom that David has for those *sons of men* (שׂוֹנֵי אָדָם – *bəne' ʾiš*) who reprimanded his glory, plotting vain things and lies against him⁷⁰. The exegetes underline the fact that the king does not address to common people for whom the psalms use a common name בְּנֵי אָדָם (*bəne' ādām* – 11:4; 14:2; 31:20)⁷¹, but he addresses to noble people, most probably members of the aristocracy who joined Absalom's rebellion in order to dethrone him⁷². The psalmist gently reproaches, like a loving father, those who gave up easily to the vain promises made by his usurper son and advises them to renounce their sly manner of plotting in front of the evidence that they themselves can notice: the permanent support that God offers to the king each time he asks for it⁷³. Rabbi Samson Hirsch states that David referred there to the contempt that those people had for his prayers in which he asked for the divine help. For this reason, he interrupted his dialogue with God, addressed to those that considered his prayer to be vain and his hope in God's help improper and asked them to judge the situation differently since they

⁶⁹ Theodoret of Cyrus consider that the psalmist's gesture rather underlines his manner of relating to prayer. "Righteous people [David], says he, never have enough of prayer; instead, being in need and taking advantage of goodwill they reap the fruit of prayer and continue offering supplication, realizing as they do the benefit coming from it". Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 64.

⁷⁰ Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary*, 185. Cf. James Mays, *Psalms. Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 55.

⁷¹ Phillips, *The Psalms in Hebrew*, 32.

⁷² Rabinowitz, *Book of Tehillim*, 20. Cf. Barnes, *Notes*, 34. Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary*, 113. Except for those who state that David addresses to people in general, and not to noblemen, Saint Euthymius is the only one who states that the psalmist speaks here to his friends that accompanied him in his exile and who were hopeless and very upset: "David says this word to his friends and acquaintances who tried to help him when he was in danger, saying to them: How long, o friends of mine, will you not rise your hearts to God, when you are in tribulations, but harden them and descend them down to earthly matters, with human thoughts and worldly concerns?". Eftimie Zigabenu și Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 82.

⁷³ Olariu, *Explicarea psalmilor*, 147. Those who challenge the reality of God's providence are considered to be fools. Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms*, 14. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms*, 45.

were noblemen, learned people. However, it was exactly because of their privileged status that they considered the idea of prayer so wrongly⁷⁴. In agreement with the rabbi's opinion, Saint Cyril of Alexandria states that David said these words to those who considered that they would be able to defeat the righteous by the power of the large army.

Calling them *sons of men*⁷⁵ for their life in slyness and their lack of faith, the king offers them a piece of the intrigue they plotted, a useful teaching telling them: "O, you people blind in your hearts and thick in your minds, when will you know that the reliance on people is vanity and lie? No warrior escapes by his great strength"⁷⁶. The exhortation for reconciliation and implicitly to obedience that David addresses to the rebels bases on a reality, which is impossible to deny. The attempt to usurp the king failed, and the intrigues plotted through lies by Absalom⁷⁷ and his counsels are now pure emptiness. All the chances to success of this rebellion died along with the death of the king's son. That is why, those who are still cloddish in their hearts⁷⁸ and think that they will succeed on casting out of the throne God's anointed, the sovereign that was reconfirmed by the recent victory, do nothing else than plot in vain (cf. Ps 2:1)⁷⁹ and fruitlessly despise the glory (royal dignity) of God's legitimate representative in Israel⁸⁰.

Observing the wisdom with which the psalmist addresses to his enemies, Saint John Chrysostom underlines the pedagogical manner in which David first shows God's power, His kindness and His love for people and implicitly the fact that He is inclined to be merciful and enlarge in tribulations and only after that, thinking of their viciousness, as if *he drowned in discouragement*, turns His word to those who live an evil life and says to them: "Having a God who is so good, so

⁷⁴ Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 20-1.

⁷⁵ Saint John Chrysostom names here *sons of men* those who live an evil life and are attracted to evil, those indurated in their hearts, earthly, riveted to the ground, following evil, pairing themselves with slyness, followers of the pleasures..." who make no effort to rise to the privileged status that the righteous have and are called *sons of God* (St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 58). Cf. Thomas d'Aquin, *Commentaire sur les Psaumes*, 61; Neale, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 111 and Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 18.

⁷⁶ Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Tâlcuirea psalmilor*, 47.

⁷⁷ Absalom's rebellion was based on the lies with which he discredited his father, the vain promises he made to the Israelites that were unsatisfied by the king's judgement and the deceit of David (cf. 2 Sm 15:1-9). Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 61.

⁷⁸ This phrase that occurs in the Greek edition of the text has the purpose to emphasize the obduracy with which they continue to stand against reality and against truth. "Hard-hearted are those who do not distinguish lie and vanity from the truth, and love inexistent things, despising the steady things and those worthy of love". Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa, *La titlurile Psalmilor*, 142. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 64 and Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 75.

⁷⁹ Freehof, *The Book of Psalms*, 18. Vanity are all things that do not bring us benefits and that will never happen (in this case – Absalom's reign). Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 75. Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 28.

⁸⁰ Barnes, *Notes*, 35.

loving, so powerful, how do you turn to infidelity? [...] and blaming their life, he shows the origin of their disbelief, namely that it is this that prevents them to look to higher things”⁸¹.

Verse 3

But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

If with the previous interrogations David drew his opponents’ attention on their futile adversity, in this verse he urges them to reflect on the fresh realities and to accept the fact that God is on his side⁸². In other words, the king asks those who revolted against him to acknowledge the fact that God has not left him, that his kingship has divine legitimacy and that by opposing to him, they rise against the One who chose him to rule over Israel⁸³. The term הִיָּלָאֵל (*hiplā^h*) – *separated from* through which the psalmist refers to his choice, also implies a warning. In all the contexts in which the verb *pala^h* occurs, it implies a separation between those who are protected by God according to His promises and those who are about to be punished for their adversity (cf. Ex 8:18; 9:4; 11:7; 33:16⁸⁴)⁸⁵. Thus, the unacceptance of the sovereignty of the king chosen by God exposes the rebels who continue to stand against him to the divine punishment. Nevertheless, with the use of the word חֲסִיד (*hāsīd*), David wishes to specify that him being elected and supported by God is not a discretionary act, but is determined by holiness, kindness, piety and devoutness for God⁸⁶. This noun sums up all the virtues of a person who is in close proximity to God⁸⁷, who felt His love and mercy and who has learned to share the gifts he has received with the others⁸⁸.

Using the verb θαυμαστόω – *making wonderful* instead of the Hebrew term that indicates differentiation, the text of the Septuagint emphasizes more obviously the privileged status of the pious man. This becomes the ideal model in which the

⁸¹ St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 58.

⁸² Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 21. Cf. Rabinowitz, *Book of Tehillim*, 20.

⁸³ Barnes, *Notes*, 35.

⁸⁴ “How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

⁸⁵ Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 28.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Samson defines the pious man like this: “A man who offers himself completely to God, who dedicates all his efforts to God and entrusts himself completely to God”. Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 21. Cf. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 61.

⁸⁷ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms*, 45.

⁸⁸ David has shown numerous times that he is like God, recompensing evil with good (1 Sm 24:18). Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 28. Cf. Craigie, *Psalms*, 80 and Kirkpatrick, *The book of Psalms*, 18.

correct manifestation of the divine blessing can be found⁸⁹. The image of this man loved by God, with which David identifies himself⁹⁰, is offered to the opponents as an alternative of life. To such a man, God never rejects his prayer, and always fulfills his requests⁹¹. By this, the psalmist wished to draw their attention on the fact that he did not become king by mistake, but he was chosen by God from all the others for this dignity from his youth and so long as he remains obedient to the one who chose him and will walk in step with the righteous he will be supported and heard in tribulations⁹².

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⁸⁹ "What does it mean that he made wonderful? That He made His servant known, brilliant and famous. [...] For he did not say only that he gave him gifts, but also that he *made him wonderful*, showing both that he gave him in a wonderful way and that he blessed him with wonder-workings". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 60. Applying these words to the context that generated the composition of the psalm, Saint Euthymius observes: "Indeed, how was he not made wonderful and known by God, he who, fighting Absalom, defeated the one who hated him, and being oppressed by him, he defeated his persecutors and having few men, crushed the one who had tens of thousands?" Eftimie Zigabenu și Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 83. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 14 and Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms*, 14.

⁹⁰ Timuș, *Note asupra psalmilor*, 47. The Western Fathers identify Jesus Christ with that pious and holy man that God glorified. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 8-9. Cf. Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 75 and Neale, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 111.

⁹¹ Arthur Weiser, *The Psalms. A Commentary*, trans. Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 120.

⁹² Emphasizing David's trust in God, Saint Euthymius paraphrases: "I, says he, since I obtained so quickly God's help and I escaped beyond all hope from the great danger of my son's rebellion, I understood from this that the Lord has mercy on me and listens to my prayer, and I hope that He will listen to my prayer again, when I cry to Him in my dangers and tribulations". Eftimie Zigabenu și Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 83. Cf. Phillips, *The Psalms in Hebrew*, 33.

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CURATIVE TERMINOLOGY IN THE ACCOUNT OF THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN AT BETHESDA POOL

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ABSTRACT. The importance of healing in the biblical texts is determined by the use of a precise terminology, which designates multiple therapeutic actions. Analysing the Greek language of healing in the Gospel of John can prove this. The central lexical element around the theme of healing developed in the Gospel of John is the Greek adjective ὑγιής. Used as an antithetical description to the noun ἀσθένεια, this adjective indicates, according to the Gospel of John, a new existential reality concretised in a new moral life. The main thesis of the paper is that the Johannine term ὑγιής involves a holistic existential dimension of human health. An important part before analysing the occurrences of ὑγιής in the New Testament is given by the need of etymological foundation for conceptualizing the health in the Greek world and in the same time the need of emphasizing the Old Testament Hebrew and Judeo-Hellenist perspectives on health. This will give us the possibility to determine the importance of the Johannine healing terminology in the precise social, historical, cultural and linguistic context.

Keywords: health, holistic healing, Gospel of John, Bethesda Pool

Introduction

Often interpreted as symbolic or allegorical *topos*¹, or as curative place of divine love, or as the image of the inefficiency of the Jewish Law, the Bethesda pool was and is of great interest for scholars, theologians and archaeologists, especially after the excavations of the site², between 1957-1962³. The results of

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¹ John Marsh, *The Gospel of Saint John* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 245-246.

² Urban C. von Wahldt, "Archaeology and John's Gospel", in James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus and Archaeology* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 562.

³ Although archaeological excavations began before World War II, very few results have been published: among them we can mention the work of Hugues Vincent, Félix-Marie Abel, *Jérusalem: recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, vol. II (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1926), 90 pages. After the World War II, they were published more papers, as: Joachim Jeremias, *Die Wiederentdeckung von Bethesda: Johannes 5*

the excavations confirmed or rejected some exegetical theories applied to the text of the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John. In his book, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology*, John J. Pilch, after analysing the three healing stories from the fourth Gospel, comes to this conclusion: “for persons in John’s group whose relatives are ill or who themselves suffer from forms of immobility and blindness, the experience of the living Jesus in midst of the group brings restoration. It is access to the resurrected Messiah of Israel in altered state of consciousness, experiences that enables results such as those reported in the significant healing interactions of Jesus”⁴. In our modern society healing is seen just as a medical effort to restore somatic health, leaving aside its spiritual, psychological and social dimension.

The Gospel of John can bring up a different perspective of human health. In order to emphasize that the healing of the lame man at the Bethesda pool does imply a holistic dimension of health, we will analyse in this paper the curative terminology of this passage starting from the etymological and lexicological benchmarks. One of the most important words in this episode is the adjective ὑγιής (healthy), used in the Gospel of John exclusively with reference to the healing of the lame man at the Bethesda pool. For defining the term ὑγιής we can use lexicographical resources, which emphasize its diachronic⁵ and synchronic development. According to the synchronic perspective, ὑγιής is used to describe human integrity, mental or somatic health⁶ and cleanliness and it can be translated

(Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), 26 pages, a paper that was received with great enthusiasm by the scholars. The most important papers are: Antoine Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs: à propos de Jean V*, Vol. 12 *Cahiers de la Revue biblique* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1970), 184 pages; Jacques Bernard, “Guérison de Bethesda : harmoniques judéo-hellénistiques d’un récit de miracle un jour de sabbat”, *Mélanges de science religieuse*, 33 (1976): 3-34; J. M. Rousée, “Sainte- Marie de la Probatique: état et orientation des recherches”, *Proche-Orient chrétien* XXI (1981): 23-42; L. Devillers, “Une piscine peut en cacher une autre: A propos de Jean 5,1-9a”, *Revue Biblique*, 106 (1999): 175-205; S. Gibson, “The Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem and Jewish Purification Practices of the Second Temple Period”, *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 55 (2005): 270-293; Urban C. von Wahlde, “The ‘Upper Pool’, Its ‘Conduit’, and ‘the Road of the Fuller’s Field’ in Eight Century BC Jerusalem and Their Significance for the Pools of Bethesda and Siloam,” *Revue biblique*, 1-4 (2006): 242-262; Urban C. von Wahlde, “The Puzzling Pool of Bethesda”, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 37 Sep/Oct (2011): 40-65; Walter Zanger, Urban C. von Wahlde, “Pool of Bethesda”, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 38,1 (2012): 8-10.

⁴ John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 138.

⁵ For the development of curative terminology in the Greek world, see: G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, G. Friedrich, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 8, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 309-310. For the Greek language of healing, see the great analyse of Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing from Homer to New Testament Times* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 1-102.

⁶ H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon With a revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1842; Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg Neva Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament ANLEX*, vol. 4, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 387.

as: *healthy, wholesome, sound, fresh*⁷, showing in general human health.

In this paper we will try to analyse the healing terminology from the perspective of Eugeniu Coseriu's theory of lexical semantics⁸, the study of the domains of lexical signified, but at the same time, we try to highlight certain elements of grammatical meanings of linguistic units, especially those related to voice and time⁹. In the same *sphere of signified*, together with the word ὑγίης we can find the terms θεραπεύω and ίάομαι, which are used in the Gospel of John. Maintaining the theory that a conceptual domain is structured *on* and derived *from* a lexical domain, we will analyse the semantic domain of the curative terminology from the Old Testament perspective.

1. Etymological and lexicological benchmarks for curative terminology

The etymological evidences help us to see the term ὑγίης as designating an existential reality¹⁰. Ferdinand de Saussure¹¹ summarizes three arguments for the etymological interpretation of the word ὑγίης, borrowed from several Indo-European examples. The adjective ὑγίης is composed of ὑ + γίης, the first element ὑ, found in Sanskrit as the prefix *su*, means "good, well" and the second element γίης, coming from Proto-Indo-European stem **gʷey*, from which the Greek words βίωω and ζάω¹² (βίος and ζωή) derived, means "to live"¹³. Thus, ὑγίης as

⁷ Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, Hauspie Katrin, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003); Maurice Carrez, Francois Morel, *Dictionar grec-român al Noului Testament*, trans. Gheorghe Badea, (Bucharest: Societatea Biblică Interconfesională, 1999), 205; William Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 832; A. Bailly, *Abrégé du dictionnaire grec – français* (Paris: Hachette, 1969), 892; G. Ioanidu, *Dictionar elino-românească tradus după al lui Skarlat D. Vizantie*, vol. 2, (Bucharest: Tipografia Statului, 1862), 836.

⁸ For Eugeniu Coseriu's theory of lexical semantics, see: Dirk Geeraerts, *Theories of Lexical Semantics* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 77-80.

⁹ Eugen Munteanu, *Lexicologia biblică românească*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008), 246.

¹⁰ Johann Baptist Hofmann, *Ετυμολογικόν λεξικόν τῆς ἀρχαίας ἐλληνικῆς* (Athena: Παπαδήμας, 1974), 455; Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la Langue Grecque. Histoire des mots* (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1968), 1151; Hjalmar Frisck, *Griechisches Etymologisches Woerterbuch*, vol. 2 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1960), 954-955; Emile Boisacq, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grecque. Etudiee dans ses rapports avec les autres Langues Indo-Europeennes* (Paris Editions: Klincksieck, 1916), 997; see also: Georg Curtius, Ernst Windisch, *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie* (B.G. Teubner, 51879), 187.

¹¹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Recueil des publications scientifiques de Ferdinand de Saussure*, ed. Charles Bally, Leopold Gautier (Genève: Lausanne, 1922), 457-458.

¹² From the proto-indo-European *gʷey*, *gʷyā-* to live (ə=γ), *gʷiwos* - *gʷiywos*- alive; with the long vowel we have in Sanskrit: *jiva-*; in Old Persian: *jiva-*; Latin: *vivus*; Lithuanian: *gyvas*; Gothic: *quis*; with short vowel we have in old Irish: *beo*, *beu*; Welsh: *byw*; Greek: βίος. For the full development of the stem *gʷey* see: Winfred P. Lehmann, *A Gothic Eymological Dictionary* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 278. Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2, (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1959), 467-468.

¹³ Michel Lejeune, *Phonétique historique du mycénien et du grec ancien* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972), 44 and 206.

an adjective with a stem in sigma, has as etymon the Indo-European construction **su-g^{wiy}-es* or **h₁su-g^{wih₃}-es*¹⁴, which can be translated as “to live well, to live in a good manner” and is equated with the Latin term *sanus*¹⁵, from where we have the Romanian adjective *sănătos*. Etymological markers give us the possibility to place the term ὑγίης in the thematic area of life, an established topos of Johannine theology, ὑγίης and ζωή having common etymological components pertaining to the same semantic domain. However, Michael Weis assumes more convincingly that ὑγίης derives from **h₂iu-g^{wih₃}-es*, which means: “to have eternal life”. He compares ὑγίης with the Latin word *iugis*- constant, and with Avestan *yauuaeji-living forever*¹⁶. This idea is borrowed by Robert Beekes in his etymological dictionary of Greek and is considered the best etymological interpretation for this word¹⁷. In defining our term we have to start from the idea that it has to do with life, from the perspective of living well or eternal.

2. Curative terminology in the Old-Testament

In the Septuagint (LXX) we can find ὑγίης as a term used especially for bodily healing, showing by its few occurrences¹⁸ the physical dimension of health closely linked to the spiritual dimension. The adjective ὑγίης is in the Septuagint (LXX) the translation of the Hebrew adjective חַי (hāy -living, alive, raw)¹⁹, or of the verb חָיָה (hāyā- to live, to be alive)²⁰, or of the phrase בְּשָׁלוֹם (bēšālōm- in completeness, soundness, welfare, peace)²¹. Somatic health is placed at the level of daily existence, as part of biological life embedded in the meaning of the verb חָיָה

¹⁴ Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 2, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 1525.

¹⁵ Michiel de Vaan, Michiel Arnaud Cor de Vaan, *Etymological dictionary of Latin and the other Italic languages*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 538.

¹⁶ Michael Weiss, “Life everlasting: Latin *iugis* “everflowing”, Greek ὑγίης Gothic *ajukdups* “eternity” and Avestan *yauuaeji* (living forever)”, *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 55 (1994): 131-156.

¹⁷ Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, 1525.

¹⁸ The word is used 9 times in LXX: Lev. 13:10,15^{x2},16; Joshua 10:21; Isaiah 38:21; Tobit 12:3; Wisdom Sir. 17:28, Wisdom Sir. 30:14;

¹⁹ Used in Lev. 13:10,15^{x2},16 for *bāšār hāy* (raw flesh) as a sign of a skin disease cf. G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1979), 198.

²⁰ Used in Isaiah 38:21: καὶ εἶπεν Ἡσαίας πρὸς Εἰζεκιαν λαβὲ πάλῃθην ἐκ σύκων καὶ τρίψον καὶ κατέπλασαι καὶ ὑγίης ἔσθη | *And Isaiah had said to Ezekiah “Take a cake of figs, and apply it to the boil and he shall live”*. J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 1-39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 691.

²¹ Used in Joshua 10:21 for describing the returning of the people in the camp. W. L. Holladay, Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 371; Alfredo E Tuggy, *Lexico Griego Español de Nuevo Testamento* (Editorial Mundo Hispano, 2003), 157; Ulrich Luck, “ὑγίης, ὑγιαίνω,” in Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, vol. 8, 310-311;

(*ḥāyā- to live*)²². The difference between the Hebrew and the Greek conceptualization of health is given by their vision of the world manifested in language. In the Jewish view, the term שְׁלֹמֶה (*šalōm*, equivalent to the Greek word εἰρήνη) indicates the fullness, completeness of bodily and spiritual health, in perfect harmony²³, interfering sometimes with the sense of the Greek equivalent ὑγίης, as in Isaiah 38:21.

The two occurrences of the term ὑγίης in the book of the Wisdom of the son of Sirach²⁴ link the Hebrew concept of health with the Greek one, which can be designated as a way of restoring the human condition²⁵. However, in the Wisdom Sir. 30:14, Codex B, the only manuscript that preserves the Hebrew version of the book, the term ὑγίης is equivalent to the Hebrew חַי (ḥāy-alive).²⁶

In the book of Tobit, ὑγίης is used to describe the result of the verb θεραπεύω. These two words, ὑγίης and θεραπεύω²⁷, and the verb ἰάομαι are the most important terms belonging to the semantic domain of healing. Therefore, to determine the full sense of the word ὑγίης, we must analyse, in addition to its occurrences, the verbs θεραπεύω and ἰάομαι in LXX, by tracing the equivalences with the terms of the Masoretic text. The verb ἰάομαι is used more than the denominative verb θεραπεύω²⁸, but the semantic domain of θεραπεύω is more developed than that of ἰάομαι, being

²² *To be healthy*, from the Jewish perspective is synonymous with *to live*. The semantic connexion between health and life is not specific just for Hebrew, we can find examples in the Acadian and Aramaic terminology about health. Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Zondervan, 1995), 32-33.

²³ Gerhard F. Hasel, "Health and healing in the Old Testament", *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21/ 3 (1983): 191.

²⁴ Sir. 17:28 ἀπὸ νεκροῦ ὡς μηδὲ ὄντος ἀπόλλυται ἐξομολόγησις ζῶν καὶ ὑγίης αἰνέσει τὸν κύριον | *Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not: the living and sound in heart shall praise the Lord*; Sir. 30:14 κρείσσων πτωχὸς ὑγίης καὶ ἰσχύων τῇ ἕξει ἢ πλούσιος μεμαστιγωμένος εἰς σῶμα αὐτοῦ | *Better is the poor, being sound and strong of constitution, than a rich man that is afflicted in his body*.

²⁵ In the Hellenist world ὑγίης shows the restoration of the unhealthy condition of human nature brought through divine or human power to their original undamaged state of health and usefulness. Cf. Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 33 ἢ 101. The word ὑγίης shows in the same time the therapeutic medical healing and the divine healing, especially by the god Asklepios.

²⁶ Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts And a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 54.

²⁷ Tobit 12:3 ὅτι με ἀγείοχεν σοι ὑγιή και τὴν γυναῖκά μου ἐθεράπευσεν και τὸ ἀργύριόν μου ἦνεγκεν και σὲ ὁμοίως ἐθεράπευσεν | *He brought me home safe and sound; he cured my wife; he brought the money back with me; and now he has cured you*. The verb θεραπεύω can be understood hear as a medical care and healing. C. A. Moore, *Tobit: A new translation with introduction and commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 267.

²⁸ The verb ἰάομαι is used 63 times in LXX and θεραπεύω ist used just for 24 times. See: Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 104, n. 8.

used outside the curative semantic domain²⁹.

ἰάομαι is used as an equivalent term for the Hebrew verb רָפָא (*rapha*) and appoints the action of healing done just by God or by an agent through His power. If ἰάομαι is applied to the action of human healing, this healing is incomplete and helpless³⁰. Michael L. Brown demonstrates that the semantic denominator of the Old Testament Hebrew examples of רָפָא (*rapha*) is not “to cure” but “to restore, to make whole”³¹.

From the Old Testament perspective, God is the only one who restores the creature to its fullness of health, as it is showed in His revelation in Exodus 15:26: ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι κύριος ὁ ἰώμενός (יְהוָה רֹפֵא) σε | *for I am the Lord who heals you*³². The Hebrew participles רֹפֵא (rōpā 'ekā) and the Greek ἰώμενός do not have to be construed as medical technical titles as the word ἰατρός- *doctor* is, but more broadly, showing both bodily and spiritual healing. The dichotomy between somatic healing and spiritual healing is excluded from the Hebrew meaning of the verb רָפָא³³. *The Healer*-title of God does not exclude certain human therapeutic medical practices³⁴. But these practices are mostly designated by the term θεραπεύω and are seen within the semantic domain of the verb ἰάομαι.

If we refer only to instances in which θεραπεύω is used for a curative action we can see that it refers only to human activity, involving some knowledge of medical treatment. The meaning of θεραπεύω cannot be equated to a Hebrew verb because the given examples have no parallel text to the Masoretic text³⁵,

²⁹ The verb means: 1. *to serve, to be serviceable*: a. As secular term in 2 Kings 19:25 ἐθεράπευσεν τοὺς πόδας; Esther. 1:1b; 2:19; 6:10: θεραπεύων ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τοῦ βασιλέως, Ezra: 1:4; θεραπεύετε τὸ ἔθνος αὐτοῦ; 2:14; b. figurative Proverbs 14:19; 19:6; 29:26: πολλοὶ θεραπεύουσιν πρόσωπα; c. as a worshipping term *to worship a divinity* Is. 54:17: κύριον, Daniel 7:10; Judith 11:17: θεραπεύουσα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; Sir. 35:16; Tobit 1:7; Wisdom of Solomon. 10:9 σοφία; Lamentation 1:25, 1:38; 2. *healing*: 4 Kings 9:16; Tob. 2:10; 12:3^{x2}; Wisdom 16:12; Sir. 18:19; 38:7.

³⁰ See the examples in Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 106.

³¹ See the demonstration in Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 25-31.

³² J. I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus*, Vol. 3 (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 2002), 213; W. H. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 578

³³ Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 31.

³⁴ The Hebrew perspective on healing was negative towards medical treatments due to interferences with pagan magic practices, which brought the wrath of God upon people. For this, see the example in 2 Chronicles 16:12, where King Asa had not turned to God during his illness, but to doctors. The passage has a moralizing structure because in Aramaic the term Asa means *doctor*. Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles, Word Biblical Commentary*, (Word Dallas, 2002), p.126.

³⁵ The book of Tobit has some fragmentary medieval copies in Aramaic and Hebrew cf: Robert J. Littman, *Tobit: The Book of Tobit in Codex Sinaiticus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Brill, 2008), XXIII; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Stuart D. Weeks, “The Medieval Hebrew and Aramaic Texts of Tobit”, in Jeremy Corley, Vincent T. M. Skemp, *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*, (Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 71-86.

except the passage in the Wisdom of the son of Sirach 38:7. But in this passage, found in Codex B, the only existed Hebrew manuscript that kept verse 7, the noun רופֵּן (*rôpē'*- *doctor, healer*)³⁶ is probably the equivalent for the verb θεραπεύω.

In 4 Kings 9:16 the Hebrew text is much shorter than the one in LXX, which adds the following: ὅτι Ἰωραμ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραηλ ἐθεραπεύετο ἐν Ἰεζραὲλ ἀπὸ τῶν τοξουμάτων | *for Joram king of Israel was getting healed in Jezrael of the arrow-wounds*. Θεραπεύω shows here a somatic medical care, the treatment and healing of the wounds.

The same idea is repeated in the episode of Tobit's blindness, chapter 2:10: καὶ ἐπορεύομην πρὸς τοὺς ἰατροὺς θεραπευθῆναι | *and I went to the doctor to be healed*. The difference between θεραπεύω and ἰάομαι is evidenced by the passage of Chapter 12, verse 3. Tobit's son uses the term θεραπεύω to describe the treatment and cure of his father, considering the angel Raphael³⁷ among those who are able to prescribe a medical treatment for healing.

However the angel Raphael uses the verb ἰάομαι to describe the action of healing, indicating another source of healing, namely the divine one³⁸. The same difference between human and divine healing is emphasized by the Wisdom of Solomon 16:12: καὶ γὰρ οὔτε βοτάνη οὔτε μάλαγμα ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς ἀλλὰ ὁ σὸς κύριε λόγος ὁ πάντας ἰόμενος | *For it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaster, that restored them to health: but your word, O Lord, which heals all things*. The text contains a typological dimension too important to be overlooked.

The importance of this passage resides in the fact that it is a clear example of Hellenistic Jewish literature that provides a context for interpretation of the title of *Healer* given in the Gospel to Jesus Christ³⁹. The author of the book sees in the trials from the desert of the chosen people wonders or signs through which God, or the Word of God, reveals himself through repeated healings. This idea is found in the Fourth Gospel too⁴⁰. The human health or healing by βοτάνη or μάλαγμα is shown by the verb θεραπεύω and they have a limited power, but the divine healing, rendered by ἰάομαι, has an indefinite power as shown in verse 13: *For you have power of life and death: and you lead to the gates of hell, and bring up again.*

³⁶ Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 65.

³⁷ The name רופֵּן means "whom God healed". W. Gesenius, S. P. Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 953.

³⁸ The last researches shows that from medical point of view the Tobit's treatment could not be efficient for regaining his sight, therefore the healing had a divine origin. See: I. Papayannopoulos, "Tobit's Blindness", *Koroth* vol. 9, 1-2 (1985): 181-87. For theological interpretation of Tobit's sickness see: Micah D. Kiel, "Tobit's Theological Blindness", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 73, Issue 2 (2011): 281-298.

³⁹ Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 60.

⁴⁰ For the authors who sustain this idea, see: Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 20-22.

The book of Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach introduces in the sphere of the signified of the verb θεραπεύω another dimension. Besides the curative action understood as the possibility to eliminate existing illness, the use of the verb θεραπεύω in Wisdom 18:19 designates a preventive or prophylactic action⁴¹: πρὶν ἢ λαλῆσαι μάθανε καὶ πρὸ ἀρρωστίας θεραπεύου | *Learn before you speak and care yourself before the illness*. If the analysed texts show some competition and subordination between the terms ἰάομαι and θεραπεύω, a radical change in the Jewish perspective is done by Jesus Ben Sirach⁴² in chapter 38, who binds the assertion of Exodus 15:26, where God is presented as the Healer *par excellence*⁴³, with the medical care and the therapeutic practice. This practice is accepted and honoured because God has created and established them as doctors⁴⁴ (v.1), the knowledge of doctors comes from God (v. 2), the power of God can be seen in the medical practice and in the science of preparing mixtures (μεῖγμα) or drugs. The main idea is that God uses doctors and their knowledge to fulfil through them the divine healing action of the entire humanity⁴⁵.

This passage establishes the relationship between medical care and spiritual care, so in addition to repentance, prayer, inner purification and sacrifice, the presence of the physician is considered a necessity (v. 9 γὰρ αὐτοῦ χρεία), but the ultimate source of healing is God and the physician should also pray to God (v.14)⁴⁶. The final conclusion is that the sinner, even if he calls the doctors will not be healed because the healing source is God Himself⁴⁷, who created and taught the doctor, and He asks for spiritual rehabilitation in the same time with the somatic one (v.15)⁴⁸. The request of a moral life for healing is clearly emphasized by this text. The change of mentality in the Jewish thought, although not complete, was due to the proximity of the Jewish-Hellenistic world⁴⁹ with the practice and the

⁴¹ P. W. Skehan, A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: a New Translation with Notes, Introduction and Commentary*, (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 290.

⁴² Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Vol. 55 Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 19.

⁴³ Friedrich V. Reiterer, "The Influence of the Book of Exodus on Ben Sira", in J. Corley, *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*, 114.

⁴⁴ The verb יָקַח (*laqach*-take, take in the hand, carry along) is understood as κτίζω (*to create, build, found*). See. S. Noorda, "Illness and Sin, Forgiving, and Healing: The Connection of Medical Treatment and Religious Beliefs in Ben Sira 38.15," in: Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* (Brill Archive, 1979), 219, n. 10.

⁴⁵ Frederick J. Gaiser, *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry* (Baker Academic, 2010), 121.

⁴⁶ Eric Ève, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 107.

⁴⁷ For a Jewish legalist perspective on healing see: Fred Rosner, "The Physician and the Patient in Jewish Law", in Fred Rosner, J. David Bleich, Menachem M. Brayer, *Jewish Bioethics* (KTAV Publishing House, 2000), 47-57.

⁴⁸ S. Noorda, "Illness and Sin, Forgiving, and Healing": 221.

⁴⁹ Friedrich V. Reiterer, "Review of Recent Research on the Book of Ben Sira", in Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference*, 28-31 July 1996, Soesterberg, Netherlands (Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 40.

influence of Greek medicine⁵⁰.

From the Old Testament we can conclude that the term ὑγίης is applied to somatic healing and was influenced by the Hellenistic meaning, but at the same time it is subordinated to the Hebrew concept of life. The term שָׁלוֹם (*šalōm*, equivalent to εἰρήνη) indicates the holistic dimension of health concretised in a new moral life as a ground for healing. Θεραπέυω means the prophylactic and therapeutic human healing action subordinate and dependent on divine healing emphasize by verb ἰάομαι. These terms designate together the divine action of restoration of the human creature through healing depicted by the verb ἰάω.

3. Curative terminology in the New-Testament. Ἰαγίης as a moral imperative

Before analysing the meaning of the word ὑγίης we have to show the differences between ἰάομαι and θεραπεύω in the New-Testament. If the occurrences of θεραπεύω are very few in the writings of the Old Testament, in the New Testament the verb θεραπεύω is used twice more than the verb ἰάομαι⁵¹. Its action, being a component part of the didactic messianic mission⁵², does not have the same connotations of medical therapeutic practices as found in Judeo-Hellenistic thinking.

If the term originally designated the secular service, moving towards the care of sick people through medical treatment, the verb θεραπεύω reaches another level of semantic development, meaning in this period: *divine healing, restoration of human health*, gaining soteriological connotations. In the Old-Testament the healing action was considered exceptional, in the New Testament it is normative for the mission of Christ⁵³. What was in a constant expectation in the Old Testament it is now fulfilled in the Messianic era⁵⁴. However the Judeo-Hellenistic meaning is maintained in the New-Testament by the Pharisees in their confrontation with Jesus.

⁵⁰ B. McCovery, "Ben Sira's "Praise of the Physician" (Sir 38,1-15) in the Light of Some Hippocratic Writings", *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 21 (1998): 62-86.

⁵¹ The verb θεραπεύω is used in the New Testament for 43 times, Matt 4:23; 4:24; 8:7; 8:16; 9:35; 10:1; 10:8; 12:10; 12:15; 12:22; 14:14; 15:30; 17:16; 17:18; 19:2; 21:14; Mk: 1:34; 3:2; 3:10; 6:5; 6:13; Lk. 4:23; 4:40; 5:15; 6:7; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2; 8:43; 9:1; 9:6; 10:9; 13:14; 13:14; 14:3; Jn: 5:10; Acts 4:14; 5:16; 8:7; 17:25; 28:9; Rev. 13:3; 13:12;

⁵² Louise Wells demonstrates that the verb θεραπεύω is used in the synoptic Gospels to show the effect of the presence of Jesus in among the crowds. In Matthew's Gospel the term can be a substitute for διδάσκω (*to learn*), the final action of the verb θεραπεύω is equated with the teaching and kerygmatic messianic mission. Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 130-131.

⁵³ H. R. Balz, G. Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 143-144.

⁵⁴ Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 208.

This fact could be seen in the episode of the healing of the man with a withered hand on Sabbath presented in the Synoptic Gospels⁵⁵. In the story of Mark and Luke, Jesus designates the healing as a soteriological reality: ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν ἀγαθὸν ποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι, ψυχὴν σῶσαι ἢ ἀποκτεῖναι | *Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?* The importance of this miracle for our analysis is given by the use of θεραπεύω in Mt. 12:13 in the context of the occurrence of ὕγις. In verse 10 the action of θεραπεύω is correlated with a specific interdiction⁵⁶ given by the rabbinic law⁵⁷ and is regarded as a violation of the Sabbath⁵⁸: εἰ ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν θεραπεύσαι; | *if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath?* All the Sabbath controversies have healing acts as a main issue⁵⁹.

The Pharisaic perspective on healing is that the healing action designates a secular cure activity involving a particular act or work which is contrary to restrictive sabbatical principles⁶⁰. ἴαομαι is used in the New Testament to show the miraculous healing done by Jesus onto people. Most often this term is used to indicate the curative somatic healing⁶¹, but the expiatory and restoring meaning of the Hebrew verb נָפַח is maintained by the use of ἴαομαι in New Testament, with the meaning of *being free of mistakes and sins by healing*⁶². The verb ἴαομαι is used in the passive voice in order to highlight the direct intervention and the action of God⁶³. We can find in the Gospel of Luke the middle voice of the verb in order to show that the action of bodily healing is performed onto people by Jesus⁶⁴. The fact that the verb is not used with the active voice meaning, especially when the healing appears to be dependent on the faith of the sick person, signifies that the

⁵⁵ The account can be found in Mk. 3: 1-5; Mt. 12:9-14; Lk. 6:6-11.

⁵⁶ The Babylonian Talmud says in Yoma 8.6 that anyone who is in imminent danger of death does not have to keep the sabbatical restrictions *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. Jacob Neusner, vol. 5 (Hendrickson Pub., 2005), 323.

⁵⁷ Ulrich Luz says that Matthew: *is interested in the conflict with the Pharisaic opponents*. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew: A commentary*, Vol. 2, trad. James E. Crouch (Augsburg: Fortress Press, 2001), 187. This conflict is due to the interpretation of verb as an act against the Sabbatical laws. However, in verse 13, by using the adverb τότε and the historical present, the focus is on the one who suffers. J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, Paternoster Press, 2005), 489.

⁵⁸ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publication, 2007), 464.

⁵⁹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 464.

⁶⁰ The same idea can be found in Lk. 13:14; 14:3; Jn. 5:10; 9:14.

⁶¹ Mt. 8:8,13; 15:28; Mk. 5:29; Lk. 5:17; 6:18; 6:19; 7:7; 8:47; 9:2,11,42; 14:4; 17:18; 22:51; Jn.4:47; 5:13; Acts 9:34; 10:38; 28:8;

⁶² H. R. Balz, G. Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary*, 170; Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (New York: American Book Company, 1889), 296.

⁶³ Mt. 8:8; 8:13; 15:28; Mk. 5:29; Lk. 6:18; 7:7; 8:47; 17:18; Jn. 5:13; Hebr. 12:13; Jacob 5:16; 1Ptr. 2:24;

⁶⁴ In the parallel passages the authors are using the middle voice just for the Old-Testament quotations: Mt. 13:15; Lk. 5:17; 6:19; 9:2; 9:11; 9:42; 14:4; 22:51; Jn. 4:47; 12:10; Acts 9:34; 10:38; 28:8; 28:27; The examples from John will be analysed in the next chapter.

healing is not a psychosomatic and cognitive process done by the person itself, but rather the healing is done by God through Jesus Christ.

Through the passive and middle voice usage of the verb the author of the Gospel gives to *ἰάομαι* two complementary meanings: *the direct act of God's presence* and *the bodily healing performed by Christ as God*⁶⁵. If in the Old-Testament the act of restoration and reunification of the creation through healing, rendered by the Hebrew verb *שָׁחַ* and equated with *ἰάομαι*, was accomplished by God, in the New Testament this is done by Christ as the divine presence and power. In addition to these two terms, an important role for curative terminology is played by the adjective *ὕγις*.

In the New Testament *ὕγις* is mentioned for 11 times⁶⁶. In Matthew 12:13, as stated above, *ὕγις* is used with *θεραπεύω*. The healing of the man with the withered hand is rendered as *ἀπεκατεστάθη ὕγις*. *ὕγις* is used in this account, as in Mt. 15:31, to showcase the result of physical healing, but with the use of the passive form of *ἀποκαθιστάνω* it means: *restoring human beings in their integrity as part of God's creation*⁶⁷.

ὕγις appears in Mark 5:34 in the testimony of Christ: *θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ ἴσθι ὕγις ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου* | *Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be whole from your suffering*. *Σέσωκέν*, as the indicative perfect active form of the verb, denotes a completed action with results in the present time⁶⁸ showing the fulfilment of the woman's desire depicted in v. 28 with the same verb with indicative future passive form (*σωθήσομαι*) and accomplished in v. 29 by her immediate healing⁶⁹. This leads us to conclude that the two present imperative of Christ (*ὕπαγε* and *ἴσθι ὕγις*) are not simple reiteration of the result of healing⁷⁰. The phrase *ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην* (*go in peace*) is an accurate translation of the Old Testament expression *לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם* (*lêk lešālôm*)⁷¹, the meaning of *εἰρήνη* is directly borrowed from Hebrew and indicates the fullness of spiritual

⁶⁵ Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 161.

⁶⁶ Considering the text from Jn. 5:4 as an interpolation, and the Mk. 3:5 an equivalence of Mt.12:13, the term appears in the New Testament for 11 times in: Mt. 12:13; 15:31; Mk. 5:34; Jn. 5:6.9.11.14.15; Jn. 7:23; Acts 4:10; Tit 2:8.

⁶⁷ H. R. Balz, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 129.

⁶⁸ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, (Zondervan Publishing House, 2002), 573.

⁶⁹ R. A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 2002), 299. For the curative meanings of *σώζω* see: Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 180-191.

⁷⁰ J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 361. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Paternoster Press, 2002), 238.

⁷¹ For the Old-Testament examples see: R. H. Stein, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 271.

health⁷², a moral life having a social dimension⁷³ and even a missionary one⁷⁴. The imperative present form ἴσθι pictures a durative action⁷⁵ being a command to do something constantly and perpetually⁷⁶, showing the permanent state of health. Thus, the phrase ἴσθι ὑγιής is a moral command for living a permanent healthy life. Through this analysis we can conclude that the term ὑγιής refers not only to bodily health, which can be deteriorated over time, but, beside the somatic dimension, it should be rendered as a concept of spiritual and mental health too. The moral imperative given above imposes a new permanent existential dimension and a new moral healthy life⁷⁷.

In Acts 4:10 ὑγιής is used to describe the miraculous healing of a lame man carried out by Peter, indicating that the source of healing is Jesus Christ himself. The healing of the lame man is designated in verse 9 by the perfect passive indicative form - σέσωται- showing the divine origin and in the same time the somatic and spiritual meaning of the healing⁷⁸. The holistic restoration of human health is strengthened by the use of the term ὀλοκληρία in Acts 3:16.

4. The curative terminology in the account of the healing of the lame man at Bethesda Pool

The Gospel of John accounts fewer healings than the synoptic Gospels⁷⁹, but these accounts are rendered as parts of the major theological themes of the Gospel, especially the healing through the power of the word⁸⁰. Healing, understood as restoration to life, can be described as an issue in the Christological context that renders Jesus as *Life-Giver*. Accounted in the close proximity to another healing,

⁷² W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 194.

⁷³ Marla J. Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations": *Journal of Biblical Literature* 4 (1984): 622, n. 20.

⁷⁴ Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 204.

⁷⁵ F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 172.

⁷⁶ J. H. Moulton, N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 74.

⁷⁷ John R. Donahue, Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, vol. 2 of *Sacra Pagina* (Liturgical Press, 2005), 176. W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 194.

⁷⁸ J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 300.

⁷⁹ In the account of the healing of the lame man at Bethesda pool the author of the Gospel uses three terms that designate curative actions: the adjective ὑγιής (in Jn. 5:6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 7:23 and in Jn. 5:4, the occurrence of the term ὑγιής being applied exclusively to the healing of the lame man), the verb: θεραπεύω (used only once in the whole Gospel Jn. 5:10) and the verb ἰάομαι (used only in Jn. 4:47, 5:13 and 12:40).

⁸⁰ As in Jn. 4:5; In 5:8; Jn. 9:7; Jn. 11:43; Larry O. Hogan, *Healing in the Second Temple Period*, col. *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus*, vol. 21 (Fribourg/ Göttingen, 1992), 235.

the miracle from the pool involves a higher theological and Christological level of interpretation⁸¹, because Christ names Himself as ζῶοποιῶν (*He who gives life, he who makes alive*).

The curative terminology is used mainly with reference to the healing of the lame man at Bethsaida Pool. Both adjective ὑγιής and verb θεραπεύω are being used just in this account. Instead, the term ἰάομαι, which has few occurrences in the Fourth Gospel, is connected with the theme of life and restoration to the true life.

Except the account of the healing at the Bethsaida Pool, the author of the Gospel also uses the verb ἰάομαι as a curative term⁸², for the healing of the Official's son⁸³ in Jn. 4:47⁸⁴. The specificity of the Johannine passage is given by the use of different terms in the same context for describing the holistic dimension of healing, compared with previous state, described by the verb ἀσθενέω⁸⁵. The meaning of ἰάομαι is enhanced by the use of the verb ζάω (*to live*), showing that the result of healing is not given only by the physical recovery from the disease, but at the same time healing is perceived as restoring to life⁸⁶. Ἰάομαι is closely related to the meaning of the verb ἡγῆ (ἡγῆ- *to live*), rendered in the Old-Testament as a curative term. Thus, in Jn. 4:47 ἰάομαι is used within the theme of life going beyond the simple understanding of healing as a biological and physical reality.

Ἰαυγής is used for the first time in John's Gospel in the question of Jesus Christ in Jn 5:6: θέλεις ὑγιής γενέσθαι; | *Do you wish to get well?* as a solution to a former condition⁸⁷. The question is an example of Christ's foreknowledge of the

⁸¹ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 320;

⁸² This verb is used in the quotation from Old Testament in Jn. 12:40: τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπόρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάομαι αὐτοῦς. | *He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.*

⁸³ The word βασιλικός is used for a royal servant of Herod Antipas. H. R. Balz, *Exegetical Dictionary*, vol. 1, 208. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 206; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John, New International Commentary On The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 2010), 276;

⁸⁴ The importance of this passage is given by the close relationship with healing at the Bethsaida Pool. Some scholars consider that Jn. 4.46-54 and Jn. 5:1-47 are a single complete episode. cf. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 319; R. Brown considers the text of Jn. 4.46-54 as a passageway for the episode of the healing from Bethsaida. Raymond. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, cxl-cxli.

⁸⁵ The verb ἀσθενέω designates the state of human helplessness and weakness at a psychosomatic level manifested through its effects, such as disease, somatic helplessness and mental incapacity, ethical and religious weakness manifested by sin and even economic failure. The term designates the "holistic" size human weakness. Gustav Stählin, „Art. ἀσθενής, ἀσθενεια, ἀσθενέω, ἀσθενημα“, in: Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, vol. 1, 490-493.

⁸⁶ R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 191.

⁸⁷ Although the author does not mention from which disease suffered this man, we can say according to v. 7, that it could be possible to suffer from paralysis or a severe locomotion difficulty. This disability last for 38 years. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 242.

sick man life⁸⁸. The aorist participle form γνοῦς designates an action antecedent to the action of the main verb expressed by present⁸⁹, showing that Christ comes towards the sick man because He is omniscient, knowing the condition of the fallen human nature⁹⁰. The phrase πολλὸν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει reinforces the idea of divine foreknowledge, for the fact that γνοῦς as aorist participle is related to the verb ἔχει indicating a past action which is still ongoing⁹¹, a bodily illness from 38 years.

The first type of human health that we can highlight from these remarks is the somatic or bodily health, Christ being the one who heals bodily diseases. The Gospel of John describes the disease in terms of bodily suffering. In this biblical description we can see other elements of disease and a different vision of human health depicted by John the Evangelist. In order to do that we have to study the passage from a closer perspective.

The question of Jesus Christ: “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6) implies a psychological dimension of health⁹². The Greek verb θέλω is used in the 2nd person singular, Christ asking for the personal desire of the lame man in order to be healed. In the verse 14 the verb γίνομαι is used with its passive voice form, but in verse 6 the author uses the verb γίνομαι at aorist middle voice⁹³. The question of Jesus Christ is very important because it requires a psychological desire of the lame man to be healed by Christ⁹⁴. This idea is developed by St. Cyril of Alexandria, who says:

⁸⁸ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 210; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 268.

⁸⁹ “τοῦτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον καὶ γνοῦς ὅτι πολλὸν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει” | When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been in this condition for a long time. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 624; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 243; For a different opinion see: J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 292.

⁹⁰ Stelian Tofană, “Coordonate și imperative ale misiunii Bisericii în lumina episodului “Vitezda” (In 5, 1-15)”: *Plērōma* 1 (2008): 12-13.

⁹¹ J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 3, 62; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 520; E. D. W. Burton, *Syntax of the moods and tenses in New Testament Greek* (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 31898), 10.

⁹² Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 268; W. Barclay, *The Gospel of John, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2001), 209; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John, Black's New Testament Commentaries* (London: Continuum, 2005), 193-194. For a different opinion, see: J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 292.

⁹³ θέλεις ὑγιῆς γενέσθαι; | *Do you want to be well?* T. Friberg, B. Friberg, N. F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 4, *Baker's Greek New Testament Library*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 97.

⁹⁴ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John, Blaker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2004), 180. John MacArthur emphasizes the importance of this question by saying that: “it secured the man's full attention, focused on his need, offered him healing, and communicated to him the depth of Christ's love and concern.” John MacArthur, *John 1-11, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006), 174.

“It is a clear proof of Christ’s utmost goodness that he does not waste a moment waiting for requests from the sick but anticipates their request with his loving kindness. He runs, you see, to the one who is lying down, and he has compassion on the one who is sick and helpless. But the question about whether he wanted to be freed from his illness was not an inquiry made from ignorance about something that was clear and evident to all, but an act to stir up more fervent desire and to urge him to ask with the greatest zeal.”⁹⁵

However the psychological dimension of the question must not transfer the disease in the domain of psychopathology. The assumption that the lame man at the pool was suffering of a general neurasthenia that would have led him to a lack of desire for life and to bodily paralysis cannot be proven⁹⁶. The psychological dimension of this question involves the fact that Christ is trying to test the will of the lame man whether he wants to be healed⁹⁷ and the fact that Jesus Christ can heal this person⁹⁸. At the same time the answer of the lame man implies a new perspective on human sickness, the social one: κύριε⁹⁹, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα¹⁰⁰ ὅταν ταραχθῆ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλη με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι¹⁰¹ ἐγώ, ἄλλος

⁹⁵ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, trans. David R. Maxwell (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 137-138.

⁹⁶ W. O. Fitch says that: “My thesis is that the Fourth Evangelist has depicted for us here, not merely one whose long illness has robbed him of hope, but one whose malady originated in the unconscious desire to avoid the responsibilities of life.” W.O. Fitch, “The Interpretation of St. John 5,6”, in F.L. Cross, *Studia Evangelica*, IV (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 195. For different exegetical interpretations see: Martin Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy*, vol. 132, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 63-64.

⁹⁷ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 243.

⁹⁸ St. Cyril of Alexandria says: “The question of whether he wanted to receive what he longed for contains the suggestion and implication that Jesus can supply it and is already prepared to do it. He is only waiting for the request of the one who receives grace.” Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 138.

⁹⁹ The vocative form of the noun κύριε can be understood in the Gospel of John as a christological address or as a polite way to address. In this passage the sick man uses just a polite way to address Jesus Christ, showing us that the man does not see Jesus as the Messiah or as the Healer but as a person that can help him to go to the pool. H. R. Balz, *Exegetical dictionary*, vol. 2, 329; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 243; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 269; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 293;

¹⁰⁰ The construction ἔχω + accusative case+ ἵνα+ subjunctive can be considered a translation of an Aramaic construction because in Greek the verb is used in this kind of cases in the infinitive form. Antoine Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs*, 137. C. Barrett considers that this construction with ἵνα is a result of the mistranslation of the Aramaic particle ܗܘܢܐ, which, intended as a relative, has been taken as a final particle. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1978), 254.

¹⁰¹ The construction ἐν ᾧ is the only example in the Gospel of John used with a temporal meaning.

πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει | *Sir, I have no man*¹⁰² *when the water is troubled to put me into the pool, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.* This answer enables us to see that the human health involves the restoration of the social status; the disease implies the dislocation from the social environment and the loss of any personal relationships with other people¹⁰³.

These two elements can be highlighted by the fact that the term ἄνθρωπος can be understood both as *servant*, showing the deplorable social and financial status of the lame man because he was unable to ask or to hire somebody to help him, and as *friend*¹⁰⁴, indicating the inability of the man to fit in that social context, or the incapacity to maintain a minimally social position, despite the fact that he was at the pool for a long time¹⁰⁵. The main concern of the paralytic man at the pool was the fact that he has no one to help him and his social status was deplorable¹⁰⁶. Unable to engage in social relationships he could not find a person to be actively involved in his life. This is the reason why he emphasizes the social aspect of his helplessness¹⁰⁷. St. John Chrysostom believes that the social dimension of the disease can be cure by Jesus Christ's help, because with Christ nobody can say that he is alone: Οὐ γὰρ ἄγγελός ἐστιν ὁ ταράσσων, ἀλλὰ ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων Δεσπότης ὁ τὸ πᾶν ἐργαζόμενος. Καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν· Νῦν τὸν κάμνοντα

¹⁰² Some Romanian biblical editions, as some English ones, translate „ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω” by *I have no one*, showing that the sick man was completely alone. For example, in the Bible from Pesta we can find this translation: „Doamne, eu nu am pre **nimeni** să mă bage în scaldătoare” (*Lord, I have nobody to put me into the pool*), *Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului și Noului Testament, Edițiune nouă revăzută după texturile originale* (Pesta, 1873), 89; in the translation of 1924 of D. Cornilescu we have: „n’am pe **nimeni** să mă bage în scaldătoare” (*I have no one to put me into the pool*), *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului și Noului Testament, [trans. D. Cornilescu], traducere nouă, cu trimeteri* (Societatea Biblică pentru Răspîndirea Bibliei în Anglia și Străinătate, 1924); Gala Galaction translates: „Doamne, nu am pe **nimeni** ca să mă bage în scaldătoare” (*Lord, I have no one*), *Biblia adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură*, trans. By Vasile Radu and Gala Galaction (Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă Regele Carol II, 1939), 1197; Cristian Bădiliță translates this passage: „Doamne, nu am pe **nimeni**” (*Lord, I have no one*), *Evanghelia după Ioan, introduceri, traducere, comentarii și note patristice de Cristian Bădiliță* (Bucharest, Curtea-Veche, 2010), 43.

¹⁰³ John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 120.

¹⁰⁴ W. Arndt, F. Gingrich, F. Danker, W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 68.

¹⁰⁵ Having friends and social relationships was an important and vital aspect for the life of a man in the Jewish and Mediterranean culture. John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 128.

¹⁰⁶ Charles Harold Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge University Press, 1963), 177.

¹⁰⁷ The Romanian Theologian Andrei Scrima considers that the two parts of this answer imply the whole spectrum of human degradation. The fact that there was no man who can help him represents “an image of spiritual misery that rules our world”, “a picture of selfishness and lack of love over us all”. Andrei Scrima, *Comentariu integral la Evanghelia după Ioan*, (București: Humanitas, 2008), 69.

ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω¹⁰⁸. So far the author of the Gospel speaks about three types of disease: bodily, psychological and social, a fourth type will be added in verse 14, that is the spiritual disease.

In this context of great suffering, Jesus Christ says: ἔγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει | “*Rise, take up your mat, and walk*”(John 5:8). The holistic healing is accentuated by the three imperative verbs addressed to the sick man¹⁰⁹, two of them used in present tense and one in aorist tense. The first imperative verb ἔγειρε designates a continuous or perpetual action. This verbal form pictures an action in contrast to the previous one¹¹⁰ expressed in verse 6 by the participle form κατακεείμενον. But this verb does not designate just the fact that the man should stand up, as we can see in some English translations, because in the previous verse the lame man stated that he was capable of walking, although with great difficulty, nor is a simple command, because for that it would have been used the aorist tense¹¹¹.

We can translate the word ἔγειρε with *arise*. The same verb and the same translation can be found in the verse 21 of this chapter where Christ speaks about the resurrection of the dead¹¹². This means that Christ is raising this man from his sinful life. The verb ἔγειρε is used both for body and soul¹¹³. This means that the man received both bodily and spiritual healing. The second imperative verb ἄρον used in aorist tense represents a momentary and unique action, but the usage of the imperative verb περιπάτει in present tense shows a progressive action¹¹⁴, emphasizing both the beginning and the development of the action¹¹⁵ and the fact that the period of suffering is over¹¹⁶. The command of Christ to take up the mat does not represent a direct command for breaking the Sabbath, but a sign of the restoration of bodily health¹¹⁷. The state of his complete recovery from disease is

¹⁰⁸ „for now it is not an Angel that troubles, it is the Lord of Angels who works all. The sick man cannot now say, I have no man”. Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews* trans. by Charles Marriott, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 14. Edited by Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889), 125.

¹⁰⁹ John MacArthur, *John 1-11*, 174.

¹¹⁰ F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar*, 173.

¹¹¹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 719-720;

¹¹² U. C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 218; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 243; Stelian Tofană, “Coordonate și imperative”, 15.

¹¹³ Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 298.

¹¹⁴ Buist M. Fanning had analysed the usage of the imperative form of the verb περιπατέω in the New Testament and concluded that it is used especially for healings. Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, *Oxford Theological Monographs* (Clarendon Press, 1990), 343-344.

¹¹⁵ J. H. Moulton, N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 3, 77. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 721.

¹¹⁶ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, 180; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 244; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 294.

¹¹⁷ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary: John*, 74.

confirmed by the author of the Gospel: εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος /and immediately the man became well, (John 5:9). The temporal adverb εὐθέως and the word ὑγιής are used to show that the healing is instantly and complete¹¹⁸. In vv. 10-13, the discourse turns to the conflict between the Jews and the healed man¹¹⁹.

This polemic implies also the usage of curative terminology. The Jews are speaking about the one who was healed by using the verb τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ that according to their view represents a practice of secular healing involving a certain activity, which contravenes the law of Sabbath. The construction of this passage involves different words for disease and healing. The Evangelist is using three terms in order to describe the levels the healing of the sick man: θεραπεύω (v.10), ὑγιής (v. 11) and ἰάομαι (v.13). The paralytic man is called ὁ ἀσθενῶν/*the sick man* (v. 7), than τεθεραπευμένος/*the man who had been cured* (v. 10) and ὁ ἰαθεὶς/*the man who had been healed* (v. 13)¹²⁰.

The final remark of the complete healing can be found in v. 14, where Jesus says: “See, you have been restored. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you” (John 5:14). This is a proof that health is closely linked to a sinless life.

Conclusions

In this paper, we tried to emphasize that the central lexical element around the theme of healing developed in the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John is the Greek adjective ὑγιής. Etymological markers gave us the possibility to place the term ὑγιής in the thematic area of life, an established *topos* of Johannine theology, ὑγιής and ζωή having common etymological components pertaining to the same semantic domain.

From the Old Testament we have concluded that the term ὑγιής is applied to somatic healing and was influenced by the Hellenistic meaning, but at the same time, it is subordinated to the Hebrew concept of life. The term שָׁלוֹם (*šalōm*, equivalent to εἰρήνη) indicates the holistic dimension of health concretised in a new moral life as a ground for healing. Θεραπεύω means the prophylactic and therapeutic human healing action subordinate and dependent on divine healing emphasize by the verb ἰάομαι. These terms designate together the divine action of restoration of the human creature through healing depicted by the verb ἰσχύει.

¹¹⁸ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 269; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 212; Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Lettura dell'evangelo secondo Giovanni*, vol. 2 (Torino: Edizioni Paoline, 1992), 31-32.

¹¹⁹ The term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is referring to the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people, especially not to the hole people. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 271;

¹²⁰ J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 295, n. 45.

Before analysing the meaning of the word ὑγίης, we have shown the differences between ἰάομαι and θεραπεύω in the New-Testament. If the occurrences of θεραπεύω are very few in the writings of the Old Testament, in the New Testament the verb θεραπεύω is used twice more than the verb ἰάομαι. We can conclude that its action, being a component part of the didactic messianic mission, does not have the same connotations of medical therapeutic practices as found in Judeo-Hellenistic thinking. If the term originally designated the secular service, moving towards the care of sick people through medical treatment, the verb θεραπεύω reaches another level of semantic development, meaning in this period: *divine healing, restoration of human health*, gaining soteriological connotations. We have seen that in the Old Testament, the healing action was considered exceptional, but in the New Testament, it is normative for the mission of Christ. However, the Judeo-Hellenistic meaning is maintained in the New Testament by the Pharisees in their confrontation with Jesus.

We have tried to demonstrate that the Johannine curative terminology involves a holistic existential dimension of human health, by emphasizing that, because the human being is a biological, psychological, social and spiritual reality, health contains four perspectives: 1. *somatic or bodily health*, because the Gospel of John describes the disease in terms of bodily suffering; 2. *psychological health*, involving the fact that Christ is trying to test the will of the man whether he wants to be healed; 3. *social health*, underlined by the fact that the lame man was unable to engage in social relationships, and 4. *spiritual health*, one of the most important.

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LUKE'S ORIGINAL VISION ON TRANSFIGURATION STORY (LUKE 9: 27-36)

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ABSTRACT. Our study is trying to identify the main instruction of the Transfiguration story, reflecting St. Luke's point of view, using both patristic opinions and helpful modern commentaries. Apostle Luke depicts an original version of the Transfiguration Mountain: eight days passed after the promise of seeing the Kingdom of God; the transfiguration of Christ happens while He was praying; the noun *ἐξοδος* points out Lucanic original vision etc. The foremost *kerygma* that the disciples are about to learn is that of their own personal transfiguration, the only path of rediscovering the lost Image of a liturgical membership. The presence of the most towering prophets of the Old Testament here on the mountain, certify that before you enter into the Kingdom of God, you have to cross the Golgotha scene, a journey that all of us have to take in order to inherit eternal life. Trying to achieve a proper exegesis of the Sacred Texts is not easy to reach, that is why our work is far from being accomplished.

Keywords: Kingdom of God, transfiguration, garments of skins, theophany, deification.

Introduction

The text, which Saint Luke the Evangelist proposes (9:27-36) is not at all easy to interpret precisely because of its mystical interferences.¹ Because both Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Methodius of Olympus, Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory the Theologian and Maximus the Confessor sees in the process of our deification, the exclusive work of the sanctifying grace². The event of the Transfiguration proposes us the manner in which each of us may be transformed – from the blessed way of the Cross (*Luke 9:31*) to the Resurrection

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¹ A more detailed approach of this theme can be found in Cătălin Varga, *Few New Testament Studies: An Orthodox Apology* (Saarbrücken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016), 111-140.

² See more detailed in Nichifor Crainic, *Cursurile de mistică* (Sibiu: Editura Deisis, 2010), 187-189.

(ἀναγεγεννημένοι) in the Transfigured Christ (*1 Peter* 1: 3. 23), as Isaac – “the beloved son” (τὸν υἱὸν σου τὸν ἀγαπητόν) from *Genesis* 22:2, who, urged by his father, was to sacrifice his life in order to recuperate it later on through an intermediate “resurrection”. The eastern tradition is convinced that it was not Christ Who was transfigured, but the eyes of the Apostles, enlightened to understand Christ as He already was: the Son of God, born from the Father, the glory and brightness of God (*John* 1:14; *Hebrew* 1:3). Of these Saint Maximus the Confessor says: „... they moved from body to spirit, before they left life in their body”³.

As a matter of fact, the three participants (Peter, James and John) contemplating the brightness of the transfiguration (*Psalms* 96:9; 104:2), recognized in this timeless event which seems to take place in the Kingdom of God (*Mark* 9:1), their own desideratum: the call to perfection (*Matthew* 5:48; *John* 17:24), or at least they looked as though they understood⁴. The Transfiguration story occurs at the heart of the synoptic Gospels (*Matthew* 17:1-9; *Mark* 9:1-10; *Luke* 9:27-36). The Transfiguration to which Saint Apostle Peter also participates takes place shortly after the cutting experience to which Christ subjects him because of his uncontrollable temper, when from “foundation rock” (τῆ πέτρα– *Matthew* 16:18) he becomes “stumbling block” (σκάνδαλον–*Matthew* 16:23)⁵. The supreme Theophany (superior to that from Sinai – *Exodus* 19; or Horeb – *1 Kings* 19) is nothing else than an anticipated Resurrection and a prefigured Parousia, offering three axiological coordinates: theophany, soteriology and Resurrection, all of them bearing an Lucanic vision as we will see below.

³ Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua*, in *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești*, vol. 80, ed. Dumitru Stăniloae (București: EIBMBOR, 1983), 125.

⁴ In many places of the Gospel, Christ sees with sadness that His disciples are not able to understand Him, cases in which they become as narrow minded as the people *outside* the Christic message. And Christ is again in the delicate situation to reprimand them: Can't you understand? Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? (*Mark* 4:13). Such is the case of the parable of the sower or of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves of bread, or of the announcement of His future Passions etc. Saint Luke concludes: *The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what He was talking about* (*Luke* 18:34).

⁵ The Greek word *skandalon* is usually translated with: “madness, abomination”; and its correspondent *skandalēthron* means “arm for the bait in a trap”. In classical Greek for example, the word is used by Aristophanes with the purpose to draw someone into dialectic so as to defeat him later with arguments. Hence, the word has two interchangeable meanings that have as purpose to deceive someone, that is why we are no longer surprised by the cold shower that Saint Peter is subjected to.

The Original Vision of Apostle Luke: Some Independent Statements

The Lucanic version of the Transfiguration, in comparison with the other accounts, maintained a personal touch⁶. Although at first sight it seems that Saint Luke comes into opposition with the other two synoptics, in fact he completes them. For example, if Matthew and Mark mention the fact that six days have passed (Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας ἕξ) from the promise of seeing the Heavenly Kingdom until Transfiguration; this time Luke interferes and mentions a number of eight days (ὥσει ἡμέραι ὀκτώ)⁷. As we have already showed, at first sight we might talk about a contradiction in the synoptics' account, that if we remain strictly at the level of the literary interpretation.

The problem is linked strictly to the chosen moment for the reference of the Evangelists to the two great moments that took place, if Matthew and Mark speak about "six days" it is because they choose to refer directly to the episode on apprenticeship from *Matthew* 16:24-28 respectively *Mark* 8:34-38. But Luke chooses to link the episode of the confession of Messiah (*Luke* 9:18-22)⁸ with that of Tabor, that is why he speaks about "eight days". Besides, the historical accuracy of Saint Luke is rescinded by the adverb ὥσει ("about", "almost", "some") leaving room for the theological interpretation of the eighth day, the salvation of the whole creation (*2 Peter* 3:10-13), the day of eternity. The evangelist thus contributes decisively through the presentation of the eschatological tension, necessary for the understanding of the mystery from Tabor.

⁶ In the Lucanic text, we will find at least five key details (for example vv. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33) which unfortunately are missing from the other two synoptics, details that contribute essentially to the understanding of the great event. According to the originals, if in Matthew the narration comprises 160 words, and in Mark 152; the Lucanic version has 172 words, which shows a much more detailed approach by Luke – he certainly is the most impressed of the evangelists.

⁷ C. Evans states that in this case Saint Luke uses the same precision which is also present in the beginning of his Gospel when he speaks about the ritual of circumcision (*Genesis* 17:12; *Luke* 2:21); we may also mention here the purification of the Temple of the Lord in *2 Chronicles* 29:17. See Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, in *New International Biblical Commentary*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 151.

⁸ According to (*Matthew* 16:24) between the episodes: "Peter's confession" and "The theme of the apprenticeship" there is a temporal delimitation underlined by the time adverb τότε – which depending on the context may be translated with "then, after that; etc.". In the narrative accounts, such as that from *2:7* or *4:1*, it may be doubled by the idea of an action that is about to happen right in the following time units. See for example Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, kindle edition, (Baker Books, 2000). Probably the news of the Passions from the end of the episode of confession (9:22) supported by the discussion between Christ and the two great prophets of the Old Testament (9:31) impress Saint Luke profoundly, the correlation of these two events occurring naturally.

The second key aspect is inserted by the evangelist in v. 29: καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι αὐτὸν⁹, which, together with the one from *Mark* 9: 2 (καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν¹⁰) offer to reader the necessary direction for a correct orientation. Through prayer (προσεύχεσθαι) we are revealed the glory of Christ's deity and thus we will see freely, says Saint John Damascene¹¹, inside ourselves the Kingdom of God (τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦθεοῦ), which „is in our midst” (ἐντὸς) – *Luke* 17: 21. For Moses was surrounded by the glory that came from outside, but Christ was surrounded by the „dazzling white” (*Mark* 9:3) of His natural glory. But as it happened in the Gethsemane Garden (*Luke* 22:39-46), the apostles are yet incapable to participate fully to the Christic co-service, because they are frightened underlines (*Mark* 9:6), and because they were very sleepy mentions (*Luke* 9:32). Meaning that they are to a certain extent absent from the great Christic event, or at least so it would seem at first sight. For the presentation of the most unexpected event in the lives of the Apostles, the narrator (Luke) choses to use three verbs that seem to underline a spiritual progression: προσεύχεσθαι = “he was praying”; ἐγένετο = “became” and ἐξαστράπτων which may be translated by “shining”. Because before the great adventure of becoming into the spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν), prayer in solitude in the Judean desert (*Matthew* 4:2) is first required, then the tearing of the prayer in the Mount of Olives (*Luke* 22:44), so that later it all culminates in the agonizing cry of the prayer on the Cross of sufferance (*Matthew* 27:46). And from here everything is declined in that state of purity (*Psalms* 119:130; *1 John* 1:5), of transfiguration (*2 Corinthians* 4:6), shining (ἐξαστράπτων) as the sun in the sky. In all the cases, the action belongs to God, and the faithful are only the objects of this action. This splendour was not presented in a moment of collective unconsciousness, it was not consumed at the level of the imagination of the apostles, but it was real – in

⁹ “And it was while He was praying...He became” (Anania 2001); “And while He was praying...He became” (Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură, 1988); “And He became, while He was praying...” (Biblia adică Dumnezeuiasca Scriptură a Legii Vechi și a celei Noi, 1914) etc. Because ἐγένετο derived from the aorist verb in the passive voice: ἐγένηθην translated by “to come to being; to become; to be” (*Mark* 2:27; *Luke* 4:24; *John* 1:3; *Acts* 4:22), that is why the correct translation is dictated by the context. Hence, according to the Lucanic original (9:29), the transfiguration (μετεμορφώθη) of Christ (*Mark* 9:2) happens during His prayer, a key detail which, if it hadn't occurred in Luke we would have had a poorer knowledge of it.

¹⁰ According to some researchers, the Transfiguration in the version of Saint Mark has a Paschal mark, adding with originality the glory revealed here on Tabor, with that of the Resurrected Jesus Christ (*Matthew* 28; *Luke* 24 and *John* 20) but revealed from the Paschal present to the narrative past of the Christic activity. See Amy-Jill Levine, Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 78.

¹¹ Ioan Damaschinul, *Cuvânt la Schimbarea la Față/Chip a Domnului și Mântuitorului nostru Iisus Hristos*, in *Despre Lumina taborică, rugăciunea lui Iisus și curăția inimii*, ed. Ioan I. Ică jr (Sibiu: Deisis, 2013), 77.

the person of the Son of God¹², in the spiritual light of His kindness (*John* 3:18-21; *1 John* 1:7); although this revelation of the spiritual world through substance is a great mystery. The theophanic light anticipates our future relationship with it, anchoring us into the destiny of the supreme transfiguration, through a dialogical communication of the deified bodies (*1 Corinthians* 15:42-49)¹³.

In the narration of the Tabor, only Luke infers the wonderful mystery through the construction: Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας, οἱ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ („...Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor”). The verb in the passive voice (ὀφθέντες with the root: ὀράω), in our case after the passive aorist (ᾤφθη) and probably borrowed from *Mark* 1:11 where the verb ᾤφθη is used to describe a divine appearance, presents and action suffered and completed by a subject (Moses and Elijah) in the perfection of the attributes of glory. That is why one cannot talk here of a meteoric appearance, the two great prophets are presented in the Lucanic vocabulary as guests from Heaven whose existence transcends darkness¹⁴. Moreover, the fact that the apostles perceived both the presence of the great prophets and the brightness of the divine glory on Christ's Face, as something real, palpable, is confirmed to us by the Petrine anamnesis from *2 Peter* 1:16-18. Because Peter does not present to Mark the Evangelist the miracle of Tabor according to „cleverly devised stories” (Ὁὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες). „The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power” (v. 16) was confessed both vocally and by the epistles, from the perspective of the eye witness: „we ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain” (v. 18).

The construction „and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning”, may also be regarded from the following perspective: the theme of the garments of skin. According to (*Genesis* 3:21), these were added to man after the fall so they do not represent an ontological element. Because of the original sin this illness was born into us to death, our nature was completely dominated by this nekrotēs. Hence, the “garments of skin” express the biological mortality (nekrotēs) which became man's second nature after the fall. It is the new state in which man lives, that of „life in death”, as he does not own life as a constitutive element, but lives through the view of deferring death. His life was changed into survival¹⁵. But

¹² H.D.M. Spence, Joseph S. Exell, *St. Mark*, in *The Pulpit Commentary*, vol. 36 (London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1913), 2.

¹³ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos lumina lumii și îndumnezeitorul omului* (București: Anastasia, 1993), 202-205.

¹⁴ Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, in *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, eds. Howard Marshall, W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 384.

¹⁵ Panayotis Nellis, *Omul – animal îndumnezeit. Perspective pentru o antropologie ortodoxă* (Sibiu: Editura Deisis, 2009), 80.

Christ comes and restores this second nature of man which is perishable and natural (*Ephesians* 5:8), His transfigured body becoming the „shining garment” (ἱμάτια) – *Mark* 9:3, of His divinity, transfiguring us gradually (*2 Corinthians* 3:18), our spiritualized body (σῶμα πνευματικόν) becoming free from the corruptible substance, free from passions and affects, thus participating fully to the glory of God. For in the Person of Jesus Christ the glory becomes accessible. The transfigured body of Jesus Christ recuperates the human dignity, filling us with eternal life (*John* 6:40), the Body of Christ Resurrected becomes the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (*1 Corinthians* 15:20), the sign and the guarantee that they will all resurrect after Him in imperishableness. Because „the body that is sown is perishable (νεκρῶν), it is raised imperishable (ἀφθαρσία); it is sown in dishonor (ἀτιμία), it is raised in glory (δόξη); ...it is sown a natural body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), it is raised a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν)” as Saint Apostle Paul reminds us (*1 Corinthians* 15:42-44¹⁶).

The following key point in the Lucanic narration, which is unique as a matter of fact, is the support of the discussion between Christ and the two great prophets of the Old Testament: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο συνελάλουν αὐτῷ, οἵτινες ἦσαν Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἡλίας, οἱ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ (vv. 30-31¹⁷). Since the One Who is transfigured is the Lord of the alive and of the dead, we must not be surprised by the appearance of Moses and Elijah especially *today* when Moses is allowed to enter into the Promised Land (*Deuteronomy* 34:4), in the land „flowing with milk and honey” (*Exodus* 3:8). In ancient times both Moses and Elijah received the commandment to go up to

¹⁶ After presenting several analogies regarding the body and the seed (vv. 36-41) Apostle Paul chooses to exemplify what he had already stated through an eschatological discourse, as a possible answer to the question in v. 35. In a series of antithetical couples (vv. 42b-44a), four qualities of the immortal body are presented which surpass the four features of the mortal body. Four antitheses are underlined by the verbs in the passive voice *speiretai* and *egeiretai*: “the natural body’ is mortal, lacking glory, weak and pray to the psychological instability; but the “spiritual body” is immortal, shining, powerful and spiritual. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, in *The Anchor Yale Bible*, vol. 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 591.

¹⁷ Almost all the Romanian editions translate the noun ἔξοδον with the end of the existence, in this telluric frame of the Saviour, which was to accomplish in Jerusalem, the leaving from this world, inculcating the idea of His close Resurrection, according to (*Matthew* 16:21; 20:18-19; *Mark* 9:31; *Luke* 17:25; *Acts* 17:3). “The end” (ἔξοδον) of Jesus announces that journey from the Taboric glory to the glory of the Father in the Kingdom of God (*Luke* 9:26; 24:26). To the same line of interpretation, we may ascribe other editions such as: “The Eastern/Greek Orthodox Bible New Testament (The EOB)”; “English Standard Version (The ESV)”; “New American Standard Bible with Codes (The NAS)”; “Revised Standard Version (The RSV)”; or “Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible (TOB)”. They translate the Greek ἔξοδον with the noun “departure” (leaving, exodus). But the version “King James with Codes” or KJV translates it with the noun “decease” (death) which complicates the text, with the emphasis more than welcome of the human nature of Jesus Christ, a reminiscence of the Nestorian philosophy as it seems.

Mount Horeb (*Exodus* 24:12-18; *1 Kings* 19:7-12) the first entering into cloud and darkness and the latter into a thin ray of light, so that both are able to participate to the glory of God. However, here on the same "inner Horeb" free from all conjunctures, the first witnesses of the first theophany participate fully to the spectacle of the second theophany that of the uncreated light, Christ calling them in one moment.

Some think that the appearance of Moses underlines the fact that Jesus is not come to dismiss the Law, as for Elijah his presence also certifies the messianic prophecies¹⁸. Others see Moses as the representative of the prophets and Elijah as the symbol of eschaton¹⁹. Prophet Malachi (4:4) speaks of the return of Elijah in an atmosphere preceding „the day of the Lord” (ἡμέρα κυρίου), and another eschatological reference regarding the two great prophets may be interpreted in the book of revelation (11:6). That is why, Carlston concludes, it is necessary to put the two together in an eschatological circumstance (that of their return) in order to explain their presence on Tabor²⁰.

The fact that Moses and Elijah appear in this moment talking with Jesus about „the days of His glorification” (John 7:39; 16:13) proves their faith into His Incarnation and sacrifice. For the transfiguration started on the mountain bears a note of inner intensification up to the moment of Christ's Resurrection, the moment of the final transfiguration. Christ had already begun to speak to His disciples about His Passion followed by the majestic Resurrection, on many occasions. What Saint Luke inserts here underlines the fact that the apostles understood that something dramatic was about to happen in Jerusalem²¹. Following Jesus was equivalent to death, but they knew (Christ had told them) that „whoever loses their life for Christ, will save it” (*Luke* 9:23-24).

This word ἔξοδον (that we find only here and in *2 Peter* 1:15) emphasizes the fact that Luke understands the great mystery of redemption that would soon happen. He had already used the standard word for death (θάνατος) in the context of the narration from 9:27. But he wants to show that Moses and Elijah refer to a different kind of death in their discussion, moreover, since the typology Sinai/Moses occupies the scene, and Moses is as present as the other actors, the

¹⁸ Craig A. Evans, *Luke...*, 161; Robert Stein, *Luke*, in *New American Commentary*, vol. 24 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 284; Francois Bovon, *Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, vol. 1, in *Hermeneia*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 376.

¹⁹ Darel L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:53*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 568; John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, in *Word Biblical Commentary*, (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 499.

²⁰ Charles Edwin Carlston, "Transfiguration and Resurrection", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80 (1961): 237-238.

²¹ Maria Yen Do, *The Lucan journey: A Study of Luke 9:28-36 and Acts 1:6-11 as an Architectural Pair* (Bern: International Academic Publishers, 2010), 115.

use of a word such as ἔξοδον will bring into the minds of the readers the thought of an „end” higher than a natural death, one which is swollen by life – because „whoever loses His life for Christ will save it” (9:24). Thanks to this premises we may think that the existence of this ἔξοδον bears a key theological detail. St. Luke understands the prophetic role of Jesus Christ also from the fact that He will be rejected by His own people. According to the Jewish tradition, the great prophets such as Elijah and Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or Amos were violently rejected by their townsmen, in some cases even martyred. That is why whoever calls himself “great prophet” must accept this in order to gain credibility. It seems that this tradition was still fresh in the mind of Luke the Evangelist, as B. Ehrman states²². In conclusion, we may summarize the following on the appearance of these prophets: some of the disciples thought that Christ was Moses or Elijah (*Luke* 9:18-21), their presence both invalidates this opinion and shows the difference between servant and Lord. Christ allows the appearance of these two great prophets of the Old Testament to prove His apostles that He is the Lord over life and death, thus strengthening and supporting them for the forthcoming Passion²³.

Another key detail recorded only by Saint Luke may be found in v. 32: “Peter and his companions were *very sleepy...*”. Anticipating the moment from Gethsemane, this interpolation hides an allegorical character, it is presented after the narration of the event, because it is obvious that the awakening of the apostles happened before. They were certainly tired because they had climbed the mountain, and probably they too prayed with Jesus for a while, but the fact that they “became fully awake” (διαγρηγορήσαντες) – verb that may also be translated with “completely awake”, shortly after they fell asleep attenuates the gravity of their act. In the Greek text of the Gospel, the active form of the verb διαγρηγορήσαντες shows their sharp fight to rest completely present, or at least the narrator wishes to express the wakeful conscience of the three apostles. The conclusion is that until this troubled moment, they are spared of any role in this scene.

„As the men were leaving Jesus” (ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι αὐτοῦ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ) is another Lucanic motif, which appears only here, with the purpose to amplify the dramatism of the Taboric experience. Through this motif of the departure²⁴

²² Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament. A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 114.

²³ Ioan Gură de Aur, *Omilia la Matei*, in *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești*, vol. 23 (București: EIBMBOR, 1994), 646.

²⁴ The infinitive verb in the passive voice (διαχωρίζεσθαι – διαχωρίζω) shows that the action suffered by the two prophets is ongoing. The leaving, respectively their departure may be interrupted at any time (that is why the nostalgic intervention of Saint Peter). For more details regarding the functions of the verb διαχωρίζω see Johannes E. Louw, Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 324.

the author wishes to present for which Apostle Peter exclaims enthusiastically: „it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters” (v. 33). Peter’s manner of addressing is very interesting and it differs from one Evangelist to the other: at Saint Luke: ἐπιστάτα (“Master”), at Saint Mark: ῥαββί (“Rabbi”) and at Saint Matthew: κύριε (“Lord”). The name κύριε shows a manner of addressing full of respect from His disciples, as for a Man whose divine authority is acknowledged. What is surprising this time in the narration of Saint Luke is this gesture through which he places the “great fisherman” on an inferior level of knowledge: ἐπιστάταις not a name equivalent with the glory that Christ dresses with (*Psalms* 104:2: “The Lord wraps Himself in light as with a garment”) on the Mount²⁵. This leads us to the thought that Apostle Peter together with the other two apostles, still don’t fully understand the whole picture of the Taboric revelation.

The idea to build shelters becomes the most sensible point of this narration, it contains the man’s desire for infinity, or the nostalgia of the Paradise lost. Thus, Peter contemplating the glory of the divine transfiguration, feels his lips suddenly exalting the Adamic elegy: Ἐπιστάτα, καλόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι not knowing that they will remain only on the mountain, God’s plan to redeem the world will not come to an accomplishment. Peter seeks with obstinacy to avoid sufferance (*Mark* 8:32), his behaviour is clarified by Evangelist Mark: „he did not know what to say, they were so frightened”, probably an observation that Mark received directly from Peter.

The Greek term σκηνή (“tent”) is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew noun *’ohel* that defines the same thing (*Genesis* 13:3; *Exodus* 26:6; *Leviticus* 4:18; *Numbers* 4:4etc). In the history of the chosen people, this concept of “tent” was present in all times: starting with the tents of the patriarchs, with the nomads that also lived in tents, and even the enemies of Israel built tents (*Judges* 6:5), during wars the army lived either in plain field or in tents (*Judith* 7:18). One of the most important Jewish feasts (Tabernacles) comes into close relationship with this σκηνή (*Leviticus* 23:42²⁶). The cult of the Jewish existed in close relationship with this “tent”, as we may see in *Numbers* 4:2-16, where the service of the sons of Kohath took place in the “tent of meeting”, in the most holy place. The book of Exodus comprises two chapters (26-27) on how the “tent of meeting” must be built, where YHWH will meet with His people. Moses set his tent outside the camp, far from it, and this “tent of meeting”, in the middle of which „the Lord spoke with Moses”, was the last testimony for every son of Israel who wished to look for God (*Exodus* 33:7-11). God Himself told prophet Nathan before the

²⁵ Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke...*, 385-386.

²⁶ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 368-371.

building of the Temple, that His dwelling place is from tent to tent (*2 Samuel* 7:6), because Yahweh is the only beneficiary of this worship²⁷.

The leitmotif of the cloud (νεφέλη) and also his prophetic action of “covering” (ἐπεσκίαζεν) hide both the presence and the divine glory or providence (*Exodus* 13:21; 34:5). Passing over the “cloud” and what this symbol meant in the time of Moses (a very familiar story), I will present briefly a cultic reference of this νεφέλη. And this with the help of a single example: when the Lord’s covenant was brought to the Most Holy Place, the book of *1 Kings* 8:10-11 tells us that the priests could not serve because νεφέλη (נֶפֶשׁ) filled the temple of the Lord. The Psalmist scenting the great mystery of the “cloud of God’s glory” exclaimed passionately: „Clouds and thick darkness surround Him, righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne” (*Psalms* 97:2²⁸). Once the Temple of Solomon is built, the wise king of Israel prayed to his Lord, exalting: „the Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; I have built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever...” (*2 Chronicles* 6:1-2).

The book of *Acts* speaks about Peter’s shadow which fell over the sick that were laid near the road and cured them, Virgin Mary becomes pregnant in the moment when the power of the Holy Spirit “overshadowed” her; and now on Tabor the same “bright shadow” (ἐπισκιάζω) overwhelms the landscape and defies the moment. For this is the paradox: the sacrifice bursts into redemption and death into the eternity of the resurrection (*1 Corinthians* 15:20).

The expression οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος (“This is My Son whom I have chosen”) is not at all foreign to the ears of the apostles, υἱὸς θεοῦ completing the support of the prophecies of the Old Testament (*1 Chronicles* 17:11-14; *Psalms* 2:7; 89:26-27; 110:1; *Proverbs* 8:22; *Isaiah* 53:11; *Wisdom of Solomon* 2:18). The notion of Son of God enters in the traditional Hebrew circuit in close relationship to the promise of the birth of Messiah, but it was strictly reserved and lacking any additional explanations. Both the prophecy from *Psalms* 2:7 and the promise from *2 Samuel* 7:14 regarding the tribe of David, confirms this expression of υἱὸς θεοῦ as the one Who will come to reign, receiving his kingdom from the hands of God Himself, invested with divine authority²⁹. “The Son of God” is a Jewish notion that has both a royal and a sacerdotal character in this case anointed by the Holy Spirit for a work that defies the historical context through the manifestation of the Kingdom of God from these days³⁰. The voice of

²⁷ C. N. Hillyer, „First Peter and the Feast of Tabernacles”, *Tyndalle Bulletin* 21 (1970), 59-60.

²⁸ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 38-39.

²⁹ B. M. F. van Iersel, *Fils de David et Fils de Dieu*, in *La Venue du Messie. Messianisme et Eschatologie* (Löven, 1962), 113-132.

³⁰ Amy-Jill Levine, Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament...*, 254.

the Father from heaven comes to consolidate Saint Peter's confession uttered previously, but also to build once for all the faith of the apostles that Jesus Christ is the long awaited Messiah.

Scholar Joel Green sees in the departure of Moses and Elijah from Jesus the fulfilling of the Christic mission, since a voice from Heaven already testified the redeeming work of Jesus, the presence of the two heavenly witnesses was no longer justified. God Himself had revealed His Son, the end that must be accomplished in Jerusalem was His, the voice that the apostles needed to hear ended, the veil was removed (2 *Corinthians* 3:14³¹). The Lucanic fragment ends with the words: „... and they did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen” (v. 36), meaning that they kept in silence the revelation about the Heavenly Kingdom, to present it after the Resurrection of the Lord (*Mark* 9:9).

The public activity of Jesus Christ starts with the announcement of the close coming of the Kingdom of God (*Mark* 1:15), in Christ being fulfilled the eschatological event announced in the narrations about the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the passing through desert and the Covenant on Sinai³². Τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ is one of the important eschatological preoccupations both of the New Testament and of the Old Testament (*Deuteronomy* 33:5; *Psalms* 29:10; *Isaiah* 43:15), in which we may speak of the so-called theme of “the presence of the future”³³, because although the Heavenly Kingdom was inaugurated in Christ and revealed for the first time on the mount, it still waits for its final consummation – fulfilment which is identical with the Parousia. Although this had not fulfilled yet, it may be experienced in advance, that is why one may speak of τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ as being both present and future³⁴. Coming down the mountain with their steps full of mysteries, the apostles are commanded to keep to themselves the miracle from Tabor, both for the fact that such an experience could not be understood by the minds that stood aside and because the sad news of the passion could torment the peacefulness of their consciences. And who knows, maybe this was also a precaution not to incite the daemon of the envious Judas.

³¹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 384.

³² Alexander Golitzin, *Mistagogia. Experiența lui Dumnezeu în Ortodoxie* (Sibiu: Deisis, 1998), 35-36.

³³ George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 195-197.

³⁴ Yordan Kalev Zhekov and Corneliu Constantineanu, “The Presence of the Future: The Eschatological Framework of the New Testament”, *Plērōma* 2 (2010): 21-25.

Conclusions

The purpose of our study was to draw from the beginning the main lines of the Tabor event, to extract its essence through a minor patristic lens but also with the help of the pertinent tools of the modern theology, that do not contradict nor deny the marks established centuries ago by the great mystics whose eyes were able to see through the “darkness” of God’s mystery. We chose a textual critique because there were many cases when a forced translation changed the intention of the original text.

It seems that Apostle Luke understood in a different way the great story of our deification, that it’s why he inserted new theological motifs, higher than Matthew and Mark. The clue of this Lucanic original vision, as it may well be seen from the title, underlines from one end to the other, the spiritual essence of the Transfiguration: our deification through grace, developed under the influence of the theophanic light.

This mystery of deification did not happen only with Christ on the mountain (καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν) or when He entered to His disciples through closed doors (*John* 20:19) or with the great mystics before; but it is consumed until today always revitalizing „for we are members of His body” (*Ephesians* 5:30). Becoming through the experience of the Taboric light „participants in the divine nature” (*2 Peter* 1:4), living as if we were resurrected from the dead, because here is the essence of the Taboric grace: the Transfigured Christ offers us the chance to *resurrect* (ἀναγεγεννημένοι) long before the great Resurrection (*John* 11:24, 43-44; *1 Thessalonians* 4:15-18).

Trying to build a correct hermeneutics in order to decipher the sacred text is an difficult and ambitious mission, it is a tough struggle with the angel of that page, that fights back either under the influence of the authority of the “cherubim with the flaming sword” (*Genesis* 3:24) or under the influence of the helpless Angel that touched the “socket of the hip” (*Genesis* 32:24-25) to make your burden even heavier. That is why our exegesis is far from being over.

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II. HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

WHY CHRIST MUST ALSO BE GOD: ATHANASIUS, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA

ADOLF MARTIN RITTER*

ABSTRACT. Does it make sense to celebrate jubilees like “Two thousand years of Christianity”, “Seventeen hundred years Edict of Milan” or “Five hundred years of Reformation in Europe and the World” in times like ours, when Christian traditions are open to doubt and wide-spread suspicion, even in the formerly “Christian Occident”? No doubt, the critique must be taken seriously, if it proves to be valid. If not, Christians are free or, what is more, obliged to criticize the critics, e.g. as far as one of the principal items of the Christian tradition is concerned, the Christology, interpreted by one of the major Church Fathers, Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 294-373), who was convinced, that Jesus Christ must be no less than God himself (αὐτὸς ὁ θεός) in order to be our Saviour.

Keywords: Athanasius of Alexandria, Christology, actuality and relevance of the Church Fathers, how to meet modern criticism

1.

The 600th anniversary of Luther’s act of posting his ninety-five theses on the door of the Wittenberg church and a Jubilee will be celebrated in Germany and worldwide in 2017. Just 17 years earlier– after extensive preparations – people in Rome, Geneva, London, and other centres of what in the bygone days was referred to as the ‘Western Christendom’ looked back on ‘2000 years of Christianity’. Does that make sense? At the beginning of the last century, the majority of the people in my country – even those who rejected official Christianity – could relatively easily agree that the effects of the advent of Christianity and especially the social changes it generated are overwhelmingly positive. Even after the end of the Second World War in 1945 the ‘essential Christian cultural and moral values’ could still be passionately and wholeheartedly evoked.

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However, the number of the critical voices raised against Christianity had by that time already been steadily growing, seeking only to find a comprehensive list of sins in the history of the Church and Christianity; that very history was considered by Franz Overbeck, who was a church historian himself, to be the best school of atheism,.

How should this state of facts be addressed? Which would be the appropriate response to this criticism? I believe we should focus on pointing out that it all comes down to nuances! The fault of global verdicts and sweeping statements in this context is that they can be more or less easily refuted when analysed in detail.

One should also never forget the blatant injustice visited upon the dissidents, the 'heretics', by the Church especially during the time of the alliance between 'throne and altar', between Church and secular power. With that said, there is no reason to complain that even in the former 'Western Christendom' Christians and all their past and present actions are being more and more severely criticised. This should serve as an opportunity for critical self-examination rather than as a means of self-pity. If instead of avoiding the criticism of their ideology, religion, and Church, Christians would accept it as a challenge, if instead of paying the critics back in kind they would refute the unjust and misleading reproaches, then and only then could this be seen as a sign of respect.

Lastly, Christians would be ill advised and indeed helpless if they were to follow the instigations of their critics and keep their faith out of the equation because it only disguises the pure struggle for power. Those who bear up under the demand for the 'real records', the real results and impact of the church history, will see no reason for that.

2.

After we have become acquainted with the present state of affairs, let us now approach our topic 'from the outside in' and let us first talk about the general historical framework of the life, work, and religious views of Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria. Evoking that context means recalling those radical changes that occurred in the history of the church and that of the world between the 23rd of February 303 and the 28th of February 380. - What is the meaning of this?

In the early hours of February 23rd 303 the prefect of Nicomedia (present-day Izmit in Turkey, on the coast of Asia Minor opposite Istanbul) appeared in front of the church of the imperial palace together with a number of other officials. The doors were forced open in a search for the simulacrum Dei,

God's image – what else is there to find in a temple? – but they only came across the Holy Scriptures, which were immediately burned. The church was then plundered. Since it seemed too dangerous to set it on fire, as the flames could easily spread to the adjacent palace, a contingent of soldiers marched in and levelled the sacred building to the ground in a matter of hours. An imperial edict was issued the following day by which all Christians, regardless of station, age or gender, were deprived of all legal protection. According to the eyewitness account of Lactantius (*De Mortibus Persecutorum* 10-15), this was the beginning of Diocletian's persecution against the Christians, one that left a mark in history as the uttermost gruesome and systematic attempt to exterminate Christianity in the first centuries of the common era.

On the 28th of February 380 Theodosius (who had just been proclaimed emperor) issued an edict in Thessalonica addressed to the people in Constantinople – an 'orthodox' bishop, with whom he could have conferred, was apparently not present there –, that claimed full legal validity beyond its narrow target group: 'It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation (*Cunctos populos, quos clementiae nostrae regit temperamentum*), should continue to profess the faith which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter (...) and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness'. This faith is later on described as the faith in the *one* Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity (*sub parili maiestate et sub pia trinitate*). Only those who abided by this religious law could call themselves Christians; all the rest were considered heretics and could be given over to the divine and the secular justice. However, it was not specified what that actually meant and how far exactly the rule of secular justice stretched in this matter. It is nevertheless beyond a doubt that a crucial step was taken with this edict of Theodosius (*Cunctos populos*, Cod. Theod. XVI 1, 2) not only towards ending the Trinitarian theological debates – generally referred to as the 'Arian controversy' – but also towards the unification of Church and State. To some extent, this edict laid down the foundation for the state church.

This is the radical change we usually refer to when speaking of the 'Constantinian shift', a break whose consequences are still felt to this day. From a small group of Galilean Jews, the Church became a reality present in the entire Roman Empire. This was the Church Diocletian and his co-emperors had declared war on: the persecution of Christians at the hands of the Roman state had never before been undertaken as a decisive life-and-death struggle as it was during their reign.

But Diocletian failed at this and his heirs changed the tack: Christianity was first granted equal rights and soon thereafter elevated to the privileged religion of the Empire.

Still, it is neither possible nor necessary to go into details here about this development from the persecution of Christians, to its cessation ordered by Galerius, the co-emperor of Diocletian, and to the official legalization of Christianity by Constantine (together with the tolerance granted to the 'unbelievers', namely to the pagans and Jews). What can and needs to be discussed in depth here is above all the further development of the Church up until the establishment of the Catholic imperial Church or the 'state Christianity' in the century of Constantine, i.e. under Theodosius, and the reaction of the Church to the so called 'Constantinian shift' should also be addressed. Finally, what cannot and should not be discussed here is the series of repercussions felt in almost all fields of church life, which were triggered by this political change of direction.

However, we should at least in passing ask the question if it is adequate to unilaterally describe the 'Constantinian shift' as the beginning or the origin of the 'secularisation' of the Church; or if the 'Constantinian shift' – by choice and exterior pressure – also brought about or at least contributed to getting the Church out of the isolation it had lingered in until then? Undoubtedly, the imperial Church of the end of the 4th century is practically nowhere to be found nowadays. In this respect, it makes perfect sense to speak of the 'end of Constantine's age'. 'But who would wish to contest that Christians bear the responsibility for the world, or that they must also take over the political responsibility – as Christians and not with a troubled conscience or in opposition to the Church order – there where they merely form a minority or sometimes even there where they are persecuted?' In other words, who could or who would seriously wish to return before the time of the 'Constantinian shift' (G. Kretschmar, *Der Weg zur Reichskirche*, in: *Verkündigung und Forschung* 13, 1968, 3-44 [here p 39f.]?)

The separation of the Church and the world had not yet been overcome at the end of Constantine and Athanasius's century. But from the time of Constantine this separation was no longer theologically justifiable, so the Church could no longer remain just an alternative to the 'world' in the long run. What it meant to live as a Christian 'in the world but not from this world' under these circumstances was an unsolved problem. Since we have to deal with these issues even today – or yet again – I believe there is absolutely no reason to look down with conceit on all the weaknesses and shortcomings of the decisions taken by the Church at the beginning of the 'Constantinian age', even on those with which Athanasius of Alexandria was involved.

3.

I choose to stay a little bit longer on the subject of the circumstances and to speak briefly about the origin of the imperial synodal authority, which designates the right the 'Christian' emperor had to convene councils, to take part in their

consultations, in any given form, and to 'ratify' their decisions, that is to grant them the legal validity of imperial laws. It is more likely that the measures taken by the state in the context of the restitution of Church property confiscated during the persecution were a decisive step (Constantine was forced to take part in this process against his will and to act as an arbitrator between the various church parties and their competing claims of ownership). Furthermore, another element that played an essential role was the fact that Constantine considered himself 'bishop (overseer) of the external issues (of the Church)' or 'bishop of those outside the Church' – both interpretations are possible – and that he claimed to lead his subjects in their faith in the one true God and to watch over the unity of their faith, which was also the basis and guaranteed the state's unity and welfare. Our question is how did the Church react to this imperial synodal authority?

This question must be viewed as the key point in the discussion over the relationship between the State and the Church in late Antiquity because the conciliar sphere is where the highly nuanced and problematic reactions of the Church are clearly expressed. It is surely not enough to note that the Church found in the imperial synod an organ of its legal unity that it did not (yet) know how to develop and use on its own. It is also not enough to state that these councils were more or less completely dependent on the will of the emperor – as it often happened and still happens under the influence of the early Church research conducted by the otherwise outstanding scholar of the antiquity Eduard Schwartz and his arguably too one-sided representation of the 4th century history. It can be pointed out that admittedly the imperial 'approval' expedited the enforcement of the conciliary decisions considerably. Nevertheless, accepting or rejecting the resolutions of a synod ultimately depended on their Church-wide 'reception'. In other words, it was never possible (at least not in the long run) to force the will of a minority upon the majority – even though there was such a thing as imperial 'synodal authority' and the use of the state's means of coercion (for instance the imposition of fines, the expropriation of church property or the exile of recalcitrant clergymen)!

And precisely because of this, bishops widely accepted the imperial rule over the Church as far as we know – bishop Athanasius of Alexandria makes no exception. The following question was occasionally asked: 'What has the emperor to do with the Church?', but usually in the context of conflicts and mostly by those who were the first ones to call on the emperor to be their arbiter, and who were left with nothing, since they lost ...

Soon enough the imperial synodal authority – first employed by Constantine – certainly led to increased pressure being put on the Church, which in this way learned how to think more earnestly about the 'blessings' of a 'Christian emperorship', as Eusebius of Caesarea (who was unfairly denounced

by Jakob Burckhardt as the ‘most nauseating court orator of all time’). Many voices were raised in a multifaceted opposition against a statement attributed to one of Constantine’s sons: ‘My will must count as a canon (so as church law)’. This sentence already hinted at the reason behind the separation of powers, which would become so important in the distant future. At that time in the Antiquity the issue had undoubtedly not been thought out yet, not had a theory on the relationship of Church and state been developed. However, the particular tension that was felt at that moment and formulated to some extent, guided the theologians and the churchmen (including Athanasius) towards opposing the perfect integration of the Church within the state apparatus as the ideological basis of the empire’s unity, without questioning the synergy of their respective authorities; it also taught them to recognize or at least to infer the danger of having an emperor rule over the Church. These aspects have been remembered for centuries, so when the Catholic Church and the omnipotent Prussian state were faced off in the *Kulturkampf*, the Catholic journalist J. Görres was able to send his own ‘Athanasius’ in the arena where the public opinion was being shaped (in 1838, in the context of the Cologne church dispute).

Nevertheless, a serious problem remains, namely the state’s use of coercive power for enforcing synodal decisions, more precisely when fighting against ‘false teachings’. During the doctrinal controversies generated – rather than resolved – by the council of Nicaea, many bishops learned it the hard way what it meant to come into conflict with the official church policy and were none the wiser for it either! ‘Compel them to come in’ (cogite intrare) – loosely referring to Luke 14, 23 – is a phrase that has been used by and since Augustine as the biblical ground for the use of force against heretics and non-believers. This ‘merciful rigour’, which sought to save heretics from damnation even against their will, remained the Christian legal title of an intolerant state for over a thousand years.

But even in this respect, the fact Augustine was so much under the impression that the need to have the non-believers enter the Church – even forcibly – or to have them ‘convert’ to the Catholic truth was a *good deed*, can be seen as an unequivocal indication of the ‘secularisation’ of the Church in the ‘Constantinian era’, and this is what we are in effect debating.

I would like to conclude this train of thought by saying that studying the history of the imperial church in late antiquity could open one’s eyes to the fact that the ‘pluralism’ with which the churches (all around the world) have had to live with since the ‘age of Constantine’ has not only been a burden – a very heavy one to bear at times – but also a blessing; also that this pluralism should not only be accepted as their lot but also affirmed, but only with the condition that in doing so, the *issue of the truth* is not entirely forgotten!

4.

And finally, we come around to Athanasius. We hardly know anything certain about his origins, childhood, and youth. He is thought to come from a non-Christian family in Alexandria, the second biggest city in the Roman Empire at that time and the capital of Egypt, a cultural and economic centre of the Mediterranean world. After having accompanied his bishop, as a deacon, to the great Council of Nicaea (325) – later considered to be the first ecumenical council –, he later succeeded him; he was ordained bishop on the 8th of June 328, in a somewhat less than ‘canonical’ fashion, since he had not yet reached the required ‘canonical age’ of 30 years; what’s more, the ordination was performed although he did not have the consent of all the bishops within the eparchy, which was compulsory according to the 4th canon of Nicaea. It was obviously a swift move intended to forestall a counter initiative – a method that seems to have coincided with the will of the church people.

The newly elected bishop did not neglect to notify the emperor of his appointment and he accepted it. In return, Constantine advocated even more vigorously than he had done with Athanasius’s predecessor for the readmission of Arius in the church community (who had been banned at Nicaea), after being convinced that Arius conformed to the teachings agreed upon at the council. But since his efforts were to no avail – although he threatened to remove Athanasius from his see and to exile him –, and the bishop of Alexandria continued to deny Arius church communion and reinstatement in his former office, Constantine surprisingly contented himself or at least accepted that he had to wait a few years in order to attain his once hidden goal. In the meantime he did not hesitate to support the unjustly accused (Arius) who was opposed by people from Egypt and other provinces and to assure him, in his letters, of his ‘highest’ benevolence. If we look at it in the long term, Athanasius was the biggest disruptive element in the imperial unification policy.

In the end it happened as it was supposed to: the accusations brought against the ‘pope’ of Alexandria, the ‘new pharaoh’ did not fail to have the desired effect, making his position at court impossible in the end. His opponents knew how to use their chance. At their urging, the emperor summoned a tribunal of the bishops; still, this court could not engage into any negotiations since Athanasius refused to appear before a tribunal that had already decided his dismissal. However, this proved to be a grave tactical mistake. This affront finally provided his enemies with the sound legal grounds they needed and enraged the emperor, who was already sick of the quarrels involving Athanasius. Moreover, it was one of the main charges brought against him at the synod of Tyre (July/September 335), which led to his being removed from his office and later exiled to Trier.

All in all, Athanasius had to go into exile five times, proving he was quite a controversial figure even during his lifetime. He has essentially remained so to this day! On the occasion of a synod in Milan (355) emperor Constantius II – son of Constantine – is reported to have said to Liberius, the bishop of Rome, that no success, not even the victory against his usurpers Magnentius and Silvanus ‘equals the ejection of this vile man from the government of the Church’ (Theodoret, Church History II, 16, 21). We can only speculate what reasons were behind the hatred expressed here. The opponents of Athanasius have always claimed that the events concerning his person are about unadulterated power struggles of ecclesiastic politics. They carefully avoided going into the theological background of their rivalry and in short, treated Athanasius as a stubborn trouble-maker. The image of Athanasius as a pure hierarch plays a substantial role even in the more recent Athanasian scholarship, including the research of Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt and that of the German scholar Eduard Schwartz. This view simply has little to do with the facts; what’s more, it is biased: just as biased as the views the propaganda of Athanasius and his faction wanted to spread. In this respect, every debate is immediately pushed in the theological area. *However*, there is no need to choose between Athanasius the ‘ecclesiastic politician’ and Athanasius the ‘theologian’, since he was obviously both! Recently a question was rightfully asked: shouldn’t the interpretation of Athanasius actually go beyond the boundaries of these pseudo-alternatives and include completely different aspects (other than ‘theology’ and ‘church politics’), namely the dimensions of worship and divine services (Dietrich Ritschl)? The significance of asceticism and spirituality were referenced – the way they were represented in the very influential ‘Life of St. Anthony’ (Vita Antonii, composed after 356), the most powerful writing of the great church father and also one that offers the safest access into his theology for the historical evaluation (according to my professor in Göttingen, Hermann Doerries).

Undoubtedly, the intransigence with which Athanasius advocated his cause was to blame for the fact that for years – long into the sole reign of Constantius II – the questions of faith were concealed behind personal and disciplinary issues. Conversely, Athanasius was credited when the actual theological significance of the dispute was finally worked out, even though his argumentation had its faults and he cannot be spared the reproach that being influenced by the rhetorical conventions of the Antiquity, he often approached the spoken or the written word as means of persuasion (rather than of reasoning) and he failed to show the respect due to words as divine gifts for the humankind and as images and instruments of the divine Logos (George Christopher Stead). Nevertheless: if the source material allows for such a conclusion, then it is hardly exaggerated to say that Athanasius as an individual had the main part in the enforcement of the ‘Nicene creed’ in the realm of the Greek-speaking Christianity, because ‘Arianism’ could be defeated on theological grounds.

5.

What is it all about? In his book "Der Sohn Gottes" (The Son of God - Tübingen 1972) M. Hengel, a New Testament scholar from Tübingen, made an accurate observation, in my opinion: that 'in less than two decades' - namely from 50 A.D. to 70 A.D. - 'more has happened in the field of Christology than in the whole seven centuries that followed, until the dogma of the early church received its final formulation' (p. 11). Already in the earliest Christian sources, namely the New Testament epistles, we encounter a surprising early form of a 'high Christology', under the guise of hymns and other literary structures (still to be reconstructed). I am thinking about the famous Christological hymn from the second chapter of the epistle to the Philippians (v.6-11: '(Christ, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God...'), the hymn in Colossians 1 (v. 15-20: '[He] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...'), the first verses of the epistle to the Hebrews (1,1-4: 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds...'), and above all, the Prologue of the Gospel according to John (Jn 1,1-16) or verses such as 1 Tim.3,16 ('God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory', cf. 1 Cor 8,6, Gal 4,4f., Rom 8,3, Jn 3,16f., 1 Jn 4,9).

Behind these fragments, we can only imagine the plethora of densely theological hymns that were incompletely preserved in the New Testament. The Christological type created here surpassed in the first two or three centuries all the other recognizable Christologies (such as messianism, adoptionism, Christ-angelology). To some extent, it is almost certain that the Jewish wisdom doctrine played a major part in the elaboration of this 'high Christology': the functions of the divine Wisdom (gr. Sophia) as well as the features of its essence were assigned to Christ. The Greek-speaking Jewish diaspora in particular, with its efforts to understand the correlations between Wisdom, Torah ('Law') and the Greek Logos (WORD), seems to have passed crucial theological thought patterns to early Christianity. Apparently, the very old idea of the exaltation to divine majesty of the killed and risen Christ was the centre of gravity of that wavelike movement, which gradually seized the qualities of wisdom and Torah and transferred them to Christ: pre-existence (existing before His earthly existence), mediation in the creation of the world, effective action within the course of history, and power of redemption. The significance of Christ is this way extrapolated from the events of His Resurrection and exaltation back to the origins of time (from the Resurrection and exaltation of Christ to His baptism by

John in the river Jordan, to His wondrous birth, and finally to the beginning of the creation of the world, as it is stated in the Prologue of John's Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...'). The reign of the exalted Christ over the entire world is thus already proclaimed in the dawn of creation.

This process of crowning the Christ with the titles of the Wisdom did not stem from a shift of the Jewish Sophia. Quite to the contrary, one could speak of a common theological concern: the fundamental questions that wish to determine the *cause of the world* and its order, that now lead to new answers, in the light and the horizons of the Christian faith. This interrogation was driven forward in the Jewish theology with regard to the figure of the divine wisdom. In Christianity this occurred in the orbit of Christ's figure, more precisely in the cult and the hymns, so in fully non-polemical forms. For the early Christianity the religious services were a prime source of theological knowledge, the 'law of praying, the law of worship' (*lex orandi*) was followed generally by 'the law of believing' (*lex credendi*)! The expansion of Christ's significance in universal dimensions spanning across time and space originated in the core of the preaching of those early, Greek-speaking Christians, consisting in confessing and understanding the Christ as Lord of heaven and earth. They tried to connect the new knowledge of Christ with those forms of theology with which they were familiar. This led the crucial quest of Christian theological thinking into a territory that had barely been explored up to that point. The mystery of the world order, as it could be previously perceived in wisdom, law, and Logos, now spoke to the Christians through the figure and the history of Christ.

In connection to this issue, in his life-long quarrel with what he considered and designated as 'Arianism', Athanasius advocated the idea that the threefold naming of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as it is found in the 'baptism commandment' of Mt 28, 19, in His all-encompassing salvific action in both time and eternity) should not be confined just within the limitations of its meaning in the history of redemption or revelation. In fact, according to Athanasius, it is unavoidable to confess that God 'in Himself' – not just in his *action* within the creation and towards people – and as per His nature (ουσία) is the Living God, God in communion, the Trinity.

Perhaps his rationale could be summed up like this: the idea that emerges clearly from the very beginning, already in his early works 'Against the Heathens' and 'On the Incarnation of the Word' and that stands firmly in place in his (three authentic) 'Discourses against Arians' as his chief dogmatic contribution – later on reaching its culmination in 'The Life of St. Anthony' – is the close relation, the interdependence between the Trinity doctrine and salvation, between 'Christology' and soteriology. Athanasius's understanding of Christ, which in this respect is reminiscent of the views of Irenaeus of Lyon, a

church father of the 2nd century, is clarified through his teaching on salvation, and that way, his teaching on salvation is possible only in relation to his Christology.

But what does that mean? It means that when one focuses on the 'benefactions of Christ' they can infer the magnificence of the Benefactor, and conversely, when one is mindful of the divine majesty, they can understand the egregiousness of the salvation He gave us. Athanasius will not even hear of a Christ who is not capable of truly saving mankind. The Apostle bears witness of the real Saviour (Acts 4, 19: 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved'). And yet a hero, or a demi-god, or any sublime 'divine' being – as long as this is not God Himself – has the power and the authority to operate redemption. Who denies that the Logos-Son is 'of the essence of the Father', a phrase introduced by the Nicene Creed, degrades Him to a mere false god one way or another and denies our salvation. Both aspects must be taken into account. When someone denies one or the other, they clearly show they don't know much of either our Lord's dignity (as described in the Scriptures), or of our own perdition and of the single way we may overcome it; they also show they do not know the Christ, because they lack the knowledge of salvation, and that they do not have the knowledge of salvation, because they are deprived of the proper knowledge of the Son and of the triune God.

6.

In order to conclude, allow me to return once more to my introduction: to the anniversary of the Reformation, Christianity's 2000 years-jubilee, and the similar occasions. Such anniversaries should be celebrated without any triumphalism or conceit, but also without exaggerated self-doubt and complexes of inferiority. It should not be concealed, that almost from the very beginning of the faith in the living, tri-personal God has been the 'Christian form of monotheism' and an integral part of the Christian identity; this should not be kept a secret and nevertheless we should also not be oblivious to the inquiries and objections on the part of the Jewish and the Muslim monotheism as far as the Christian tradition of a Trinitarian speaking of God is concerned.

The central issue of the so-called 'Arian controversy' was the relationship of Christ and God, the matter of Him being 'the Son of God', and not so much the nature of God. While the 'Arians' argued that the Son was not really divine – although the Holy Scriptures referred to Him as 'the firstborn of every creature' (Col 1, 15) – their opponents, Athanasius among others, tried to show with the help of extensive exegesis of debatable biblical statements that Christ was 'true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father', as the Nicene Creed said.

There were, however, individual theologians, such as Hilary of Poitiers, the younger contemporary of the bishop of Alexandria who was dubbed 'the Athanasius of the West', who on the one hand subscribed to everything, but on the other hand also transferred the debate to a different area and broadened the discussion on the nature of God.

In his most seminal work, his comprehensive treatise 'On the Trinity' (*De Trinitate*), composed during his exile in the East (356- 360), Hilary said the following: 'we cannot, as true believers, assert that God is One (*unum Deum ... praedicare*), if we mean by it that He is alone (*solus*); for faith in a lonely God denies the Godhead of the Son. If, on the other hand, we assert, as we truly can, that the Son is God, we are in danger, so they fondly imagine, of deserting the truth that God is One. We are in peril on either hand; we may deny the unity or we may maintain the isolation' (VII, 3). To sum up: although the God of the history of salvation is one (*unus*), he is not lonely (*solitarius*); and how God reveals Himself to be in the history of salvation, that is how He is in His eternal Godhead.

This accurate insight of the Latin Church father from the 4th century could be assimilated today in this manner: that the Christian's Trinitarian faith (which also contains the reason 'why Christ must also be God') can be interpreted as 'the summa of the Gospels' (Jörg Baur) or as 'the unimaginably difficult expression of the simple truth that God is living' (Eberhard Jüngel). Moreover, it is necessary to note that the Jews and the Christians distance themselves from Aristotle's 'unmoved mover'-God 'through the historical experience of Passion' and 'the suffering of their God' (Jürgen Moltmann). Even 'the Jewish experience of God' cannot reflect a simple form of monotheism, because based on the experience of divine suffering it must come to the realization that there is 'a Self-differentiation within God' (J. Moltmann in reference to Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, New York 1962). Likewise, the Christian experience of God could probably be summarized (consistent with the Jewish experience or at least opened to it) in these statements: God is love. Love is self-revelation. Self-revelation requires self-differentiation. Self-revelation is fulfilled in self-sacrifice. God's love communicates itself to those who are different from Him. Therein lies our freedom and our salvation' (J. Moltmann, in: Pinkas Lapide - J.M., *Jüdischer Monotheismus - Christliche Trinitätslehre. Ein Gespräch*, 1979, S. 44f.). Similarly, in his teaching on the Holy Trinity Augustine takes as a point of reference the experience of the surprising, responsible, and overwhelming divine love: 'you see the Trinity if you see love (...). Behold, then, there are three things: he that loves, and that which is loved, and love' (*De Trinitate* VIII 12,14).

Translated by Aniela Siladi

ANDREI ŞAGUNA AND THE LEADERS OF THE EVANGELICAL-LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TRANSYLVANIA

MIRCEA-GHEORGHE ABRUDAN*

ABSTRACT. Born, educated and living in the multilinguistic and multiconfessional space of the Austrian Monarchy, Andrei Şaguna has been able to fructify both the cultural and the patristic heritage of Orthodoxy, and the modern and liberal spirit of the second half of the 19th century, cultivating good relationship with Bishop Georg Daniel Teutsch and friendships with Alois Sentz and Jakob Rannicher. His correspondence and the historiographic evidence reveal these contacts as having been marked by respect, due to the function his acquaintances had in the academic staff, the imperial and local administrative and educational mechanism, but especially by reverence and appreciation. The life, activity, and works of Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna, make him a European figure, because of his formation, his pastoral mission, his strong dedication to education and to bringing the culture closer to the Transylvanian Romanians, and his part in the inter-confessional dialogue before the initiation of the Ecumenical Movement and the official contacts between the Orthodox and the Lutheran churches.

Keywords: Orthodox Church, Transylvanian Saxons, XIXth century, inter-confessional dialogue and relationship, Georg Paul Binder, Georg Daniel Teutsch, Jakob Rannicher.

1. Preliminaries

Living in the same space but not having the same rights, the Romanians and the Saxon of Transylvania have frequently interacted throughout time; however, the intensity of those interactions has varied depending on the spirit of the century, and the relationships involving the Romanian and the Saxon churches, and lay elite had evolved into both good understanding and disapproval, and at times, even into conflicts¹. The Christian spirit and teachings shared by the two

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¹ Thomas Năgler, *Românii și sașii până la 1848: Relații economice, sociale și politice* (Sibiu: Editura Thausib, 1997); Adolf Armbruster, *Dacoromano-saxonica. Cronicari români despre sași. Românii în cronică săsească* (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1980); Mircea Păcurariu, „Legături cultural-bisericești între românii ortodocși și sașii luterani din Transilvania până în 1918”, în *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XXXI (2/1986): 136-151; Viorel Ioniță, „Relațiile româno-săsești de-a lungul timpului”, în *Revista Teologică*, X (1/2000): 17-29.

nations, but especially the fact that they belonged to two and respectively three different denominations, are factors that have played a decisive role in the history of the two distinctive linguistic entities. Reflecting upon the religious evolution of the two nations, we can easily observe the lack of aggressive proselytism or confessional disputes that existed throughout the 17th century among the Orthodox Romanians and the reformed Hungarians or between the latter and the Catholic Székely².

Nevertheless, we should not ignore the contacts which have been made by means of the Saxon educational system which functioned in the Lutheran parishes, and those of the Saxon Evangelical gymnasiums of the Saxon towns where Romanians often attended classes; this had created not only an exchange of ideas and strong personal connections between the Orthodox and the Lutherans, but also rich didactical and theological scientific collaboration³.

The modern period and especially the challenges and the new socio-political, cultural and religious realities brought by the 19th century have given a new impulse to the Romanian-Saxon relations, bringing the leaders of the two nations to closer positions than ever before. The arrival and the installation of Andrei Şaguna as the new Orthodox bishop in Sibiu in 1846 brought a revival of collaboration with the Saxon leaders, most of which also had certain responsibilities within the Saxon Evangelical community.

For the Saxon community, the intertwining between politics and church, especially in the absolutist decade – similarly to the Romanians for whom the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholic Churches were the fundamental institutions in their national movement –, had actually been legally sanctioned in 1807, when the office clerks took part in the decision making process of the Evangelical Church A.C., as it welcomed laypersons in its administration and leadership. Since belonging to the Saxon nation and being a member of the Lutheran Church was almost perfectly coextensive, and since the Saxon politicians and their church had common interests, it would not be exaggerated to say this has led to the fusion of the two leaderships: it became normal to discuss political news, cultural and educational problems in the church, the pastors, in their turn, shaped the community views⁴.

The collaboration between the Orthodox and the Evangelical Church has been made possible not only by the political context – namely the 1848-1849 Revolution and the loyalty to the Emperor, the neo-absolutist decade and the

² Ludwig Binder, *Grundlagen und Formen der Toleranz in Siebenbürgen bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Köln-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1976), 105-108.

³ Michael Kroner, "Der rumänische Sprachunterricht in den siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Schulen vor 1918," *Schriftenreihen für Auslandsbeziehungen in Stuttgart* 8 (1972): 3-24.

⁴ Loránd L. Mádly, *De la privilegiu la uniformizare: Saşii transilvăneni și autoritățile austriece în deceniul neoabsolutist (1849-1860)* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2008), 8-9.

Austro-Hungarian pact – which demanded their proximity and support of common interests, but also by the figure of Andrei Șaguna, who had been raised and educated in an ethnical and confessional pluralism deeply marked by ideas of western Europe's liberalism – circulated in his family's entourage and in the academic circles of Pesta⁵. While studying philosophy and law Șaguna had preserved in his life and activities a penchant for canonical and juridical studies, which has later drawn him to the “Law Academy of Sibiu, befriending some of the professors of this prestigious school”⁶.

Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that Șaguna had been decorated and ennobled by Emperor Franz Joseph after the events of 1848-1849 – alongside other Romanian and Saxon leaders who had fought for the Imperial Court and suffered severe losses during the Hungarian revolution, thus proving their unwavering attachment to the Austrian monarchy – as *Freiherr von Șaguna* and secret advisor of the emperor, as well as a member of the State Senate, becoming even more famous both in the eyes of the Romanian, and Saxon public opinion.

Therefore, only when we know these facts can we understand and analyse Șaguna's friendship with a number of intellectuals of the Evangelical community such as: professor Georg Müller, with whom he had travelled with in the winter of 1848-49 to Olmütz to see the emperor as representatives of the Saxon and the Romanian National Committees; professor Alois Sentz who had translated Șaguna's *Compendium of Canon Law* to German⁷, Károly Kuzmány, professor of Theology at the Institute of Evangelic Theology in Vienna, with whom he had corresponded in matters of the canon law regarding the family, in the teachings of the Orthodox Church of Transylvania⁸; and Jakob Rannicher, his closest Saxon friend.

⁵ For Șaguna's biography see: Keith Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality: Andreiu Șaguna and the Romanians of Transylvania, 1846-1873* (Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 1977); Johann Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit Andrei von Șaguna: Reform und Erneuerung der orthodoxen Kirche in Siebenbürgen und Ungarn nach 1848* (Köln-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2006); Mircea Păcurariu, *O viață dăruită Bisericii și Neamului: Sfântul Ierarh Andrei Șaguna, Mitropolitul Transilvaniei* (Sibiu: Editura Andreiana, 2012).

⁶ Hermann Pitters, “Despre relațiile Mitropolitului Andrei Șaguna cu Biserica Evanghelică C.A. din Transilvania,” in *Slujitor al Bisericii și al Neamului. Părintele Mircea Păcurariu la împlinirea vârstei de 70 de ani*, ed. Calinic Argatu et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea, 2002), 572.

⁷ *Compendium des kanonischen Rechtes der einen, heiligen, allgemeinen und apostolischen Kirche, verfaßt von Andreas Freiherrn von Schaguna, von Gottes Gnaden Erzbischof in Siebenbürgen und Metropolit der Romanen der griechisch-orientalischen Religion in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen, Geheimen Rath Sr. kaiserl.-königl. Apostolischen Majestät, Großkreuz des kaiserl.-österr. Leopold Ordens und Ritter des kaiserl.-österr. Ordens der eisernen Krone I. Klasse. Aus dem Romanischen übersetzt von Dr. Alois Sentz, ordentlich-öffentlicher Professor an der königlich-ungarischen Rechtsakademie in Hermannstadt, Ehrenmitglied des siebenbürgischen Vereines für romanische Literatur und Kultur des romanischen Volkes* (Hermannstadt: Drotleff, 1868).

⁸ Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania între Revoluția pașoptistă și Marea Unire: Evoluție istorică și relații profesionale* (Sibiu/Cluj-Napoca: Editura Andreiana/Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2015), 442-453.

2. Andrei Şaguna and Georg Paul Binder & Georg Daniel Teutsch

During the events of 1848, Andrei Şaguna came to know the two foremost figures of the Evangelical community of Transylvania: Georg Paul Binder and Georg Daniel Teutsch, who were the leaders of their nation, just as he was of his. Their erudition and common ecclesial, political, and academic interests were similar. The Saxon historiography called both superintendents “a secular appearance in the history of our people”, because they had led the people and the church with peace and determination, having a clearly defined purpose. Whereas the first of them, Georg Paul Binder, was considered to be “one of the most fortunate figures of a leader, who could see a ray of light even in the deepest darkness, endowed with scientific seriousness, perfect wisdom, stern responsibility, noble humanity and honestly devoted to his calling”⁹, the second one, Georg Daniel Teutsch, is the one who brought to its completion a development process “that was necessary in order to achieve this *sächsische Volkskirchlichkeit*, the living unity between the people and their faith, the highest goal of our ecclesial and religious development”¹⁰.

Bishop Paul Binder travelled to the Imperial Court in Innsbruck – just like Andrei Şaguna – in order to hand to Emperor Franz Joseph a memoir presenting the standpoint of the Saxon nation with regard to the union of Transylvania with Hungary¹¹. At the same time, the young Saxon deputies led by Georg Daniel Teutsch, sharing the ideas of the Hungarian liberal revolution, voted for the unification of Transylvania and Hungary in the hope that the ideas and programme of the revolution would be implemented here as well¹². It is clear that the Saxons had different views as to the evolution of Transylvania after 1848. The reconciliation and everyone’s siding with Bishop Binder and *comes* Franz Salmen were finally brought by the sessions of the general convention of the Evangelical Churches of Hungary, held at Pesta in 1848. During this convention, it has been attempted to unify the Evangelical Churches into a single Hungarian Evangelical Church, with identical services, only performed in Hungarian. The Saxon deputies saw this as a violation of their rights of autonomy, and consequently, they strongly opposed this decision through the voice of Bishop Binder who took the stand and said: “under no circumstance will we change our German language, with the words of which we have even crossed the ocean, with a language spreading only as far as Leitha”¹³. From that moment on, all Saxons expressed their

⁹ Hermann Jekeli, *Die Bischöfe der Evangelischen Kirche A.B. in Siebenbürgen 1: Die Bischöfe der Jahre 1553-1867* (Köln-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1978), 273.

¹⁰ Jekeli, *Die Bischöfe 1*, VIII.

¹¹ Jekeli, *Die Bischöfe 1*, 287.

¹² Ludwig Binder, Josef Scheerer, *Die Bischöfe der Evangelischen Kirche A.B. in Siebenbürgen 2: Die Bischöfe der Jahre 1867-1969* (Köln-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1980), 10.

¹³ Jekeli, *Die Bischöfe 1*, 288.

unconditional loyalty to the Court from Vienna, just as the Romanians through the voice of Bishop Șaguna, which would bring upon them after the defeat of the Hungarian revolutionaries the gratitude and honor of the Court of Vienna.

Although we do not possess to this moment a clear proof of Șaguna and Binder actually meeting in Innsbruck or Pesta, a letter of Konrad Schmidt, lawyer and future *comes saxonum*, addressed to Georg D. Teutsch on May 23rd 1848, states that “a delegation of the Walachians led by bishop Șaguna, is also going to Wien with the purpose of obtaining a change in the imperial propositions.” Therefore, we can conclude the two nations were aware of each other’s movements and actions. Another very important aspect results from this letter, one helping us to identify the position and considerations of the Saxons regarding the Romanians, with whom they had a difficult juridical problem in the *Sachsenlands* that would no longer exist after the revolutionary reforms. Schmidt tells Teutsch his “hopes lay with the sympathy most of the Transylvanians had manifested that day towards the Austrian imperial house, which in turn will proceed in taking the measures that will protect the Diet from the tyranny of a fanatic group of the population”, gaining a free counsel, that would also ensure the Saxon circles taking a common stand at the Diet¹⁴. Therefore, despite the absence of evidences proving the existence of direct contacts between Șaguna and the Saxon leaders during the revolution of 1848, we can infer that the Saxons were directly interested and informed of Șaguna’s acts, measures and positions.

The national efforts of the Saxons and the Romanians have often intersected during the neo-absolutist period, and conflicts eventually burst between leaders of opinion, which were carried out especially in the press, not to mention the differences within each of the groups¹⁵. The main reasons were the existence of a Romanian majority within the Sachsenland – which obstructed the efforts of the Saxons to create an exclusively Saxon autonomous territory –, the almost complete absence of Romanian clerks and the disproportioned help that was being received for the reconstruction. All this time, the Viennese Court continued its policy of equally warranting all nations, consecutively limiting the pre-eminent role held by the Saxon University, which was dissolved in the end. Under the given circumstances, due to the lack of any other institutions to protect their identity and help to regain the lost rights, the Saxons, like the Romanians, have turned to the Church, which became their representative institution¹⁶.

¹⁴ Konrad Schmidt to G. D. Teutsch, Hermannstadt, 23. Mai 1848, in *Briefe an Georg Daniel Teutsch*, ed. Monica Vlaicu, (Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 32-33.

¹⁵ Loránd Mádly, “Eforturile sașilor transilvăneni pentru afirmarea și păstrarea identității în perioada neoabsolutismului și rolul Bisericii Evanghelice”, in *Identitate și Alteritate 4: Studii de istorie politică și culturală*, ed. Constantin Bărbulescu et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Argonaut, 2007), 120.

¹⁶ A brief history of the Lutheran Church in Transylvania and its confessional identity in the 19th century see: Mircea Gheorghe Abrudan, “The Confessional Identity of the Transylvanian Saxons (1848-1920)”, in *Entangled Identities: Regionalism, Ethnicity, Confession and Gender in Transylvania (18th-19th Century)*, ed. Sorin Mitu (Cluj-Napoca/Gatineau: Argonaut/Symphologic Publishing, 2014), 127-159.

Still, we do not have actual data confirming direct relations Şaguna has had with either Binder or Teutsch, even if they are sure to have met on official (political, cultural, ecclesial) occasions in Cluj or Sibiu. However, their correspondence, the press of the time and the historiography have not yet brought any significant discoveries on this matter¹⁷. There are different ways to explain this fact, but I believe two are the most plausible: the first is the dogmatic, canonical, liturgical, and ecclesiological distance separating the two churches, making any theological collaboration or closeness of the two, impossible; the second one is the censure the system imposed – the Saxon accounts referring to, or mentioning the Romanian Churches were very brief. In addition to this, there was also the Saxon Bishop Georg Binder's "auto-exile" in the fortress of Biertan, his exclusive concern for the issue of the National Dotation, the ecclesiastic tithe, the school reform, the strengthening of the connection between the *rostrum* and the *cathedra*, and the internal organizing of the Evangelical Church.

The next years would bring major changes not only to the socio-political life of the Empire, and implicitly of Transylvania, but it would also generate certain evolutions in the religious life of the Transylvanian churches. The political relaxation of the summer of 1860 was just the beginning of the liberal era to be officially instituted by the Liberal Diploma of October 20th 1860, that "divided the exertion of the legislative power between the Emperor, seconded by a sort of central Diet composed of 100 representatives of the various countries [...] and the provincial Diets the attributes of which regarded the administration, the churches, and the education"¹⁸.

A series of national and inter-ethnic conferences was organised under these new auspices in the next years, preparing the Diets' sessions of 1863 and 1864 – what started then was a period of constructive collaboration between the Romanians and the Saxons, that lasted until 1865. During this period Şaguna's relationship with the Saxon leaders intensified, as they were all both leaders of their nations and of their churches. A sign of this new collaboration, the declaration of the Orthodox Dean Ioan Hanea was published by Şaguna in the journal of his Eparchy, *Telegraful Român*, in 1861, stating that

in the name of the holy justice, of the Saxon and the Romanian peoples' friendship, we dare come before your grace, before the sister nation of the Saxons with whom we are called upon to share good and bad, we dare come before God and the whole world and ask that Sibiu's magistrate be composed of an equal number of deputies of the two ethnic groups, and that Romanian be used in the public affairs along with the German¹⁹.

¹⁷ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 105.

¹⁸ Simion Retegan, *Reconstrucția politică a Transilvaniei în anii 1861-1863* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2004), 52.

¹⁹ *Telegraful român*, December 12, 1861.

However, these reactions of the clergy, aimed at instilling in their faithful the impulses of a new future period of national fulfilment, have generated negative reactions from Franz Salmen, who asked Șaguna in a letter to take the necessary measures against his clergymen, accusing the Romanian priests of disobedience and stirring agitation in *Sachsenland*²⁰. Șaguna replied in a quite severe tone, accusing him of insubstantial calumnies directed against his nation and priests, who are fully entitled to participate in the public and social life of Transylvania, in the spirit of the new Diploma and Imperial Patents²¹. His uncompromising actions also contributed to Salmen being exchanged for Konrad Schmidt, Landeskirchenkurator of the Evangelical Church. Being at the height of his political influence, Șaguna conducted the directions of the Romanian politics until 1865. Despite the Hungarian boycott, he succeeded in getting the most important decisions taken and ratified during the sessions of the Diet in Sibiu of 1863-1864, decisions elevating the Romanian nation, language, and Churches to the same rank as those of the other nations, granting complete equality of rights with the rest of the inhabitants of Transylvania²².

However, the euphoria of the Romanians did not last long, as the Court of Vienna attempted to reconcile with the Hungarians, following its defeat in the conflict with Prussia in 1864-1865, inaugurating the dualism and the empire's division in two, with two respective governments in Vienna and Budapest. It seems the emperor had let Șaguna know as early as 1865 what his future political decisions would be. Daniel Teutsch was informed of this matter by Eugen Trauschenfels at the end of the same year, who shared with him what he had heard from „Gubernialrath Lázár, who said the Emperor had disclosed his thoughts to Șaguna, saying he wanted the Union realised and asking him to influence the children of his church to this end. There is no account of Șaguna's answer, but it should have reached completion”²³.

The same person wrote Teutsch asking what advice to give the Saxon deputies in Vienna regarding the above-mentioned issue, assuring him they will make their opposition manifest exclusively when voting, and ending his letter asking whether he knew by any chance “what part does Șaguna play?”²⁴ What all this points to is that the acts and the policy promoted by the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan was of direct interest to the Saxon leaders, as Georg

²⁰ Retegan, *Reconstrucția politică a Transilvaniei*, 151.

²¹ *Telegraful român*, September 14, 1861.

²² Ioan Bolovan, “Românii în perioada reformelor și a revoluțiilor democratice (1820-1859)”, in *Istoria României: Compendium*, Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan eds. (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul Cultural Român/Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2004), 572.

²³ Eugen Trauschenfels to G.D.Teutsch, Kronstadt, 10. Oktober 1865, in *Briefe an Georg Daniel Teutsch*, 120.

²⁴ Eugen Trauschenfels to G.D.Teutsch, Kronstadt, 10. Oktober 1865, in *Briefe an Georg Daniel Teutsch*, 123.

Daniel Teutsch, who was constantly updated on the events taking place in the Empire by his friends and acquaintances who sent him reports and regarded him as a foremost leader of their nation, although he was not yet a bishop (he would become that only after the death of the venerable Georg Paul Binder, in September 1867).

The year he was elected bishop, Georg Daniel Teutsch became closer to Şaguna spatially, because he moved to Sibiu, as well as factually, as the collaboration between the two nations intensified, in their attempt to counter the Magyarisation policy in the ecclesiastic and the educational fields²⁵. Though he was not a remarkable theologian, Bishop Georg Daniel Teutsch was an exceptional organizer, and he excelled in historical research and in understanding the political-ecclesiastic activities, leaving a lasting mark of his spirit on the Lutheran Church. Even more so, his unique political capacities set him side by side with Samuel von Bruckenthal²⁶.

There is however, one extant letter addressed to Teutsch by Şaguna, written at the time when Teutsch was still the principal of the gymnasium of Sighişoara, a letter proving Şaguna had known him well²⁷. In this letter addressed "To the esteemed principal of the C.A. gymnasium of Sighişoara" Andrei Şaguna wrote

Determined by the highest regard I have for the extraordinary head of the same gymnasium of Sighişoara, I reverently address him and ask that he may receive from us a Romanian illustrated Bible, printed in the presses of our dioceses, for the library of your institution, as a sign of my highest respect for science and morality. At the same time, I am honoured to assure you of my everlasting admiration²⁸.

²⁵ About the Magyarisation policy in Austro-Hungary and in Transylvania see: Adam Markus, *Die Geschichte des ungarischen Nationalismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013); Joachim Puttkamer, *Schulalltag und nationale Integration in Ungarn. Slowaken, Rumänen und Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Auseinandersetzung mit der ungarischen Staatsidee 1867-1914* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2003); Mircea Păcurariu, *The policy of the Hungarian state concerning the Romanian Church in Transylvania under the Dual Monarchy (1867-1918)* (Bucharest: Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1986); *De la Pronunţiament la Memorandum 1868-1892. Mişcarea memorandistă, expresie a luptei naţionale a românilor*, Corneliu Mihail Lungu ed. et al., (Bucureşti: Arhivele Statului din România, 1993); Friedrich Teutsch, *Geschichte der ev. Kirche in Siebenbürgen, Band II. 1700-1917* (Hermannstadt: W. Krafft Verlag, 1922), 363-586.

²⁶ Walter Muss, *Lexikon der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Innsbruck: Wort und Welt Verlag, 1993), 520-521.

²⁷ Ioan Lupaş, "Episcopul Gheorghe Daniil Teutsch 1817-1893", *Revista Transilvania*, XL (1909): 24.

²⁸ Andrei Şaguna to G.D. Teutsch, Hermannstadt, 4. Mai 1859, in Abrudan, *Ortodoxie şi Luteranism în Transilvania*, 388.

Georg Daniel Teutsch had the same esteem, respect and admiration for Şaguna's entire activity, as they become apparent in the ample, admiring obituary he published in June 1873 in the Weekly German-Transylvanian Gazette²⁹, at the death of the Metropolitan. Despite the fact that some of the biographical data are wrong and that while mentioning and analysing the pro-memoirs Şaguna had sent the Emperor, Teutsch believes there are some historical inaccuracies – at the same time detecting a personal, melancholic tone used in order to move the Emperor and obtain the leave to re-establish the Metropolis – he eventually concludes in the name of the friends and of the enemies of this great man that “all will agree that Şaguna's name corresponds to a new age in the life of the Romanian people and of the Eastern Church”. Concurrently, Teutsch draws an image of Şaguna's accomplishments, affirming the following

Şaguna has been the sole intellectual leader of his people for almost a generation, and as such has been able to achieve political results only few mortals have been blessed to reach. It is true the radical changes of 1848 and the following years had been favourable for his cause, but it should be acknowledged as a personal merit, that with the aid of his vision and wise judgement he came to understand the significance of those events and use them to his advantage. He was neither a verbose politician, nor one of those idealists who by the power of their enthusiasm and of their charming words wish to change the course of rivers and displace mountains; he liked to remain firmly attached to the real facts and deal with them. When he quickly realised that nothing lasts in Austria, that everything there is submitted to never ceasing changes, he kept away from the madness of gripping on to a single political system, and always remembering at the right time the words of the Roman poet *impavidum ferient ruinae*, he was able to rejoice in his rewarding results, regardless of the changes of that time, something only a few mortals are allowed to experience. [...] Oh, how far they are from one another, the poor Walachian bishop of 1846, whose nation and church were merely tolerated in Transylvania, and the member of the house of the magnates, and in between these two extremities, the man of confidence of the enlarged Imperial Senate of Vienna, the deputy of Sălişte in the Diet of Sibiu, and the life member of the Austrian senate³⁰.

To conclude, we can say that despite the lack of hard evidence pointing to the existence of direct personal contacts between Şaguna and Teutsch, we can surely affirm together with Thomas Nägler that “having a similar constitution and being confronted with similar challenges, their knowledge and their caring for their people in those tormented times, bring them closer, regardless of the different premises they had started from”³¹.

²⁹ About the Transylvanian German press see: Nicolae Teşculă, *Presa social-politică săsească din Transilvania (1850-1876)* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010).

³⁰ „Andreas Freiherr von Schaguna”, *Siebenbürgisch-deutsches Wochenblatt*, June 28, 1873, 419-420. For more details see Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania*, 377-403.

³¹ Thomas Nägler, “Einleitung”, in *Briefe an Georg Daniel Teutsch*, 23.

3. Andrei Şaguna and Johannes Filtsch

Whereas there haven't been any strong direct theological contacts between the Saxon bishops and Şaguna, there is at least proof of cordial inter-confessional relationships based on mutual respect and that of the law, between the Orthodox and Lutherans, namely a short correspondence between Şaguna and a rural dean, Johannes Filtsch, pastor of Şelimbăr.

Johannes Filtsch wrote a letter to the Orthodox Metropolitan in the winter of 1861, letting him know of the situation of a mixed family in his parish. The daughter of Andrea Zimmermann, a tavern keeper from Şeica, married to an Orthodox Romanian woman, had been raised and had attended the German Evangelical School, as well as the Evangelical religion classes and those required for confirmation. Aged 16 at that time, the parents and their daughter wished for her to officially belong to the Evangelical community, probably in view of a secretly planned marriage, before she reached *annus discretionis*. The last two phrases written by the pastor are of utmost importance in establishing the principles defining the relationship between the Evangelicals and the Orthodox during the time of Şaguna. Here is how he addresses Şaguna:

Being aware of the human and Christian sentiments of Your Excellency towards our Church, I have felt at my leisure in giving the father of the girl hope he will be granted permission to consider his daughter a legitimate member of her father's church", also stressing that "without any intent of proselytism, in this case I have felt compelled to bring in all faith my approval to Your Excellency, to whom I have the deepest regard and respect³².

Şaguna quickly answered and wrote to Filtsch that based on the principles his letter had stated, his request could not be denied, namely to "have the 16 year old girl Maria Zimmermann change her Greek-Oriental religion with the Evangelical one, as he has even fewer reasons to object, given that the age of 18 established by the political authority for giving permission the change one's religion does not originate in the Canon Law" on the one hand, and on the other hand, stating his conviction that "the present change is not the consequence of any form of proselytism". He did however ask the girl's mother to send a written approval supporting and legalizing her daughter's gesture, "to the deaconate of the second district under my supervision"³³, as a sign of obeying the law to the letter – one of his specific traits.

³² Johannes Filtsch to Andrei Şaguna, Schellenberg, 11. Dezember 1861, in *Andrei Şaguna: Corespondența I/1*, ed. Nicolae Bocşan et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005), 554-557.

³³ Andrei Şaguna to Johannes Filtsch, 18/6 December 1861, in *Andrei Şaguna: Corespondența I/1*, 556-557.

4. Andrei Şaguna and Jakob Rannicher

Pursuing his interest in ecclesiastical and modern civil law Andrei Şaguna had a fine collaboration with the Law Academy in Sibiu and its professors³⁴; his closest friend had been Jakob Rannicher, an erudite jurist from Sibiu who held important offices in Transylvania at Cluj and Sibiu, as well as in Vienna and Budapest³⁵.

Jakob Rannicher was born November 7, 1823 in Sibiu, the son of Jakobus and his third wife Theresia Offemüller; he would attend the Saxon primary school and gymnasium, and from 1844, the courses of the Law Academy, an institution which formed many politicians, jurists, journalists and lawyers of Transylvania. During his studies, but especially after having finished them, his entire activity was focused on serving the purpose of the Academy that “in addition to the fundamental notions of general law, every Saxon student should learn and further promote the special rights of his people”³⁶, because the Saxon juridical law had always been centred on manifesting and preserving the old rights and privileges they had ever since the Middle Ages on the *Königsboden* (the imperial territory). He graduated from the Academy in 1846 and started to practice juridical research in Târgu-Mureş, while also becoming a correspondent for the *Transylvanian review* and the *Transylvanian gazette* from Sibiu, his main area of concern being the situation of the Church and the School.

The revolution of 1848 propelled him into the political life of Transylvania. He became an active member of the Saxon leaders of Sibiu and one of those opposing the unification of Transylvania with Hungary. Because he zealously militated against this unification, pleaded for maintaining the integrity of Grand Austria, and urged the Saxon youth to fight for Austria’s unity, for “we are Saxons above all, and as citizens of the free Saxon nation – we are the people most faithful to Austria”³⁷, he was forced to flee to Bucharest in exile, and later to Vienna in May 1848, where he would successively work for the ministries of Finance, Culture, and Education³⁸. From here he wrote to his colleagues in May 1850 – at the same time advising the young professor Daniel Teutsch to travel with bishop Paul Binder to Vienna, as the new Romanian bishop of Sibiu had previously done – urging them with the following words: “See how Şaguna acts. When he senses the danger, he is instantly in Vienna. There is no other imaginable way”³⁹.

³⁴ For details see Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania*, 335-359.

³⁵ Pitters, *Despre relațiile Mitropolitului Andrei Şaguna*, 573.

³⁶ Thomas Năgler, “Jakob Rannicher und seine Zeit”, *Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis. Series Historica* 1 (2004): 230.

³⁷ Jakob Rannicher to Friedrich Gundhart, Wien, 19. Februar 1850, in *Jakob Rannicher im Zeichen seiner Zeit. Briefe und Reden (1846-1874) 1. Teil*, ed. Monica Vlaicu (Sibiu/Hermannstadt: Honterus Verlag, 2008), 175.

³⁸ Năgler, *Jakob Rannicher*, 232.

³⁹ Jakob Rannicher to Georg Daniel Teutsch, Wien, 16. Mai 1850, in *Jakob Rannicher im Zeichen seiner Zeit 1*, 203.

In the context of these events, he started engaging in his first serious contacts with the Romanian elites, led by Şaguna, and with the delegations of the Transylvanian Evangelical Church who were asking the Court to help and support the Saxon educational system, which was directly subordinated to it. After he had left Sibiu for Cluj, and then for Pesta and Vienna, he and Şaguna wrote each other letters. Their correspondence comprises 32 letters sent by Şaguna to Iakob Rannicher. Ilarion Puşcariu published 12 letters in 1909 as a tribute to the Metropolitan, which he considered his spiritual father⁴⁰. The Saxon bishop Friedrich Müller has also published four letters in 1956, trying to prove Şaguna and Rannicher had cooperated, and that the latter had helped the former in creating his new statute for ecclesiastic organisation⁴¹. A reinstatement of the personality of Jakob Rannicher in front of the attention of the historiography realized the historian Monica Vlaicu, who published in 2008 and 2010 two large volumes gathering a large part of the correspondence and speeches of Rannicher. In the second volume we find a number of 23 letters received by Rannicher from Şaguna⁴². Johann Schneider is the latest researcher who discussed the relationship between the two, writing a short chapter entitled “Andrei Şaguna and Jakob Rannicher”, in which he debates the influence of the German jurist upon the canonical organization of the metropolitan church of Transylvania⁴³.

Their correspondence, as well as other evidences show that there has been a close collaboration between Şaguna and Rannicher, both in the juridical-canonical field, as well as in the field of organizing confessional education and dealing with issues of ecclesiastic administration.

The first proofs confirming connections and contacts they had date back to the time of the 1848-49 Revolution. They met in Vienna in October 1849, where Şaguna urged him and the Transylvanian Saxons to maintain peace with the Rumanians⁴⁴. In a dissertation Rannicher had signed in 1855, when he was a secretary of the Transylvanian government, we find a gratifying description of Şaguna's cultural activities – he had founded the diocesan press of Sibiu – that reads

⁴⁰ Ilarion Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole dintre cele ce se păstrează de la arhiepiscopul-mitropolit Andreiu baron de Şaguna”, in *Mitropolitul Andreiu baron de Şaguna: Scriere comemorativă la serbarea centenară a naşterii lui*, (Sibiu: Editura Consistoriului Mitropolitan, 1909), 487-532.

⁴¹ Friedrich Müller, „Das Luthertum als Auslöschungskern der volkskirchlichen Entwicklung und deren geschichtliche Auswirkung in Südosteuropa”, in *Geschichtswirksamkeit des Evangeliums in seinem lutherischen Verständnis*, (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk), 1956, 46-54.

⁴² *Jakob Rannicher im Zeichen seiner Zeit: Briefe und Reden (1846-1874) 2. Teil*, ed. Monica Vlaicu (Sibiu/Hermannstadt: Honterus Verlag, 2010), 374-375, 383-384, 386-391, 401-402, 404-407, 410-416, 419, 423-427, 430-431, 485-486, 516-518.

⁴³ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 101-107.

⁴⁴ Jakob Rannicher to Friedrich von Sachsenheim, Wien, 31. Oktober 1849, in *Jakob Rannicher im Zeichen seiner Zeit 1*, 153-163.

He hit the rock and made the fountain of intellectual culture spring forth for his people. This is how we could depict Șaguna, he who in 1850 has done for the Romanians and for the faithful of the Greek-Eastern church of Transylvania, what Honterus had done for the Reformation and the Saxons 300 years ago⁴⁵.

Rannicher and other Saxon intellectuals had the same admiration for Șaguna's publishing activity, the most prestigious act being the issue of his *Compendium of Canon Law* (1868)⁴⁶ and of the *Holy Bible* (1856-1858)⁴⁷ where we can notice the two major areas of interference between the Evangelicals and the Orthodox: the juridical and the scriptural spheres, both of which played a key part in the activities of the Saxon intellectuals of this period.

As member of the Lutheran ecclesiastical consistory of Sibiu, Rannicher brought his substantial contribution to the reorganization of the Evangelical Church C.A. of Transylvania: he wanted it restructured from its base to the top, on the principles of the modern law and of the liberal ideas in order to obtain once again, the Saxon Church's ecclesial autonomy with regard to the state, it had lost in 1807. With the beginning of the liberal period in the 1860s, his purpose will gradually become a reality. Thus on April 12th 1861, the first *Landeskirchenversammlung* took place, voting on the new constitution of the Evangelical Church which stipulated its autonomy from the state and establishing the new chief duties of the Saxon communities "the culture and education, the faith and fear of God are the never drying springs the people have as comfort and blessing for vigorous actions"⁴⁸.

The fruitful collaboration between the Romanians and the Saxons began in this favourable context, and it was made manifest during the assemblies of the Diet in 1863 and 1865 when the autonomy of Transylvania and its development within Austria had been sanctioned⁴⁹. During these sessions the friendship

⁴⁵ Jacob Rannicher, "Die Thätigkeit der Diöcesan-Druckerei in Hermannstadt", *Transsilvania*, July 2, 1855, 1-3; and July 9, 1855, 7. The Romanian translation of this article was published in the Romanian newspaper *Telegraful Român* in the same year: Jakob Rannicher, "Activitatea tipografiei diecezane în Sibiu", *Telegraful Român*, February 26, 1855, 65; and March 2, 1855, 69-70.

⁴⁶ Andrei Baron de Șaguna, *Compendiu de dreptul canonic al unei sântei sobornicesci și apostolesci Biserici* (Sibiu: Tipografia archidieceșana, 1868).

⁴⁷ *Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Legii celei vechi și a cei noao, după originalul celor șeptezeci și doi tâlcuitori din Alecsandria. Tipărită în zilele Prea Înălțatului nostru împărat al Austriei Francisc Iosif I, supt priveghiiarea și cu binecuvântarea Ecselenției Sale, Prea Sfințitului Domn Andreiu Baron de Șaguna, Dreptcredinciosul Episcop al Bisericei greco-resăritene Ortodocse în Marele Principat al Ardealului, Comander al Ordinului Leopoldin cesaro-regescu austriacu, și Sfetnic din lăuntru de Stat al Maiestaței Sale Cesaro-Regești Apostolice* (Sibiu: Tipografia Episcopiei, 1856-1858).

⁴⁸ Năgler, *Jakob Rannicher*, 232-233.

⁴⁹ About the debates and the legislation issued by this Transylvanian parliament see: Valeriu Moldovan, *Dieta Ardealului din 1863-1864. Studiu istoric-juridic* (Cluj: Tipografia Națională, 1932); Simion Retegan, *Dieta Românească a Transilvaniei (1863-1864)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1979).

connecting Şaguna and Rannicher became obvious, as well as the respect and admiration of the Metropolitan for the Saxon jurist, as the tone of his letters makes it clear. What had drawn them near and had enabled this friendship were the coordinates of their lives, because they were, like Schneider underlines,

both Austrians loyal to the Emperor, both were passionate canon law experts and were seeking a way to put a hold on the state's influence in the Orthodox and the Evangelical church, respectively, and in their confessional schools, at the same time trying to obtain as substantial endowments as possible from the state, for the priests and the schools⁵⁰.

Beside his juridical and political actions in Sibiu, Budapest and Vienna, Rannicher has been the actual theologian of the Transylvanian Protestant Saxons during the second half of the 19th century, through his work on ecclesiastic law⁵¹, at the centre of which was his manual of ecclesiastic law, a Christological ecclesiology based on the Holy Scriptures and on the Lutheran professions of faith, bearing the mark of Schleiermacher's theology. This work radically opposes Rannicher to the rationalistic bishop Georg Paul Binder, for whom "Jesus Christ had been 'an emissary of God' he had been just a 'superior gifted man, full of grace' who guided humans towards goals and heights they have to climb with their own powers in the end"⁵².

Hence, the Lutheran theologian Johann Schneider concluded that we should not be surprised that there is no documented meeting of the two bishops, namely Andrei Şaguna of Sibiu and Georg Paul Binder of Biertan (Birthälm), since "although they have certainly met often in Sibiu or in Cluj, on official business, they had nothing to say to each other as Christian bishops"⁵³.

Furthermore, it is surprising how Rannicher did not try to hide his disapproval vis-à-vis the Saxon leaders, but he marked his disdain of the frail theological substance of his church's clerics. For instance, in a letter he wrote to the Saxon *comes* Konrad Schmidt – who had warned him his *Manual* was not "popular" enough, because not even the clergymen would be able to understand it – Rannicher indirectly calls Bishop Paul Binder and other clerics "mediocre theologians". He wrote

I would not be surprised if they did not understand; I do not write for those who think theology is a cow providing us with milk and butter; I find it impossible to ignore the point of view of the German scholarly research in the field of ecclesiastic law; I do not intend to write a mere compilation of

⁵⁰ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 104.

⁵¹ Jakob Rannicher, *Handbuch des evangelischen Kirchenrechtes mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die evangelische Landeskirche Augsburgischer Bekenntnisses in Siebenbürgen, Erstes Heft, die Einleitung enthaltend* (Hermannstadt: Theodor Steinhausen, 1859).

⁵² Jekeli, *Die Bischöfe 1*, 279-280.

⁵³ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 105.

dry laws and names, one which could be easily consulted without soliciting the cognitive capacities at all. I actually want to stimulate the thinking of those readers for whom, in my opinion, self-examination can announce and generate a contradiction⁵⁴.

Naturally, all these facts were well known to Șaguna, because among the 3000 books that used to belong to him (which are currently preserved in the archives of the Orthodox Metropolis of Sibiu) there were all of Rannicher's works, the church constitutions of the Evangelical Churches A.C. and H.C. of Austria, as well as numerous German Evangelical and Catholic opera of canon law⁵⁵. This would explain Șaguna's interest in maintaining a good collaboration and friendship with Rannicher, and his confidence in him.

This confidence is revealed by the contents of an undated letter – published by Friedrich Müller – in which Șaguna sends Rannicher his project on “the organization of our church, in the view of its contents’ and German translation’s understanding and examination”, and asks him to “outline your valuable opinion on this”⁵⁶.

Müller's attempt to date the letter prior to or after December 25th 1863 is based on a reasoning according to which the most plausible date should be a previous one, due to the fact that Șaguna still signs *Freiher von Șaguna, Bischof*, (Baron of Șaguna, Bishop) and not with his new ecclesiastic title, *Erzbischof* (Archbishop), appearing in all the official documents and letters sent after this date⁵⁷. Andrei Șaguna himself underlined its confidence in Jakob Rannicher's opinions and expert authority, when he urged Dimitrie Moldovan, a Romanian imperial adviser, in May 31, 1861 to consult with Rannicher “in all ecclesiastical and school things” because he had helped him “for years” and he is “a cultivated and talented man”⁵⁸.

To get a better image of their relationship, I considered it necessary to offer a general view of the most important letters Șaguna has sent Rannicher, between 1863 and 1872. The first characteristic of the letters is the friendly, warm tone in which they are written, on the one hand – he alternatively employs expressions such as “dear friend”, “beloved friend”, “most honoured friend”, “dear companion”, “most honoured companion”, “my precious friend”, “most esteemed friend”, “beloved companion” – and, on the other hand, the profusion of biblical and literary quotations and references, from the famous works of that time, demonstrating once more the profound theological spirit of the two Transylvanian leaders, anchored in Scripture and the culture of the world.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Teutsch, *Jakob Rannicher. Ein Lebens- und Zeitbild aus dem Kampf der Sachsen um ihr Recht* (Hermannstadt: Ostdeutschen Druckerei und Verlag, 1922), 17–18.

⁵⁵ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 106; Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania*, 412-414.

⁵⁶ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 106.

⁵⁷ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 102-106.

⁵⁸ Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania*, 416.

In his letter of March 14, 1863, Şaguna imparts to his dear friend the sadness he feels because the gubernatorial counsellor Pavel Vasici was trying to take the gymnasium of Braşov away from the ecclesial jurisdiction and to place it under the authority of the government⁵⁹. The same topic reappears in the letter of January 21, 1866, in which the Metropolitan informs Rannicher on his petition not being resolved, a petition “forwarded to the government for the granting of the publicity right to our grand gymnasium of Braşov”⁶⁰.

In March 1865, Şaguna wrote Rannicher two extensive letters, explaining his actions in Karlowitz with regard to the separation of the Romanian eparchies from the Serbian ones, focusing on the issue of the goods, which had so far been administered jointly by monasteries, parishes and schools, and on the new Caransebeş bishopric⁶¹. Whereas in the first letter, written in Karlowitz on March 2, 1865, he spoke of the Serbian congress he had attended, where the Serbs refused to grant him ecclesiastic autonomy and implicitly the Romanians the respective share of the church goods⁶², in the second one, sent on March 5, 1865, Şaguna requested from Rannicher that he would compose in complete confidence three appendices. One would be a letter later appended to the report on the election of a new Romanian Orthodox bishop residing in Caransebeş; the second, a petition concerning his installation as archbishop and metropolitan, to be solemnly read in the church; the third would be two imperial diplomas to be issued concerning the re-establishing of the Orthodox Metropolis of Transylvania, on the one hand, and his acknowledgement as archbishop and metropolitan. Furthermore, he asked Rannicher to write a request in his name to the same presidium of the state ministry, allowing the preparation of the general congress of the Metropolis in Răşinari, in which 30 priests and 60 laymen would take part as deputies⁶³. At the end of March, Şaguna informed his friend of his short visit to Vienna and of the demarche he had addressed to the ministries, as well as of his Court audiences⁶⁴.

At the beginning of the next year, on January 21, Şaguna sent his dear friend his gratitude for the advice he had given him, and especially for the petition he was going to personally hand to the emperor. He asked Rannicher to be very strict when correcting the document, emphasising the idea that all the denominations are equally legitimate, just as it is stated in the rescript the Emperor had recently sent to the Diet of Transylvania. He then returned to the issue of the gymnasium

⁵⁹ Şaguna to Rannicher, Hermannstadt, 14. März 1863, in Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 487–488.

⁶⁰ Şaguna to Rannicher, Hermannstadt, 21. Januar 1866, in Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 498–499.

⁶¹ Details about this see: Nicolae Bocşan, „The Hierarchical Separation between the Romanian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches 1864-1871”, in *Church and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Maria Crăciun and Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: European Studies Foundation Publishing House, 1998) 207-218.

⁶² Şaguna to Rannicher, Carlowitz, 2. März 1865, in Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 488–490.

⁶³ Şaguna to Rannicher, Carlowitz, 5. März 1865, in Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 492–494.

⁶⁴ Şaguna to Rannicher, Wien, 30. März 1865, in Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 496–497.

in Brașov and concluded by informing Rannicher of the ratification “of the two diplomas concerning the creation of the Metropolis and my being named Archbishop and Metropolitan, by his Majesty”⁶⁵.

In September 1866, Șaguna wrote to Rannicher that he was asked to declare himself in favour of the “creation of the mixed schools”; he underlined the fact that he had been opposed to this idea since 1862 manifesting his disapproval on many occasions, of such schools already functioning in the Dobra County⁶⁶. Once again, he made it clear he did not approve the creation of lay schools that would absorb the confessional ones, because the former bore the elements of the de-nationalization and would dilute the national-confessional identity that the schools under the patronage of the church preserved. On ending his letter, he gave an account of the problems the church had in Brașov, namely the dissensions between Romanians and Greeks, who together formed the Orthodox community of the city.

In a letter of December 1866, Șaguna conveyed to his friend the bitterness he experiences due to the events that had taken place lately in the Transylvanian society: he had been accused by “members of the Greek-Catholic intelligentsia in the Transylvania Gazette” that he had been bribed by the Hungarian ministry in 1848, thus generating a strong dispute between the *Telegraful Român* and other Romanian newspapers. The blame for these problems was with the superficial culture of the people, contrasting them with the foremost figure of the solid culture in Pesta, “my school friend, the Baron Eötvös”. Furthermore, he told him of the intransigent position he had taken with regard to the affairs of the church, writing the government he “will not take any kind of orders”⁶⁷.

In the following letters of March, September and November 1867, Șaguna gave an account of some of the aspects of his day-to-day life⁶⁸, insisting on the topic of “the situation of the consistorial exactor’s salary”⁶⁹ and hoping this problem would be solved soon; moreover, he mentioned that the ministry had “approved a law project concerning our church”, even though his propositions had not yet been considered⁷⁰.

Two ample letters from February and July 1868 concern matters of canon law: Șaguna told Rannicher of his immediate canonical matters of concern, namely publishing his manuscript on Canon Law, due to appear the same year in Romanian and German, as well as of the controversy between “my Greek and Romanian Christian faithful in Brașov”⁷¹.

⁶⁵ Șaguna to Rannicher, Hermannstadt, 21. Januar 1866, in Pușcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 498-499

⁶⁶ Șaguna to Rannicher, Hermannstadt, 26. September 1866, in Pușcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 502.

⁶⁷ Șaguna to Rannicher, 22. Dezember 1866, in Pușcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 506-508.

⁶⁸ Șaguna to Rannicher, Hermannstadt, 13. März 1867, in Pușcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 510-511.

⁶⁹ Șaguna to Rannicher, 26. September 1867, in Pușcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 513-514.

⁷⁰ Șaguna to Rannicher, Hermannstadt, 11. Nov. 1867, in Pușcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 515-517.

⁷¹ Șaguna to Rannicher, 20. Februar 1868, in Pușcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 519-521.

This exchange of opinions was meant to solve the litigation in Braşov. In a long letter from July 1868 Şaguna explained to Rannicher why he had punished the Greeks with interdiction: his action was justified by the fact that Rannicher had represented the Greeks as ministry councillor before minister József Eötvös⁷², supporting their opinion that their parish would not be subordinated to the local bishop, because it was a patriarchal stauropigy, depending directly to the Ecumenical Patriarchy and therefore being able to choose priests only from among the monks of the Holy Mount Athos⁷³. Şaguna tried to demonstrate to Rannicher that canonically, the position of the Greek community could be sustained and that his punishment was correct, abiding by the canonical norms⁷⁴. What can be observed in this correspondence on a juridical-canonical dispute is probably surprising: the tone is friendly and respectful, and Şaguna no longer addresses Rannicher with “Sir”, or “ministerial councillor”, but using another more personal formula, such as “my dearest friend”, answering, in return, “as a friend replies to his friend”.

Şaguna’s final letter to Rannicher – July 1872 – has the melancholic tone specific to his last year of life; he thanks him once again for the joy of having received his last letter on June 25 and of having been re-elected to the Diet, remembering the words of “psalm 89:10: the time of my years is seventy” although “I am 64”, words which sound very familiar; he is at peace with the thought of death⁷⁵.

It is very hard – if not impossible – to reconstruct and properly evaluate the contacts these two friends have had, because it should not be ignored that they not only communicated through letters, but they have also met regularly especially during the sessions of the Transylvanian Diet in Sibiu between 1863 and 1864, discussing topics that required confidence and maximum discretion. A proof of such a meeting is a message Şaguna sent Rannicher on the August 9, 1863, reading, “My dearest friend, I wish to discuss something very important with you in private, and I would like to do so before today’s conference at the Diet’s commissary. Therefore, I ask you to come to me for breakfast. I will wait until half past 8”⁷⁶.

We saw that after 1849, Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna and the jurist Jakob Rannicher, collaborated in the matters of canon and secular law, ecclesiastic organization, education, politics, culture, Şaguna completely trusting his Lutheran friend, ensuring him of his friendship and even of his blessing, in the final salutation of some of the letters⁷⁷.

⁷² About him and his relationship with Şaguna see: Ioan Lupaş, *Şaguna și Eötvös, conferința ținută în sala festivă a gimnaziului din Braşov la 6 decembrie și la Asociațiunea din Sibiu la 8 decembrie 1913* (Arad: Concordia, 1913); Vardy Steven Bela, *Baron Joseph Eötvös (1813-1871): A Literary Biography* (Colorado: Columbia University Press, 1987).

⁷³ More about this dispute see: *Ein juristisch-politisches Charakterbild, getreu nach dem siebenbürgischen Leben gezeichnet von einem Unbefangenen* (Hermannstadt: Theodor Steinhäusen, 1868).

⁷⁴ Şaguna to Rannicher, 20. Iul 1868, in Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 525–529.

⁷⁵ Şaguna to Rannicher, Hermannstadt, 7. Iul 1867, in Puşcariu, “Câteva epistole”, 523.

⁷⁶ Schneider, *Der Hermannstädter Metropolit*, 103.

⁷⁷ Extensively about their contacts see: Abrudan, *Ortodoxie și Luteranism în Transilvania*, 403-435.

Conclusions

The young Anastasiu Șaguna had been educated in the Romanian political, social and cultural circles of Pesta, he had graduated a Roman-Catholic gymnasium, the University of Pesta, had served in the Metropolis of Karlowitz, being constantly informed on the illuminist ideas circulating the Empire and thus coming in contact with Christians belonging to various denominations and with citizens of various nationalities. He later became hieromonk Andrei Șaguna, archimandrite and finally bishop of the Orthodox Bishopric of Transylvania for 25 years, and as such, he was the actual leader of Transylvanian Romanians. An eminent diplomat, secret advisor of the Emperor Franz Joseph, Andrei Baron of Șaguna succeeded in crossing the confessional and dogmatic barriers separating the Lutherans and the Orthodox, half a century before the actual modern ecumenical dialog would be initiated at the beginning of the 20th century⁷⁸.

His personal contribution to the Orthodox-Lutheran dialog – officially opened between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran World Federation only 100 years after his death, in 1981⁷⁹ – resides in the fact that he knew how to fulfil the Saviour's commandment in John 13: 35: "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples", by coming in close contact with the faithful and the leaders of the Transylvanian Lutheran hierarchy. Bishop Șaguna proves to us just how important personal relationships and the experience gained from face to face interactions are.

We should note that Andrei Șaguna did not act according to a pre-determined plan or agenda the imperial chancellery had outlined, but according to a natural need for knowledge and mutual help, within a space of confessional and ethnical interference where the people shared a centuries-old experience of "tolerance" and cohabitation.

Naturally, we could not assert his pivotal thought had been the idea of re-establishing the Christian unity, the ecclesial unity between the East and the West, but we can state that what had held his call for dialogue together was his necessity to discover the valuable things his Lutheran friends possessed. Jakob

⁷⁸ For details on the initiation and the development of the Ecumenism and of the ecumenical dialogue between various Christian churches, see: Alexandru Moraru, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română între anii 1885-2000: Dialog teologic și ecumenic, volume III, tom II* (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 2006), 113-354; Ioan-Vasile Leb, *Teologie și Istorie: Studii de Patristică și Istorie Bisericească* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Arhiepiscopiei, 1999), 264–270.

⁷⁹ For a more detailed presentation of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox and the Evangelical Churches, see: Constantin Pătuleanu, *Die Begegnung der rumänischen Orthodoxie mit dem Protestantismus (16. Bis 20. Jahrhundert), unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des bilateralen theologischen Dialog zwischen der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche (1979-1998)* (Hamburg: Kovac, 2000); Cosmin Daniel Pricop, *From Espoo to Paphos: the dialogue of the Orthodox Churches with the Lutheran World Federation: 1981-2008* (Bucharest: Basilica, 2013).

Rannicher for instance, from and through whom he had (re)discovered teachings of the primary Church and of the German humanist culture, the exponents of which were the Lutheran Saxons in Transylvania.

Although the contacts were personal and not official, I believe it could be asserted that in this case we are dealing with an example of “local ecumenism” initiated and promoted not only at the top, but generated at the base of the Transylvanian multi-confessional and multi-ethnic society; this dialogue overcame the fear, the hatred and the resentment felt for others, thus overcoming any isolation or marginalization.

Nevertheless, the first biographer of Metropolitan Andrei Țaguna, archimandrite Nicolae Popea is probably the one leaving us the most vivid testimony of Țaguna’s ecumenical legacy and irenical spirit when writing

our Metropolitan was esteemed and honoured even by the foreigners, regardless of their nationality or confession [because] he regained the autonomy and the freedom of our national church, he restored our old Metropolis and organized it on liberal bases in the spirit of the canons and of the primitive church, so well, that in our days you rarely find a church as well organized as ours⁸⁰.

Furthermore, the words describing Țaguna’s “ecumenical” spirit, written by the same author and close collaborator, are especially relevant, supporting the historical truth – since they come from a direct witness – and unveiling the true character of the Metropolitan

there will be those who still say the Metropolitan Țaguna hates other denominations, and especially Greek-Catholics, there is nothing more unjust than this accusation [because he attacked] no one when he was provoked, but many times he remained passive, asking for the common good. To the contrary, one may say that no one respected other denominations more than Metropolitan Țaguna. His Romanian noble heart regarded with utmost consideration men belonging to Greek-Catholic and other religions⁸¹.

The relationships between Andrei Țaguna and the leaders of the Lutheran Church in Transylvania have been marked by the admiration, appreciation and respect the Lutherans had for him, his actions in their turn, bearing the mark of his loyalty to the imperial Court from Vienna, his respect for the laws and his constant wish to stand within the framework of the authority and constitutionality of the state, as well as that of the respect and love for the word of Holy Scripture and of the Holy Tradition.

⁸⁰ Nicolae Popea, *Esceleñi`a Sea Archiepiscopulu și Metropolitulu Andreiu Baronu de Țiaguna* (Sibiu: Editura Archiepescană, 1873), 28.

⁸¹ Popea, *Esceleñi`a Sea*, 14.

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III. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

THE INTERRELATION OF EUCHARIST AND MARRIAGE. THE MISSION OF THE PARISH IN FORMING COMMUNICANTS AND SPOUSES IN HOLINESS

PHILIP LEMASTERS*

ABSTRACT. Orthodox parishes today must enable communicants and spouses to recognize how their communion with Jesus Christ calls them to a holy communion with one another. Eucharist and marriage both manifest a covenantal communion that changes the identity of the persons who participate in them from isolated individuals to participants in the Body of Christ. They also involve physical actions that transcend the merely physical in their significance, and thus resist the Gnostic tendencies of separating “body” and “person.” They both draw on the deep incarnational sensibilities of Orthodoxy. Sacrifice is central to both sacraments, as husband and wife wear the crowns of martyrdom as they offer themselves to one another and to the Lord, in whose offering they commune in the Eucharist.

Keywords: Orthodox, ethics, marriage, Eucharist, sex, sacrament

Eucharist and holy matrimony are foundational practices of the Orthodox Church, obviously celebrated with great frequency. Unfortunately, many communicants and spouses do not perceive their deep interrelation and profound spiritual significance. In a time when popular practices and attitudes concerning marriage and sexuality reflect contemporary cultural trends far more than Orthodox teaching, a crucial calling of the parish is to draw on the resources provided by these sacraments to enable husband and wife to make their common life a sign of the salvation of the world.

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The challenges in doing so are great. It is widely accepted today in western culture that marriage and sexuality concern nothing more than the consent of autonomous individuals to order their intimate and familial affairs as they see fit. The same may be said of religious affiliation, which serves the preferences of individuals for meeting their perceived needs in a spiritual setting that increasingly resembles a commercial marketplace. Trends in both areas underwrite an individualistic view of life for which God becomes irrelevant or an idol crafted in one's own image.¹

This paper makes three primary claims about the interrelation of Eucharist and marriage in response to these cultural dynamics.² *First, Orthodoxy understands Eucharist and marriage to enact covenantal communions that change the very identity of those who share in them.* Together with these new identities come obligations to fulfil the calling that participation brings. *Second, Eucharist and marriage involve physical actions that transcend the merely physical in their significance.* They thus contradict the Gnostic tendency to separate "body" and "person" so common in both past and present cultural sensibilities, especially with reference to sexuality. *Third, both sacraments share a common motif of sacrifice, as husband and wife wear the crowns of martyrdom in holy matrimony as they offer themselves and one another to the Lord with whom they commune in the Eucharist.* The interrelation of these holy mysteries concerns the fulfilment of the human person and, ultimately, of the creation itself in Christ.

The first theme of covenantal communion, which is shared by Eucharist and marriage, is present from the beginning of the biblical narrative with reference to the relationship between man and woman. The Genesis reference to marriage as a "one flesh" union concerns not merely the momentary joining of bodies, but the full personal union of two people, created as male and female in the image and likeness of God. Jesus Christ interpreted this passage in Matthew 19:6 with reference to the permanence appropriate to marriage: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What God has joined together, let no one separate." References in the Old Testament to Yahweh as the husband of Israel, and of His faithfulness to her despite her infidelity, are surely more consistent with a view of marriage as

¹ Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 224, observes that "People do not gather in the churches to constitute the body of the Church, to manifest and realize the true life of the communion of persons; they come to satisfy their individual religious needs and pray as individuals, in parallel with the rest of the congregation, more alone perhaps than on the sports-ground or at the cinema."

² This paper draws on earlier treatments of these themes in Philip LeMasters, *Toward a Eucharistic Vision of Church, Family, Marriage, and Sex* (Minneapolis, MN: Light & Life Publishing Co., 2004), 52ff. For discussions of the relationship between Eucharist and marriage, see also John Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 20-24; and John Breck, *The Sacred Gift of Life: Orthodox Christianity and Bioethics* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 93.

an abiding covenant than as a merely legal contract easily dissolved when a party does not meet its requirements. (Hos. 2:19ff.)

Since Christ compared the heavenly kingdom to a wedding feast with some frequency, and performed His first sign in John's gospel at a marriage banquet, commonalities between Eucharist and marriage should not be surprising. The covenantal nature of marriage is not arbitrary, but reflects the intimate union of man and woman as "one flesh." For example, in his response to the sexual libertines of Corinth, St. Paul argues that even casual sexual encounters with prostitutes accomplish this one flesh union. Sexual intimacy is so profound that he compares its gravity to joining oneself with Christ.

He asks rhetorically "Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For as it is written 'The two shall become one flesh.' But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6: 15-17) For St. Paul, profound matters of identity are at stake in all acts of sexual intimacy, for they concern our participation in covenantal relations with the Lord and with another human being.

Likewise, St. Paul stressed to the Corinthians that the Eucharist enacts a deep personal union both with Christ and one another in His Body, the Church. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ. Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." (10:16-18) Eucharistic communion with the Lord is so real that participating in it unworthily, "without discerning the body," brings judgment and even death. (11: 28-30) Even as we can profane the marital nature of intercourse by relations with prostitutes or other forms of promiscuity, we can profane the Eucharist by not being rightly in communion with the Lord and other members of the His Body, the Church. Such actions fall short of the covenantal nature of both sacraments. Those who perform them disorient themselves from the fulfilment of the salvific purposes God seeks to accomplish through these holy mysteries.

Since St. Paul presents both marriage and the Eucharist as such profound acts of union, it is not surprising that he uses the marital imagery of "one flesh" in Ephesians 5: 31-32 as a sign of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Likewise, in 2 Corinthians 11:2, he states that "I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband." Various church fathers make similar connections between marriage, Eucharist, and the Church. For example, after describing how the "one flesh" union of marriage includes husband, wife, and child, St. John Chrysostom notes that "Our relationship to Christ is the same; we become one flesh with Him through communion..."³ St. Nicholas Cabasilas also

³ St. John Chrysostom, "Homily 20," *On Marriage and Family Life*, Catherine P Roth and David Anderson, trans., (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997,) 51.

affirmed also that, through the Eucharist and the other holy mysteries, “Christ comes into us and dwells in us, He is united to us and grows into one with us” such that we “become one flesh with Him.”⁴ Such references indicate that the marital union of husband and wife is so profound that it is a fitting image for both the sacramental and ecclesial dimensions of the Christian life. As Vigen Guroian notes,

The Orthodox Church describes sexual intercourse as *synousia*, a term which means consubstantiality. Husband and wife are joined together as *one* in holy matrimony. They are an ecclesial entity, one flesh, one body incorporate of two persons who in freedom and sexual love and through their relationship to Christ image the triune life of the Godhead and express the mystery of salvation in Christ’s relationship to the Church.⁵

For man and woman to “express the mystery of salvation in Christ’s relationship to the Church” is to fulfil their primordial calling as those created in the image and likeness of God. Their communion with one another is to become a sign of their communion with the Lord in the Eucharist and the Church. They are no longer isolated individuals, but members of a “one flesh” union that joins them profoundly to the spouse, the Lord, and His Body.

A second theme connecting Eucharist and marriage is that they both involve physical actions, which have a significance that extends beyond the merely physical. As St. Paul instructed the Corinthians, even momentary physical joining with a prostitute results in a unity parallel in significance to one’s unity with Christ. The physical gestures of intercourse obviously have a decisive shaping role in the lives of people in so many ways, both for good and for bad. Simply to describe such actions with biological precision does not convey their full significance—spiritually, morally, psychologically, or socially. Indeed, such disparate acts as adultery, rape, incest, and faithful conjugal union are not distinguished merely by descriptions of bodily actions.

Likewise, an account of the physical movements involved in the Eucharist does not plumb the depths of their meaning. As Fr. Alexander Schmemmann taught, an absolute division of symbol and reality in sacramental theology is contrary to the experience of the Church, for the sacraments manifest, realize, and reveal what they symbolize. It is through participation in them that human beings participate in the life of God in a way that is both real and mystical.⁶ Paul Evdokimov made the similar point that the Holy Mysteries “do not merely give, but *contain*, grace and are *channels*; they are at the same time the instruments of salvation and salvation itself,

⁴ St. Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998), 60-61.

⁵ Vigen Guroian, *Incarinate Love* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 87-88.

⁶ Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998), 135ff, 140-141.

as is the Church.”⁷ While the Eucharist involves the same physical capacities for eating and drinking as are used at any meal, its significance is nothing short of “one flesh” union with Christ in the heavenly banquet.

In a parallel fashion, it is impossible to separate with complete clarity the physical joining of husband and wife in intercourse from any other dimension of their shared life. Their physical union is inextricably entwined with the various dimensions of their relationship, including parenthood and the multi-layered aspects of their identity as a couple and members of a family. The physical symbol of their union manifests the reality of their marriage as persons at a deep level. Likewise, the eating and drinking of the Eucharist is an epiphany of true participation in the life of the Lord and His heavenly kingdom. This close identification is reflected in Christ’s teaching, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.” (John 6:53) In both marriage and Eucharist, physical gestures function as epiphanies of grace and full participation in the life of another. To regard them as anything less than manifestations of covenantal communion is to degrade their significance.

These claims reflect the Incarnational theology of Orthodoxy, as Jesus Christ is both fully divine and fully human. Divinity, then, is not a stranger to physicality, but joined with it in the Person of Christ. The God-Man performed many physical signs and gestures that conveyed the fullness of God’s kingdom for those enduring bodily struggles such as hunger, sickness, and even death. In this light, salvation is not an escape from physicality, but its fulfilment, restoration, and ultimate transformation in the heavenly reign.

As St. Paul taught, the Lord’s bodily resurrection is the “first fruits” of hope for the blessing of the entire creation, including its material aspects, in the eschatological Kingdom. (1 Cor. 15:20) In arguing that “the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord,” he appeals to Christ’s resurrection as the basis of our hope to also be raised up by God. In contrast to the Gnostic inclinations of his libertine opponents, St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that their bodies are both members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:15, 19). Since God intends whole human beings—body, soul, and spirit-- to participate in heavenly glory, how one lives in the physicality of the body plays a decisive role in one’s faithfulness to the incarnate Son of God, now risen and ascended bodily into heaven.

In this context, the body is neither intrinsically evil nor spiritually irrelevant. And given Christ’s use of the wedding feast as an image of the heavenly banquet, as well as the marital imagery of Revelation (e.g., 19:7-9, 21:2) for the consummation of all things, it is certainly not merely coincidental that the fulfillment of the relationship between man and woman has figured so prominently in the eschatological hope of Christianity from its origins. From the “one flesh” language

⁷ Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1995), 124.

of Genesis to the marriage banquet of the Lamb in Revelation, God brings those created male and female in His image and likeness more fully into communion with Him and one another. Their “one flesh” union finds its fulfilment in the heavenly banquet in which husband and wife participate already as they wear the crowns of the Kingdom. They stand together in the unfolding narrative of the fulfilment of God’s gracious intensions for human beings to become participants in the loving communion of the Holy Trinity.

God’s salvation is the fulfilment, not the annihilation, of His good creation, including the physical dimensions of our existence. Especially with reference to marriage, Chrysostom taught that the desires of husband and wife for one another are not simply evil, but a dimension of human nature “still basically good after the Fall.”⁸ Because “Marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled,” Chrysostom chided husbands for excusing themselves from services after intimate union with their wives. He affirmed that God has created man and woman as “ontologically ideal counterpart[s].”⁹ Indeed, “husband and wife are one body in the same way as Christ and the Father are one.”¹⁰ Marriage provides a “safe haven” for the fulfilment of desire and the most intimate union of man and woman “to be a living image, or icon, of the marriage of Christ the Bridegroom with His Bride, the Church.”¹¹ Here the “one flesh” union of husband and wife finds its natural and eschatological culmination.

Physical hunger and thirst, together with the social and communal dimensions of table fellowship, also find their completion in the heavenly banquet in which communicants participate mystically in the Eucharist. Even as marriage plays a key role in the biblical drama, so do meals. The Passover *seder* is the Jews’ ongoing participation in the salvation of the Hebrew people from slavery and death in Egypt at the time of the Exodus. In the context of Passover, Christ reveals that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. To eat His flesh and drink His blood is to participate in a new covenant of deliverance from death itself. The requirement of nourishment for physical existence becomes the basis for profound spiritual imagery, which underwrites the importance of bodily actions for matters beyond what they typically signify in this world. In the context of historic Christian faith, marital union and table fellowship both become channels of participation in God’s reign.

⁸ David C. Ford, *Women and Men in the Early Church: The Full Views of St. John Chrysostom* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1996), 47.

⁹ Ford, *Women and Men in the Early Church*, 51-54. See also Lawrence R. Farley, *One Flesh: Salvation Through Marriage in the Orthodox Church* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2013), 93ff.

¹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, “Homily 20,” *On Marriage and Family Life*, 52.

¹¹ Ford, *Women and Men in the Early Church*, 67-68.

The third theme of commonality for the Eucharist and marriage is that of sacrifice. The connection is obvious with reference to the Eucharist in which communicants receive the Body and Blood of the true Passover Lamb. Participation in the spiritual sacrifice of the Eucharist calls and enables communicants to join themselves to the one offering of the Son as they lift up every dimension of their lives to the Holy Trinity for blessing and fulfilment.

Perhaps less explicit are the sacrificial themes of marriage, though they are also profound. For example, St. Paul teaches that spouses should “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” and that husbands should love their wives “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Eph. 5:21ff) In becoming “one flesh,” both spouses sacrifice the identity of autonomous individuals and enter into a joint ascetical struggle of dying to their self-centeredness out of love for the other. In this sense, Chrysostom notes that “it is possible for us to surpass all others in virtue by becoming good husbands and wives.”¹²

The challenges of offering their common life to the Lord-- in all its interpersonal, economic, and physical aspects—presents a myriad of a opportunities for spiritual growth to the man and the woman, both as unique persons and as a couple. Faithful marriage places their erotic love in a context directed toward the Kingdom, to the fulfilment of all human desire in union with the Holy Trinity. From the marriage service itself, in which husband and wife wear martyrs’ crowns of the Kingdom, their union is directed toward *theosis*, the fulfilment of their primordial calling together in the image and likeness of God. As Guroian comments,

God has intended from all eternity that she [the Church] and Christ should be united as Bride and Groom so that the world might be saved from sin and death. Christian marriage is a sign and foretaste of a world reconciled in Christ to God. That is no mere analogy, but belongs to the deepest symbolism that God has built into the fabric of his creation. God created and constituted man and woman as complementary beings who in union constitute a single humanity, a single Adam-Eve existence. In marriage, man-and-woman-together is a sacramental sign of the union of Christ and the Church.¹³

Christian marriage is an ongoing participation in the Eucharist, in the heavenly wedding banquet that manifests God’s salvation. The humble physical elements of bread and wine find fulfilment as the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist and become our participation in the life of heaven. Likewise, the intimate personal union of man and woman becomes in holy matrimony their entrance to the heavenly realm, their participation by grace in the life of the Holy Trinity as distinct persons sharing a common life and love. For human beings to do that requires profound asceticism as they become more fully communicants and participants in Christ’s sacrifice for the life of the world.

¹² St. John Chrysostom, “Homily 20,” *On Marriage and Family Life*, 57.

¹³ Guroian, *Rallying the Really Human Things: The Moral Imagination in Politics, Literature, and Every Day Life* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2005), 127.

Their ascetical offering helps to restore man and woman to their natural state in God's image and likeness. St. John of Damascus taught that "Repentance is the returning from the unnatural to the natural state, from the devil to God, through discipline and repentance."¹⁴ The return to the natural state is a process of the healing of the soul from slavery to the passions, which requires in marriage a sacrificial offering of both spouses in accordance with God's salvific purposes. There certainly is a difference between desire in accord with humanity's God-given nature and the passions that disorient and distort those desires. For example, Chrysostom observed that "The body has a natural desire, not however for fornication, or for adultery, but simply for sexual intercourse. The body has a natural desire not for gluttony, but simply for nourishment, and not for drunkenness, but simply for drink."¹⁵ The sacrificial offering of marriage directs those innate desires to their proper end of bringing man and woman more fully in union with one another and with the Lord.

St. Gregory Palamas describes insightfully the ascetical struggle of sacrifice:

Will not the passionate part of the soul, as a result of this [ascetical] violence, be also brought to act according to the commandments? Such forcing, by dint of habituation, makes easy our acceptance of God's commandments, and transforms our changeable disposition into a fixed state. This condition brings about a steady hatred towards evil states and dispositions of the soul; and hatred of evil duly produces the impassibility, which in turn engenders love for the unique Good. Thus one must offer to God the passionate part of the soul, alive and active, that it may be a living sacrifice.¹⁶

Such asceticism is neither an escape from nor a repudiation of the body, but instead the participation of the body—as well as the whole person-- in holiness. As Palamas noted, "so, too, in the case of those who have elevated their minds to God and exalted their souls with divine longing, their flesh also is being transformed and elevated, participating together with the soul in the divine communion, and becoming itself a dwelling and possession of God; for it is no longer the seat of enmity towards God, and no longer possesses desires contrary to the Spirit."¹⁷ While this statement arises from a monastic context, it is certainly applicable to those who live in the world, including married couples. Marital asceticism does traditionally concern restraint in matters of intimacy, but it is surely not limited to them. Through the many struggles of their shared life, husband and wife possess an almost limitless number of opportunities to deny themselves out of love for one another, their children, and family members. For example, Chrysostom advised married couples to

¹⁴ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Bk. 2, Ch. XXX in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. 9, 43.

¹⁵ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily V on Ephesians* as quoted in Ford, *Women and Men in the Early Church*, 131.

¹⁶ St. Gregory Palamas, *The Triads* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1983), 55, II.ii.20.

¹⁷ St. Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, 47-48, I.ii.1.

Pray together at home and go to Church; when you come back home, let each ask the other the meaning of the readings and prayers. If you are overtaken by poverty, remember Peter and Paul, who were more honoured than kings or rich men, though they spent their lives in hunger and thirst. Remind one another that nothing in life is to be feared, except offending God. If your marriage is like this, your perfection will rival the holiest of monks.¹⁸

Fr. Stanley Harakas observes that marriage and family provide the context “in which most Orthodox Christians...grow toward *theosis*.” Given the great challenges presented to holiness by difficulties encountered in family life, he notes that a relationship which images the loving union of the Holy Trinity is possible only when the spouses intentionally offer themselves to God as the “third partner” in the marriage. In such a context, husband and wife may “contribute to making the home—for parents and children alike—a workshop for growth toward *theosis*.”¹⁹

The common Orthodox ascetical practice of periodic abstinence from marital relations must be seen in proper context, for it does not imply that sexual union is sinful or should be repudiated by all married couples. Fr. John Chryssavgis notes that the petitions of the wedding service itself present chastity as “the integrity of the human person” open to the couple, not simply as physical virginity. In prayers that recall fertile married couples from the Old Testament and pray for similar blessings for the bride and groom, the service “shows no reservation towards sexuality, no trace of despicability, or even suspicion.”²⁰ From its first centuries, the Church has rejected Gnostic and Manichean condemnations of the goodness of the physical body, as well as of sexual union in marriage. St. Gregory the Theologian affirmed marriage with great rhetorical force:

Are you not yet wedded to flesh? Fear not this consecration; you are pure even after marriage. I will take the risk of that. I will join you in wedlock. I will dress the bride. We do not dishonour marriage because we give a higher honour to virginity. I will imitate Christ, the pure Groomsman and Bridegroom, as He both wrought a miracle at a wedding and honoured wedlock by His presence. Only let marriage be pure and unmingled with filthy lusts. This only I ask: receive safety from the Gift and give to the Gift the oblation of chastity in its due season, when the fixed time of prayer comes around.²¹

¹⁸ St. John Chrysostom, “Homily 20,” *On Marriage and Family Life*, 61-62.

¹⁹ Stanley Harakas, *Living the Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Light & Life Publishing Co., 1993), 241-242, 245, 254.

²⁰ John Chryssavgis, *Love, Sexuality, and the Sacrament of Marriage* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005), 25-26.

²¹ St. Gregory the Theologian, “Oration 40,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, Vol. 7, 365, as cited in Ford, *Women and Men in the Early Church*, 32-33. This discussion of marital asceticism draws on an earlier treatment of these themes in LeMasters, *The Goodness of God’s Creation: How to Live as an Orthodox Christian* (Salisbury, MA: Regina Orthodox Press, 2008), 25ff.

Marital fasting is a tool for directing the desires of husband and wife to God and for the healing of unhealthy passions. When couples agree to abstain from relations in order to devote themselves to more focused prayer for a period of time, they direct their desire for communion ultimately to the heavenly banquet of which their marital union is a sign. They recognize that even the most blessed marriage on earth does not manifest fully the “one flesh” union with one another and with God to which they are called. As H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., notes, the marital fast enables spouses to “seek enjoyment without being distracted by a self-indulgence that turns one’s heart from God...The goal is to delight in God’s creation without being mastered by this delight, to find in this enjoyment rightly taken an opportunity through which to pass beyond this enjoyment to His Kingdom...”²² The point is not legalism, but eschatological hope for greater participation in the life of God by the man and woman who wear the crowns of the Kingdom. Evdokimov notes on these matters that “the Church offers only elements for a basis of judgment. She exerts no constraint; her task is to free man [and woman] from all forms of enslavement in order to make him [and her]... free citizen[s] of the Kingdom.”²³

A parallel with the Eucharist is helpful here. Fasting from food does not imply that the fruits of the earth are evil. The problem is that corrupt human beings typically have unnatural attachments to food, drink, and other sources of pleasure. Fasting provides an opportunity to reorient one’s desires for fulfillment from the stomach to the Lord and to keep the blessing of physical nourishment in its proper place. Moreover, the innate human desires for food and drink are not evil in themselves. But they certainly are corrupted and play a paradigmatic role in the disintegration of humanity from the beginning of the biblical narrative. In the Eucharist, however, the very purposes of physical nourishment are fulfilled and restored, as bread and wine become our participation in the life and fellowship of heaven.

In order to feast rightly at the heavenly banquet, we must fast at times from lesser ones. Self-restraint with reference to physical appetites is necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist. The servers must certainly refrain from consuming the gifts before the service begins. The self-restraint of fasting from other food and drink in preparation for the Eucharistic feast does not imply that the desire to satisfy daily hunger and thirst are somehow sinful, but instead reorients our appetites toward communion with God and one another. As with marriage, some level of sacrifice is necessary in order to participate in the fullness of the blessings already foreshadowed in the world as we know it. While Eucharist and marriage do not call those who participate in them to abstain

²² H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., *The Foundations of Christian Bioethics* (Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger Publishers, 2000), 243-244.

²³ Evdokimov, 176.

completely from the bodily pleasures of nourishment or intimacy, they do call for spouses and communicants to join their lives more fully to the one offering of the Son, which requires ascetical struggle in various forms. In both holy mysteries, humble human gifts become our true personal participation in the heavenly banquet.

The greatest challenges in integrating Eucharist and marriage are not theoretical, as the texts of the services and the writings of ancient and contemporary teachers describe them clearly. In our ever-changing world, however, it is difficult to form men, women, and youth in ways that enable them to embrace the deep connections of these holy mysteries. Perhaps a first step in that direction is to resist the division between “religion” and “real life” so commonly assumed in modern western culture. The conventional wisdom, adopted at least in practice by many Orthodox, is that the distinctive teachings of the faith amount to little more than sectarian idiosyncrasies that must be relegated to the private sphere, where they become matters of mere personal preference that have little to do with fulfilling the nature of the human person.²⁴

If Orthodox Christians are to make a credible witness to the new life of the Kingdom, they must be formed through their parishes and families to embrace a distinctive vocation. They must do so, not as a matter of arbitrary sectarian preference or escape from reality, but as a persuasive sign that the path they pursue is truly the salvation of the world. Parishioners must show in their own lives that Eucharist and marriage serve the healing of human brokenness, not simply religious ceremonies or antiquated customs.

In order for the laity to live out this vocation with integrity, clergy, catechists, and other teachers must instruct them on the deep interrelatedness of Eucharist and marriage. Since these holy mysteries are frequently celebrated and quite familiar to parishioners, there is no shortage of opportunities to challenge the laity to grow in their understanding of how they impact daily life. It is also necessary to identify and reject popular ideas and practices that corrupt the beliefs and behaviour of so many parishioners on questions of marriage, sexuality, and family. If the Church does not address these matters explicitly and effectively, it should not be surprising when the dominant ethos of our times influences parishioners profoundly and negatively.

Of equal importance is the need to present the ascetical dimensions of the Eucharist life and of marriage in ways that are not reduced to legalism or rote traditionalism. Since the matters at stake very much concern bodily appetites,

²⁴ The practices and trends of the larger society present temptations too strong to be resisted by simple appeals to preference or the curious habits of religious groups. It is one thing to affirm religious liberty in the social sphere out of respect for the freedom of persons to believe and worship as choose. It is another, however, to make secularism normative in a way that obscures the urgency of the Church’s vocation to call human beings to become more fully who God created them to be in His image and likeness.

parishioners will find strength in fighting their passions and reorienting their natural desires in holy ways through appropriate forms of self-denial with food and other sources of pleasure.

The Eucharistic theology of Schmemmann is helpful at this point, for he teaches that

the world to come in which we participate in the Divine Liturgy is our same world, *already* perfected in Christ, but not *yet* in us. And since God has created the world as food for us and given us food as means of communion with Him, of life in Him, the new food of the new life which we receive from God in His Kingdom *is Christ Himself*. He is our bread—because from the very beginning all our hunger was a hunger for Him and all our bread was a symbol of Him, a symbol that had to become reality... and all food, therefore, must lead us to Him.²⁵

Christ did not obliterate hunger, food, or the body. Instead, He fulfilled them, making them more real as channels of participation in the blessedness of the Kingdom. It is incumbent upon those who receive the Eucharist to display a life in this world which bears witness to Christ's divinization of the human being. Our participation in the Eucharistic offering is not limited to the service of the Divine Liturgy, but must permeate every dimension of our life in the world, including what secular society thinks of as the "real life" matters at stake in sex, marriage, and family. Otherwise, we have failed to embrace the truth that "Christ has *offered* all that exists... We are included in the Eucharist of Christ and Christ is our Eucharist."²⁶ Hence, Schmemmann claims that the calling of the priesthood is "to reveal to each vocation its priestly essence, to make the whole life of all men the liturgy of the Kingdom, to reveal the Church as the royal priesthood of the redeemed world."²⁷

Schmemmann teaches that the same is true of holy matrimony, for the entrance of bride and groom into the Church "does not merely symbolize, but indeed *is* the entrance of marriage into the Church, which is the entrance of world into 'the world to come', the procession of the people of God—in Christ—into the Kingdom." The glory of humankind as the king of creation in Genesis finds fulfilment in each new family blessed as "a kingdom, a little church, and therefore a sacrament of and way to the Kingdom."²⁸ The spouses' crowns of martyrdom reject the idolization of the family—and of romance, sex, social respectability, personal happiness and of other worldly values—and serve as signs of the ultimate reality in which their marriage enables them to participate.²⁹ The common

²⁵ Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 43.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

vocation of human beings is also that of married people: “to follow Christ in the fullness of His priesthood: in His love for man and the world, His love for their ultimate fulfilment in the abundant life of the Kingdom.”³⁰

In a world with very different understandings of what marriage is about, Orthodoxy calls husbands and wives to live eucharistically. The Church today must discern how to form communicants and spouses who recognize and embrace the deep interrelation of Eucharist and marriage as signs of the salvation of the world. To do so is not only for the extraordinarily pious or merely a charming idiosyncrasy of a particular religious or ethnic heritage. It is, instead, an imperative that arises from our very nature as human beings in the image and likeness of God, who invites man and woman to dine at the heavenly banquet and to wear the martyrs’ crowns of those who find new life in His Kingdom.

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³⁰ Ibid., 94.

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NARRATING THE HOLY MAN IN LATE ANTIQUITY: THE CASE OF SHENOUTE OF ATRIPE

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ABSTRACT. This paper generally explores the central role of holy men in Late Antiquity, and especially the case of Shenoute of Atripe, an extraordinary Egyptian monk from the first half of the fifth century. Our major premise is that in the Christian communities of Late Antiquity, the saint (the holy man so well studied by Peter Brown) played a role comparable to that of a prophet, seen as the axis of the community. In other words, the charismatic holy man transformed his territory into a sacred space and created a new site for the interrelation between society and the sacred. Moreover, all those blessed with charisma served as a focus of divine power and delineated a new territory of grace. This process can be described as a kind of “spatialization of charisma”. Briefly, every dwelling place of a holy man became a sacred site and a locus of personal salvation. For Shenoute, the body is the site of redemptive transformation. It is also the site for theological development, social control, and the construction of Christian identity. Therefore, our conclusion is that the holiness of this figure becomes a significant social factor in late antique Mediterranean world. The visibility of holiness – the fact that holy man is observed and narrated – plays a central role in understanding the cultural significance of this figure in a changing world.

Keywords: holy man, spiritual authority, monasticism, holiness, Late Antiquity, Shenoute of Atripe

Introduction

In this paper, we explore the central role of the holy man in Late Antiquity, and particularly the ascetic or prophet from the middle of the fourth century and fifth century. In this sense we chose an extraordinary Egyptian monk, Shenoute of Atripe, a holy man who saw himself as merely the instrument of God’s will. In the first section of our study, we will focus on the essential features of holy man as part of his charismatic authority, and then we will refer

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to the ascetic discourse that he put forward to promote and legitimize his active role in society. The first section is mostly based on Peter Brown's brilliant analysis of the holy man. First of all, we say that Late Antiquity was a time in which much of the accepted political, cultural, and social order was being transformed into something new: a Christian Mediterranean world¹. The visibility of holiness – the fact that holy men are observed and narrated – plays a central role in understanding the cultural significance of these figures in the late antique world.²

According to Susanna Elm, the late Roman Empire represents an era marked by increasing authorship and the development of new literary genres that "elaborated new notions of sanctity and charisma. It was the period in which models of martyrdom and confessional sainthood emerged. Through this abundance of hagiographical texts and miracle stories, the authors of this emerging culture of charisma reveal to their fellows the processes by which humans could fashion themselves into saints"³. A gallery of holy men, living in monasteries or isolated cells, in tombs, or on pillars, all broadened the network

¹ P. Brown reserved a privileged place for the rise of the Christian monk or holy man in the mutual histories of the Christian church and Mediterranean society in Late Antiquity. The birth of Christian monasticism in the deserts of Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Judea during the late third and early fourth centuries occurred during a period of tremendous cultural, religious, and social ferment. Ascetic movements of various kinds – Gnostics, Manicheans, and others – already existed by the time the first Christian monks embarked upon their own experiments in contemplative living. The reasons for the growth and development of this widespread and diverse ascetic culture are complex and cannot be reduced to any single cause. Nor can the meaning of ascetic life for those who participated in it be accounted for in any simple way. Historian Peter Brown had made a persuasive case for understanding the rise of ascetic and monastic practice (both Christian and non-Christian) in Late Antiquity as a response to a "crisis in human relations" that had arisen amidst this instability and uncertainty. See Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 82. The social meaning and function of early Christian monastic practice owes much to Peter Brown's groundbreaking work, especially his early ("The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity") and widely influential essay on the holy man. There has been much subsequent reflection on and revision of Brown's important work on the holy man in Late Antiquity. See in this issue several other scholars influenced by Brown's model of the holy man: Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 2013; Neil McLynn, *Christian Politics and Religious Culture in Late Antiquity* (New York: Routledge), 2009; A. Papaconstantinou, D. Schwartz and N. McLynn, *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond* (Farnham, Ashgate), 2016.

² Graham Anderson emphasizes the degree to which "action" and "display" are also intertwined in the lives and narratives of late antique holy men. See Graham Anderson, *Sage, Saint and Sophist: Holy Men and Their Associates in the Early Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 112.

³ Susanna Elm, "Introduction", in „Charisma and Society: The 25th Anniversary of Peter Brown's Analysis of the Late Antique Holy Man. Conference Held at the University of California at Berkeley, March 13-16, 1997", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998), 349.

of holy space. All those blessed with *charisma* and gifted with *parrhesia*⁴ served as a focus of divine power and delineated a new territory of grace⁵. In the second part, we will refer to one of the most spectacular holy men in Late Antiquity, Shenoute of Atripe. The story of this holy man crystallized the image of the charismatic sainthood, because he acted as a living mediator between earth and heaven. In this context, we stress the idea that Shenoute of Atripe played a vital pastoral role, as prophet and spiritual guide⁶.

The Holy Man. Some Considerations

In this section, we would like to analyse some nuances in the multifaceted picture of the holy person in late ancient society, especially as it evolved during the last three decades of the seminal studies by Peter Brown.⁷ In 1971 Peter Brown

⁴ The ability to intercede for others before God is one of the distinctive marks of the spiritual guide. The Greek term for this ability is *parrhesia*, which literally means “the freedom to say everything” and is best translated “boldness of speech.” *Parrhesia* is the common ground where the spiritual abilities of the *pneumatophoros* and the miraculous powers of the holy man overlap. The ideal of *parrhēsia* was of course very old. For centuries, it had been incarnated by the philosopher who was expected to act as an honest and courageous adviser and critic of the powerful. In Late Antiquity, the concept was infused with new life with the emergence of bishops first and then monks as its new embodiment. The Christian takeover of the old role of the philosopher as the public conscience of society introduced important Old Testament echoes into the classical ideal. Someone like Shenoute was as much a *parrhēsiastēs* as an Old Testament prophet. His truth-telling was guaranteed not only by his objectivity and moral rectitude, but also by a privileged relationship to the divine. His *parrhēsia* before the powerful of this world derived to a large degree from his *parrhēsia* before God himself. His criticisms, therefore, attacked not only the abuse of power and wealth but also impiety and sinfulness.

⁵ In Late Antiquity, the holy man transformed his territory into a sacred space and created a new site for the interrelation between society and the sacred. For this aspect of the holy man, see the contribution of Mark S. Burrows, “On the Visibility of God in the Holy Man: A Reconsideration of the Role of the Apa in the Pachomian *Vitae*”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987), 11–33.

⁶ For the Peter Brown’s classic description of the holy man as patron, and as a spiritual authority (a spiritual father), see “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man,” in P. Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 132–34, and P. Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 60–62.

⁷ P. Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80–101; reprinted in idem, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 103–152; now revised in idem, *Authority and the Sacred* (1995): chapter 3, “Arbiters of the Holy: the Christian holy man in Late Antiquity”, 57–78. For assessments of the evolution of Brown’s view of the holy person in Late Antiquity, see S. Elm, “Introduction”, 6 (1998), 343–51; and see Brown’s own assessment, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971–1997”, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998), 353–76. The *Journal of Early*

published his famous article, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity'.⁸ It is no exaggeration to say that this essay has transformed the way we think about saints in Late Antiquity.

Brown's thesis that the rise of the holy man in the later Roman Empire reflected a watershed in religious history, that the veneration of living human beings constituted a realignment of the meaning of sanctity (the holy man' in Brown's terminology) and of access to the power and social authority which such sanctity conferred, has nourished a rich literature on the Christian saints in Late Antiquity.⁹ For Brown, the Christian saint has represented the key to understanding the nature of human life in the late Roman Mediterranean society.

As Brown put it succinctly, „the rise of the holy man is the Leitmotiv of the religious revolution of Late Antiquity”.¹⁰ Shenoute not only served as abbot of the White Monastery, but also worked as a passionate and eloquent evangelist for

Christian Studies 6 (Fall, 1998) is completely devoted to a re-assessment of Brown's holy man. The significance of Brown's original article is manifest from the fact that in March 1997 a conference was held in Berkeley, California, to celebrate the quarter-century of its publication, the proceedings of which were published in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998), and from the publication of a symposium inspired by Brown's article: James Howard-Johnston and Paul Anthony Hayward, *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁸ In this article the holy man's public role as *patronus* becomes relevant, but subsequently Peter Brown offered some emendations to his position in „The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity”, *Representations* 1 (1983), 1–25, reprinted in John Stratton Hawley (ed.), *Saints and Virtues*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 3–14. In this article, Brown highlights the holy man's exemplarity and his embeddedness in community from Late Antiquity. In this context we point out while Brown focused primarily on the figure of the holy man as a substitute for the village patron and as a “man of power,” Philip Rousseau emphasized his figure as a new kind of teacher with a new kind of *paideia*, identifying the central expression of authority within ascetic society as the relationship between master and disciple. For more details, see Philip Rousseau, “Ascetics as Mediators and as Teachers,” in J. Howard-Johnson and P. A. Hayward, *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (1999), 45–59, esp. 54, 57. See also Samuel Rubenson, “Philosophy and Simplicity: The Problem of Classical Education in Early Christian Biography,” in T. Hägg and P. Rousseau, *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 110–39.

⁹ The exegetical literature on the late-antique holy man is vast. For an introduction, see in particular Brown (1971, 1995, 1998) and Patricia Cox Miller, *Biography in Late Antiquity: a Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). On the role of the holy man in rural society in Late Antiquity, see P. Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, (1982); on the Roman period, see G. Anderson, *Sage, Saint and Sophist: Holy Men and Their Associates in the Early Roman Empire* (1994); on the textual implications of the cult of the saints, see David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 97–105.

¹⁰ Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (1982), 148. There are numerous appraisals. See especially the range of articles presented by leading historians and classicists in Howard-Johnston and Hayward, *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Age*, (1999).

Christianity. He sometimes targeted pagan survivals within ordinary Christian piety.¹¹

From this perspective, Shenoute was seen by Besa, his biographer, as a prophet like Elijah. In Old Testament narratives, Elijah is portrayed not only as a prophet, but also as a violent opponent of the cult of Baal. As we will see, Shenoute saw himself as a divinely appointed prophet, and a medium both of God's message and of God's judgment.

Essentially, the holy man of Late Antiquity belonged simultaneously to the earthly and the heavenly worlds¹². In Peter Brown's paradigmatic assessment, the late antique holy man is "an 'icon' who brought the holy into the world, a hinge person mediating between God and man."¹³

Brown suggests that in the late Roman East, the divine comes to earth not through relics and bishops or even emperors, but through the charismatic holy man. Despite the discourse of ascetic isolation surrounding these figures, Brown emphasizes the degree to which the charismatic saint plays an integral social role as *patronus*¹⁴ and mediator.¹⁵ Both the philosopher and the saint encompass a life of intense holiness, and an intensely public life.¹⁶

¹¹ See David Frankfurter, "Popular Religious Practices in Fifth-Century Egypt," in *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice*, ed. Richard Valantasis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). The monastic prophet or holy man might violently confront traditional religion, but he could also act as a facilitator of more gradual religious change. See P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press 1995). The dossier of the monastic archimandrite Shenoute of Atripe (c. 350–465) provides rare firsthand documentation of a monk's often violent campaign against traditional religion in his context (Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, 2 vols., Louvain: Peeters, 2004).

¹² The relation of heaven and earth at the grave of a saint are already set forth in Peter Brown's *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981).

¹³ John Howe, "Revisiting the Holy Man: Review Article," *Catholic Historical Review* 86:4 (2000), 641.

¹⁴ In Brown's account, the holy man remained sacred, and embodied an idea of the Christian God, but he was also a powerful patron in a world where mundane social, economic, and judicial responsibilities constituted the main sphere of his activity (cf. P. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", (1971), 80–101. The most visible manifestation of the holy man was obviously care for widows, orphans and the poor which contributed to the growing prominence and influence of his in cities (cf. P. Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2002); Richard D. Finn, *Almsgiving in the Later Roman Empire: Christian Promotion and Practice*, 313–450 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁵ Peter Brown notes that the holy man's true power came from his role as a "mediator" in village life (cf. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", 89).

¹⁶ Though Brown's arguments regarding the social function of the Christian holy man are more well known, he also argued that the Pagan philosophers participated actively in public life as "holy men." The philosophers, Brown suggests, "summed up in their persons the 'core' of a cultural and religious tradition," internalizing and representing the pinnacle of a learning and life that marked the epitome of Roman cultural values. While this life was marked by renunciation and shaped by ascetic withdrawal, it also endowed them with an authority that thrust them into the center of public and political life. See Peter Brown, "The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity." *The Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture*. The Graduate Theological Union and the University of California Berkeley, ed. Edward C Hobbs and Wilhelm Wuellner, Vol. 34. December 1978, 3.

As Patricia Cox argued, the "holiness" of these figures becomes a significant social factor in late antique life. "The *idea* of the holy man," Cox concludes, "became at least as important as the men themselves, for their existence (or, perhaps, their reputations) attested to the gods' concern for the welfare of humankind."¹⁷ Tracing the emergence of the holy man as a cultural phenomenon, Cox demonstrates the widespread allegiance of late antique Christians and Pagans alike to "the new holy personality cult."¹⁸

Since the publication of Peter Brown's seminal article "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man" thirty years ago, much scholarly energy has been devoted to this topic and has provided new insights.¹⁹ By pointing out the psychological and sociological dimensions of the cult of the saints and holy men, and by stressing the existence and function of the emerging new centres of power comprising charismatic figures, Brown's study evoked the issue of the "spatialization of charisma"²⁰.

The saint or holy man has long been recognized as a figure of importance in the social and religious history of Late Antiquity, with his role as spiritual guide and patron in communities attracting particular attention.

In both Egypt and Syria, the holy man is one who opts out of the rising tensions of village social life with its irreconcilable demands in a heroic act of retreat (*anachoresis*). Once in the desert, in a process of self-discovery, the holy man did battle with the demonic, defeated the anomalous 'earthly powers' and in so doing, forged a new identity, one that completely stood outside the structures of society.

¹⁷ Patricia Cox Miller, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 19.

¹⁸ In addition, in the case of both the divine philosopher and the charismatic saint, Robert Kirschner emphasizes the importance of the observer's gaze in constructing the holy man. See Robert Kirschner, "The Vocation of Holiness in Late Antiquity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (2007), 114.

¹⁹ P. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," (1971), 80–101. And see now Brown's reassessment of his "holy man" in "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971–1997," *Journal Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998), 353–76. See also S. Elm's introduction to the journal issue devoted to the twenty-fifth anniversary of Peter Brown's analysis of the late-antique holy man, *Journal Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998), 343–51. On the origin of the holy man in Syria, see J.W. Drijvers, "Hellenistic and Oriental Origins," in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. S. Hackel (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1981), 25–33; Sebastian P. Brock and S. Ashbrook-Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

²⁰ A term coined by John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow in *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 8. See also J. Z. Smith's conclusion ("The Temple and the Magician," in *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* [Leiden, 1978], 182) that "the locus of religious experience has been shifted from a permanent sacred center, the temple, to a place of temporary sacrality sanctified by a magician's power." Smith concludes (*ibid.*, 187) that this shift had taken place already in the second century B.C. D. Frankfurter's analysis (*Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998], chaps. 2, 4) casts doubt on this shift.

But in rejecting ‚power‘, he gained a whole new form of power. Furthermore, *anachoresis* placed supernatural power beyond the ambiguities of the ‚earthly‘ regions by having grown it, in pure culture as it were, in the antithesis to human society. Prolonged rituals of social disengagement reassured the clientele of the ascetic that his powers were totally acceptable, because they were wielded by a man dead to human motivation and dead to human society.

In other words, the monks gained more power through rejecting it. From this perspective, Shenoute simultaneously places himself in the tradition of authoritative ascetics whose charisma („ascetic authority”)²¹, and ascetic practice rendered them ascetic fathers worthy of disciples²².

²¹ The nexus between asceticism and authority was examined by Claudia Rapp in *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*. „Holy” is a central term in this book. What Claudia Rapp wants above all to demonstrate is that the most distinctive feature of episcopal leadership in Late Antiquity was not the bishop’s political position, performance of ritual, teaching of scripture, or patronage of the poor, but the holiness that grounded these and all other aspects. In Rapp’s view, bishops were esteemed as holy, so that ascetic authority of the bishop was linked to the holy man. Therefore, Rapp uses Peter Brown’s ideas about this figure as a framework of interpretation throughout the book. The result is a subtly argued, erudite, and fascinating contribution to a subject of continuing interest to scholars of Late Antiquity. For more details, see Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, (2005). The question of the relationship between asceticism and authority is rich in nuances throughout early Christian literature. Without referencing in detail the voluminous body of literature created by the discussion of the role of the ‘holy man’ in the late antique world, it is necessary to highlight at least a few of the more specific studies, which are immediately relevant as background to the present paper. Indispensable for situating the topic is Peter Brown’s article „Arbiters of the Holy: The Christian Holy Man in Late Antiquity”, in *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World* (1995), 55-78. For a study of the language of spiritual authority that monks created in the early medieval West, see Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (2001). See also on the related subject of the rhetoric of gendered authority in ascetic and episcopal settings, Conrad Leyser, „Vulnerability and Power: The Early Christian Rhetoric of Masculine Authority”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 80 (1998), 159–173. Concerning the question of ecclesial dimensions of ascetic authority, see Simon J. Coates, „The Bishop as Pastor and Solitary: Bede and the Spiritual Authority of the Monk Bishop”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (1996), 601–619; John Chryssavgis, „Obedience: Hierarchy and Asceticism: The Concept of Spiritual Authority in the Church”, *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 34.1 (1990), 49–60; Paul Henry, „From Apostle to Abbot: The Legitimation of Spiritual Authority in the Early Church”, *Studia Patristica* 17. 2 (1982), 491–505; Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Philip Rousseau, „Spiritual Authority of the Monk Bishop: Eastern Elements in some Western Hagiography of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries”, *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), 380–419. For a recent discussion of aspects of the question of the relationship between ascetic authority and ecclesiastical authority, see also Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). On individual figures of spiritual authority, see also Jan Willem Drijvers and John W. Watt, *Portraits of Spiritual Authority: Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium and the Christian Orient* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

²² One of the major themes in Shenoute’s canons is the issue of monastic purity and holiness. This holiness was not just something considered at the level of the individual monk, but was seen collectively: in the sense that each monk’s holiness affected the holiness of the entire community. On this theme, see B. Layton, *The Canons of Our Fathers: Monastic Rules of Shenoute*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Shenoute of Atripe and the Ascetic Authority: Text, Context, and Subtext

After Pachomius, St. Shenoute of Atripe²³ (c. 348 – c. 466 A.D) is the most important monastic figure of coenobitic monasticism in Egypt. As we will see his career as holy man was spectacular.

One common way in which holy persons become holy comes from their ability to serve as a conduit between the world of the transcendent and the world of the mundane. In this sense, the holy man appears as „a kind of hinge person, whose vertical axis linked him to the realm of celestial powers and whose horizontal axis separated him from social engagement and the daily round of the quotidian”²⁴. The holy person was holy because of both a vertical connection to the Holy and because of a horizontal severance from the world of the mundane through the practice of withdrawal (*anachoresis*) or asceticism. The two religious paradigms that shape Shenoute’s self-presentation are that of prophet²⁵ – relating wisdom received from God – and that of suffering.

A *prophet* – a term found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – is one who claims to speak for God. Prophets are called by God to speak God’s word to the people. They are mediators from the top down: from a divine source to a people. The precise function of the prophet is reflected in the Greek word itself: *prophetes*, one who speaks for another, or interprets the will of another, usually a god, to humans.

The holy man described by Peter Brown served as a mediator but because of the power emanating from him, could also serve as a prophetic voice

²³ Shenoute of Atripe was the third leader of a notable monastic federation near Panopolis in Upper Egypt (present day Akhmim) that included two monasteries for male monks, the White Monastery (commonly known as Deir Anba Shenuda) and the Red Monastery (commonly known as Deir Anba Pšoi), and one for women in Atripe itself. There was very little academic attention given to Shenoute until ten to fifteen years ago when his literary corpus was reconstructed by Stephen Emmel. Now, besides a few versions of Shenoute’s biography, there are several academic studies extant, including translations of nine volumes of his *Canons*, eight volumes of *Discourses*, and a number of letters. There is also an international team of researchers at work, directed by S. Emmel, professor of Coptology at the Institute of Egyptology and Coptology at the University of Münster in Germany. This team is working on transcribing, editing, translating and studying these precious manuscripts in order not only to understand Shenoute and his monastic federation, but also to fill in the gaps of understanding concerning various other aspects of life in Late Antiquity with which Shenoute was involved. Books reflecting this interest include Rebecca Krawiec’s *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Caroline T. Schroeder’s *Monastic Body: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

²⁴ Lawrence S. Cunningham, „Holy Men/Holy Women”, in *The Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert A. Segal, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, 287.

²⁵ David Frankfurter recognized the Egyptian Christian holy men as types of regional prophets, thus stressing the local and regional dimension of their cults. See D. Frankfurter, “Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt”, *Journal Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003), 339–85.

and a healer. There are many important facets of Shenoute that touch on many important aspects about ancient Christianity, monasticism, and general conditions of life in Late Antiquity. His *Vita* and writings allows us a glimpse into the still obscure culture of his day. His important personality and the larger influence he had on the development of monastic lifestyles are only now being appreciated in its real importance²⁶.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Shenoute's monastic order was his involvement with the lay people of that region. In contrast with the Pachomian *Koinonia*, Shenoute opened his monastery on Saturdays and Sundays to lay people and pilgrims and gave them religious instruction. He was quite generous in providing for the poor and in many cases acted as their patron while at the same time he was robustly denouncing the wealthy, particularly the middle and upper classes of the local capital Panopolis; whom he thought had a careless attitude to the physical and spiritual welfare of their local people²⁷.

Nevertheless, Shenoute of Atrife is a difficult figure to assess. If A. Veilleux reads Shenoute in negative terms: as „authoritarian, harsh, and violent”, as „a force of nature, a volcano in perpetual eruption”²⁸, J. Leipoldt describes as „Christ-less”. In our opinion, this characterization seems imbalanced, if not unfair, especially in light of recent exegesis. As Krawiec has remarked, Shenoute saw himself as a divinely appointed prophet, a „suffering servant”, and a medium both of God's message and of God's judgment.²⁹ By taking on the persona of a biblical prophet, Shenoute solidifies his reputation as a spiritual father.

His role as a prophet in the community was to peel away the monks' false sense of security in their salvation and reveal what he believes to be the true spiritual state of the monastery. As Schroeder has remarked „he frames his censure of the monks' disobedience to the rule and of the leader's failure to exercise authority over the monks in the context of prophetic duty. He presents himself as the messenger of the truth who must uncover and extinguish the

²⁶ Recent scholarship has turned its attention to Shenoute's identity and activities as a monk, and thus also to the importance of his writings for understanding the many worlds constructed and inhabited by early Christian ascetics. In addition to Emmel's work, see especially Bentley Layton, *The Canons of Our Fathers: Monastic Rules of Shenoute* (2014); David Brakke and Andrew Crislip, *Selected Discourses of Shenoute the Great: Community, Theology, and Social Conflict in Late Antique Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Ariel G. López, *Shenoute of Atrife and the Use of Poverty* (2013); Caroline T. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atrife* (2007); Andrew Todd Crislip, *From Monastery to Hospital: Christian Monasticism and the Transformation of Health Care in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2005; Rebecca Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (2002).

²⁷ A. Lopez, Shenoute of Atrife and the Use of Poverty, 57-62.

²⁸ Veilleux, preface to David N. Bell, *Besa: The Life of Shenoute*, CS 73 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1983), v and xi.

²⁹ Krawiec, Shenoute and the Women, 55-72.

falsehood and hypocrisy concealed in the monastery.”³⁰ In other words, Shenoute preaches repentance on earth and intercedes for sinners at the divine court.³¹ Exposing sins, pronouncing judgment, interceding with Christ, as well as helping people with practical problems – these are the tasks of the prophet Shenoute, made possible by his clairvoyance³², according to the *Life of Shenoute*.³³ Therefore, one of the interpretive keys to unlocking Shenoute’s often complicated or elliptical language is his self-representation as a prophet for his community³⁴.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to reflect on Peter Brown’s article on the rise of the holy man in Late Antiquity, one of the most influential articles of the last half-century. We have attempted to set Brown’s reflections in the context of the evolving notion of sanctity, or holiness, in the early ascetic tradition. In this sense, the case of Shenoute is very relevant. Briefly, for modern exegesis, Shenoute of Atripe is a violent and relentlessly demanding figure, and for that reason, he is a prophet³⁵.

More recent identifications of Shenoute as a prophet fall into two types: whereas scholars as such Stephen Emmel, Rebecca Krawiec, and Caroline Schroeder emphasize Shenoute’s use of biblical language and gestures to present himself as akin to the prophets of ancient Israel, others such as David Frankfurter

³⁰ Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies*, 49.

³¹ Compare Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred* (1995), 74.

³² Heike Behlmer notes that clairvoyance, the „gift to search hearts”, was an element in the holy man’s prestige, at least as Peter Brown articulated in *The making of Late Antiquity*, and she sees the *Life* as multiplying the instances in which Shenoute displayed this miraculous ability (H. Behlmer, „Visitors to Shenoute’s Monastery”, in David Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 357.

³³ The portraits of Shenoute that work from Brown’s holy man, all find themselves drawn to the *Life of Shenoute*, which provides the best material for a Shenoute who acts as a patron, dispenses divine blessings, and performs ritual acts that mimic as much as they reject traditional pagan religious behaviour. For more details, see *The life of Shenoute by Besa*, introd., trans., and notes by Daniel N. Bell, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1983).

³⁴ For example, in *Canon I*, Shenoute conforms to the literary and anthropological model of the biblical “peripheral prophet”, a figure who stands outside of the community’s primary religious and political authority system and speaks to the community from a marginal, but not wholly outside, position. For more details, see B. Layton, *The Canons of Our Fathers: Monastic Rules of Shenoute* (2014). On the Shenoute as a prophet, see Caroline T. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies* (ch. I, 24-53). On the figure of the biblical peripheral prophet, see Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), 1980. On the biblical tradition of prophecy in Christian Egypt, see also David Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), 1993.

³⁵ David Frankfurter proposes to use instead of “holy man” the term “regional prophet” (cf. “Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt”, in *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 11 (2003), 339-385.

and Heike Behlmer view Shenoute through Peter Brown's (revised) model of the holy man. As he originally developed it in 1971, Brown's holy man differed from and assimilated the role of his predecessor, the prophet. The old prophets lost his identity in a trance (cf. 1 Samuel 10, 6), but the holy man maintained his identity, for he gained access to divine knowledge not through a trance but thanks to an ascetic withdrawal.

Therefore, far from being conferred through an uncanny gift of revelation, the identity of the holy man was an „achieved status“, created by hard ascetic practice, so that the holy man, deriving his spiritual authority from his personal connection to God.

On the other hand, the revelations from God, constituted the essential element of Shenoute's authority as a prophet. His authority runs from his initial exposure of concealed sin in the monastery before he became its leader, through his interactions with his monks as their leader, including and especially the women, through his assertions of authority over persons outside the White Monastery (clergy, other monks and lay people). To know what God knows and to announce it to others – this was what it meant to be a prophet for Shenoute, and thus, there is a strong continuity between the authority that he sought to establish within the monastic community and that which he sought outside of it. Briefly, Shenoute was on the one hand a prophet, and on the other hand a holy man.

As we know, prophets have charisma, or they are prophets because people see they have charisma, or the prophet has charisma because people see it in him: the system tends to feed continuously back into itself.

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GROWING WITH THE HOLY FATHERS: 'ABBA' (THE ELDER), 'THEŌRIA' AND 'PHRONĒMA EKKLĒSIAS', A 'HERMENEUTICAL SPIRAL' DERIVED FROM THE ASCETICAL 'PRAxis' OF THE WORD

NICHIFOR TĂNASE*

ABSTRACT. It is argued that the “return” to the “biblical” faith should find a parallel in a “Return to the Fathers”. *Early Christian thought was biblical*, and one of the lasting accomplishments of the patristic period was to forge a way of thinking which was scriptural in language and inspiration. Forgetful of this truth, the Holy Fathers have been isolated *from the Scripture* and there is therefore an imperative to seek to relate more closely the two. A particular hermeneutical perspective called *theoria* - an “inspired vision” of the Divine Truth, shaped their works. For *Holy Fathers exegesis never had a purpose in itself*; rather patristic hermeneutics directly addressed the reader's life situation. As an antidote to the chasm between modern and pre-modern exegesis we propose the advice of Christopher A. Hall: “Read the Bible holistically” with the Fathers, which if actualized, would mean that the Church would recognize that it possesses a living Truth, one that cannot be limited purely to the biblical text. Further, it is proposed that Christ Himself is to be the “hermeneutic” principle or the principle of interpretation. The Bible does not contain its own principle of interpretation Orthodoxy operates in a closed “hermeneutic circle” through *the dynamic that exists between Scripture and Tradition* (the permanent presence of God). Unlike some former approaches to biblical interpretation, many of today's scholars do not see this circular process as an obstacle to biblical exegesis, but understand it in terms of a “hermeneutical spiral” (G. Osborne), which describes the interaction between text and interpreter. The “hermeneutical spiral” takes place via the interaction of inductive and deductive research and via the movement from biblical to systematic and to homiletical theology. Finally, it is argued that the “hermeneutical bridge” between the word of Scripture and the present life of the Church as thus understood could be strengthened by *rediscovering the “hermeneutic function” of the Holy Spirit, His continuing work of inspiration* that allows the Word of God to be interpreted again, in any time and for each new generation.

Keywords: Asceticism and Scripture, Patristic Hermeneutic, Spiritual Authority, *Theoria*, Isaac of Nineveh

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1. Seeing and Saying. Reading the Scripture with the Church Fathers

Personal methodologies can easily lead us astray to the extent that we believe that we can maintain cohesion between objective and subjective readings, that is, a critical reading of God's Word, against a spiritual approach of the Bible that can easily produce an arbitrarily subjective reading.¹ The better alternative is by means of the rediscovery of the Holy Fathers² whose critical gift of discerning multiple layers of meaning in the biblical text makes possible a hermeneutics in which the literal and historical meaning, as the author understood it, is brought into close relation with the spiritual level of

¹ The "return" to the "biblical" faith [cf. Peter Zimmerling, *Evangelische Spiritualität. Wurzeln und Zugänge*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 32; Christo Lombaard, *The Old Testament and Christian Spirituality. Theoretical and Practical Essays from a South African Perspective*, Society of Biblical Literature, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), especially this two Chapters: *Four South African Proposals for a Central Theme to "Scriptural Spirituality"* 27-53, *Exegesis and Spirituality* 71-91] should be correlated to "Return to the Fathers" [cf. Ioannis Zizioulas, "Patristic Theology in the Modern World," *Revista Ortodoxă* 24 (2010): 7]. There is a tendency to repeat Fathers almost literally what they said or wrote, we are dealing increasingly with so-called "patristic fundamentalism", something like Protestant biblical fundamentalism - we are behaving toward to the Fathers as the archaeological objects on which we are trying to conserving. That is why „we need, says Zizioulas, to 'inculturate' the Holy Fathers in our time, that is to bring in contemporary culture, contemporary to do with us. Return to the Fathers in Orthodox theology created another problem: we isolated the Holy Fathers from the Scripture and we are not trying to relate them to it. Thus, on the one hand, the Fathers are not placed in a relation with Scripture and, on the other hand, they are not linked to contemporary culture (and reflected in it). It almost threatens to suffocate patristic message, cancel the Holy Fathers and make them irrelevant. To correct this, we must take the Holy Fathers as guides. In other words, today we can't truly be Christians unless we let ourselves to be guided by the Holy Fathers. In this case, we must creatively interpret what the Fathers said for our time. So, we need creative freedom" (Zizioulas, "Patristic Theology," 7).

² Bertrand Jacquin de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis: Greek Fathers v. 1* (Petersham, Massachusetts: St. Bede's Publications, 2002); Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: an Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, trans. John A. Hughes (Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1994); J. van Oort and U. Wickert, eds., *Christliche Exegese zwischen Nicaea und Chalcedon* (Kampen: KokPharos, 1992); Paul Blowers, ed., *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); C. Mondésert, ed., *Le monde grec ancien et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984); Marc Hirshman, *A Rivalry of Genius: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretation in Late Antiquity*, trans. Batya Stein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Karlfried Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation. Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier (III-Ve siècles)*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 219 and 220 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studium Orientalium, 1982-1985).

meaning, which directly addresses to the reader's life situation.³ Recent researches in the history of exegesis have pointed to such a direction, as The American Catholic theologian, Brian E. Daley notes: "*Patristic exegesis has become almost fashionable again. After centuries of neglect, even hostile dismissal on the part of Christian preachers and scholars of virtually every theological hue and stripe, the efforts of early Christian writers to interpret the Bible have recently been watered into life again*".⁴

He also speaks of an atheistic-modern methodology which is opposed to the patristic "pre-critical" approach: "Historical criticism, including the criticism of Biblical texts, is methodologically atheistic, even if what it studies is some form or facet of religious belief, and even if it is practiced by believers. Only "natural," inner-worldly explanations of why or how things happen, explanations that could be acceptable to believers and unbelievers alike, are taken as historically admissible. So God is not normally understood to count as an actor on the stage of history; God's providence in history, the divine inspiration of Scriptural authors and texts, even the miracles narrated in the Bible, are assumed to be private human interpretations of events, interior and non-demonstrable, rather than events or historical forces in themselves".⁵

Orthodox biblical interpretation has traditionally opted for a homiletic approach in preference to a purely exegetical one: The link between early Christian ascetical practices and the Fathers' non-historical mode of Scriptural interpretation prompted the 19th-century Anglican writer, John Keble, to offer an early modern defence of patristic exegesis.⁶ More recently, Robert Louis Wilken, Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia, has sought to show that Christianity is "inescapably ritualistic," "uncompromisingly moral," and "unapologetically intellectual."

He has challenged Adolf von Harnack's idea of the "Hellenization of Christianity" that has been so influential in the interpretation of early Christian thought: "The notion that the development of early Christian thought represented a Hellenization of Christianity has outlived its usefulness". In its place, he

³ See Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004) 50-110. Chapters deal with how God is known ("Founded on the Cross of Christ"), worship and sacraments ("An Awesome and Unbloody Sacrifice"), the Holy Scriptures ("The Face of God for Now"), and the Trinity ("Seek His Face Always") through faithful thinking into the revealed Word by Origen, Justin, Augustine, Ignatius, Chrysostom, Clement, Irenaeus, or Cyril of Alexandria. But always so important to Wilken's depiction of such patristic reflection on Scripture, within the developing faith (*regula*) of the church, is that it be narratively seen and heard within the circumstances and relations in which the Fathers worked and lived.

⁴ Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Is patristic exegesis still usable?: Reflections on early Christian interpretation of the Psalms" *Communio*, 29, 1 (2002): 185-216, here 185.

⁵ Daley, "Patristic exegesis," 191.

⁶ Ephraim Radner, "The Discrepancies of Two Ages. Thoughts on Keble's 'Mysticism of the Fathers,'" *The Anglican* 29, no. 2 (2000): 10-15; Cf. Daley, "Patristic exegesis," 216.

advocates a more appropriate expression, namely “Christianization of Hellenism”. Yet neither does this phrase capture the Christian originality, which affirms that life and doctrine are strictly one. Nevertheless, Wilken captures an essential point when he writes, “*But what has impressed me most is the omnipresence of the Bible in early Christian writings. Early Christian thought is biblical, and one of the lasting accomplishments of the patristic period was to forge a way of thinking, scriptural in language and inspiration, that gave to the church and to Western civilization a unified and coherent interpretation of the Bible as a whole. Needless to say, this means that any effort to mount an interpretation of the Bible that ignores its first readers is doomed to end up with a bouquet of fragments*”.⁷

There are numerous biblical commentaries in later Orthodox tradition as well, although they are commonly passed over today because they assume what is often called (pejoratively) a “pre-critical”⁸ attitude to the biblical narrative. For the *Holy Fathers exegesis never had a purpose enclosed within itself*, unlike the Catholic approach.⁹ David C. Steinmetz arguing for “*the superiority of pre-critical*

⁷ Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, 6-7. In the Chapter 2, on Christian worship, he shows that early Christian thinkers were men of prayer who knew the person of Christ not only as a historical memory, but as a fact of experience in the liturgy, in which the events recorded in the gospels, particularly the death and Resurrection of Christ, were “made present”. The subtitle *Seeking the Face of God* is based on Psalm 105:4 in the Latin version, “Seek his face always” (*Quaerite faciem eius semper*). This verse is cited four times by Saint Augustine in his work *The Trinity*.

⁸ After a closer examination of the makers of this early ‘inner-biblical exegesis’, M. Sæbø says: “First, a History of biblical interpretation may have an appropriate *starting-point* in its own basis, which is the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament, the Holy Scripture of Jews and Christians. Since it was within the scriptures that became the Scripture that a process of *inner, scriptural interpretation* really started, a description of the interpretation history should not ignore this early beginning although it also, for certain reasons, may be called the ‘pre-history’ of biblical interpretation”; cf., Magne Sæbø, “Church and Synagoge as the Respective Matrix of the Development of an Authoritative Bible Interpretation,” in *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300). Part 1: Antiquity*, ed. C Brekelmans, Menahem Haran and Magne Sæbo (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996) 731-748, here 731. The rising Christianity ‘doubled’ the traditional Judaism in a way that caused a fundamental “shift of paradigm” (Sæbø, “Church and Synagoge,” 736). The ‘intrinsic’ cultural elements became not least at the transition the ‘inner-biblical’ interpretation to a broad ‘extra-canonical’ literary activity (ibid., 733).

⁹ A Catholic understanding of pre-critical method gives us Thomas O’ Loughlin, “Christ and the Scriptures: the chasm between modern and pre-modern exegesis,” *The Month* 31 (1998): 475-85: “*A more adequate way to describe pre-modern exegesis, than of seeing method as characteristic, is to note what exactly the exegete wanted to find – ‘the final cause’ of search to use scholastic terms. One thread running right through patristic and medieval exegesis is that every single line in the scriptures tells us something about Christ – although to get at this one had to use an armoury of methods strategies, and skills. The common element between modern and past exegesis is that for both the meaning of the text was not always obvious and had to be uncovered using a variety of methods (many of which are far older than their modern practitioners realise); what separates them is the object that is obscure. To the modern exegete it is the meaning of a text written at a*

exegesis,"¹⁰ has suggested an alternative hypothesis. First, he notes the limitations of the medieval theory of levels of meaning in the biblical text (distinction between "things" and "signs" made by Augustine, or that of a double literal sense: a *literal-historical* sense and a *literal-prophetic*), which he regards as possessing undoubted defects, but even more constricting is the modern theory of a single meaning, which Steinmetz treats as simply false.

This attempt to capture the meaning that the author initially intended, from the biblical text, is viewed by *the pre-critical exegetical tradition as a decided obstacle to the correct deciphering of the true sense of text*, and the historical-critical method, on the other hand, is the key that can unlock this primitive meaning of the text. In the complex phenomenon of the meaning of a text, where the question of truth can endlessly be deferred, what is required is a hermeneutical theory capable of avoiding "*the Scylla of extreme subjectivism*", on the one hand, and "*the Charybdis of historical positivism*", on the other. Illustrating the theory of four senses of Scripture (Jerusalem as: city in the Middle East (literal sense) the church (allegorical), the faithful soul (tropological), and the centre of God's new creation (anagogical), Steinmetz makes reference to John Cassian: "*From the time of John Cassian, the church subscribed to a theory of the fourfold sense of Scripture. The literal sense of Scripture could and usually did nurture the three theological virtues, but when it did not, the exegete could appeal to three additional spiritual senses, each sense corresponding to one of the virtues. The allegorical sense taught about the church and what it should believe, and so it corresponded to the virtue of faith. The tropological sense taught about individuals and what they should do, and so it corresponded to the virtue of love. The anagogical sense pointed to the future and wakened expectation, and so it corresponded to the virtue of hope*".¹¹

Holding that '*pre-critical exegesis*' is not monolith, Daniel J. Treier challenges the approach of Steinmetz, drawing attention to some of the difficulties that had to be faced in reading the Old Testament Christianly in the early Patristic exegesis.¹²

particular time in a specific culture; to the earlier exegete all the texts have as their true object the incarnate Word" (O' Loughlin, "Christ and the Scriptures," 477). Notice here the summing of Augustinian understanding of revelation as a transmission of "scholastic" concepts and the idea of continuous development of the doctrine that makes the biblical exegesis to discover obscure senses, ratiating the revelation into knowledge of God fuller than in the time when it was initially offered in an obscure form.

¹⁰ David C. Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," *Theology Today* 37, no. 1 (1980): 27-38.

¹¹ Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," 28, 30, 38 and 40. For St. John Cassian see, also, George Demacopoulos, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (University of Notre Dame, 2007) 107-126.

¹² Daniel J. Treier, "The superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis? Sic Et Non," *Trinity Journal* 24 (2003) 77-103: "First of all, 'pre-critical exegesis' is no monolith. It is, rather, an unfolding story, a quest full of twists and turns, even substantial disagreements. The NT itself manifests the challenges of reading the OT Christianly" (Treier, "The superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis?," 79).

Christopher A. Hall's phrase – "*Read the Bible holistically*" – talks about the unifying message on which the Fathers insist, that is, that "*the narrative of the Bible is a continuous*".¹³

In the next chapter, our aim is to show that the complementarity between the Word and the Sacraments is the only way to avoid the first symptom of crisis in the hermeneutical approach, namely, "pseudomorphosis of biblical spirit" (objectifying Scripture). Therefore, the sacramental continuity of the living Truth is a 'hermeneutic spiral' between Scripture and Tradition.

2. The Hermeneutic Spiral and/or "Continuous Revelation" (*theoria*)?

The exegetical vision of the Holy Fathers was one inspired by a desire for a deeper understanding of God, a vision which was called *theoria*.¹⁴ Avoiding the difficulties associated with a "verbal inerrancy" approach, they held that every word of the biblical text was created through "*synergy*", a mutual effort between human author and the Holy Spirit. The ancient Christian exegesis of East and West as evidenced in the writings of the Fathers, approached the problem from a holistic point of view. The Church defined the "canon", not to compose inspired writings, because she never believed in any „continuous revelation" (as a direct inspiration to write books that communicate a biblical, additional revelation), but in the unique historical act of God: "*Tradition, says Meyendorff, is the sacramental continuity in history of the communion of saints, in a way it is the Church itself*".¹⁵ Another function of holy Tradition is to make Scripture available and understandable to a changing and imperfect world.

¹³ Christopher A. Hall, *Reading the Scripture with the Church Fathers* (New York, InterVarsity Press: 1998): "*Read the Bible holistically*. The fathers insist that the narrative of the Bible is a continuous, deeply connected story from Genesis through Revelation. The Old Testament is not discontinuous with the New. Rather the themes presented in the Old Testament find their fulfillment in the narrative structure of the New Testament. Continuity and fulfillment characterize the entire story. Most importantly, the fathers insist that the biblical narrative reaches its culmination, its thematic climax, with the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God. Indeed, the incarnational, soteriological and eschatological foci of the New Testament further clarify and deep the Old Testament witness itself. We will read the Bible ineffectively and incorrectly, the fathers warn, if we fail to read its individual parts in the light of its overarching, unifying message" (Hall, *Reading the Scripture*, 191).

¹⁴ Modern commentators starting from the synthesis of Language, hermeneutic and Word of God, want to study more recently the way in which phenomenology of language attends in particular to the voice of Jesus as exemplified by the parable and the voice of Paul as expressed in the letter. See Robert W. Funk, "Saying and Seeing: Phenomenology of Language and the New Testament," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 3, no. 34 (1966): 197-213: "The voice of man of his linguistic nexus is the focal interest of phenomenology of language, as well as of some recent theology" (Funk, "Saying and Seeing," 197).

¹⁵ John Meyendorff, *Living Tradition: Orthodox Witness in the Contemporary World* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), 14.

Therefore the word *homoousios* expressed, in a language understandable in its time, a truth which Scripture presupposed. This example clearly illustrates „the Church’s awareness that she possessed a living Truth which cannot be limited simply to the biblical text. The verbal freedom which the Nicene Fathers demonstrated was not, however, an internal liberty in relation to the content of Scripture. The Orthodox Church has never proclaimed dogmas which are not direct interpretations of historical facts related in the Bible”.¹⁶ This illustrates the Orthodox approach to the problem of „doctrinal development”, whose meaning consists „neither in a sort of continuous revelation, nor in making additions to Scripture, but in solving concrete problems related to the one eternal Truth”, the latter remaining essentially the same before and after the definition. These definitions are final and cannot be changed inasmuch as they express the absolute Truth of Christ, living in His Church. Since “Tradition is an expression of the permanent presence of God in the community of the New Israel”¹⁷ any “new theology”, breaking with Tradition and continuity, would be meaningless.

The Holy Scriptures took shape in the matrix of the early Tradition of the Church, but without any notion that *Tradition and Scripture were to be viewed as either complementary or mutually exclusive*. Orthodoxy sees the relationship between the two in a way that can be described not by “Scripture or Tradition”, nor by “Scripture and Tradition”, but by the phrase “Holy Scripture in the Tradition of the Church”, because *Scripture is Tradition, the latter seen as a true “spiritual” reading of the Scriptures*: a reading based on the work of the Holy Spirit who is the source of inspiration in the Church.¹⁸

Given that “all Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3, 16), this work of inspiration involves synergy between the Holy Spirit and the man who receives divine revelation and translates it into the announcing of the gospel. Tradition can be equated with “apostolic gospel”; another description is “Church’s living memory” (S. Bulgakov).

The biblical writings can only be interpreted correctly in the light of Holy Tradition. Tradition presents the original content of Scripture, but it also contains the oral and written *paradosis*, that is, all “that is sent/transmitted “from the beginning revelation began as Christian reflection on the mystery of Christ. Christ Himself is the “hermeneutic” principle or the principle of interpretation. The Bible does not contain its own interpretation within itself.¹⁹

Orthodoxy operates in a “hermeneutic circle” expressed in an *enduring dynamic relating Scripture and Tradition*. Today’s biblical scholars do not see this circular process as an obstacle to the activity of biblical exegesis, but as an

¹⁶ Meyendorff, *Living Tradition*, 17-18.

¹⁷ Meyendorff, *Living Tradition*, 18.

¹⁸ John Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, trans. Ioana Tămăian (Cluj-Napoca: Patmos, 2008), 17.

¹⁹ Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, 23-24.

“hermeneutic spiral” (G. Osborne), which describes the interaction between text and interpreter. According to Grant Osborne’s understanding: a. *“hermeneutical spiral” like comprehension up* (interaction between inductive and deductive) but also, b. *so-called upward spirals of application* and contextualization for Christian life today.

The movement is from biblical theology to historical theology to systematic theology to homiletics: Biblical theology integrates individual passages of Scripture into an archetypal “theology”; Historical theology studies how the Church has historically contextualized biblical theology; systematic theology draws on biblical theology in the light of historical research so as to recontextualize the Scriptures for the current generation; Both theological disciplines and that of homiletics are then employed to make use of the results of each of these stages.²⁰

The Complementarity between the Word and Sacraments is expressed in the Road to Emmaus episode (Lk 24, 13-35), Taking the narrative as a whole, we can see that the Word must be *celebrated in order for it to be fully heard*. The conviction that God’s Word is fulfilled through liturgical celebration marks the unique character of Orthodox hermeneutics.²¹

²⁰ Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, (Westmont: Intervarsity Press, 1991). The „hermeneutical spiral” take place: via the interaction of inductive and deductive research and via the movement from biblical to systematic to homiletical theology. *“Biblical theology collates the partial theology of individual passages and books into an archetypal „theology” of Israel and the early church (thus integrating the Testaments). Historical theology studies the way the church throughout history has contextualized biblical theology to meet the challenges and needs of the church at various stages of its historical development. Systematic theology recontextualizes biblical theology to address current problems and to summarize theological truth for the current generation. Finally, homiletical theology (so called to stress that the sermon preparation is part of the hermeneutical task) applies the results of each of these steps to the practical needs of the Christians today”* (cf. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 14). Osborne refers to the fact of ignoring the understanding of the Early Church: *“While the hermeneutic of the early church cannot be determinative for the modern methods, since we are hardly bound to their modes of thinking, it is worthwhile to note that de earliest universally considered the biblical stories to be historical”* (Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 167). The hermeneutical circle has a pre-heideggerian sense: the issue of circularity in the process of understanding: *“the term ‘hermeneutical circle’, for the classical formulation of the hermeneutical circle got its form for the first time in Johann Gustav Droysen’s work [The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present (New York: Continuum, 1985) 119-131] and this form was repeated by others writers. It consist in the tulle that ‘the whole can be understood only through its parts, but the parts can be understood only through the whole’.*” For scholars such as Humboldt, Boeck, Palmer and Lonergan, the hermeneutical circle seems to be a vicious circle. In contrast, for some other scholars such as Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer, there is no real circularity in the process of understanding; *apud*, Mohammad Motahari, *“The Hermeneutical Circle or the Hermeneutical Spiral?” The International Journal of Humanities 2*, no. 15 (2008): 99-111, for here 100 and 103.

²¹ Michael Pasquarello, *“Doxological Reading and Eschatological Imagination,” Liturgy. A Journal of The Liturgical Conference 2*, no. 28 (2013): 58-67;

By *preaching* the gospel and liturgical *celebration*, the believers celebrate the Liturgy through which the Word, as with the Eucharist gift, is received and given back to God as a sacrifice of praise. The only way to avoid “pseudomorphosis of biblical spirit” (objectifying Scripture) is to ensure that the Word of God be placed within its own *ecclesial and liturgical context*, where it is “updated”, internalized and assimilated. *The first symptom of crisis in the hermeneutical approach described here appears when few of today's biblical researches are seen to directly address the spiritual needs of the believers.* As John Breck notes “we contented ourselves with questioning the biblical text instead of letting the living and life-giving Word of God speak to us and call us”.²² In a pre-critical culture such as that of early monastic biblical students, allegory remained very important: “*To interpret allegorically is to read expectantly, to listen to the text with a certainty that it will carry meaning for the reader. It is a hermeneutical strategy based upon not suspicion but critical trust of the text. The practice of allegorical reading requires the reader's receptivity to the text's continual ability to generate meaning in the present. Such an interpretation need not, of course, be uncritical*”.²³

Hillel's second rule, *gezera shawa* ('analogy'), is abundantly illustrated by Paul's frequently recurring practice of 'pearl stringing', Midrashic exegesis characterizes the Apostle's hermeneutical procedures more than any other style. Having been trained as a Pharisee, Paul shared with the Judaism of his day many of the then current hermeneutical conventions and procedures: “*The earliest believers, following the teaching and exegetical procedures of their Master, seem to have placed the revelation of God in Jesus the Messiah 'neben dem Text,' so that both stood starkly side-by-side. Paul's treatment of the Old Testament, however, evidences not quite such a simple juxtaposition, but, rather, a more nuanced exposition of the*

²² Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, 28-30, 33-35. As a reaction appeared after disintegrator initiative of modern biblical criticism, the new literary criticism, in a particularly way the narrative and reception theories, however, manifests a tendency towards relativism. As structuralists, they abandon the interest for the literal sense of the biblical text, stopping rather on the meaning established by the reader, the so-called “aesthetic pole”. In an attempt to determine the literal meaning, the text is drawn from the historical context in which it was produced, and “exegesis” is reduced to a modern and sophisticated form of allegorizing. Grant R. Osborne enumerates *the weaknesses of the methodology of narrative criticism*: 1. A dehistoricizing tendency; 2. Setting aside the author; 3. A denial of intended or referential meaning; 4. Reductionistic and disjunctive thinking; 5. The imposition of modern literary categories on ancient genres; 6. A preoccupation with obscure theories; 7. Ignoring the understanding of the early church; cf. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 212-216.

²³ Mark S. Burrows, “‘To Taste with the Heart’: Allegory, Poetics, and the Deep Reading of Scripture,” *Interpretation* (2002):168-180, here 171. See also: Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, “Scriptural Typology and Allegory in Liturgical Prayer” *Liturgy. A Journal of The Liturgical Conference* 28, no. 2 (2013): 4-13.

Jewish scriptures within a larger context of Christological awareness... Paul in his major letters usually begins with the biblical text itself and then seeks by means of a midrashic explication to demonstrate Christological significance".²⁴

Due to the permanent hermeneutical work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues "to speak" to the Church through the voice of the Spirit (John 16:13). Tradition is a *living* reality in which the Spirit brings into the Church all (*panta*) that Jesus taught His disciples up to His passions and His death, but He also speaks about the fullness of truth (*aletheia pase*) which represents nothing less than the words of Christ who is resurrected, raised and glorified/praised (John 16, 13-15).

Seeking *ipsissima verba Jesus* in studies which are "in search of the historical Jesus" becomes a nonsense. Through the dynamic quality of the work of the Holy Spirit in the space between the text and the reader, the Bible becomes a living book, a place/medium for sharing the life-giving knowledge or *communion* with God that reveals Himself in and through it.²⁵

We'll continue our approach by pointing that the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Truth, is the only One who can break the "hermeneutic circle", serving as a hermeneutic 'bridge'. Thus, *theoria*, is not a method of exegesis, but rather a 'vision' of the divine truth communicated by the Holy Spirit to the Church. As a spiritual vision, *theoria* can provide us one single hermeneutical program for removing the modern divorce between biblical exegesis, systematic theology and spiritual praxis.

3. *Phronêma ekklesiâs* ("the Mind of the Church") is, at the Same Time, "the Mind of Scripture"

A principle promoted by The Holy Fathers taken directly from Hebrew rabbis, is that of an exegetical reciprocity which assumes that *all Scripture is entirely inspired*. Old Testament and New Testament can be interpreted only by

²⁴ Richard N. Longenecker, "Early Church Interpretation", in *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Mondon and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2007) 78-89, here 81-82; see chap.7.1 "Phenomena of biblical usage" (Longenecker, "Early Church Interpretation", 87).

²⁵ Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, 36-38. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine draws the distinction between the mode of understanding (*modus inueniendi*) and the mode of communicating (*modus proferendi*) Scripture; cf., Michael C. McCarthy, "We Are Your Books: Augustine, the Bible, and the Practice of Authority," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 2, no. 75 (2007): 324-352, here 322. There's not such a distinction in orthodox view. The Bible, says McCarthy, is not conceived as an object of formal study: "Rather, scripture is inhabited, and Augustine's comment that "we are your books" suggests precisely the dynamism he thought scripture ought to have within his congregation as well" (McCarthy, "We Are Your Books," 333). This is what McCarthy calls "embodied exegesis".

reciprocal reference to each other, since they together form an inner and organic unity. *Only a spiritual vision, a theoria, unites, in one hermeneutical program, both typology and a certain allegorical perspective.* Typology marks the connections between parallel realities (the relationship of promise to fulfillment), while allegory involves the search for “hidden” or symbolic meaning, the latter representing a higher spiritual signification than that discerned from typology.

Allegorical exegesis does not focus upon historical events as such, but rather the deeper spiritual significance of those events. However, in reaction to radical trends towards *de-historicization* in the method as practiced at the exegetical school of Alexandria, the exegetes from the rival school in Antioch claimed that the ultimate meaning of any story or reality must be based on the event itself, that is, *in history*. The search for an inspired vision of divine truth (*theoria*) had led them to the identification not of two meanings, but of a *double meaning*: both literal (namely historical) and spiritual. However, Antiochene typology knows only a unidirectional movement, from past to future or from earth to heaven, while the typology involves a *double movement*: from past to future, certainly, but also from future to past. Thus, the antitype and archetype which are already, in a prophetic way, present in types, are present by *anticipation* (“the rock was Christ” – *the type already contains and manifests antitype*). Fathers of the Church argued that every theophany, every work of God in the Old Testament must be understood as a theophany of God the Son, rather than God the Father.²⁶

Frances Young believes that the ancient scholars did not make a distinction between the two methods categorical and exegetical typology as such is a “modern building”: “*The modern divorce between biblical exegesis and systematic theology, or indeed between biblical exegesis and praxis, would have been unthinkable in the day of the Fathers*”.²⁷ A type contains “*a mimetic seal*” so that the antitype is

²⁶ Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, 40-43, 67.

²⁷ Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: University Press, 1997) 7: “To deplore the influence of Greek philosophy or contrast the Hellenic and Hebraic approaches, as scholars have done in this century, is to do less than justice to the fascinating cultural interpenetration which took place as the Bible became the literary foundation of a new ‘totalizing discourse’”. Young, also, says: “To discern the mind of scripture did involve two things: (1) the assembly of texts pointing to the same conclusion, and (2) respect for the normal ‘earthly’ meaning of words, appropriately modified, or perhaps I should say ‘elevated’, for their theological context. The interpretation may not be literal, but in the majority of cases, it is also far from allegorical. The categories usually used to discuss patristic exegesis are inadequate to the task” (Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 35) and they learn to read properly (*kalos*) with the ‘sense’ (*dianoia*) right (ibid., p. 38). The Athanasius exegetical strategies and hermeneutical principles was “neither literal, nor typological, nor allegorical. Rather it is deductive. The deductive process involves attention to the meaning of the words, their particular biblical sense, the syntax and the context of the text in question – the basic techniques of the *grammaticus* attending to the verbal configuration of a passage... demands innovative exegesis” (Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 40).

already mirrored in “*content into*” the type. Although rooted in history, the type transcends history to the extent that it bears the “seal” of his own eschatological perfection.²⁸

For correctly interpreting the Scriptures and understanding the profundity of the truth contained within them, the exegete must *interpret them from the inside*. In other words, Scripture prescribes a way of life - “Christ in us”, as the Apostle expresses it. Or, according to the patristic tradition, we cannot correctly interpret Scripture if we do not live according to it, that is, to live “in Christ”. To correctly understand and explain the Scriptures *from inside* requires of the interpreter asceticism and prayer in order to “*walk in truth*” (3 John 1:3), to have “*the mind of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 2:16) or to “*know the mystery of the kingdom*” (Mark 4:11). Exegesis is a function of worship, a testimony to ?? the community of faith; as such the Church is the place most fully suited to liturgical interpretation, annunciation and celebration of the Word of God. Orthodox exegetes claim the absolute necessity that in their reflections they subscribe to the “*phrônema ekklesias*”, the “thinking of the church”, based upon the conviction that the work of exegesis is *diakonia*, a service to the Church.²⁹

How might one describe the “hermeneutical bridge” between the word of Scripture and the present life of the Church? This can be answered only by rediscovering the “hermeneutic function” of the Holy Spirit, which involves three inter-related elements: 1) historical event, 2) preaching the soteriological significance of that event, through the biblical authors, and 3) interpretation and updating of the preaching of the Church to each new generation. The Holy Spirit's work consists in loading the historical event with a typological significance and in the guidance of the prophetic, apostolic or future witnesses to a discernment of that signification in order that they might preach it and then transmit it as an element of Church's Tradition. Holy Scripture cannot be understood, therefore, *in vacuo*, apart from the illumination provided by the whole Church's tradition, because only within Church does the Holy Spirit “*update*” the Word during the Holy Liturgy, in the sacraments and in the preaching of the Holy Gospel. He does this under “his hermeneutic function”, under His *continuing work of inspiration* which allows the Word of God to be re-interpreted again and again, in every time and for every new generation.

²⁸ Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, 48, 51. Therefore Diodorus had to maintain that type contains a double meaning, historical and transcendent at the same time, literally and spiritually (interpretation has here priority over the event). Therefore, the type is ‘double’: grounded in historical reality where the salvation is realized, he wears and reveals eternal truth and eternal reality.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 52, 64, 72.

The Holy Spirit's work of inspiration is not only limited to Scripture since all authentic tradition (*paradosis*) is in some way "inspired": "Thus, we are forced, says John Breck, to distinguish two levels or degrees of inspiration: that of Scripture and that of the Tradition ... To distinguish Scripture from Tradition in terms of the Spirit's work, we could talk about revealing inspiration and about the anamnesis inspiration."³⁰

The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Truth, is the only One who can break the "hermeneutic circle", serving as a "bridge" or a hermeneutic connection which updates and makes available the Word of God at every moment of the Church's life, through her liturgical preaching and ministry. Thus, *theoria*, is to be understood not so much as a method of exegesis, but rather as a "view" of the divine truth communicated by the Holy Spirit to the Church. While the Hebrew prophet received his revelatory vision in a state of ecstasy, the Christian exegete becomes an instrument of the Spirit through contemplation, an opening to God's grace both at the level of heart and mind. Exegesis, as well as preaching the Word or painting of icons, says John Breck, is in the fullest sense a "vocation" or a calling: "the closed connection between Scripture and Holy Tradition of the apostolic testimony and its interpretation can be illustrated by comparing the Tradition with the icon. The Word and the icon have four common elements. First: the event itself, representative and represented, through which Revelation is being shared to the Church. The second element is the inspirational work of the Spirit, which gives to the biblical author and to the iconographer a view (*theandria*) of eternal reality or of eternal truth which lies at the heart of events. The third element is the material expression of that truth in human language of words or in a graphic form and in color. The fourth element is the act of internalization of this truth by the believer, as it is being revealed by word or icon. It is being left entirely legal or canonical. The Word is being illuminated by icon as He is being illuminated by the Holy Tradition ... icon is actually a part of the tradition, as the biblical Word".³¹

Furthermore, it is extremely important to add that the truth which is being communicated by the Spirit is more than information, it involves participation and communion. No formal technique, nor a systematic methodology is required to understand it. Thus, according to the ascetic tradition, Scripture and prayer enlightens each other. This means that the "prayer of the Scriptures" is not a closed circle, but rather an upward spiral. That is why we will skip from biblical exegesis to "the prayer of Scriptures", using in this endeavor the Syrian spirituality.

³⁰ John Breck, *Puterea Cuvântului în Biserica dreptmăritoare*, trans. Monica E. Herghelegiu (Bucharest: EIBMBOR, 1999), 43-47, 109-110: Tradition, is the Church's own testimony about Jesus and of the meaning of life, death and resurrection. It is, however, an inspired testimony: a remembrance (anamnesis) and interpretation (hermeneut), a true lighting ("light/photismosn glorious gospel of Christ," II Cor. 4:4) to incarnate the one truth revealed in the person God's Word.

³¹ Breck, *Puterea Cuvântului*, 110-112.

4. Swallowing the Scroll (*manducation de la Parole*) – “inner reading” of Scriptures

The biblical-patristic hermeneutic principle refers therefore to the necessity of *reading the Scriptures “from inside”*.³² The word should be “lived”, as in biblical language “to hear” implies “to obey” (*shamea, akouô / hypakouô*), and this obedience in turn leads to a real prayer of the Word, meaning to open up to him, at the level of heart and mind. *Lectio divina* can be used to recover the contemplative reading of Scripture.³³ Therefore, any “individual” reading of Scripture takes place in the Church and is a ministry/service in the life of the Church. Like prayer, it strengthens our participation in the ecclesial Body. *Scripture is a fundamental environment for revelation*. The process that leads from reading and studying the biblical text to “internalization” of text through meditation, was named by the French “*la manducation de la Parole*” or “consumption” of God’s Word.³⁴ The ultimate purpose in *lectio* was to reach to *illuminatio*, or even *deificatio*, that is, *theosis*, or human participation in God's life. For *lectio* to reach *contemplatio*, the inner struggle of reader must be accompanied by a ministry/ serving which is full of humility, an *operatio* or a pure *diakonia*.

³² Craig G. Bartholomew and C. Stephen Evans (ed.), *“Behind” the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation. Vol. 4 of Scripture and Hermeneutics Series* (London: Paternoster Press, 2003), 5-12.

³³ Mark Christopher Gorman, “Reading with the Spirit: Scripture, Confession, and Liturgical Imagination”, in *Liturgy. A Journal of The Liturgical Conference* 2, no. 28 (2013), 14-22.

³⁴ The name “manducation” comes from spiritual anthropology of Marcel Jousse, presuming an “internalization” of the Word. Joseph Morlaas, in the preface describes the foundation’s methodology M. Jousse, as follows: “*acte concret où se manipule une réalité transcendante la réalité concrète de l’Enseigneur se donnant, corps et doctrine, à l’enseigné. Il marque la stabilité, l’immuabilité des éléments fondamentaux de la civilisation palestinienne depuis ses commencements jusqu’à l’avènement messianique de Iéshoua de Nazareth... c’est le fondement de la méthodologie jousienne*”, cf. Marcel Jousse, *La Manducation de la Parole* (Gallimard: Paris, 1975) 17. Also he continues: “*comme une fusion cosmique dans un contexte mystique, la manducation pédagogique comporte la comunion de l’enseigneur et de l’enseigné, l’enseigneur étant nécessairement, de par les mécanismes psychophysiologiques, lui-même indissociable de son enseignement. D’où l’unité du diptyque composant le présent ouvrage: la manducation de l’enseignement et la manducation de l’Enseigneur*” (Jousse, *La Manducation*, 12). A close expression “Manducation de la Parole” by Marcel Jousse is that of Ellen Davis’ “swallowing the Scroll”: “*Several aspects of the figure are suggestive of the milieu in which Ezekiel called to prophesy. The first is the notion of ingestion as a means of appropriating the divine word. In an anthropological study contrasting the passive pedagogical systems of modern society with the “rhythmo-catechetical” system of the Palestinian rabbis, Jousse emphasizes the importance of memorable gesture and figures*”, cf. Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel’s Prophecy*, Bible and Literature Series, no. 21 of the Columbia Theological Seminary, Georgia (New York: Sheffied Academic Press, 1989) 52 and 62. See also: Eugene H. Peterson, “Eat This Book: The Holy Community at table with the Holy Scripture,” *Theology Today* 56, no. 1 (1999): 5-17.

The process described here begins with biblical exegesis and ends with “the prayer of Scriptures”. Thus, in Western tradition, *lectio divina* involved the progressive transition from the proper reading (*lectio*) to a profound reflection on the given portion (*meditatio*) in order to achieve the goal, meaning prayer (*oratio*), a “prayer of the Scriptures”.³⁵ Allegory, as a common mode of reading the biblical text in this tradition, was never intended as a means of abstract interpretation; rather it was always grounded in spiritual practice: “*In the Western church this approach came to be known as lectio divina, the slow and meditative practice in the monasteries of a «deep reading» advocated already by St. Benedict in his Rule Such reading was the dominant means of encountering scripture as a living word from antiquity until the dawning of early modernity*”.³⁶ Monastic readers preserved the Bible's central position through the work of copying, this labor merely providing “*the dry bones upon which they enlivened the text through a spirituality of reading*”.³⁷

Eastern Fathers nowhere present accounts of any systematic technique for reading Scripture. In story of the Transfiguration, the “*bleached clothes [of Christ] are a symbol of the words of Scripture, which became bright, clear, pure and understandable without any enigmatic implication and symbolic shadow and they revealed their reason within themselves and covered by them, as they came to the smooth and straight knowledge from God and were freed from passion to the world and the flesh*.”³⁸

³⁵ Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, 107.

³⁶ Mark S. Burrows, “‘To Taste with the Heart’ Allegory, Poetics, and the Deep Reading of Scripture”, *Interpretation* 56, no. 2 (2002): 168-180, here 170. A meditative reading and prayer of God's Word was practiced in Judaism. *Nehemiah* describes the post-exilic setting of the Liturgy of the Word, while reciting a week “Book of the Law of Moses”, accompanied by homiletic interpretation of the seventh day of the year. Then Qumran community law stipulates that a third of the night to be devoted to reading from the Torah and prayer. Origen we find the first reference at exactly spiritual reading as such (*theia anagnosis*).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 170-171.

³⁸ Paul Marion Blowers, “Exegesis of Scripture,” in *Oxford Handbook to Maximus the Confessor*, ed. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 253-273; P.M. Blowers, “A Psalm ‘Unto the End’: Eschatology and Anthropology in Maximus the Confessor's Commentary on Psalm 59,” in *The Harp of Prophecy: Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms*, ed. Brian Daley and Paul Kolbet (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 257-283; Blowers, “Eastern Orthodox Interpretation,” in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 1, ed. Steven McKenzie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) 241-249. Blowers, “Patristic Interpretation,” in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, ed. Steven McKenzie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 81-89. In the studies based on the exegetical method of St. Maximus, Blowers examines three Incarnations of the Logos: in creation, in Scripture and in the body taken from Virgin Mary. Christ incarnates Himself in the Scriptures as the eternal Logos, and Christ Himself reveals a deeper meaning, and symbolic eschatological Scripture, “symbols of its mysteries”. Christ is his “hermeneutical principle” since it is both the content of Scripture and her interpreter.

Father John Breck gives some indication of the significance of the meditative reading of Scripture and its relationship to the prayer of the Holy Eastern Fathers:

1) Liturgy is the context in which God's Word is being expressed. Thus, there is no such thing as a strictly "personal" reading, for receiving the Word of God is always an ecclesial act. *Phronêma ekklesiâs* or "thought of the Church" is at the same time "thought of the Scripture". As Frances M. Young says "*discerning the unitive 'mind' (dianoia) of scripture was seen as essential to reaching a proper interpretation*";³⁹

2) There is an intimate relation between the holistic reading of Scripture and contemplative prayer. By opening the heart to the mystery of the divine presence, a presence which is both hidden and revealed in the Scriptures, we read and internalize the Word of God in order to *pray to God with "his own words"*,

3) The movement which occurs from *lectio* to *oratio*, from a meditative reading of the Scriptures to a personal communion with God through the "prayer of the Scriptures" is a gift, an *epiklesis* of the Spirit;

4) Saint Maximus, together with the whole ascetic tradition, strongly emphasizes that meditative spiritual reading of Scripture helps us to pursue an inner pilgrimage and this, in turn, leads us both towards glorification and, at the same time, to an *update* of the Scriptures;

5) according to the ascetic tradition, Scripture and prayer *enlighten each other*. This means that the "prayer of the Scriptures" is not a closed circle, but rather an *upward spiral*,⁴⁰

In the hermeneutics employed by the Fathers, "the Prayer of the Scriptures" involves Christological, ecclesiological and Trinitarian readings of Bible. The Spirit transforms an allegorical picture from a simple sign into? a symbol, an environment of participation. Starting from the study of the phenomenon of division, from a communication failure, of the "divided sensitivity" that characterizes much of contemporary consciousness, Andrew Louth insists on the value of ?? allegory which "*enables us to restore through her in us the unity and simplicity lost by the fall, and so to come back to love.*" Allegory is a way of prayer, it is at home especially in the Liturgy: "*Allegory is firmly connected to the mystery of Christ, it is a way to tie the whole Scripture of this mystery, a way to make a synthetic vision of the biblical narrative images and events.*"⁴¹

³⁹ Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 29.

⁴⁰ Breck, *Sfânta Scriptură în Tradiția Bisericii*, 114-117. Each *lectio divina* can become a reality for us, "Today": "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21).

⁴¹ Andrew Louth, *Deslușirea Tainei. Despre natura teologiei*, translation and afterword by M. Neamțu, preface by Ioan Ică jr. (Sibiu: Deisis, 1999) 169-170, 159-160. "The seduction of allegory path - or awareness of multiple meaning of Scripture - comes from the recognition of this great 'profoundness', *mira profunditas*, of the Holy Scriptures" (Louth, *Deslușirea Tainei*, 159).

It is the experience of teachers, saints and ascetics of the Church that the Holy Spirit guides the reader of the Scripture from the literal to the spiritual meaning of the text, and thus through to inner contemplative prayer, this being an act of love of the Holy Spirit. The truth that is being communicated by the Spirit is more than information, it involves participation and communion, an inner journey from *contemplatio* to *meditatio*: “Therefore, says John Breck, *there is no formal technique, nor a systematic methodology to enable us to pass from a literal reading of the text to a purely spiritual reading or from knowledge of God to communion with God, the attempt to hear the voice of God in Scripture...*”⁴²

Following the Holy Virgin’s example, we first receive in ourselves the gift and the power of the Holy Word, we read it, we meditate upon it and we internalize it in order for it to come to fruition in us, for our spiritual perfection. *Lectio divina* is a quality and a way of reading the Scripture, possible only through the work of God’s Spirit in us: “*The transition from exegesis to lectio and the transition from the literal to the spiritual meaning of a passage is accomplished less through our human effort and more through the Holy Spirit. Consequently, every authentic spiritual reading of Scripture should start with a triple epiklesis: an invocation addressed to the Father to send upon us the gift of the Spirit, for the Spirit to transform our reading into a deep and constant communion with Jesus Christ, God’s eternal Word.*”⁴³

In our last chapter, the continuous synergy between reading and prayer is enlightened by the figure of the elder who communicates us a lived experience of the Word. As we shall see, the desert hermeneutic in this sense involved a hermeneutical circle or spiral – interpretation both derived from and led toward praxis. Thus, in the following, we emphasize that the reading requires spiritual asceticism, humility and purity of heart, because “truth” cannot be reduced to an object of discussion, but demands the role of the Spirit as the inner teacher. Therefore, the Saint Isaac the Syrian will be our practice teacher (born of silence) of the word through our sanctification and astonishment.

5. “The Elder” (Old Man) Communicates a Lived Experience – the “Practice” of the Word

The Church in Persia owes much to Antiochian theological influences, the theological orientation of Alexandrian Cyril (412-444) being perceived as foreign to the East Syriac Church tradition. In its theological schools many scholars monks translated into Syriac a number of Greek philosophical and scientific texts, which were in turn studied by the Arabs. These peoples then brought the material to Europe via Spain. Based on the tradition of the Syro-Oriental schools, the

⁴² Ibid., 122.

⁴³ Ibid., 127.

Arab academies were developed.⁴⁴ Between 471 and 489, the Bishop Barsaûma († about 496), disciple of Iba of Edessa enabled the Persian school of Narsai to construct its first establishment.

The Syro-Oriental Church, now closed off from Persia, was willing to offer to persecuted Edessenes a place where they could reorganize their school which, based on Antiochene theology, was viewed with suspicion by the Byzantines. Following a decision to seek independence from the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Babowai (457-484), and those opposed to “ miaphysitism”, in 484 Barsauma convened *the Synod of Beth Lapat*, at which Antiochene theology was recognized as the basis of the Syro-Oriental Church and with it, Narsai’s exegetico-theological approach which involved acceptance of theological positions condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431? and later at the second Council of Constantinople in 553 (condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodorus of Tarsus and Iba of Edessa).⁴⁵ Under the regulations of the school of Nisibis,⁴⁶ the members of the school, who called

⁴⁴ Adam H. Becker, *Fear of God And the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis And the Beginning of Wisdom. The School of Nisibis and the Development of Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 24. Like Becker examined the earliest Syriac Sources attest to an understanding of Christianity as a form of learning. Some of the earliest explicit examples in Syriac literature of the tendency to employ pedagogical terms can be found in Peshitta. The Syriac equivalent of the Hebrew root y-š-b (lit „to sit”, was translated as „to live”) it is shift in „to sit in study”. The closure of the School of the Persians in 489 for being a strong-hold of Nestorianism would also have affected the various sources for the School that were composed after this date. In reality, the theology of the School in the mid-fifth century, if it even had a distinctive theology, was not necessarily equivalent to a later East-Syriac one, even if Antiochene writers, such as Diodore of Tarsus, were read there. The ethnic appellation „of the Persians” may be relevant to the origins of the School, but it does not have continuing significance through the fifth century (Becker, *Fear of God*, 45). On the other hand, Theodore’s influence on the Church of the East, including in Christology, exegesis and sacramental theology, was immense (Becker, *Fear of God*, 117).

⁴⁵ Barsaûma didn’t hesitate to use political power, obtaining from the “king of kings” Peroz (457-484) the expulsion of “miaphysitists” in Persia. He tried to do the same and in Armenia, but there, in 491, the Catholicos Babken, together with Albanian and Iberian bishops, convened a council at *Valarshapat* which condemned the Council of Chalcedon, Leo’s Tome and Barsaûma. See Sabino Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul – asceză singuratică și milă fără sfârșit*, trans. Cornelia Maria and Deacon Ioan I. Ică jr (Sibiu: Deisis, 2012), 32.

⁴⁶ The whole day was divided between study and prayer, and during the school year any working activity was forbidden outside of school. Students were housed in small residential units where they were provided with food and accommodation. The headmaster, called “*Rabban*” was responsible for the Department of exegesis (*kursyâ da-mpshshqânâ*), while “*rabbaitâ*” with the functions of a deputy director in charge of discipline, library and economy. There were foreseen: a teacher of reading (to whom was entrusted the teaching of grammar, reading and composition), a professor of writing and calligraphy and a “*bâduqâ*” (researcher), which deals with non-religious subjects. Besides Scripture, they taught Aristotle and some elements of history, geography, natural science rhetoric. Provide two years study program: teaching first book of Psalms, the student had to memorize them, the second book of the Old and New Testament study by Ephrem and comments of Theodore of Mopsuestia; see Arthur Vööbus, *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis*, Volumul 12 din Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile (Stockholm: ESTE, 1962) and Raymond Le Coz, *Histoire de l’Église d’Orient, Chrétiens d’Irak, d’Iran et de Turquie* (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 89-105, 311-336, both quoted in S. Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 34-35.

each other “brothers”, were a community (*knushyâ*) of semi-monastic type, remaining in the same time studying in a state of celibacy.

St. Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Nineveh, lived in the 7th-century. He and his brother joined the ascetic monastery of Mar Matthew, near Nineveh as monks. His passion for reading led him to become blind, says Isho'denah. *But the source of his knowledge was threefold*: first the Scripture or rather “*contemplation of Scripture*”, then, the teaching of the Fathers, whom he calls “*true men*”, and finally his *own experience*. Scripture, the primary source of revelation for Isaac, needs to be investigated, questioned, interpreted, and sometimes even exceeded.

The Fathers are to be read, assimilated, interiorized and re-expressed. Even though accepting the Antiochene methods of exegesis, the Syro-Oriental tradition has not departed from the ancient Syriac tradition, but it has been able to rediscover within the tradition of Antioch elements which we can call typical of the exegesis of Afrah and Ephrem. *That is, while it does not use Alexandrian allegorical method, it does employ the category of symbol and mystery*. This agreement between the oldest Syriac tradition and Antiochian exegesis is not due so much to the historical contacts as to “*the success of the same style in different cultural environments*” (edessano-nisibian of Antiochian and Syriac language and Greek language). The common elements are: *an historic interpretation* but with an affinity for the *Jewish mode of exegesis* and the discrete use of *typology*.⁴⁷

Dadisho 'Qatraya recognizes in the work of Theodore of Mopsuestia⁴⁸ (350-428) what he calls “*spiritual exegesis*” different from the exegesis as “*historic*” and as “*homiletics*”.⁴⁹ For Theodore, the Logos does not manifest itself clearly in

⁴⁷ Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 122.

⁴⁸ Not only the School of Nisibis helped to propagate the ideas of Theodore. Thomas of Edessa, Posi, Cyrus of Edessa, Išai and Henana of Adiabene, show how faithfully East-Syrian teachers reproduced Theodore's ideas. The 6th century was a period of a great exegetical activity (exegetical works of Elisa bar Quzbye, Abraham and John of Bet-Rabban, Mar Aba, Henana of Adiabene and Michael Badoqa, have not been preserved). Apud, Lucas Van Rompay, “The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation,” in *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: the history of its interpretation. I/1: Antiquity*, ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1996), 612-641, here 636. See, also, Dimitri Zaharopoulos, “Theodore of Mopsuestia, view on Prophetic Inspiration,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 23, no. 1 (1978): 42-52.

⁴⁹ See, Luise Abramowski, “Dadisho Qatraya and his Commentary on the Book of the Abbas Isaiah,” *The Harp. A Review of Syriac and Oriental Ecumenical Studies* 4 (1991): 67-83; Paolo Bettolo, “Esegesi e purezza di cuore. La testimonianza di Dadišo' Qatraya (VII sec.), nestoriano e solitario,” *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 3 (1986): 201-213; Robert A. Kitchen, “Dadisho Qatraya's Commentary on Abba Isaiah: The Apophthegmata Patrum Connection,” *Studia Patristica* 41 (2006): 35-50; Lucas van Rompay, “La littérature exégétique syriaque et le rapprochement des traditions syrienne-orientale et syrienne-occidentale,” *Parole de l'Orient* 20 (1995): 221-235; Antoine Guillaumont, “Dadisho Qatraya,” *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Ve Section: Sciences Religieuses* 87 (1978-1979): 327-329; Sebastian P. Brock, *Prière et vie spirituelle. Textes des Pères syriaques. Spiritualité orientale* 90, Translated by Didier Rance, and André Joly (Bégnolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 2011).

the Old Testament, but presents itself in what he refers to as “prophecy” which manifests as “symbol” and “sign” and it is thus different from allegory.⁵⁰

The *Gnostic Century* of Evagrius was adapted to a “Theodorian” environment.⁵¹ It is indeed surprising that Isaac, and not only him, was able to bring together two approaches who were considered in interpretation/exegesis and in theology as notoriously opposed to each other : the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools. John the Solitary (in Apamea, mentioned by Babai the Great) is among the first in the Syriac environment to provide an ascetic and spiritual overview, as Evagrius had done within the Helenophone and Egyptian monasticism in general.

Isaac pays great attention to the topic of reading and sometimes argues strongly against those who despise it (*Discours 29, Part Two*).⁵² The reading which St. Isaac invites us to engage in is actually a “hermeneutic” process of disclosure and of perception with the help of the Intellect (*hawnâ*). It is a spiritual reading in which the Spirit enlightens the intellect so that it might embrace the deep sense of scriptural texts. Isaac invites a reading that could be categorized as allegorical, typological, symbolic, anagogic but by “*dilation of the heart*”, the intention being to pursue an understanding of Scripture that goes to the heart of the text and to the author’s intent.

In this regard this approach is Evagrian. Isaac’s aim is not so much to seek from the text a coherent interpretation but rather for the reader to discern the “exteriority of the Scripture” in its intimate significance, that is, a word which is beyond Scripture, but yet still in Scripture, in its most secret heart. This is called by Isaac “inner reading”; Dadisho 'Quatraya prefers the term “spiritual reading.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 125-126.

⁵¹ Philoxenus of Mabbug († 523) in fifth century and Sergius Resh'aina in VI-VII century are the two Syriac translations. Evagrius cannot be considered as an exegete, but, through his *Scholias*, trying to text out of what he calls the ‘intelligible realities’ (*pragmata noēta*) who hide under the ‘sensible realities’ expressed in Scripture and he invites us to understand Scripture into a ‘intelligible mode’ (*noētōs*) and ‘spiritual way’ (*pneumatikōs*), but here the “spiritual” is not conjugated with the “allegorical” but with “intelligible” (*noētōs*). His interest is not to give a new meaning to the current text, but a noetic spiritual sense, but with a sense that has to do with the nous of the reader. “Do not allegorize words of blamable people” (*Gnostic 21*), “Do not explain spiritually all that naturally lends itself to allegory ... you’ll spend more time on Jonah’s ship” (*Gnostic 34*). The literal meaning still has value to the reader through a “large heart” will be reached through pure heart full understanding of the words of God; apud, Chialà, *Isaac the Syrian*, 145.

⁵² St. Isaac the Syrian, *Cuvinte către singuratici. Partea a II-a, recent descoperită*, introductory study and translation by Ioan I. Ică jr. (Sibiu: Deisis, 2003), 339-442. His constant prayer was, “*Make us worthy of the truth that is within the Scriptures.*”

⁵³ Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 160-164. Scripture as a mirror and as an inexhaustible source are two images used by Ephraim. Isaac expresses the same images as ‘sipped’ the meaning of words and ‘swimming’ in the ocean texts. The reader is continually seems to float in an ocean that does not leave broke, you must descend into the abyss, it means moving from “simple form” outside to deep waters. Dadisho ‘Quatraya lists three types of exegesis: one that sheds light on the of “historical” meaning (*tashcītānâvâ*)

Isaac sees the “other” as a possible place of revelation. In this context he calls the old man’s figure and role as the one who initiates into the lonely life and therefore introduces into knowledge.⁵⁴ Himself fulfils the role of “elder” for the solitary ones, and the epistolary genre of some of his speeches reveals an activity of a spiritual accompanying.⁵⁵ An entire journey of initiation glimpse from his work, a journey which is being made by the lonely one under the guidance of an “old man”, of which he remains linked throughout his spiritual journey.⁵⁶

Between reading and prayer Isaac sees a continuous synergy with each feeding each other.⁵⁷ In illustrating this process, Isaac compares it to the figure of a solitary old man who leads us to knowledge. Gaining a certain amount of discernment, the old man is there to show, to accompany, but not to replace. “The Elder” (old man) communicates, therefore, a lived experience, a necessary addition of the Word in Scripture, meaning the “practice” of the Word.⁵⁸

The desert fathers recognized that in order to appropriate the words of Scripture and weave them into the fabric of their lives. Those who came to the elders seeking “a word” did so not because they wanted or needed an extended spiritual discourse. They sought instead to have their very particular needs and

who are interested in “school people” that the meaning of a second “homiletic” (*mtargmânâyâ*) way Saints Basil the Great and John Chrysostom is addressed to the world, and, finally, a “spiritual explanation” (*pushâqâ ruhânâyâ*) for the solitary and the saints. *The historical reading and homiletics, fully legitimate, do not cover reading Scripture*. Reading requires spiritual asceticism, humility and purity of heart, just as the Word will light in the depths of the reader, making his spiritual spurting more hidden meaning.

⁵⁴ Guy G. Stroumsa, “Du maître de sagesse au maître spirituel”, Giovanni Filoramo (ed.), *Maestro e Discepolo. Temi e problem della direzione spiritual tra VI secolo a.C. e VII secolo d.C.* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2002): 13-24; Kallistos Ware, “The Spiritual Guide in Orthodox Christianity”, *The Inner Kingdom* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), John Sommerfeldt (ed.), *Abba. Guides to Wholeness and Holiness East and West* (Michigan: Cistercian Publications Kalamazoo, 1982), Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness. The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), J. Behr, A. Louth (eds.), *Abba. The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West. Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ Isaac, Part III, *Discours* 12.

⁵⁶ Isaac, Part II, *Discours* 3, cap. IV, 71.

⁵⁷ Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 164. Isaac draws parallels between Scripture and creation: the *physis* has a didactic and therapeutic function ascribing to beings revelatory function, that despite their lack of reason, make them mediators of knowledge.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 172-173. There is a contemplation of Scripture and one of the created realities, but there is also a contemplation of the practical work. Image of the sun or the water painted on a wall, are associated with knowing the, «truth», that can be acquired only by «tasting the spiritual carrying out of», «trying mysteries with their own life» because they cannot be understood „in teaching of a man or by researching books”. The simplicity of the words together with the knowledge coming from inner experience and shall be more valuable than teaching from one sharpness mind or by hearing and in the ink.

concerns addressed by direct, immediate words of salvation.⁵⁹ The careful attention given to words in the desert was complemented by the importance attributed to praxis. The question of how to bring one's life into conformity with Scripture became a burning question: "They were convinced that only through *doing* what the text enjoined could one hope to gain any understanding of its meaning".⁶⁰

The elders discouraged attempts to inquire into the meaning of a particular text, because for the desert fathers, Scripture existed in order to be put into practice. This practical appropriation of Scripture was seen as a "process of coming truly to understand and realize the meaning the Scripture. Attaining a saying from Scripture, realizing its truth within oneself, implied a deep moral and spiritual transformation".⁶¹ So, there is a hermeneutical significance of *praxis*. The monks' insistence on the importance of praxis had a direct influence on the way they approached the interpretation of Scripture.

By incorporating the teaching of a particular text into one's life "reveals the end of the hermeneutical process as far as the monks were concerned: fulfillment or incorporation of the text in a life".⁶² In short, the monks' practical orientation to Scripture provided the key which opened up its worlds of meaning: "The desert hermeneutic in this sense involved a hermeneutical circle or spiral – interpretation both derived from and led toward praxis. To understand the Scriptures, it was necessary to make some attempt to put them into practice".⁶³

"Practice" is not opposed to "knowledge".⁶⁴ Thus, *praktikē*, *askesis* and keeping/guarding the commandments, is itself a way of knowledge or a "place

⁵⁹ Douglas Burton-Christie, *Word in The Desert. Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 134: "Two constantly recurring questions found in the *Sayings* remind us of the inextricable bonds that connected words and praxis for the desert monks. The first – "Abba, give me a *word*" – is more of a plea than a question, but nevertheless implies a multitude of questions. The other – "Abba, what should I *do*?" – reveals the concrete and practical character of the monks' concerns and complements the first."

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 153-5. The reasons for their refusal to discuss the texts were that: excessive speculation on Scripture would inevitably lead one away from the simple exercise of putting the commands of the text into practice.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 160.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 165. See also, L. Roger Owens, *Abba, Give Me a Word: The Path of Spiritual Direction* (Brewster, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2012).

⁶⁴ About the idea of a pedagogical sufferings or a "conversion of asceticism" to St. Isaac, see Ioniță Apostolache, *Hristologie și Mistică în Teologia Siriană*, (Craiova: Editura Mitropolia Olteniei/Cetatea de Scaun, 2014) 279-300, în mod special p. 284-290. And about the relationship between *Praxis* and the spiritual vision, see, also: Valentin Vesa, *Cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu la Sfântul Isaac Sirul* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Renașterea, 2013), 211-215.

of knowledge”.⁶⁵ Knowing the truth can only be achieved “by tasting the spiritual deeds”, “trying mystery with one’s own life”, because they can’t be understood “from a person’s teaching or from researching of books”.⁶⁶ Isaac distinguishes between “knowledge from deeds” and “idle wisdom”, resembled with a painter who paints a wall with water that can’t relieve his thirst.

So, the “experience of things” that this ordinary man has it makes much more than the knowledge of the “wise who speaks because he studied but without having the experience of things”.⁶⁷ „Reading of Scripture” (*qeryana* - a syrian term that refers to both to Bible and the Holy Fathers) banishes despair from the soul of the one who chose to live in *xeniteia* (syr. *askesayuta*). „Reading” is not a study of the biblical text with a cognitive purpose, but a mystical meeting, the direct experience of conversation with God. Scripture is the main way for spiritual transformation of human and the rejection of his sinful life.⁶⁸ It is not necessary that the monk to be an erudite, he rather must have a pure mind.⁶⁹ According to Isaac, true faith is not achieved from books but from experience; it emanates from the purity of mind rather than from reading. „The one who has tasted the truth no longer argues for it”.⁷⁰

Alfeyev makes some suggestions on how to read the Scripture („praying reading”) to capture mystical understandings (*sukkale*) of the spiritual significance that arise in the mind of the ascetic: 1) silently and quietly 2) by gathering of mind and absence of thoughts from outside 3) praying before reading. Not every word of Scripture has the same meaning for every reader.

⁶⁵ Patrick Hagman, *The Asceticism of Isaac of Nineveh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 112-173, 213-221. See also: Adam H. Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and the Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006), Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), Richard Finn, *Asceticism in the Graeco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Gavin Flood, *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory and tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Sidney H. Griffith, “Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism,” in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 220-245, Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, “Praxis and Theoria: The Heart, Love and Light Mysticism in Saint Isaac the Syrian,” *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 6 (1987): 93-120, Leif E. Vaage, “Ascetic Moods, Hermeneutics, and Bodily Deconstruction,” in *Asceticism*, ed. V.L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis (1995), 246-63, Richard Valantasis, *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Eugen, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2008).

⁶⁶ *Discours* 3, IV, 1, cf. Isaac, *Cuvinte către singuratici. Part II*, 200.

⁶⁷ *Discours* 1, 39 and 53: „Love the simplicity of words accompanied by the knowledge that comes from experience rather than looking inward a river Ghisoni (cf. Gen. 2:13) coming from the teaching of the sharpness mind, from hearing and from ink”.

⁶⁸ I/1 (3-5) = PR 1 (2-5) [pp. 26-28]. Cf. Ilarion Alfeyev, *Lumea duhovniceasca a Sfântului Isaac Sirul*, trans. Dragoș Dâscă (Iași: Doxologia, 2014), 107, 173.

⁶⁹ I/64 (307) = PR 65 (446-447) [pp. 452-453]. Cf. Alfeyev, *Lumea duhovniceasca a Sfântului Isaac Sirul*, 176-8.

⁷⁰ *Chapters on knowledge* IV, 77 (p. 227); cf. Alfeyev, *Lumea duhovniceasca a Sfântului Isaac Sirul*, 178.

When the man receives the Paraclete, he no longer needs divine Scriptures, „heart learns in a hidden way from the Spirit”.⁷¹ Thus, says Alfeyev, „Isaac emphasizes the primacy of spiritual experience towards any formal expression of this experience, whether it is the reading of scriptural and ascetic texts”. In *Discours* 19 of Part I, St. Isaac speaks about six kinds of discoveries mentioned in Scripture: through the senses (burning bush, cloud of glory, Abraham’s receiving of the three men give to, Jacob’s ladder), through bodily seeing, through ecstatic rapture of spirit (Isaiah’s and Paul’s visions), „the stage of prophecy”, „thought in a certain way” (dogmas) and „as in a dream”.⁷²

The “crucifixion” of man is the primary way to knowledge: contemplating the cross, “the sipped” of the Scriptures, but also to draw the life from the mystery of Christ’s death. Cross is a receptacle of power, of the glory or the “*shekinah* of God”, the place of divine mysteries and knowledge, “Christ’s robe.”⁷³ It is revelation which encapsulates in itself the dynamics of salvation, the “emptying out” of the love of both the Son and the Father. The gift of contemplation is given to the one who dies with “the death of Christ.” Contemplation and “practice” of the cross are described by Isaac in terms of “crucifying the flesh” and “crucifixion of the intellect”. The Cross is twofold: patience of sorrows and the pain of mind in unceasing prayer and in other and it is called “contemplation”.⁷⁴

There is one last way of knowing, namely, discoveries or revelations (*ghelyâne*), in which one distinguishes between “material” discoveries or revelations, meaning those perceived by the senses, and discovery or “spiritual” revelation. Of the first type of events Isaac says that we observe them in Scripture or in the Fathers and they typically occur through the mediation of angels; thus they are called “angelical discoveries / revelations”. The second type, “spiritual discoveries” are gained through the revelations of the Holy Spirit which perceived in the inner man ???: “in the feeling of heart, a hidden discovery, without the mediation of external senses.” It is the perception that there is no involvement of him who receives it is but simply a “work of the Spirit”, the man being in “astonishment”, in non-prayer.⁷⁵

⁷¹ 1/6 (58) = PR 6 (91) [56, pp. 286-287]; apud Alfeyev, *Lumea duhovniceasca a Sfântului Isaac Sirul*, 182.

⁷² Alfeyev, *Lumea duhovniceasca a Sfântului Isaac Sirul*, 230-3. The term „understandings” (Sukkale) is therefore semantically close to the term of „discovery”.

⁷³ About the relationship between the knowledge from experience of asceticism, and the knowledge from contemplation of the Cross (the “*shekinah* of God”), see: Brenda Fitch Farady, „Isaac of Niniveh’s typology of the Cross” *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001): 385-390.

⁷⁴ Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 175-176: St. Isaac quotes here from Abba Isaiah who said, „if the intellect wants to climb the cross before to be calmed the waywardness of senses comes upon him the wrath of God” [Abba Isaiah, *Asketikon* 26 (gr.17) 4], i.e. without being healed the weakness of his thoughts by the patience and shame of the cross, dared to imagine its glory in the cross intellect (n. 84).

⁷⁵ Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 177-178. With their discoveries / revelations angels cleans the man in order to makes him a temple of the Holy Spirit, Who, in His turn, sanctifies man with the discovery / revelation of Him. Revelation are therefore aimed at cleansing and sanctification of man, in order for it, remembering God unceasingly to become the temple of the Trinity.

Isaac discovered the *relationship between* discovery / revelation and truth: “In this way these should be understood: one is the discovery and the work [of God] and the other is truth and knowledge. Because the discovery is not the accuracy of the truth, although it’s showing some with signs [*remze*] and clues [*âtwâtâ*] suitable for human powers. So, to the work [of God] and to the wonder of discoveries are not given the name of knowledge and truth. [...] Therefore one who receives a discovery or in which a work is been worked [divine] will not necessarily know truth and accurate knowledge of God: because many are those who receive gifts like though they know God like children [cf *Heb* 5, 13].”⁷⁶ So, even in discovery, which is a privileged path of knowledge, the experience of it does not guarantee its truth. Those who master knowledge through their own endeavors are also prone to being caught up and blinded by pride and the *more they study, the more darkened their understanding can become*. Isaac notes that “truth” cannot be reduced to an object of discussion, but must first be received and then offered, wrapped in his natural garment which is discretion.

In the *Discourse* 13 of the *Third Part*, he speaks of “three places of knowledge” in nature (meditation), apart from nature (mind), and beyond nature (faith).⁷⁷ In the third ‘place’, knowledge ends, facts come to an end and senses become superfluous. Here, the object of knowledge is Being itself; the senses become useless because what is already discovered by the one who perceives is not something unknown to him, and the only author of the discovery / revelation is Holy. The usually term for knowledge used by Isaac is the Syriac *te’oryâ* which transliterates the Greek *theoria* (contemplation),⁷⁸ and indicates “deep understanding” of a reality that is born of silence, that is, contemplation as “spiritual vision”⁷⁹, where the exact and intimate knowledge of the examined reality must be generically understood.

Words have limits. Isaac asks God for the gift to “hear the word of silence”, a ‘word’ which rises “in the heart without being written bedding”, which moves “the intellect without expressing itself” and is a word “upon the lips of the Spirit”.

⁷⁶ St. Isaac the Syrian, *Discours* 19 in *Cuvinte către singuratici. Part II*, 415.

⁷⁷ St. Isaac the Syrian, *Cuvinte către singuratici. Partea a III-a, recent regăsită*, Foreword, introduction and text Sabino Chialà, trans. Ioan I. Ică jr. (Sibiu: Deisis, 2007), 160-168.

⁷⁸ Sebastian Brock, „Some Uses of the Term *theoria* in the Writings of Isaac of Niniveh”, *Parole de l’Orient* 20 (1995): 407-419, here 408-410.

⁷⁹ St. Isaac uses a concept, precious to John Dalyatha also, that of the glory of the divine nature. He distinguishes between two visions, for which we possess two eyes: the contemplation of the glory of God concealed in created natures and that of the glory to His divine nature. Apud, Robert Beulay, *La Lumière sans forme. Introduction à l’étude de la mystique chrétienne syro-orientale* (Editions de Chevetogne: Chevetogne, 1987), 206-210, here 201. See, also, Robert Beulay, *L’enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha, mystique syro-oriental du VIIIe siècle* (Beauchesne: Paris, 1990), 386-463, in particular 447-455.

Thus the truth in its fullness “will be revealed at the proper time from itself,” while the depth of the mysteries is yet guarded by silence. In this, Isaac seems to show himself as belonging to the ancient tradition of apophatic theology. However, one can recognize a difference of emphasis in Isaac, because, although the knowledge he speaks of is beyond nature, it does not leave nature behind. Rather, for him, the Spirit descends into nature and works within her heart.

In Isaac's thinking it is not a matter of ecstasy, but of astonishment (*tehrâ*) as a sign of lack of knowledge and non-prayer. We have already seen how the Spirit is active only in the third stage of spiritual life, of which Isaac speaks, where there is no human work: the lack of knowledge (surprise), as in the non-prayer. He sees the role of the Spirit in ? discovery, which means to live in constant remembrance of God. In Isaac's vision, however, the Spirit has other functions, such as that of “inner teacher.” The Spirit works deep down the “shading” (*magnânutâ*) in two forms: sanctification received through the grace of God and “astonishment” or the power of understanding by which the intellect receives divine revelations.⁸⁰

Conclusions

In this study we wanted to emphasize the link between asceticism and the interpretation of Scripture and, for this reason, we turned to the most popular ascetic experience of the Church, namely the Syrian spirituality, taking St. Isaac the Syrian as a model. But the stages of the study were dictated also by the several adjacent readings, like that of: N. Berdyaev (about the relation between revelation and truth⁸¹), Christopher Veniamin („cloud of witnesses”⁸²), Norman Russell⁸³ (link between *theoria* and *theosis* in Scriptures and the living experience of deification – “do you live it?”⁸⁴) and Dumitru Staniloae (“Holy Fathers

⁸⁰ Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul*, 182-186, 194-195.

⁸¹ Nicholas Berdyaev, *Truth and Revelation* (New York: Collier Books, 1962).

⁸² Christopher Veniamin, *The Orthodox Understanding of Salvation. “Theosis” in Scripture and Tradition* (Dalton, PA: Mount Tabor Publishing, 2014), 66: “As great Paul himself proclaims in the epistle reading for Orthodoxy Sunday, we have a ‘cloud of witnesses’ (Hebr. 12:1), who testify to the Truth”. This will be the orthodox interpretation of Holy Scripture.

⁸³ Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers With God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009), 55-72.

⁸⁴ Russell, *Fellow Workers*, 169: “When my book on *theosis* in the Greek Fathers was published a few years ago, I showed a copy to a Jewish friend, a student of the Kabbala. He looked through it intently for some minutes, then said, ‘Yes, but do you live it?’. A humbling question. *Theosis* is not a subject of study. If it does not affect us personally, it does not become the context in which we lead our Christian lives, it has no more value than any other topic of intellectual curiosity”.

may still be⁸⁵). All in an attempt to highlight the very important contribution of biblical studies, that can bring an awaited 'corrective' to the twentieth century neo-patristic theology.

Therefore, in this study we have established the link between early Christian ascetical practices and the Holy Fathers' mode of Scriptural interpretation, their critical gift of discerning multiple layers of meaning in the biblical text, making possible a hermeneutics in which the literal and historical meaning is brought into close relation with the spiritual level of meaning, which directly addresses to the reader's life situation.

The desert father's hermeneutic in this sense involved a hermeneutical circle or spiral – interpretation both derived from and led toward praxis. We can, also, make reference to John Cassian's theory of Scripture's four senses (literal, allegorical, thropological and anagogical). For St. Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Nineveh, the source of his knowledge was threefold: "contemplation of Scripture", teachings of the Fathers, and his own experience. He was able to bring together two approaches opposed to each other: that of Antiochene and Alexandrian schools. The reading which St. Isaac invites us is actually a "hermeneutic" process of disclosure and perception with the help of the Intellect (*hawnâ*).

Isaac discovered the relationship between revelation and truth. We may now "read the Bible holistically" starting from the unifying message on which the Fathers insist that "the narrative of the Bible is a continuous". So, we have to let the living and life-giving Word of God speak to us instead of questioning the biblical text itself. For tasting the Word with the Heart we can't ignore the understanding of the early church. This is the way of a pre-critical culture such as that of early monastic biblical school. For them Scripture prescribes a way of life – "Christ in us".

But, for a long time the pre-critical exegetical tradition was seen as a decided obstacle to the correct deciphering of the true sense of text, and the historical-critical method, on the other hand, is the key that can unlock this primitive meaning of the text. The Orthodox approach to the problem of "doctrinal development" consists neither in a sort of continuous revelation, nor in making additions to Scripture, but in solving concrete problems. The movement is from biblical theology, to historical theology, to systematic theology, to homiletics. Thus, the atheistic-modern methodology is opposed to

⁸⁵ Dumitru Stăniloae, „Sfânta Tradiție. Definierea noțiunii și întinderii ei,” *Ortodoxia* 16, no. 1 (1964): 102-103. To say that there can be „fathers” anymore is to suggest that the Holy Spirit left the Church. The neo-patristic syntagma „Back to the Fathers” involved a creative interpretation of their experience which is the „practice of the Word” or the „enfleshed Scriptures” in their own lives.

the patristic “pre-critical” approach, because, for the Holy Fathers, exegesis never had a purpose enclosed within itself. Orthodox biblical interpretation has traditionally opted for a homiletic approach instead of a purely exegetical one.

The exegetical vision of the Holy Fathers was one inspired by a desire for a deeper understanding of God, a vision which was called *theoria* and was achieved through “synergy”, a mutual effort between human author and the Holy Spirit. A principle promoted by The Holy Fathers taken directly from Hebrew rabbis, is that of an exegetical reciprocity which assumes that all Scripture is entirely inspired. Thus, the search for an inspired vision of divine truth (*theoria*) had led them to the identification not of two meanings, but of a double meaning: both literal (namely historical) and spiritual. Also, the antitype and archetype are already, in a prophetic way, present in types. Church Fathers argued that every God’s theophany in the Old Testament must be understood as a theophany of God the Son (the type already contains and manifests antitype). In story of the Transfiguration, the bleached clothes of Christ are a symbol of the words of Scripture, which became bright, clear, pure and understandable.

Holy Scripture cannot be understood, therefore, *in vacuo*, apart from the *illumination* provided by the whole Church’s tradition. The biblical-patristic hermeneutic principle refers therefore to the necessity of reading the Scriptures “from inside”. The ultimate purpose in *lectio* was to reach to *illuminatio* and *deificatio* (*theosis*) as human participation in God’s life. The process begins with biblical exegesis and ends with “the prayer of Scriptures”. Eastern Fathers present accounts of any systematic technique for reading Scripture. *Phronêma ekklēsias* or “thought of the Church” must be able to “discerning the unitive ‘mind’ (*dianoia*) of Scripture” (F. Young) which is essential for reaching to a proper interpretation. We have to distinguish, also, two levels of inspiration: that of Scripture (revealing inspiration) and that of Tradition (anamnesis inspiration).

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CHURCH CONFESSING WORK IN THE EARLY CENTURIES OF CHRISTIANITY: FIRST LATIN APOLOGIES

IONIȚĂ APOSTOLACHE*

ABSTRACT. The value of Latin apologists was confirmed over the centuries due to their written confessions, where we find both the ground for the theological, spiritual and polemical argument, and honest assessment of contemporary realities. Realistic tone and moderate spirit give the advantage of a safe opening towards contemporary theology. From legal notions, to socio-moralizing records and to great profound theological arguments, this direction of theology provides an inexhaustible source of priceless help to define current reality. This is, because many of the cases and situations apologetically analysed in those times are still up to present true. On the other hand, if it were to talk about a specific methodology of the Latin apologists, we would definitely stop on the practicality of their works. From Tertullian to Minucius Felix, from St. Cyprian to Lactantius, the professing work of the Western Church aimed at highlighting the manhood truth, the only essential reality to religious metamorphoses undergone by human being.

Keywords: Christian apologetic, Latin apologists, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Western Church, missionary, confession work

Introduction

The circulation of ideas in the first centuries has special linguistic specificity and consistency reflected in the social, cultural and last but not least theological confluences. Educated people in western towns could understand and write *in Greek*. Similarly, those in the East knew *Latin* very well. Following this tradition, the profane literature of the time has developed in the first instance; many ancient works were translated from Greek to Latin and from Latin to Greek. This specificity has also passed to theological field, though, there were some notable differences. First centuries witnessed Latin as “official language of the royal administration and hence of the cities in the West. On the other hand, Greek

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was the language of culture in the Mediterranean world.”¹ This becomes obvious at a theological level, especially when it comes to terminology. Therefore, we can say that Latin apologetic theology inspired more from Roman law pragmatism. Without any sophisticated philosophical elaborations, Latin apologies have come forward mainly by direct analyses on the practical state that Christianity had in the first centuries. We start from this premise, since etymologically speaking, theological Latin is a language that forms implicitly during the time of apologists. Apologetic literature and also the whole Latin literature thus, begin with Tertullian. He is “*the father of Latin theology*”² This is particularly confirmed by the work they carry out in North Africa, where they rooted, better than in Rome, “the roots of Latin Christianity. This is why Africa’s land, enriched by its intelligence and reason, watered by the blood of its martyrs grew the tree of Western Christianity, until all nations of the earth rested itself”.

A major role in the formation of Latin theology specificity and therefore of first apologetics written accordingly, was that of the Carthaginian School. The first who makes himself noticed is Tertullian, the one who particularly influenced the polemic specificity, and at the same time arid, of Latin apologetics. This direction is partly reflected in the theology of St. Cyprian of Carthage and St. Augustine. The personality of the great apologist is also the key to understand Christianity in North Africa. From the tumultuous beginning of early Christianity to its peak, Tertullian’s missionary activity that he undertook here, bore great fruit in the Latin tradition. His confessing example was followed by Minucius Felix, by Arnobius or Lactantiu personalities “who gilded the early period of the Western Church’s teaching, together with its to nobles luminaries... Thus, early in the third century, the council chaired by Adripinus, bishop of Carthage, was attended by no less than 17 bishops of this province. This was then, followed by a merciless period of persecutions and thus the African Church was given blood baptism”³.

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (c. 160-c. 225) is “one of the most troubled and original personalities of Latin literature.” Originally of a pagan family of Carthage, he was converted to Christianity in 193, being impressed by the sacrifice of martyrs. Tradition tells us that he was married, but did not have any

¹ Aidan Nicols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches. A Study in Schism*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 152.

² Charrington, *Christian Apologetics of the Second Century* (London, 1921), 38. “After him, father Constantin Voicu says, language is much improved by St. Cyprian of Carthage through his works. Starting with the IVth century it became the exclusive language of the West writers.” Constantin Voicu, *Patrologie*, vol. I, 24.

³ Alexander Roberts and James Donalson, “The Writings of the Fathers down to AD. 325,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. III (New York, 1918), 16.

children. Jerome speaks about his theological reputation, recalling the fact that he was also ordained a presbyter, serving in his hometown. In the late part of his life he became the adept of Montanus' heresy⁴. He was particularly attracted by "the rigor and austerity of the doctrines preached by Montanus, as a response to the laxness of Roman priests of his time. Exactly as Montanists, he considers Montanus as the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Mediator, the Paraclete about whom the Saviour speaks in the Gospel of John. Montanus' prophecies were seen as a New Testament, which would complement and not cancel the Gospel."⁵ The time of his death is not known precisely, but it is again St. Jerome who tells us that "*he lived to a decrepit old age.*"⁶

Stylios Papadopoulos, the Greek patristic scholar, details more aspects specific to his work.⁷ Thus, as a notable representative of Latin direction, Tertullian gave to the West "the linguistic tool, Christian Latin language, Latin theological terminology, which did not lack completely, as it was earlier believed, but it was not sufficient to the needs of the Church". He particularly emphasizes the polemical nature of his work, intensively supported by his practical abilities.

⁴ "Tertullian, the presbyter, is now regarded as chief of the Latin writers after Victor and Apollonius. He was born in the province of Carthage in Africa, and was the son of a proconsul or Centurion. He was a man of keen and vigorous character, he flourished chiefly in the reign of the emperor Severus and Antoninus Caracalla and wrote many volumes which we pass by because they are well known to most. I myself have seen a certain Paul an old man of Concordia, a town of Italy, who, while he himself was a very young man had been secretary to the blessed Cyprian who was already advanced in age. He said that he himself had seen how Cyprian was accustomed never to pass a day without reading Tertullian, and that he frequently said to him, "*Give me the master,*" meaning by this, Tertullian. He was presbyter of the church until middle life, afterwards driven by the envy and abuse of the clergy of the Roman church, he lapsed to the doctrine of Montanus, and mentions the New Prophecy in many of his books... He is said to have lived to a decrepit old age, and to have composed many small works, which are not extant". See in Ieronim, *Despre bărbații iluștri. Despre viețile Apostolilor. Despre cei doisprezece învățători* (București: Paideia, 1997), 48-49.

⁵ Remus Rus, *Dicționar enciclopedic de literatură creștină din primul mileniu* (București: Lidia, 2003), 834.

⁶ Ieronim, *Despre bărbații iluștri*, 49.

⁷ Papadopoulos gives a full list of his works, even of those classified as unauthentic. There are mentioned in his Patrology 32 titles, all in Latin, noting that "those written in Greek were lost." The bibliography is presented chronologically. We mention here some of them, as follows: *Despre spectacole* (196); *Despre idolatrie* (196/197); *Despre îmbrăcămintea femeilor* (196/197); *Către neamuri* (197); *Împotriva iudeilor* (197); *Către martiri* (197); *Cuvânt de apărare – Apologeticum* (197); *Despre mântuirea sufletului* (198); *Despre botez* (198/203); *Despre rugăciune* (198/203); *Despre pocăință* (203); *Despre răbdare* (198/203); *Despre respingerea ereticilor* (203); *Împotriva lui Hermogene* (204); *Despre Trupul lui Hristos* (206); *Împotriva valentinienilor* (206-207); *Despre suflet* (206/207); *Despre învierea morților* (206/207); *Împotriva lui Marcion* (207/207); *Împotriva lui Praxes* (210-211) etc. Stylios Papadopoulos, *Introducere, Secolele II și III* (București: Editura Bizantină, 2006), 344-347.

“*Legal* thinking and *rhetoric* art together with sophistry, says Papadopoulos, are the main weapons of Tertullian. All his argumentation is legal-sophistic, since God has to be thought more as lawgiver and salvation as obedience (*salutaris disciplina*) towards God. To pagan she highlights the legal situation of Christians and their full legality within society. Tertullian broadly introduced judicial aspect, and legal thought in Latin theology.” As regards philosophy, he has a contemptuous attitude but does not entirely eliminate it from his arguments. He often uses ideas or concepts taken from the Stoic philosophy of Middle Platonism.

Theology generated by Tertullian covers several important chapters of doctrine, thus apologetically falling.⁸ It is highly important to mention here his teaching about the dogma of the Holy Trinity, managing to identify the three hypostases into the existential unity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁹ Following the example of St. Justin Martyr, Tertullian often uses the prophecies of Old Testament in his theological approach. In this way, he refers to the oneness of God and thus he fights against Marcion’s heresy.¹⁰ “If God is all-powerful, eternal, unborn, undone, without beginning and end, then He must necessarily be One.”¹¹ Confronting Hermogenes, he proved that “God is not the cause of evil”, showing that if “he is One, then the attribute of eternity can only be owned by One”¹², and that therefore God is not responsible for the evil in the world”¹³. Against Valentinus the Gnostic’s heresy, which supported the theory of pleromatic emanationism in divinity, Tertullian wrote a satire.¹⁴ Very important is also his Christology, stating that: “Wisdom and Logos are broadly speaking one and the same: Wisdom came from the Father before creation, but it also experienced and another rise to

⁸ In the context of his practical skills, his ability to theologize was considered as being inferior to his magisterial, elocutionary, philosophical and even pen craft attributes. He did not excel in presenting systematic theology, but being rather a supple debater, correcting through his writings and unrighteous opinions and law errors that Christianity faced.

⁹ Tertullian is the second Christian apologist, after Theophilus of Antioch, who uses the term “Trinity” (gr.: *Tryas*). Moreover, he “distinguishes persons in the unitary Godhead and recognizes the reality of united natures of Christ. The person (*persona*) expresses the unity of being (*substantia*), and the divine nature of Christ does not make the human one vanishes away” (Papadopoulos, *Patrology*, vol. I, 342).

¹⁰ The heretic Marcion (c. 100-160) promoted a theology characterized by Gnostic influences, trying to point out the difference between the God of the Old Law, who was considered evil and cruel and the One of the New Testament, who was considered full of love and compassion. On these grounds he rejected the Old Law wholly; he even made his point directly on the text of the Gospels (Rus, *Dicționar enciclopedic*, 538-540).

¹¹ *Împotriva lui Marcion* 1.3.2.

¹² *Împotriva lui Hermogene*, 16. 1-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16. 3-4.

¹⁴ Goffrey D. Dunn, “Tertullian,” in *The Early Church Fathers* (London and New York, 2004), 24.

become Logos. Son's providence was achieved through *flowing* from the spring, which is the Father, which is part of (not all) being"¹⁵. As about the Birth, Death and Resurrection of Christ the Saviour, Tertullian claims that they are real and actual events, "things that must be necessarily believed, precisely because they are absurd."¹⁶

Carthaginian theologian's best known apologetic work remains undoubtedly *Apologeticum*. This true "Word of defence" was written in 197/198, divided into 50 chapters. The paper is a synthesis of valuable apologetic arguments used in favour of Christians. The main style it was written into the paper, took into considers "the denial of the allegations according to which Christians threatened the prestige of the state, or pagan deities and authority (Majesty) of the Emperor"¹⁷. In this paper, Tertullian uses his practical knowledge. Although he was a very good knower of doctrinal teachings, being called as "the father of orthodox Christology"¹⁸ in *Apologeticum* he relies more on a *realistic interpretation*.¹⁹ He thus, proves the fact that "Christianity is no new philosophy, since it is not just mere speculation about the origin of man, but divine revelation, namely the truth revealed by God"²⁰.

First, he exposes "*unjust hatred*" that the Romanian state had against the name of Christian. "This unfairness, says the great apologist is at once exaggerated and refuted by the same plea that seems to excuse it, namely ignorance. When therefore men hate because they do not know the character of what they hate, what is to hinder the thing hated from being of the sort they ought not to hate?"²¹ Furthermore, Tertullian reveals deprivation of the right to defense; a right Christians were deprived of.²² The sentence given upon them springs "out of necessity" self-imposing penalty. This attitude was far beyond the imperfectability of so-called "procedural error" this being the reason why the Carthaginian father answers back toughly against state authority: "The Christian alone may not be sought out, but he may be brought into court, as if searching out had any other object than prosecution!"²³ Tertullian grounds his approach by offering the

¹⁵ Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, vol. I, 342.

¹⁶ I.G. Coman, *Tertullian, Sabia lui Hristos. Sugestii pentru o metodică a misiunii creștine moderne* (București, 1939), 7.

¹⁷ Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, vol. I, 345.

¹⁸ C. de Lisle Shortt, *The Influence of Philosophy on the Mind of Tertullian* (London, 1933), 100.

¹⁹ Coman, *Tertullian, Sabia lui Hristos*, 17.

²⁰ Rus, *Dicționar enciclopedic*, 835.

²¹ Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, I, 4, *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești 3* (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1981), 38.

²² *Ibid.*, II, 1-4.

²³ *Ibid.*, II, 9.

counterexamples of the Roman emperors who adopted friendly attitude towards Christians.²⁴

After clearing out the issue of these deliberateness errors, Tertullian “*unleashes*” his apology’s confessing side. He points out the fact that beyond the ungrounded accusations made to Christians by the fact that they “do not honour pagan gods” and do not “worship the emperor” is the testimony of cosmological reality. Logically, following the demonstrations reinforced by scholars as Pythagoras or Plato, Tertullian justifies himself by the fact that Christians have placed above all *their faith in the Supreme and Eternal Creator*. Through Him was “ordered, conceived and harmonized” the whole creation.²⁵

“The object of our worship, says Tertullian, is *one God*, who through the word by which he commanded (that they should exist), the reason by which he arranged them, the power by which he could (carry out his will), fashioned out of nothing all this mass with all its apparatus of elements, bodies and spirits, for an ornament to his own greatness, whence it is that the Greeks also have applied the name *κόσμος, kosmos* (ornament) to the universe.”²⁶ In addition to those stated, he shows that under the testimony of natural revelation the truth of Holy Scripture is revealed to unbelievers. This understanding, from the outside to inside, became useful to those who recognized in the external environment the order that had been praised earlier by the nations’ wise people.²⁷

By virtue of these demonstrations, Tertullian approaches the objective, really proving out the fact that “*Christ is God*.”²⁸ He is also *the Logos*, meaning “*The word, reason and His power*,” “the Son of God has his mother as the result of no unchastely; even she, whom he seems to have (for mother), had not married...” Moreover, the author highlights the *personal and existential relation between the*

²⁴ In the year 174, in one of his campaigns, the emperor Marcus Aurelius passed through difficult times with his army, all enduring thirsty in the north of the Danube in Germany. They were all very close to death, but due to the prayers of Christians serving as soldiers, a big storm occurred and it started raining. Furthermore, the lightning that showed in the sky frightened so badly the enemies that they all fled. Since then, the emperor “never persecuted Christians, but ordained, more of them in his legions.” Tertullian even speaks of an annotation of the Roman emperor, where he himself accounts this great miracle. “Thus, although he did not openly abolish punishment incurred by such men, yet in another way he openly neutralized it, adding also a condemnation, and indeed a more shocking one, for their prosecutors.” (*Apologeticum*, V, 6). Along with the example of Marcus Aurelius, Tertullian also mentions Tiberius, who, after receiving a letter from Pilate, changed his initial attitude towards Christians, but there are also mentioned names as Trajan, Hadrian, Pius or Verus. See Jeremy Collier, *The Mediations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (London: Griffith Faran & Co, 1931), XI.

²⁵ Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, XI, 4-5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, XVII, 1.

²⁷ This is the reason why, “we should have to unlock the archives even of the most ancient peoples, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Phoenicians” (*ibid.*, XIX, 5).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, XXI, 3.

Son and His Father without any clear difference within internal relation, which thus aims at unity of being. "Therefore, says Tertullian, we also ascribe Spirit as its true essence to word and reason and likewise to power, by which we have proclaimed that God has constructed everything, in which are present both word when declaring and reason when arranging and power when accomplishing. We have learnt that this Spirit came forth from God and by this forth-coming is begotten and has therefore been called Son of God and God from unity of nature. For Spirit is also God."²⁹

A special place is reserved to *the arguments meant "to worship the emperor"* as one of the main accusations made against Christians was that "of their refusal to bring sacrifices" to him. In this respect, Tertullian argues that the sacrifices of Christians are much higher and more precious than those made by pagan priests on their idols' altars. But Christians pray "on behalf of the safety of the emperors a God who is everlasting, a God who is real, a God who is living, whom even the emperors themselves prefer should be propitious to them beyond all others. They know who gave them empire, they know, as human beings, who gave them life also; they feel that he is the only God, in whose power alone they are".³⁰ Therefore, the whole work of the Carthaginian apologists "a battle for the truth, in danger of death." His whole professing struggle "is victory, a victory that carries with it both the glory, of pleasing God, and the spoil, which is eternal life... therefore, he states, we have conquered, when we are killed. Thus we escape, when we are convicted."³¹

The context of its emergence and the contribution brought to the professing work of the Church, transformed Tertullian into a genuine pioneer. By his way of theologizing and polemic approach and he provided effective solutions in the fight against heresies, and by his apologetic attitude he threw light in the relation with society and that time's culture. Moreover, the language of his writing becomes a veritable vehicle for western theology. Therefore, the image of Tertullian remains representative to the majority of Latin apologists. Starting from Minucius Felix, St. Cyprian, Lactantius, Novatian, Jerome, to Christian poets Augustine and Vincent de Lerin, to the Medieval period, the Renaissance or the Reformation, Tertullian has always been present due to his ideas.³²

²⁹ Ibid., XXI, 9-11.

³⁰ Ibid., XXX, 1.

³¹ Ibid., L, 2-3.

³² Tertullian professing work that enriched the service of the Church was primarily "very precise, its content strengthening the connecting ring of Christian faith and thus preparing the minds for fair judgment of those happened. For this reason, its influence in Christian circles is so obvious, even gaining great privilege to be translated into Greek" (John B. Delaunay, *Tertullian and his Apologetics. A Study of Early Christian Thought*, (University Press, 1914), 128.

Marcus Minucius Felix

The second important name in the list of Latin apologists of the first centuries is *Marcus Minucius Felix*. A contemporary of Tertullian,³³ Jerome tells us that he “was a distinguished advocate of Rome, wrote a dialogue representing a discussion between a Christian and a Gentile, which is entitled *Octavius*.”³⁴ In turn, Lactantius places him “among the leading apologists of Christianity.”³⁵ In his youth he acquired quite great cultivation, being extremely familiar with the teachings of ancient philosophers, their work being his source of inspiration most often.

The composition of his work is in fact an apologetic assessment of contemporary realities, written in the key of Platonic dialogues. It seems that an essential contribution in his professing work was Tertullian’s influence³⁶ Differences in thinking and approach are nevertheless more than visible. Since the “great African paid no value to pagan religion and philosophy pagan, showing only great intransigence and hostility in relation to the past violently manifested in his many writings, Minucius Felix, he himself convinced that Christianity is something new, has a more conciliatory attitude towards paganism, demonstrating absolute superiority in all aspects of the new religion, so despised and persecuted over the old one.”³⁷ His most notable work is *Octavius*, although patrologists do not unanimously agree on its paternity issue. However, social and religious context of the capital of the Roman Empire and especially the interaction between Rome and the African Christianity reinforce Minucius Felix as its author.³⁸ It is structured as a dialogue which, according to some opinions, it would have been imaginary.

The three characters who appear here are: the author, Q. Caecilius Natalis and Octavius Januaris. The tone and the content of the paper used makes it special compared to the other apologetic writings of that time. This time, the recipients are no longer the Roman emperor, senators or people, but “educated men of letters and

³³ His day of birth and death remained uncertain. It is known only the fact that the two met each other. The reason for conversion would have also been the suffering that Christians unjustly had to put up with the state. As a lawyer, it seems that Minucius saw many trials, after which Christians were obliged to find their right in the governors’ torture, in the arenas, in fighting with beasts or fire.

³⁴ Ieronim, *Despre bărbații iluștri*, LVIII, 52.

³⁵ Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 5, 1, 21.

³⁶ There is indeed a strong parallelism between many quotations from Octavius and Tertullian’s works: *Apologeticum*, *Ad nationes*, *De anima* or *De corona*. Similarity goes beyond some words, ideas, expressions or arguments found at both apologists. We are talking here is about an entire reasoning, which is unlikely to be imagined fortuit. E. Amann, “Minucius Felix,” in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Chatolique*, vol. 10 B, 96.

³⁷ Bodogae, *Apologeți de limbă latină*, 343.

³⁸ W.C.A. Kerr, *Minucius Felix* (William Heinemann LTD: Chambridge, Massachusetts, 1957), 304.

arts, friends of wisdom and eloquence... The plan of the apology is very simple: the author, Marcus Minucius Felix, departs from Rome with two friends for a walk on the beach at Ostia, Octavius Januarius and the other one, the pagan Caecilius Natalis. After a sharp and long discussion on the value of the two religions, chaired by the author, the pagan converts himself.”³⁹

Inspired by the style of the works of Cicero (*De natura deorum*), Minucius Felix’s apology first distinguishes by the complex antithesis between Christianity and paganism. His thought “impresses at the level of secular philosophy” skilfully valuing the most important sources of profane literature. The ideas of Plato, the Stoics, Cicero or Seneca are reflected in the pages of the Latin apologist. All the seare presented at the expense of Sacred Scripture, which “is completely absent from work.” “Central ideas of the work, says Stylianos Papadopoulos, monotheism and resurrection of the dead, are supported by logical and philosophical arguments. Based on this information, *Minucius must be considered as a religious philosopher and not as a Christian theologian.*”⁴⁰

Based on these considerations, we will further try to identify the main apologetic coordinates of his thought, as they appear in his work, *Octavius*. Thus, in the first instance, after presenting the tradition and pagan rituals, *Caecilius* considers Christian religion as something impossible to prove in the way of actual realities. “Where is the one God, solitary, desolate, whom no free people, no kingdoms, and not even Roman superstition, have known? The lonely and miserable nationality of the Jews worshipped one God, and one peculiar to itself; but they worshipped him openly, with temples, with altars, with victims, and with ceremonies; and he has so little force or power, that he is enslaved, with his own special nation, to the Roman deities.”⁴¹

Under this tangible judgment, *Caecilius* will also attack the signs of God’s existence, showing that the universe “cannot overturn, breaking the sky and connection of all elements”.⁴² In order to assert his ideas, *Caecilius* denies the possibility of a Christian philosophy. But all his statements against Christianity are generated by ignorance, and not by “cunning or malevolence,” being clarified one by one by *Octavius*. First, he points out the fact that truth must first rise in any discussion. He also emphasizes the simplicity by which Christian faith is illustrated. In this way, “the more unskilled the discourse, the more evident the reasoning, since it is not coloured by the pomp of eloquence and grace; but as it is, it is sustained by the rule of right.”⁴³ Simplicity praised by Octavius is immediately

³⁹ Bodogae, *Apologeti de limbă latină*, 345.

⁴⁰ Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, vol. I, 315.

⁴¹ *Octavius*, X, 3-4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, XI, 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, XVI, 6.

implied by simple logical comparisons about the existence of human nature." Man, he asks rhetorically, is he whether collected together from the elements, or harmoniously formed of atoms, or rather made, formed, and animated by God? And it is this very thing which we cannot seek out and investigate without inquiry into the universe; since things are so coherent, so linked and associated together, that unless you diligently examine into the nature of divinity, you must be ignorant of that of humanity."⁴⁴ Due to this note, Octavius gets his interlocutor closer to *the divine origin of all existence*, which is simpler to be understood in its spiritual reality. Behold the heaven itself, how broadly it is expanded, how rapidly it is whirled around, either as it is distinguished in the night by its stars, or as it is lightened in the day by the sun, and you will know at once how the marvellous and divine balance of the Supreme Governor is engaged therein!"⁴⁵

In order to point out God's greatness and His familiarity with our lives, Octavius relies on arguments of the works of great ancient philosophers. Thus Maro compares God with "the spirit within nourishes, and the mind infused stirs the heaven and the earth, and the other members of the world. Thence arises the race of men and of cattle, and every other kind of animal." He also refers to ideas and concepts of the works of Thales of Miletus, Anaximenes, Diogenes of Apollonia, Socrates, Pythagoras, Xenophon etc. When it is Plato's turn, Octavius states that "his discourse would be altogether heavenly, if it were not occasionally fouled by a mixture of merely civil belief. Therefore in his *Timaios* Plato's God is by His very name the parent of the world, the artificer of the soul, the fabricator of heavenly and earthly things, whom both to discover he declares is difficult, on account of His excessive and incredible power; and when you have discovered Him, impossible to speak of in public."⁴⁶

The last chapter of the work, the fortieth, brings Caecilius' conversion that recognizes the superiority of the arguments of pagan religion in relation to the paganism it exercises. As a result, he converts, confessing that "*I both confess concerning providence, and I yield to God; and I agree concerning the sincerity of the way of life which is now mine.*"⁴⁷

St Cyprianus

St. Cyprian "is eminently the first Father and teacher that the Western Church had. If Tertullian is the first great theologian of the Latin West, St. Cyprian is its first Orthodox theologian, its first bishop theologian and its first martyr

⁴⁴ Ibid., XVII, 1-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., XVII, 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid., XIX, 14.

⁴⁷ Ibid., XL, 2.

bishop".⁴⁸ His full name *Caecilius Cyprianus quiet Thascius*⁴⁹, the Holy Father was born between 200-210, his parents were pagans. He received Christian baptism in 245, having already assimilated great bringing up and already practicing as a teacher of rhetoric. Although he has never met Tertullian personally, he greatly admired him, considering him as his master for issues regarding theology. He first served as a priest in Carthage and was ordained shortly after baptism. In 248/249, St. Cyprian was appointed bishop of the region, being acknowledged "by the voice of the people and against a group of elderly priests, including one called Novatus". In the period of his service as a bishop he passed through numerous challenges, enduring alongside his flock the torture of Decius's (250) and Valerian's persecution.

The Holy Father took a stand in order to clear up the issue of those who had left the Church during these persecutions (*Lapsi*). In exchange for their readmission into the ecclesial community, St. Cyprian asks them to do penance. Another issue for which he finds solution, but which will temporarily take him out from the authority of Rome, is that of "the readmission of the heretics into the Church". The question was whether their baptism kept its significance or not. "St. Cyprian and the synods convoked on this occasion in Carthage (251 and 252) are in favour for the invalidation of heretical baptism. This view was also shared by the Eastern bishops, headed by Firmilian of Caesarea".⁵⁰ The rich professing work of the Holy Father is appalled by the crown of martyrdom, being beheaded on September 14th, 258.⁵¹ Testimonies about his life and martyrdom are to be found in works as: *Acta Proconsularia, Vita Caecilii Cyprianis*, the notations of Jerome in *De viris illustribus* (67), as well as in his works and especially, his letters.⁵²

Holy Father's ideas were mainly focused on Scripture and secondly on Tertullian's work. These two coordinates were "his support and strength in his march towards death: Yes magistrum – he said, when he asked for one of the

⁴⁸ Papadoupulos, *Patrologie*, vol. I, 405.

⁴⁹ His first name, Caecilius, is borrowed from his mentor and confessor, the pious priest Caecilius of Carthage thanks to whom he converted to Christianity. "First name Thascius seems to illustrate Punic local idiom (lexical clack) of Latin Caprianus (from caper / goat), modification of Cyprian (from the island Cyprus)". See Ciprian al Cartaginei, *Scrisori* (București: Sofia, 2011), 6.

⁵⁰ Constantin Băjău, „Constituția Bisericii în opera Sfântului Ciprian al Cartaginei,” *Analele Universității din Craiova, Seria „Teologie”* 5 (2000): 117.

⁵¹ Rus, *Dicționar enciclopedic*, 139-140.

⁵² In a very thorough study, carried out after 1700 years from the martyrdom of St. Cyprian, father Professor Ioan G. Coman gives details about the content of these works, at the same time reminding the fact that "the appreciation of some patristic writers or some contemporary Christians such as Firmilian of Caesarea Pontus, Cornelius of Rome, Caldonius, Lucius and other of his correspondents is relative and it is in no way highly conclusive" (Ioan G. Coman, „Personalitatea Sf. Ciprian,” *Studii Teologice* (1959): 256.

books of one his great ancestors needed for his daily reading, together with the Holy Scripture”.⁵³ He had also great knowledge of Latin profane literature, which he often used in *his apologies*. His written work includes treaties or tracts, homilies, polemical works and letters.⁵⁴ We will further analyse only his apologetic writings. The first work falling into this category, according to J. Tixeront’s catalogue entitled *Ad Donatum* (“To Donatus”) was probably written shortly after his conversion (246). St. Cyprian presents here, starting from his own experience, man’s moral transformation through Holy Baptism and direct cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit. *Ad Demetrianum* or “To Demetrius” (252) displays the attitude of the Holy Father to a pagan’s blasphemies. He blames the Christians for all the bad things that were happening in the world (famine, pestilence, war, drought).⁵⁵

His arguments, greatly based on word of the Holy Scripture show that “unbelief is the cause of all evils, surely bringing upon the wrath of God.” Another apologetic paper, in the list of the work of the Holy Father, is *Quod idola nonsint Dii* (“That idols are not gods”). Most likely written before 250, the paper gets its inspiration from Tertullian’s *Apologeticum*. Of a questionable paternity, the apology toughly argues against the danger of idolatry, considering Christianity as a religion of genuine value, the only vehicle for spreading the truth. The Fourth notation of the Holy Father following this direction is *Testimonia ad Quirindum* (249-260). It is an apologetic trilogy of “great importance for the history of the text of Scripture, since it bears special reference to a gathering of biblical passages on the behaviour of Jews to the Lord, Christology (the first two books) and Christians’ moral life (the third book)”. The last apologetic work according to J. Tixeront’s catalog, is *Ad Fortunatum* (“To Fortunatus”) (257). Grounded on a scriptural basis thoroughly argued, the author succeeds, with the help of this paper in strengthening the Christians who were suffering during persecutions, explaining the invaluable benefit of martyrdom and of Christ’s servicing to blood.⁵⁶

⁵³ Nicolae Chițescu, “Studiu introductiv,” in Ciprian al Cartaginei, *Despre unitatea Bisericii universale. Despre condiția muritoare a omului* (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 2013), 11.

⁵⁴ See the catalogue of his works at Pontius deacon *Vita Cypriani*, VII; PL, t 3, col. 1487-1488; Momensen, *Hermes*, 1886, t. XXI, 142; Sylianos Papadopoulos chronologically structures the work of the Holy Father, identifying as its specific “the classic and original style of the Latin orators”, the beauty of speech, the tone, which is “neat, calm, warm and rhymed”. Therefore, there are mentioned 16 titles (see *Patrologie*, vol. I, 413-416).

⁵⁵ At that time Carthage was going through a tough plague regarded as “the punishment for the deeds of Christians”, Rus, *Dicționar enciclopedic*, 140.

⁵⁶ J. Tixeront, *A Handbook of Patrology* (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1923), 121-122; Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, vol. I, 413-415.

As a theologian he made himself remarked due to his significant contribution in the development of the ecclesiological concept of “*catholicity*”. Papadopoulos outlines the main coordinates of his theology visible and applied at an apologetic and professing level. “1. Perseverance in Tradition and clear dissociation between truth and religious custom. 2. Presentation of his thought as questioning of the Holy Scripture and using exceptionally low extra-church thought that, despite this, he had studied and known very well. 3. Guiding and enlightening the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁷ Defined by these coordinates, St. Cyprian stands out as one of the greatest theologians of the Christian West. Catholic theologian Joseph Tixeront does not place him among speculative theologians, considering him to be more a man of practical experience, “a bishop like St. Ambrose or St. Leon...get himself involved in doctrinal issues as far as people’s training demanded, watching over all in order to preserve the peace of their mind, since he thought that all soul’s energies must be directed towards inner change.

Moreover, an admirer and disciple of Tertullian, being as calm and balanced as intemperate his master was. His eloquence bearing a toga, had always solemn and professing character. Furthermore, due to his calm and self-control that he always displayed, the influence he had over his countrymen and the whole Church was overwhelming. If the chair of Rome was «*the chair of Peter*», also that of Carthage was in the fourth century, «*Cyprian’s chair*». This spirit characteristic to Rome as well as to the whole West multiplied within this practical genius and his extraordinary practical talent to lead the believer”.⁵⁸

In apologetic terms, St. Cyprian’s contribution is invaluable. Ideas on moral, pastoral, anthropology and Christian ontology are complemented by competent dogmatic elaborations, which provide examples and practical solutions, worthy to be followed in a time of intense ague and social convulsion. It is noted, however, and is to be recorded his attitude towards the “*unity of the Catholic Church*.” Thus, his paper *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate* offers still up to the present day answers and clarifications on issues of ecumenical and inter-religious order.⁵⁹ Holy father’ attitude could be generally characterized as uncompromising,

⁵⁷ Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, 406. Letters: 11, 3; 16, 4; 36, 1-2, 17-19; 57 etc.

⁵⁸ J. Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, vol. I (Baden: St. Luis and Freiburg 1910), 356-357.

⁵⁹ During the Holy Father’s pastoring, the persecutions against Christians caused temporary split between Latin Churches. Rome and North Africa, where there was also Carthage’s Episcopal Chair, had reached consensus over certain doctrinal points, on the readmission “of the fallen ones.” Thus, in compliance with the old canons, “the apostates were excluded from the Church and they could be readmitted only after the repentance established by the hierarchy. But it was sought out a way to smooth the situation of those who had fallen from the faith by asking guarantees of their faith - or, according to some, based upon the Western principle of virtues’ reversibility - by the confessors, i.e. by those who, risking their lives, had confessed Christ before the pagan authorities, but had managed to remain alive only after imprisonment, torment, mutilation,

fighting against any form of schism and heresy, in which he saw the main dangers and most direct threats to the unity of ecclesial corpus. He is absolutely convinced that “*the Church, of whose representative he is, is the only true and it brings together only the righteous ones. As it regards the fallen, they have lost their souls even from this life.*”⁶⁰

One of the main ideas of St. Cyprian’s work “On the unity of the Church” is given by the thorough scriptural argumentation, the images and symbols used as examples to clarify apologetic issues. His continuous professing attitude showing that it is the main positive influence that he has upon his believers. No matter what happens, the Christian must always be vigilant and hardworking in order to protect the Church by its enemies. “For it is not persecution alone that is to be feared; nor those things which advance by open attack to overwhelm and cast down the servants of God, says the Holy father.

Caution is easier where danger is manifest, and the mind is prepared beforehand for the contest when the adversary avows himself. The enemy is more to be feared and to be guarded against, when he creeps on us secretly; when, deceiving by the appearance of peace, he steals forward by hidden approaches, whence also he has received the name of the Serpent.”⁶¹ He also asks from his believers to be steadfast *in the work of faith* by “*protecting the commandments of faith*” and the fulfilment of sacred teachings that the Lord shared by tradition. In this regard, the Holy Father points out the necessity of persevering in truth, the only sure guarantee of acquiring eternal life. “We ought therefore to stand fast on His words, to learn and do whatever He both taught and did.

etc. The confessors offering to the fallen ones «a note of reconciliation» (*libellus pacis*), by which they were readmitted into the church. The abuses of this way of returning to Church committed by the apostates became scandalous for the true Christians: some confessors, pushed by mercy, interest or contempt towards the rules of the Church, did not make any difference between the apostates and did not give any importance to the hierarchs. St. Cyprian reminds of canonical tradition and the limit to which the mercy for the apostates can be extended, confessors and hierarchs’ right in this complex process. Hereafter, there followed a serious conflict between him and the community of believers on the one hand and some apostates and some confessors on the other. For neither all apostates always accepted a long and harsh public repentance as a condition of their readmission within the churches, nor the confessors and sometimes even the priests accepted the blame of having received too easily again those who had rejected Christ when facing of death.” In this context, given the inclination to split, created by some priests, the Holy Father’s approach permanently focused upon the unity of the Church. This present paper, written on this very occasion, offers a generous apology on the attribute of catholicity. Its entire content is illustrated by images and biblical symbols, wisely organized by the great hierarch in the context of times’ challenges (Chițescu, *Apologeți de limbă latină*, 428-429).

⁶⁰ Băjău, “Constituția Bisericii în opera Sfântului Ciprian al Cartaginei,” 118.

⁶¹ Chițescu, *Apologeți de limbă latină*, 434.

But how can a man say that he believes in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do? Or whence shall he attain to the reward of faith, who will not keep the faith of the commandment? He must of necessity waver and wander; and, caught away by a spirit of error; like dust which is shaken by the wind, be blown about; *and he will make no advance in his walk towards salvation, because he does not keep the truth of the way of salvation.*"⁶²

Chapter IV of the paper details the coordinates which define the "unity of the Church." "Faith stone" about which Christ the Saviour speaks in His conversation with the apostle Peter⁶³, is the cornerstone of this synergistic work. Lord has thus ordained "the origin of that unity, as beginning from one. Assuredly the rest of the apostles were also the same as was Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honour and power; but the beginning proceeds from unity. Which one Church, also, the Holy Spirit in the Song of Songs designated in the person of our Lord."⁶⁴ St. Cyprian's text was used by Roman Catholics since the Middle Ages, as ground for papal primacy. The next chapter greatly throws daylight upon this issue, the Holy Father characterizing the Bishopric (College of Bishops) as "one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole... As there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root".⁶⁵ *Faithfulness* is an attribute, which again the Carthaginian bishop refers to for the benefit of the Church's unity. This line of service can be only one, in the words of Jesus Christ: "*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.*" "This sacrament of unity, this bond of a concord inseparably cohering" is alike "*the coat of the Lord, Jesus Christ*" since "it is not at all divided nor cut, but is received as an entire garment, and is possessed as an uninjured and undivided robe by those who cast lots concerning Christ's garment, who should rather put on Christ."⁶⁶

Leaving this unit, or better said deserting it, is the cause that leads to heresy. Lord allows these things, allowing the primary gift of freedom and at the same time wanting to witness "the sound faith of those that are approved may shine forth with manifest light".⁶⁷ Conception of falsehood preaching, those deceived by heretics self-excluded from the church community. "Although there can be no other baptism but one, they think that they can baptize; although they

⁶² Ibid., 435.

⁶³ Cf. Mt. 16: 18-19: "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. "

⁶⁴ Chițescu, *Apologeti de limbă latină*, 437.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 438.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 439.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 441.

forsake the fountain of life, they promise the grace of living and saving water. Men are not washed among them, but rather are made foul; nor are sins purged away, but are even accumulated. Such a nativity does not generate sons to God, but to the devil. By a falsehood they are born, and they do not receive the promises of truth. Begotten of perfidy, they lose the grace of faith. *They cannot attain to the reward of peace, since they have broken the Lord's peace with the madness of discord.*⁶⁸

St. Cyprian furthermore illustrates how inexpiable this sin is, since "is not even purged by suffering. *He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church*; he cannot attain unto the kingdom who forsakes that which shall reign there."⁶⁹ In order to illustrate how serious the consequences for those who leave the Church are, the Holy Father used three examples from the Old Testament *Korah, Dathan and Abiram* are the ones "who endeavoured to claim to themselves the power of sacrificing in opposition to Moses and Aaron the priest, underwent immediate punishment for their attempts. The earth, breaking its fastenings, gaped open into a deep gulf, and the cleft of the receding ground swallowed up the men standing and living."⁷⁰ In the last part of his work (chap. XXI-XXII), the Holy Father criticizes "spiritual weaknesses and *confessors'* breaking rules."⁷¹

St. Cyprian of Carthage is also the author of the famous phrase: "extra Ecclesiam nulla salus" ("there is no salvation outside the Church").⁷² In their deep dogmatic content, Carthaginian bishop's words still generate up to today ideological disputes about "the identification of gifted boundaries of the Church with its canonical ones". Thus, there are two clear directions regarding the practical manifestation of ecclesial life.

Given this situation, since "Eastern Church remained faithful to the thought of St. Cyprian (focusing on the importance of unity at the expense of schism), Western churches have followed the teaching of St. Augustine (who made the difference between the canonical boundaries of the Church and the gifted ones, that those who no longer found themselves within the canonical boundaries of the Church could still find themselves in terms of the gifted ones within the

⁶⁸ Ibid., 442.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 444.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 447.

⁷¹ These were "the Christians who did not give up to faith, but confessed the Lord with the price of their lives, but managed to remain alive, sometimes with injuries or with some body parts missing after persecution" (ibid., 448).

⁷² This phrase is placed by the Holy Father in the context of absolute faithfulness through which the believer is connected to the ecclesiastic body. He calls the Church "The spouse of Christ, uncorrupted and pure" who "cannot be adulterous. She knows one home; she guards with chaste modesty the sanctity of one couch. She keeps us for God. She appoints the sons whom she has born for the kingdom. Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother" (ibid., 438-439).

Church in different ways).⁷³ Over time, the St. Cyprian's formulation was intensely debated during theological circles, eventually becoming the subject of debate within the Ecumenical Movement Churches.

Extremely quoted in the Western medium theological circles, the approach of the Metropolitan Kallistos Ware uses the principle of the divine hypostasis from a soteriological point of view. "*Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus.*" The whole meaning and absolute and direct interpretation of this aphorism lies in its tautology. Outside the Church there is no salvation, because salvation is in the Church. Could we say that someone who does not participate in the Church's life is truly doomed? Of course not. Much less if someone is in the Church he/she is certainly to be saved. As Augustine wisely noticed: «How many sheep that are in today, will be out, and how many wolves that are out now, will then be in!».⁷⁴ Since there is no separation between the «seen» and «unseen» church, in the same way there may be members of the Church who are not so visible, whose work is known only by God. If someone is to be saved, he/she must be a member of the Church but we could not say to what extent.⁷⁵

But, for us Priest Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae's point of view is cherished as law, considering it more proper to bring light upon this issue. His Holiness starts from the idea that "the existence of Churches does not mean that God has exclusively limited work to them. The Son of God, he says, incarnated by assuming human nature which was not yet Church. The New Testament narrates cases when God work son humans directly, without the mediate preaching of the Apostles, i.e. the church (centurion in the Gospel, Saul, Cornelius etc.). St. Paul and general experience confirms the fact that that God exercises His judgment also upon those who do not belong to the Church when they do not fulfil His will written in their hearts (Romans 1, 18-22, 2, 14)".⁷⁶ There is absolutely out of question the possibility to expel those who do not live their life according to the canonical and sacramental rules generated by the Mystical Body of the Lord, represented by the Church.

St. Cyprian defends this identity and professes its necessity. He speaks in the context of pastoral needs he faces. Those who had left the Church and wished to return had to realize the value of sacramental things. For those who were now "*extra Ecclesiam*", he leaves room to come and be together in a real and practical way with the Saviour Christ. He also takes into account the dynamic of this

⁷³ Adrian Boldișor, *Importanța și actualitatea dialogului interreligios pentru lumea contemporană: istorie, perspective, soluții* (Craiova: Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei, 2015), 168.

⁷⁴ „How many sheep there are without, how many wolves within!” / „Quam multae oves foris, quam multi lupi intus!” (Augustin, *Omilii la Ioan*, 45, 12).

⁷⁵ Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Penguin Books: New York, 1993), 120.

⁷⁶ Dumitru Stăniloae, „Coordonatele ecumenismului din punct de vedere orthodox,” *Ortodoxia* (1967): 527-528.

gracious work, but he increasingly emphasizes the soteriological purpose. Therefore, this is the reason why this issue theologically based still represents a hot debate today, when people talk more and more about “*the importance and necessity of interreligious dialogue for our contemporary world*”.⁷⁷

Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius

Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius (c. 240–c. 320) is also one of the greatest representatives of Latin patristic apologetics. A native of Roman Africa, he was born in the middle of the third century; his parents were pagan. He studied rhetoric in great detail, being the disciple of Arnobius the Elder of Sicca. He never succeeded in pleading in a forum as a lawyer or legal professional, having no oratorical talent. He became famous, however, as a teacher, teaching rhetoric first in Cartagena and then in Nicomedia in Bithynia, which was then the capital of the Eastern Empire, where he was personally requested by Diocletian. Conversion to Christianity happened in Bithynia, being impressed by the moil Christians had to endure. He personal describes this moment, which he considers to be crucial for his life and work. “*When I was teaching rhetorical learning in Bithynia, having been called there, and it had happened that at the same time the temple of God was overthrown, there were living at the same place two men who insulted the truth as it lay prostrate and overthrown.*”⁷⁸

He describes here the beginning of persecution against Christians, pointing to the two pagans, a philosopher and a legal professional who had read anti-Christian imperial decree in the public square. “Thus pushed by their arrogant impiety but also by the power of truth itself – if not by God himself, apparently – I have got over me this mission, as by all the powers of my talent to reject the allegations against righteousness”.⁷⁹ Because of his beliefs, he was casted away from teaching. This state of being, “imposed or not, was the cause of some severe material deprivation since as a writer he did not earn much. His first writings of this period, after 303 were works of Christian Apologetics: «*On*

⁷⁷ The continuous value of the interreligious dialogue was for theology “*the integrant part*” through which Christians were able to argue, “in the discussions with those of other faiths and ideologies, the attribute of man in as a possessor of “face” who tends to “likeness” of God, being created and living on earth as singular and free person. “The true dialogue occurs at the level of ultimate personal partners’ depth and as such it becomes a human phenomenon. He belongs to the person who opens to be understood and witnesses to make others understand. Challenged by some, ignored by others, often misunderstood and many times forgotten, dialogue is the centre of our Christian life with a past that is as old as our faith.” See Boldișor, *Importanța și actualitatea dialogului interreligios*, 7-8.

⁷⁸ *Divinae Institutionae* (DI), 5, 2, 2, 213.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 5, 4, 1, 217.

the creating work of God» (303 or 304, where his decision to become a Christian is not yet explained) and especially «*Divine institutes*» (304-313). Most likely, the crypto-Christian poem «*About phoenix*» was also written in this period (303-304).⁸⁰

Later, probably around 310, Lactantius continued his activity as a teacher, being employed by St. Constantine the Great as a tutor for his son Crispus in Trier in Gaul.⁸¹ During his stay in the court of the emperor he exercised an intense juridical influence. How profound this came to be it is not known, mere speculation being made in this regard. The day of his death remains uncertain. His fame was certainly in the context of his time, until the Renaissance. Jerome called him “the most eloquent man of his time, comparing him to wise Cicero; his treatises were summaries of Cicero’s thought ... Jerome also expressed his admiration to the way in which Lactantius used his eloquence, which was greatly illustrated by his work *Divine institutes*. In a letter addressed to Paulinus of Nola, it is still Jerome who says that Lactantius easily annihilated his opponents’ opinions (*facile aliena destruxit*) and unbendingly wrote against the pagans (*contra gentes scripsit fortissimo*)”.⁸²

From *the work* of the great Latin apologist were preserved only the works with Christian value. All his writings primarily distinguish by the beauty of their linguistic style. The first apologetic writing was *De officio Dei* (“*Of the work of God*”, 303-304), meant for his trainee, Demetrianus. In all its 20 chapters, Lactantius takes a stand against some views of pagan philosophy, which disregarded “the human body and soul and drew conclusions based on their flaws against the theist-anthropocentric vision”.⁸³ As a counterbalance, he presents “the genesis of the human being, offering details about the soul and body, since the moment of its creation by God.”⁸⁴

His work *On Divine Institutes*, composed of seven books, was completed in, in order to reject pagan philosophy attacks on Christianity. The topics developed here deals with the values of the Christian religion, righteousness, true worship and true faith, ending with the view on the eschatological Church’s doctrine. He makes quite little reference to the Holy Scripture, he brings up arguments from pagan prophecy and Hermetic literature. Biblical quotations that help him in his

⁸⁰ Dragoș Mârșanu, “Studiu introductiv,” in Lactanțiu, *Despre moartea persecutorilor* (București: Polirom, 2011), 21.

⁸¹ This is the time when he starts works such as „*Despre Instituțiile Divine*” and „*Despre moartea persecutorilor*” (cca. 313-315), followed by „*Despre mânia*” (cca. 316) and by „*Epitomul Instituțiilor Divine*” (320). He intended to write works against the Jewish, but in the end he didn’t do it.

⁸² Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey, “Introduction at Lactantius,” in *Divine Institutes* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 4.

⁸³ Voicu, *Patrologie*, vol. I, 280.

⁸⁴ Rus, *Dictionar enciclopedic*, 485.

argumentation are those used by Saint Cyprian in his work *De Testimonia*. As regarding the specificity of his work, it should be noted that in the first three books, he uses an emphatically polemical tone, concluding that “all polytheistic religions and pagan philosophies have the role to alienate man from God instead of getting him closer”. In the next four books, the author directly focuses on “the grounds of Christian faith.”⁸⁵

In his writing *De ira Dei* (“*Of God’s wrath*”, approx. 314), Lactantius criticizes the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers’ critical actions to explain “divine wrath”. He thought that such thinking would vitiate Heaven and as such the existence of God, since due to his care for man Almighty “allows to be touched to the limit of anger against those who do evil. Who loves the righteous hates the wicked. Nobody loves life without hating death. God’s wrath can be tamed, although it remains eternal against those who eternally commit sins.”⁸⁶

Lactantius’ post-persecutory apologetics is completed by his work *De mortibus persecutorum* (“*Of the death of the persecutors*” – DMP), written about 316. He started writing it in the East, Bithynia, and finished it in the West, Gaul. In this work, the Latin apologist describes actual situations and happenings of his time, intensely using the works of Suetonius, Decius, Valerian and Aurelia. “The selection of the persecutors, who came after Diocletian’s persecution, is sometimes difficult to understand since, it is obvious that their relationship with the Christians was not the only criterion taken into consideration. Lactantius’ senator-like attitude could generate a choice based on the relationship that the emperors had with the Senate; also, the local character of some of the persecutions could not meet, we can assume all the features characterizing DMP. Moreover, the real way the emperors died (violent or not) could make Lactantius choose between an emperor or, on the contrary, another”.⁸⁷ DMP is in fact a justification of the equity towards Christian truth in order to show its profundity compared to the vanities of the world. Lactantius’ professing thus, becomes a summary of what his predecessors had created, this time grounded upon the courage of deserved freedom.

In order to highlight *the specificity of his apologetics*, we will focus on the work *On Divine Institutes*, to which we previously referred to. This is the work where Lactantius offers a true synthesis of his theological thought, using the most important elements of his confession. His polemical attitude that pervades his work most often is complemented by honest arguments to the subjects he develops. The third book of his work thus provides relevant “criticism” on the

⁸⁵ Claudiu T. Arieșan, *Studiu introductiv*, in Lactantius, *Instituțiile divine* (Timișoara: Editura Învierea, 2004), 9.

⁸⁶ Rus, *Dicționar enciclopedic*, 484-485.

⁸⁷ Mârșanu, *Studiu introductiv*, 29-30.

pagan philosophy transforming him into “the first Christian Latin writer that tries a direct, detailed and justified fight with it.”⁸⁸ He starts his approach by invoking the concept of truth, about which he says that it should be “more clear and without any embellishments, more powerful because it has sufficient ornament of itself.”⁸⁹ Since all realities bringing salvation pass by divine revelation “philosophical meditations are wandering”. These false realities need clarification “by arguments, that no one, induced by the honourable name of wisdom, or deceived by the splendour of empty eloquence, may prefer to give credence to human rather than to divine things.”⁹⁰ Beyond the pride of philosophers and scientists, Lactantius places humility and honest self-assessment, strengthened by faith in God. Therefore, he thinks that “wisdom consists in thinking neither that you know all things, which is the property of God; nor that you are ignorant of all things, which is the part of a beast.”⁹¹ In the same line with philosophy’s deceiving, the Latin apologist also places those who have become its sharers. Unrelated to the spiritual ones, the thoughts of most of them do not seek either virtue or truth. “For knowledge is insufficient for the undertaking of that which is good and avoiding that which is evil, unless virtue also is added. For many of the philosophers, though they discussed the nature of good and evil things, yet from the compulsion of nature lived in a manner different from their discourse, because they were without virtue. *But virtue united with knowledge is wisdom.*”⁹²

After carrying out harsh criticism of pagan philosophers, Lactantius highlights “the relation between wisdom and religion.” “*Chief good is in religion only*” as a unique and human characteristic chance to understand the divine.”⁹³ Where, then, is wisdom joined with religion? Lactantius asks himself. There, indeed, where the one God is worshipped, where life and every action is referred to one source, and to one supreme authority: in short, the teachers of wisdom are the same, who are also the priests of God.”⁹⁴ Following the same direction of thinking he concludes that “Christian wisdom is the only wisdom”. Since it managed to make people better, more virtuous, *sophia christiana* greatly exceeds *sophia prophana*. It hallows everybody and it is universally valid, thus becoming “*a force that perfects and saves the world.*”⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Coman, *Probleme de filosofie și literatură patristică*, 103.

⁸⁹ DI, Book III, 1, 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Book III, 1, 11.

⁹¹ Ibid., Book III, 6, 14.

⁹² Lactantius provides here the full list of philosophers who despised the value of virtue in their thoughts. He thus argues against the major theorists of moral philosophy Aristippus, Peripatetics and Stoics. They were all the promoters of a formal attitude on those whom they have influence upon. See Coman, *Probleme de filosofie și literatură patristică*, 108; DI, Cartea III, 8, 1-31.

⁹³ DI, Cartea III, 10, 1.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Cartea IV, 3, 6-7.

⁹⁵ Coman, *Probleme de filosofie și literatură patristică*, 123.

Beyond the criticism made to pagan philosophy, Lactantius and does not forget to illustrate its positive elements. The great disadvantage of ancient *Sophia* is its truth spread by many currents, movements and conceptual approaches share. The whole character of truth can be found within the wholeness of philosophers. *Plato*, for example, "said that the world was made by God: the prophets speak the same; and the same is apparent from the *verses of the Sibyl*. They therefore are in error, who have said either that all things were produced of their own accord or from an assemblage of atoms; since so great a world, so adorned and of such magnitude, could neither have been made nor arranged and set in order without some most skilful author; and that very arrangement by which all things are perceived to be kept together and to be governed bespeaks an artificer with a most skilful mind... *The Stoics* say that the world, and all things which are in it, were made for the sake of men: the sacred writings teach us the same thing. Therefore, *Democritus* was in error, who thought that they were poured forth from the earth like worms, without any author or plan. For the reason of man's creation belongs to a divine mystery; and because he was unable to know this, he drew down man's life to nothing. *Aristo* asserted that men were born to the exercise of virtue; we are also reminded of and learn the same from the prophets... *Zeno* the Stoic taught that there were infernal regions, and that the abodes of the good were separated from the wicked; and that the former enjoyed peaceful and delightful regions, but that the latter suffered punishment in dark places, and in dreadful abysses of mire: the prophets show the same thing... As a conclusion, *the philosophers touched upon the whole truth, and every secret of our holy religion; but when others denied it, they were unable to defend that which they had found, because the system did not agree with the particulars; nor were they able to reduce to a summary those things which they had perceived to be true*".⁹⁶

Instead of Conclusions: the actuality of Latin apologists

In the knowledge of the Latin apologists the principal point of reflection is the Incarnated Logos. He is therefore the Mystic Ocean in which man receive his ontological blessing. The problem of interaction is also such actual in there works. In this concern, the actuality of their thinking is reflected today in our attitude against the secularization, globalization or atheism. With the help of their works he discovers today the sense of a spiritual approach with the rationality of creation. Only in this way we will be able to overcome the traps of an abstract theology that changes our conception about God and has no support for the spiritual effort of an ascetical experience in ourselves and in the creation. The

⁹⁶ DI, Cartea VII, 7, 8-14.

Authentic Apologetic isn't satisfied to talk about God, but offers with anticipation the guaranty of a direct experience of God in our life, in the porous of spiritual and moral perfection in our entire nature.

Beyond the sensitive realities, contained in body and in the rational perception, the Holy Fathers placed the apophatically dimension of knowledge. In their kind of thinking, this real and new dimension of human life is activated through the act of confession. That is way the Latin apologetic can be useful part for the modern theology. Today we need to discover the values of: faith, truth, life, mercy and also the love of God and the real love for people. These are the examples that Latin apologist had promoted in their life and works. Therefore, in the virtue of his spiritual and confessional dimension, the Orthodox Apologetic has an apophatically purpose in the actual reality. It constitutes the living reception of truth, felled profoundly and directly in human's works, renewing not only the mind through different meanings, but also his life. In this way, the faith, like a view beyond the mind and understanding fulfil the spiritual man in his life and movement through the created world.

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IV. THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

PIETISTIC WAY OF LIFE AND SOPHIOLOGY: SPINOZA'S RECEPTION BY THE RADICAL PIETIST GOTTFRIED ARNOLD (1666-1714)

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ABSTRACT. After the fierce polemic (1720-1740) between Joachim Lange and his Pietist companions from Halle, on one hand, and Christian Wolff as representative of the Enlightenment, on the other hand, the two sides have reached a common denominator: the refutation of the philosophy of Benedict Spinoza as “acosmism”/Pantheism with fatalist consequences. Spinoza and the Spinozism became the common enemy of both, Pietism and Enlightenment. Against such an interpretation, the German radical Pietist Gottfried Arnold proposes in the second volume of his work *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie* (1700/1741) another, very original Spinoza's reading. The Dutch philosopher thinks and actually lives as an authentic Pietist. He affirms and practices the unity between thinking and life and proposes a kind of metaphysics of the unity between God and nature, which should not be understood as pantheism, but as sophiology: all the things are included in God because their concepts are thought by the “Eternal Wisdom of God”.

Keywords: Spinoza, Pietism, Sophiology, acosmism, Pantheism, fatalism, philosophy as way of life

1. Spinozism as Pantheist Metaphysics. Spinoza's Refutation by the Halle Pietism and Christian Wolff (1737/1744)

The German version of Spinoza's *Ethics* was printed in 1744. It was the second translation of this treatise into a modern language after the Dutch edition of 1677, that was published the same year with his entire Latin *Opera posthuma*,

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previously published in Amsterdam by Jarrig Jelles and Johann Rieuwertsz. On the title page of the German edition, it was written: *B. v. S. Sittenlehre widerlegt von dem berühmten Weltweisen unserer Zeit Herrn Christian Wolff. Aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt. Frankfurt und Leipzig 1744*. The identity of the author was hidden behind three initials (“B. v. S.”). That had to do with the fact that shortly before the end of his treatise the Dutch philosopher himself expressed the wish, that his name not be mentioned on the title page, as shown in the *Opera posthuma* reprinted preface of Jarrig Jelles¹. On the contrary, the German publisher stressed the name of “the famous philosopher of our time, Mr. Christian Wolff”, the author of the 128-page of a Spinoza’s refutation placed at the end of the book with the title *Herrn Christian Wolfs Widerlegung der Sittenlehre B. v. S. aus dem andern Theile seiner natürlichen Gottesgelahrtheit genommen*.

Trying to explain this oddness, the German translator of Spinoza’s work, Johann Lorenz Schmidt, a disciple Christian Wolff’s², affirms in a short but very polemical preface that the intention of his translation as well as of the adding of a *Widerlegung* to this treatise was to defend the being and the freedom God’s (“das Daseyn Gottes und die Freyheit desselben”)³ against the Dutch philosopher, who is described as “dangerous enemy” (“gefährlicher Feind”), “the most terrible of all enemies of this genus” (“der erschrecklichsten unter allen [Feinden] von dieser Gattung”)⁴, “fearful enemy” (“fürchterlicher Feind”), “defeated enemy” (“überwundener Feind”), “spook” (“Gespenst”)⁵, “god denier” (“Gottesleugner”)⁶, etc.

¹ [Jarrig Jelles], “Vorrede vor des Verfassers nachgelassenen Werken. Geneigter Leser”, in *B. v. S. Sittenlehre widerlegt von dem berühmten Weltweisen unserer Zeit Herrn Christian Wolff*, aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt, (Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1744), 7-56, here: p. 14.

² The name of Johann Lorenz Schmidt was already linked to Wolff’s rationalism because of the controversial edition of the «Wertheim Bible» (1735). See J. Thomas Cook, *Spinoza’s Ethics. A Reader’s Guide* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007), 156: “In the midst of the controversy surrounding Wolff’s exile, a translation of the first five books of the Bible was published (1735) – a work that came to be known as the «Wertheim Bible». The translator was a young man named Johann Lorenz Schmidt, and his translation was carefully crafted to remove all mention of the supernatural or miraculous from the text, as well as all mention of the ostensible Old Testament foretelling of the coming of Jesus. Wolff had been supportive of Schmidt, personally and professionally, and so suspicion was rife that the Werheim Bible was a natural result of the Wolfian philosophy”.

³[Johann Lorenz Schmidt], “Vorrede zu dieser Übersetzung”, in *B. v. S. Sittenlehre...*, 3-6, here: p. 5.

⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁵ Ibid, 5.

⁶ Ibid, 6.

Schmidt seems to actually be concerned rather to defend his mentor Christian Wolff against the allegation of his «cruel opponents» (“grausame Widersacher”) that he would be a follower of Spinoza⁷.

Johann Lorenz Schmidt does not name these «cruel opponents», but they were well known at the middle of the eighteenth century. In the year 20s of the eighteenth century a fierce polemic between Pietistic members of the Halle Theological Faculty, led by Joachim Lange, and Christian Wolff broke at the University of Halle. The controversy arose from the publication by the German philosopher of two works, *Ratio praelectionum Wolffianarum in Mathesin et Philosophiam universam* (1718) and *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt, den liebhabern der Wahrheit mitgeteilt* (1720) and was focused on the alleged Spinozistic nature of the Wolffian philosophy⁸. Lange and his Pietistic companions suspected Wolff to be a rationalist and determinist. “Rationalism and determinism were thought to imply that all things were necessary, i.e., fatalism, which was commonly equated with Spinozism”⁹. This way, Joachim Lange, the main Wolff’s opponent in Halle, claimed the mechanical vision of his metaphysics. “He set one of Wolff’s big errors in his mechanization of the world and the reduction of humans to automata. (...) Lange said Wolff had committed the particular error of Spinoza, by believing «in absolutely mechanical fate»”¹⁰. Like Spinoza, he conceives the world as clockwork, «a spiritual automaton». That means mechanical necessity and, from an ethical point of view, fatalism¹¹.

⁷ Ibid, 4-5: “Die Ehre einer ordentlichen und gründlichen Widerlegung war unserm großen deutschen Weltweisen, dem Herrn geheimen Rathe Wolf, vorbehalten. Seine grausamen Widersacher gaben ihm die Veranlassung dazu. Sie wußten in ihrem Grimme nichts Heftigeres gegen ihn zu erdenken, als daß sie ihn zu Spinozas Partey zähleten, und vorgaben, er wollte mit demselben das verworfene blinde Schicksal nebst der Nothwendigkeit aller Dinge wieder hervorziehen. Aller Stutzschriften ungeachtet, verharreten sie so hartnäckig bey dieser Beschuldigung, daß sie sich dieselbe nicht wollten ausreden lassen. Allein, wie sehr wurden sie beschähmet, als sie endlich aus dessen größeren Werken ersahen, daß er seinen Feind ohne Verstellung angriff, und denselben mit unumstößlichen Gründen von dem angemaßten Throne der Wahrheit herabstützte. Wie herrlich war nicht dieser Sieg der Wahrheit!”

⁸ J. Thomas Cook, *Spinoza’s Ethics. A Reader’s Guide*, 156. In this way the Pietistic “accusations against Wolff called attention to the positions of Spinoza and led to a more serious study of the texts” of the Dutch philosopher.

⁹ J.C. Morisson, “Christian Wolff’s Criticisms of Spinoza,” *Journal of History of Philosophy*, 31 (1993): 405-420; reprinted in *Spinoza. Critical Assessments*, ed. Genevieve Lloyd, vol. IV: *The Reception and Influence of Spinoza’s Philosophy* (London-New York: Routledge, 2001), 122-137, here: p. 122.

¹⁰ William Clark, “The Death of Metaphysics in Enlightened Prussia”, in *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, by William Clark, Jan Golinski and Simon Schaffer (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 423-426; here: p. 427.

¹¹ Ibid., 428.

Facing such accusations, Christian Wolff tried to defend himself and began to publish criticisms of Spinoza's philosophy, culminating in a systematic refutation of Spinoza's *Ethics*. "His basic strategy was to confirm the widely held view that Spinoza was a universal fatalist and to prove that he himself was not by showing that his own philosophical principles provided the basis for a decisive refutation of Spinoza's principles. More precisely, his strategy was to prove that the Principle of Sufficient Reason does not have the harmful consequences alleged by the Pietist critics by showing that it could be used to refute the very doctrines, especially fatalism, from which these consequences followed"¹².

In the first phase of the controversy Wolff's attempts failed. The Pietistic «cruel opponents» in Halle urged the king Frederick William I to dismiss and banish Christian Wolff, who they denounced as an atheist¹³. In the year 1723¹⁴ the German philosopher had to pass into Saxony, where he had received a call from the University of Marburg.

But Wolff does not give up. During his stay in Marburg he further tried to distance himself from Spinoza and to show how different are his philosophy and the Pantheistic metaphysics of the Dutch thinker. Therefore, Wolff developed a critique of Spinoza that originally formed the section half of his *Theologia Naturalis* (1737). This is actually the text that will be translated in German and reprinted alongside the first German edition of Spinoza's *Ethics* in 1744, four years after Wolff's return in Halle. It played an important role in the decision from 1740 to call back the rationalist philosopher at the University of Halle and in his reconciliation with the Pietist Joachim Lange the day after returning as professor in Halle¹⁵.

Actually Wolff does not refute the philosophy of Spinoza as such, but the "Spinozism" (*Spinozisterei*), i.e. his influence and the movement that the author of the *Ethics* causes or, as Adorno would say, "the jargon of the acosmism (or Pantheism)". Wolff defines Spinozism as "an opinion according to which is supposed one unique existing thing, which possesses infinite attributes, of which

¹² Morisson: "Christian Wolff's Criticisms of Spinoza", 122-123.

¹³ Benjamin Marschke, "From Heretics to Hypocrites. Anti-Pietist Rhetoric in the Eighteenth Century", in *Kinship, Community, and Self: Essays in Honor of David Warren Sabean*, by Jason Coy et al., Spektrum: Publications of German Studies Association, vol. 9 (Berghahn Books, 2015), 122-31; p. 122: "Pietism was initially targeted by the establishment; later, it was targeted as the establishment"; p. 126: "In this way, the terms of the controversy regarding Pietism had inverted – the Pietists had gone from the persecuted to being the persecutors".

¹⁴ The outbreak of the polemic between Wolff and Lange was occasioned by Wolff's *Oratio de Sinarum philosophia practica* (1721). In this text, Wolff argued that the Chinese people are the role model for the virtuous atheists and a successful state although "they do not know the creator of the world". See Christian Wolff, *Oratio de Sinarum philosophia practica* [1721]: lat.-dt. Aufl.: *Rede über die praktische Philosophie der Chinesen*, übers., eingel. und hg. von M. Albrecht, Philosophische Bibliothek, Bd. 374 (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1985), 27.

¹⁵ Clark, "The Death of Metaphysics in Enlightened Prussia", 426, 436-37; 458-60.

two are infinite thought and infinite extension and which express each an eternal and infinite essence: finite things emerge out the necessary diversification of the modes in the attributes of this existing thing"¹⁶.

So described, the *Spinozisterey* presents itself as a reduction of the Spinoza's philosophy to a few aspects of his metaphysics, of which the most important is the acosmism¹⁷. "Since *acosmism* becomes the primary *topos* for Spinozism, it becomes clear how the metaphysical component of the Ethics remained primary in understanding it"¹⁸.

Wolff does not criticize this reduction. On the contrary, he takes it as such and operates in its framework. In uncritical agreement with the criticized Spinozism he focuses his lecture of Spinoza on the posthumously published *Ethics* (1677) and particularly on its *metaphysical* part. Both the *Spinozisterey*, and the Spinoza's *Widerlegung* (1737/1744) by Christian Wolff contributed significantly to the understanding of the Dutch philosopher as a metaphysician¹⁹. The immediate consequence of this attempt was that "the ethical concerns of Spinozism fall out as secondary constructions without a solid foundation"²⁰. Not so much the Wolff's critique on the *Spinozisterey*²¹ but the establishment of this reduction of Spinozism to the metaphysical dimension of Spinoza's thinking and the ranking of the ethical reflection of the Dutch philosopher *after* his metaphysics and in dependence on this found a strong echo in the later European philosophical consciousness.

¹⁶Herrn Christian Wolfs *Widerlegung der Sittenlehre B. v. S. aus dem andern Theile seiner natürlichen Gottesgelahrtheit genommen* [1744], § 671, pp. 3-4: "Die Spinozisterey ist eine meinung, nach welcher nicht mehr, als ein einziges bestehendes Ding, welches unendliche Eigenschaften besitzt, angenommen wird, wovon ihrer zwo das unendliche Denken und die unendliche Ausdehnung sind, und deren jede ein ewiges und unendliches Wesen ausdrucket: die endlichen Dinge aber entstehen nach derselben aus der nothwendigen Abwechselung der Weisen in den Eigenschaften dieses bestehenden Dinges; zum Beyspiele die Seelen, aus Abwechselung der Weisen in dem unendlichen Denken, und die Körper, aus Abwechselung der Weisen in der unendlichen Ausdehnung."

¹⁷ Regarding the history of this term, see Cook, *Spinoza's Ethics*, 154-55: "A few freethinkers in Great Britain, usually identified as deists, seem to have been influenced by the doctrines of the *Ethics*. One of these, John Toland, coined the term «Pantheism» (in 1705) to refer to a doctrine, like that espoused in the *Ethics*, that identifies God with all nature. The term became a shorthand way of referring to Spinoza's metaphysical views, though like «Spinozism» it was a term of dismissal and in common mind, hardly distinguishable from atheism".

¹⁸ Ashley Underwood Vaught, *The Specter of Spinoza in Schelling's «Freiheitsschrift»*. A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the department of Philosophy, Villanova University, UMI 2008, 67.

¹⁹ Ibid, 68: "Perhaps this is why Spinoza was so universally understood as a metaphysician". See also: Günter Gawlick, "Einige Bemerkungen über Christian Wolffs Verhältnis zu Spinoza", in *Spinoza im Deutschland des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts. Zur Erinnerung an Hans-Christian Lucas*, by Eva Schürmann, Norbert Waszek and Frank Weinreich (Stuttgart - Bad Cannstatt, 2002), 110.

²⁰ Underwood Vaught, *The Specter of Spinoza...*, 67.

²¹ Ibid, 72: "Despite the fact it was published with the first translation and that intellectual figures such as Lessing, Mendelssohn and Goethe would read this edition of Spinoza's work, there is little evidence that Wolff's critique had a resounding effect."

This was also the meeting point between Pietism and Enlightenment, the two different and often antagonistic main spiritual movements of the eighteenth century. The Pietistic opponents of Christian Wolff and Johann Lorenz Schmidt felt vindicated because of the annex with the Wolff's *Widerlegung*, which the German edition of the Spinoza's *Ethics* contained, although critics suspected that the introduction of the refutation was "just a smokescreen in order to get the *Ethics* published"²².

Anyway, after a long and fierce polemic with the Halle Pietists the representatives of the Enlightenment learned to develop a new kind of discourse, that avoids the confrontation with these «cruel opponents» and looks for a common denominator even in the refutation of Spinoza's pantheistic metaphysics. Pietism and Enlightenment meet each other in the common suspicion against the *Spinozistery* and in a common understanding of the Spinoza's philosophy.

2. Philosophy as a Way of Life. Gottfried Arnold and Spinoza's Pietistic Agreement Between Life and Philosophy

A few years before the publishing of the *Sittenlehre* (1744) was printed the third edition of a famous Pietistic theological work, the *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments biß auf das Jahr Christi 1688* by the radical Pietist Gottfried Arnold. The first edition of this work was published in Frankfurt am Main in the years 1698-1700. This edition was significantly supplemented in 1703 with "Supplementa, Illustrationes und Emendationes zur Verbesserung der Kirchen=historie", that will be included in the second edition (Frankfurt, 1729) as an annex alongside the main text of the treatise. A much better edition, the third, appeared in 1740 [vol. II, 1741; vol. III, 1742] in Schaffhausen²³. It is due to Johann Friedrich Cotta (1701-1779), Professor at the University of Tübingen, who became later the head of the «Confessionals», which was opposite to the Pietists and therefore to Arnold himself. Especially the second (and the third) volume of this edition bears the mark of Johann Friedrich Cotta²⁴.

²² Cook, *Spinoza's Ethics*, 156.

²³ Franz Dibelius, *Gottfried Arnold. Sein Leben und seine Bedeutung für die Kirche und Theologie. Eine kirchenhistorische Monographie* (Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Hertz, 1873), 240-41.

²⁴ Dibelius cites the results of the investigations of Christian Sepp, *Geschiedkundige Nasporingen* (Leyden: De Breuk & Smits, 1872-75), *apud* Dibelius, *Gottfried Arnold*, 241: "Der Herausgeber des ersten Bandes ist nach dem Zeugnis Edelmann's einer seiner pietistischen Freunde, dessen unwesentliche Zusätze übrigens meist aus Salig's Historie der Ausburger Confession entnommen sind. Als Herausgeber der beiden folgenden Bände erscheint der Tübinger Professor Cotta, der späterhin als Haupt im Lager der Confessionellen gewiß nicht zu Arnold's Freunden zählt und schon deßhalb seine 'Jugendsünde' geheim hielt, ganz abgesehen von dem würtembergischen Edikt des Jahres 1703, das allem Lesen und verbreiten der Werke Arnold's zu steuern suchte. Seine Bearbeitung ist viel viel umfangreicher und bedeutender als die des ersten Bandes; die Schaffhauser Ausgabe verdankt also ihm den Ruhm, die beste zu sein".

In this second volume (1741) Gottfried Arnold devotes several pages from the chapter 16 to the “atheists”, “naturalists”, “deists” and “latitudinarians”, among which Benedict Spinoza occupies an important place²⁵. In contrast to Spinoza’s reading in the circles of the Halle Pietism and Enlightenment in the first half of the eighteenth century (especially between 1720-1750), which was focused on the refutation of his metaphysical ideas as they are articulated particularly in the *Ethics* (1677), Gottfried Arnold offers here another, completely different perspective on the life and the thinking of the Dutch thinker. He addresses this topic based first on the *Theological-Political Treatise* (1670) and not on the *Ethics* (1677) that however he does not ignore. He mentions the *Ethics* among the works of Spinoza²⁶ and cites it twice²⁷, respectively the propositions 11 from the part I and 4 from the part IV.

That could have to do with the fact that “in the early eighteenth century the *Theological-Political Treatise* continued to be much better known than the *Ethics*. The *Treatise* had been translated into Dutch, French and English, and had provoked innumerable refutations from all over. The *Ethics*, by contrast, existed only in Latin and Dutch, and though the original *Opera Posthuma* could be found in libraries in all parts of Europe, most people with knowledge of the content of *Ethics* had garnered that knowledge from secondary sources, especially Bayle’s *Dictionnaire*”.²⁸

But actually Gottfried Arnold, like many other interpreters until today²⁹, appreciates in special way Spinoza’s exemplary unity of thought and life. Spinoza places the concept of the philosophical way of life, like the Stoics and the Epicureans in antiquity, in the middle of his philosophical considerations³⁰. Michael Czelinski-Uesbeck³¹ showed how exemplary are the input words of Spinoza’s treatise *On the Improvement of the Understanding (Tractatus de intellectus emendatione)* for the putting of his whole thought into the service of a good life: “After experience had taught me all the usual surroundings of social life are vain and futile; seeing that

²⁵ Gottfried Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments biß auf das Jahr Christi 1688*. [1699-1700], bey dieser neuen Auflage an vielen Orten verbessert, und in bequemere Ordnung bgebracht, wie auch mit verschiedenen nützlichen Anmerckungen und einem weitläuffigem Anhang vermehert, Schaffhausen, 1741, Bd. II, 16. Kap. “Von deen Atheisten, wie auch denen so genannten *Naturalisten*, *Deisten* und *Latitudinariis* in diesem *saeculo*”, 209-22; about Spinoza: § 37-§ 45, pp. 219-22.

²⁶ *Ibid*, §37, p. 219.

²⁷ *Ibid*, §39, p. 220.

²⁸ Cook, *Spinoza’s Ethics*, 154.

²⁹ Helmut Seidel, *Spinoza zur Einführung* (Hamburg, 1994), 17: “Seit Sokrates und einigen seiner Schüler (Kyniker) ist die Übereinstimmung von philosophischer Denkweise und existentieller Lebensform nirgends so überzeugend demonstriert worden wie von Spinoza”.

³⁰ Michael Czelinski-Uesbeck, *Der Tugendhafte Atheist. Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Spinoza-Renaissance in Deutschland* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 13.

³¹ *Ibid*.

none of the objects of my fears contained in themselves anything either good or bad, except in so far as the mind is affected by them, I finally resolved to inquire whether there might be some real good having power to communicate itself, which would affect the mind singly, to the exclusion of all else; whether, in fact, there might be anything of which the discovery and attainment would enable me to enjoy continuous, supreme, and unending happiness”³². Philosophy is for Spinoza, above all, ethics, practical philosophy³³. In a paradoxical way, this unity of thought and life, respectively this practical character of the philosophy is less stressed in Spinoza’s work entitled *Ethics* than in his other treatises (especially in *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, in *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, and in his *Epistles*).

This is the reason because Gottfried Arnold gives more attention to these works of the Dutch philosopher, especially to the *Theological-Political Treatise* and to the *Epistles*, than to Spinoza’s *Ethics*. After he mentions all the works of Spinoza in § 37, the radical Pietist cites on this line the *Theological-Political Treatise* 13 times (3x the Preface; 2x Chapter I – p. 7; 2x Chapter IV – pp. 46, 47, 1x Chapter V – p. 65; 1x Chapter VII – p. 85; 2x Chapter XI – pp. 139, 143; 2x Chapter XV – p. 170 and *fine*), the *Epistles* 8 times (Ep. II; Ep. XIX, 2x Ep. XXI. ad Oldenburgium; Ep. XXIII, Ep. XXIV, Ep. XLIX, Ep. LXXIV) and the *Ethics* only twice (part I, propos. 11 and part IV, propos. 4 – p. 169). Arnold pays the same attention to Spinoza’s *Ethics* as to the *Preface* of Jarrig Jelles to the *Opera posthuma* (1677) that he cites also twice³⁴. He uses the *Ethics* only to show that Spinoza is not an Atheist³⁵. Although the author of the *Ethics* was accused of being an atheist, nobody could prove these allegations. On the contrary Spinoza founded all his principles on the idea of God’s existence and rejected the atheism as a *horrendum facinus*³⁶. On this line Arnold quotes the following text from the demonstration of

³² Benedict de Spinoza, “On the Improvement of the Understanding [Tractatus de intellectus emendatione]”, in *On the Improvement of the Understanding, Ethics and Correspondence*, by Benedict de Spinoze, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2006), 1-38, here: p. 1.

³³ Czelinski-Uesbeck: *Der Tugendhafte Atheist*, 13-14.

³⁴ Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §37, footnote i), 220; §44, footnote l), 222.

³⁵ Ibid, §38, 220: “Man hätte von ihm ausgesprengt/ als wolte er ein buch schreiben/ darinne bewiesen würde/ es sey kein Gott/ und deßwegen hätten ihn auch etliche *Theologi*, welche diß geschrey wol selbstn erst erdacht gehabt/ bey der hohen obrigkeit angegeben. (...) Nach seinem tode aber ist er durchgehends als ein *formaler* Atheiste beschrieben und angegeben worden, wie mehr als zu bekannt ist. Nun kan eben niemand einige ausdrückliche worte in seinen schrifften, darinnen er Gottes *existentz* gelegnet hätte, wie die scribenten die seiner sonst nicht schonen freywillig bekennen”.

³⁶ Ibid, §38, p. 220: Vielmehr hat er selbst seine *principia* auf die *existentz* Gottes und dessen vornehmste eigenschafften nach der natürlichen erkänntniß gegründet, wie es seine schrifften deutlich ausweisen, und der *auctor* der *praefation* über seine *opera posthuma* nennet den *atheismus* einen *horrendum facinus*, das keinem weisen mann anstehe, noch bey ihm gefunden werden könne.” See Czelinski-Uesbeck: *Der Tugendhafte Atheist*, 26-27.

the proposition 4 from the part IV of the *Ethics*³⁷: “The power, whereby each particular thing, and consequently man, preserves his being, is the power of God or of Nature (I. xxiv. Coroll.); not in so far as it is infinite, but in so far as it can be explained by the actual human essence (III. Vii).

Thus the power of man, in so far as it is explained through his own actual essence, is a part of the infinite power of God or Nature, in other words, of the essence thereof (I. xxxiv)”³⁸. Arnold insists: the Dutch thinker described God in part I, proposition 11 of the *Ethics* as a “substance, consisting of infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality”³⁹.

But these two quotations from the *Ethics* remain isolated in the economy of his reasoning. The main arguments of Gottfried Arnold against Spinoza’s atheism incrimination have other sources, especially the *Theological-Political Treatise*⁴⁰ and the *Correspondence*. In the Letter XXI [LXXIII] to Oldenburg⁴¹, the German radical Pietist believes he found a proof of Spinoza’s adherence to Christianity. Actually Arnold claimed from the beginning of his short text about the life and the doctrine of the Dutch thinker, that Spinoza was baptized⁴².

³⁷ Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, in *On the Improvement of the Understanding. The Ethics. Correspondence*, by Benedict de Spinoza, trans. from the Latin, with an Introduction by R.H. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), part IV, propos. 4, p. 193: “It is impossible, that man should not be a part of Nature, or that he should be capable of undergoing no changes, save such as can be understood through his nature only as their adequate cause.”

³⁸ Ibid. See Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §39, p. 220: “Die *potentia* oder kraft, wodurch die einzelen creaturen/ und also auch der mensch/ ihr wesen erhalten/ ist selbst die kraft Gottes oder der natur; nicht zwar so fern diese unendlich ist/ sondern so fern sie durch die würrliche *essentz* des menschen kan *expliciret* werden/ deßwegen die kraft des menschen/ so fern sie durch sein würrliches wesen ausgedrucket wird/ ein theil der unendlichen krafft Gottes oder der natur/ das ist/ des wesens ist“.

³⁹ Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, part I, propos. 11, p. 51. Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §39, p. 220: “Wie er denn auch Gott beschreibet als eine *substantz*/ die aus unendlichen *attributis* bestehe/ deren ein jedweddes das ewige und unendliche wesen ausdrücke.”

⁴⁰ Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §40, p. 220: Tractat. Theologico-Polit. C.IV., 46-47.

⁴¹ “Letter XXI [LXXIII] to H. Oldenburg”, in *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, vol. II, trans. from the Latin by R.H.M. Elwes (London: G. Bell, 1884), 298-299, here: p. 298: “I say that all things are in God and move, thus agreeing with Paul, and perhaps with all the ancient philosophers of antiquity, though the phraseology may be different”. See Arnold: *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §40, p. 220: “Ich sage mit Paulo/ daß alles in Gott sey/ und in Gott bewegt werde (Act. 17,28) und vielleicht auch mit allen *Philosophis*, obgleich auf eine andere weise.”

⁴² Ibid, §37, p. 219: “Denn er [Benedictus Spinosa] war ein gebohrner Jude, und hatte in seiner jugend aus natürlicher begierde etwas zu wissen, sich gar sehr in den büchern umgesehen, auch seinen Rabbinen so viel händel gemacht daß sie ihn von sich angestossen hatten. Hierauf gab er sich bey den Christen an, und weil denen, welche ihn aufnahmen, der geist der prüffung mangeln mochte, wurde er von ihnen getauft und vor einen Christen gehalten.”

At the beginning of the 18th century this issue was highly controversial⁴³. Spinoza himself speaks depending on the audience in different ways⁴⁴. Arnold does not overlook this problem, but he is concerned to emphasize rather the Pietistic way of life of Spinoza than his adherence to Christianity. This is because the formal adherence to the Church has no importance for Gottfried Arnold as Pietistic Theologian.

Pietism was a spiritual movement which has appeared as reaction to the reduction of the Christianity to a few dogmatic or metaphysical contents without regard for life⁴⁵. The first signs of this movement appeared at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Britain, and later in the Low Countries and Germany. Named "Puritanism"⁴⁶ in the English speaking countries or "Pietism" in the rest of

⁴³ See Czelinski-Uesbeck, *Der Tugendhafte Atheist*, 26-27; 74-75: Chr. Kortholt Sr. [*De tribus impostoribus magnus liber*, Kiloni, 1680, p. 75] affirms already in 1680 that Spinoza became a Christian after his excommunication from the Jewish community. According to Friedrich Kettner [*De Duobus Impostoribus, benedicto Spinosa et Balthasare Bekkero*, Dissertatio Historica, Lipsiae, 1694, p. 4], Spinoza's conversion to Christianity would have followed after his flagellation in the Jewish Synagogue from Amsterdam. *Der Criticus* [*Der gelehrte Criticus über curieuse Dubia und Fragen aus der Kirchen- und Profan-Historie, wie nicht weniger aus der geographie, Philologie, Moralité und Politic. Abgefasset von dem Autore des wohl-informirten Redners*, Gleditsch, Leipzig 1704-1706, p. 1094] takes over this information. Henrich Ludolff Benthem [*P.C. und S. Holländischer Kirch- und Schulen-Staat*, Hannover 1698, 350ff.] affirms too that Spinoza was a disreputable contemporary although he became Christian. Gottfried Arnold [*Unpartheyischen kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1700] does nothing more than to continue this direction. In 1706 Seckendorff still supports that it is obviously that a Jew or a Portuguese in Netherland, who is called B. Spinoza, became Christian. On the contrary Johann Christoph Sturm und Christoph Sand jun., who knew Spinoza personally, and Johannes Colerus in 1705 [first engl. edition: John Colerus, minister of the Lutheran Church at the Hague: *The Life of Benedict de Spinosa*, done out of French, London, 1706] contradict this information. According to Johann Wolfgang Jäger [*De Bened. Spinozae vita et doctrina*, Dissertatio, 1710, p. 32], Spinoza "was neither Jew nor Christian". Sigismund Hosmann [*Das schwer zu bekehrende Juden-Hertz. Nebst einigen Vorbereitungs-mitteln zu der Juden Bekehrung*, Zelle, 1699, p. 166] emphasize that the most important atheists and naturalists who fight against the Christian faith are Jews, for example: B. Spinoza. In principle, they who doubt Spinoza's adherence to Christianity are either people who knew Spinoza personally or suspicious theologians regarding Spinoza and the Jews.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁵ See Martin H. Jung, *Pietismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2005), 8; Picu Ocoleanu: *Sophia Parthenos. Etica sofianică a vieții contemplative în pietismul german și în sofologia ortodoxă rusă* (Craiova: Ed. Mitropolia Olteniei, 2014), 10.

⁴⁶ Andrew Cooper Fix, *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 19: "Beginning of the sixteenth century a systematic attempt was made on the part of the educated classes of Europe, and in particular the clergy, to reform or change the attitudes and values of the rest of the population. Protestant and Catholic reformers endeavored to spread their religious ideas and practices among the lower classes, and in the process they attempted to suppress many aspects of traditional popular culture. Peter Burke has suggested that these religious reformers can be seen as "puritans" because they sought to purify the beliefs of the lower classes from popular superstitions and pagan survivals. This clerical campaign against popular culture made swiftest progress in urban areas and in Protestant regions of Europe, although Catholic areas also affected, if somewhat later."

Europe, this movement overcame the confessional boundaries and emphasized how important leading a really Christian way of life actually is. This is the reason why Gottfried Arnold retains especially Spinoza's ascetic endeavors⁴⁷ and his inclination to lead a quiet life. Arnold mentions on this line the retreat of Spinoza among the Rijnsburg Collegiants, a kind of Dutch Pietists, who lead a quiet philosophical life and the rejection of the call at the University of Heidelberg. Both of them correspond to the Pietistic ideal of life for which he pleads. In the same Pietistic logic, Arnold records with satisfaction the negative reaction of Spinoza to the Scholastic and Aristotelian theology which he considers a form of alienation and an abuse against the word of God⁴⁸. According to Spinoza, the consequence of this alienation is the rift between discourse and practical life. Thereby Spinoza meets again the Pietism in its main theological topic⁴⁹.

Arnold concludes regarding the issue of the supposed Spinoza's atheism: Christianity has nothing to do with an intellectual confession of faith, but with a way of life ("lebensart"), with a "praxis"⁵⁰. From this point of view, Gottfried Arnold suggests that Spinoza's life and thinking correspond completely to the Pietistic (i.e. authentic Christian) life ideal.

⁴⁷ Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §37, p. 219: "Er soll daselbsten auf seine dinge so gar erpicht gewesen seyn, daß er kaum in einem viertaljahr einmal vor die thür heraus gekommen".

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, §40-§41, p. 220: "Wenn wir aber ferner nach seinem begriff von der Christlichen religion fragen, so finden wir, daß er sich an *scholastischen* und *Aristotelischen theologie* am meisten geärgert, und darüber ohne zweiffel auf seine eigene meynungen gerathen sey.

Er schreibet von denen *Theologis* unter andern also: "Ich bekenne, daß sie sich über die tiefen geheimnisse der schrift verwundert haben: jedoch sehe ich, daß sie nichts als *Aristotelische* und *Platonische speculationes* vorgetragen, darauff sie die schrift *appliciret*, damit es nicht schiene, als folgten sie den Heyden nach. Es ist ihnen nicht gnug gewesen, der Griechen ihrer thorheit zu folgen, sondern sie haben auch die Propheten nach derselben *accomodiret*, woraus man siehet, daß sie die göttlichkeit der schrift niemals recht erkannt, und je mehr sie sich über die geheimnisse verwundern, e mehr weisen sie, daß sie nicht so wol der schrift glauben, als nur schmeicheln". s) Allein über der betrachtung dieses mißbrauchs der heiligen schrift, ist er hingegen auf das andere *extremum* verfallen".

⁴⁹ Martin Bollacher, *Der junge Goethe und Spinoza. Studien zur geschichte des Spinozismus in der [Epoche des Sturms und Drangs]*, Studien zur deutschen Literatur, hg. Richard Brinkmann, Friedrich Sengle und Klaus Ziegler, Bd. 18 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), 55-56. Bollacher highlights the common points between Spinoza and Arnold. The most important among these is the necessity of an agreement between the doctrine and the practical life.

⁵⁰ Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §45, p. 222: "Ein verständiger leser wird nach untersuchung dieser angeführten historien wohl von selbst ernstlich wünschen, daß diejenigen grossen ärgernisse aus der Christenheit abgethan werden möchten, woraus so wohl alle ruchlosigkeit als der *atheismus* selbst bey den leuten entstehet; nemlich die verkehrte lehre und *praxis* bey so vielen, die sich lehrer, und zwar rechtgläubige zu seyn unterwinden, und dann die ungerechtigkeit bey allen andern lebens=arten."

3. Spinoza's Metaphysics as Sophiology. Gottfried Arnold's Interpretation of the alleged Panteism of Benedict Spinoza

The main suspicion against Spinoza's thinking regards at the beginning of the eighteenth century his "acosmism", namely the identification between God and the nature and its determinist and fatalist consequences in the practical life. Joachim Lange and his Pietistic companions in Halle but representatives of the Enlightenment like Christian Wolff focused their polemic against Spinoza on his pantheist metaphysics too. Their Spinoza's reading starts at the *Ethics* and is limited to its metaphysical parts.

On the contrary, Gottfried Arnold proposes a Spinoza's reading beginning at his practical philosophy, namely at the unity between thinking and life that he requests above all. Nevertheless, the question concerning the alleged pantheism of the Dutch philosopher remains open. Arnold provides an original answer to this question which opposes to the Spinoza's interpretation of the Pietistic mainstream.

Based on the rational method of the mathematics, Spinoza aimed to show that God is a single substance and all the things are contained in him. But according to the German radical Pietist this does not necessary mean that Spinoza is an "acosmist" or a "Pantheist". Following Jarring Jelles's ideas from the preface to the *Ethics* printed in *Opera posthuma* and translated later into the German by J.L. Schmidt, Gottfried Arnold argues that Spinoza and the Disciples of Christ, Apostle Paul and Apostle John, agree completely in the doctrine about God⁵¹. Like Jelles, he "juxtaposed Spinoza's statements with quotations from the Acts (17:28) which have it that «in him [God] we live, and move, and have our being»" and "emphasized the unselfish love of God and neighbor constituted the ethical ideal of both Spinoza and John the Evangelist"⁵².

Thus Arnold interprets the Spinoza's identification between God and the nature not in an acosmist/pantheistic sense but as sophiology. Spinoza himself confessed to H. Oldenburg that he understands the identification between God and the nature in the sense of Apostle Paul (Acts 17,28): "I say that all things are

⁵¹ Ibid., §39, p. 220: "Anderswo saget er: Ich halte Gott vor die *causam* aller dinge/ aber *immanentem* nicht *transeuntem*. Ich sage mit Paulo/ daß alles in Gott sey/ und in Gott bewegt werde (Act. 17, 28) und vielleicht auch mit allen *Philosophis*, obgleich auf eine andere weise."

⁵² Honorata Jakuszko, "The Spinoza Inspiration in the Late German Enlightenment (Spätaufklärung)", *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, 15, 28 (2009): 173-88; here: 175-176. H. Jakuszko cites here the following titles: H. Timm, *Gott und Freiheit. Studien zur Religionsphilosophie der Goethezeit, Die Spinozarenaissance*, (Frankfurt am Main), pp. 162-163; on the spiritual affinity between Spinoza and Paul the Apostle: J.Ch. Edelmann, "Abgenötigtes jedoch Andern nicht wieder aufgenötigtes Glaubens-Bekenntnis", in *Das entdeckte Christentum im Vormärz*, by W. Barnikol (Jena, 1927), 167-168 (the quoted text was authored in 1745); on the affinity between Spinoza and John the Apostle: G. Herder, "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele (1778)", in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. B. Suphan, Bd. VIII (Berlin, 1877), 202.

in God and move, thus agreeing with Paul, and perhaps with all the ancient philosophers of antiquity, though the phraseology may be different"⁵³. That means that all the things in nature are actually included in the mind of God as divine concepts, ideas and decrees⁵⁴, respectively that everything in nature brings with itself a divine concept (*einen begriff von Gott*) according to the mode of every being and its perfection⁵⁵. The knowledge of nature leads therefore to the knowledge of God. This is the reason why this knowledge of nature is not an exterior, a physical knowledge (*äusserliche erkenntniß*), but a kind of inspiration, of contemplation, of God's revelation in our souls⁵⁶.

Arnold's interpretation of the unity between God and nature in Spinoza's thinking has nothing to do with their Pantheist identification. The nature (or rather: the logic of the nature) is contained in God, in the collector of all the divine meanings (*rationes divinae*) that God himself contemplates. This is actually the wisdom of God (*die weisheit Gottes*⁵⁷), *Sophia*, about which Spinoza says, it has taken in Christ human nature. "The Eternal Son of God, that is the Eternal Wisdom of God (...) has manifested itself in all things and especially in the human mind, and above all in Christ Jesus" affirms Spinoza in Letter XXI [LXXIII] to H. Oldenburg⁵⁸.

⁵³ See note 41 in this text.

⁵⁴ Arnold: *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, §39, p. 220: "In diesem göttlichen wesen, sagt er nun, wären die creaturen als göttliche *conceptus, ideen und decreta*, deren würckung selbst das wesen aller dinge mit seye, die in Gott enthalten wären, und was er mehr vor solgereyen aus dieser meynung ziehet."

⁵⁵ Arnold quotes here a text from the *Theological-Political Treatise*, chapter IV. Ibid., §39, p. 220: "Er ziehet aber aus dieser meynung, daß Gott die natur selbst sey, und daß alles aus ihm und zu ihm geschaffen, unter andern folgendes heraus: «Weil ohne Gott nichts weder seyn noch begriffen werden kan, so ists gewiß, daß alles, was in der natur ist, einen begriff von Gott nach der art eines jeden wesens und seiner vollkommenheit mit sich bringe, und ausdrücke, und daß wir dahero eine desto grössere und vollkommener erkänntniß Gottes erlangen, je mehr wir die natürlichen dinge erkennen» q) [*Tractat. Theologico-Polit. C.IV.*, p. 47]."

⁵⁶ Ibid, §40, p. 220: "Dabey will er beweisen, daß er nicht auf dieser äusserlichen erkänntniß Gottes eben stehen blieben, sondern redet wider die fleischlichen menschen, "die deswegen die erkänntniß und liebe Gottes vor nichtig hielten, weil sie an diesem höchsten gut nichts finden, daß sie greiffen oder essen, oder damit sie sonst ihr fleisch belustigen könnten. Hingegen schreibt er, dieses *dictire* die *idea* oder der begriff von Gott in der seelen, daß Gott unser höchstes gut sey/ oder daß die erkänntniß und liebe Gottes der letzte zweck sey/ dahin alle unsere verrichtungen zielen sollen. Und wer da wise, daß er nichts edlers als seinen verstand habe, der werde dieses vor mehr als zu *solid* halten. r) [*Tractat. Theologico-Polit. C.IV.*, p. 46]."

⁵⁷ Ibid, §43, p. 221 (quotation of *Tract. Theol. Polit. C.I.*, p. 7).

⁵⁸ "Letter XXI [LXXIII] to H. Oldenburg", in *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, vol. II, 299. Arnold quotes this letter too (§43, p. 221): "Ohne den ewigen Sohn Gottes, das ist, ohne die ewige weisheit Gottes, die sich in allen dingen, und sonderlich in dem menschlichen gemüth, am allermeisten aber in Christo Jesu offenbahret hat, kan niemand zum stande der seligkeit kommen, als welche allein lehret, was wahr oder falsch, böse oder gut sey". f) [*Epist. XXI*].

When referring expressly to the texts of the Dutch thinker, where he talks about the Wisdom of God, Arnold suggests a sophiological understanding of Spinoza's doctrine about the unity between God and nature. In the same year of the appearance of the second volume of the *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie* (1700), he published the sophiological treatise *Das Geheimniss de Göttlichen Sophia oder Weißheit/ Beschrieben und Besungen von Gottfried Arnold* (Leipzig, 1700). The Biography of the German radical Pietist goes in this time a sophiological period through: he reflects about Sophia and lives according to the ascetic principles of Sophia⁵⁹. This is the reason why Gottfried Arnold recognizes in Spinoza's metaphysical reflections rather a kind of sophiology than an "acosmism" or Pantheism.

Of course, compared to the sophiological doctrine of Jacob Böhme or to Arnold's own very complex sophiological reflections, Spinoza offers only a few considerations about the Wisdom of God. For example, he does not receive the unusual doctrine of Böhme⁶⁰ about Sophia as the fourth hypostasis of the Holy Trinity. For him, as for the Fathers of the Church in antiquity, the Wisdom of God is actually the Son of God. But the logic is the same: the ideas of the things are collected in the Wisdom of God and thereby all the beings exist and move in God.

Gottfried Arnold does not develop enough his considerations about Spinoza's metaphysics as sophiology, but suggests that this is the key of its understanding. The completions about this topic at the end of the second volume of *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie* (ed. 1741)⁶¹, which are due to Johann Friedrich Cotta (1701-1779), do nothing other than to contradict Spinoza's original interpretation by Gottfried Arnold in the name of his usual reading imposed by the bizarre philosophical tandem Joachim Lange-Christian Wolff.

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⁵⁹ See Ocoleanu, *Sophia Parthenos*, 121-27; 138-45.

⁶⁰ See Jacob Böhme, *De triplici vita hominis, oder vom Dreyfachen leben des Menschen*, ed. Amsterdam, 1682, V, 9-81, pp. 73-86.

⁶¹ Arnold, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie*, Num. XXIII. Von *Benedicto Spinoza*. Zum II. Th. XVII. Buch, XVI. Cap. § 36-45, pp. 1152-1154.

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V. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

DEACON CORESI'S IMAGE IN HISTORICAL RECORDS

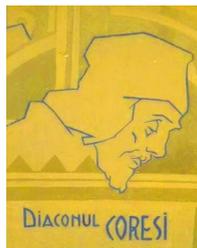
VICTORIA GRĂDINAR*

ABSTRACT. Coresi, member of the clergy ordained in the first rank of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, settled in Brasov in 1559, printed fundamental religious books in Romanian for more than 20 years. This remarkable and valuable person whose statute has been captured in written documents or fine arts portrayals, opened *the way for writing in Romanian*, and the Coresian image has been known and appreciated, especially starting from the 18th century until now, due to researches in the field of history, theology and fine arts. As a text translator or translation reviser, Coresi has been studied and is still under the attention of our researchers of old literature. Deacon Coresi's image can be traced in time in various creations in the fine arts field.

Keywords: Coresi, arts, literature, old Romanian writing, religious books

"And because I read and saw that everything explains, confirms and endorses the Holy Bible, I liked that very much and I wrote words with the printing press for thee, Romanian brothers, so thee can learn from these and I ask thee to read and contemplate because thee shall see it for yourselves that those are the jewel and thee shall find in them a hidden treasure...."

Deacon Coresi



Detail from the lower part of the composition „*Cultural history of Transylvania*”
by Costin Petrescu, 1939, Great Hall, Universitarilor Palace, Cluj-Napoca.

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Shortly after the printing press had been introduced in Romania in the 16th century, a group of scholar typographers emerged: hieromonk Macarie, Dimitrie Liubavici – Târgoviște, Filip the Moldavian, with his activities ensuring access to new scholastic ways in Sibiu and Deacon Coresi with his cultural group in Brasov, a core source of printed texts meant to enlighten the entire nation.

The researchers of deacon Coresi's life and activity († 1583, Brasov) state that he learnt the art of printing from apprentices expatriated in harsh circumstances – possibly even from Serbian monks who had brought to the Romanian lands bits of printed texts produced in Venice. We could also mention that the business relationships established with some public figures of those times in Ardeal, Transylvanian Saxons, Hungarians, Lutherans or Calvinists, make him the first diplomat in the typography industry from Romania.

Coresi, member of the clergy ordained in the first rank of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, settled in Brasov in 1559, printed fundamental religious books in Romanian for more than 20 years. He became a religious book publisher, under the impulse of the new reform movement started by Luther and first of all stood out as an important typographer and then as a book merchant for earning his living. The deacon's laborious activity evolved from associate to freelancer and then to religious printing press owner¹. Evidence supporting this can be found in documents from Brasov where we discover that on December, 12, 1573 "*the Bishop's deacon, the typographer, together with 4 people*" arrived in Brasov "*for a printing press*" and stayed there for 5 days for discussion with the local hierarch²; in terms of the veracity of his origins in Targoviste his own testimony in the epilogue of the Romanian Gospel printed in Brasov in 1560/1561 stands as proof and also some other forewords to Coresi's books³. Deacon Coresi's image can be traced in time in various creations in the fine arts field. Thus, we can mention the statue in Saint Nicholas Church's yard in Scheii Brasovului, a stone sculpture by Ion Meiu and also the bust made by sculptor Sorin Tomșa, sheltered in the Museum "*The First Romanian School*" in Piata Unirii, Brasov.

Another depiction of Coresi's image can be seen in the mural painting in the Great Hall of Universitarilor Palace, Cluj-Napoca. The pictorial composition made by artist Costin Petrescu in 1939, shows Coresi next to great Romanian cultural personalities from Transylvania. The composition is called "*Cultural History of Transylvania*" and spans on three large mural surfaces on the stage background⁴.

¹ Vasile Oltean, Historical and Religious Configuration of Brasov (13th – 20th centuries) [in Romanian] (Sibiu: Ed. Andreiana, 2010), 334.

² Ibid., 331.

³ Florica Dimitrescu, The Four Gospels Printed by Coresi – Brasov 1560-1561 [in Romanian] (București: Ed. Academiei, 1963), 167.

⁴ Annamaria Baci, The Mural Painting Restoration as Generator of Cultural Information [in Romanian] (Cluj-Napoca: Grinta, 2011), 79.

DEACON CORESI'S IMAGE IN HISTORY'S RECORDS



Deacon Coresi, statue in Saint Nicholas "The Church Yard, The First Romanian School of Braşov", Piaţa Unirii, Braşov



Bust, deacon Coresi in the Museum

The records of those times and also the restoration results reveal that one year later, in 1940, the entire painting was covered with a layer of paint so as to conceal the role of the Transylvanian scholars; over the years, other layers were added until in 1999, after restoration, they were scraped off the painting and the work of art was given back to the public in its original form. Thus, the painting in the Great Hall of the Universitarilor Palace was severely degraded by this covering method and we now consider that it would have been more proper to choose the same approach used for the Romanian Athenaeum, where the fresco created by the same artist was covered with red velvet during communism (from 1948 to 1966) so as to hide the monarchy's role in Romania's history.



*Detail – upper parts of the monumental painting by Costin Petrescu,
Great Hall, Universitarilor Palace, Cluj-Napoca*

Costin Petrescu⁵, painter, university professor and publicist chose the *fresco* technique – specific for mural painting – for a large area of this work of

⁵ Artist Costin Petrescu had a close relationship with painting starting from an early age, as both his father and grandfather had been artisan painters. He graduated from the School of Belle Arte and the Architecture School from Bucharest and studied abroad in Vienna, Munich and Paris and in 1921 he studied banknote engraving methods in USA. Between the two world wars Costin Petrescu painted a series of portraits of cultural personalities such as Gheorghe Lazăr, Vasile Lascăr and Dem I. Dobrescu, reaching a total number of about 400 portraits. One of his representative works is the monumental composition in the Romanian Athenaeum, also known as the greatest work of art made in Romania in the fresco technique up to that point, for the completion of which he worked for approximately five years, until 1939 and which comprises 25 scenes representative for Romania's

art, while for the lower part he used the technique of oil on plaster made of lime and gypsum⁶. This lower area, a narrow one, but covering the same length with the one made in the fresco technique, displays the *legend* of the composition situated on the upper part, where characters are placed in chronological sequence from left to right, starting from deacon Coresi, on the same vertical axis with Sava Brancovici, the Metropolitan Bishop of Ardeal.



Detail from the monumental painting by Costin Petrescu, Great Hall, Universitarilor Palace, Cluj-Napoca

Coresi, famous character in the Transylvanian culture, appears in both painting areas mentioned above, on the left side. Sitting on a humble chair, wearing a tunic and a coat over his shoulders, with his head covered by a hood and slightly bent forward, as if in a gesture of profound piety, all these suggest his involvement and commitment in rendering the liturgical texts that he printed. The deacon's portrait was painted according to his real features, with a short beard, in colours limited to greyish shades with light tones at the collar and the sleeves⁷.

history. Other large size mural paintings created by him are those in the churches from Miroși, the Royal Church from Curtea de Argeș, Saint Sylvester, Mihai Vodă and „Saint Dumitru – Colentina” of Bucharest but also in the “Saint Nicholas” church from Șcheii Brașovului. He also painted some scenes in the Patriarchal Palace and inside the Coronation Cathedral in Alba Iulia, he designed the royal cape that King Ferdinand wore on October, 15, 1922 at his coronation in Iași, he made the outdoor mosaics at the Romanian Athenaeum in Bucharest. Costin Petrescu died in Bucharest on October, 15, 1954. [https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costin_Petrescu_\(pictor\)](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costin_Petrescu_(pictor))

⁶ Baciu, *The Mural Painting Restoration*, 80.

⁷ The order of Canon 27 of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod stipulates “Clothes worn by clerical people (outside the religious services) ought to be long and as much as possible dark, because length represents decency and dark colors (black or gray) are the symbol of humility.” Ioan N. Floca, *Acc. to Canons of the Orthodox Church. Notes and comments* [in Romanian] (București: Sophia, 2005).

Next to deacon Coresi, Costin Petrescu accurately depicted his appeal for printing by capturing the gesture of feeding the paper to the press, the paper sheets on a desk and the printing press where the collected texts were taking shape. All these *symbol – elements* make Coresi an important member of this monumental composition.



*Details form the upper part of the composition
“Cultural History of Transylvania”, by Costin Petrescu, 1939,
Great Hall, Universitarilor Palace, Cluj-Napoca.*

The stylistic approach of the painting, with wide strokes and a sober colour palette in the upper part, is in contrast with the lower part where all the personalities' portraits are rendered by a schematic drawing with a cobalt blue simple line, on an ochre background with golden geometrical shapes and approximately in the same position as in the upper part. On this film of colour, under each portrait, the name of the depicted person appears and this enables the understanding of the upper composition, which comprises the portraits of the most representative scholars in Transylvania in the period 16th century – 19th century, as follows: Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan, Archpriest Radu Tempea, Paul Iorgovici, Cantor Dimitrie Eustatievici, Bishop Ioan Inocențiu Micu, Gheorghe Șincai, Petru Maior, C. Diaconovici Loga, Ion Molnar Piuariu, I. Budai Deleanu, Priest Samuil Micu, Bishop Vasile Moga, Andrei Mureșanu, Ștefan Octavian Iosif, George Coșbuc, Metropolitan Bishop Andrei Șaguna, Octavian Goga, Gheorghe Barițiu, Gheorghe Pop de Băsești, Vasile Goldiș, Simion Bărnuțiu and Timotei Cipariu.

Although considered by some as a slide to heresy, Coresi's work was facilitated by the fact that Romanian priests understood this revolutionary act of introducing the Romanian language in the cult, much in the same way protestant confessions emerging at the time did⁸. Printed texts in Romanian defeated time and led the way to the orthodox cult nationalisation and the development of the Romanian language.

Together with other craftsmen-merchants, Coresi set up the typography in Brasov, where he printed, after Filip the Moldavian- typographer in Sibiu, a series of books in Romanian, thus highlighting the victory of printed writings on the Romanian land. Lucian Blaga refers to his first printed texts as being in fact "the first great poem of the nation", although "The Scripture was already known, read, translated, explained in Romanian orally and in writing"⁹, considering that *the language had already been formed for centuries* in our country when Slavonic appeared, said Mihai Eminescu.

The Transylvanian Saxon chronicler Simon Massa (+1605) wrote that the first books in Romanian (The Catechism of 1544, The Christian question of 1559) had "*reformed the Wallachian Church*", and Nicolae Iorga said that the appearance of these printed texts is due to the Hussite influence in Ardeal and that their translation was made in the north, i.e. in Maramureş, in the second half of the 15th century¹⁰. Alexandru Rosetti also states that the first translations in Romanian were made in Maramures in the first half of the 16th century under the influence of Luther's reform.¹¹

As a text translator or translation reviser, Coresi has been studied and is still under the attention of our researchers of old literature. Among the Romanian philologists who researched the Coresi phenomenon, we can mention academician Nicolae Corlăteanu in the 20th century, who captured in his work important aspects about the beginnings of Romanian writings in his Bachelor thesis named: *Linguistic Relations between the "Codex of Voronet and Coresi's Apostolic Work (1563)"*, research that highlights the spiritual unity and the written word's triumph in Romanian, and the introduction of the spoken language in writing and in the Church.

These old writings represent the expression of the Romanian nation's spirituality and arouse interest "especially for history and for the evolution of

⁸ Mircea Păcuraru, *Sibiu's Scholars from the Past* [in Romanian] (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 2002), 8.

⁹ Antonie Plămădeală, *Teachers of Romanian Thought and Feeling* [in Romanian] (Bucharest, 1981), 67.

¹⁰ N. Iorga, *History of Romania's Religious Literature up to 1688* [in Romanian] (Bucharest, 1904), 18-19.

¹¹ Al. Rosetti, *The Romanian Language Between the 13th and the 16th Centuries* [in Romanian] (Bucharest, 1956), 181.

culture, being able to help establishing the coordinates of former people's mentality and way of thinking"¹². Our old books have been kept in places inhabited by Romanians. The results of Coresi's praiseworthy typographic activity underlined the cultural progress unanimously appreciated by historians, philologists and theologians.

After almost a quarter century worth of effort, Coresi marked in history through his creation, a heroic age for the promotion of our national culture, period rightfully called "*The Coresi era*" with the first books in Romanian: *Christian Question or Romanian Catechism* (1559), *Little Octoechos of Brasov* (1557), *Pentecostarion Triodon* (1558), *The Gospel Book* (1561), *The Romanian Apostle* (1563), *The Gospel Significance and the Euchologion* (1564), *The Psalter* (1568), *The Romanian Psalm Book* (1570), *The Gospel Book with Moral* (1581), *Romanian Litourgicon* (1570) and *The Rule of Saint Fathers* issued between 1570-1580, then Slavic- Romanian: *The Psalter* of 1577 and *The Gospel Book* of 1580¹³. These books meant for all the orthodox around the world and also the Slavonic ones printed by Coresi, can be found in libraries in orthodox countries in the Balkans and in the monasteries on Mount Athos.

Historians specialized in our old culture, such as A. Lambrior, A.D. Xenopol, Al. Rosetti state that "Romanians have written in all periods in their language"¹⁴ and Coresi's apostolic work from the second half of the 16th century was a correction and an improvement for the benefit of Romanians and of the Church, especially through the printed books referring to orthodoxy which have brought a great contribution to the Romanian orthography. Coresi's image and reforming work in the church is worth researching, as the struggle of keeping the ancestral faith alive could not have been successful but through presenting the dogma in the language known by people¹⁵.

Due to this fact, he is ranked by the specialists in the field as the first cleric typographer of Romanian books who committed to "settling the homiliary in the readings of literate Romanians"¹⁶ and was named "the father of Romanian

¹² Florian Dudaș, *Memory of Old Romanian Books* [in Romanian] (Oradea: Ed. Episcopiei Ortodoxe din Oradea, 1990), 11.

¹³ Oltean, *Historical and Religious Configuration of Brasov* (13th – 20th centuries), 332

¹⁴ A. Lambrior, *Literary Conversations*, XV, no. 15 (1981): 127.

¹⁵ "In the holy church t is bett'r to sayeth five w'rds with meaning than ten thousand w'rds in a f'reign language, not und'rstood" or ," And because I readeth and did see yond ev'rything explains, c'rrob'rate and endeth'rses the Holy Bible, I did like t v'ry much and I wroteth w'rds with the printing presseth fr thee, Romanian broth'rs, so thee can learneth from these and I asketh thee to readeth and contemplate because thee shall seeth t f'r yourselves those art the jewel and thee shall findeth in those a hidden treasure....." , Coresi, *The Gospel Significance and the Euchologion* [in Romanian], ed. Vladimir Drâmba (București: Ed. Academiei, 1998), 187.

¹⁶ Dudaș, *Memory of Old Romanian Books* [in Romanian], 18.

literature"¹⁷, the one who promoted Romanian to the rank of "the language of culture"¹⁸ and "publisher of books for brothers from everywhere"¹⁹, the man who separated words in writing, as they had been written linked to one another until then.

The first book printed by Coresi in Romanian *Christian Question* from 1559 is acknowledged as document of Romanian language. We quote from it the *Lord's Prayer*, remarking that the differences compared to the modern language are almost insignificant: „ Our father, whyche art in heaven, halowed be thy name. Thy Kyngdome come thy wyll be doen in yearth, as it is in heaven. Geve us this daye our nurturing breade. And forgeve us our trespaces, as wee forgeve them that trespasse agaynst us. and leade us not into temptacion but deliver us from evill for thyne is the kingdom and the power, and the glorye for ever, Amen"²⁰. We notice that typographer Coresi used "the old Romanian manuscripts with certain modifications that he brought so as to confer the language the scent of that age"²¹, contributing thus to creating a unitary literary language and to developing the culture and society they lived in.

The reputable Metropolitan Bishop Antonie Plămădeală of Ardeal, when analysing the phrase "With God's mercy, I, deacon Coresi ...", stated that Coresi made a "touching royal, triumphal, solemn entrance into the history of the Romanian printed words. It is like he would have said: *We, Mircea Voivode* on a royal document, or much like a bishop in the foreword of a most significant pastoral book"²². Furthermore, if we look at the work printed by Coresi as a whole, we can place him among the first preachers of national unity by language and of the Latin origin of Romanians, because he used to translate the term *Roman* by *Rumanian*²³. At the same time, Șerban Coresi, his youngest son, editor of the book *The Old Testament from Orastie*²⁴, is the person who wrote for the first time, researchers assert, the term *Romanian*, thus "proclaiming the origins of Romanians who descended from the Romans"²⁵.

Beyond the wish of perpetuating deacon Coresi's memory and the will of creating a historical image through the various written or plastic representations,

¹⁷ Dan Simionescu, "Points of View...", [in Romanian], *The Church's Voice*, no. 4 (1958): 348.

¹⁸ George Ivașcu, *History of Romanian Literature*, 1: 240.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁰ *Apud* Barbu Teodorescu, "Coresi's Personality and His Role in the Romanian Culture" [in Romanian], *The Romanian Orthodox Church's Magazine*, no. 3-4 (1959): 288.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 290.

²² Plămădeală, *Teachers of Romanian Thought and Feeling*, 69.

²³ G. Giuglea, "Coresi establishes the first connection between 'Roman' and 'Rumanian,'" *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, no. 5-6 (1935): 226-228.

²⁴ Nerva Hodiș, "A Fragment from Deacon Coresi's Euchologion" [in Romanian], in *Tribute to D.A. Sturza* (Bucharest, 1906), 236.

²⁵ *History of Romanian Literature* [in Romanian] (București: Ed. Academiei, 1964), 1: 246.

the most remarkable typographer's portrait is ubiquitous in Romania's culture. His activity as a typographer reaches another level in the 17th century due to the royal figures' involvement by means of the donations made for texts and books written in Romanian and for the cultural life of Transylvania, Moldova and Wallachia, climaxing with the issuing of the New Testament in 1648 at Alba Iulia, and the Bible in 1688 in Bucharest.

Coresi's image, known biographically from the brief monographies dedicated to him, manages to express his personality as a scholar and a deacon descending from a Greek family that lived in Wallachia²⁶, a man who took care of building a church in the capital of this region, Targoviste, with craftsmen brought from Brasov²⁷.

This remarkable and valuable person whose statute has been captured in written documents or fine arts portrayals, opened *the way for writing in Romanian*, and the Coresian image has been known and appreciated, especially starting from the 18th century until now, due to researches in the field of history, theology and fine arts. 2016 has been declared by the Saint Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church also the commemorative year of religious typographers, one of whom is Coresi, depicted in this article aiming to highlight the Coresian image.



The Apostle, 1566, by Coresi

²⁶ Ovid Densusianu, *History of Romanian Literature* [in Romanian] (Iasi, 1894), 199.

²⁷ Ion Bogdan, *Documents and Records Regarding the Relationship between Wallachia and Brasov and Hungary in the 10th and 16th century* [in Romanian] (București, 1902), 233.

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MACARIE THE HIEROMONK AND THE TRANSLATION OF HYMNS INTO ROMANIAN. CASE STUDY: HEIRMOS OF *PENTECOST**

DANIEL MOCANU*

ABSTRACT. The goal of our paper is to explain the special importance which the *Pentecost Heirmos* has within Macarie, the Hieromonk's creation (1750-1836), one of the most outstanding figures of the ecclesiastical Byzantine music in the Romanian area. We intend to undertake a comparative musical-literary analysis of *Heirmos IX* at the *Feast of Pentecost*, composed by Petros Lampadarios and translated by Macarie the Hieromonk. We will inventorize the solutions that Macarie found for solving the prosodic and metric differences between Greek and Romanian. He noticed the impact those solutions had on the melodic path of the *Heirmos* (the place of the cadential formulas). In addition to the version based on Petros Lampadarios' composition, Macarie the Hieromonk, also wrote an original *Pentecost Heirmos*. It was based on Byzantine bases, which, due to its melodic and composition particularities, has been considered a masterpiece of the Romanian Byzantine church music.

Keywords: Macarie the Hieromonk, Heirmos, Pentecost, musical analysis, Romanianisation

Introduction

Although Macarie the Hieromonk's entire creation had an essential importance for the Romanian musical culture at the beginning of the 19th century, nowadays, very few of his hymns are heard on the lecterns in churches from parishes and monasteries. The monumental work that the Hieromonk undertook, that is Romanianisation of Greek hymns performed within services, was preserved in manuscripts and printed works, which are studied only by skilled singers, who still use the *Anastasimatar* at Saturday evening services, or the *Heirmologhion*, at Great Feasts, and also by experts in Byzantine lore, who examine Macarie's work in order to highlight the way he translated the Greek hymns into Romanian.

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The present paper aims at analyzing one of Macarie's works, which has stood the test of time. Thus, it is sung each year, at the Feast of *Pentecost*. We have chosen to analyze the *Heirmos* of the ninth hymn from the Canon of the feast day, for several reasons. Firstly, it is the hymn that replaces the Megalynarion "It is truly meet...", at the Divine Liturgy. Secondly, in addition to the translation of Petros Lampadarios' original, Macarie the Hieromonk decided to write two more versions on the same *Heirmos*. The *Heirmoi at Great Feast*, composed by Macarie, can be considered an unequalled masterpiece belonging to the Romanian Byzantine musical creation.

The *Heirmologhion* of Macarie the Hieromonk

In the beginning, we intend to outline Macarie the Hieromonk's portrait. Then, the *Heirmologhion* will be presented, with its *Heirmos* of the ninth hymn at the Feast of *Pentecost*. After that, we will analyse the musical versions comparatively, while taking into account elements of the literary form and those of the musical one. Macarie the Hieromonk¹ was the greatest psalm singer in Wallachia. It is

¹ Macarie the Hieromonk is known as a composer, a psalm book teacher, a typographer. "Pious Macarie the Hieromonk, the protopsaltes of the Metropolitan Church in Bucharest, was the most famous music teacher, at the beginning of the last century and a great founder of our sacred music. Pious Macarie was also a humble and spiritual monk, a good servant of Christ's Church and a distinguished orator. Both the song and his sermon were inspired by the Holy Spirit and were performed with all piety and right consideration." Cf. Arhimandrit Ioanichie Bălan, *Patericul Românesc* (Editura Mănăstirea Sihăstria, 2005), 356. For information about Macarie the Hieromonk's life, work and activity, see: Conf. Univ. Dr. Nicolae Gheorghîță, "Macarie Ieromonahul," in *Dicționar de muzică bisericească românească* (București: Basilica, 2013), see also: Macarie Ieromonahul; Nicolae Popescu, *Macarie Psaltul. La o sută de ani de la moartea lui (1836-1936)* (București, 1936); Nicolae Popescu, "Știri noi despre Macarie Ieromonahul, dascălul de cântări și directorul tipografiei din Mănăstirea Căldărușani," *BOR* 9 (1915): 967-968; 10 (1916): 1101-1109; C. Erbiceanu, "Dedicația lui Macarie cântărețul către Mitropolitul Grigorie," *BOR* 1 (1908): 37-43; Mihail Gr. Poslušnicu, *Istoria muzicii la români* (București, 1928), 28-34; Nifon Ploieșteanu, *Carte de muzică bisericească, pe psaltichie și pe note liniare* (București, 1902), 54-59; Gheorghe Ciobanu, "Muzica bisericească la români," in *Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie* (București, 1974) 339 and 392-394; Titus Moisescu, *Macarie Ieromonahul Opere I, Teoriticonul* (București: Editura Muzicală, 1976); Octavian-Lazăr Cosma, *Hronicul muzicii românești* Volume II (București: Editura Muzicală, 1974), 84-98; Ierodeacon Marin Dionisie, "Macarie Ieromonahul la 120 de ani de la moartea lui 1836-1956," *MMS* 3-4 (1956): 169; Titus Moisescu, *Prolegomene Bizantine* Volume I (București: Editura Muzicală, 1985), 23; Nicu Moldoveanu, "Macarie Ieromonahul (1770-1836) – traducător, compozitor, copist, tipograf," *BOR* 7-12 (1997): 279-293; Gheorghe Ionescu, "Macarie Ieromonahul, dascăl de psaltichie și epistat al școlilor de muzică din Țara Românească," in: *Studii și cercetări de istorie a artei* (București: Editura Academiei Române, 1992), 73-83; Viorel Cosma, *Muzicieni din România* Volume V (București: Editura Muzicală, 2002), 216-222; Gheorghe C. Ionescu, *Muzica bizantină în România. Dicționar cronologic* (București: Editura Sagittarius, 2003), 87-92; Costin Moisil, "Studiu introductiv," in *Anastasimatarul Cuviosului Macarie Ieromonahul, cu adăugiri din cel al Paharnicului Dimitrie Suceveanu* (București: Editura Bizantină, 2002); Costin Moisil, „Anastasimatarele în limba română tipărite în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea: conținut, surse, autori,” *Acta Musicae Bizantinae* Volume IV (Iași, 2002), 144-153.

Macarie the Hieromonk that we owe the printing of the first books of sacred music with hrisantic notation and Cyrillic alphabet in Romanian. His books that were printed at Vienna in 1823 – the *Theoreticon*, the *Anastasimatarion* and the *Heirmologhion* – laid the groundwork for the introduction of Romanian sacred music in liturgical service, but also in teaching activities carried out in theological seminaries and schools of singers. The Hieromonk's entire musical creation includes over 2000 hymns which were adapted to the Romanian language and more than 150 original songs; most of them were left in manuscripts². His hymns served as an inspiration for later composers and developed the Romanian sacred music heritage.

The *Heirmologhion*³ (τὸ Εἰρμολόγιον) is one of the most illustrative books of Eastern hymnography. It was a music book, which allowed the singers to memorize the melody of the heirmoi and then they applied it to the troparia from the canon. Nevertheless, it was also a book of worship that was used in liturgical service of the morning office⁴. The *Heirmologhion* was meant for singers only. It contained the heirmoi⁵ of canons with or without their own melody and heirmoi⁶ that established the melody for those troparia that succeeded each ode. The earliest manuscripts of the *Heirmologhion* date back from the IXth and Xth centuries⁷ and they are major sources for knowing the first development stages of

² Pr. Asist. drd. Nicolae Giolu, "Macarie Ieromonahul," in *Dicționar de muzică...*, and the following *Macarie Ieromonahul*.

³ About the emergence and evolution of the *Irmologhion*, see: Simon Harris, "The *Canon* and the *Irmologhion*," *Music & Letters* 85, no. 2 (May, 2004): 175-197; Constantin Secară, "O tipologie a Irmologhionului," in *Muzica bizantină—doxologie și înălțare spirituală* (București: Editura Muzicală, 2006), 164-215; Egon Wellesz, *History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1998), 141-142; Miloš Velimirović, "The Byzantine Hymnos and the *Irmologhion*," in *Gattungen der Musik in Einzeldarstellungen*, (München: Gedenkschrift Leo Schrade, 1973), 192-244. Velimirović does the classification and cataloging of the *Irmologhions* into two groups, KaO and OdO, depending on internal organisation of the *Canons* and on organization of the timbres, as fundamental elements of construction.

⁴ Harris, "The *Canon* and the *Irmologhion*," 178.

⁵ Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, "Automelă," in *Dicționar de muzică...*, and the following *Automelă*.

⁶ Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, "Asemănândă," in *Dicționar de muzică...*, and the following *Asemănândă*.

⁷ The oldest and most important manuscripts of the *Irmologhion* were published in the series entitled "Monumenta Musicae Byzantine": *Hirmologium Athoum* Volume 2 (Copenhagen: "Carsten Høeg" Publishing House, 1938), (full copy of *Codex Monasterii Hiberorum 470*); *Hirmologium Cryptense* Volume 3 "Laurentius Tardo" (Rome: Publishing House, 1951), (full copy of *Codex Cryptensis Epsilon. gamma.II*); *Hirmologium Sabbaiticum* Volume 8 (Copenhagen: "Jørgen" Publishing House, 1968-70) Raasted 1. Pars Suppletoria 2.1. Pars Prima: Toni Authentici 2.2. Pars Secunda: Toni Plagales (Copenhagen: "Jørgen" Publishing House 1968-70) (full copy of *Cod. Saba 83*); Volume 6 *The Hymns of the Irmologhion* Part I transcribed by A. Ayoutanti & M. Stöhr, reviewed and annotated by Carsten Høeg, (Copenhagen, 1952); Volume 8. *The Hymns of the Irmologhion* Part III 2 transcribed by A. Ayoutanti, reviewed and annotated by H.J.W. Tillyard, (Copenhagen, 1956); Volume 4 *Twenty Canons from Trinity Irmologhion*, transcribed by H.J. W. Tillyard (Boston, Paris, London, Copenhagen, 1952).

hymnography and Byzantine music. Macarie the Hieromonk's *Heirmologhion*⁸ is based on Petros Peloponessiou Lampadariou's⁹ one¹⁰, which was printed with a Neo-Byzantine notation (Koukouzelian), the so-called *shortened Heirmologhion* that, beginning with the 17th century, has been called "Book of Katavasias"¹¹. As stated in the preface, Macarie's work includes "Katavasias of Great Feasts and of Mother of God, of the Triodion and of the Pentecostarion, as they are sung within the Holy Great Church of God".

Macarie's *Heirmologhion* has the following content: Katavasias at Great Feasts; Katavasias of the Triodion and of the Pentecostarion; Hymns composed by Gregorios Protopsaltes¹² for the Compline Canon of Saint and Righteous Lazarus; Hymns 4, 6, 8 at the Annunciation; Ode 7 for Virtuous Cross; Canons of

⁸ *Irmologhion sau catavasieriu musicesc, care cuprinde în sine catavasiile praznicilor împărătești și ale Născătoarei de Dumnezeu, ale Triodului și ale Pentecostariului, precum să cîntă în sfînta lui Hristos Dumnezeu beserica cea mare.* Acum întîiași dată tipărit în zilele prea-luminatului și prea-înălțatului nostru domn și ighemon a toată Ungrovlahia, Io Grigorie Dimitrie Ghica voevod, întru înțîiul an al domniei sale. Cu voia și blagoslovenia prea-o-sfințitului mitropolit a toată Ungrovlahia kyrio kyr Grigorie (în ediția pentru Moldova: Ioann Sandul Sturza voevod întru înțîiul an al domniei sale, cu voia și blagoslovenia prea-o-sfinției sale părintelui arhiepiscop și mitropolit al Moldaviei kyrio kyr Veniamin). Alcătuit romaneste pre așazămintul sistimii ceii noao dupre cel grecesc de smeritul Macarie Ieromonahul, portarie al Sfîntei Mitropolii a Bucureștilor, dascalul școalei de musichie. 1823. Traducător, editor și tipograf: Macarie Ieromonahul, în tipografia armenilor mechtariști din Viena, 1823.

⁹ Petros Lampadarios Peloponessiou (Πέτρου Λαμπαδαρίου του Πελοποννησίου) (1730-1778) is the most important composer of 18th century, who activated between 1764 and 1778. He recomposed almost the entire repertoire of hymns. Owing to him, the influence of Oriental music penetrated the ecclesiastical music more than ever. "Petros Peloponnesios" *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*. Canterbury Press, accessed April, 27, 2016 <<http://www.hymnology.co.uk/p/petros-peloponnesios>>.

¹⁰ Ειρμολόγιον των καταβασίων Πέτρου του Πελοποννησίου μετά του συντόμου Ειρμολογίου Πέτρου Πρωτομάλτου του Βυζαντίου. Εξηγημένα κατά την νέαν της μουσικής μέθοδον μετά προσθήκης ικανών μαθημάτων, ων εστερούντο εις το παλαιόν. Επιθεωρηθέντα ήδη, και ακριβώς διορθωθέντα παρά του Διδασκάλου Χουρμουζίου Χαρτοφύλακος. Petros Peloponnesios Lampadarios; Ed. Petros Byzantios, Chourmouzos Chartophylakos (Istanbul, 1825).

¹¹ Secară, "O tipologie a Irmologhionului...", 66.

¹² Protopsalter Gregory, also known as *The Levite* (because his father was a priest) or *Vizantie* (after his birth place) (1777/78?; died on the 23rd of December 1821) was a psalm singer, a composer, an exchigisitor, a theorist and a teacher. He was one of Protopsalter Jacob's pupils. He was also a disciple of Petros Vyzantios and George of Crete. His name is linked to the introduction and theorization of new systems. He brought contributions in connection with modal steps, modulations and transcription from old to new musical notation. He transcribed 20 volumes from old to new notation. Moreover, he also composed numerous personal works. He transcribed the following pieces in new notation: the *Anastasimatar*, the *Irmologhion* and Petru Lampadarie's *Doxastar* (translated and printed in Romanian by Hieromonk Macarie in 1823, respectively by Dimitrie Suceveanu, in *Sticherarion [Idiomelar]*, 1856-1857). Costin Moisil, "Grigorie Protopsaltul," in *Dicționar de muzică bisericească românească...* and the following *Grigorie Protopsaltul*; "Protopsaltes Gregory", *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*. Canterbury Press, accessed April, 27, 2016 <<http://www.hymnology.co.uk/g/gregorios-protopsaltes>>.

the Holy Week; Melodies (sl. *Podobije*) sung in Holy Churches of God during Great Vespers; Melodies (sl. *Podobije*) sung as hymns (sl. *sedelina*) during early services; Antiphons, first plagios mode - hymns sung at the end of early services.

Hieromonk Macarie's *Heirmologhion* was composed according to Petros Lampadarios' collection of hymns¹³. Those hymns had been put in circulation as manuscripts at the beginning of the 19th century. Then, Protopsaltes Gregory and Hourmouzios Hartofilax transcribed them in the new system. Petros Lampadarios' work appeared two years after that of Macarie.

Thus, one could stress the idea that Hieromonk Macarie used Petros' works that circulated in manuscripts in order to draw up his *Heirmologhion*. He mainly used the version that Protopsaltes Gregory transcribed in 1816. This fact is proven by the analysis of the contents of the two books: Macarie's version lacks the Katabasiae and the other hymns that belonged to Hurmuz and that were published in his volume in 1825¹⁴.

With regard to the service of *Pentecost*, one aspect worth mentioning relies in the differences found between Macarie's version and Petros' one. It is about the structure of the Heirmos in Ode IX. Macarie was dissatisfied with the heirmoi in Ode IX at the Katavasias of Great Feasts that had been translated according to Petros Lampadarios. Consequently, he has composed those heirmoi. He didn't take them plainly upon himself, but he called them concisely: «another». These heirmoi are justly considered the most successful compositions of this skilled teacher.

They are pieces of a rare melodic beauty, which are sung absolutely unchanged even today. The hymns of the *Heirmologhion* are an adaptation of the Greek melody to an hymnographic existing text: Macarie did not translate the text, but he used the text of the *Pentecost* service, which Filothei sin Agăi Jipei utilized in the *Romanian Psalter*¹⁵.

We'll take into consideration *Heirmos IX* from the two Collections of *Heirmoi*. *Heirmos IX* is also used during the *Divine Liturgy*, when it replaces the hymn "It is truly meet...". The Heirmos of the ninth hymn at the Feast of *Pentecost* was written by John Damascus and destined to be sung in the fourth mode, *leghetos*.

¹³ For the analysis of Petros Peloponisiu's *Irmologhion*, see Constantin Secară, "Elemente stilistice și de formă prezente în *Irmologhionul* lui Petris Lampadarios Peloponissiou," in *Muzica bizantină...*, 224-285.

¹⁴ Secară, "O tipologie a *Irmologhionului*...", 208.

¹⁵ Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, *Filothei sin Agăi Jipei, Psaltichia rumânească, Volume IV, Stihirar-Penticostar*, in *Izvoare ale Muzicii Românești Volume VII D* (București: Editura Episcopiei din Buzău, 1992), 211-215.

Elements of Literary Form

Structural, metric, modal and syntactic analysis of the heirmoi of the *Pentecost*, fourth mode, leghetos.

Structural and metric analysis		Modal and syntactic analysis				
Hymnographic text with punctuation marks according to Hieromonk Macarie <i>Irmologion...</i> pp. 68-73. Πιστημα Κυριου Ιωαννου του Απολα	Number of syllables	Hymnographic text with punctuation marks according to Hieromonk Macarie <i>Irmologion...</i> pp. 81-87. Canon composed by John Damascus	Evidences or cadential sound (name of sounds and typology of cadences under the new system)		Type of cadence	
			PL	MI	PL	MI
			Number of syllables			
«Χαίροις Ἄνασσα, μητροπάρθενονόδεος, ἄπανόφειδόνητρονεβύλαονστόμα. Πήρετον, οὐ σθένει σε μέλειται ἄλιως. Τλαγιῶ, δὲ νοῦς ἴπας σου τὸν τόκον Νοεῖν, ὄθεν σε συμπόρωνος δοξάζομεν».	12 12 12 12 12	Bucură-te împărăteasă Maică, slava fecioarelor, că toată gura cea limpede biregrăitoare, vorovind nu te poate cânta cum se cade și se întuneacă toată mintea a cunoaște nașterea ta. Pentru aceasta cu un glas pe tine te slăvim.	VU VU pa di VU	VU VU VU pa di VU	Perf. Perf. Perf. Imp. Imp. Perf.	Perf. Perf. Perf. Imp. Imp. Perf.
		Second version of heirmoi Bucură-te împărăteasă Maică, slava fecioarelor, că toată gura cea limpede biregrăitoare, vorovind nu te poate cânta cum se cade și se întuneacă toată mintea a cunoaște nașterea ta. Pentru aceasta cu un glas pe tine te slăvim.	VU VU VU VU VU	VU VU VU VU VU	Perf. Perf. Perf. Perf. Perf.	Perf. Perf. Perf. Perf. Perf.
		Third version of heirmoi Bucură-te împărăteasă Maică, slava fecioarelor, că toată gura cea limpede biregrăitoare, vorovind nu te poate cânta cum se cade și se întuneacă toată mintea a cunoaște nașterea ta. Pentru aceasta cu un glas pe tine te slăvim.	VU VU VU di di di VU	VU VU VU di di di VU	Perf. Perf. Perf. Imp. Imp. Imp. Perf.	Perf. Perf. Perf. Imp. Imp. Imp. Perf.

Symbols and abbreviations used in structural, metrical, modal and syntactical analysis: PL – Petros Lampadaros; MI – Macarie the Hieromonk; perf. – perfect cadence; imp. – imperfect cadence.

The comparative analysis¹⁶ of the versions of heirmoi at the Feast of *Pentecost*, which were composed by Petros Lampadarios¹⁷ and Hieromonk Macarie¹⁸, emphasizes the following aspects: elements of the literary form (the comparative macrostructural analysis, including elements of prosodic structure); and elements of the musical form (the modal functional system; the cadential system; the musical phrases: the melodic ambitus; melodic intervals; the rhythmic of the melody).

The heirmoi presented synoptically within the list of elements of literary form are divided according to the ideational structure of the text. The modal analysis (by outlining the cadences) reproduces the cadences through the cadential sound; the perfect cadences are rendered into capital letters, while the imperfect ones are rendered into small letters.

Elements of Musical Form

Modal Functional System

When taking the modal functional system into account, one could perceive that both authors wrote the heirmoi of the *Pentecost* in the irmologic form, which used the diatonic scale of voice IV, starting from VU, also known as Leghetos.

The Leghetos voice is the irmologic form of Voice IV. Due to the special role it has, sound VU is first tone, base within this modal scale.

¹⁶ The comparative musical analysis was adapted after having been adopted from: Alexandru, M. & Tsougras, "On Methodology of Structural Analysis in Byzantine and Classical Western Music - A Comparison". Proceedings from the 4th Conference on Interdisciplinary Musicology CIM08 (Thessaloniki, 3-6 July 2008) [both published on CD-ROM and on the conference's webpage: <http://cim08.web.auth.gr>]. Maria Alexandru, "Palaeography of Byzantine Music: Brief Introduction with Some Preliminary Remarks on Musical Palimpsests", [*El palimpsesto grecolatino como fenómeno librario y textual*], Institución «Fernando el Católico» (C.S.I.C.), Excma. Diputación de Zaragoza, (Zaragoza, 2006): 113-130. O. Strunk, "Intonations and Signatures of Byzantine Modes," *Musical Quarterly* (1945): 339-355; Georgios N. Konstantinou, *Teoria și practica Muzicii Bisericești* volumul I, ediția a II-a revizuită și adăugită, traducere din limba greacă, exemple muzicale, exemplificări audio (melos) și îngrijire ediție de Adrian Sirbu, îndrumător traducere Prof. univ. dr. Maria Alexandru, (Iași: Asociația Culturală "Byzantion", 2012); Victor Giuleanu, *Melodica bizantină: studiu teoretic și morfologic al stilului modern neo-bizantin*, (București: Editura Muzicală, 1981); Costin Moisil, "The Romanian Version of Petros Lampadarios' *Anastasimatarion*. Observations Regarding the Principles of Music Adaptation," in *Cantus Planus*; papers read at the 12th meeting of the IMS Study Group, Lillafüred/Hungary, 23-28 August 2004. Printed by the Musicology Institute of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, (Budapest, 2006), 151-171; I Arvanitis, "Rythmical and Metrical Structure of Byzantine Hyrmoi and Stichera, as Method and Result of A New Rhythmical Interpretation of Byzantine Hymn," *Acta Musicae Byzantinae* 6 (2003): 14-29.

¹⁷ Ειρμολόγιον των καταβασίων..., 68-73.

¹⁸ *Irmologhion sau catavasieriu musicesc...*, 81-87.

The Leghetos voice has the following main tones: VU, DI and superior ZO. The cadential system includes both imperfect cadences on PA, DI, superior ZO and superior PA, and perfect and final cadences on VU. Some musical creations may contain melodic attractions on PA to VU, on GA to DI and on KE to superior ZO. Zo receives the ifes, when the melody reaches its height; then, it descends and it becomes natural, when the melody passes ZO, while ascending, and, while descending, ZO receives the ifes again. At other times, natural ZO turns into ZO ifes.

The heirmologic hymns of voice leghetos rarely touch the heptaphony of the scale (superior VU). When the melodic line reaches superior VU, and, then, descends, VU receives ifes, and when the melodic line ascends and stays on superior VU, VU is natural. When the hymns are preceded by verses, the latter are sung on the VU sound; then, they climb up to DI and end with a cadential formula that corresponds to the voice, culminating on VU¹⁹.

The Katavasias that are present in the work of Petros Lampadarios and that were Romanized by Hieromonk Macarie, are composed in the argo irmologic style²⁰, which combines features borrowed from both the irmologic form of the voice and the sticheraric one. Both examined versions lack modulations in other voices. The melodic text respects the structure of mode IV Leghetos.

In terms of musical form elements, melodico-rhythmic formulas within cadences are those that underlie the Byzantine hymns. Victor Giuleanu says that: "...regarding the Byzantine music, melodic formulas take a modal aspect, thus creating those compositions that have typical structures, which the performer-composer combines and associates masterly, in order to create and express himself in that specific manner"²¹.

In modal and syntactic analysis of musical form elements, we will make use of the analysis type suggested by Constantin Secară²², which takes into account the identification of three types of formulas that are typical for the argo-syntomon style: beginnings (lat. incipit), cadential formulas, and inter-cadential formulas. These types of formulas represent the basis of semantic pronunciations heard at the analytical-structural and metric level, as set forth in the list above. In

¹⁹ Konstantinou, *Teoria și practica Muzicii Bisericești...*, 156-157; Victor Giuleanu, *Melodica bizantină*, (București: Editura Muzicală, 1981), 351-352; Grigore Panțiru, *Notația și ehurile muzicii bizantine*, (București: Editura Muzicală a Compozitorilor, 1971), 227-228; Nicolae Lungu, Pr. Prof. Gr. Priest Prof. Gr. Costea, Prof. I. Croitoru, *Gramatica muzicii bisericești „psaltice”*, (București, 1997), 64.

²⁰ The argo-syntomon style (αργόν – vast) that defined the *Irmologhion-Katavasias* from the 17th-18th centuries, designated the trend of kallopoismos within a historical period when personalities in the field of Byzantine music became emancipated. The process in discussion started as early as the 16th century. Secară: "Elemente stilistice și de formă...", 232.

²¹ Giuleanu, *Melodica bizantină...*, 186.

²² Secară, "O tipologie a Irmologhionului...", 233.

addition, through the identification and presentation of these formulas, one can easier perceive the processes that Hieromonk Macarie used when he romanized the Heirmos of the ninth hymn at the feast of Pentecost.

The Beginnings (lat. *incipit*)

In terms of the VU, DI, KE symbols, they are representing the initial notes that the beginnings are built with, while the Roman numerals represent the number of the ode from the Canon of the *Pentecost*. The beginnings introduce themselves in the form of some introductory melodic fragments, which secure the modal marks for deployment of melodic text.



Petros Lampadarios
Ειρμολόγιον των καταβασιών..., 72



First Heirmos

Second Heirmos

Third Heirmos

Macarie the Hieromonk
The Heirmologhion...[Heirmologhionul...], 84-87

When getting in touch with the beginnings of the two versions, one could observe the following:

- a) When composing, Macarie remains faithful to the Greek melody; hence, the structural similarities between the phrases of the two versions.
- b) In the last two versions, Macarie departs from the the original Greek and composes new beginnings, which have a more high-profile opening and open the thematic framework of the Heirmos.
- c) The melodic line that is present in Petros Lampadarios' beginning has a small opening. It has just a few notes and it leaves the widening and the extension of the phrase on account of subsequent developments.

Cadential System:

The cadential system found within the two analysed versions can be divided into two sections: perfect cadences and imperfect cadences. In Petros Lampadarios' version we encounter a perfect cadence on VU, in several versions of cadential formula, and two imperfect cadences on PA and DI, also, in several versions of cadential formula. In comparison, in Macarie's version, the cadences have the same structure as in Petros Lampadarios' one.

When we have analysed the musical versions²³, we have resorted to a synoptic overview for each Heirmos, in which we have noted the cadential formulas that we encountered:



Petros Lampadarios,
Ειρμολόγιον των καταβασίων..., 72



Macarie the Hieromonk, *The Heirmologhion... [Heirmologhionul...]*, 84-87

²³ The transcript from chrysanthic notation on stave-pentagram ignores ornamental signs, height differences of sounds in the system of Byzantine and Western intonation and, sometimes, the meter. The *legato* indicates that the notes it unites are sung on the same syllable.

Inter-cadential formulas are presented in the form of melodic-rhythmic formulas that are specific to voice IV leghetos - the argo-syntomon style, which covers the hymnographic text in melismatic formulas of small or large dimensions, being in interdependence with the ideational and syntactic structure of the text.

το - ον το - κο - ον νο - εν

Petros Lampadarios, Ειρμολόγιον των καταβασιών..., 72

I
a cu - noa - şte Na - şte - rea ta

II
a cu - noa - şte Na - şte - rea - ta

III
a cu - noaş - te - naş - te - rea - ta

Macarie the Hieromonk, *The Heirmologhion... [Heirmologhionul...]*, 84-87

If the two examples of inter-cadential formulas are taken into consideration, one will observe that the Hieromonk Macarie utilizes the formulas present in Petros Lampadarios' *Heirmologhion* in order to Romanianise the Heirmos of the ninth hymn. Thus, Macarie used imitation as a method of composing and created a symmetry at the level of the Heirmos, by using the same melodic patterns for the Romanian hymnographic text. Furthermore, as noted in the preface of the *Heirmologhion*²⁴, Macarie prioritized the Romanian word and accent: "Forming the word becomes the ultimate purpose... as it seems nonsense to have accent marks destined for doubled-in-size words (too short or too long) in contrast with Greek ones; the timbre of Greek word does not depend on the flow of melody (sl. Podobjije). Moreover, estrangement from the flow of melody by reason of the length of the word... is definitely an error and a sin". Thus, inter-cadential formulas are taken from the original Greek, with the necessary adjustments to the syllabic structure of the word and the syntax of the phrase in Romanian.

²⁴ Macarie Ieromonahul, *Irmologhionul...*, VI.

Macarie the Hieromonk's first Heirmos tried to be as faithful as possible to the structure of the Greek original. Nevertheless, the next two heirmoi derivated from the original and the Hieromonk created new melodic formulas of a greater length. Musical articulations are far more ornamented and they get into the syntactical register of the sticheraric idiom.

Melodic Ambitus

Generally, when one takes into consideration the two authors' hymns, one notices that the heirmoi exceed the octaval framework, reaching ZO in a grave register (at Petros Lampadarios) and NI (at Macarie the Hieromonk). They do not exceed step PÁ in a high register. The heirmoi come to expand even within an ambitus of 10ma.



Melodic Intervals

Considering the analysed heirmoi, throughout the melodic course, both authors particularly use two-step intervals (3m, 3M) or three-step ones (4 p). Longer intervallic steps, four-step ones (5p) or five-step ones (6 m), are used to highlight the main idea of the text.

Rhythmics of Melody

The argo-syntomon style from Byzantine music is defined by a beat given by the sequence of durations that compose the melody. Diversity of rhythmic formulas is obtained by combining syllabic formulas with melismatic ones, which confers a syllabic-melismatic beat.

In order to understand how tempo changes into rhythm, we are going to compare the four sequences of musical phrases morphologically. These phrases contain both syllabic and melismatic formulas.





Petros Lampadarios, Example: Ειρμολόγιον των καταβασίων..., 684

Macarie the Hieromonk, Example: *Heirmologhion or Musical Book of Katavasiae...*
[Heirmologhion sau catavasieriu musicesc...], 84-87

The two featured examples illustrate how the melodic path develops in a peaceful, moderate movement. Owing to their asymmetry, present rhythmic formulas provide the melody with full development freedom. Rhythmics is heterogeneous as it is determined by stressed syllables (*tone*) and unstressed ones (*atone*) of each word. The presence of dotted rhythms, of the triolet, gives a certain dynamism to the melodic line. A comparative analysis of the two versions on the level of both literary elements and musical ones, reveals a number of structural features of argon-syntomon hymn. In addition, the principles used by Hieromonk Macarie within the process of *Romanianisation* are being highlighted. Actually, Macarie adapted Peter the Peloponnesios' Heirmos of the ninth hymn to Romanian. These principles of adaptation could be subdivided into three categories:

a) Hymns Adapted to Romanian

The Heirmos of the ninth hymn at the feast of *Pentecost* that we examined, was composed by Macarie by adapting the original melody to the Romanian hymnographic text. The hymnographic texts of heirmoi employed by Macarie are almost identical to those of Filothei sin Agăi Jipei²⁵, and of Hieromonk Joseph from Neamț²⁶. The small philological differences are effects of the evolution of language, as the linguistic process is vivid and susceptible to changes. According to Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, from the musical point of view, the hymns of the *Heirmologhion* that was Romanianised by Monk Macarie, tend to approach Hieromonk Macarie's version. It was made possible by Romanianisation of similar hmyns and it denotes a stylistic continuity within the transcription process of old hymns²⁷.

As regards the place the accents occupy within the melodic text and the hymnographic one, Macarie used a number of methods to resolve the mismatches caused by prosodic and metric differences between the two languages. The first method employed to adapt the text to the melody was the replacement of the original cadence with another one, at the same point, in order to match with the accents from Romanian prosodic text.

This solution changes the melodic course of the original melody. In broad lines, where language allowed, Macarie used the compositional rule from Greek melodics, which defended the following principle: each beat corresponds to a syllable within the first part of the phrase; stressed syllables are placed with a step or a third above the dominant syllable, which, often, is repeated. For most examples, within the first section, the melody appears as a succession of simple ascending motifs, with an incipit on VU towards DI - the dominant step of Voice IV, *leghetos* - while a cadential formula constitutes the second part of the first section. The second section of the phrase is more varied than the first one melodically and it has a two-stroke beat or a four-stroke beat. It consists of a cadential formula²⁸.

²⁵ Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, *Filothei, Sin Agăi Jipa, Pslatiche Rumânească, Vol. IV, Stihirar-Penticostar*.

²⁶ There are currently three manuscripts that contain Peter the Peloponnesos' hymnoi, belonging to Monk Joseph from Neamț Monastery: Greek Manuscript 101 BAR; Ms. gr. 38 BMN, Ms. gr. 30 BMS. Cf. Secară "O tipologie a Irmologhionului...", 200.

²⁷ Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, "Manuscise psaltice românești și bilingve în notație cucuzeliană în marile biblioteci din România," in *Studii de muzicologie* Volume XII (București: Editura Muzicală, 1976), 141.

²⁸ These rules of Byzantine composition belong to Peter from Ephesus, who noted them within the preface of the *Anastasimatar*, (Νέον Αναστασιματάριον μεταφρασθέν κατά την Νεοφανή Μέθοδον της Μουσικής Υπό των εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει μουσικολογιωτάτων Διδασκάλων και εφευρετών του Νέου Συστήματος, νυν πρώτον εις φως αχθέν διά τυπογραφικών χαρακτήρων της Μουσικής, επί της θεοστηρίκτου Ηγεμονίας του Υψηλάτου ημών αυθέντου πάσης Ουγγροβλαχίας κυρίου κυρίου Αλεξάνδρου Νικολάου Σούτζου Βοεβόδα, αρχιερατεύοντος του πανιερωτάτου μητροπολίτου Ουγγροβλαχίας κυρίου Διονυσίου. Εκδοθέν σπουδή μεν επιμόνω του Μουσικολογιωτάτου κυρ Πέτρου του Εφεσίου, φιλοτίμω δε προκαταβολή του πανευγενεστάτου άρχοντος μεγάλου Βορνίκου κυρίου Γρηγορίου Μπαλλιάνου. Εν τω του Βουκουρεστίου νεοουσστάτω Τυπογραφείω, 1820), printed at București, in 1820; the rules refer to the structure of a musical piece written in a stihiraric style, but they can also apply to songs written in an irmologic pattern that is moderately melismatic. Costin Moisil, "The Romanian Version...", 156

b) Cadential Formulas

In broad lines, Macarie uses the same motifs and cadential formulas as the Greek original. He keeps the same succession rules of musical phrases and correlation rules of syllables that are stressed by strong measures of beats from cadential phrases. When the Romanian phrase is much longer than the Greek one, Macarie removes or adds new cadences, in order to avoid shortening or lengthening the phrase with new words. Thus, the composed melodic line differs from the original.

As it arises from the above lists, cadential formulas can be divided into perfect and imperfect ones. As a rule, formulas of perfect cadences are located at the end of those phrases and distances that are permanent; that is, they express an idea or a sequence of musical ideas exhaustively and correspond to the end of an idea from the literary text. Formulas of perfect cadences contain from 4 to 7 syllables and end on VU. Commonly, formulas of imperfect cadences are located at the end of phrases that are in course of development, in the sense that they appeal for continuation of musical ideas and they usually correspond to a comma in the text. Formulas of imperfect cadences contain between 3 and 5 syllables and they end on PA or DI.

Likewise, the differences between the two versions could be put on the account of literary accents related to perfect and imperfect cadential formulas. Consequently, Macarie was constrained to run various changes. In terms of differences at the level of melodic structure of formulas, one can ascertain that they are also generated by the linguistic differences, the number both of syllables and of accents.

The two versions are, largely, similar, at the level of cadential formulas, but, in terms of the number of syllables in a particular period or Heirmos, things are different. The reason lies in the literary style employed by Saint John of Damascus when he wrote the canon of the *Pentecost*. St. John of Damascus used the rules of ancient Greek prosody. He made use of iambic formulas and, thus, there is a syllabic equality between the verses of an ode and between odes themselves. The Romanian translation no longer kept the syllabic equality and the texts were interpreted unconstrainedly from fixed poetic forms.

c) Musical Adaptation: Constraints and Freedom of Choice

From an architectural point of view, Macarie's heirmoi glide away with a dynamic rhythm. As a result, there is a number of specific aspects: the musical phrases, which form the Heirmos, unfold as a succession of conjunct steps, through tones and semitones, with the exception of the few third and fourth steps. Throughout the melodic track, almost all sounds from the intervallic instrument of modal diapason become active, while the sounds from the lower part of the diapason are

more often used, through small melodic steps. The ascending meanings of beginnings lead to dominant step, DI. Descending meanings lead to the base, VU. At the end of each musical phrase, rhythmic lowers its tune due to values that are higher than those throughout the melody; they confer a relative stability to cadential melodic formulas, if imperfect, and definitive stability, if perfect cadences.

Despite these methods of transcription used, the author assumes the liberty to estrange a lot from the original melodic text and writes new melodies, like the two versions of the Heirmos from the ninth hymn. They are melodies that highlight the composer's mastery.

On the other hand, in certain circumstances, the author turns to other procedures of composition and employs different formulas or different cadences. Analysis of incipit, of cadences and of intercadential formulas explains Macarie's procedure of estranging from the Greek original. Such an intervention may be referred to as a method of replacing the original cadence with one another, on the same, but with a high melodic complexity. Cadential formulas that he uses within the two heirmoi are completely different from the Greek original and highlight the author's skill. Likewise, when the Romanian text is shorter or longer, the author removes or adds new cadential formulas. When differences in text are significant, the melodic line is entirely changed. However, the author has a certain care for the preservation of rare Greek formulas.

Conclusions

Macarie adapted the Heirmos of the ninth hymn at the feast of *Pentecost* to the Romanian hymnography. Nevertheless, he tried to keep composition rules from the original Greek as much as possible. Sometimes Macarie turned to a middle solution, in order to keep the Romanian melodic text as close as possible to the original. Thus, he added or removed certain imperfect cadential formulas and sometimes he entirely substituted the cadential formulas from the Greek text. The Romanian hymnographic text has been subdivided in such a way as to correspond to the final cadences in the Greek text. For rhetorical reasons, certain formulas have been used to highlight the text idea. With artistic genius, Macarie broke the melodic line of the Greek original and introduced new formulas. He even created other melodies for the same texts, as it was the case of *Heirmos IX*.

The *Romanianisation* process undertaken by Hieromonk Macarie - see Petru Peloponisiu's *Heirmologhion*, in general, and the Heirmos of the ninth hymn at the feast of *Pentecost*, in particular - implies conserving the Greek melody, with certain distinctions between the Greek text and the Romanian one, which are given by differences regarding the accents, the number of syllables and the amount of words.

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- Νέον Αναστασιματάριον μεταφρασθέν κατά την Νεοφανή Μέθοδον της Μουσικής Υπό των εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει μουσικολογιωτάτων Διδασκάλων και εφευρετών του Νέου Συστήματος, νυν πρώτον εις φως αχθέν διά τυπογραφικών χαρακτήρων της Μουσικής, επί της θεοστηρίκτου Ηγεμονίας του Υψηλάτου ημών αθέντου πάσης Ουγγροβλαχίας κυρίου κυρίου Αλεξάνδρου Νικολάου Σούτζου Βοεβόδα, αρχιερατεύοντος του πανιερωτάτου μητροπολίτου Ουγγροβλαχίας κυρίου Διονυσίου. Εκδοθέν σπουδή μεν επιμόνω του Μουσικολογιωτάτου κυρ Πέτρου του Εφεσίου, φιλοτίμω δε προκαταβολή του πανευγενεστάτου άρχοντος μεγάλου Βορνίκου κυρίου Γρηγορίου Μπαλλιάνου. Εν τω του Βουκουρεστίου νεοσυστάτω Τυπογραφείω, 1820, printed at București, in 1820.

Appendix 1. Petros Lampadarios, Ειρμολόγιον των καταβασίων...



BOOK REVIEWS

Bosko I. Bojovic – *L'Eglise Orthodoxe Serbe. Histoire – spiritualite – modernite*, Institute des Etudes Balkaniques, Belgrade, 2014, 372 p.

The history of the Serbian Orthodox Church is not very well known in the Romanian space. Some pages from the works about the history of the universal Church published by authors like Father Ioan Rămureanu¹, Father Nicolae Chifăr², Father Vasile Muntean³ or Father Mircea Păcurariu⁴ show some aspects of it (especially from the medieval period, when this Church had also a Patriarch) and some works present the relationships between this Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church⁵. However, these works only give a general vision (and not always a complete one) about the history of this important ecclesiastic institution.

This is the reason why, in this essay, we will try to present the work of the Serbian

historian Bosko I. Bojovic, published in 2014 at the Institute for Balkan Studies in French, which offers a complete presentation of the multi-millenarian Serbian Orthodox Church in a well-known language. The author, who works as research manager at the aforementioned institute, being also a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, a Professor at the Belgrade University and an Associate Professor at *Ecole de Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales from Paris*, already enjoys good recognition amongst contemporary researches. His works, in which he analyses the History of the Byzantine Empire, the one of the Ottoman one and the History of the Balkans are therefore well known.

His research is divided in three big parts, which are themselves segmented in several unities. The first one is dedicated to the evolution of the relationships between Church and State between the 12th and the 20th centuries (pp. 17-108), the second one to the relationships between Royalty and the evolution of the Orthodox Church in the aforesaid space (pp. 109-202), and the third one, entitled "Tradition and modernity" (pp. 203-324), highlights the biographies of some important personalities like Nikolai Velimirovic (pp. 205-224) or Justin Popovic (pp. 225-237), the links between the two, as well as some aspects of historical demography (pp. 255-266) or aspects about the links between ethnicity and confession.

¹ Ioan Rămureanu, *Istoria Bisericească Universală* [History of the Universal Church], 1-3th volumes, (Bucharest: Press of Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1987).

² Nicolae Chifăr, *Istoria creștinismului* [The History of Christianity], 1-2th volumes, (Sibiu: "Lucian Blaga" University Press, 2008).

³ Vasile Muntean, *Istoria creștină generală* [The History of general Christianity] (Bucharest, Press of Orthodox Biblical and Mission Institute, 2008).

⁴ See: Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* [The History of Romanian Orthodox Church] (Bucharest: Press of Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2006).

⁵ See, for example: Lucian Mic, *Relațiile Bisericii Ortodoxe Române din Banat cu Biserica Ortodoxă Sârbă în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* [The relations between the Romanian Orthdo Church from Banat with the Serbian Orthodox Church, in the second half of the XIXth century] (Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 2013).

In the forward, Bosko I. Bojovic speaks about the importance of spirituality for the Serbian people⁶ and about the role of the monasteries from this area. He shows that the monastic life constituted a modality of practicing and transmitting the principles of this spirituality:

“This spirituality is embodied in the faith and practice through the introduction of the cult of the saints in the liturgical calendar of the Local Church, with its own particularities. These are the coenobitic monasteries, inspired by the ones from the big spiritual centres of Byzantium (e.g.: the great Monastery of Theodoros d'Evergetis from Constantinople) which are at the basis of the coenobitic rules, namely the monastic *typika* (pp. 9-10).”

Further on, he presents each part of the history of this national Orthodox Church, but not only by presenting data and information, but also by highlighting the relations between Church and society, by analysing the importance of ethnicity in the constitution of the Serbian Patriarchate during the medieval times and during the contemporary period or, by analysing important contemporary problems.

At the end of the book, there is a long bibliographical list (pp. 325-364), comprising especially Serbian titles, which shows the quality of the research and can be useful to the reader who wants to study more thoroughly some of the problems⁷; it also includes two maps (363-364) and an index (pp. 365-370).

In conclusion, the work of Bosko I. Bojovic, entitled *L'Eglise Orthodoxe Serbe. Histoire – Spiritualité – Modernité*, can be considered an important research about the history of the Church, which is also very useful for Romanian historians who want to find more things about this important neighbouring Orthodox Church.

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⁶ “The thinking and the theological literature from the Orthodox space rely especially on the ascetical hermitic spirituality, but also on the cultural and liturgical experience. This is the reason why the hagiographic writings, but also the liturgical ones, or the legal (canonical) ones, with their rhetoric and laudatory preambles, are the first expression of this theology of the faith accompanied by politics.” Bosko I. Bojovic, *L'Eglise Orthodoxe Serbe. Histoire – Spiritualité – Modernité* (Belgrade: Institute des Etudes Balkaniques, 2014), 9.

⁷ Romanian readers can be proud when they find works of authors like Nicolae Iorga cited among other masterpieces in the domain. Cf. *ibid.*, 338.

BOOK REVIEWS

**Joachim G. Persoon, *Spirituality, Power and Revolution: Contemporary Monasticism in Communist Ethiopia* /
Vaclav Jezek, *Overview of the Orthodox Church During Communism*,
Volos Academy of Theological Studies, Volos, 2014, 545 p.**

In a special way, the Volos Theological Academy from Greece published in 2014 a book written by two authors about the relationships between the Orthodox Church and Communism. The first part of it (p. 11-259), signed by the English researcher Joachim G. Persoon, specialised in the history of the Ethiopian Church (he gained his PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies from the University of London), is in fact the PhD thesis of the first author.

Divided in six chapters, the book comprises a series of introductory elements (pp. 11-50) like the literature used by the author in the process of documentation (pp. 15-17), theoretical concepts (pp. 22-29), aesthetical aspects (pp. 30-39), and terminology (p. 39), a big exploration of the history of the monastic life from the area (pp. 51-117) and the most important aspects that defined this life during Darg's Communist period.

The author presents the main geographic aspects and shows how they influenced the development of the monastic life

in the zone, talks about the importance of the sacred dance for the Ethiopian religion and culture and about the importance of the rules in Ethiopian monasticism¹ and about the importance of the abbeys in the process of evangelism², and presents some examples of important monasteries, chosen from the almost 1000 (p. 14) existing on that territory. Then, in the second part of the presentation, he presents the evolution of monasticism in the Communist period, showing that

“During the Communist period, monasticism manifested itself as the sacred appearing at the heart of usurping secularism, which it sought to transfigure through compassion and renovating energy. The monastic community's experience was marked both by negotiation, ambiguity, indetermination and surprisingness” (p. 19).

Fruit of the academic work of the author, but also of the direct interaction with the monks and the Ethiopian environment (because the author lived two and a half years in Ethiopia for documentation and he interviewed a lot of monks), this research offers to the reader a beautiful and complex image of that world and of its

¹ He shows that, almost each monastery has its own rule, but not like in the Catholic space: “Each Ethiopian Monastery has a *danb*, although it has less central importance than a western rule. Kings and wealthy patrons sponsored the writings of rules”. Joachim G. Persoon, *Spirituality, power and revolution: contemporary monasticism in communist Ethiopia* / Vaclav Jezek, *Overview of the Orthodox Church during Communism* (Volos: Volos Academy of Theological Studies, 2014), 61.

² “In order for the monasteries to remain relevant in Ethiopian society, it was essential that they be active in evangelism.” Persoon, *Spirituality, power and revolution* / Jezek, *Overview of the Orthodox Church during Communism*, 119.

interaction with Communism, which did not affect the monastic life in the same manner it did in the European Orthodox space.

The second part of the volume (pp. 260-495), written by the Czech priest Vaclav Jezek, aims to help the reader to become familiar with the situation of the Orthodox Churches from Eastern Europe. After an examination of the history of the Church in this space (starting from the Middle Ages), the author presents the main aspects of the relations between Church and State in countries like Romania (p. 437-442), Yugoslavia (pp. 442-447), Bulgaria (pp. 447-452), Albania (p. 452-455) or Cyprus (p. 455-460). At the end of the book, there is another presentation of a brief history of the Ethiopian Church (pp. 460-464) and the impressions of the first author about the country.

Except the fact that the work offers much information in a very unsystematic way, the book is important and interesting. It is interesting for the readers who want to delve into such an unknown part of the

Church history and it is important for the historical research, because it brings new information and fills an empty space in the contemporary research about this subject.

Therefore, the readers interested in the exotic aspects of the Church history, but also the historians who are interested in finding new and important information about this subject and about the History of the Orthodox Churches from the European spaces, during the Communist period³, are invited to read it and to use it in their new researches as an important source.

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³ As it is also presented in Christine Chaillot (ed.), *Biserica Ortodoxă din Europa de Est în secolul XX*, translated into Romanian by Liliana Donose Samuelsson (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011).