

WHOLENESS OF THE BODY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TALKS ON ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION

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REZUMAT. Integralitatea trupului în contextul discuțiilor privitoare la transplantul de organe. În cadrul acestui articol, autorul analizează, pe baza opiniilor unor specialiști în teologie și bioetică, precum: Înaltpreasfințitul Irineu al Alba-Iuliei, Thristram Enghelhardt, Mircea Gelu Buta, Maria Aluaș sau alții, relația dintre intrgritatea trupului și transplantul de organe. Principala întrebare este aceea dacă procesul de transplant, care afectează integralitatea trupului, făcându-l să piardă un organ sau să primească unul străin, este o greșeală, în conformitate cu învățătura Bisericii Ortodoxe. În cadrul analizei, problema este corelată cu alte procese similare, precum amputarea, sau împărțirea moaștelor, care afectează de asemenea integritatea trupului. Concluzia la care se ajunge în urma cercetării este aceea că, în condiții normale, procesul transplantului nu este o greșeală, ci un act de iubire pentru aproapele.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Irineu Pop-Bistrițeanul, Thristram Enghelhardt, eshatologie, trup și suflet.*

ABSTRACT. In this article, the author analyses, based on the opinions of some contemporary theologians and specialists in bioethics like the Archbishop Irineu Pop from Alba-Iulia, Thristram Enghelhardt, Mircea Gelu Buta, Maria Aluaș, or others, the relationship between the wholeness of the body and the transplantation of organs. The main question debated is if the process of transplantation, which affects the integrity of the body is a sin, according to the Orthodox Church teaching. The problem is related with other similar processes like the amputation or the segmentation of relics, which also affect the body wholeness. The conclusion is that, in normal conditions, the process of transplantation is not a sin, in normal situations, but a fact of love for the other.

Keywords: *Irineu Pop-Bistrițeanu, Thristram Enghelhardt, eschatology, body and soul.*

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Introduction

Organ transplantation is an interesting topic of discussion for contemporary researchers, fact proved by her presence in all major treaties bioethics², in discussions on legal phenomenon valences³, abuses or similar matters⁴. Scientists are concerned about both the medical side of it, noting in their works issues relating to donor and recipient profile and moral implications they might have.

² Some of the most important works on this subject are: Vasile Astărăstoae, Almoș Bella Triff, *Essentialia in Bioetica*, Cantes Press, Iași, 1998; Irineu Pop-Bistriceanu, *Curs de bioetică (Bioethics handbook)*, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2005; John Breck, Lyn Breck, *Trepte pe calea vieții – o viziune ortodoxă asupra bioeticii (Steps on the life's road)*, translated in Romanian Language by Geanina Filimon, Sophia Press, Bucharest, 2007; H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr., *Fundamentele bioeticii creștine – perspectiva ortodoxă (Fundamentals of the Christian bioethics - an Orthodox perspective)*, translated in Romanian Language by Cezar Login, Sebastian Moldovan, col. „Philosophia Christiana”, Deisis Press, Sibiu, 2005; Maria Aluaș, *Bioetică medicală (Medical Bioethics)*, Press of the „Iuliu Hațieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca, 2016; Ana Smith Iltis, Mark J. Cherry (coord.), *La temelile bioeticii creștine – eseuri critice asupra gândirii lui Tristram Engelhardt jr. (To the roots of the Christian Bioethics - critical essays on the thought of Tristram Engelhardt jr.)*, translated in Romanian Language by Cezar Login, Maria Aluaș, Dumitru Vanca, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2011; Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii și Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 9th volume „Bioetica creștină și provocările lumii secularizate (Christian bioethics and the challenges of the secularised world)”, col. „Bioetica”, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2006; Marian Niță (coord.), *Dicționar de bioetică, (Dictionary of bioethics)* Aius Printed Press, Craiova, 2009; Gheorghe Scripcaru, Aurora Ciucă, Vasile Astărăstoae, Călin Scripcaru, *Bioetica, științele și drepturile omului (Bioethics, the sciences and the human rights)*, col. „Bios”, Polirom Press, Iași, 1998.

³ Cf. Camil Tănăsescu, *Fundamentele filosofico-juridice ale conceptului de prelevare și transplant de țesuturi și organe umane (mss. dactil., teză de doctorat: The philosophical and juridical fundamentals of the concept of transplantation of human tissues and organs)*, Bucharest 2005; P. A. Carstens, „The constitutional influence on organ transplants with specific reference to organ procurement”, in *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal*, XVII (2014), Issue 1, pp. 208-210; Gheorghe Scripcaru, Simona Damian, „Către o nouă ramură juridică, biodreptul (dreptul comparat și aculturația juridică) (Throw a new juridical branch, the bio-law – the compared law and juridic aculturation)”, in Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii și Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 7th volume, „Perspectiva creștin-ortodoxă asupra prelevării și transplantului de organ (Christian-Orthodox perspective about the prelevation and transplantation of organs)”, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, pp. 33-35.

⁴ Cf. Maria Cristina Voinic, *Traficul ilicit de organe, țesuturi și celule umane – prevenire și combatere (Illicit trafficking in organs, tissues and cells - preventing and combating)*, Sitech Press, Craiova, 2009; Ștefania Kory Calomfirescu, *Moartea cerebrală și transplantul de organe (The cerebral death and the transplantation of organs)*, Ecou Transilvan Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2014; Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii și Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 7th volume, „Perspectiva creștin-ortodoxă asupra prelevării și transplantului de organ (Christian-Orthodox perspective about the prelevation and transplantation of organs)”, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009; Iancu Tănăsescu, *Transplantul și prelevarea (The transplantation and prelevation)*, C. H. Beck Press, Bucharest, 2008.

Bioethics, science and history quite recent, located at the crossroads of many sides of contemporary investigation, assured the friendly meeting and dialogue between different specialists. Contemporary bioethical discourse has become so big concerns synthesis of all devoted to the subject. Among these concerns, include one regarding the relationship between transplant and completeness of the body, which we will analyze in the following lines, drawing large publishers aspects of literature older or newer, theological or secular⁵.

Wholeness Of The Body - a Barrier to Organ Transplantation?

Definition

As can be inferred from the very name of the concept, completeness body is the term used to define the quality of the human body, living or dead, to be composed of all its organs at the place where, biologically, they found since the birth of their owner⁶. This may be disrupted either because of diseases that lead to loss by amputation of some organs or following transplantation. Teeth or hair loss does not affect the integrity, just as the loss of the different layers of the skin after its regeneration, as in their case, it is natural phenomena that produce it.

Contemporary Bioethicists, Transplant and Completeness Body

Transplantation requires, as noted, there is a donor and a recipient. The trial itself raises many questions theological, medical, legal, etc. Some theologians such wonders whether the man is a unit „dies in pieces”⁷. Analysis lawyers are concerned both legislative provisions concerning transplantation and abuses attributed to the procurement of the necessary bodies, while doctors are interested in all these aspects, but also the underlying medical phenomenon.

⁵ Cf. Dominique Martin, „Professional and Public Ethics United in Condemnation of Transplant Tourism”, în rev. *American Journal of Bioethics*, X (2010), Issue 2, p. 18; Maria Aluaş, „Trafficking in organs and transplant tourism. Ethical and legal issues in the romanian context”, în Ioana Vasiliu, Florin Sireteanu (eds.), *Crimes, Criminals and the New Criminal Codes. Assesing the Effectives of the Legal Response. In Honorem Professor George Antoniu*, Accent Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, pp. 170-178.

⁶ In fact, according to the *Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, "integrality" is defined as being: " state, situation of what is comlete". Cf. Romanian Academy, "Iorgu Iordan" Institute of Linguistics, *Dicţionar Explicativ al Limbii Române (DEX) (Explicative Dictionary of Romanian Language)*, 2nd edition, Univers Enciclopaedic Publishing House, Bucharest 1996, s. v. „integralitate”.

⁷ Cf. Ioan Chirilă, „Omul - o unitate care moare pe părţi? (Man - a unit split dies?)”, in Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii şi Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 7th volume, „Perspectiva creştin-ortodoxă asupra prelevării şi trasplantului de organ (Christian-Orthodox perspective about the prelevation and transplantation of organs)”, Renaşterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, pp. 25-26.

Among theologians, some voices are against transplant, claiming that the entirety of the body, important condition for human existence in its spiritual meaning is affected through this process. Moreover, and legally, it stipulates that „the human body is sacred, untouchable, should be respected both during life and after death, and can not be subject to any trade”⁸, paragraph willing to emphasize the importance of the body and its relationship and dignity. The idea completeness body was found in a veiled way to theologians as Engelhardt and is expressed directly and clearly by His Eminence, Archbishop of Alba Iulia today, in two of his works. At first, it is presented in a less directly, but rather the respect to be given to the body as part of the human being:

„In all cases, bodies, human organs and tissues must be given respect. Through baptism, Christians faithful were clothed in Christ and united with Christ (Gal. 3, 27)” and they received the Eucharist Christ in themselves. Their bodies became temples of the Holy Spirit. This may provide grounds directly against the killing of a human body brain dead, but otherwise living (eg never inject a lethal drug to cause a biological dead). The bodies of all (the Holy Spirit blows where He wills), but especially of faithful Christians should be respected as we respect the body relics of a saint⁹.

At the second, original ideas are outlined in volume that wants a little treatise on bioethics, and more clearly in the second. And he aware that respect for the human body is a prerequisite even in the transplantation¹⁰, analyze this aspect is concerned. An interesting contribution it brings to confer keep eschatological dimension of the whole problem. Thus, when talking about this medical approach, he states that:

„Many Orthodox oppose a strong resistance to organ transplants because their conception of character and the human body, about sickness and

⁸ Gheorghe Scripcaru, Aurora Ciucă, Vasile Astărăstoae, Călin Scripcaru, *Bioetica, științele și drepturile omului (Bioethics, the sciences and the human rights)*, p. 140. In other place, they show that: " As we have already show, none the human place in its integrality, must not be the boject of a commercial activity (with the exception of the donation of blood, which, in the majority of the states, is for free)". *Ibidem*, p. 141.

⁹ H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr., *Fundamentele bioeticii creștine – perspectiva ortodoxă (The fundamentals of the Christian Bioethics - the Orthodox perspective)*, p. 433.

¹⁰ " Sampling means sometimes go to the lack of respect and consideration for fellow body. We are wondering if it still is respected the dignity of this body where there are missing the eyes, the hart, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, the pancreas, a few bones and a few meters from the gut (what is called multi-organ sampling and it is considered the most cost). Maybe, in this case, we are all right to be opponents of such a materialist and utilitarian reductionism, which is now predominating and which is transforming the body in an object and in and in removable and interchangeable parts". Irineu Pop-Bistriteanul, *Curs de bioetică (Handboo of bioethics)*, p. 69.

healing and about death. In Orthodoxy, man is never found without his body, either during the biological life or thereafter. After death, the man retains a kind of biological imprint of his body. You will need to account for how it has used, or what has become of those they suffered: „He who sins against his own body (I Cor. 6, 18), „The Lord keepeth all their bones, none of them will crush (Ps. 33, 19 și In 19, 36). Finally, when the Saviour says: „And if thy hand or thy foot offend you, cut it off and throw it from you, it is better for thee to enter into life maimed or lame, than to be burned in the eternal fire" (Mt. 18, 8-9), do not let us understand that: 1) the body and destiny are part of the elements of personal judgment after death; 2) the fact of the matter is currently before you judge with integrity or amputated body?

In Scripture, mention organ of the body is made primarily by their function relationship which marks or deviating („who has ears to hear, let him hear"). For the Orthodox, no organ is isolate each part of a system that links it to all the other organs of the body, the body which itself is the temple of the Holy Spirit Church member and member of the body of Christ. What prevents the Orthodox to accept the easy removal of organs from a body,, "is undoubtedly the conception we have about death and about the first days after it"¹¹.

In a study published four years later in the journal *Bioethics* of the University of Cluj, he shall recompose speech, expressing in a much more readable, aided by an artifice rhetorical conception dance on the relationship between the completeness of the body, perceived as whole and the complex phenomenon of transplantation. Here's what he says:

„But where is it and what remains of dignity when he lacks eyes, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, some bones? How will present him before the judgment seat?"¹²

Concept dance, as well as other professionals you quotes¹³, it is one that is based on a serious and may be, somehow, citing scriptural. However, it raises questions similar to those which it put other specialists from recipients behaviour analysis asks whether transplantation and kinship brings the two

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 61-62.

¹² Irineu Pop-Bistrițeanul, „Un gând creștin asupra transplantului de organe (A Christian think about the transplantation of organs)", in *Studia Universitatis „Babeș-Bolyai"*, series "Bioethica", LIV (2009), nr. 1, p. 22.

¹³ Mark Andronikof, „Un punct de vedere ortodox asupra transplantului de organe (An Orthodox point of view about the transplantation of organs)", in *Revista Teologică (Theological Review)*, New Series, VIII (1998), nr. 1-2, p. 102 et passim.

actors¹⁴. It is one that is based on a serious and may be, somehow, citing scriptural. However, it raises questions similar to those which it put other specialists from recipients behaviour analysis asks whether transplantation and kinship brings the two actors. However, when it comes to an amputation surgery, the aim of which is the salvation of man, even without retaining entirety, no protest, does not consider the process as one being unethical and does not provide arguments scriptural against him. Researchers dealing with prevention of amputation¹⁵, trying to find solutions, but where this is not possible, however, call this process, without any qualms, more than that if they try to oppose, through such assumptions, by the Church, it would be heavily criticized and it claims that preaches death and not life as Christ asks! Why is it that when it comes to amputation therapeutic role, theologians are quick to talk about the need for completeness body, and when it comes transplant, she relies on in order to provide an argument against this?

True, if the amputation of a body, this is because the one who loses would not be able to use it and storing it in the body could lead to disruption of the function of the other and, ultimately, death. Transplantation, organ functioning, and in addition, the integration of another body would of course raise serious questions about the relation of the body with him. Will make the body of the old body? Will it be part of the new body? How will report the body receives from him? Questions which could be its knead those concerned about the moral dimension of the process. Sometimes, however, the theory is solved by doing. In the present situation it is the same. When if it is a healthy organ is transplanted, the one who donates body can function without him¹⁶, while the body of the recipient uses to prolong life and to function parameters similar to those before. It's true, we can discuss here the quality of life of the

¹⁴ Cf. Sebastian Moldovan, „Transplantul – o înrudire? (Transplantation - a kinship?)”, in Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii și Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 7th volume, „Perspectiva creștin-ortodoxă asupra prelevării și transplantului de organ (Christian-Orthodox perspective about the prelevation and transplantation of organs)”, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, pp. 108-128; Viorica Bindea, „Se întâmplă în 2008 (It hapened in 2008)”, in Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii și Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 7th volume, „Perspectiva creștin-ortodoxă asupra prelevării și transplantului de organ (Christian-Orthodox perspective about the prelevation and transplantation of organs)”, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 225.

¹⁵ Cf. Malgorzata Zdzioch, "Preventing amputation... This reflective account is based on NS796 Thomas E (2015) Preventing amputation in adults with diabetes: identifying the risks" in *Nursing Standard*, XXX (2016), Issue 25, pp. 61-62.

¹⁶ Cf. Cristina Gavrilovici, Beatrice Ioan, Mihaela Vicol, Vasile Astărăstoiaie, „Aspecte etice în procurarea de organe (Ethical aspects in the procurement of organs)”, in Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii și Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 7th volume, „Perspectiva creștin-ortodoxă asupra prelevării și transplantului de organ (Christian-Orthodox perspective about the prelevation and transplantation of organs)”, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 79.

two and how it is affected, however, we believe that future advances¹⁷, can improve this aspect.

We believe therefore that the main dilemma that should knead specialists should not be so, but the approach should be based on other premises, such as love of neighbour and help him. In addition, there are more important issues that should be considered, such as body abuses arising from the practice etc.

On the other hand, the reader might ask whether this body is fully valid only during life and lapses after its finality. In the press, the news and other sources is often mentioned as the relics of certain saints were offered but some communities or individuals, especially from ecclesiastical space¹⁸. The relics are nothing but bodily remains of some saints, usually remaining incorrupt and usually they smell nice. Their existence is a prerequisite for the process of canonization¹⁹.

However, dividing the pieces of these churches which have as protectors on certain saints or certain hierarchs of the Church does not affect the completeness of the body. Why then would affect the entirety transplantation?

The matter is therefore an issue only in the context of the entirety of the body is correlated with dignity owner and abusive practices. Given that there is such situations, when death will fully brings transplant donor should definitely avoid making the practice of transplantation. Under normal circumstances, however, as the Tristram Enghelhardt:

„When there is a determination proper death, even a determining proper death of the entire brain, you should be banned Orthodox Christians or their families to give their consent to such donations after establishing brain death, if they do this in love for others.

When there is a reliable determination of death, transplant does not involve the killing or maiming of a living person. Indeed, even living donation of an organ or tissue not essential to life vividly show none of the signs of mutilation sinful,

¹⁷ Cf. Ștefan Iloaie, „Transplantul sau suferința ca șansă pentru mântuire (Transplantation or the sufference as a chance for the salvation)”, in Mircea Gelu Buta (coord.), *Medicii și Biserica (The Doctors and the Church)*, 7th volume, „Perspectiva creștin-ortodoxă asupra prelevării și trasplantului de organ (Christian-Orthodox perspective about the prelevation and transplantation of organs)”, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, pp. 165-183.

¹⁸ Cf. <http://biserica-sfantul-silvestru.ro/biserica-sfantul-silvestru-a-primit-moastele-patronului-ei-spiritual>, accesat 24. 05. 2016; <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/stiri/ziarul-lumina/parohia-ostia-primit-particica-moastele-sfantului-calinic-la-cernica-96126.html>, accesat 24. 05. 2016; <http://mitropolia.md/particele-din-moastele-sfintilor-si-o-bucata-de-lemn-din-crucea-pe-care-a-fost-rastignit-hristos-au-fost-aduse-la-sfanta-manastire-suruceni/>, accesat 24. 05. 2016.

¹⁹ For more information about this subject and about the conditions that must be fulfilled for a canonisation, see: Ioan N. Floca, *Drept canonic ortodox – legislație și administrație bisericească (Orthodox Canon Law – legislation and administration of the Church)*, 2nd volume, Press of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1990.

they were determined canons in non-therapeutic castration convictions. We are not ungrateful for the body that God gave it to us. Do not try to remove the differences between man and woman. We accept goodness human nature. Instead, we get back, loving, helping others, as long as it does not involve risk certain death (as, for example, by donating the heart), such acts of love, depending on the circumstances, not only tolerable but also commendable"²⁰.

It is therefore Orthodox perspective on organ transplants. Seen as an act of love and help to our neighbor, practiced as such, it does not come with any of the canons of the Church but rather strengthens learned from the Fathers.

Conclusion

As you can see from our research page, completeness body is not a problem for organ transplantation, as long as it is not about any „sinful mutilation”²¹, or is not motivated by criminal intent. Clearly, God sees things in depth and understand the act of love beyond the requirements of a law that can kill (II Cor. 3, 6), giving it a new meaning by His Holy quickening. So, theologians concern is based only in the context of the problem is related to other similar matters and tends to escalate, placing it outside the context of ethical dialogue. In other cases, more important issues such as cloning and euthanasia, supported recently by some contemporary theologians²², ought to preoccupy contemporary theological exponent’s space and lead them to find solutions.

²⁰ H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr., *Fundamentele bioeticii creștine – perspectiva ortodoxă (The fundamentals of the Christian Bioethics - the Orthodox perspective)*, pp. 432-433.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 432.

²² Cf. Hans Kung, *La mort heureuse*, trad. Jean-Louis Schegel, Editions du Seuil, Seuil, 2015; Hans Kung, *My Struggle for Freedom. Memoirs*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2003 (Novalis, Ottawa 2003; Continuum, London 2003); Hans Kung, *Disputed Truth. Memoirs*, vol. II, Continuum Publishing House, London, 2008.