

THE METAPHORS OF *GOD* IN ORTHODOX PRAYERS

Andreea-Nora PUȘCAȘ¹

Article history: Received 22 September 2022; Revised 6 December 2022; Accepted 1 February 2023; Available online 27 March 2023; Available print 31 March 2023.

©2023 Studia UBB Philologia. Published by Babeș-Bolyai University.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

ABSTRACT. *The Metaphors of God in Orthodox Prayers.* In this paper we look at the conceptual metaphors of *God* that we encountered in a collection of Orthodox prayers. Prayers are a type of discourse genre belonging to liturgical sublanguage, which is described as conservatory and intangible. We aim at identifying the way in which religious imaginary is configured as part of the linguistic heritage. We do not only intend to analyse the mechanisms of the conceptualization of *God* in the discourse of devotions, but also to connect it to religious teachings and dogmas, to have a better understanding of the outlined imaginary. The concept of *God* is deeply rooted in prayers and is lexicalized into coherent and logical structures, interwoven into a pluralist perspective on divinity.

Keywords: *God, Cognitivism, conceptual metaphor, linguistic imaginary, Orthodox prayers*

REZUMAT. *Metaforele referitoare la Dumnezeu în rugăciunile ortodoxe.* În prezenta lucrare ne propunem să identificăm metaforele conceptuale referitoare la *Dumnezeu* într-un corpus de rugăciuni ortodoxe. Rugăciunea este un tip de discurs aparținând sublimbajului liturgic, descris ca intangibil și conservator. În cele ce urmează, vom urmări modalitatea în care se configurează imaginarul religios ca parte a patrimoniului lingvistic. Nu intenționăm doar să analizăm mecanismele prin care *Dumnezeu* este conceptualizat în discursul rugăciunii, ci și să relaționăm aceste reprezentări cu învățăturile religioase și dogmatice, pentru a înțelege mai bine modul în care este configurat imaginarul verbalizat. Conceptul de *Dumnezeu* este puternic înrădăcinat în limbajul rugăciunii, fiind organizat în structuri coerente și logice care oferă o perspectivă pluralistă asupra divinității.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Dumnezeu, cognitivism, metaforă conceptuală, imaginar lingvistic, rugăciuni ortodoxe*

¹ **Andreea-Nora PUȘCAȘ** is a researcher at “Sextil Pușcariu” Institute of Linguistics and Literary History in Cluj-Napoca, working for the Department of Lexicology and Lexicography. She published the books *Unitățile frazeologice cu termeni religioși în română și spaniolă. O analiză comparativ-contrastivă* (2015) and *Epistolar. Texte însoțitoare ale răspunsurilor la Chestionarele Muzeului Limbii Române* (2021). Email: andreea_nora_pop@yahoo.com.

1. Introduction

Religion and religiosity can be studied from many points of view (historical, dogmatic, ritualistic, moral, linguistic, etc.), with the prevailing modern-day practice of approaching this field from an interdisciplinary perspective. One of the recent tendencies integrates religion with the field of cognitive sciences, in general, and with cognitive linguistics in particular, seeking to approach linguistic creativity. In this respect, as human thought is studied from the perspective of the role of its metaphorical structures, it can be stated that research into religious language is a key factor in understanding the imaginary of a certain religious community. Taking the cognitivist approach to religious imaginary implies studying the relationship between metaphors and religion or, in Witzig's (2013, 2) words, identifying the "metaphors Christians worship by". Also, Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003, 193) noted that religious conceptual systems are metaphorical, so metaphors contribute to the understanding of religious experiences, since they are "an important tool to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices and spiritual awareness". Moreover, there are two levels of interpreting religious metaphors: a metaphysical universal level ("what it may mean to be a self-conscious human being flung amidst the diversity of the world") and a local one (the "impulse to structure accordingly both society and the psychological posture of that group"). Metaphors are configured into imaginative models which evolve around basic root metaphors, or, in other words, the listener is taken "to a familiar set of information and experiences through which the idea may be decoded" (Erussard 1997, 199–200).

Religious language cannot be related only to the imaginary, but also to linguistic legacy, since "long-used metaphors have become cultural currency, exerting influence at pre-cognitive levels" (DesCamp and Sweetser 2005, 223). We understand religious language in terms of a common heritage passed down from previous generations (Pușcaș 2020), due to its main features: continuity, stability, archaicity and preservation. Some centuries ago, Romanian religious language coincided with the language of highly cultivated men, therefore contemporary religious texts are a proof of old "bookish" Romanian. Several religious sublanguages can be distinguished, the biblical one being of central importance due to its intangible, conservative and epiphanic dimensions, as the Bible is the fundamental Christian text; the language of the Scriptures has also a dominant role in organizing religious language in general. With the cognitive approach, new light has been shed on biblical metaphors, such as Jesus Christ's metaphorical discourse (see Witzig 2013), the metaphors of "The Song of Songs" (see Verde 2016), as well as the metaphors of *God* employed in The Old and New Testaments (see DesCamp and Sweetser 2005).

Following these previous lines of research, the present paper pursues the examination of cognitive metaphors used in Orthodox prayers (our corpus consists of a prayer book, the *Horologion*, and the *Liturgy book*). We, therefore, aim at liturgical sublanguage, a type of religious language employed in religious practices, also intangible and conservative; the metaphors we intend to analyse are not new, spontaneous, or truly creative, as they are related to the theological perspective of Christian life. In addition, this type of discourse explores the relationship between the believer and divinity and must be understood and interpreted in the context of spiritual life (privately praying to God), since concepts are embodied in actions. That is why Rosenberg (2016, 75) claimed that religious metaphors should be considered in connection to their significance in one's life, intimately related to personal spiritual experiences.

We have decided to focus on the metaphors of *God* due to their central significance in Christian life. The abundance of metaphors provided in the language of prayer is almost self-evident, because understanding God implies the reference to an entity who is the main object of faith, "a reality that is transcendental and surpassing any reality that is known to humans, to their experiences, knowledge and thoughts"; consequently, "religious language needs metaphors that can be understood, imagined, experienced and practised" (Kuczok 2014, 54–5).

2. Theoretical and methodological background

Although it is normally believed that cognitive metaphors were first examined by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980, and described in more detail in 1993, the conceptual dimension of the metaphor was not new, as it had been approached by Aristotle, and had re-emerged in the modern age; consequently, cognitive linguistics is "the result of a long tradition that has the merit of clarifying the cognitive mechanisms of metaphorical processes"² (Verde 2016, 45).

According to cognitivism, metaphors are a matter of thought, not mere linguistic devices aimed for literary embellishment. It is, therefore, a conceptual or cognitive metaphor which manifests itself through language, thought and

² In this respect, Verde's work (2016) is illuminating: Aristotelian metaphorology included a cognitive perspective, while in the modern era the cognitive dimension of the metaphor was anticipated by Tesauro (through the image of 'birth': intellect generates new meanings and makes connections to familiar elements) and Vico (the metaphorical process implies creating a conceptual image through sensory experiences); later, the cognitive dimension was developed by philosophers such as Richards (metaphors seen as a form of interaction between metaphorizing and metaphorized terms), Black (metaphors imply more than a substitution process) and Blumenberg (metaphors convey a *Weltanschauung* perspective), by Ricoeur (metaphors are alive and create a new way of thinking), and Eco (the literal meaning, the cultural and contextual dimensions of the metaphor should also be taken into account).

actions (we speak and act through metaphors, as they impose structure on our thinking) and which is noticeable in a variety of everyday life situations (that is why “we live by” metaphors, although we might be unaware of them). Hence, metaphor is a useful tool in building the way we perceive reality; through the process of metaphorization, abstract concepts such as *time*, or *feelings* (the input examined, called “target”, or “theme”) are expressed in concrete terms, taking into account the direct experiences of individuals (the input providing the structure for the metaphor, called “source”, or “vehicle”). This results in systematic “mappings” or conceptual correspondences between the two domains. The source domain is often based on the knowledge extracted from our bodily experiences in the world (movement, object manipulation and senses), while corporality is metaphorically projected in different areas, including religious experience (Lakoff 1993, 208–9; Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 89).

Lakoff and Johnson’s theory was continued by other researchers and improved through the concept of *blending*. According to the *blending theory* (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), brain processes cognitive material instantly and inadvertently; cognitive blending means selecting and combining meaning from firmly set cognitive structures in order to build new meaning. The metaphorical process implies the following: source, target, generic space (the aspects the two domains have in common) and blended space (a balanced and potent mixture of elements belonging to the two domains). Metaphors divide into two categories: single scope blends (a systematic pattern of mapping between the two inputs: the relationships from the first domain are projected onto the second one, while the language and the structure of the input space are used in the blend) and double scope blends (meaning is imported from at least one input space, while the blended space conveys the structure through elaboration, inference and completion).

Later, Edward Slingerland (2004) introduced the concept of “experiential” or “embodied realism” to refer to conceptual metaphors in a text, expressing a point of view that goes somewhere between antirealism and Enlightenment realism. In his point of view, “there are structures of cognition common to all human beings regardless of their culture, language, or particular history. [...] these commonalities are not reflections of some a priori order existing independently of humans and necessarily true for any conceivable rational being but, rather, arise out of the interactions of human bodies with a fairly stable physical world over the course of both evolutionary and personal time, which makes the emergence of certain primary metaphors and other cognitive structures almost inevitable” (16–8). Metaphors in a text are seen as primary vehicles for meaning, since they are close to our embodied experience.

The above-described theoretical background is useful when trying to understand and analyse the mechanisms of the imaginative act through which

transcendental reality is conceptualized. However, when dealing with linguistic imaginary, the cognitive approach should be extended to the cultural dimension of language, which goes beyond cognitive mechanisms; linguistic imaginary is culturally tailored and includes all the representations about objects and phenomena established in language (Platon 2020, 24).

3. An inventory of metaphors

According to Christian teachings, theological thinking is apophatic, as God cannot be limited to words, notions, or definitions. Therefore, He is described through negative words: *immeasurable, ineffable, incomprehensible, unreachable, unspeakable* (Schmemmann 1993, 63). Apart from the use of *alpha privativum* words, there are certain names in the Holy Scriptures employed by God to refer to Himself, which indicate a more distant relationship between men and divinity: "I am the existing one" (Exodus 3:14), "I too am working" (John 5: 17). The analysis of the metaphors of *God* in Orthodox prayers in light of cognitive linguistics has in view the domains, the cross-mapped conceptual elements and the configuration of the blended space; eventually, the analysis of the way the interrelated conceptual elements are mingled is to be undertaken. The target domain is God, while the source domain very often unveils an anthropomorphic representation of divinity, because, as DesCamp and Sweetser (2005, 215) noted, "Human concepts of God must necessarily take place within the realm of human cognitive capacities". Most identified metaphors are structural, i.e., one concept (God) is metaphorically structured in terms of another one.

The corpus abounds in instances of the general metaphor **GOD IS A HUMAN BEING**³. This metaphor usually harmonizes with "the basic normative root metaphor of Christianity", i.e., **GOD IS LOVE**, which functions as an organizing principle or a sustained metaphor that "organize subsidiary metaphors and diffuse new ones" (Erussard 1997, 198). From this point on there seems to arise an entailment of specific metaphors:

GOD IS THE CREATOR

→ **GOD IS THE FATHER**. The metaphor originates in Lord's prayer (Matthew 6: 9–13), in which Jesus Christ calls God a father as He is God's only-begotten Son and includes Himself in a brotherhood with humans. The metaphor uncovers the following map taken from the biological family organizing frame: Christians → God's children; Christians → brothers; Christians' sins → children's

³ Concepts are printed in capital letters to show that they do not occur at the language level, but at the conceptual one.

mistakes; God has mercy on men → the father helps and protects his children. The generic mental space implies an agent and a patient, who can also become an agent, and their corresponding characteristics. For example: *Tatăl nostru, Care ești în ceruri / Our Father, Who art in heaven* (CR, 7; L, 77); *Părinte sfinte, miluiește-ne / Holy Father, have mercy on us* (CR, 46); *Părinte a toată lumea, binevoiește a îngriji și de aceste ființe nevinovate / Father of the whole world, deign to watch over these innocent beings* (CR, 83); *și-mi deschizi părinteștile Tale brațe / and open unto me Thy fatherly arms* (CR, 102); *binecuvântează moștenirea Ta / bless Thy inheritance* (L, 97); *Părinte atotțiitorule / Almighty Father* (C, 43).

The fatherhood metaphor has been tackled by DesCamp and Sweetser (2005, 217; 234), who noted that it is so culturally entrenched that it functions as a primary metaphor that “can be utilized and re-worked in cognitive blending”. According to the authors, “Parenthood is arguably the strongest human experience of emotionally close (and emotionally symmetric, in that affection and relationship are mutual), but hierarchically asymmetric relationship”. However, in terms of theological interpretation, the concept of family relationship exceeds DesCamp and Sweetser’s view, since God’s paternity is not natural, or anthropomorphic, as it was shown by Christ: “no one knows the Father except the Son” (Matthew 11:27) (Schmemmann 1993, 188). With the coming of Christ into the world, man regains the status of God’s son and Christ’s brother, so God can be called a father. Father is the source of life, protects, and resurrects His offspring, revealing completely His identity: He is Love manifested in His mercy and care, which is vividly illustrated by the image of the embracing arms (Bistrițeanu 2021, 23–33).

Furthermore, the Church is sometimes seen through the lens of maternity: *să ajungă a fi credincioși fii ai sfintei noastre Biserici / come to be devoted children of our holy Church* (CR, 93), Christians’ loyalty being pointed out. The Church is viewed as a mother and people carry out their spiritual gestation in its womb; church life starts with baptism and finishes with the soul’s passing from this world (Noica 2002, 40).

→ **GOD IS A BUILDER.** The metaphor relates to God being the Creator of the world and has its own set of entailments: God → builder; the human being → God’s construction; the construction is refurbished → God forgets human beings. Worthy of being mentioned, God is humanized through the image of the hands, which becomes a creation symbol, as it is unconsciously assumed that creating something involves the use of hands. Examples: *Miluiește-mă, Stăpâne și Făcătorul meu / Have mercy on me, my Master and Creator* (CR, 33); *Cel Ce m-ai zidit, Dumnezeuule, miluiește-mă / Thou Who hast fashioned me, God, have mercy on me* (CR, 77); *Ziditorul meu, nu mă uita pe mine / my Fashioner, do not forsake me* (CR, 287); *a zidit pe om cu mâinile / He hast fashioned man with His hands* (CR, 290); *pe om l-ai zidit după chipul și asemănarea Ta și cu tot harul Tău l-ai*

împodobit / You have created man according to Your image and likeness and adorned him with all the gifts of Your grace (L, 23); *Tu ești Cel Ce din neființă ne-ai adus întru ființă / You are the one Who brought us out of nothing into being* (L, 61); *Mâinile Tale m-au făcut și m-au zidit / Your hands have made and fashioned me* (C, 20). In theological words, the world is created for all humans and every person is created for the world, while the transition from inexistence to existence means encountering God's light, love, and wisdom (Schmemmann 1993, 89; 189).

GOD IS A GUIDE

→ **GOD IS A GUARDIAN.** The organizing frame delineates a mental space in which the following activities occur: God → protector; believers/virtues → the protected; enemies → hardship. Moreover, God takes on the traits of a safeguard who guides the believer and offers him good advice. Examples: *Păzitorul nescricăciunii / Guardian of incorruption* (CR, 87); *Păzește-ne întru toate zilele vieții noastre / Protect us all the days of our life* (CR, 88); *păzește de vrăjmașii văzuți și nevăzuți pe soțul meu / deliver my husband from enemies visible and invisible* (CR, 89); *Tu [...] priveghezi asupra mea, îndreptezi pașii mei în calea binelui / Thou [...] wakefully watch me, order my steps aright* (CR, 101); *Apără, mântuiește, miluiește și ne păzește pe noi, Dumnezeule, cu harul Tău / Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace* (L, 12); *Domnul te va păzi pe tine / God will guard you* (C, 28). The metaphor mirrors the more general metaphor GOD IS LOVE, as He is the only one who manifests love in the way described by the Gospels.

→ **GOD IS A SHEPARD.** This prevailing metaphor with elements taken from the frame of pastoralism finds its roots in the Biblical parable of the shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep alone to find the lost one (Luke 15:4–6). The metaphor has already been analysed by DesCamp and Sweetser (2005, 218) through the employment of Fauconnier and Turner's diagram. Its generic mental space involves an agent, the agent's characteristics and duties, an object and its characteristics; the mental space of each input includes God → shepherd; Israel → sheep, while according to the blended mental space, God is a shepherd; God feeds and leads Israel, carrying for the most vulnerable. We consider an extension should be added to this interpretation, as sheep does not refer only to the people of Israel, but also to the individuals who are lost due to their sinful condition; so, the following mapping can be added: committing a sin → getting lost from the flock; the grass eaten by the sheep → the Eucharist. The metaphor is supported by examples such as: *Iisuse, Păstorul meu, nu mă pierde pe mine / Jesus, my Shepherd, destroy me not* (CR, 287); *Iisuse, Păstorul meu, caută-mă pe mine / Jesus, my Shepherd, seek me* (CR, 295); *Iisuse, Păstorul meu cel preaîndurat /*

Jesus, my most-merciful Shepherd (CR, 299); *numără-mă între oile turmei Tale preaaalese. Hrănește-mă împreună cu ele din verdeața dumnezeieștilor Tale Taine / number me among the sheep of Thy chosen flock. Nourish me with them on the grass of Thy Holy Mysteries* (CR, 304); *și-i numără cu turma Ta cea aleasă /and number them among Your chosen flock* (L, 36). The mappings are enriched by the metaphor CHRIST IS A LAMB, which points at the crucifixion of Jesus and, consequently, at the Eucharist: *Se sfărâmă și Se împarte Mielul lui Dumnezeu / The Lamb of God is apportioned and distributed* (L, 80). Despite the specific zoological reference, the same idea of looking after sheep is put forward; in addition, the double role of Jesus, who is seen both as a shepherd and lamb, establishes an identity between the agent and the patient, which evokes hypostatic union.

→ **GOD IS A DOOR OPENER.** The metaphor is related to another common religious metaphor, (CHRISTIAN) LIFE IS A JOURNEY, indicating a shorter itinerary and an easier to reach destination. The entailment of the metaphor is the following: the sinner → the visitor; the wish for change → knocking at the door; the heart → the door; forgiveness → the space behind the door. According to the frame, people are not passive, while their actions are benefic and necessary. Examples: *Iisuse, deschizătorul celor ce bat, deschide inima mea cea ticăloasă / Jesus, Opener to those that knock, open my wretched heart* (CR, 292).

→ **GOD IS A TEACHER.** The two inputs are framed as follows: God → a teacher; Christianity → a school; Christians → students; good deeds → the subject taught. Structures are imported from the source domain and reveal an illuminating didactic process, which is useful to inner life; spiritual growth starts with the five senses, which take man to a better knowledge of God until they become familiar with Him, the process of teaching being seen as reciprocal (Noica 2002, 14; 18). Examples: *Luminează-mi ochii mei, [...] ca nu cumva să adorm întru moarte / Enlighten mine eyes, [...] lest at any time I sleep unto death* (CR, 42); *să mă îndreptezi de astăzi înainte spre bine, până la sfârșitul vieții mele / guide me in the way of good from today till the end of my life* (CR, 49); *ne-ai învățat ca întotdeauna să ne rugăm unul pentru altul / You taught us to always pray for one another* (CR, 89); *Să-i învețe pe dânșii cuvântul adevărului / Rightly teach them the word of truth* (L, 35); *învăță-mă îndreptările Tale / teach me Thy statutes* (C, 18); *Fă să înțeleg calea îndreptărilor Tale / Make me understand the way of Thy statutes* (C, 18).

GOD IS A CONTROLLER OF EXISTENCE

→ **GOD IS A KING.** The metaphor is Bible-based – “The Kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21) – and can be understood only with reference to biblical times, when “every person had a king, just as every person had a parent.

The conduct and priorities of the king had immediate and central importance to the lives of his subject” (DesCamp and Sweetser 2005, 234). In addition, religious services also have a royal appearance manifested in the tonality of the music used in worship (in this respect, a proper example is the Song of Cherubims), or in the symbols of royal authority, which are a proof of the influence exerted by the Byzantine imperial court over rite performance (Schmemmann 1993, 123).

The mapping of the metaphor implies the following steps: God → king; Christians → subjects; praying to God → worshipping the king; directing things and actions → reigning. The generic mental space includes an agent and a patient and their corresponding duties. Examples: *Veniți să ne închinăm Împăratului nostru Dumnezeu / Let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God* (CR, 12); *Dumnezeule veșnic și Împărate a toată făptura / Eternal God and King of all creation* (CR, 30); *Cel Căruia ne închinăm, Împărate sfinte / worshipful God, holy King* (CR, 31); *Și-i învrednicești pe toți [...] veșnicei Tale împărății / And lead them all [...] into Thine eternal kingdom* (CR, 48); *cârmuitorul atotputernic și preaînalt al lumii întregi, Care privești de pe tronul Tău pe toți locuitorii pământului / almighty and supreme ruler of the whole world, Who watch over all inhabitants of the earth from Thy throne* (CR, 80); *Binecuvântată este împărăția Tatălui și a Fiului și a Sfântului Duh / Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (L, 9); *să se învrednicească de cereasca Ta împărăție / be deemed worthy of Your celestial Kingdom* (L, 41). The image of the king unable to get separated from his kingdom is very common in the analysed corpus; theologians explain this representation in terms of knowing and loving God, which translates into being united with Him, as God represents the source of life and life itself. There are no visible signs of God’s kingdom, which will emerge at the end of the world, when people will recognize their true emperor; however, those who believe in God have already found the kingdom of heavens (Schmemmann 1993, 47–8).

→ **GOD IS A MASTER.** The conceptual blends of the metaphor rely on a frame provided by the experience of serving others: God → master; Christians → God’s servants, God being described as merciful. The generic mental space involves an agent and a patient with their specific characteristics: *Miluieste-mă, Stăpâne / Lord, have mercy on me* (CR, 33); *Stăpâne, Iubitorule de oameni / Master, Lover of mankind* (CR, 38); *Iisuse, Stăpânul meu cel preamilostiv / Jesus, my greatly-merciful Lord* (CR, 299); *duhul curăției, al gândului smerit, al răbdării și al dragostei dăruiește-l mie, slugii Tale / a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me, Thy servant* (CR, 104); *Doamne, Dumnezeul nostru, a Căruia stăpânire este neasemănată și slavă neajunsă / Lord, our God, Whose dominion is incomparable and glory incomprehensible* (L, 13); *Stăpâne, Doamne / Master, Lord* (L, 17); *să-Ți aducem datorita închinare și preamărire /*

to You all glory, honor, and worship are due (L, 23–24); *Robul Tău sunt eu / I am Thy servant* (C, 22); *fericită este sluga pe care o va găsi priveghind / blessed is that servant whom He shall find watching* (C, 25). The concept of bondage exceeds the idea of rigid dominance; according to Christian thought, God knows better than human beings what they need or wish for; although they may desire to find life, they may erroneously search for it, while they eventually realize God gives them exactly what they have wished for (Noica 2002, 20).

→ **GOD IS A JUDGE.** The metaphorical link between the two domains draws on the stock of commonplace knowledge about trials in a court: the judge decides how a person is guilty of a crime. The pattern of the metaphorical structure is: God → a lawmaker; sinner → sentenced people; saints → rewarded people. The agent is described as righteous and enraged, applying a spontaneous judgment to the patients. Examples: *Fără de veste Judecătorul va veni și faptele fiecăruia se vor descoperi / Suddenly the Judge shall come, and the deeds of each shall be laid bare* (CR, 11); *Doamne, Iisuse Hristoase, Judecătorul meu și Dumnezeu veșnic / Lord, Jesus Christ, my judge and eternal God* (CR, 63); *în ziua dreptei Judecăți să dăruiești lor și nouă bucuria și fericirea sfinților / on the day of your righteous judgment vouchsafe them and us to find the joy and gladness of saints* (CR, 79); *în dreapta Ta mânie îi pedepsești pentru greșelile lor / in Thy righteous fury you condemn them for their sins* (CR, 84); *răspuns bun la înfricoșătoarea judecată a lui Hristos / a good defence before the dread judgment seat of Christ* (L, 76); God makes the laws: *Fericiți cei [...] care umblă în Legea Domnului / Happy are those [...] who walk in accordance with God's Law* (C, 17); *Lăuda-te-voi întru îndreptarea inimii, ca să învăț judecățile dreptății Tale / I will confess Thee with uprightness of heart, when I have learned the judgments of Thy righteousness* (C, 17). In front of a judge, people usually experience fear, which, in Christian terms, refers to the fear of not losing God and to the loving relationship with Him; therefore, this type of fear gets people closer to God. Another important aspect relates to forgiveness, which is given to people by God before they ask for it (Noica 2002, 97; 121).

GOD IS AN ORGANIZER OF EXISTENCE AND A PROVIDER

→ **GOD IS AN ADMINISTRATOR.** According to this metaphor, which relies on the field of experience, God surpasses the role as creator and assigns the one of a reliable and skillful administrator of the terrestrial creation: *Chivernisitorul cel bun al celor lumești / good provider of earthly things* (CR, 87); *Cel Ce ai așezat în ceruri cetele și oștile îngerilor și ale arhanghelilor spre slujba slavei Tale / Thou Who hast placed the choirs of angels and archangels in heavens to celebrate Thy glory* (CR, 17); *Cel Ce prin adâncul înțelepciunii, cu iubirea de oameni toate le*

chivernisești și ceea ce este de folos tuturor le dăruiești / Thou Who by the depth of Thy wisdom dost provide all things out of love for mankind, and grantest unto all that which is profitable (C, 28). The metaphor gains a more nuanced perspective through its mapping: God → administrator; the world → entity; angels → subordinates.

→ **GOD IS A CLEANER.** The metaphor involves a regular pattern of mapping between the source and the target domains: committing a sin → getting dirty; sins → dirt; being forgiven by God → being cleaned, while the agent acts upon the subject along the transcendental experience. Examples: *curățește fărădelegile mele / cleanse my iniquities* (CR, 292); *curățește-mă după mare mila Ta/ cleanse me according to Thy mercy* (CR, 296); *curățește-mă pe mine păcătosul / purify me, the sinner* (CR, 15); *curățește-ne pe noi de toate întinăciunile noastre trupești și sufletești / cleanse us from every defilement of flesh and spirit* (CR, 18); *să ne curățești sufletele și trupurile de toată necurăția cărnii și a duhului / You may cleanse our souls and bodies from every defilement of flesh and spirit* (L, 41); *sufletul meu curățește-l de tot păcatul / cleanse my soul of all impurity* (C, 63). In religious practices, the domain of cleaning is related to the Sacrament of Confession which does not suppose only a simple enumeration of sins, but also a state of being, involving understanding and repentance (Noica 2002, 56).

→ **GOD IS A CLOTHES PROVIDER.** The following schema is invoked to highlight the metaphor: good deeds → clothes; supernatural power → clothes; God → clothes (provider); nakedness → lack of good deeds. The generic mental space involves a merciful agent who exerts his powers over an unworthy subject. For example: *Iisuse, Care ai îmbrăcat cu putere de sus pe Apostolii Tăi [...], îmbracă-mă și pe mine cel golit de toate faptele cele bune / Thou Who didst clothe with power from on high Thine apostles [...], Jesus, clothe also me stripped bare of all good works* (CR, 287); *Iisuse, acoperământul cel de bucurie, acoperă-mă pe mine nevrednicul / Jesus, Shelter of Joy, cover me, the unworthy* (CR, 292); *Iisuse, veșmântul cel luminat, înfrumusețează-mă / Jesus, Garment of Light, adorn me* (CR, 301); *la vremea potrivită învrednicește-i de [...] veșmântul nestrăcării / grant them at a proper time [...] the garment of incorruption* (L, 36); *Domnul este acoperământul tău / God is your garment* (C, 28). The apparently inconsistent images – the conceptualization of God as an item of clothing and as a clothes provider – work together to form a coherent metaphorical concept. More specifically, longing for God means understanding with the whole being that His absence is synonymous with darkness, desertedness, or uselessness, as He is the reason and joy of all things (Schmemmann 1993, 106).

→ **GOD IS A DOCTOR.** The image schema of this extremely frequent metaphor activates the metaphorical process in the following way: God → a clinician; sins → the cause of the disease; God's wounds → medicine. Examples: *durerile noastre le-ai ridicat, de unde cu rănila Tale noi tămăduindu-ne / You*

didst take on our infirmities, being healed through Thy wounds (CR, 291); *dă-mi tămăduire mie, celui ce-Ți cânt / grant healing to me who cry unto Thee* (CR, 298); *tămăduiește-mi trupul cel rănit cu păcatele / heal my body scabbed with sins* (CR, 299); *de durerile cele sufletești și trupești izbăvește-mă / from sickness of soul and body deliver me* (CR, 301); *cu patimile Tale vindecă patimile mele, cu rănilile Tale tămăduiește rănilile mele / heal my passions with your passions, heal my wounds with your wounds* (CR, 302); *doctorul sufletelor și al trupurilor noastre / physician of our souls and bodies* (L, 78). The blending of the conceptual elements can be paraphrased as follows: fallen human condition is in decay and only God can offer people a cure to overcome their state.

→ **GOD IS A DEBT'S SAVIOUR.** Inferences are transferred in the following way: God → the person the debtor owes money to; believer → debtor; God's gifts → debt. Examples: *Dezlegătorule al tuturor datoriiilor / Absolver of all debts* (CR, 300); *nemărginite sunt datoriiile mele către Tine / my debts to You are innumerable* (CR, 102). The mention of the never-ending debts evokes God's mercy and compassion, which surpasses people's mistakes.

→ **GOD IS A REDEEMER.** The entailment of the metaphor is the following: sins/the devil → killers; Christian life → war (the specific metaphor CHRISTIAN LIFE IS WAR was analysed by Witzig 2013, 5); God → the helper that rises people's soul from the dead. There are more possible cross-mappings activated by the metaphor, but the most frequent one relates to people's need to exert more effort in their endeavour in order to improve or become better persons. Examples: *nu mă lăsa să adorm în moartea păcatelor / Grant me not to fall asleep in the death of sin* (CR, 15); *să măntuiești zidirea Ta / save Thy creation* (CR, 49); *S-a sculat Domnul, omorând moartea / The Lord awoke destroying death* (CR, 67); *dulcele Mântuitor al sufletului meu / sweet Saviour of my soul* (CR, 59); *înviază și sufletul meu cel omorât cu păcate / raise my soul, deadened by sins* (CR, 286); *apără-i de vrăjmașii văzuți și nevăzuți / protect them from enemies, visible and invisible* (CR, 81); *să mă ajuți a birui ispitele ce mă învăluiesc / help me drive away the assaults of temptation* (CR, 92); *Pentru ca să fim izbăviți noi de tot necazul, mânia, primejdia și nevoia, Domnului să ne rugăm / For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord* (L, 11); *răstignindu-Te [...] cu moartea pe moarte ai călcat / You were crucified and [...] conquered death by death* (L, 15); *Mâna Ta să mă mântuiască / Let Thy hand be for saving me* (C, 24). The images in the structures parallel the theological thinking according to which, in his Love, God could not let men die, so He took all their sufferings and flaws by assuming the cross experience (Noica 2002, 119). Therefore, God's love is humble (Noica 2002, 31) and through His incarnation (as God and man's son simultaneously), God itself is understood as Love revealed to mankind (Schmemmann 1993, 140).

The general metaphor **GOD IS AN INANIMATE OBJECT** is manifested through the metaphorical expression **GOD IS BREAD**. The generic mental space includes an object (God) which can act upon the patients (believers). There are also practical implications of the metaphor: food is made to be eaten. This metaphor is related to the Eucharist, the sacrament of sacraments in Orthodox tradition. At the Last Supper, Jesus Christ took the bread and the wine and told his apostles to consume them as His Flesh and Blood (Matthew 26: 26–8). Examples: *Iisuse, pâinea vieții, satură-mă pe mine, cel flămând / Jesus, bread of life, fill me who am hungry* (CR, 292); *pururea Se dă de mâncare și niciodată nu Se sfârșește / ever eaten, yet never consumed* (L, 80). The metaphor originates from the field of religious practices, the fulfilment of the Eucharist meaning the encounter of God's kingdom; bread and wine, people's terrestrial food, become Christ's Body and Blood, a transformation which is real, exceeding the symbolic role (Schmemmann 1993, 35–44).

Oriental metaphors embodied in Orthodox prayers are in accordance with people's everyday experience. In other words, they relate to primary metaphors, "the metaphors at the most grounded level, which are based on primary scenes", connecting perceptual experiences and subjective responses (DesCamp and Sweetser 2005, 216). The spatial organization up/down generally suggests positive versus negative experiences, which express a repertoire of motions and physical interactions. They indicate the following mapping: God is up; sinners are down; devils are in the lowest point; committing a sin → being pulled down; the descend of God → saving people; being forgiven by God → being pulled up. Examples: *Iisuse, ziditorul celor de sus, răscumpărătorul celor de jos, pierzătorul celor de dedesubt / Jesus, Creator of those on high, Redeemer of those below, Vanquisher of the power of hades* (CR, 289); *durerile noastre le-ai ridicat / You didst take on our infirmities* (CR, 291); *mintea spre cele dumnezeiești să o suim, că pentru aceasta Dumnezeu pe pământ s-a pogorât, ca să ne ridice la ceruri pe noi / let us set our mind on things divine, for God came down to earth that He might raise us to heaven* (CR, 294); *ne-ai ridicat pe noi / Thou didst raise us* (CR, 293); *întru deznădăjduire zăcând eu m-ai ridicat / while I was lying in despair upon my bed, Thou hast raised me up* (CR, 11); *Binecuvântează, părinte, scaunul cel de sus / Master, bless the throne on high* (L, 24); *Doamne, Dumnezeuul nostru, Cel Ce întru cele de sus locuiești și spre cele smerite privești / Lord our God, Who dwells on high and watches over the humble* (L, 36); *Cel Care sezi împreună cu Tatăl sus / You Who are enthroned with the Father on high* (L, 79); *Iarăși și de multe ori cădem la Tine și ne rugăm Ție / Again and countless times we fall down before You, and we implore You* (L, 41). According to theologians, keeping one's heart up refers both to one's inner heaven and to the heaven created through people's good relationship (*Inimă curată zidește întru mine, Dumnezeule, și duh drept înnoiește întru cele dinlăuntru ale mele / Create in me a clean heart, O God,*

and put a new and right spirit within me – L, 65); the human being falls not only from the heights of God, but also from the ones of his real nature (Schmemmann 1993, 172; 190).

Another underlying metaphorical conceptual structure is **the container image schema** based on the sensorimotor experience of a container which is filled with liquid, and on the primary experience of pouring liquid or putting objects into a container: God → the person who pours something into the container; man's heart/house → the container; virtues → substances: *Varsă în sufletul lui credință vie, nădejde tare, dragoste sfântă / Fill his soul with true faith, unfailing hope, holy love* (CR, 78); *binefacerile, bucuriile și binecuvântările pe care le reversi neîncetat asupra lor / the unending benevolence, enjoyment and blessings that you pour out upon them* (CR, 84); *umple casa noastră de toate bunătățile cele de pe pământ / fill our house with all the good earthly things* (CR, 88); *Umple inima lui de bucuria mântuirii Tale / Fill his heart with the gladness of Thy salvation* (CR, 95). Apart from this common schema, the believer is the agent who “pours” his prayer towards God (the container): *Rugăciunea mea voi vărsa către Domnul / I will pour out my prayer unto the Lord* (CR, 268). Moreover, the metaphor of the soul (recipient) overflowed with sins is also frequent: *s-a umplut sufletul meu de răutăți / filled with evils is my soul* (CR, 268); *Hristoase, pe toate umplându-le Tu, Cel Ce ești necuprins / Christ, You Who are uncontainable, fill up all things* (L, 51). Although inconsistent, the metaphors belonging to this category act in a coherent way.

The image schema source/path/goal arises out from the subjective judgment of achieving a purpose and out from the sensorimotor experience of reaching a destination. It is patterned as follows: humans live their life → the journey; God's way → the destination; God → the road owner; redemption → destination; temptations → obstacles along the way: *să umble întotdeauna pe cărările Tale / always set their footsteps in Thy paths* (CR, 86); *arată-mi [...] calea Ta cea dreaptă / guide me [...] in the way of Thy righteousness* (CR, 97); *Îndreptează calea noastră [...], întărește pașii noștri / Make straight our path [...], make secure our steps* (L, 91); *La poruncile Tale voi cugeta și voi cunoaște căile Tale / On Thy commandments will I ponder, and I will understand Thy ways* (C, 18); *Pe calea poruncilor Tale am alergat când ai lărgit inima mea / The way of Thy commandments have I run, when Thou didst enlarge my heart* (C, 18). There are some practical implications of this metaphor: the traveler should avoid being side-tracked and follow God's guidance. In the generic mental space, there is an actor undertaking an action under somebody else's guidance.

4. Conclusions

Analysing the discourse about God is a task which involves describing “a reality that by its very nature is indescribable” and which, therefore, requires

conceptualization (Kuczok 2014, XV), while metaphors acquire the role of “vehicles for meaning” (Witzig 2013, 6). The metaphors encountered in the analysed corpus are diverse in nature and are organised by mental schemes which work together coherently. When mapping the entailment of metaphors, information was extracted from the field of experience, from the field of knowledge (general or specific) and from the one of religious practices.

The entailments of metaphors partially overlap and supplement one another, emphasizing various aspects and indicating a generic space in which divinity is described as a positive authority. On delving into prayer texts, we found some characteristics that recur in our mappings at a high rate: human metaphors are preferred, God is usually represented as a subject, while humans are the objects upon whom the agent acts. Also, in this type of religious texts, both primary and non-primary metaphors are encountered. The most frequently mentioned characteristics of God in the corpora of Orthodox prayers are those of providing paternal care, manifested as nourishment, garment, shelter, protection, or guidance. God also proves to be almighty, righteous and loving. The discourse of prayers abounds in orientational metaphors, too.

Religious metaphorical expressions can be properly understood only within the space of religious imaginary, taking into consideration the broader context of the cultural and theological background of the metaphors employed, which provide a deeper layer of meaning. In our interpretation, it was necessary to go beyond the cognitive dimension, by appealing to theological interpretations and views, as religion cannot be reduced to a matter of conceptual systems (Rosenberg 2016, 72). It is only profound experience that gives content to the concepts of religious language, while religious concepts can be empty without any relation to religious experiences (Gerhart, Russell 1984, 13).

SOURCES

- C = 1973. *Ceaslov*, ediția a doua. București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă.
 CR = 2003. *Carte de rugăciuni*. Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea.
 L = Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română a Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului. 2009. *Liturghia Sfântului Ioan*, ediția a V-a, Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea.

WORKS CITED

- Bistrițeanul, Benedict. 2021. *Brațele părintești*. Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea.
 DesCamp, Mary Therese, and Sweetser, Eve E. 2005. “Metaphors for God: Why and How Do Our Choices Matter for Humans? The Application of Contemporary Cognitive Linguistics Research to the Debate on God and Metaphor.” *Pastoral Psychol* 53: 207–238.

- Erussard, Laurence. 1997. "From Salt to Salt: Cognitive Metaphor and Religious Language." *Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa*, 6/2: 197–212.
- Fauconier, Gilles, and Turner, Mark. 2002. *The Way we Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind'S Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gerhart, Mary, and Russell Allan. 1984. *Metaphoric Process: the Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.
- Kuczok, Marcin. 2014. *The Conceptualization of the Christian Life in John Henry Newman's Parochial and Plain Sermons*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Lakoff, George. 1993. "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor", in *Metaphor and thought*, 202–251, edited by Ortony Andrew, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, George, and Johnson, Mark. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lakoff, George, and Johnson, Mark. 2003 (First published in 1980). *Metaphors we Live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Noica, Rafail. 2002. *Cultura duhului*. Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea.
- Platon, Elena. 2020. „Patrimoniu și imaginar lingvistic”, in *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România. II. Patrimoniu și imaginar lingvistic*, 11–28, edited by Corin Braga and Elena Platon. Iași: Polirom.
- Pușcaș, Andreea-Nora. 2020. „Limbajul religios”, in *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România. II. Patrimoniu și imaginar lingvistic*, 109–127, edited by Corin Braga and Elena Platon. Iași: Polirom.
- Rosenberg, Alape Vergara. 2016. "Cuerpo, metáforas conceptuales y religión." *Ideas y Valores* 65, Sup. No. 2: 63–78.
- Saint Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology. 2008. *The Orthodox Study Bible*. California: Elk Grove.
- Schmemmann, Alexandre. 1993. *Euharistia. Taina Împărăției*, 1993, translated by Boris Răduleanu. București: Anastasia.
- Slingerland, Edward. 2004. "Conceptual Metaphor Theory as Methodology for Comparative Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 72, no. 1: 1–31.
- Verde, Danilo. 2016. "Metaphor as Knowledge. A Hermeneutical Framework for Biblical Exegesis with a Sample Reading from the Song of Songs (Song 8:10)." *The Biblical Annals*, 6 (2016): 45–72.
- Witzig, Peter G. 2013. *Metaphors we Worship by: An Examination of Conceptual Metaphor and Religion Through the Lens of Christianity*. Atlanta: Emory University: 1–9.