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2

CONTENTS

IV. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

V. BOOK REVIEWS

I. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

PSALM 4 – ISAGOGE, EXEGESIS AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION. PART II

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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 centered 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 a few 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 were not entirely in agreement, 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!

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2 O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame[1]? 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.

4 Be angry[2], and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent[3]. Selah

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

6 There are many who say, "Who will show us some good[4]? 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 wine[5] abound.

8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety[6] (ESV).

Verse 4

Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah

The reconciliatory advices continue on a paternal tone[7] in this verse as well. The psalmist suggests to those that rebelled to reconsider their attitude and implicitly to evaluate their acts through their conscience[8]. But before doing

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[1] The expression עַד־מֶה כְבוֹדִי לִכְלִמָּה (*ʿaḏ-me^h ḵǝḇôḏî liḵlimmā^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.

[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 (*ṭôḇ*) – *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] Ernst Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms I* (Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2010), 66.

[8] Rabbi Solomon Freehof, *The Book of Psalms: A commentary* (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938), 18. "Those who refer this psalm to Absalom's rebellion against his father, suppose that David says to these rebels and their supporters: I forgive you your first moment of anger against me, but stop being against me; draw back into your soul at night time and repent for your wandering", Gherasim Timuș, *Note și meditațiuni asupra psalmilor I* (București: Tipografia "Gutenberg" Joseph Göble, 1896), 49; cf. Iuliu Olariu, *Explicarea Psalmilor din Orologiu* (Caransebeș, 1899), 148.

this, David asks them to sin no more, ending their rebellion forever, not because they fear their king, but because they fear God[9]. The subtlety with which the author of the psalm refers to God again, in fact, the one against which the *sons of men* fight indirectly, does not result from the text at a first sight. The allusion to the divine power and justice can be found only in the complex implications that the verb רָגַז (*rāḡaz*) – *to flinch*, *to panic*, *to tremble*, *to agitate* has. Thus, this manifestation that comprises man's entire being is usually generated by three feelings: anger, fear or pain. In this context, the rabbis and most of the exegetes[10] state that the anxiety to which the psalmist refers is generated by fear, firstly because it would be improper to believe that he urged his enemies to anger when in fact he was trying to calm them down, and then because up until now no reference is made to a particular pain or sufferance[11]. Their opinion is also influenced by the fact that the feeling of fear of God is often associated within the psalms with that of trembling (cf. Ps 2:11)[12]. And the fact that this verb is used within the parallel texts of the psalms (18:8; 77:17; 77:19; 99:1) only when they refer to God confirms even more the idea previously mentioned through which we state that the psalmist refers here to God not to himself.

The Greek translation of the verb *ragaz* with ὀργίζω – *to get angry*, *to infuriate* modified significantly the interpretation perspectives proposed by the Hebrew text. In this new approach, the psalmist does not refer to God, before whom all people must tremble, but warns his opponents, in a moralizing manner, on the bad effects that can result from their uncontrolled anger. Starting with Saint Apostle Paul who takes *ad litteram* the first part of the verse in one of his

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[9] Mayer Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms* (Boston: Leiben, 2004), 186. Cf. Arthur Weiser, *The Psalms. A commentary*, trans. Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1962), 121.

[10] In the rabbis' opinion the text of this verse conveys the following message: "If you do not fear me, fear God and do not rebel," – 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), 29 or "Tremble and fear so that you sin no more," – Rabbi Samson Hirsch, *The Psalms. Translation and commentary* (New York: Samson Raphael Hirsch Publications Society, 1960-66), 22. According to Rabbi Akha, *be angry, and do not sin* means "Make your Tempter tremble with fear, and he will be unable to make you sin." And in others Rabbis opinion, those words means "Make your Tempter tremble with frustration, and he will be unable to make you sin, thus you will not fall intro grip sin." *Midrasch Tehillim*, trans. August Wünsche (Trier: Sigmund Mayer, 1892), 46.

[11] Albert Barnes, *Notes, critical, explanatory, and practical, on the book of Psalms I* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868-69), 36.

[12] Hirsch, *The Psalms*, *22*. In John Goldingay opinion "trembling is an appropriate response of awed submission to Yhwh rather than having recourse to other resources". *Psalm 1-41* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 121.

epistles (Eph 4:26)[13], this moralizing interpretation proposed by the translators of the Septuagint was accepted and developed richly by the Fathers of the Church. Without setting aside the positive part of anger[14], the Holy Fathers consider that the king asks the rebels not to fulfil their furious intention in reprehensible acts. They may get angry with him, but they must not sin by rebelling. "So, David also says here: even if you become angry unwillingly, which is not a complete sin, do not add your acts to this, in order not to fulfill the sin. For God forgives smaller things to the weaker, meaning anger, to stop what is bigger, meaning killing and all the acts that are generated by uncontrolled fury"[15].

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[13] See Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An introduction and commentary*, in *TOTC* 15 (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 72. The Apostle apparently atenuates the stigmatization of this passion severily condamned by Christ (Mt 5:22-24), because he too offers a saving value to the action of removal of the anger: "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. [...] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph 4:26-27.31-32 – ESV). See Robert Davidson, *The vitality of worship: A commentary on the book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids/Edinburgh: Eerdmans/Handsel Press, 1998), 23 and Mays, *Psalms*, 55. Saint Chrysostom says that here Paul compels us to reconcile, saying: "*Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.* [...] He was afraid that during the night, the furious remaining alone might increase his anger. During the day he meets with a lot of people, who can dissipate his anger and turn his thoughts; but at night, when man is alone and sits and speaks to himself, the waves of anger increase and the fury gets bigger. That is why the apostle anticipates this; he wants to deliver him to the night reconciled, so that the devil no longer has the occasion, because of the solitude, to heat the furnace of anger and make it bigger. Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur, *Omilii la Matei*, in *PSB* 23, trans. Dumitru Fecioru (București: IBMO, 1994), 213-4.

[14] Before its debasemant through sin, anger was the first function of aggressiveness that had the purpose to generate opposition to all evil. When he *says stand in awe, and sin not* "he does not interdict anger because it is useful. Nor does he cut the anger, for it is useful against injustice and ignorance. But he cuts the wrongful anger, the irrational anger. [...] For anger was not given to us for us to sin, but to stop with it those who sin, not to become passion or illness, but cure for the passions". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1988), 62. "When this power of the soul is used against demons and sins, it has the form of a virtuous wise and holy anger, the one that the psalmist is talking about". Sf. Nichita Stithatul, *Cele 300 de capete*, in *Filocalia* 6, trans. Dumitru Stăniloae (București: IBMO, 1977), 216.

[15] Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor I (1-8)," trans. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Mitropolia Olteniei* 4 (1989): 48. When he refers to this text, Saint John Cassian urges us to anger, but not against our neighbor, but against passions. "Kindle your anger against your passions and against your evil thoughts and do not sin by acting what they put into your minds. [...] When evil thought come into your heart, cast them away with anger and after having done that, as if you were on a bed of the peace of the soul, repent". Sf. Ioan Casian, *Despre cele opt gânduri ale răutății*, in *Filocalia* 1, trans. Dumitru Stăniloae (Sibiu: Institutul de arte grafice "Dacia Traiană" S. A., 1947), 110. Cf. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 8, trans. Philip Schaff (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 9. Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms I*, trans. P. G. Walsh (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990), 76.

The psalmist's words in the first part of the verse are meant to convey both a warning and reconciliatory advice. With this attitude, the king tries once more to change the evil thoughts of those who plot vain intrigues[16]. And in order for his attempt of ending the conflict to reach a positive result, he advises the rebels to meditate in the tranquility of the night[17], deep inside their hearts[18], on the events that happened and decide wisely. David's recommendation is admirable[19] because for a person that needs to make an important decision, the night is the mother of counsel, and the heart, the spiritual center of man, is the highest court. In other words, the psalmist urges his opponents to calm their anger, to control their actions and not to spread lies with empty words[20].

Besides this dimension, the Septuagint suggests through the translation of the verb דמם (*dāmam*) – *to be silent* with κατανύσσομαι – *to repent*, *to feel a painful sting* also a penitential perspective. The second meaning of the verb, which in fact is the literal translation of the term, is obviously open to the theme of the *piercing of the heart* largely developed in the Christian ascetical literature[21]. "After dinner – says Saint John Chrysostom – when you prepare to go to sleep, to go to bed, and there is a lot of peace and quiet, since nobody is around and when there is a deep peace that nothing can disturb, rise within your heart the tribunal of conscience and call yourself to account for the evil things you wished for during the day, the intrigues you plotted, the sorrows you produced to your neighbor, the rotten desires you accepted. Bring all these in the center in the time of that tranquility and stop your conscience from all evil thoughts, destroy them and ask for justice, tear the sinner mind. For this is what *commune* means spoken instead of pierce, sting with a needle what you say in your hearts during the day"[22].

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[16] David asks them to accept the fact that they are mistaken after they've searched their consciences sincerely. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81*, trans. Robert Hill (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 47.

[17] "Since night time is free from external worries and brings peace to our thoughts, he was correct in this verse in bidding us pass in review what was said or done during the day and in obliging us to heal our wounds with the remedy of repentance". 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), 65. Cf. Eftimie Zigabenul and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea în tâlcuirile Sfinţilor Părinţi I*, trans. Ştefan Voronca (Galaţi: Egumeniţa, 2006), 84.

[18] In one's bed, the heart is no longer influenced by the troubles of this world and can judge clearly. Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 29.

[19] Barnes, *Notes on Psalms*, 36. Cf. Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary on The Psalms I*, trans. Fancis Bolton, (Edimburg: T. & T. Clakk, 1871), 114.

[20] Craigie, *Psalms*, 81. In Derek Kidner opinion, the psalmist invite his enemy to think. Kidner, *Psalms*, 72.

[21] Cf. *Septuaginta. Psalmii, Odele, Proverbele, Ecleziastul, Cântarea Cântărilor* 4/I, ed. Cristian Bădiliţă et al. (Bucureşti: Polirom, 2006), 48.

[22] St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 64. Cf. Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms 1-51*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Boston: Liden, 2005), 15 and Goldingay, *Psalm*, 122.

STELIAN PAŞCA-TUŞA

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

The final urges that the psalmist addresses to those who followed his son in rebellion are in fact an invitation to obey God. When he asks them to offer the sacrifices of righteousness and to put their trust in the Lord[23], David does nothing else but end the conflict that they started against him and against the Lord of his righteousness and he determines his opponents to assume the mistakes they did while rebelling. The sacrifice that those people had to offer for their forgiveness could not be offered with hypocrisy, as they has done when they gathered around Absalom at the altar in Hebron (cf. 2 Sm 15:7-12)[24], but required a pure heart and piety according to the stipulations of the Law[25]. According to the opinions expressed by the rabbis and the Holy Fathers, the text does not stop to a literal approach, but implies an obvious spiritual dimension. In the view of these interpreters those who are invited to offer this type of sacrifice must change their way of living in agreement with the principles of the divine justice, so that their behavior should be considered and accepted as a sacrifice pleasing to God[26]. This perspective that transcends the sacrificial ritual determined the Holy Fathers to state that the text prefigures the unbloody sacrifices required by the Lord of the New Covenant. "When he says "offer sacrifices of righteousness", he does not present the shadowed part of the Law, rather the one in Christ and in the Gospel. For the Old Law teaches to offer bloody sacrifices, but in them man could not become complete in conscience. They were offered for the prefiguration of the good scent of the true offerings and were meant to last until the time of the improvement"[27].

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[23] James Mays, *Psalms. Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 55.

[24] Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 29. Cf. Alexander Kirkpatrick, *The book of Psalms* (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), 19 and Olariu, *Explicarea Psalmilor*, 147.

[25] In Arthur Weiser opinion the sacrifices of righteousness are the true manifestation of repentance. Weiser, *The Psalms*, 121. Cf. Davidson, *The vitality of worship*, 23; Phillips, *The Psalms*, 34 and Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary*, 114.

[26] "Do the acts of the righteous and it will be considered as an offering of sacrifices". Mayer Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 186. Cf. Freehof, *The book of Psalms*, 18; Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 22.

[27] Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor," 48: "What does this mean to *offer sacrifices of righteousness* – Saint John asks himself? Return to justice, do justice: this is a greater gift offered to God, this is the accepted sacrifice, this is the pleasant offering, and not to sacrifice bulls and sheep, but to act righteously". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 65. The bishop of Cyrus states that with these words the cult of the Old Law is cancelled as a superfluous thing and a new type of sacrifice is instituted, because "the possession of righteousness is more acceptable to God than every sacrifice of a hundred or thousand beasts". Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 65. Cf. St. Augustin, *Exposition on the Psalms*, 9 and Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 77.

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The return from the paths of emptiness to a righteous life also implies naturally a change in the manner of relating to God. If initially these *sons of men* put their trust in their powers and their overwhelming number, now they have to entrust themselves to the Lord and put their trust in Him exclusively[28]. This final advice through which David wishes to seal the return of the rebels has the purpose to consolidate their relationship with God and implicitly with the king whom He obviously supported in his exile[29]. After all, putting one's trust in God reflects the renunciation to pride and the achievement of a broken spirit which, according to the psalmist (cf. Ps 51:19) is the most obvious sign of a sacrifice of righteousness[30].

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

Some exegetes consider that the direct reference of the psalmist to his opponents (defined by the expression *sons of men* – v. 3) stops along with the advices in the previous verse[31]. In this respect, the term רַבִּים (*rabbîm*) – *many* in the beginning of this verse, points to a different category of persons who are lacking a certain good and presenting a distrustful attitude towards the divine providence[32]. These people were part of either the group that accompanied David in exile and now doubted their victory[33] or of the group that could not decide

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[28] Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 29. Rabbi Samson notices those who are blessed with many gifts not to put their trust in the material goods, but to put their trust in God Who gave all those things because this is the only way they will be able to enjoy them; Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 22.

[29] "David presents his own things as example. And he tries to teach that those who sacrifice to the Holy God the fruits of righteousness their trust in Him does not remain fruitless. For, he says, as soon as I offered the sacrifice of righteousness and I put my trust in Him, I defeated my enemies, although I cried for the fallen young man [Absalom]". Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor," 48.

[30] Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary of Psalms*, 15. "Besides righteousness, we are also asked to have this virtue, to trust in Him, not to trust in any of the earthly things, and standing far from all this to fix our mind to God". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 66.

[31] 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.

[32] Davidson, *The vitality of worship*, 24. "It is not the few, the sincere, the tried and the wise who say this, but the great indiscriminating multitude grasp on the confusion of these thoughts. What does it mean what he says? *Who will shew us any good?* There are some who either reject God's providence, or they love pleasures, laziness, riches, glory and power, who ask us such things: Where are the goods of the Lord?" St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 67. Cf. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 10; Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor," 49 and Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 66.

[33] Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary*, 116; Cf. Robert Bratcher and William Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 46; Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 68.

yet whose part to take in the conflict, the king's or the rebels'[34]. Taking into account the fact that either of these categories could suit this context, we cannot say anything decisively on this matter. However, we mention the fact that David builds his arguments starting from the idea that those who are in front of him are skeptical regarding the positive solution to their dilemma and that the good they dream of is not of a spiritual nature[35], their relationship with God being a rather distant one[36].

After the psalmist presented his urges to morality and tried to establish a righteous thinking in the hearts and minds of those who wondered in lies and deceit, now he struggles to offer an answer to those who denied the palpability of the Lord's providence. To offer credit to his endeavor, from the very beginning the king appeals directly to Aaron's blessing[37], a prayer well known to all the Israelites, and asks God to shine His face on the people, so that with this He pours continuously over everybody peace and prosperity[38]. In other words, when he asks the Lord to show His face, David asks Him to offer to those who doubted the reality of the providence, a real proof of His presence. In the thinking of the Old Testament, the face or the image (פָּנֶה – *pāne^h*) of a person were perceived as

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[34] Barnes, *Notes on Psalms*, 37. Cf. Kirkpatrick, *The book of Psalms*, 19.

[35] Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 23. "The psalmist says at the beginning that the legion limits the good to the apparent thins and thinks that only those things are good which man can experience with his senses. [...] But the one who aims for virtue, despises this judgment of good, because it is slavish. This is the way a person sees good into the light and this is how the divine joy occurs. Speak about such a light that shines from the face of the Lord, a light whose nature our mind fails to understand. [...] Considering the face of the Lord with certain features, it seems to me that the Prophet referred only to virtues through these features". Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa, *La titlurile Psalmilor*, in *PSB* 30, trans. Teodor Bodogae (Bucureşti: IBMO, 1998), 142. Dydimus identifies good with Christ. Dydimus the Blind, "Fragments on the Psalms," in *PG* 39, 1168 – Craig Blaising et al., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Old Testament (Psalms 1-50) VII*, (New York: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 35.

[36] Rashi considers that David urges those who plot against him to repent for their sins and to put their trust in God, Who can offer them much more blessing and wealth, than what they could achieve with the money offered by Saul for his capture. Obviously, the rabbi starts from the premise that the psalm was written during one of the persecutions ordered by Saul. Mayer Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 186.

[37] "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." (Nm 6:24-26 – ESV). Cf. Goldingay, *Psalm*, 123.

[38] Craigie, *Psalms*, 82; cf. Charles Briggs and Emilie Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms I* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906-07), 32. In the Book of Psalms, God is often asked to turn His face on the people to show His mercy (Ps 25:16-17; 86:15-16; 119:58, 132). Hence, the showing of the face includes a favourable disposition for a person, and its concealment proves a state of adversity, hate or contempt. In the case in which the Lord turns His face, the prayers and the cry for mercy remain unanswered or the salvation is late in coming (Ps. 31:23-24; 55:1-2). Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament V*, trans. David. E. Green (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eermans Publishing Co., 1986), 24.

a means of manifestation of all the feelings and attitudes, so that it was considered that the entire personality was concentrated on his face[39]. Both in the case of men and in the case of the Lord, this concept signaled the presence of the respective person. Thus, the expression *the face of the Lord* was the most common way through which an author indicated the integral presence of the divinity[40].

If we take into account the polysemy of the verb נָשָׂא (*nāsā'*) – *to lift* which refers also to the lifting of a mark or a flag[41], we understand that the psalmist did not want to offer to the *many* only a sign of the divine providence, but a control point to indicate the good path[42]. Thus the light of the face was not only the sign of the Lord's real presence, but also a mark to testify[43]. Translating the imperative of this verb with a form of passive aorist (*ἐσημειώθη – was made a sign*), the text of the Septuagint lets us understand that the testimony of the Lord's presence can be seen on the faces of those who partake to His glory. Saint John Chrysostom states that this fact is obvious from the words of the psalmist who mentions that the light of God's face is not shown, it does not shine, but can be seen on man's face: "He did not say that it appeared, nor that it shone, but that it was *made a sign* proving that as something that is marked on the forehead is obvious to everyone and cannot be hidden, nor is it possible that one can fail to recognize a face full of light and that spreads streaks, the same way is your providence, o Lord. For as the light made as sign, meaning that it is impregnated on the face and it is obvious to everyone, the same way is the providence of your love for the mankind"[44]. Using the same type of interpretation the Western Fathers compare this sign of the divine light on the man's face with the impression of

[39] Allen Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 373.

[40] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms*, 49. *Panim* is the term which the authors of the Old Testament use most often to underline the presence of a person. David Freedman et al., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary II* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 744.

[41] "What are the flags good for in the army? To gather the soldiers, when they are scattered, and to hold them in unity when they are together. They are also used to show the way to the enemy. [...] The sons of men, you know the will of your princes, manifested through symbols put in front of your eyes and you are not paying attention at all to the light of the Lord, Who leads you, who commands you. The Israelites in the desert were led by a column of fire, image of the light that God put into our hearts and spirits". Timuş, *Note asupra psalmilor*, 52; cf. Olariu, *Explicarea Psalmilor*, 149.

[42] Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 186; cf. Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 23; Phillips, *The Psalms*, 34 and Delitzsch, *Biblical commentary*, 116.

[43] Cassiodorous conssiders that the sign offered by the Lord as testimony is the Cross of His Son. Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 77; cf. 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), 113.

[44] St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 70.

Caesar's face on a coin[45], and Origen offers a biblical example that confirms the psalmist's intention: after Moses' discussions with the lord, his face was shining so brightly, that he had to cover it with a veil. "Furthermore – underlines the Alexandrine exegete – it is obvious from the words of Psalm 67[46] that the face of the Lord, of which we talk about and which enlightens the mind of the one who is able to receive its streaks, is the cause of our understanding…"[47].

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

The immeasurable gladness mentioned by the psalmist in the beginning of this verse confirms the fact that God already poured the brightness of His countenance into the heart overwhelmed with sufferance of the king who never ceased putting his trust in the divine help. The presence of the Lord dissipated from the king's heart all sorrow and offered him a joy superior to that which his opponents might feel when they look at the abundance of their earthly fruits: the corn, new wine and oil[48]. The Hebrew version of this text accepts two translations: one of the underlines, as we have already mentioned, the superiority of the king's state of gladness in comparison with the happiest moment that his opponent might have, and the other observes the psalmist's generosity who finds the necessary spiritual strength to rejoice in the abundance of fruits that his opponents have[49]. Rabbi Benjamin considers that these variants of the text do not exclude one another, because there is the possibility that the author wished to keep both nuances that emphasize two attitudes that

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[45] Developing this comparison, Saint Augustin states that if Caesar has the right to ask for the thinks that have his face on them, then God may do the same with the soul of man. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 10. Relating the concept of face and the action of sealing to Christ, Saint Cyril states: "The Son in the hidden face of God, and the Spirit sent from Him to us is light. Because we were sealed through Him, when we were first created". Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor," 49.

[46] "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah 2 that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations." (v. 1-2).

[47] Origen, "Selection from the Psalms," in *PG* 12, 1165 – Blaising et al., *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 35.

[48] Cf. Goldingay, *Psalm*, 123.

[49] Davidson, *The vitality of worship*, 23. In Midrash the congregation of Israel saw in this abundance their future prosperity: "The congregation of Israel says, because the nations of the earth have kept only seven laws, You have enriched them with the good things of this world as a reward, how many more good things will You lavish in the world to come upon us who are charged with keeping of six hundred and thirteen laws. Therefore, we rejoice when we behold the prosperity of the nations of the earth." *Midrasch Tehillim*, 47-8.

alternated[50]. Thus David first manifested his kindness for his opponents showing that he does not wish them ill[51], and then he showed them that he does not envy them because the gifts he had already receive from the Lord are far better. Substituting to the psalmist, Rashi observes: "Anyway, I don't envy them, says David, because You put gladness into my heart in the time that their corn and their wine increased, because I am sure that if the Lord does so many things for those who upset Him, all the more so, in the time that will come, which is the day of harvest, He will do to those who fulfill His will"[52].

The Fathers emphasize here the manner in which a spiritual person such as David does not settle only for the gladness generated by the abundance of fruits, but aims at the spiritual gladness. His happiness is in his heart where, according to Jesus Christ's words, the Heavenly Kingdom exists, and not in the eyes that take pleasure in the material goods, because those who remain only at this sensory level will never be able to see the good, even if it stands right in front of them[53]. Also, the spiritual man sees in this abundance not only the providence of the Lord, Who makes the earth give its fruits all in their due time[54], but also their spiritual meaning[55]. If the corn and the wine are the fruits through which God maintains the physical life of ma, they can become through His work, the gifts that will nurture man's soul: the Holy Eucharist[56].

Verse 8
In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety

The peaceful sleep and without any torments that the psalmist is about to experience even when he is still in danger is the most obvious sign that the

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[50] Segal, "Psalm 4."

[51] Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 30.

[52] Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 186. Cf. Freehof, *The book of Psalms*, 18.

[53] St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 10. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 65-6.

[54] When he speaks about the corn and wine and oil and their abundance, in the same time he speaks about rain, climate of the seasons, fertility of the earth, its fruitage, the course of the sun, the revolutions of the moon, the regular movement of the stars, the sequence of summer and winter, of autumn and spring, the knowledge of agriculture, the use of the tools and many other connected handicrafts. For if all these do not co-operate it is impossible for these fruits to grow to maturity. Hence, when he says corn, wine and oil, the prophet offers to the wise man a means to rise from part to the thinking of the whole, opening an ocean of God's providence shown in visible things". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 72.

[55] Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, 79.

[56] Eftimie Zigabenul and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 87. Cf. Neale, *A commentary on the Psalms*, 114.

Lord has protected and enlarged him from his tribulations[57]. The spiritual peace which he enjoys now fortifies even more his trust that no one will be able to harm him as long as he has the divine support[58]. Thus, the complete trust in the Lord determines David to state that the moment he lies down in his bed, he will fall asleep without any worries[59]. This reality is also marked by the adverb יַחְדָּו (*yaḥdāw*) – *together*, whose secondary meaning implies the idea of simultaneity[60] or fast fulfillment of an action. Taking into account the context in which this term is used, the exegetes considered that it is preferable to choose the second meaning of the word (*soon, shortly after*), because it offers coherence to the text[61]. In the situation in which the main sense of the adverb were used for this text, the understanding of the fragment would be rather difficult, because instead of expressing clearly that the psalmist completes both actions (lying in bed and falling asleep)[62] the text becomes needlessly complicated. Hence, some of the rabbis associated this term with the expression *in peace* and stated that the psalmist conditions his peaceful sleep with the reconciliation with the rebelled Israelites[63], and the Fathers saw in the adverb *together*, either a reference to the unitary structure of man (body and soul)[64], or to the unity in David's thinking. Thus, for Saint John Chrysostom, the words *I will both lay me down in peace* mean: "collected, not split into thousands of worries,

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[57] Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (Collegewille: The Litugical Press, 2001), 13-4. The Fathers consider that here David refers firstly to his peaceful end (because he would not be killed), and then to the death of all those who believe in God and trust Him to receive recompense for their efforts. "According to Saint Cyril [of Jerusalem], I will receive the same and together with the saints the death similar to sleep, in peace, if I don't have the sin which is adversity to God. And thus, ending my life, God will take me to dwell into the good hopes, meaning that I will have a certain and unmovable hope". Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor," 50. Cf. St. Augustin, *Expositions on the Psalms*,11; Cassiodorus, *Explanation on the Psalms*, 79 and Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 66.

[58] "The one who has such peace not only is he not afraid of barbarians or enemies, but he is not afraid of the devil himself". St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 75.

[59] Freehof, *The Book of Psalms*, 18.

[60] Kidner, *Psalms*, 73.

[61] Weiser, *The Psalms*, 121. Cf. Barnes, *Notes on Psalms*, 39; Briggs and Briggs, *The book of Psalms*, 37; Olariu, *Explicarea Psalmilor*, 150 and Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 24.

[62] "I will sleep for days in peace and without any torments, after I cast away all the fears that upset me, and not only will I just fall asleep, but I will also pall with sleep, meaning that I will do both of these". Eftimie Zigabenul and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 87.

[63] Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 187. Cf. Cf. Goldingay, *Psalm*, 124 and Kimhi, *The longer commentary*, 30.

[64] "And *together* refers to the body and soul, meaning: "I will sleep in peace with my body and soul, for the body through death will be free from the visible enemies, and the soul will be free from the invisible enemies…". Eftimie Zigabenul and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psaltirea*, 87.

without thinking of this or that, nor astray in the world through inquietudes, but thinking of me and what is useful for me or for man in general"[65].

In the second part of the verse, the psalmist states that the peace he feels inside his soul is owed exclusively to God Who makes him feel safe anywhere and anytime, even while sleeping when every man is vulnerable. This impenetrable protection that only God can offer, determines the king to look with a lot of detachment at the useless attempts and agitation of his opponents who will never succeed against the One who protects him.

THEOLOGICAL DIMENSION

1. Lord have mercy – premise for the Prayer of the Heart.

Evaluating the historical context and the reasons that determined the psalmist to ask for mercy from the Lord, we come to the conclusion that the expression: *Lord have mercy* (v. 2) is either the only solution, or the most common way through which he hopes to achieve deliverance. In other words, this expression indicates a personal prayer spoken with high intensity, through which heavenly mercy and support are asked for in order to obtain deliverance from a pressing state that enfolds the entire being, or from a permanent menace that places the soul into the close proximity of death[66]. Thus, some of the contemporary exegetes[67] consider that through the cry: *have mercy*, the psalmist does nothing else that draw the attention as fast as he can on his helplessness and underline the need for divine protection.

Although at a first sight the prayer *Lord have mercy* indicates a mainly penitential character[68], the Fathers underlined the fact that the human being's need of divine mercy is characteristic to his nature, no matter the spiritual state he is in[69]. Hence, Saint John urges us not to be ashamed to ask for God's mercy even

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[65] St. John Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 79.
[66] Craigie, *Psalms*, 119.
[67] Bratcher and Reyburn, *The book of Psalms*, 510.
[68] According to Saint John Chrysostom this cry condenses the entire delivering dimension. The prayer *have mercy* sums up the entire approach that man goes through from the fall into sin to deification: the confession and acknowledgement of the sins, imploring for mercy, forgiveness of the trespasses, deliverance from punishment and obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven. "The one who said: *have mercy!* – underlines the Holy Father – confessed and acknowledged his sins. For those who have sinned ask for mercy. The one who said: *have mercy!*, obtained forgiveness for his sins. For the one who received mercy is no longer punished. The one who said: have mercy!, achieved the Kingdom of Heaven. For the one that God shows mercy on is not only saved from punishment but God also makes him worthy of the future goods". Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur, *Omilii la Ana. Omilii la Saul şi David. Omilii la serafimi*, trans. Dumitru Fecioru (Bucureşti: IBMO, 2007), 63.
[69] Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, "Tâlcuirea psalmilor IV (30-40)," trans. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Mitropolia Olteniei* 1-3 (1990): 194-6. For a better understanding we also recommend the reading of the commentaries by father Dumitru Stăniloae to this translation. Cf. Sf. Vasile cel Mare, *Omilii la Psalmi*, in *PSB* 17, trans. Dumitru Fecioru (Bucureşti: IBMO, 1986), 251 şi Eftimie Zigabenul and Sf. Nicodim Aghioritul, *Psalmtirea*, 487.

when we are virtuous, because in our battle with the sin, righteousness and spiritual purity are not enough to obtain the victory[70]. In this respect, King David is given to us as an example for, although he considered himself not guilty for the adversity manifested by his opponents, he asked for mercy from the very first verse of this psalm. Hence, none of the things the psalmist wished for could become real unless God poured His mercy onto him: his cry would have remained unanswered, his trust would have been in vain and the Lord's look upon him with a merciful eye would have been impossible. For these reasons, the words *have mercy* offered the psalmist the trust that the deliverance from the intrigues of his opponents is conditioned only by a certain amount of time, because God cannot remain insensitive towards a persons that asks for His help in such a manner.

The prayer: *Lord have mercy* represents through its theological content and through its frequent use within the Dialogue with the Lord the climax of the oranta expressions of the Old Testament and implicitly the *heart* of the psalmic prayers[71]. Through the pronunciation of the divine name within this prayer, the psalmist positions himself into the sphere of communion and accomplishes an act of confession of his faith into the true and living God Who revealed Himself to his parents, and through the request have mercy, he opens himself to the direct communication with the grace of the Holy Spirit which is poured abundantly over those who wish to live their life mysteriously into God. The echoes of these sanctifying words were heard again in the Holy Scripture only after several centuries from the lips of the suffering who ask Christ for mercy and deliverance. Their example was followed by the Fathers of the first Christian centuries who, managing to materialize through the continuous repeating of the words *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner* a real manner of living into Christ[72].

Hence, the words *Lord have mercy* cannot be conceived as a simple formula used for the request of God's mercy, but they rather ought to be considered to be a real ferment which determines and implies a considerable amount of

[70] Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur, "Tâlcuiri la Psalmi. Tâlcuire la Psalmul 4", trans. Alexandru Mihăilă and Sabin Preda, *Studii Teologice* 1 (2008): 162.

[71] The reflections of the Fathers underline the fact that *Lord have mercy* is nothing else than the *pure heart* of the Psalms, and the latter is the fruit of the prayer from the Old Testament. When the prayer *Lord have mercy* is put by the bishop of Cyrus, on Christ's lips, it becomes the Prayer of Jesus, and through Him it also becomes the prayer of the fathers and implicitly the prayer of our hearts. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 245.

[72] No matter the forms that it had along the years (*Lord have mercy*; *Lord Jesus Christ*; *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me, the sinner* or *Jesus*) the prayer of the heart has always had as a main element the invocation of the name of the Lord, and as a secondary structure the wish to obtain the divine mercy. Being a synthesis of the two moments of the prayer of the heart (adoration and repentance), the expression *Lord have mercy* which is frequently used within the Book of Psalms may constitute the starting point and the basis from which the entire theology on the Prayer of the Heart or the Prayer of Jesus develops within the Church. Kallistos Ware, *Puterea numelui. Rugăciunea lui Iisus în spiritualitatea ortodoxă*, trans. Gabriela Moldoveanu (Bucureşti: Christiana, 1992), 26-7.

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actions and consequences characteristic for the human-divine communication. Because of this, the practice of the calling of the divine name and mercy with the words *Lord have mercy* was not limited to the psalmic structures[73], but was first adopted by several people in the New Testament, and after that by all those who wished to unite intimately with the One whose name they called within the prayer.

2. The face of the Lord – a sign of His personal presence

To underline the theological importance of the face of the Lord in the context of the pouring of His mercy, we consider that the systematic presentation of some aspects concerning the significance that the concept of *face* has within the Old Testament thinking is absolutely necessary. Because of the fact that the face of a person expresses best his/her feelings and attitudes, it was only natural that in the case of the Lord, the face was perceived as a means of manifestation of His feelings, as the profound of the nature[74]. Thus the entire person of Yahwe is concentrated on His face, both love and anger, even is the latter is rather expressed by the *turning of His face* or the *absence of the face* of the Lord. In the most explicit fragment for the study of the notion (Ex 33)[75], where the Lord promises Moses that His face will walk with Israel, actually referring to the personal presence of Yahwe amongst His people. In this respect, Moses' request to see the glory of the Lord expresses his wish to be assured once mores that He is always present directly besides him[76]. On the other hand, this fragment in placed within a context that allows/permits a theological exploitation of the notion, since the face seems to be a substitute of Yahwe Himself Who states clearly His refuse to accompany the people in its wandering through the desert (Ex 33:3-5[77]) and His intention to send an angel to replace Him[78].

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[73] The imperative חָנֵּנִי (*ḥonnḗni*) – *have mercy* occurs with this form only in the Book of Psalms, being present 18 times in 13 psalms: 4:2; 6:3; 25:16; 26:11; 27:7; 30:11; 31:10; 41:5.11; 51:3; 56:2; 57:2; 86:3.15; 119:29.58. 132. To this one may add three connected forms: חָנְנֵנִי (*ḥānənḗni*) – *hapax legomenon* from Psalm 9:14, יְחָנֵּנוּ (*yəḥonnḗnû*) from Ps. 67:2 and 123:2 and חָנֵּנוּ(*ḥonnḗnû*) from Ps. 123:3.

[74] Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, 373.

[75] For a complete analysis of this text we recommend: Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa, "Despre viaţa lui Moise sau despre desăvârşirea prin virtute," in *PSB* 29, trans. Dumitru Stăniloae and Ioan Buga, (Bucureşti: IBMO, 1982), 88-99.

[76] John Durham, *Exodus*, in *WBC* 3 (Dallas: Word, Inc., 2002), 458.

[77] "Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people. When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you." ". (Ex 33:3-5 – ESV)

[78] Edmond Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancient Testament* (Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1955), 62.

The distinction between Yahwe and His face does not correspond completely to the Israelite representations. The fact that God reveals Himself and that man can see Him is a statement with respect to which, for the old Israel, there is no doubt. The name *Penuel*, which confirms the fact that the patriarch Jacob saw the Lord face to face, and the example of Moses who spoke to God face to face shows us the fact that the face was not a problem for the Jewish thinking (Ex 33:11; Nm 12:7-8[79]; 14:14). However early in the history of Israel occurred the statement that no man can see the face of the Lord (Ex 33:20-23; 1 Kgs 19:11-13[80]). To accommodate the idea of the presence of the Lord with the fact that He is invisible and with His unity, *the notions of angel and glory* (which had a material sublayer, one in humanity, the other one in nature) gradually outran the notion of *face* as a form for the presentation of the Lord. However, Edmund Jacob considers that "we must observe that the face never ceased to be considered a divine revelation; the search of Yahwe's face, in other words His personal presence, condenses both the cult of the Temple[81], and the communion with God through personal prayer (Ps 63:1-3[82]) and the faithful were confident that this search of the face had as recompense Yahwe's blessing, which consisted of Him turning His face towards them: The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you! (Nm 6:25; cf. Ps 80:3[83].7.19)"[84].

CULTIC USE

Psalm 4 is read each Saturday evening within the Vespers as part of the first kathismata (Ps 1-8). Separately, it is read within the service of the Great Compline on Sundays and other important feasts. Verse 3 is used as prokeimenon on every Monday in the Great Lent and it is also read as a stich within the polyeleos from October 14th, December 5ht and January 17th and 25th. Verse 6 is used as a koinonikon (communion chant) for the Liturgy on September 14th and we can also find it as a stich for the megalynaria of the polyeleos of the same day. And the words of the verses 6-8 are part of the prayer we say after dinner[85].

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[79] "Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Nm 12:7-8 – ESV)

[80] "And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by… And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave." (1 Kgs 19:11-13 – ESV)

[81] Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, 373.

[82] "…in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you." (Ps 63:1-3)

[83] "Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!". (Ps 80:3).

[84] Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancient Testament*, 62. Cf. Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 745.

[85] See Athanasie Negoiță, *Psaltirea în cultul Bisericii ortodoxe* (București: Tipografia Cărților bisericești, 1940), 61, 65, 132 și 141.

UPDATING

Most often, people have the tendency to compel God (based on some previous merits or, what is much worse, under the form of an insidious coercion) to answer immediately to the requests they make in difficult times of their lives. If these requests are not answered, then the Lord is forced to accept, besides the improper attitude, their anger, rebellion, reproaches and even abuse. But the psalmist shows us that the Lord hears our prayer in the very moment we cry for help. If the answer is late in coming or if our request is not solved the way we would wish it, it's not because of an evil intention, but rather because of other realities: sometimes we ask for things that we don't need or are not of any use to us, others we don't deserve to have our requests fulfilled and maybe the time when we consider we should receive help is not the most suitable. In these conditions, if we want God to always answer positively to our requests it is necessary that we take into account the following aspects: our request must not bring sorrows to our neighbors; it must be formulated in agreement with the divine commandments, it must be supported by a virtuous living and it must be followed by perseverance and prayers of gratitude. Besides these it is important to emphasize the fact that God in His omniscience prepares for us in advance the things we are going to ask for at a certain point and that in order to receive them we must believe that in the moment we asked for them we have already received them, as Christ Himself suggested (cf. Mk 11:24).

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THE RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE JEWISH CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES[*]

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ABSTRACT. My paper deals with the necessity of existing cultural, social and religious dialogues between the leaders of the messianic Judaism movement and the metropolitan Orthodox Church, based on an honest, reverent and respectful approach, in order to present to this marvelous Jewish Christian community, the spirituality of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Body of Christ, that is the Orthodox Church. The elimination of the dichotomy fundamentalism vs. liberalism is a goal that has to be accomplished, so we can develop a constructive ecumenical dialogue that promotes our Holy Tradition of the Apostolic Orthodox Church. Last part of my research contains several suggestions regarding means of improving the dialogue while accepting the fact that both messianic Judaism and Orthodox Christians inherited specific authority, doctrines, practices and above all, a complementary Christian Tradition.

Keywords: messianic Judaism, Orthodox Church, religious dialogue, fundamentalism, new improvements.

Introduction

The target of each dialogue is to develop a motivational system of mutual trust based on polite questions and answers, with the purpose to discover new information about the interlocutor[1]. The interreligious dialogue wishes to develop solid relationships between the Christians of different confessions, based on understanding and respect, it wishes to build a peaceful climate which is able to avoid the potential ideological, social or political

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[1] Heinrich Niemann, "Some Special Problems of Speech Communication", in *Text, Speech and Dialogue*, 10th International Conference, eds. Václav Matoušek, Pavel Mautner (Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2007), 11.

conflicts. Above all this, the dialogue with other religious communities aims directly to break down all the prejudices and stereotypes that bring no contribution and maintain a tensed atmosphere. For this reason our religious dialogue, in order to be a constructive one, will not focus on the fragile theological areas that may lead to arguments and attacks. Our purpose is not to come to the same beliefs since our religious communities have a historical tradition which is very different from one another, but we need to identify common points that may lead to an efficient dialogue. Also, we don't want to convert anyone to Orthodoxy, because we don't want to risk becoming proselytes, but we do believe with all our heart in the apostolicity and holiness of the Orthodox Church, that is why if someone is convinced by the truth of the Orthodoxy and wants to experience Christ in this way, we praise the Lord.

Within our interactions it is highly important to take into account the fact that the dialogue is not the final means to consolidate relationships, since we all know the shortcomings of each religious discourse, we will never be able to express only in words the mystery of our person Created in God's image. This truth was suggested by Augustine when he told his followers to sharpen their minds because of the sterility of his language: "*Stretch your minds, please…help my poverty of language*"[2] (*Sermon* 119.3).

Regarding the dialogue with the Jews who converted to Christ, it is of capital importance because the Messianic Jews do not often participate in the main international theological events, as one of their theologians admits it[3], and their affiliation to an authentic Christian tradition is truly necessary for their status as Christians. But this uncertain status offers them a privileged position, because it is rather difficult to establish whether the results of the dialogue must remain confidential, meaning to eliminate a third party from the discussion[4], or they can be released for the public with the approval of both parties. Along with the Second Vatican Council, a new missionary paradigm appears on the religious scene, one which is built on respect and tolerance towards all the other religious communities of the world. In this new situation, starting with the years 1960-1970, the international dialogue between Christians and Messianic Jews develops, together with the emancipation of the black people and the liberalization of the feminist movement, a new challenge which put under question the conventional hierarchies that promoted a single gender, a

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[2] James K.A. Smith, *Speech and Theology: Language and the logic of Incarnation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 114.

[3] David J. Rudolph, "Messianic Jews and Christian Theology: Restoring an Historical Voice to the Contemporary Discussion", *Pro Ecclesia* 14 (2005): 2.

[4] David Blaikie, Diana Ginn, *The Legal Guide for Religious Institutions* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2010), 167.

single race and a single religion. From this historical moment on the bases of a new honest dialogue are set, which aims to respect the differences of opinion, to embrace the religious pluralism and the equality of values[5].

In this respect, L. Minnema[6] suggests that in order to achieve a constructive dialogue, one has to choose one of the three standard patterns: the traditional style of communication which identifies the interlocutor with the tradition he belongs to and to which he remains faithful[7]; the modern style of communication through which a renewal of tradition and society is asserted, dialoguing from positions of equality with all the other existing traditions; the post-modern style of communication is identitary egocentric, always looking to proliferate its own religious profile, presenting it as the only valid option.

In this paper, we chose a traditional communicative approach, in order to observe and respect the tradition of the Christians coming from Jews, a Mosaic tradition, focusing especially on the factors that led to the separation of the paths, because only in this way we will be able to propose an exercise of mutual closeness based on trust and respect for the eternal values.

Saint Apostle Paul – the Christian Jew in dialogue with other Jews (*Acts* 9:20-25)

A few days after his great conversion on the road of Damascus (*Acts* 9:3-6), Saint Apostle Paul was at the synagogue from Damascus in front of the most important teachers of the Law and preached the faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, the One he used to persecute just several days before, killing all the Christians who stood in his way. This stunning episode in the history of Christianity, that comes to show us the power of God, places the main enemy of Christians in dialogue with the Jewish religious leaders. Apostle Luke calls them οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ("Jews"), a common name in the book of Acts, used to separate the Jews who were against the Gospel of Christ from the ones who converted[8] (12, 3; 13, 45; 14, 4; 17, 5; 18, 12; 19, 33; 20, 3 etc).

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[5] Katharina von Kellenbach, "In Our Time: Civil Rights, Women's Liberation and Jewish-Christian Dialogue Fifty Years After *Nostra Aetate*", *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 10 (2015): 2-3.

[6] Lourens Minnema, „Correlations between types of culture, styles of communication and forms of interreligious dialogue", *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 70 (2014): 3-4.

[7] The life of the tradition and even that of the dialogue resides in some sort of a game of understanding so long as a text or a dialogue is "mute", its understanding has not yet begun. In order to avoid this "dialogue of the deaf", we must start a dialogue using the language of our interlocutors, and this cannot be achieved as long as one does not care for the tradition of the interlocutor. What we say to someone must be intercepted so that he may find answers from his cultural, social and religious background that is to find the words of his own language. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Adevăr și Metodă* (București: Editura Teora, 2001), 458.

[8] Lane T. Dennis, Wayne Grudem, *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2008), 2101.

Unfortunately, what could have been a constructive dialogue for the conversion of the rabbis and of the Jewish people from Damascus to the faith in Jesus Christ, transforms into "a dialogue of the deafs", because the man they used to trust, the persecutor Saul developed an apology contrary to the expectations of the Jews with profound Messianic accents, calling Jesus, the One they considered to be an insurgent, with the name of Son of God[9] (*1 Thessalonians* 1:10; *Galatians* 1:16; 2:20 etc). The dialogue was impossible because Saul who converted to the faith in Jesus Christ defeated them in dialectics, cutting all forms of argumentation that the rabbis presented. Saint John Chrysostom said that Saint Apostle Paul did not speak of the death and resurrection of Christ, but of the fact that He is Messiah, the Son of God, presenting this fact very rigorously based on many quotes from the Old Testament that fulfilled in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ[10]. This dramatic repositioning of Saint Paul as great preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will contribute to the incredible script in which the persecutor becomes persecuted himself (14:22) for the love of Christ[11]. The impact of this dialogue on the Jews must have been shocking since they knew Paul came to Damascus to fulfill completely different objectives. The answer of the Jews to this form of dialogue is easy to anticipate, but we think that Luke, the author of this book, is the one who put into the mouths of the Jews the expression: ὁ πορθήσας ("to destroy"[12]), precisely to nuance the astonishment of the listeners from the Jewish synagogue. But what the combatant Jews from the synagogue could not understand was the fact that their opposition encouraged the zeal of the newly converted, because they did not succeed in arguing their position according to which Jesus was not the Messiah that the Jewish people waited for so long[13].

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[9] O. Béguin, J. Bosc, A.M. Carré, G. Casalis, P.Ch. Marcel, F. Refoulé, R. Ringenbach, *La Bible: traduction oecuménique* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988), 2638: „Sauf dans la variante 8, 37, ce titre de Jésus n'apparaît dans les Actes qu'ici et, si l'on veut, en 13, 33; dans les deux cas, il est attribué à Paul – qui l'utilise souvent dans sa correspondance (1 Th 1, 10; Ga 1, 16; 2, 20 etc.). Ici son emploi en parallèle avec *le Messie* (v. 22) souligne sa signification messianique".

[10] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* 11, Philip Schaff (ed.) (Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 127.

[11] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*, in *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible*, R.R. Reno (ed.) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2005), 127: „This question calls dramatic attention to the unique position of Paul and to the total reversal of his life through divine intervention, from persecutor to persecuted".

[12] This verb in the participle πορθέω may also be translated with "pillage, annihilate" as it is used in 9:21 or in *Galatians* 1:13. 23. F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, ²1979), 165.

[13] I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, in *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 186.

The reaction of the Jews is of complete ferocity: Ὡς δὲ ἐπληροῦντο ἡμέραι ἱκαναί, συνεβουλεύσαντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν· ("*When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him*" – 9: 23), through this description Apostle Luke presents them for the first time as a hostile group, plotting to overthrow Saul and his ministry. And the intensity of their wish is also underlined by Saint Luke with the words: παρετηροῦντο δὲ καὶ τὰς πύλας ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀνέλωσιν· ("*they were watching the gated day and night in order to kill him*"[14] – 9: 24). The preaching of the Gospel in the synagogues was almost always followed by a painful experience for Apostle Paul, as he confesses once: "*Five times I have received at the hands of Jews the forty-less-one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned…*" (*2 Corinthians* 11:24-25). At least for the first case we have in the Old Testament the legal procedure for the application of this punishment: "*If there is a dispute between men and they come to court, and the case is heard, and they acquit the innocent party and condemn the guilty one; then, if the guilty party deserves a flogging, you shall make him lie down before the judges and they shall flog him before them according to the number fitting for his offence. Forty times they shall flog him, they shall add no more; for if they continue to flog him beyond this number of strokes, your brother will be put to shame before you*" (*Deuteronomy* 25:2-3).

"The hostility with which Saint Paul was received in almost all the synagogues was due to his Christian missionary programme amongst the Gentiles and the Jews from the diaspora, of which he spoke later on: "*The Jews persecute us and displease God and oppose all people by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved*" (*1 Thessalonians* 2:15-16). The hate of the Jewish communities against Saint Paul was supplied by the perspective of the perversion of the Law and of the Judaic religion through the preaching of the Gospel[15], but this very resistance against the Gospel would transform the Jews from defenders into enemies of God, thus estranging more and more from Yahweh, by the fact that they did not accept the deity of His Son Jesus Christ"[16].

The official break between the Christians and Jews did not happen in 70 AD as it would seem, but immediately after, in a period of time between the two Jewish revolts (66-70 and 132-135), and after the last revolt the separation between Christianism and Judaism becomes definitive and universally valid. The

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[14] David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, D.A. Carson (ed.) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 314.

[15] Despite all these rivalries, rabbis kept in contact with the Christened Jews, at least with respect to the decision either to consider the Christian books of the New Testament as inspired, and thus introducing the into the Judaic Canon, or to declare them heretic and eventually burn them in public. R.T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1903), 146-157.

[16] Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 79-80.

rabbinic Judaism is organized around the Law and its traditions and with Rabbi Rabban Gamaliel at Yavneh (around year 80) this separation is perfected even further, declaring heretics all the Jews converted to Christianism. But the problem of separation must be discussed in the terms of estrangement between the Christian Jews and all the other Christians and not between Christianity and the Rabbinic Judaism, as Biblicist J.D.G. Dunn states[17]. And this was because for several centuries this wing of Christianity lost some of its importance, the Christian Jews being absorbed completely by the Rabbinic Judaism on the one hand and on the other hand by the universal Christianism. Also, other causes were the lack of their successors.

In a short analysis one may observe that the main reason for the separation between Jews and Christians was the preaching of Jesus Christ as Messiah and Son of Yahweh, because the first believed that through this the Covenant with God is trespassed and the importance of the Law and of the Mosaic cult is perverted. Recent studies speak about the fact that the Apostolic Council held in Jerusalem (around 50 AD) generated theological disputes regarding the inclusion of the Christians coming from the Gentiles into the Judaic religious tradition. Here Saint Apostle Paul comes into conflict with the Judaizers from Galatia, also with the bishop of the Church from Jerusalem Apostle James, as we may conclude from the background of *Galatians* 2, and which is clearer in *Acts* 21 and *James* 2[18]. Jesus Christ was the stumbling stone for the Jews as psalmist David prophesized (*Psalm* 118:22-23), they considered our Lord Jesus Christ to be an apostate and the writings of the New Testament as a dangerous and heretic material which had to be avoided unyieldingly[19].

But once this "stumbling stone" was eliminated by the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as Messiah by the Judaic communities, a constructive dialogue can be initiated with these newly converted, based on mutual respect and the identification of a common tradition, especially since the cult of the early Church borrowed many elements from the Judaic cult. It is an orthodox Christian imperative to reunify the paths, and to consider Christians and Jews no longer enemies and strangers. Indifference and opposition must be turned into cooperation and goodwill; discrimination, insults and ideological persecution must be stopped, so that Jews and Christians meet not as enemies but as cherished and respected friends. In order to do so, ecumenical dialogue needs to eliminate that official

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[17] James D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: scm press, ²2006), 312-314.

[18] Stanley E. Porter, *The Paul of Acts: Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric and Theology*, in *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 115 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 172-186.

[19] Amy-Jill Levine, "Reflections on Reflections: Jesus, Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations", *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 8 (2013): 2-3.

break between the Christians and Jews happened two millenniums ago, and rediscover our common tradition that flows from the Person of Jesus Christ.

The necessity of an honest dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Jewish messianic communities and the risks of the religious fundamentalism

In the last decades of the past centuries, religion dominated the social and political environment but not without negative connotations increased by the two directions: the New Religious Movements under the generic term of "cults" and the so-called religious fundamentalism, as Professor M. Leone[20] calls it, which pretends that it represents the historic religious traditions. A new challenge of the century was the identification of the religious fundamentalism with terrorism (September 11, 2001; Charlie Hebdo[21]) about which W. Laqueur[22] predicted into an article, that this situation will develop in the form of a "sectarian fanaticism". The very name of "fundamentalism" is obscure because of the use of the term in all sorts of social and religious contexts and we forget too often the fact that this label appeared in the American Protestantism of the past centuries, defining its opposition against the so-called "Modernist Controversy". The Protestant denominations divided into two groups: the modernists or the liberals who promoted the need of the involvement of science within the religious life and the other party called the conservative or traditionalist fundamentalism which militated for the preservation of the historical and conservative version of the Christian faith[23].The problem is not to differentiate fundamentalists from non-fundamentalists, as M. Barkun says, but to eradicate the violent fundamentalism that enlivens the new religious movements, and also to identify the causes that

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[20] Massimo Leone, *Sémiotique du Fondamentalisme Religieux: Messages, Rhétorique, Force Persuasive* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014), 29-30: „Cette perspective, toutefois, **omettant de considérer le fondamentalisme comme phénomène intrinsèquement religieux**, et donc comme manifestation du sens et du langage, est incapable d'en comprendre la nature anthropologique, et par conséquent de développer une connaissance adéquate des raisons profondes pour lesquelles les fondamentalismes sont capables de faire l'objet d'une contagion communicationnelle et sociale".

[21] Jamil Khader, „Repeating Fundamentalism and the Politics of the Commons: The Charlie Hebdo Tragedy and the Contradictions of Global Capitalism", *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 3 (2015): 15: „The Charlie Hebdo massacre also plays out the contradictions between the democratic and republican ideals and the resurgence of global empires in this new stage of the metastasis of neoliberal global capitalism. Indeed, these terrorist attacks cannot be addressed without taking into account the colonial and post/neo-colonial contexts in which they have unfolded".

[22] Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 24–36.

[23] Ralph W. Hood Jr., Peter C. Hill, W. Paul Williamson, *The Psychology of Religious Fundamentalism* (New York, London: The Guilford Press, 2005), 47-51.

lead to such an aggressive type of behavior[24]. The danger of fundamentalism consists of the fact that along the years it proved to be an ideology that offers no credit to the generally valid principles of the human rights, it has an anti-feminine agenda[25] most often and it is too dogmatic when it comes to accepting the others, especially those of a different religion[26]. The term of fundamentalism associated to religion is an "eclectic" word that reunites three domains of interest: from a perspective the term expresses the exclusivity or distinctiveness of a moral rigor; understood as theological background it refers to the opposition against the cultural and religious liberalization and from a social point of view, fundamentalism denotes an ideological organizational uniqueness different from all the other types of religious movements[27].

According to T. Eagleton[28], the supporters of the religious fundamentalism are basically fetishists and their greatest fear is nonexistence; they fear that history will swallow them definitively and irrevocably. And they struggle to fill this void with dogmas and the main dogma is: only their religion contains intrinsically, fundamentally, essentially, univocal the truth about humankind and divinity, and this fundamental truth is opposed by the evil forces that must be countered with extreme virulence[29]. According to them, the truth of the religion must be subjected to the unchanged practices of the historical past and only those who act as such have a truly special relationship with the divinity[30]. Fundamentalists

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[24] Michael Barkun, "Religious Violence and the Myth of Fundamentalism", in *Religious Fundamentalism and Political Extremism*, Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur (eds.) (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2004), 58-61; Jonathan Githens-Mazer, Robert Lambert, „Why conventional wisdom on radicalization fails: the persistence of a failed discourse", *International Affairs* 86 (2010): 889-901.

[25] The American fundamentalism proposed only the male gender for the key positions of the society, and attributed women only household problems and not the status of a professor with authority. The emancipation of women was considered to be a bad thing, which brought apocalyptic anxiety, the fundamentalists being the main opponents. Betty A. DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Timothy Larsen, *Christabel Pankhurst: Fundamentalism and Feminism in Coalition*, in *Studies in Modern British Religious History*, Stephen Taylor, Arthur Burns, Kenneth Fincham (eds.) (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 103-104.

[26] Claudia Derichs, Andrea Fleschenberg, "Religious Fundamentalisms and Their Gendered Impacts in Asia", in *Religious Fundamentalisms and Their Gendered Impacts in Asia*, Claudia Derichs, Andrea Fleschenberg (eds.) (Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2010), 8.

[27] Lenshie Nsemba Edward, Johnson Abel, "Religious Fundamentalism and Problem of Normlessness: Issues in Value System in Nigeria", *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 12 (2012): 44.

[28] Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 208.

[29] Hal Marcovitz, *Religious Fundamentalism* (San Diego: ReferencePoint Press, 2010), 77-78.

[30] Jason S. Wrench, Michael W. Corrigan, James C. McCroskey, Narissra M. Punyanunt-Carter, „Religious Fundamentalism and Intercultural Communication: The Relationships among Ethnocentrism, Intercultural Communication Apprehension, Religious Fundamentalism, Homonegativity and Tolerance for Religious Disagreements", *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 35 (2006): 29.

consider themselves warriors and defenders of their God, and their virulent actions are considered to be beneficial for humanity, verging on the ridiculous through the undermining of the cruel reality that proves the contrary[31].

Of course, the Orthodox Church will avoid the fundamentalism in the dialogue with the Messianic Jews, as done before, because of the useless risks that such a presumption may subject to, but we will underline whenever is necessary the four attributes of our Church that history and tradition validates continually: the uniqueness, holiness, sobornicity and apostolicity. We also believe that it is truly necessary to avoid within our interreligious dialogue tracing the canonical limits of the Orthodox Church, since the canonical boundaries don't always coincide with the charismatic boundaries, as the Orthodox theologian G. Florovsky says[32]. The Church acknowledge the validity of the Mysteries performed outside its canonical jurisdiction, and readmitting many of those who parted from the Church, without Baptism, only with Chrismation. But is very important to underline that the danger of fundamentalism may affect both parties, either orthodox apologists or messianic Jews. In order to avoid that, both churches need to understand the risks of an fundamentalism attitude, that can crush any religious separation, and be opened to listen and even borrow the good side of his neighbour.

For an efficient combat against the fundamentalist attitude, the same professor M. Leone[33] proposes the elimination of the barriers that separate the fundamentalists from the rest of the world, by using a corporatist discourse that discards prejudices and makes them understand that isolation is not in their advantage, because they belong to the same society. That is why, the main concern of the Church in its dialogue with the fundamentalists, of any parties, should be, we say in agreement with professor Leone, the cultivation of the feeling of belonging to the same society that follows the same common target: serving God and humanity. The risk to become fundamentalist in expression is yet real, that is why it is highly necessary an actualization of the teachings of father Dumitru Stăniloae, who in the light of the fact that the Orthodox Church comprises in it all the confessions separated from it, since they could not separate completely from the Holy Tradition, as well as due to the fact that the Holy Spirit is not absent from any being that received reason[34], we may speak of the so-called "open sobornicity"[35].This is the key concept that synthesizes the

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[31] R.H. Hindery, "The anatomy of propaganda within religious terrorism", *Humanist* 63 (2003): 16.

[32] Georges V. Florovsky, "Les limites de l'Eglise", *Le Messager Orthodoxe* 37 (1961): 30-31.

[33] Massimo Leone, "Pour une Lutte Efficace contre les Discours Fondamentalistes", *Fellows: le regard de chercheurs internationaux sur l'actualité* 5 (1er avril 2016): 2.

[34] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* 2 (București: EIBMBOR, 21997), 267-268.

[35] Dumitru Stăniloae, "Sobornicitatea deschisă", *Ortodoxia* 23 (1971): 165-180.

availability of the Orthodox for the members of the other Christian confessions based on the principle "unity in diversity". This means that all the other "incomplete Churches", even the Messianic Jews, are called through this "open sobornicity" to give up the excessive focus on only one part of the faith of the Apostles on which they are founded historically and doctrinary, and to receive the ecclesial completeness of the Orthodox Church which is open for everybody, thus living according to the whole within the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church[36].

Reflections regarding contemporary relations with Non-Orthodox Jews and the pillars of an honest interreligious dialogue

The educational factors from the American Jewish communities (high schools and universities) provide at least at a pedagogical level, a sustainable interreligious dialogue based on respect and trust. The orthodox professors (by this we refer to the conservative Judaic party) teach that a correct approach of the texts, rituals and Judaic beliefs will never come into conflict with the views of the other Jewish communities assimilated to the Christian traditions. The community schools are built on the following premise: the body of the students must be comprised within all the other various Jewish communities which form the contemporary Jewish community as a whole. The same pattern is used for the constitution of the faculties of Judaic profile in North America. The renowned Marc Kramer, the head of the Jewish school community – Jewish Community Day School Network (*Reshet Batei Sefer Kehilatiim*), describes at least four philosophical orientations of the Jewish contemporary schools: adoption of the pluralism as religious ideology; accepting the denominations with the purpose to populate their institutions but only from a social perspective, not from a religious one as well; some schools are non-ideological meaning non-denominational; schools that are entirely under the auspices of Orthodoxy remain open to the entire community. This educational climate manages to equilibrate all the Jewish communities, always trying to avoid possible conflicts between the various points of view, through a uniform and synchronic presentation of the positions of all the denominations regarding a certain topic or academic subject. Hence, neutrality within debates is intensively promoted[37].

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[36] Aurel Pavel, Ciprian Iulian Toroczkai, *Adevăratul şi falsul ecumenism. Perspective ortodoxe asupra dialogului dintre creştini* (Sibiu: Editura Universităţii Lucian Blaga, 2010), 146-147.

[37] Jack Bieler, "Orthodox Educators in Non-Orthodox Jewish Educational Settings", in *The Relationship of Orthodox Jews with Believing Jews of Other Religious Ideologies and Non-Believing Jews*, Adam Mintz, Robert S. Hirt (eds.) (New York: The Michael Scharf Publication Trust of the Yeshiva University Press, 2010), 58-59.

The fact that there is such an education and accessibility on the side of the Jewish communities for the religious pluralism may be really useful for the Christian Orthodox environment. They will have to elaborate a persuasive interreligious dialogue with the help of which to present the Orthodox Christianity as the only Church completely apostolic that may reunite the contemporary Jewish Christians at the heart of a common tradition. In the nowadays interreligious dialogue important voices from the contemporary Jewish communities, acknowledge the fact that the debate on vulnerable topics ceased representing a purpose in itself a long time ago, but they are rather concerned to cooperate in a positive spirit, except for those from the Jewish conservative wing, who follow unyieldingly to legitimate themselves as the triumphalist party. Although many of these *klal Yisrael* know nothing of the requirements of the *shema Yisrael*, as rabbi Michel Feinstein confesses[38].

An important topic of the dialogue may be developed from the exploitation of the official position of the Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), who states that holiness is not only the appanage of Israel, but it can be obtained by every person who practices the good deeds in agreement with God's will[39]. This attitude comes on the background of the critiques brought by Heschel both to Judaism and to Christianism for their individualist ideas regarding holiness, and with respect to the relationships between Christians and Jews he accepts both the principle of communication and tolerance and that of separation, presenting a dualist attitude. Only through the preservation of the uniqueness and of their identitary perception with respect to God's will, both Christians and Jews are able to fulfill their call and their sanctifying mission into this world[40]. Hence, any attempt to mix and impose a certain tradition to the detriment of the other may be a harmful exercise for the consolidation of the relationship between the messianic Jews and the Orthodox Christians. The Jews that acknowledged Christ are called to embrace the apostolic Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church, in order to be integrated into the Body of Christ, thus fulfilling Saint Apostle Paul's prophecy regarding their return (*Romans* 9-11), but we must not ask them to give up completely their traditions that define them as a unique and non-recurring people except for the instructions adopted by the Church in the year 50 on the occasion of the first ecumenical Council from Jerusalem (*Acts* 15). Mutual respect also means acknowledging the other's sacrality, because in the New Testament

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[38] Aharon Lichtenstein, „Beyond the Pale? Reflections Regarding Contemporary Relations with Non-Orthodox Jews", in *The Relationship of Orthodox Jews with Believing Jews...*, 195-196.

[39] Alexander Even-Chen, "On the Holiness of the People of Israel in the Thought of Abraham Joshua Heschel", in *A Holy People: Jewish and Christian Perspectives on Religious Communal Identity*, Marcel Poorthuis, Joshua Schwartz (eds.) (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 361.

[40] Alexander Even-Chen, "On the Holiness of the People of Israel...", 365.

the call to holiness is addressed by God to the whole community (*Matthew* 5:48[41]) and not to isolated individuals, thus holiness having a profound ethical character fixed within a very well defined social climate[42].

Another linking point may be constituted by the official acknowledgement of the three fundamental principles regarding the messianic Jews that R. W. Jenson[43] proposes: the first considers them to be a gift from God for the Church; the second refers to the acknowledgement of the volatility of the status of Jew, it tends to spread amongst the Christian communities coming from the Gentiles, which means that they don't resist in the climate proposed by the Church; and the third one refers to their obedience to Torah, as a divine instrument that assures their continuity as nation. I think that the first two may be considered practical realities that result from the meeting of the two civilizations (Judaic and Christian), but the third principle needs some additions. The obedience to Torah may be considered to be beneficial as long as its ritual requests do not contradict the decrees established in the Orthodox Church at the Council from Jerusalem (50 AD) and at the seven Ecumenical Councils, that define the main dogmas of the Church.

Another request is to eliminate prejudices. Many researchers interpret *Romans* 14 and the problem of "the weak" from the point of view of the Messianic Jews and of the Gentiles that continue to maintain the prescriptions on the pure aliments and the calendar distinctions[44]. Here the term "weak" is a pejorative one and portrays the deficiencies of the faith of those it refers to, which results into their failure to become perfect in Christ, according to the Pauline model (*Ephesians* 4:13). I think that this attitude of superiority and self-sufficiency from the part of these researchers may be overcome if we insist on the main motif of the Pauline debate that is on the imperative not to judge

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[41] The starting particle **οὖν** serves both as transitional and inferential conjunction, proving the fact that what follows is in fact a logical consequence of what was stated before. This argument shows the fact that the inadequate interpretation of the imperative from Leviticus 19:18 leads to the elusion of all ethical value, an action which comes into contradiction with God's intention from the Law. Once this new argument is accepted the value is given by the opposition: surpassing the popular morality and legal conventions is obligatory in order to be able to work righteousness according to God's will. Horst Balz, Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* 2 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 542; Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, in *Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, Adela Yarbro Collins (ed.) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 320-321.

[42] Kent E. Brower, Andy Johnson, "Introduction: Holiness and the *Ekklēsia* of God", in *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament*, Kent E. Brower, Andy Johnson (eds.) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), xxii.

[43] Robert W. Jenson, "Toward a Christian Theology of Judaism", in *Jews and Christians: People of God*, Carl E. Braaten, Robert W. Jenson (eds.) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 9-11.

[44] David J. Rudolph, "Messianic Jews and Christian Theology...", 5.

anyone and not to become you yourself a stumbling rock for others (14:3-4. 10.13), as the same D. J. Rudolph states in his study quoted in the following. We believe that the problem of the identification of "the weak" must be removed at all costs, this stereotype being a dike in the attempt to consolidate the relationship, especially since neither the modern exegesis reached a common point[45]. The main preoccupation should be finding common points in Christ that unite us in the same Body (*Ephesians* 1:22-23).

One last problem that needs to be solved within the interreligious dialogue is the following: did Saint Apostle Paul encourage the baptized Jews to maintain their Mosaic rituals[46], or did he advise them to integrate within the community according to the Christian teachings? Because we believe that on the solution of this problem depends the future of the dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the contemporary Messianic Jews. The answer resides, if we want to acknowledge it, in the text from *Galatians* 3:10-14:Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσίν, ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσίν·

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[45] Biblicist M. Reasoner states that the phrase "the weak" meant for Saint Paul a literary construct based on the situation from Corinth, since the Apostle couldn't have known the exact situation of the Christians from Rome. But the German theologian E. Käsemann states that it speaks only about the Jewish faithful, and the Biblicist C. K. Barrnett proposes the hypothesis according to which this group of the weak most probably comes from a gnostic-Jewish fusion, for which an Orthodox Jewish background is impossible to recover. A. J. M. Wedderburn states that the identification of the members of the parties of "the weak and strong" is not clearly done according to the distinction Jew non-Jew, because within the Church some of the Jews considered themselves free from the Mosaic Law and of the traditions that it imposed, and in the same time, others, non-Jew Christians, might have been drawn to the Judaic practices of the synagogue from Rome. Another perspective is offered by M. D. Nanos who says that "the weak" are practicing Jews from outside the Church, Apostle Paul speaking in fact to the Christians that were an integrating part of the Synagogue, and who often interacted with the Jews. And in this context, says Nanos, Saint Paul uses the word "weak" with a pedagogical meaning, with the purpose to force the Jews to become "strong". Finally, Biblicist C. H. Dodd acknowledges the fact that on the dimensions from Rome, no one knows exactly the perennial factors, which imposes an agnostic attitude. Another researcher that joins this honest register from an interpretative point of view is J. P. Sampley, who tries to argument the thesis according to which Paul uses several oversized words and expressions with the purpose to gain the attention of both types of audience. Hence, he says, Apostle Paul did not believe that there were active vegetarians amongst his audience, but wishing to address the problems caused by the nutritional rules of the Judaic cult, he widens the area and addresses a more general problem, that of vegetarianism. Mark Reasoner, *The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14: 1 – 15: 13 in context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 369; C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957), 257-258; A.J.M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 32-34; Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 154-157. C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), 211-212; J. Paul Sampley, „The Weak and the Strong: Paul's Carefull and Crafty Rhetorical Strategy in Romans 14: 1 – 15: 13", in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honour of Wayne A. Meeks*, L.M. White, O.L. Yarbrough (eds.) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 40-43.

[46] David J. Rudolph, "Messianic Jews and Christian Theology...", 7.

γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται·ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται· ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως[47]. Apostle Paul brings into discussion Abraham's bloodline (3:6-29) because the Judaizing who tried to convince the Christians that they must respect the Mosaic rules, seem to have chosen their own path[48], in opposition with that of the great Apostle, which is based not on the practice of the Law, which is curse, but on the faith in Jesus Christ's Sacrifice – the only way through which we become righteous before God. The Jews were boasting with their knowledge of Law hold oneselfs more superior than any other Christian group, and the possesion of the Law demonstrates that Israel is inalienably the people of true God[49]. Apostle Paul answer is what he already just strengthens in his epistle to Galatians: anyone who believes that through the Law can be righteous before God, it is in a big glitch, because his attitude draw the wrath of God (3: 10-12). The solution of Paul concludes that a man is justified by faith and grace and not by the Law, an universal truth that has to animate our interreligious dialogue.

All this proposed tasks (the exploitation of the official position of the Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel; the official acknowledgement of the three fundamental principles regarding the messianic Jews that R. W. Jenson proposes; the dismission of prejudices and the attitude of Saint Paul regarding Jews Christians), tinted in a way or another, the big idea from the title, it is our proposal to achieve an proper religious dialogue with Christian Jewish Communities.

Conclusions

The interreligious dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Messianic Jews needs to be reanalysed and reconceived based on equality and mutual respect. A stringent task is also the elimination of fundamentalism from the religious discourse, a key factor in the failure of a possible future cooperation. Including the Jews who returned to the faith in Jesus Christ into an authentic Christian tradition is highly necessary for their status as Christians, and from this

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[47] Aland Barbara and Kurt, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, *The Greek-English New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 28 2012), 1164-1166.
[48] J. Louis Martyn, „A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles", in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, Mark D. Nanos (ed.) (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 357.
[49] N.T. Wright, "Law in Romans 2", in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), (Tubingen: JCB Mohr, 1996), 139.

perspective the Orthodox Church may have an important role, because its apostolic tradition is the most compatible with that of the Messianic Jews given the fact that there was a time in history when these two worlds cohabitated in the body of the same Church.

Also, avoiding the "dialogue of deafs" remains another request equally important as the first one, because as long as we wish to come to a point where all of us have the same beliefs and doctrinary convictions, we will do nothing else but to promote this harmful form of dialogue in which the dumb is speaking to the deaf.

The result of this research is that I noticed how important it is, in the equation of a fruitful dialogue, to identify the essential points that stood at the base of the separation of these two worlds (Judaic and Christian). I noticed the availability that most of the Judaic communities from America have for the religious pluralism, as well as their wish to cohabitate with the Christian congregations. This availability must be valued immediately by the authorities of the Orthodox Church, with the purpose to present these Messianic Jews the apostolic completeness of our Church.

The pillars on which constructive dialogues can be built, as I systematized them previously (acknowledging the sacrality of the other; the Messianic Jews are a gift from God for the Christian world; elimination of the prejudices regarding the past of the Jews and last but not least understanding the view of Saint Apostle Paul regarding the respect given or not to the law and to the Judaic duties of the cult) are only a few leads of research that we propose to the considerations of the specialists, with the final purpose to underline the necessity of the unity of faith and the impartation of the grace of the Holy Spirit for us, all the Christians, to give our lives to Christ the Lord.

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II. HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

THE DANISH EXPERIENCE, FROM THE LAST THIRD OF THE 19TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT: CULTURAL STRUGGLE AND CONSERVATISM

JON GISSEL*

ABSTRACT. In the last three decades of the 19th Century, Denmark experienced a mayor cultural struggle, a spiritual fight, which has profoundly influenced the way of thinking and the situation for the Christian Faith until the present. In this struggle, Christianity and Conservatism expressed themselves on one side, Atheism, Materialism and Individualism on the other. One of the signs was an intense debate about the relationship between faith and knowledge. In this case the Protestant Bishop Martensen presented a very interesting answer to Atheist claims. Another was the demand, from the Radical side, for "schools without confession", that is without any connection with Christianity at all. Finally, there was the question, if upbringing and education should take place in absolute freedom. In the old Orthodox countries, young people as well as parents, schools and the Church will face many of the same problems and questions. All of this asks the question, how can the Church handle a general cultural conflict?

Keywords: Christianity, Denmark, Conservatism, Knowledge, School, Upbringing.

Introduction

Denmark has not experienced the physical and spiritual repression of Communism as Romania has. It has, however, gone through experiences which might be relevant to present day Europe in general. The Culture of every country has various layers; some are easily found, some lay more in quietness. Moreover, the past is always the background of the present. This is also the case with Denmark, and it is possible to find a deeper level beneath supermarkets and superficiality, materialism and ignorance of Christianity.

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Today, many Danes know very little about their own tradition. This is sadly enough most of all the case with the Christian part of it which has a long tradition though not an Orthodox one. There is an individualism, which came very much to the fore in the second half of the 19th Century which, strangely enough, turns against the idea of the free will of man. It proclaimed the free thinking, but it suppressed the free will, and that seems to me a contradiction. It wants to abolish every principle of authority, but it also denied people any real choice. It was deterministic because of its Naturalism, but it also led to the sort of thinking, where everything should be easy and comfortable. Determinism is the way of thinking which contends that man only acts from necessity, not by free choice. There is in Denmark as in the Western world generally an anti-Christian direction in the culture, ever since what is termed the Enlightenment,[1] but it became dominant culturally after 1870. Having a state-supported Church did not prevent that. An attitude has established itself that makes the new, the "latest thing", always better than what is old.[2]

Denmark had, at that time, a very homogenous population. Only 1, 1/3% declared themselves outside the Peoples Church ("Folkekirken") in 1901. Out of a population of 2.450.000, 106 were Orthodox. Those, who claimed not to belong to any body of faith, grew in number, but were also quite a small part of the population (3628); most were men living in the capital.[3] The University of Copenhagen was at the time the only one in the Country. Radicalism, Atheism, Positivism became very prominent in Copenhagen in the years before 1900, and knowledge and the University became an intellectual battlefield. The Academic world dissociated itself more and more from the Christian faith.[4]

Denmark experienced in the last third of the 19th Century a major clash of opposing principles. It was both a cultural and a spiritual conflict, and the result

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[1] On this large topic in the West generally, see the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2007), and the American historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004). In a more specific way: Christian Gottlieb, *Dilemmas of Reaction in Leninist Russia: the Christian Response to the Revolution in the Works of N.A. Berdyaev 1917-1924* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2003).

[2] Effects of the result of the Cultural Struggle have been described by Henrik Jensen, *Offrets Århundrede* (Copenhagen: People's Press, 2007) and *Det ordentlige Menneske* (København: Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, 2009); by Torben Bramming, *Opgør med den moderne Myte* (Copenhagen: Kristeligt Dagblads Forlag, 2012); and recently the book Johan Christian Nord, and Kristoffer Garne, eds., *Efter Georg* (Copenhagen: Munch & Lorenzen, 2015). Generally, they do not address the Cultural Struggle itself as a topic.

[3] J.P. Trap, *Kongeriget Danmark*, ed. H. Weitemeyer (Copenhagen, 1906), I: 35, 50ff.

[4] This is a general phenomenon. William F. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale* (Washington: Regenery Publishing, 1951/2002) provides a very good description of an example. Buckley criticizes the talk about democratic values and cultural heritage without mention of Christianity as central in this heritage. The chapter "The Superstitions of 'Academic Freedom'" is most relevant to the text by Helms below.

was that the bias I have mentioned became paramount. It was the age of the King Christian IX (1863-1906), a period marked by substantial changes in the country in military, political, economic, and cultural matters, beginning with the defeat in the war against Prussia and Austria in 1864. The struggle is an important one for the cultural history of Denmark, which includes the issue, if the culture of the country should bear the stamp of Christianity or of atheism. It was a conflict between ideas, between completely different attitudes to religion. The negative attitude to the Christian faith was the one that won out and has become still more dominant since. It is generally labeled "Radical" in Denmark, or by those who profess it "Modern". This could possibly be rendered as "Liberal" in English. But who were the people who fought against this trend? They are little known in Denmark today. They opposed the ideological movement, which called itself "the Modern Breakthrough". It is important to realize that this was in itself a self-aggrandizing expression, intended to propagate a particular view of life and human beings. The intention succeeded. Practically every history book which treats Denmark in the period from 1870 through 1970 is dominated by this view. This is especially the case where spiritual matters are concerned. They were Naturalists, denying that there was anything outside the visible world, including tacitly or directly, the existence of God, and they wanted to regulate everything according to a strictly secular form of reason. The most prominent figure in this line was Georg Brandes, a critic who promoted the attitude in lectures in 1871. He described the "modern" as an attitude which takes its "position within the totality of Nature and not in the dogmatically supernatural". It is important to be aware that this definition is directed clearly against Christianity, and that it also implies that Naturalism, unlike Christianity, is not based on dogma, which in my opinion is clearly wrong. This is written in a public text. In a private letter, he wrote: "I hate Christianity to the marrow in my bones." That is a very violent expression, and it is an example of the strong emotional character of many expressions by the Radicals when talking about opponents and any other way of thinking than their own, and about Christianity in particular. This phenomenon was also frequent in public texts. This emotional treatment of adversaries, this active aversion, or to use Brandes' own expression: this hatred, is curious, as those who promoted Naturalism stressed the intellectual character, the rationality, the objectivity of their position. There is a contradiction here, which it is very important to study and to try to explain.[5] The emotional character of the Radical way of fighting, and the strong bias against traditional culture, most of all Christianity, points to the subjective background for the way in which Method was used. The Naturalists did not see that they were not at all as objective, as they claimed to be.

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[5] Jon A.P. Gissel, *Konservatisme og Kulturkamp* (Copenhagen: Munch & Lorenzen, 2014), 60, 64.

Another representative of Atheism was the Classical Philologist J.L. Heiberg who lived around 1900 and wrote about Byzantium. But, as he did not like Christianity at all, there is a tendency to distortion of his topic. Harald Høffding, a Philosopher and Historian of Philosophy, was very concerned with what he called the Law of Causes. By this he meant that circumstances, like inheritance, determined the actions of a person, and in general, what happened. There is a strong deterministic line in the way of thinking of the Positivists, Naturalists and Radicals. This is clearly linked to their striving for certain, that is, positive, knowledge. Analysis was for them to ascertain how causes made only one result possible. There was a general wave of Naturalistic and Radical claims in Europa, especially Western Europe, at the time.

Conservatism at the time might be theological, cultural and political, and the adherents did not necessarily support each other, though in many cases they fought against the same enemies. My own research has mainly been in the field of cultural Conservatism; it has been about those, whom one never hears about in the normal historical accounts and in the media; about the forgotten people, the losing side, about those who did not have posterity on their side, but who also represented a valuable alternative; they have a number of good points, something which is worth listening to. The Radicals are those who have received attention in posterity, the Conservatives have not. So I see what I do as an act of justice.

In Denmark, Romanticism is especially important, as seen in the "Golden Age" of Danish poetry and art in the first half of the 19th Century. Then, Romanticism also gave a strong impulse to historical interest and historical studies. So when the Radicals attacked the continued importance of Romanticism, they harmed the link with the Classical period of Danish culture, whereas the Conservatives, while not accepting Romanticism unconditionally, tried to avoid a break with this important past. The result of the Radical victory in this cultural conflict was a mayor breach in the national tradition of Denmark. In the Golden Age, it was generally accepted in cultural circles that man has a free will. But later in the century, naturalistic philosophical assumptions prevailed and with them the attitude that both nature and culture are governed by laws without exception, that there is a "law of causes".[6] This made rejection of the idea of the Freedom of the Will the only philosophical way of thinking, in this view. Moreover, this rejection was often combined with attacks on the theologians, and Bishop Martensen argues strongly and diversely for the importance of this ability to make choices in human life. For him, the man after being born, grows, develops continually, as a result of the choices he makes during his life.

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[6] This was the expression of the philosopher Harald Høffding. Jon A.P. Gissel, *Konservatisme og Kulturkamp*, Copenhagen: Munch & Lorenzen, 2014, 292.

Two well-known figures from Denmark in the 19th Century are Søren Kierkegaard and N.F.S. Grundtvig. They are present in the background of my topic. Hans Andersen wrote in 1857 a novel called "To be or not to Be", which is critical of the Rationalism and Atheism of his day, so he can be said to have taken up topics which would later be central in the Cultural Struggle. The bishop Hans Lassen Martensen (1808-84), bishop of Sjælland (Zeeland), was an important figure in the 19th Century, a great academic apart from being a bishop, and a master of synthesis, but he is today less known than Grundtvig and Kierkegaard.[7] These latter two have in posterity been seen largely without the Christian content, which their writings contained. Grundtvig has been made a symbol of community and popular power, Kierkegaard a symbol of individualism. In that way, they have been incorporated into the atmosphere of very restricted Christianity.

Not everybody supported the domination of intellectualism and individualism. Those who opposed this, are called the Conservatives: they were Christians or at least built on the cultural foundation of Christianity.

The Freedom of the Will

This Conservative way of thinking was represented by the bishop Martensen, who was concerned with the Church and the congregation, the country and the culture as something which fits together, is intertwined. It will be fruitful, I think, to take a closer look at Martensen's important work *Christian Ethics* from the 1870's, in which he opposed the secular movement on important points.[8] He defended the idea of the free will of man. He was explicitly aware of the importance of a person's circumstances, including the family one grows up within, but he also stressed that these surroundings can only bring an inclination towards a particular way of acting, it cannot force you to act in a certain way. So there is real choice. It is an interesting feature of the situation that the Lutheran theologians at the time defended Free Will, as it is an attitude not normally connected with Lutheranism. This may be worth noting in an Orthodox context. The idea of spiritual growth in man, also a main theme for the Conservatives, is part of the same way of thinking. Martensen explains the freedom of the human will by saying that it can actualize its character within conditions which God has made. Only God has unconditional freedom. Man is dependent on God and on Nature, and what he has been given as an individual, can be formed by the will, but not become something different. God has given man a relative freedom, a freedom of choice. Therefore man acts with will and purpose, therefore he has responsibility, and therefore human sin is counted as

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[7] About Martensen is available in English: Jon Stewart, ed., *Hans Lassen Martensen. Theologian, Philosopher and Social Critic* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2012). The book contains articles by various authors; the important topic of the Freedom of the Will is not prominent, however.

[8] H.L. Martensen, *Den christelige Ethik* I-III (Copenhagen, 1871-1878).

guilt. Man is intended to become attached to God in his development, and man forms his character through his actions. Man adopts the possibilities for movement or calmness, for action or not acting. Man can act according to the impulses or urges of love or of egoism. Martensen proceeds by saying that determinism only looks at the conditioned in human freedom and contends that this freedom is only a hidden necessity. He argues that man is a part of the family, but also that he is something in himself, that he can adopt or reject the redemption which is offered to by the Gospel of Christ. This is a main point with Martensen: that the will is no passive entity. Human character is determined by the whole continuum of the person's actions, it has formability (the Danish word is "Dannelighed"). There are a variety of possibilities in it. Bishop Martensen says explicitly that in the way of thought of his own time the power of "circumstances" and "situation" has succeeded the belief of Antiquity in the power of the stars over human actions: Determinism is the same, the words are different. But in Martensen's own way of thinking the freedom of choice makes man have a history. In history something undefined is to be defined. There are possibilities, but determinism fails to appreciate the category of possibilities. Finally, Martensen argues against the idea, which became fashionable at that time, that statistics would show freedom of the will as illusory.[9]

Knowledge

The Cultural Struggle was very much a struggle about knowledge and about the University, as already mentioned. The enormous progress of Technology in all Europe at the time, made a particular form of science seem unconquerable. The British author and Historian of Ideas C.S. Lewis wrote that the development of machines from the middle of the 19th Century more than anything else made this the greatest break in world history; that psychological effect of this was that everything new seemed better than what came before it.[10] In short the idea of change as a value in itself came up. The Positivists, who were the Liberals or Radicals, argued that only certain knowledge was worth considering as knowledge. This ideal of knowledge is linked to Mathemathics and the Natural Sciences. To deal with the material world and with what is measurable quantitatively, makes it easier to claim positive knowledge. By making this an ideal, the formulation of laws was made the most important issue. To achieve that kind of certainty, the positivists became very focused on Method: Method turned out to be for them the essence of scholarship. The Conservatives were more inclined to consider a kind

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[9] H.L. Martensen, *Den christelige Ethik*, vol. I (Copenhagen, 1871) (edition 1884), 141-168. Pp. 155f. about the formability of human character. The *Christian Ethics* was translated into Russian (1890), but to my knowledge not into Romanian, see the book edited by Stewart, p. 330.

[10] C.S. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum", in *Selected Literary Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 1-14, on pp. 10f.

of knowledge in which probability was important. From the Conservative side the question was asked: What is knowledge, what are the limits of knowledge? In Denmark, the debate about the relationship between faith and knowledge was quite lively in the 1860's, but with the advance of Radicalism in the 1870's, it changed character.

The Bishop Martensen directly addressed the question of the relationship between faith and knowledge in his great work about *Christian Ethics* from the 1870's.[11] He points out that those who support a culture based on human thought alone, the humanists, have insisted that scholarship, all university activities, should be independent of faith. They insist that Theology for that reason is not truly academic, as it generate its results from the faith, and because Theology itself is perception, only a knowledge concerning belief. Martensen argues against the Humanist-naturalist point of view by saying that it is an illusion to think that any human knowledge exists without faith. Faith and knowledge accompany each other. The person who does not want to believe in God and in His Revelation, will have to believe in the World, in Reason, in Nature. From one position or from the other, people develop their knowledge from their own premises. It is wrong to say that faith stands on one side and knowledge without presuppositions on the other. There is, however, a twofold opposition, there are four parties acting, two on each side. One faith and its aligned form of knowledge stand as one party, and another kind of faith and its aligned kind of knowledge stand as another party. Martensen goes on to say that the reason for all human knowledge being carried by faith is that we are created. It belongs to the limitations of everything human, and we cannot as the Creator Himself produce our knowledge out of ourselves, but must take support from something given. Al scholarship and science is based on certain foundational presuppositions, the truth of which cannot be demonstrated, but only be grasped directly. This is precisely faith, whether it is of a religious, a moral, or a scholarly or scientific character. Certainty, especially about the religious truth, is conditioned by the personal relation of a human being with the same truth, by the will of the person, and the matter cannot be described in terms of concepts and theory alone.

By treating the issue this way, Martensen rejects all kinds of absolutism of knowledge, something which became more and more prominent in the age he lived in and dealt with. He characterizes the opposite position by saying that Naturalism rests in articles of faith which it cannot prove. This absolutism of knowledge has continued till this day and is not least used when confronting Christianity. On the other hand it has today become more common to acknowledge the importance of presuppositions to research; and this is an indirect admission that Martensen was right.

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[11] H.L. Martensen, *Den christelige Ethik* III, (Copenhagen, 1878), 334f. See about this Gissel, *Konservatisme og Kulturkamp*, 240f.

This is very important, and to give Postmodernism its due, it has questioned the presuppositions of Positivism.

Martensen is an example of the interesting argumentation, the seriousness on the side which lost, and I think that it is important to unearth these arguments today, when the modern culture in many respects has reached its outer limits.

The history of Danish historiography is a part of this general cultural and spiritual collision. Later work on the period has almost without exception made the Radicals, mainly the historians Kristian Erslev and Erik Arup, the central figures and the models in their discipline. The Conservative historian Johannes Steenstrup (1844-1935) argued that within the field of History, certain knowledge was not possible, but that one could reach a high degree of probability.[12] Steenstrup reacted against the growing domination of Method, of Source-criticism, in his time, represented by his colleague as an historian, Kr. Erslev, who was a Positivist and a Radical, taking the Natural Sciences as a model for historical scholarship.[13] In a famous debate in 1891,[14] they argued against each other: Erslev that Source-criticism should be the starting point of all work in History, Steenstrup for work on a broader spiritual basis. The following generation became adherents of Erslev, and Steenstrup's point of view was practically forgotten. Being an historian myself, I have seen the consequences within my own discipline: a criticism rigidly opposed to the traditional history and ending by dissolving everything. The matter is complicated: Modernity has two faces: both a belief in objectivity in science and scholarship, and a strong subjectivism which gradually gains control and results in Postmodernism.

Danish academic culture overall, and in the individual disciplines, developed as a result of the Radical attack into a retreat from contact with religion, a fear of not being scholarly, not being "realistic", if not seeking material explanations. This again led to a suspicion against older historiography, more influenced by Christianity, and against Saints Lives as historical sources. The Conservatives wanted to work on the basis of a Christian attitude to life and a Romantic and Idealistic outlook. So while the Radical historians wanted to demolish tradition, regarding it as only an older stage in the development of culture, Johannes Steenstrup saw the purifying of tradition as the aim of historical work. He defended directly Saints Lives as

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[12] Johannes Steenstrup, *Historieskrivningen* (Copenhagen: Hagerups, 1915), 182-187.

[13] Kr. Erslev, *Historisk Teknik* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1911).

[14] The debat took place in the newspaper *Dagbladet* 23.3, 6.4. and 7.4 1891, and it has been edited in *Johannes Steenstrup. Historiografiske og historieteoretiske Skrifter*, ed. Jon A.P. Gissel (Haderslev: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til dansk Historie, 2006), 49-63. See Jon A.P. Gissel, "Åndskampen i historieforskningen i Danmark", *Scandinavian Evangelical e-Journal* 4 (2013): 1-53, http://see-j.net/index.php/SEE-J/article/view/131/123.

historical sources, claiming that they were not only literature, but also represented the life, the way of thinking of people in the Middle Ages.[15]

For Steenstrup, key concepts of his historical work are curiosity, imagination, ability of combination, psychological insights, rather than an exclusive emphasis on method, on criticism of the sources, as was the case in his Positivist counterpart Erslev. This attitude of Steenstrup's seems to me to presuppose the idea of the Freedom of the Will. The ability to enter the way of thinking of another person, another age, another nation is in his view basic for historical study. The mind, way of thinking and action are intertwined, and man has some influence on his own destiny, therefore the ability, the attempt to understand his choices is a prerequisite to the writing of history. This is a mindset, rather than a method, which allows historical scholarship to move, work and act in a room larger than that of source-criticism alone. Steenstrup insists quietly on the personal responsibility of the individual, and thus on an ethical dimension in historical writing. After understanding also some kind of a verdict, an evaluation is needed. Thus, it seems to me, in Steenstrup's way of thinking, Freedom of the Will is present in his conception of knowledge.

School and Faith

As far as the Christian Conservatism was concerned, education and cultural consciousness, the personal adaption of information, ("dannelse") had to be related to the faith. School and education were important in the context of the Cultural Struggle. For a long time schools were closely connected with the Church. In the last third of the 19th Century, the clergy still had a certain supervision of the schools. But from France came a wish to make schooling secular, both during the Revolution and after 1871, the Third Republic. The argument for this was equality. Christian debaters made the point that religion always contains special features and has historically conditioned appearances. Therefore one cannot make teaching of religion abstract. But it is possible to make a living teaching in Christianity which is organically related to the entire work of the whole school. There was in Denmark a discipline called "religion", which individuals and circles of people attached to the Church tried to strengthen.

Johannes Helms (1828-1895) was an important school-leader at the time. His school was a private one and it belonged to the so-called "learned" schools for boys, which placed special emphasis on the Classical Tradition in content, Greek and Latin language. Helms himself was a poet, and he wrote patriotic songs: he belonged to the National Liberals, the national academics of the generation before

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[15] The article "Åndskampen i historieforskningen i Danmark", *Scandinavian Evangelical e-Journal* 4 (2013): 1-53, http://see-j.net/index.php/SEE-J/article/view/131/123, also treats the question of Saints Lives.

the Radical attack. This conscientious school-leader wrote 1880 in a publication from his school, a so-called "program", about the relationship of his school to the Christian faith. It became a brief and effective statement of the relationship of his own school to Christianity. Helms writes that this school was a Christian school, and that a number of classes in religion was insufficient, but no teacher and no discipline could oppose this basis. He admitted that reasons for falling from the faith[16] might come by many ways, which the School could not control. He also had to admit that he could not guarantee that this negative influence might not come from the School itself, because all human work is done in weakness. As the leader he could make a mistake, and he could be blind, but he could give the topic all his attention, to prevent the problem from materializing or to prevent it from lasting. Helms did not want to make any test of the attitude of the teachers, because there were so few to choose between, and because he might open the door to hypocrisy if he did. He said that he was making this statement to preserve the confidence of the parents in the school at a time when a movement, coming from part of the literature of the moment and spreading to all of Society, intended to break down the religious life. He explained that a meeting in the country, where the movements of awakening within the Lutheran Church were strong, had addressed the subject of the relationship between the learned schools and the Church. Helms made the point that his school had a confession, and that Christianity was taught from the Lutheran Confession (Confessio Augustana), but that the Faith and practicalities of children of other recognized bodies of faith were respected. He addressed the subject of confidence in the teachers, saying that he would not demand that anybody should teach Christianity, but he did demand that no teacher of his School should try to demolish what the School builds, and no one who attacks Christianity in a dramatic way outside the School can be a teacher there. The School must be a unity. It wouldn't do for every teacher to drag the pupils in his own direction. Helms also said that the teachers and the School should not always talk about Christianity and the Word of God, as this might have the opposite effect of what is wished.

The program by Helms is a remarkable document. The fact that he found it necessary to make this declaration at this early point, in 1880, proves in itself how powerful was the ideological movement which wanted a break between Church and School. The connection could no longer be taken for granted. The statement contains the important Conservative theme of the relationship between the individual and the larger context; in this case the teacher and a concrete school as an institution. Helms as a person respects the attitude of another person, but the School cannot contain everything within its walls. Helms expresses, like Martensen, a reticence regarding preaching Christianity on an everyday basis. This attitude might contain the risk that the Christian Faith gradually drops out of sight.

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[16] "Forargelsen" in Danish; the equivalent of "skandalon" in Greek.

Helms was the leader of his school, but he was obviously in a difficult position, maneuvering between the teachers and the parents. His program attracted a good deal of attention, and as a result of it three of his teachers left the school. This is surprising given the moderate character of his remarks, in form and in content, and proves as to how strong the movement against traditional Christianity had become already in 1880.

Upbringing and the novel "Freedom"

"Freedom" was a very popular word at the time, as it is today. But what is freedom, and is it always unproblematic? The author K.G. Brøndsted was a schoolteacher and a defender of the traditional Denmark. The Church, and that means in Denmark the Lutheran Church, was for him personally combined with some sympathy with the Roman-Catholic Church. It is a Denmark, where the Monarchy is indispensable, and in which also the Aristocracy has a stabilizing role to play actively continuing certain virtues and values. It is a culture, in which the Family is the basis and marriage is its kernel. The home is a place which unites spiritual life in its practical form. Brøndsted also used the home as a metaphor for eternal life, the life at home with God. In all these respects, Brøndsted is at the center of a conservative paradigm. In 1893 he published the novel "Frihed" (Freedom), which he called 'A Tale of the Present'. What makes the book a tale of his own time is the question of upbringing, of education and individual freedom. The father of the protagonist Tymme is a priest in the Danish Lutheran Church, who gets under influence of ideas from the followers of Grundtvig. Those are ideas that parents, the grown-ups should let nature take care of itself, and then it will prosper. So the idea is: as little child guiding as possible. No pressure, says the priest, willing hands make light work. We have met these ideas in recent decades also. It is a theoretical thought of freedom, a kind of Utopia, combined with a certain weakness in the person, the priest, who is its spokesman. However, another person with a stronger will, a much more purposeful follower of these ideas, becomes very influential in the family. The book criticizes the idea of freedom in Grundtvig and his followers, but it also turns its critic against the Radical conception of freedom, which is directed distinctly against Christianity and all traditional values. The children of the priest meet this conception and the persons who carry it later in their lives and come to harm. The newspapers are a recurring feature, they are influential. The boy Tymme's life becomes a mess, by his always having freedom, a lack of upbringing. He turns aimlessly, now in one direction, now in another. He is unable to concentrate on one piece of work, to learn something thoroughly. In the end he goes to America and becomes a Roman Catholic: he needs Church to take the responsibility from him. Until that point, a

vague upbringing without values made life sad and dark. Brøndsted is by no means a caricature of an authoritarian figure. His portrayal of his characters is differentiated and understanding.

Conclusion

I have been asked: What was the motor for this Cultural Struggle? With regard to the Radical side it was probably the wish for a purely worldly view of life, making the intellect, the individual and aesthetics the main factors. If an attitude to life and human beings is rooted in the Christian Faith, there may very well be an intellectual, a personal and an aesthetic perspective in it, but they belong to a larger contexts, they do not dominate in themselves. They are kept in their place by the Christian Faith. With regard to the Conservative side there was a wish to maintain the Free Will and human responsibility as central in the meaning of life. Christianity should continue to be the foundation of the culture of the country. It was right that there should be a National feeling without exaggeration. Also, the Classical (Greek-Roman) tradition should continue to play its part. They did not want a break with the past, but a quiet development. They wanted a firm upbringing of children, without exaggerations. The love for home, family, and Fatherland was of high importance to them. However, I must also ask: What does „motor" refer to? Is the metaphor the same as the driving force? If the metaphor gives the impression of a purely mechanical movement without personal influence and responsibility, I would say that it points in the wrong direction.

With regard to the situation in the present, in my opinion, the Church will have to be an active voice in the debate, and the Church must itself discuss the subject of the relationship between faith and knowledge. It seems to me that it is important to make known to young people that it is a good thing to study something in depth and in quiet. It is important that young people learn how to evaluate fashionable tendencies in an independent way. It is also important to show that an alternative, to both Modernity and Postmodernism, is possible. The comparison with my Danish topic shows that it is important to be able to call attention to parts of the culture which have been forgotten. There is a fight against lack of remembering and lack of knowledge, which is also relevant to the Christian Orthodox Tradition. Moreover, it is important that young people learn how to distinguish between Faith and superstition, as opponents of Christianity will try to obscure this distinction, as they have tried in Denmark. Young people in Romania are likely to face many of the same challenges, which appeared at the time in Denmark. On the other hand, the background is different. In the West Orthodoxy is generally new, and there has for a long time been a Pluralism with a strong bias away from the Christian faith. In Romania and other countries in Eastern Europe there are

both a long Orthodox tradition and the cruel experience of communist tyranny, including physical repression of the Christian Faith and Christian people. These diverse backgrounds will have to be included in the education of the youth. On the other hand, in both regions young believers will need strength to resist the pressure to join Materialism. Whether it is about excessive use of alcohol or materialism in a more spiritual sense, the rejection of the idea that man is more than a physical being. There is a fight between spirits, and it is difficult to avoid sliding away from the Faith and the Church.

If one wants to fight the antichristian bias, which has often been fanatical, it won't do becoming fanatical oneself. The classical Conservatives I have described briefly here, were not fanatics. It is important that its is documented historically that the radical bias is by no means the result of any "law"; but that other possibilities existed. This is an insight that young people should have access to. But it is also important that arguments are brought forward seriously as well as balanced and practically in the present about topics like the freedom of the will, knowledge, Church and School and upbringing. In such a debate both firmness and humility are needed.

Something that the Orthodox Church can, as I see it, gain from the Danish Experience, is that if the Faith disappears, the cultural foundation will also erode. Somehow, the topic of Authority will have to be addressed. In Denmark today this topic is difficult, because authority as such has been given a negative sound two times (in the last decades of the 19th Century and in the 1960's). Ironically, those who insurrected against authority, became authorities themselves.[17] This might well be the case in Romania also. How can the Orthodox Church explain a Principle of Authority? How can she show young people that a certain lead of direction is necessary? In a school as in the Church, in short in any institution there will have to be a unity of one sort or the other, as is demonstrated by Helm's paper.[18] Often young people will ask for guidance, but still it is a difficult topic today, because authority, both of the parents and of the Church can be portrayed as colliding with the freedom which is so valued today, and, indeed, given the terror experienced under Communism, rightly so. The novel by Brøndsted emphasizes the importance of the question: nobody can grow up in complete freedom. This lesson has been repeated in Denmark in the wake of the 1960's: those who experienced that their parents wanted to be "friends" with them, without any authority, got extremely tired of it. There are voices in Denmark today, saying that the Liberal attitude to upbringing was a mistake.[19] Then, how is it possible to explain to the young people why authority is necessary, and how to avoid the exaggerations, the negative side of authority?

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[17] E.g. the Radical historians like Kr. Erslev.
[18] Cf. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale*, 211.
[19] One of them being the historian Henrik Jensen, already mentioned.

The Church must also consider how she wants to and does not want to use the media. In Denmark, Radicalism won the day, to a great extent by gaining influence in the newspapers.

Finally, it seems relevant to ask the question: how can the Church bring a patristic perspective into the debate about the education of the youth and about the attitude to Materialism and to cultural fragmentation? What inspirations can be gained from St. John Chrysostomus and St. Basil the Great? Such a perspective was missing among the Christians and Conservatives in the Cultural Battle I have been addressing here, but it seems much needed in the present situation. St. Basil talks about the use of pagan author, about humility, greed, against anger and against drinking. In his letters appears the Christian family life. All of these themes must be important to young people today; and it will also be valuable to call to their attention, that one of the great saints of the Church has faced these subjects.

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BISHOP GRIGORIE COMŞA – A HOMILETIC PORTRAIT

NICUŞOR BELDIMAN[*]

ABSTRACT. A zealous hierarch and preacher, with a significant contribution to the theory of homiletics and the development of Romanian homiletic literature during the first half of the 20th century, was Bishop Grigorie Comşa of Arad whose life and works, intertwined in an exemplary pastoral paradigm, fully deserve our attention and gratitude. Beside a great number of sermon books, bishop Grigorie Comşa also bequeathed to us *The History of Romanian Preaching* – a 303 – page anthology of homilies and a major source for the field of Practical Theology. It is also a landmark of inter-war culture, as it provides an overview of the medieval and modern church thought. The contribution of homilists is easily identified, as the book is structured according to two criteria: the historical one (by centuries, starting with the first extant records dating from 15th century) and the geographical one (for the three great historical provinces: Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania). The last book to be mentioned was published in 1920. The author does not confine himself to enumerating the books, but provides commentaries on the quality of these sermons. We also note that he presents and describes valuable sermons in manuscript form, who are now known due to the diligent author of this *History*.

Key words: *Grigorie Comşa, The History of Romanian Preaching, sermon manuscripts, homiletic anthology.*

Hierarchs Scholars, Workers In The Romanian Homily Field: A Short Retrospective

The history of the Romanian sermon gives evidence of enlightened clergy who contributed to the preservation and communication of the orthodox faith by their writing, well aware of the importance of the preaching activity of the clergy for the instruction of the faithful.

We deem necessary to mention a few of the hierarchs who developed an intense activity of preaching in the past of our Church. A prominent figure is Varlaam, "the metropolitan-scholar, who offered a new and bright interpretation

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to the Gospel and a series of lives of saints"[1], in his 75 sermons contained in *Cartea românească de învăţătură la duminicile de peste an, la praznicele împărăteşti şi la sfinţii mari (The Romanian Book of Teaching For All The Sundays of the Year, the Great Feasts of the Church and the Great Saints' Feast Days)*, printed in Iaşi in 1643. St. Anthimus the Iberian (1650 - 1716), the greatest preacher at the end of the 17th century, enriched the Romanian culture with the most refined expression of the spoken word until that moment, by elaborating his lasting *Didahii (Sermons)*, which place him among the greatest rhetoricians of all times. Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna (1808 – 1873), an exceptional hierarch of our Church, being aware of the importance of the sermon in the spiritual life of the faithful, printed and offered valuable collections of church sermons and interpretations to the Sunday readings to the parish libraries: *Chiriacodromionul lui Nichifor Theotoche, cu un adaos de cuvântări pentru sărbătorile domneşti şi Tâlcuirea Evangheliei în Duminicile Învierii şi ale sărbătorilor (Nicephoros Theotoche's Kiriacodromion, With An Addition of Sermons for the Great Feasts of the Church and the Interpretation of the Gospel for the Sundays of the Resurrection and Other Feast Days)*, genuine inexhaustible sources in the homily field.

Their activity was carried forward by Petru Maior, (1756 – 1821), an unwearied champion of the Romanians' rights in Transilvania and an enlightened theologian, the well known coryphaeus of "Şcoala Ardeleană" ("The Transilvanian School"), who offered the posterity not only historical and philological writings, but also remarkable theological works, including a few sermon books: *Propovădanii la îngropăciunea oamenilor morţi (Sermons to the Burial of the Dead); Didahii, adică învăţături pentru creşterea fiilor (Sermons On the Raising of Children); Predice sau învăţături la toate duminicile şi sărbătorile anului (Sermons or Teachings For All the Sundays of the Year)*. During the same period, bishop Philotheus of Buzău (1805 – 1860) requested that all the clergy in his Diocese, "each one of the priests should choose a topic and develop it into an elaborated discourse in writing"[2], in order to practice the art of sermon; while bishop Dionisie Romano (+1873), the first honorific member of the Romanian Academy[3], enriched the Romanian culture with many books among which: *Principii de retorică şi elocvenţa amvonului (Principles of Rhetoric and Eloquence of the Ambo)* made up of three parts; *Modele de elocvenţă bisericească (Models of Church Eloquence),* in which he offers examples of preaching from the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers of the Church, as well as *Adunare de cuvinte sărbătoreşti, funebre şi alte ocaziuni (A*

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[1] Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria literaturii religioase a românilor până la 1688* (Bucureşti:1904), 160.

[2] Gheorghe Ionescu, *Viaţa şi activitatea lui Filotei, episcopul Buzăului* (Bucureşti: 1941), 132.

[3] Antonie Plămădeală, *De la Filotei al Buzăului, la Andrei Şaguna* (Sibiu: 1997), 62.

Collection of Festal Sermons at Burials and On Other Occasions). Besides these ones we shall also mention Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi (1768 – 1846), who printed *Chiriacodromionul lui Nichifor Theotoche (Nicephoros Theotoche's Kiriacodromion)*, Bishop Neofit Scriban (1808 – 1884), author of *Cuvinte panighirice şi moralnice (Commendatory and Moral Discourses)* and *Predici şi cuvântări (*Sermons and Discourses*)*, Bishop Melchisedec Ştefănescu (1823 – 1892), translator of *Şaizeci şi patru de cuvinte sau predice ale Sfântului Ioan Hrisostom (The 64 Discourses and Sermons of St. John Chrysostom)*, and others, who illustrated the homiletic literature of their time with an undeniable value.

A prominent figure of a diligent preacher, with a special contribution to the theory of sermon and to the development of Romanian homiletic literature in the early 20th century was Bishop Grigorie Comşa of Arad, whose life and work, built up in a fortunate pastoral paradigm, deserves our full attention and gratitude. If Reverend Professor Dumitru Belu is considered the most prolific author of Romanian homily studies (his prodigious work counting 360 published studies and 330 unpublished), in the same way, Bishop Grigorie Comşa of Arad could be called the most prolific homily author of all times in Transilvania, taking into account his whole publishing activity, mostly his sermon volumes[4].

1. Bishop Grigorie Comşa – general biographical and bibliographical data

Place of birth, studies, ministry, books and studies of general interest. He was born on the 13th of May 1889 in Comana de Sus, Făgăraş County. His parents, Ana and Gheorghe, offered him a distinguished religious education. He received his early instruction at the school in his native village, where his father was a schoolmaster. After graduating the elementary school, he began the gymnasium in 1900 and after eight years he obtained the graduation diploma in the school year 1907 – 1908. As a result of the education he received in his family, he attended theological studies at the Theology Seminary "Andreian" in Sibiu which he attended for three years. Among other teachers, there was Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan[5]. As a student of this prestigious Theological School he received a diocesan scholarship and thus, attended the Law School in the University of Budapest and after four years he received the title of Doctor in Law on the 8th of May 1915. All along he studied theology in the Theology Department in the same University, and attended Homily and

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[4] Vasile Gordon, *Introducere în Omiletică* (Bucureşti: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2001), 140.

[5] Marin Pană, "Contribuţia episcopului Grigore Comşa la dezvoltarea omileticii ortodoxe româneşti", *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* XCI, no. 3-5 (1973): 391.

Church Law studies mostly. Coming back to the country on the 10th of October 1915, he was ordained deacon by Metropolitan Ioan Mețianu. He served in the cathedral in Sibiu for four years (1915 – 1919). Besides, he was editor of the religious newspaper "Telegraful român" for a year[6], and then, a religion teacher at the gymnasium school in Sibiu for almost two years, then a collaborator at the "Revista teologică", a secretary of the "Gojdu" foundation and even a deputy in the first Romanian Parliament[7]. In the year 1920 he worked in the Ministry of Arts and Religious Affairs, first a defender, and then as a general vice-president. He completed his theology studies at the Theology School in Bucharest, where he graduated in 1921, and then, in 1925, he becomes a Doctor in Theology with the thesis *Datoriile preoţimii în faţa problemelor sociale (The Assignments of the Clergy Facing Social Problems)*.

As early as his Seminary studies in Sibiu, he was mainly concerned with reading and studying the Holy Scriptures, and he felt a special call for priesthood. Then he dedicated himself to church rhetoric completely. A highly cultivated scholar, he was consecrated a Bishop of Arad on the 3rd of May 1925, and on the 28th of May 1934 he was chosen, together with Bishop Nicolae Ivan of Alba Iulia, a member of honour in the Romanian Academy and the Romanian Writers Society[8]. During his ministry as a bishop he paid a special attention to the teaching vocation of the priest. He was convinced that the duty of the priest is to preach the word of God, with and without time, in order to enlighten the heart and guide the life of the faithful to obeying God's commandments and teachings[9]. After a short, yet fruitful, ministry in Arad, he died on the 25th of May 1935 at the age of only 46 years old.

For his remarkable contribution to the development of the Romanian theological, mostly homiletic, literature, Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan of Transilvania acknowledged Bishop Grigorie Comșa's activity on good reasons:

> His Eminence Bishop Grigorie Comșa of Arad initiated a lively religious activity in his Bishopric, and he was a lively example of the way it should be done. Endowed with a remarkable gift of preaching, His Eminence taught the word of the Gospel with enthusiasm all over his diocese; yet he also came to help our clergy, offering it his sermons and discourses held on different occasions. These wonderful speeches represent a source of inspiration for each priest and we warmly recommend them to our clergy[10].

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[6] Mircea Păcurariu, *Dicţionarul teologilor români* (Bucureşti: Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1996), 116.

[7] Tit Simedrea, "Episcopul Grigorie al Aradului", *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* LIII, no. 4-6 (1935): 263.

[8] Dorina Rusu*, Istoria Academiei Române în date (1866-1996)* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 1997), 255.

[9] Grigorie Comşa, "Ordinul circular nr. 3228 din 1 octombrie 1925"*, Biserica şi Şcoala* 41 (1925): 4.

[10] Nicolae Bălan, *Veniţi la Hristos* (Arad: 1926), 6.

2. Homiletic Landmarks

The Presentation of Grigorie Comşa's homiletic work, mainly of his sermon volumes, will emphasize once more his place among the exceptional writers of Romanian homily studies. Thus, among his published writings in this field we mention: *Darurile Duhului Sfânt (The Gifts of the Holy Spirit)* (Arad, 1934), a work containing sermons held on the occasion of the visitation of the faithful on the Feast of the Pentecost; *Haina de nuntă (The Wedding Garment)* (Arad, 1935), a work containing 22 sermons on subjects like: sin, the value of time, the care for the soul, fear of God, God's providence, the Last Judgment, Christian conscience, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life etc. These sermons are distinctive by the accurate plan of the topics, their argumentation with texts from the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers and by a clear, discursive language; *Veniţi la Hristos (Comest to Christ Thou All)* (Arad, 1926) contains sermons for all the Sundays of the church year, beginning with the Easter Sunday and ending with Palm Sunday; *De la leagăn până la mormânt (From Cradle To Death)* (Arad, 1927) is made up of 51 sermons for the Holy Mysteries of Baptism, Confession, Communion, Unction, Matrimony and for the consecration of churches; *Predici pentru toate duminicile de peste an şi alte ocazii (Sermons For All the Sundays of the Year and Other Occasions)* (Arad, 1918). This volume contains 74 sermons of which 29 belong to Rev. Gheorghe Maior, and 45 to Bishop Grigorie Comşa. Their style is short and dense, avoiding exaggeration and superfluous rhetoric. They approach subjects of interest for the real life of the faithful; *Aprindeţi darul lui Dumnezeu (Light Up the Gift of God)* (Arad, 1934), a collection of meditations which emphasizes the role of the priest as a preacher of the Gospel. The author insists upon the duty of the priest to be deeply convinced of the eternal truths which he preaches and penetrated by the saving grace of the Holy Mysteries; *Predici la sărbătorile bisericeşti (Sermons For The Church Feasts)* (Arad, 1925) contains 20 eulogies and thematic homilies for the Great Feasts of the Church: The Nativity of the Mother of God, The Elevation of the Holy Cross, The Venerable Parascheve, St. Demetrios the Myrrh-Gusher, The New Year, St. Nicholas, The Nativity of the Lord, and so on. These sermons are well developed and documented with quotations from the Holy Scriptures and various writers and historians. They contain teachings and exhortations referring to the everyday life of the faithful, with a view to persuade them to adopt a lifestyle which could ease their spiritual progress; *Păstor şi turmă (Shepherd and Flock)* (Arad, 1925), a work containing speeches held on the occasion of his ordination as a bishop, as well as on other occasions; *Brazde în ogorul Ortodoxiei (Furrows in the Land of Orthodoxy)* (Arad, 1932). The volume is made up of 10 pastoral homilies and 70 speeches held at funeral services, memorial services, blessing of cultural houses and

monuments of heroes, all of them pointing to various stages of the church life of those days; *Spre zările veșniciei (To Eternal Horizons)* (Arad, 1933), a volume which gathers occasional sermons and speeches, representing a part of his preaching activity; *Flori din grădina sufletului (Flowers From the Garden of the Soul)* (Arad, 1934) is made up of 56 sermons, of which 43 occasional discourses and 13 pastoral sermons.

Besides this remarkable number of sermon books, Bishop Grigorie Comșa left us two volumes of illustrative parables and stories: *Trei sute cincizeci de pilde pentru predici și alte cuvântări*[11] *(Three Hundred Fifty Parables and Other Lectures)* and *O mie de pilde pentru viața creștină*[12] *(A Thousand Parables For Christian Life)*, as well as *Istoria predicei la români*[13] (The History of the Sermon in Romania), the only book of the genre in the Romanian homiletic literature, which we are going to present below, with respect to its structure and content, pointing out some important aspects analyzed by the author himself.

3. The History of the Sermon in Romania

a) Structure and content
Published at the Church Book Printing House in Bucharest in 1921, The History of the Sermon In Romania is not only an anthology of homilies of 303 pages; it is also a landmark-source in the field of Practical Theology. It can also be considered a reference book in the inter-war culture, as it represents a mirror of medieval and modern church thinking. Made up of 7 chapters accompanied by an appendix, the work shows the author's capacity of synthesis and analysis, by appealing to a retrospective excursion into ages and historical lands (e.g. in the Romanian Principalities, in Transilvania), up to early 20th century. We may notice the author's reference, in two separate sections, to the contribution of the Church United to Rome.

In the first chapter, after a short introduction in the 15th century sermon, the author rests upon Grigorie Țamblac's activity, a priest under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople sent to Moldavia, where he held eight speeches in the Romanian language, as it is mentioned by Bishop Melchisedec Ștefănescu, and an occasional sermon held on the 20th of December 1401 in the metropolitan church of Suceava, when he was warmly welcome by Prince Alexander the Good.

In the second chapter, Gheorghe-Grigorie Comșa's *History of the Sermon* shows us the first homily preserved in our homily literature, an obituary, that is

[11] Arad, 1928.
[12] Arad, 1929.
[13] București, 1921.

Cuvântarea lui Neagoe-Vodă Basarab la a doua îngropare a oaselor mamei sale Neaga şi a copiilor săi Petru, Ioan şi Anghelina la mănăstirea din Argeş (*The Speech of Neagoe Basarab Voivode at the second burial of the bones of his mother, Neaga, and his children Petru, Ioan and Anghelina at the monastery of Curtea de Argeş*), held around the year 1519. Another remarkable personality of the 16th century approached by the author is deacon Coresi. He is known by his printing activity which culminated with the two monuments of old Romanian language: *Tâlcul evangheliilor* (*The Interpretation of the Gospels),* 1564 edition, and *Evanghelia cu învăţătură de la 1581 (The Gospel with Teaching)*, printed in Braşov. Unfortunately, the first was lost. The second, which is still available due to the philologians Sextil Puşcariu and Alexie Procopovici, contains 65 sermons for Sundays, the Great Feasts of the Church and feasts of the saints, in which Coresi used the language spoken in Wallachia and South Transilvania, which forms the basis of the literary Romanian language.

The third chapter is dedicated to the printing activity in the 17th century. It contains references to the following writings: *Cazania de la Bălgrad (The Homiliary at Bălgrad)* (1641), a reprint of that of 1581, *Cazania de la Govora (The Homiliary at Govora)* (1642), translated and printed by Hieromonk Silvestru during the reign of Matei Basarab[14], which contains the explanation of the parables at the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, up to the Sunday of All Saints.

Among all the works of that century, one cannot omit *Cazania lui Varlaam (The Homiliary of Varlaam)* (Iaşi, 1643), printed during the reign of Vasile Lupu, an expression of the unity of nation, language and faith of the Romanians in the three Provinces. It is made up of 76 homilies for Sundays, Church Feasts and feasts of the most important saints. Besides the mere presentation of the work, the Bishop of Arad offers examples of short fragments chosen from sermons in order to emphasize the declared attempt of the author to write for everyone's understanding. Once again, this Homiliary deserves its acknowledgement as an expression of the unity of nation and faith for its being reprinted in Transilvania, at Alba Iulia, under the name of *Kiriacodromion* or *A Evanghelie învăţătoare (Teaching Gospel)* (1699) with the endeavours of Metropolitan Athanasius[15], soon after its first edition in Iaşi.

The author mentions further the translation and printing of some older collections of sermons: *Cheia Înţelesului (The Key of Understanding)*,"the first book of sermons published in Bucharest" (1678)[16], translated after the Russian original version of Ioanichie Galetovsky, *Sicriul de Aur (The Golden*

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[14] Gheorghe (Grigorie) Comşa, *Istoria predicei la români* (Bucureşti: 1921), 30.
[15] Ibid., 57.
[16] Ibid., 48.

Coffin) (1683), with 15 funeral sermons and *Mărgăritarele lui Hrisostom (St. John Chrysostom's Precious Pearls)* (1691). The last is preceded by a preface which makes reference to St. John Chrysostom's homilies. There follows the 46 lectures with short commentaries made by deacon Gheorghe Comşa. This third chapter ends with an emphasis on the "beauty worthy of admiration"[17] of the two funeral speeches, *A Homiliary for the Burial of the Dead* and *Teaching On the Glorification of Man*, which are then reproduced entirely.

The fourth chapter is made up of two sections: The Sermon in the 18th century in the Romanian Provinces, and in Transilvania. Rev. Comşa mentions the contribution of several great scholars of this period with text commentaries and examples. One of them is Metropolitan Anthimus the Iberian, the greatest preacher at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century. His *Sermons* are representative works, both for the homiletic ministry and for the Romanian literature, in general. He left us 28 homilies for Sundays and church feasts and 7 occasional speeches printed for the first time in 1866 by Ion Bianu and Constantin Erbiceanu.

Another representative scholar is Metropolitan Jacob Putneanu with his work *Adunare de multe învăţături (A Collection of Many Teachings)* (1757), followed by Archimandrite Bartolomeu Măzăreanu, the abbot of the Putna Monastery. The author presents his speech held in 1758 on the occasion of the exhumation of St. Steven the Great's holy relics[18].

During the same period, there were published the sermons of the Greek Bishop Ilie Miniat – *Didahii şi predici (Didahii and Sermons), Didahii în Postul Mare (Sermons for the Lent)*, translated in 1742 by Metropolitan Neofit.

In Transilvania, there was a remarkable activity of Rev. Urs from Cotigleti, Sts. Visarion and Sophrony from Cioara, as well as Samuel Micu Clain. He printed a volume of funeral sermons *Propovădanii sau învăţături la îngropăciunea oamenilor morţi* (*Preaching or Teaching at Funeral Services*) in 1784. The author mentions that Samuel Micu, a representative of the Romanian Enlightenment, left us translations in manuscript of *homilies* written by Sts. Basil the Great, John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus.

In the fifth chapter, the author makes a full presentation of the homiletic activity in the 19th century. This chapter is structured on five big sections: A. – The Sermon in the Romanian Provinces up to 1850; B. – The Sermon in Transilvania up to 1860; C. - The Sermon in the Romanian Provinces from 1880 to the present; D. - The Sermon in Transilvania from Şaguna to 1920; E. – The Sermon in the Romanian Church United with Rome. As Grigorie Comşa points out, St. Gregory of Nazianzus' *Sermons* and St. John Chrysostom's *The Well and*

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[17] Ibid., 61.
[18] Ibid., 98.

the Wheat Grains Sharing, were published in the Romanian Provinces in Romanian translation due to the endeavours of Metropolitan scholar Grigorie Miculescu. Another positive example is Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi, who translated and printed the following sermon books "to the benefit of the Romanian people"[19]: *Tâlcul lui Teofilact şi al celor şapte taine (On the Interpretation of Theophilact and of the Seven Holy Mysteries)*, *Predici la Faptele Apostolilor (Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles)*, *Chiriakodromionul de la 1801 (The Kiriacodromion from 1801)*, and Ilie Miniat's *Didahii*. Among the authors of original sermons printed during this period in the Romanian language, we mention Archimandrite Euphrosin Poteca, whom the author tells us to have published several sermons in *Vestitorul bisericesc* (The Church Herald), which appeared at Buzău in the years 1839,1840 and 1841, and then separately in a brochure named *Cuvinte panigirice şi moralnice (Panegirical Sermons and Moral Words)* published in Bucharest in 1826.

It is equally important Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna's activity presented by the author in a eulogistic manner, as he offers his clergy Nichifor Theotoche's *Kiriacodromion* reprinted several times together with 26 original sermons, in order to raise their moral and cultural level. After 1860, the future Bishop of Arad, evoked Dimitrie Ţichindeal's role in Transilvania and Ioan Papp's sermons entitled *Învăţături morale* (*Moral Teaching)*. To the end of the chapter he mentions a parenetic speech held in 1832 on the occasion of the consecration of a church in Oradea. The author of the book does not forget to mention the position of the illuminist Petru Maior, not only from a pedagogical and historical perspective, but also from that of church speeches, making a full presentation of his homily books.

Gheorghe Comşa notices the prodigious church activity of the following bishops in the Romanian Provinces after 1880: Iosif Naniescu, Neophit Scriba, Filaret Scriba, Melchisedec Ştefănescu, one of hte founders of the Romanian Academy, Visarion Puiu and Iuliu Scriban.

The end of the 19th century consituted an auspicious period of reprinting of older collections of homilies: *St. John Chrisostom's Precious Pearls* (1872), *The Homiliary of Varlaam* (1903), *The Great Homily* (1903) by St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil the Great's *Homilies* (1912), as well as publications with a homiletic character: the "Predicatorul" Review (1857) and the "Candela" Review (July 1882, Cernăuţi), the most important literary publication in Bucovina. Its first editor and collaborator was Rev. scholar Vasile Mitrofanovich, "professor of strong and deep theological and secular culture, high academicals, and a rich didactic and publishing activity"[20] to whom we owe the first and most important scientific

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[19] Ibid., 128.

[20] Nicolae Necula, „Contribuţia preotului profesor dr. Vasile Mitrofanovici la dezvoltarea disciplinelor Teologiei Practice", *Studii Teologice* XL, no. 5 (1988): 103.

treatise in the Romanian theological literature. Unfortunately, it is also the last academic hand-book in this domain printed in Romania[21].

Another occasional writing is the brochure *Cuvinte către ostaşi (Words For Soldiers)* (1921), containing 30 lectures, a testimony over time of the manner in which the clergy knew how to inspire the heroes who sealed with their own blood the justice risen for all the Romanians"[22].

At the beginning of the 20th century, Transilvania brings its contribution to the development of homiletic literature due to Rev. Zaharia Boiu, one of the few writers of original sermons printed and distributed to the clergy in three valuable volumes under the general title *Seminţe din agrul lui Hristos* (*Seeds from Christ's Field*) and to Rev. David Voniga, who printed the brochure *Cuvântări bisericeşti (Church Lectures)* at Timisoara in 1903 and a homily hand-book at Orăştie in 1906. The author appreciates that Rev. Voniga's sermons "contain a rich material for the church rhetorician, and beautiful examples of life"[23], yet, it also points out to the lack of discourse consistency and fluency.

Besides them, he also mentions Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan of Transilvania, who left to his contemporaries and posterity a series of homilies requested by the events of his time, among which *Cinci predici pentru timp de război (The Five Sermons In Times Of War)*, published under the title *Îndrăzniţi, eu am biruit lumea (Take Courage, I Have Conquered the World)*at Sibiu in 1915. During the same period we notice Rev. Prof. Ioan Lupaş's prodigious activity in Cluj, who published two volumes of sermons entitled: *Mângâiaţi poporul (Comfort the People)* (Sibiu, 1916) and *Căzut-a Cununa Capului nostru (There Fell The Crown Of Our Head)* (Arad, 1917) "written in a fluent language"[24] and largely spread among the faithful in Transilvania.

The sixth chapter, a narrower one, is dedicated to the church press and its relationship with the sermon. If the press had an overwhelming role in the past, after the World War I there was a need for periodical publications which should also contain sermons. The main publications of such kind are presented chronologically: "Vestitorul bisericesc" (Buzău, 1839), "Preotul" (Iaşi, 1861 – 1865), "Predicatorul moralului evanghelic şi al umanităţii" (Iaşi, 1864), "Vocea Bisericii" (Bucharest, 1894), "Amvonul" (1892), "Lumina" (Bucharest, 1900), "Viitorul", "Biserica şi Şcoala" (Arad), "Foaia diecezană" (Caransebeş).

A special attention is paid to the following publications: "Telegraful Român" in Sibiu (1853), in which there were published numerous homilies

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[21] Vasile Gordon, "Repere importante ale predicii, în Biserica noastră, de la începuturi, până în secolul al XX-lea – Studiu cu exemplificări", *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* CXIX, 1-6 (2001): 227.

[22] Gheorghe (Grigorie) Comşa, *Istoria predicei la români*, 229.

[23] Ibid., 237.

[24] Ibid., 240.

and homiletic studies written by bishops and professors of theology; "Revista Teologică", published in 1907, with a rich homiletic content, and "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", printed in Bucharest in 1874, containing speeches of distinguished church rhetoricians as Bishop Ghenadie of Argeş, Rev. Spiridon Bădescu, Archimandrite Melchisedec, Bishop Hylarion of Argeş, Rev. Alexandru Mironescu, and others.

After he fully exhibited the history of the sermon from the 15th to the 20th century, the author offers some examples of homilies from the ritual books (*The Menaion* and *the Pentekostarion*) in the last chapter of his book. They constitute an inexhaustible treasure for the beauty of chants, and the teaching and subjects they contain. He strongly urges his clergy to use them as an inspiration for their own sermons.

b). Manuscripts with sermons indicated by the autor in his work

The written Romanian homiletic tradition is linked inseparably to the beginning of church writing in the Romanian territory. It is also intertwined with the beginning of the first schools in the porch of the churches, monasteries or bishoprics. Its apparition is due to a stringent need of writing or copying important speeches, mostly occasional, with which the priest or the chanter inspired their listeners at the great church feasts over the year or tried to comfort them in hard moments, especially at burials. Manuscripts which keep such treasures for the souls of the Romanian faithful of past times, for whom, to be able to read in church, on pages written by hand with ink letters, was a worthy virtue, can be searched in the individual libraries of some bishops and priests, and also in public libraries like the Library of the Romanian Academy and church libraries like those in the Faculties of Theology, Patriarchy, Metropolitanates, Bishoprics and monasteries. Thus, in the Library of the Romanian Academy there are numerous manuscripts which contain an impressive number of sermons. Those dated 19th century inclusively are written in Cyrillic letters, yet not hard to be read. Their research is facilitated by the catalogues made up on this purpose, among which one can notice those printed by I. Bianu and Gabriel Ştrempel, the present director of the Library of the Academy. The last one is the most recent and complete. One should note that "at least 75% of the manuscripts catalogued by Mr. Ştrempel have a religious content. Among which, almost 40% are homilies and sermons, and the most frequent ones, around 25%, are obituaries coming from Transilvania"[25].

One of the scholastic concerns of Bishop Grigorie Comşa (Deacon Gheorghe Comşa, at that time) was the real work of research and revaluation of

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[25] Vasile Gordon, *Biserica şi Şcoala. Analize omiletice, catehetice şi pastorale* (Bucureşti: Editura Cristiana, Bucureşti, 2003), 19.

these unknown treasures of an undeniable value. Thus, *Istoria predicei la români* (*The History of the Romanian Homily)* is the only book in the ecclesiastic environment which offers them a generous place alongside with acknowledgements and commentaries. Thus, on the basis of the research at the Library of the Romanian Academy and in other different places, as he mentions in the Preface of his work, the author describes the following manuscripts:

The Manuscript of Rev. Grigore from Măhaciu dating 1600, contains a sermon on the Last Judgement; *The Manuscript no. 601*, which, starting with sheet 28, contains 31 sermons at various church feasts: The Ascension of the Lord into Heaven, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, St. Nicholas, The Presentation of the Mother of God to the Temple, the New Year, The Baptism of the Lord, the Sundays of the Lent, the Easter, The Pentecost, and others. This manuscript dates back from the beginning of the 19th century for it contains the information that Paisios, the abbot of the Dragomirna Monastery, offered the manuscript to Rev. Chifan Popovich from Suceava in the year 1820; *The Abbot Steven's Manuscript* (1720) has 91 pages, bound at the end of a volume called *Cheia Înţelesului (The Key of Understanding)*. It contains 12 sermons made up of stories taken from the Holy Scripture, and the language is difficult and inaccessible; The *Manuscript of Rev. Urs from Cotigleti*, a copy of Varlaam's *Homiliary* made after the edition of the *Kiriacodromion at Balgrad* (1699); *The Manuscript of Monk Meletie from Făgăraş* includes 30 sermons on charity, prayer, work, patience, the rememberance of death and the Last Judgment. It is a translation written in Cyrillic letters and dates back the late 18th century. Author unknown.

One may notice that Grigorie Comşa narrows down the exposition of these manuscripts containing sermons to short references to the author, time, number and theme of the lectures a manuscript contains, without paying attention to details with respect to their strict content, none being reproduced entirely. For this reason, I considered appropriate for our research and for the sake of exemplification to transcribe and present one semon with a content that shall be described in the following:

Rom. Manuscript no. 489 (f. 31 – 34): On putting an end to all works in our lives

"And all apprehension in our lives lies in this: always and in all, with all our mind and heart, soul and body, word and deed and thought, let us live in God's will as much as we can. For as we lived in the vanity of the world and were servants of sins with all our mind and senses, so, as Blessed Philotheus says, let us, who could come closer to a godly life, with all our mind and senses, be servants of the living and true God, of His righteousness and will, obey His holy commandments, and let us depart completely from things unpleasant to God, according to the word of the

Scriptures: "Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way". And when you get up, praise God first, then confess to Him, and then these: prayer, chanting, reading, handiwork, and always have a pious mind fixed in the hope of God, doing everything according to His will, not to your vain glory, or for people's pleasure, knowing that God is always with us. For he is everywhere and fillest al things, for the One Who made the ear can hear everything, and the One Who made the eye can see everything and everywhere. And may his words be according to God, abstaining from grudge, and condemnation, and vain talk, and malice. And accordingly, may he refrain from food and drink, in the fear of God, and mostly in the time of sleeping, with pious inner watchfulness be mindful, for this short slumber is an image of the eternal one, that is, of death, and lying into bed is an image of lying in the tomb; and in all these may we have God in front of our eyes, as David said: "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Thus, he who does so is always in prayer. And if someone has a healthy body, it is right to put him to work: to fasting and vigil, hard work or prostrations or handiwork, with diligence, so that he could make the body a good servant of the soul, and be redeemed with the grace of Christ; and if the body is weak, it is right to lead it against its power, and may he never be careless in prayer, both the strong and the weak, and be keen in ascetic labour, and train the mind in fear of God. Ascetic labour should be done according to each one's strength, while the intellect should be kept in reverence and in God's hope and love, irrespective of bodily health or sickness. We are also beholden to love our neighbours and show it in words and deeds with the grace of God, and if they be far, may we unite with them in loving thoughts towards them, and dismiss the evil thoughts from our heart, and subject our souls to them in humbleness, and be well pleased to them. If God sees all these in our heart, He will forgive our trespasses and receive our prayers as a good gift, and will fill us with His bountiful mercy"[26].

A short analysis. As in the previous case, we have here a thematic moral speech held in a monastic environment, taking into account the abundant advice, mostly with respect to giving up the wrong deeds and leading a life dedicated to "the work of God". The preacher proves to be a good connoisseur of the Holy Scriptures, invoking several quotations, also appealing to the Holy Fathers when quoting the Blessed Philotheus.

The text is easily readable in spite of the existence of certain incoherent repetitions and sentences. The author points out to God's providence for us, as He is "the One who is everywhere and fillest all things", and to His omnipresence "for the One who made the ear can hear everything, and the One Who made the eye can see everything and everywhere". One may notice mostly some

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[26] Gabriel Ştrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor româneşti* , vol. I (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1978), 256.

advice regarding the virtues which should characterize Christian life, especially the monastic one, like humbleness, moderation, godliness, charity, fasting, prayer, vigil, handiwork: "And if someone has a healthy body, it is right to put him to work: to fasting and vigil, hard work or prostrations or handiwork, with diligence".

Conclusions

After an analysis of the theological work of Bishop Grigorie Comșa, we can affirm that he brought a special contribution to the teaching activity of the clergy. Thus, in 1925, he emitted an ordinance by which he reminded that "the duty of a priest is to preach unceasingly and scholarly so that his parishioners may leave the church comforted and spiritually renewed"[27]. By a new order, he asked his clergy to come in front of the faithful with well prepared sermons, and then he requested them to participate in the special rubric in the "Biserica și Școala" review with studies, articles and sermons which should be published a week before the Sunday or the feast days to which they were dedicated, as a useful homiletic source of inspiration"[28].

The scholarly bishop was always present among his clergy, trying to stir their interest for a dynamic sermon at all events, "with a sounding voice: a powerful trumpet call to be known, heard and followed by his spiritual sons"[29]. For him, preaching represented not only a sacerdotal duty, but also a pastoral means of preserving Orthodoxy and the unity of the Church; the ambo is, like the altar, a fundamental place of ministry.

The way in which he held his sermons is obvious in the following description: "His thunder voice shook the vaults and made the air vibrate whenever he served the Liturgy or spoke to the wonder of his faithful listeners or adversaries of our fatherly faith; for he was a feared and arduous rhetorician, who did not miss any opportunity to proclaim an evangelical truth or denounce a human error"[30].

Structurally, his sermons are elaborated with great effort and a special care, they are long thought of, lived, made up and laid down on paper before being uttered; never improvised on the spot, but made up thoughtfully and artfully, according to the homiletic and rhetorical norms and rules, according to the spiritual character of his listeners, following the example of the great

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[27] Grigorie Comșa, "Ordinul Circular nr. 3228 din 1 oct. 1925", *Biserica și Școala* 41 (1925): 5.
[28] Grigorie Comșa, "Ordinul Circular nr. 2873", *Biserica și Școala* 35 (1925): 1.
[29] Grigorie Comșa, "Ordinul Circular nr. 2873", *Biserica și Școala* 35 (1925): 2.
[30] Sandu Stana, "Zece ani de la moartea episcopului dr. Grigorie Gh. Comșa"*, Biserica și Școala*, 22 (1945): 166.

preachers of the golden age of patristic literature, by choosing carefully his sources and words. Unlike other Transilvanian hierarchs, Bishop Comşa's speeches are characterized by a limited extension of the content, which "shows an inner burning carefully controlled by the author, and which is gradually transformed into a powerful explosion of ideas, information and irresistible arguments, even for the most passive of listeners"[31].

As a homily historian, Bishop Grigorie achieved a synthesis of great bibliographical value for the preaching activity of our Church. In his work, *Istoria predicei la romani (The History of the Romanian Sermon)*, the author presents the way in which the teaching of the Gospel developed in our country and the homiletic diligence of the ministers from the 15th to the 19th century. Well documented with manuscripts, old and new homiletic printing, accompanied by the commentary of an authoritative theologian, the work has remained a point of reference of the genre until nowadays; it was used as a hand-book in the Seminary in Buzau for many years.

For the year 1921, the above mentioned work has a varied thematic content and a general view on the continuity of teaching ministry in the Romanian territories, which contributed to both the maintaining of Christian cohesion and the transmission of the idea of national unity from one generation to another. This work is unique with respect to the historical, retrospective approach in the homiletic field up to the year 1921. It is a mirror of the Romanian theological education which was carried on by exceptional personalities.

The critical apparatus down the page shows a work made with accuracy and the diligence of an archivist who inventories not only theological works, but also those of historians like Nicolae Iorga, Ioan Lupaş, Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu, Vasile Pârvan, Timotei Cipariu, and others. Well trained in theology and Romanian modern and medieval literature (Anthimus the Iberian, Sextil Puscariu and Ovid Densusianu), Bishop Grigorie Comşa illustrates an acknowledged fact, at all hyperbolized: by the sermon within the divine cult, the Church in the Romanian Provinces represented not only an institution for social communities, but also a school of Romanian conscience. What Nicolae Iorga represented in the political and university fields at the beginning of the 20th century, whom he frequently quoted, Gheorghe Grigorie Comşa was in the field of the church life and theological education of his time.

The text is easily readable and persuasive for anyone, as it does not abound in neologisms and is written in a coherent, contained and accurate style, which shows a clear thinking and a responsible view on the scope of church activity and the development of theological education.

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[31] Miron Erdei, *Propovăduirea în Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Banat în prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea* (Oradea: Editura Universităţii din Oradea, 2001), 43.

We cherish the hope that, in spite of some omissions regarding the analyzed printed writings and aspects of homiletic technique (argument, style, structure), *Istoria predicei la romani (The History of the Romanian Sermon)* represents a real contribution to the Romanian homiletic field, and last but not least, a moment of reflection, an impulse with respect to the continuation of research which could lead to an elaborated work in several volumes.

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III. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

THE FREEDOM OF GOD AND THE FREEDOM OF MAN IN FATHER DUMITRU STĂNILOAE'S THEOLOGY

VALER BEL*

ABSTRACT. God is the supreme Mystery of existence, He *is* by His own power above existence. God is the tripersonal super-essence of spiritual nature, above all spirituality that we may understand or imagine. He is the one Who brings everything into existence and that is why there is a fundamental difference between God and creation; the origin and the existence of the creation depend on the will and the creative work of God. As personal super-essence and super-existence, God is completely free because He cannot be closed into a reference system; He is the ultimate instance of all His decisions and acts.

Man, *created in the image* of God reflects at the level of creation the freedom of God. As created existence, he is part of a reference system of the created world, which depends on God in its existence and becoming. As personal existence, in the image of God, the human person is capable of an existence that is not entirely enclosed into the reference system of the created nature; he is called to the free communion with God and it is the ultimate instance that decides his thoughts, acts and words. Man guards and increases his freedom or loses it according to the manner in which he professes it. For within the freedom of man the possibility to state the freedom is involved, at the same time renouncing it. The paradox of the freedom of man consists of the fact that man gives up his freedom through his own freedom because of pride or because he leaves the communion with God, Who offers him the true freedom.

Keywords: God, communion, creation, existence, freedom, man, reference system, Dumitru Stăniloae.

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God in Himself. God reveals Himself to Moses as "Who He is": "I am Who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites. I am has sent me to you" (*Exodus 3:14-15*). *Ego eimi ho on* means that God *is* above all existence. Dionysius the Areopagite says to this respect: "The existence itself belongs to *Who I am*. And He does not belong to the existence but the existence belongs to Him. And He is not into existence, but the existence is into Him". "For God is not in a random manner but simple and undetermined, comprising existence in Himself from before"[1]. God is the super-existing essence (from *esse*). And since the essence is given for real only in subject or hypostasis one may say that the support of all the attributes of God is the hypostatic reality, or the threefold hypostatic reality (D. Stăniloae)[2]. The attributes of God themselves have as support the threefold hypostatic essence, beyond any characteristic or Self attribute of God. The Self existence of God is above all the other Self attributes.

"I am" means the absolute existence that is not opposed by non-existence. God does not receive the existence from outside, He does not own it by participation, that is why His essence, since it is not brought from non-existence to existence, has nothing antithetical. "I am" is not a static essence, but the One who reveals Himself as presence, in vision or hidden, but His nature is completely incomprehensible, because God has no beginning and is above all existence. He is the One that brings everything into existence. The One for Whom all the things come to existence and to Whom they return[3].

The fundamental difference between God and Creation. There is no *analogia entis* between God and creation, between Creator and creature. That is why the distinction between essence, hypostasis and energy does not mean Emanationism or Modalism. Gregory the Theologian speaks about the fundamental distance (*diastema*) between two different natures. The origin and the existence of the creation depend on the Creator, on His creating will, that brought it into existence. The creation has a beginning in time and space, the time and space are structures of the creation. Hence, the creation is exposed to evolution, change, disappearance. But the divine essence has its origin in Itself, it is divine transcendent plenitude, it is not subjected to temporality and spatiality. Consequently, God does not let Himself spatialized, localized, limited by a place. God cannot be inserted in the sphere of immanence, in a pantheist or idolater manner[4]. Only His apophatic

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[1] St. Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nominibus,* Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca (Paris: Migne, 1857–66), chap. V, coll. 818.

[2] Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1978), 1:151.

[3] Pr. Ion Bria, *Tratat de Teologie Dogmatică şi Ecumenică* (Bucureşti: România Creştină, Bucureşti, 1999), 81.

[4] Ibid., 83-85.

infinity and incomprehensibility may be understood, but not His essence: "Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To Him be honor and might forever!" (*1 Timothy 6:16*).

As the One who truly exists, by the fact that He is through Himself, or the support of the Self existence, and consequently He is super-existence or super-essence, God is the supreme personal reality. By indicating Himself as the One who is truly existent, or super-existent, also reveals Himself as a personal reality: *I*. He is *I* par excellence. The Self super-existence can only be personal. As a super-existent personal reality, God is the undetermined origin of all the features that are determined to a certain extent through the fact that they originate from Him. The divine personal reality is undetermined in an eminent manner, for it is the hypostatization of the super-essence, from each all the created existences originate. God is the tripersonal super-essence, or the super-essential tripersonaltiy[5] of spiritual nature, a spirituality which is above all spirituality that we understand or we can imagine: "God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth" (*John 4:24*).

The impersonal essence is not super-existent. It falls in all respect into a reference system. And the essence which is subjected to a reference system does not exist through itself neither in form, nor in its reality. It belongs to the order of the existence determined by the super-existing subject. The reality which is for the other, receives its existence or form from the other. It is inferior to the person, hence it is not super-essence. An essence or a nature subsisting as object, exists for a subject different from it, for a person and based on this fact it receives, in relationship with the human person, the form from it; and in relationship with God, it receives its existence from Him[6].

God-Existence through Himself – the origin of all the existence. Only God, as a super-existent personal reality and as a support of the Self existence, may produce, without emptying Himself, the existence from all the available plans. Only because there is God as a personal reality and supreme super-existent support of the Self existence, there is existence everywhere. The existence in the accessible plan, being the voluntary result of the super-existent personal reality, cannot be its cause, nor the final cause of every existence. That is why the existence in the accessible plan is an argument for its origin in the creating work of a super-existent personal reality, which exists through Itself[7].

Our direct experience and knowledge cannot go further than the works that originate from God's super-essence, distinctive but unseparated from it, works which create existence, support and fulfil the created existence; until

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[5] Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, 1:152, 158.
[6] Ibid., 1:159.
[7] Ibid., 159.

the communion with the attributes of God manifested in these works. All the works or attributes of God are infinite because He never empties Himself in giving them, because the creatures will never reach the end of their communion and the works and attributes of God will never cease to irradiate from the super-essential hypostatic Divinity. But the Divinity, the threefold hypostatic support is beyond their infinity, since it is their origin[8].

Only the *super-existence of the threefold hypostatic Divinity*, unframed in the reference system of nature, may explain *the existence of the human person*, capable of an existence which is not entirely framed by the reference system of nature and called to the communion with such an absolute, perfect and eternal existence that is in a free relationship with God, the supreme Person. Only the transcendence of the divine Person provides the existence of the human persons which are not completely into the reference system of nature, because only God can provide this freedom. Otherwise it would all fall under the senseless laws of nature and death.

The world of nature is created for man that is to be an environment and a means of communication between the human persons and the divine Person, in order to be thus framed through the human persons into the plan of the personal divine-human relationship. For not only the created and definable existence can be explained exclusively in a personal supreme super-existent reality, but the human persons as well, that take part to a certain extent to its super-existence, its absolute and its apophatism[9].

The absolute freedom of God. God, as a personal existence, super-essential and super-existent is by Himself, through Himself and for Himself. He is absolutely free, because the reality of the supreme Person is completely free from every reference system. He is in a complete manner the supreme instance of all His acts and deeds. The One who exists through Himself is an existence free from all relativity and determination. He is the existence not only in the superlative manner, but a super-existent existence. He does not support the existence in a passive manner and is not subjected to passions. The entire life of God is an act of power. He has all the attributes in Himself and not shared from another. That is why He has everything incomparably superior to the creatures, because all the created existences have their attributes by communicating with the attributes of God, through His works[10].

The mystery of creation. All things were created by God, but in a progressive order and in a certain conformity and relationship between them.

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[8] Ibid., 159-160.
[9] Ibid., 181.
[10] Ibid., 152.

That is why, one may say that on the one hand they were created "in the beginning", on the other hand, that the creation ends with the bringing into existence of man. Because creation is not complete until God reveals its meaning in man. The creation culminates, fulfills and reveals its meaning in man, and man in the communion with God. This fact is expressed in the biblical account on creation since it describes the creation of the world as taking place gradually, in six days, and in the end God creates man through a special act (*Genesis 2:7*), in His image (*Genesis 1:27*), man being, after creation, in a permanent dialogue with God.

When it speaks of the bringing to existence of a new order within creation, the biblical account shows that they were created through the word of God, which is also expressed by: "And God said". In the light of the complete Revelation of the New Testament, the Word of God, through which all were created, is the Son or the eternal Word of the Father: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... Through Him all things were made; and without Him nothing was made that has been made" (*John 1:1-3*). "He is the image of the invisible God, ... For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible ... all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together". (*Colossians 1:15, 16, 17*).

Thus, the speaking of God must not be identified with the absolute power of the Almighty, Who creates from nothing, from His transcendental distance, but with the Word of God Who incarnated "when the set time had fully come" (*Galatians 4:4*). That is why everything that is created is brought to existence through the Word of God and is testimony or sign of the Word and has a logosic character. Everything that is created, is created in the Spirit of God (*Genesis 1:2*: "and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters") that is in and according to the sense and the Spirit of God. From the fundamental relationship of love and communion of the Father and the Son and the Spirit of love, unity and personal communion, the love of God is expressed through Logos in the things that are created. Seen in this perspective, every creature is in its final logosic and pneumatic foundation. The creation is the manifestation if the intra-Trinitarian relationship of love of God threefold in Persons and bears in itself the personal signs of God in His vivid relationship with the creature, in general, and especially with man, created in His image[11].

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[11] Pr. Valer Bel, *Unitatea Bisericii în teologia contemporană. Studiu interconfesional ecumenic* (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2003), 167-168; see also the literature indicated there.

Man created in the image of God. As a crowning of the creation, God, as personal God creates the man out of love to be His partner in dialogue. He does not create an object in the person of man, a simple ornament to reveal His almightiness and to praise His glory, but based on the foundation of the plenitude of His communion, He brings to existence a personal creature that is in a conscious relationship with Him that is why, God creates, firstly, the space for life, the grounds of the existence within it and the possibility for all the creatures to dialogue with Him. And these creatures can participate to His life through His creative activity. Nature, time and this bodily matter have an ineffable value because they are created in in such a manner that God carries on through them the direct dialogue or communion with people. Hence, the world is both God's gift of love and the environment and the place of meeting Him[12].

If man was created by the personal God out of love, as a created image of His, it means that besides love there is within creation the freedom that man has as an essential feature of his quality of "image of God". The basis of the entire greatness of the divine image in man consists of his freedom.

However, this freedom must not be understood as emancipation or independence from the Creator, since all are fulfilled through love. Love creates and supports the authentic relationship between creature and Creator: in freedom authentic communion. God's love is shown in the freedom of man with all its absolute power because it allows the impossible, meaning that it gives the creature the possibility to reject the relationship with God in its quality of communion with Him. None of the human actions can reject the fundamental divine grace. In the same time, man is able through his alienation from God, to transform the communion with Him into a simple interpersonal relationship of survival[13].

As image of the super-essential God, the human person has to a certain extent the quality of being on its own. It is the ultimate instance that decides his thoughts, deeds and words. Many actions act upon it. But it stops them and decides on its own whether it wants to transmit them forward and the form in which it wants to transmit them. Man is not a simple piece in a gearing through which passes a movement started somewhere else. On the one hand, man is part of the reference system of the created reality, depending on God in its existence and becoming. On the other hand, the human person is not for the general system to which it belongs, "*ci este de sine*", for it may be to a certain

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[12] Ibid., 168.

[13] Nikos Nissiotis, *Die Theologie der Ostkirche im ökumenischen Dialog. Kirche und Welt in orthodoxer Sicht*, (Stuttgart, 1968), 93-94.

extent above this system. It reflects to the manner in which it can use an action professed upon it, which in this way appeals to its adhesion rather than pass through it without asking[14].

The rationality of creation and the freedom of man. Brought to existence through the Word or Logos of God, the entire creation has an inner rationality that is a unity a dynamic inner order and unity and a meaning that God gave it and towards which it moves. This rationality manifests as inter-relationship: all the parts of the universe are in an interior relationship with one another and support each other. In the same time, all of them are open to the Logos of God. The rationality of the creation culminates in man, and man completes and perfects himself in the communion with God, being a personal being, created in His image. Bearer of the same rationality, man is in an organic relationship with the whole nature, so that his ascension to God coincides with the final aspiration of the faith.

Man's rationality is more than the rationality of the creation in general. In man, this rationality is manifested and becomes self-aware, awareness of the order, sense and finality of the creation. Through this awareness, God comes into dialogue with man and leads him to completion and perfection. That is why man is responsible for the creation that God entrusted him with to work with it and guard it[15]: "God blessed them and said to them: Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (*Genesis 1:28*). "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (*Genesis 2:15*). Through this awareness, man stands in relationship with God and with the world to produce in himself and into the world transformations wished by God. The progress of man towards the "likeness with God" or the regression through the alienation from Him towards unlikeliness, affects positively or negatively the entire creation. "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (*Romans 8:20-22*).

By virtue of the rationality open to the Logos of God, creation has multiple alternative virtualities. Through the enriched thinking and through common work, accompanied by an increased responsibility which they apply to nature, people rise to higher stages of understanding it. Man starts to discover the rationality of the

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[14] Stăniloe, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, 1:153.

[15] Pr. Dumitru Popescu, Diac. Doru Costache, *Introducere în Dogmatica Ortodoxă*, (București: Libra, 1997), 196-197.

creation by discovering its material benefit and in the same time through the search of the higher meaning of things.

Creation has this rationality with a double purpose: to serve man for his existence and biological support, but also with the purpose to grow spiritually through the knowledge of the senses of creation and of the increasing compliance of the creation with man, through the knowledge of the ultimate purpose of creation that is God, Who answers the infinite aspiration of man for perfection[16].

Man is transcendent to himself as origin however his existence is entrusted to him. Man is not entrusted to other creature as a passive object, as in the case of the nature. God created the world and put in it multiple virtualities and passive alternative possibilities, for man to profess a creating role within the creation of God. Man can update and develop freely some of the world's virtualities or the other. Since God helps man in this updating, God remains in a relationship of freedom unto the world, and man in a relationship of free collaboration with God[17].

Thus, in the world God's freedom meets the freedom of man, not in a confrontation or competition, but in a creative collaboration, when man follows the sense and the rationality of the external nature and of his own nature and walks on the path of growth in communion with the Creator. If man uses the external nature and his own nature against rationality and its meanings, he destroys both nature and himself[18].

The paradox of the freedom of man. Thus, the man is free, but the freedom of man is not God's freedom. God's freedom is absolute, because He is above all the created existence and He is also its Origin. Image of God, man is a personal created being, aware of itself and of the world that participates to God's attributes. That is why, on the one hand, he belongs to the reference system of the created world, but on the other hand he rises above this reference system, being able to decide and act freely in the world and upon the world. The freedom of man reflects God's freedom at the level of the created world. The flexible rationality of the world, full of multiple alternative virtualities, corresponds to the indefinite virtualities of reason, imagination and of man's creative and progressive power. But this flexible rationality receives a complete sense through the actualization of this flexibility, only if man guides himself in this work by ethical principles, responsibility towards the human community and towards God.

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[16] Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, 1:354.

[17] Ibid., 359.

[18] Pr. Valer Bel, "Raționalitatea creției și libertatea omului", in *Medicii și Biserica*, ed. Mircea Gelu Buta (Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea, 2007), V:95.

Man guards and increases his freedom depending on the manner in which he professes it. For in the freedom of man there is also involved the possibility of the fall or the ability to state his freedom renouncing it in the same time[19]. The paradox of the freedom of man consists of the fact that man renounces his freedom, through his own freedom, because of pride. The devil impels but cannot force. Without the wish for self-aggrandizement and independence against God, man would not have fallen, despite of the devil's conspiracy. On the contrary, through the opposition against the evil, man strengthens himself in good and walks on the path of righteousness. The essence of the sin of all the people, who do nothing else than to repeat the original sin, consists of the insubordination towards God, distrust and ingratitude towards Him, originating from pride, which determines the wish for autonomy. Dominated by pride and the wish for autonomy, man wants to fulfil the meaning of his existence through himself and using his own means, without God's help, forgetting his condition of creature and setting God aside. That is why, the divine Revelation says that "Pride is the beginning of sin" (*Jesus Sirach 10:13*).

Forgetting about God, man becomes the slave of his own utopic projects, and even worse, he becomes the slave of his own passions, renouncing the "freedom and glory of the children of God" (*Romans 8:21*) precisely through the stating of his freedom. This because man is a theonomical creature, and so he finds the fulfilment of his existence only in the communion with God who grants him this fulfillment and the true freedom: "The Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (*2 Corinthians 3:17*).

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TERTULLIAN AND SAINT CYPRIAN ON PRAYER

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ABSTRACT. Prayer is one of the renewing aspects of the Christian religion. It summarises the whole Gospel. St. Cyprian presents the evangelical precepts/ teachings as the foundation of the path to salvation. Tertullian shows that prayer is considered by Christians offering spiritual sacrifices, which replaced the older offerings to the idols and pagan deities. Prayer is following the exhortation of the Saviour, for true worshipers, to worship God in the Holy Spirit and truth. Prayer teaches patience, suffering for the Lord; it helps to the removal of God's wrath, it helps watching and praying for enemies and persecutors, washing our sins, casting temptations, quenching persecutions, lifting the fall; it offers support for the weak, attack and defence weapons for Christians.

Keywords: prayer, heavenly Father, evangelical teachings, Christianity, salvation

The Fathers and Writers of the Church are faithful who became "luminaries of the world", whose writings must be guarded and adopted and who were acknowledged as "chosen Fathers"[1]. They proved, besides a good knowledge of the culture and thinking of their epoch, also a strong theological formation, solid knowledge of the Tradition of the Church. This offered us the possibility to explain the Holy Scripture, but also to perpetuate the memory of several events from the history of the Church, that have the purpose to build, to form and transform man into a real believer. To this we add their wish to explain God's word, to theologize, thus emphasizing the truth of faith used in that period most often as a weapon against the heresies. And last but not least, we may speak about the struggles of these writers to determine the members of the community to participate to the services and to praise the Lord.

These are the coordinates on which two treatises may be inscribed, that is the one by Tertullian, *De oratione*, and the one by Saint Cyprian of Carthage, *De Domenica oration*. The prayer *Our Father* represents one of the renewing aspects of the Christian faith. It summarizes the entire Gospel[2].

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[1] Stylianos Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, vol. I, *Introduction, 2nd and 3rd centuries*, trans. Adrian Marinescu (Bucureşti: Ed. Bizantină, 2006), 20.

[2] The New Testament presents both God's Revelation in Jesus Christ and the preaching of this revelation. It is hard to separate the revelation from the community that received and transmitted it. The Gospels are revealed, received, transmitted and lived in the community of the Church, animated by the Holy Spirit, Who shares with it the understanding of the mystery.

Tertullian's treatise[3], written between 198 and 203, comprises three parts: the exegesis of the prayer (chapters I-IX), the moral conditions of the prayer (chapters X-XXVII) and the presentation of the prayer as a spiritual sacrifice and in the same time as an universal weapon used to defend the Kingdom of heaven and all the creation.

In his treatise, written at the end of 251 and the beginning of 252, Saint Cyprian[4] dedicates his attention especially to the prayer Our Father, which he explains, verse by verse, in 35 chapters, considering the treatise to be a catechesis for those who become Christians. In the manner of approach, clarity of the style and concision, the work is superior, as some philologists and theologians remark, to that of Tertullian (M. A. Fahey, E. Gallicet, A. Davids, M. Simonetti, S. Papadopoulos etc.).

Saint Cyprian presents the teachings of the Gospel as fundamental ways to redemption: "The percepts of the Gospel, most beloved brethren, are other than divine teachings, foundations for building hope, supports for strengthening faith nourishments for encouraging the heart, rudders for directing our course, helps for gaining salvation, which, as they instruct the docile minds of believers on earth, conduct them to the heavenly kingdom"[5]. Tertullian, in his turn shows that the prayer must be done with faith, from the bottom of our heart, secretly, humbly, with few words. "Consequently, the prayer formulated by Christ consists of three elements: the spirit whereby it can have such power, the word by which it is expressed, and the reason why it produces reconciliation"[6].

The Lord's Prayer is very agreeable to God since it was taught by His very Son. "It is a friendly and intimate prayer (amica et familiaris) to beseech God with His own words, for the prayer of Christ to ascend to His ears"[7].

Our attitude of respect, propriety and humbleness when we pray must be similar to that of the tax collector, from the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:10-14), for only this is the manner in which the justification before God that the Evangelist speaks about may be understood as purification (Lat. iustificatus) from the sins committed and, consequently,

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[3] Tertullian, *Despre rugăciune*, in *Apologeţi de limbă latină*, trans. David Popescu, Părinţi şi Scriitori Bisericeşti 3, (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1981), I, p. 229.

[4] Saint Cyprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, in *Apologeţi de limbă latină*, trans. David Popescu, Părinţi şi Scriitori Bisericeşti 3 (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1981), I, p. 464.

[5] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, 464. Tertullian uses the phrase „paves the way for our prayers to reach heaven", XI, p. 235.

[6] Tertulian, *Despre rugăciune*, I, p. 229.

[7] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, III, p. 465.

to receive the mercy of God, with the meaning of becoming accessible, of acceding to… (Greek *dikaio*).

The prayer starts with the address "Our Father" – an address through which we confess that we are sons of God, according to the word of the Gospel. The Christian, the new man, reborn through Baptism, renewed through the kindness of God, hos creator, names Him Father, because he became God's child. The word coming from him, Who continues to dwell in the one who believes in Him, that is the one who gains the privilege to be God's child (cf. St. Cyprian, chapters 8-9). Through faith and grace the bond between father and son is created, with the one Who lives in heaven. Saint Cyprian underlines and insists upon the fact that we pray to our Father, the Father of all those who believe and, not particularly "my Father, Who art in heaven"[8], thus emphasizing the communitarian character, that of Christian communion of the prayer in general, and of the *Lord's Prayer*, in particular. Tertullian underlines the fact that besides the confession we make through prayer, that of being the sons of the heavenly Father, we confess the faith in God and our Christian filiation[9]. Moreover, he shows that we become in the same time the sons of our mother the Church, that is Christians, as opposed to the people of Israel, which does not acknowledge the divine filiation through Jesus Christ, the one Who was among His fellows and they did not know Him[10] (Isaiah 1:2). This is a condemnation of the Jews because through these words from our prayer we praise our Father. God became our Father and ceased to be the Father of the Jews that abandoned Him. The name of the son cannot belong to a guilty people, but only to those who received forgiveness for their sins and with this Name, they obtained the promise of eternity. Jesus said: "'If you hold my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'. They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's descendants and we have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?' Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father…»'" (John 8:31-38).

The truth that the authors of the treatises want to emphasize is that through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnated, we became sons of God, by

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[8] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, VII, p. 467
[9] Tertulian, *Despre rugăciune*, II, p. 230.
[10] Tertulian, *Despre rugăciune*, III, p. 230.

the gift of adoption, (Galatians 4:4-7), because this is the purpose, the apogee of the revelation of the Spirit. "The only prayer that Jesus whispers in the Spirit and the Spirit in Jesus 'is Abba. Father'. Our Father is truly the apogee of the Eucharistic Mystery, in which our adoption initiated at Baptism takes place and is renewed[11].

Moreover, we confess, through prayer: "Who art in heaven". This is a confession of the Christian spirit, who believes that the prayer does not address to the statues of the idols, neither to Caesar, nor to people, but to heaven, to the heavenly Father, Who is the Father of the Only Begotten Son, it addresses the one Who has the sky, the earth and all the creatures in His power.

We then say, "*Hallowed be Thy Name*"[12]. Through this, we request that God gives us the strength to sanctify Him in us, who are in communion with Him through our faith and deeds. We cannot believe not even for a moment that our prayers could add a tiny bit to the holiness of God. Thus, we ask that His name becomes holy in us[13], for He Himself told us: "Be holy because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). We ask Him daily to help us progress in this holiness that we received at Baptism. We need Him to sanctify us constantly, to forgive our sins that we commit every day. We pray for the baptismal holiness to remain forever in us. And, as our supreme judge recommends the ill that have been healed, and asked them to sin no more, so that nothing worse may happen to them, to pray to God, day and night to maintain our holiness and the life that we have because of His infinite kindness.

Then we add: "*Thy kingdom come*". Through this call we express the fact that we fait for the coming and the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Spirit, to remind us of everything that was done for us: birth, passion, death, resurrection, ascension and the second coming of Christ. The entire community, the Church, calls Him with all its faith, asking that the Kingdom of God comes quickly to give the world immortality and imperishableness. For God rules forever; in Him Who always has been and always will be, that cannot have a beginning. But when we pray, we ask that the kingdom God promised us, the kingdom that He bought with the sufferance and the blood of His own Son, Jesus Christ, to come to us and make us citizens of His Kingdom as the Righteous Judge will say: "Then the King will say to those on his right,

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[11] Boris Bobrinskoy, *Taina Preasfintei Treimi*, trans. Măriuca and Adrian Alexandrescu (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 2005), 227.

[12] "One should underline more the fact that Peter's exhortation to call the Name of God was lived within the Christian communities as the very essence of the new life in Christ and that, even before the name of Christian occurred and became popular with the Church [...] believers were already named those who call the Name of God", says Father Professor Boris Bobrinskoy in *Taina Preasfintei Treimi*, 137.

[13] Tertulian, *Despre rugăciune*, III, p. 231; St. Ciprian, XI, p. 470.

'Come you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sink and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me'" (Matthew 25:34-36)[14]. So us, the Christians, in prayer, we call God our Father and we ask for His kingdom to come to us.

"*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" is often the formula through which we ask for the complete fulfillment of the divine will in us, for His will to fulfill in everyone both on earth, in body, and in heaven, in spirit. Tertullian and Saint Cyprian present the third request of the Lord's prayer as follows: "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*", interpreting that we ask for God's help to be able to fulfill His will, with all our being, body and soul, because they understand here through "heaven" our soul of spiritual nature and through "earth", our body of material, biological nature.

For man is not strong through his own power, these need to be supported by the grace and mercy of God and they can be achieved if the prayer is done for the power of God to dwell in us and thus, to fulfill God's will, according to the model of Christ.

The illustration of the human weakness can be found in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said: "*My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me*", but to show His disciples that they must always fulfill God's will and nit their own will, He added: "*Yet not as I will, but as you will*" (Matthew 26:39). Besides this He also tells us: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:39). The will of God is the one revealed by Christ: humility in behavior, determination in faith, respect for the words spoken, correctness in actions, mercy in our deeds, sobriety in our behavior.

God wants us not to do something wrong to our neighbors, to be responsible for our deeds, to be at peace with our brothers, to love them with all our hearts, confessing Him, with our activity and our deeds, as Father and fearing God. He wants us to take all effort to fulfill His will because we are inseparable from His mercy, strongly attached to His Cross. He wants us that when the dignity and greatness of the Christian name is mentioned, which strengthens this continuity, which confesses the truth, this determination which supports the fight, this patience which, even in death, deserves bays. In this way the Christian becomes heir, together with Jesus Christ; this is the manner in which we will fulfill His commandments and which fulfill the will of the Father. We pray that the power of the Father

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[14] St Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, XII, p. 470.

fulfills in heaven and on earth, because this is the double fulfillment on which our salvation depends. Our body comes from the earth, our soul comes from heaven; we are, thus, both heaven and earth and we pray both for one and for the other that is for body and soul, for the triumph of the divine will. Because of the sin, there is a struggle between the body and soul: these two opponents that offer daily occasions for fights, so that we don't always do what we want. "The spirit seeks the heavenly and the divine, the flesh desires the earthly and worldly. Accordingly we ask that harmony be effected between these two by the help and assistance of God, so that, while the will of God is being done both in the spirit and in the flesh, the soul which is reborn through Him may be preserved"[15].

An aspect which deserves to be emphasized in the interpretation of Tertullian to this verse, is that the author of the treatise demonstrates and arguments that our request that the will of God is fulfilled is natural and it is in agreement with the rules instituted by Christ, but it also expresses the ardent wish of the believers persecuted by the Roman domination, that the Kingdom of God, with its kindness and justice, come quickly.

After the requests for the heavenly gifts (the name of God, His will and His Kingdom), follow the requests for the earthly things "Give us today our daily bread" (*Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie*). Essentially, the request does not refer only to the bread with which we nourish daily, but it also refers to the Eucharistic bread, which provides us with immortality in Christ, the one Who is "the bread of life" (John 6:35), even more, we ask that we remain unseparated from His body forever[16].

This verse may be understood in a spiritual sense[17] and in the natural sense and in both cases, through the grace of God, they serve for salvation. *The bread of life is Christ* (John 6:48) and this bread is not for everyone, but for us, the Christians[18]. So we ask for this bread to be given to us daily; because our life is in Christ, and the Eucharist is our daily nourishment. And if, due to great sins, we are forbidden to eat the heavenly bread, we would be separated in the same time from the body of Christ. "But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world... Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood,

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[15] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, XV, p. 473.
[16] That is why some editions of the Holy Scripture preferred the translation "give us our bread for existence", a translation from Latin of the word "supersubstantialem", underlining the spiritual, Eucharistic dimension.
[17] Tertulian, *Despre rugăciune*, VI, p. 233.
[18] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, XVII, p. 474.

you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever' " (John 6:50-51; 53-58). According to this word it is clear that those who will eat the Eucharistic bread will receive communion with Christ the Savior and will live eternally. Hence, we ask for our daily bread, meaning the Body of Christ, thus we commune with the life of Christ so that we remain daily, forever united with His grace and with His Holy Body. The words that we comment on may also be interpreted here in another manner. We give up to temporality, faithful to the call of grace, we abandon the wealth and the vanity of the time because we need the food, which is the Word of God: "In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples" (Luke 14:33). "But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction" (1Timothy 6:8-9). According to these words "not only are riches to be contemned but are also dangerous, that in them is the root of the enticing evils, that device the blindness of the human mind with the hidden deception. On the contrary, to those who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, He promises that all the other things will be given to them. For, since all are God's possessions, the one who has God will not lack anything if he does not lack to God[19].

Moreover, as Tertullian says[20] "Having considered God's generosity, we pray next for His indulgence […] He taught us to say in prayer: 'Forgive us our trespasses'".

Cyprian explains the verse more detailed. He indicates that since we are fed by God we live in God. This in not only for this life but also for the eternal life when we cannot do this, so that our sins are forgiven. God gives name to these sins, in the name of the debts, as He says in His Gospel: You wicked servant, I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? (Matthew 18:32-33). Remembering that we are sinners is a reality as beneficial as wisdom, because if we are obliged to pray for our sins and ask for God's forgiveness, we came to know ourselves. No person assumes willingly

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[19] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, XIX-XX, pp. 475-476.
[20] Tertulian, *Despre rugăciune*, VII, p. 233.

its own guilt, nobody is innocent: this selfish feeling of innocence makes us guiltier. By praying every day for our sins we can become aware of the fact that we sin every day. This is what we learn from Apostle John: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). God is amiable and asks us to pray for our sins, promising mercy and forgiveness, but adds a condition to this promise that is to forgive in our turn those who trespass against us. Hence, He shows us that we cannot obtain forgiveness for our sins unless we show mercy to our debtors. As He says in the Gospel: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1-2).

"To complete the prayer which was so well arranged, Christ added that we should pray not only that our sins be forgiven, but that they be shunned completely: 'Lead us not into temptation', that is, do not allow us to be led by the Tempter"[21]. We see through these words that the enemy cannot do anything against us if God does not allow this. So, when we ask God not to lead us into temptation, we are reminded of our helplessness and our weakness. This thing protects us from the attacks of pride, against presumptions and against vain glory. We must not take pride in anything, not even in confessing the name of Jesus Christ, nor in sufferance, because Jesus recommended humility by saying: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). So when man acknowledges in humility his weakness and offers everything to God, God's heart opens for mercy, and He hears the prayers inspired by the respect and will to call Him and to pray to Him. The last request expresses, in two words, all our demands and all our prayers.

The verse "but deliver us from evil" comes as "a little clause concluding all our petitions"[22]. With these words we refer to all the evil acts that the Tempter may exercise upon us, in this world, and that God only, through His grace, can grant and offer them to us. When we have said: *Deliver us from evil*, there is nothing more to ask for. We beg the divine protection against the spirit of evil and, after obtaining it, we are safe against the attacks coming from the devil and from the world. God's plan is a merciful plan[23], for God is long enduring and merciful as it is shown from the Old Testament. But why

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[21] Tertulian, *Despre rugăciune*, VIII, p. 234.

[22] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, XXVI, p. 480.

[23] "But salvation through Jesus Christ is death and resurrection, reconciliation and new life: 'For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!' (Romans 5:10)". Bobrinskoy, *Taina Preasfintei Treimi*, 133.

should we fear the evilness of the world, when God protects us, covers us with His power and authority: "what fear indeed is there with regard to the world for him who has God as his protector in the world?"[24].

The treatise De Domenica oration, by Saint Cyprian, continues from chapter 27 to chapter 35, urging the Christians to pray ceaselessly, day and night "recreated spiritually and reborn imitate what we are destined to be"[25], not only through words but also through deeds according to the model of our Lord Jesus Christ[26].

Tertullian develops in the following chapters, from 10 to 29, a guide book for Christians, with a spiritual-theoretical part and a practical one. In the first part, prayer is considered and presented as a spiritual offering which replaced the old sacrifices destined to the pagan idols and deities; it follows for the true prayers, the recommendation of Jesus Christ to worship the Father in in the Spirit and in truth (John 4:23). The author tells us that the prayer teaches: patience, sufferance in the name of the Lord; it helps banishing God's anger, it is strength for vigil and prayer for the enemies and persecutors, it brings the forgiveness for our sins, it drives away temptations, it allays persecutions, it is rise from fall and offers support to the weak, it is a weapon of attack and defense for Christians. (We also find these ideas in the book *Apologeticum*). In the practical part of this, let's say "guide book of moral behavior", Tertullian returns to an older concern: the aspect of women and their jewelry; he recommends the manner proper to kneel while praying; he enumerates other practices he does not agree with; he brings into discussion aspects concerning martyrdom and martyrs; he explains the word *Alleluia* and the use of psalms and eulogizes the entire universe in his prayer to the Creator.

Although some works of the Church Writers, in general, and those mentioned above, in particular, may be subsumed in the genre of those called interpretations or arrangement of truths that are already known and debated for "on the Person of Christ and on the economy of God […] no one can say something more than it has already been said before authentically"[27] however it was a necessary phenomenon within the Christian literature, being a manner of promotion, a nucleus of the Christian education and of adaptation and expression in the Apostolic Tradition.

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[24] Saint Ciprian, *Despre rugăciunea domnească*, XXVI, p. 480.

[25] Ibid., XXXV, p. 486.

[26] "The entire ethics of Cyprian is based on the eschatological tension between *now* and *then* (nunc et tunc)", said Michel Réveillaud in his book *Saint Cyprien, L'oraison dominicale* (Paris, 1964), p. 207.

[27] S. Papadopoulos, *Patrologie*, I: 27.

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CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AS AN EMBODIED STORY: A PERSPECTIVE OF NARRATIVIST THEOLOGY[1]

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ABSTRACT. This paper follows on from the premise that humans are narrative beings, i.e. their identity is founded on stories. From a theological perspective, more importantly, Christian identity is founded on a particular story – the story of Jesus Christ. As a consequence, theology is the critical reflection of this story. Narrative theology is a school which emphasizes this point of departure. However, narrative theology also has its potential weaknesses. In the pursuit of their at least partial overcoming this paper suggests speaking about narrativist theology instead, drawing on from the difference between story and narrative. Subsequently, it argues for the need for the Christian church and theology to be involved in a generous and open dialog with various narratives of the Christian story and with various narratives of other stories. Finally, it suggests understanding (the Christian) story as something which must not be merely narrated, but also ritually enacted and embodied.

Keywords: narrative, story, Christian identity, ritual, intratextuality, narrativist theology.

Story and human identity

In a famous 1971 article philosopher and Methodist minister Stephen Crites wrote the following words: "[People] awaken to a sacred story, and their most significant mundane stories are told in the effort, never fully successful, to articulate it. [...] every sacred story is creation story. [...] the story itself creates a world of consciousness and the self is oriented to it."[2]

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[2] Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1995), 71.

Crites' research represents the quest for one of the plausible answers to the question "Why story?"; the question which has come to be very prominent not only in philosophy, but since the 1970s also in Christian theology.[3] Crites' thesis is that story represents an inherent part of human existence; the narrative structure of human consciousness belongs to the realm of "nature", thus in fact preceding "culture".[4] Alasdair MacIntyre speaks about the narrative form of human identity when he sees the self as a narrative unity linking the whole life of a human individual from birth to death.[5] Similarly, Pavel Hošek finds evident and fundamental affinity, even correlation between story and human life, especially with regard to their temporality. He does not

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[3] However, one of the first theological reflections on the notion of story goes back to the early 1940s and to the work of H. Richard Niebuhr. See, especially, H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Story of Our Life," in *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1941), 43-81. A real break-through in this respect was the publication of Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974). The blossoming of theologians' interest in story and the narrative nature of the core of the Christian message began in the 1980s with the emergence of so-called postliberal theology and its "manifesto" – the petite, but intellectually stimulating and dense volume by George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1984). Even though some researchers would like to speak of the decline of theologians' interest in story (see, for instance, Paul J. DeHart, *The Trial of the Witnesses: The Rise and Decline of Postliberal Theology* [Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006]), the ever growing body of scholarly literature on this theme of theological study proves them wrong. See, for example, Adonis Vidu, *Postliberal Theological Method: A Critical Study* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005); C. C. Pecknold, *Transforming Postliberal Theology: George Lindbeck, Pragmatism and Scripture* (London and New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2005); Alexander Lucie-Smith, *Narrative Theology and Moral Theology: The Infinite Horizon* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Aldershot, 2007); Francesca Aran Murphy, *God Is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007); or Robert Andrew Cathey, *God in Postliberal Perspective: Between Realism and Non-Realism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009). After all, the persisting interest is indicated, *inter alia*, by the new 25th anniversary edition of George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 2009). In the Czech theological milieu narrative theology has been studied to some extent, for example, by Petr Macek, Jaroslav Vokoun and Pavel Hošek. See Petr Macek, *Novější angloamerická teologie: Přehled základních směrů s ukázkami* (Praha: Kalich, 2008), 114-125; Jaroslav Vokoun, *K rekonstrukci teologie po konci novověku: Postkritický přístup* (České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita, 2008), 64-107 and 123-185; Jaroslav Vokoun, *Postkritický proud v současné angloamerické teologii* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2009), 95-192; and Pavel Hošek, *Kouzlo vyprávění: Proměňující moc příběhu a „křest fantazie" v pojetí C. S. Lewise* (Praha: Návrat domů, 2013), 32-42.

[4] Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," 70-71. For a critical discussion on this topic see also Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 64.

[5] Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1985), 205.

even hesitate to refer to story as an "immediate offprint of life".[6] According to Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones story is a crucial conceptual category for depicting personal identity.[7] Ronald Michener perceives people as narrative beings. In particular, he portrays Christians as storying people who as a community embrace biblical narratives and their logic and argumentation.[8]

However, these observations lead us to saying that not all thinkers who otherwise see story as a fundamental category for theology are willing to go as far as to generally say that "to be human is above all to have a story".[9] Hans Frei and others insistently argue that theology cannot start from universal human experience formulated as a story. It needs to begin with a particular story as told by the Bible. It is this particular story which sustains the existence of any theology. They maintain that the starting point for theology is not the narratively constructed human identity with the story of Jesus Christ as one of the examples, but rather the gospel story that in turn shapes the lives of individuals and communities.[10] Kevin Vanhoozer in this respect says that Hans Frei is not a narrativist as the latter does not aim to construct an epistemology or ontology of human being based on a certain narrative structure. Instead, he interprets Frei as an Anselmian theologian since this prematurely deceased Yale professor first and foremost sought to understand Christian faith on its own terms through its central story.[11]

This paper does not primarily seek to confirm one and to refute the other of the two positions. Here it is more important to emphasize that the concept of story plays an irreplaceable role in Christian theology. It will be, therefore, argued that Christian identity is founded on a particular story – the story of Jesus Christ. The paper will briefly introduce narrative theology as a school which emphasizes this point of departure. However, it needs to be added that narrative theology also has its potential weaknesses, most notably, in the perspective of this paper, its concept of intratextuality. In the pursuit of

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[6] Hošek, *Kouzlo vyprávění*, 17. On this issue see also the work of Paul Ricoeur, especially Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* vol. 3 (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[7] Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, "Introduction: Why Narrative?," in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1995), 4-5. In addition to this significance the two authors maintain that story also plays an essential role in understanding issues of epistemology and methods of argument and displaying the content of Christian convictions.

[8] Ronald T. Michener, *Postliberal Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 122-123.

[9] Hans W. Frei, *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*, ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), 208.

[10] Cf. Frei, *Theology and Narrative*, 210; and Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 66-67.

[11] Cf. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 178.

at least a partial overcoming of these weaknesses this paper suggests construing narrativist theology instead, following on from the difference between story and narrative. Subsequently, it argues for the need for the Christian church and theology to be involved in a generous and open dialog with various narratives of the Christian story and with various narratives of other stories. Finally, the paper suggests understanding (the Christian) story as something which must not be merely narrated, but also ritually enacted and embodied.

God's story and human identity

Following from the aforementioned it is possible to formulate the thesis that Christian identity is rooted in the story of Jesus Christ. In this perspective Christian life is the praxis of the following of a story – the story of life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Theology is then, first and foremost, reflection of this story; the story is primary, while theologizing follows. The emphasis on the narrative nature of the core of the Christian message, which can be to a significant degree seen as a response to the decades-long supremacy of Enlightenment universalistic rationality in theology and to the efforts seeking to "translate" the biblical message to a set of universally valid principles and axioms,[12] has given rise to so-called narrative theology – the theology of story.[13] It is also referred to as postliberal theology and its adherents interpret it as an ecumenically open and constructive corrective to modernism, theological liberalism, and conservative fundamentalism.[14]

In the perspective of this theology, conversion, the accepting of faith, that is, the very "heart" of Christian identity, is seen as the entering into the story of Jesus Christ. One finds oneself and the meaning of one's existence in God's story in and with the world; one becomes a chapter in the salvation story.[15] It can be argued that Christianity is autobiographical as it absorbs the life stories of both individuals and communities into the grand story witnessed to by the Scripture.[16] In regard to the "absorbing power of texts"[17] George Lindbeck says that they shape the "imagination and perceptions of the attentive reader so

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[12] See Hošek, *Kouzlo vyprávění*, 33-34.

[13] Cf. Macek, *Novější angloamerická teologie*, 114.

[14] Cf. Michener, *Postliberal Theology*, 14. On this topic see also Macek, *Novější angloamerická teologie*, 114-115.

[15] Cf. Hošek, *Kouzlo vyprávění*, 37; and Niebuhr, "The Story of Our Life," *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1995), 41.

[16] See Hošek, *Kouzlo vyprávění*, 37. See also Nicholas Lash, "Ideology, Metaphor, and Analogy," in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1995), 120.

[17] His observations include fiction but *a forteriori* refer to sacred scriptures.

that he or she forever views the world to some extent" through their lenses. Moreover, "[f]or those who are steeped in them [i.e. sacred scriptures], no world is more real than the ones they create. *A scriptural world is thus able to absorb the universe.*"[18] Such understanding of the Bible was crucial for the birth of narrative theology. A Christian does not perceive the world anymore the way he or she previously used to; he or she looks at it now from the perspective of a character in the biblical story.[19] Gerard Loughlin, however, goes even further when he argues that one becomes part of the story in such a way that the story becomes part of one's very self. He refers to the biblical image from Rev 10:9-10 where the angel commands John to eat a book. Loughlin claims that one absorbs the text, rather than being absorbed by it; to live in the community of Christians means to consume God's word.[20] One can become part of God's story because it is a fundamentally open story. The story of Jesus Christ continues with the story of the church. Or, more precisely, the church is by its very nature a continuation of the story of Jesus Christ.[21]

Gerard Loughlin argues that every theology which bears in mind this story is at least partially narrative – it is a story theology.[22] Although one can undoubtedly agree with this statement, it is more helpful for the purposes of this paper to construe narrative theology in a narrower sense as that stream of contemporary theology which establishes itself as a *tertium quid* between theological liberalism and conservatism in the quest for a new understanding of the story of the Christian church in the context of what is often labeled as postmodernity.[23]

Narrativist theology

The critical discussion which has emerged throughout recent decades in this respect shows that narrative theology ("story theology") requires some corrections despite its unquestionable assets. For the aims of this paper,

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[18] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 117, emphasis added. See also Bruce D. Marshall, "Absorbing the World: Christianity and the Universe of Truths," in *Theology and Dialogue: Essays in Conversation with George Lindbeck*, ed. Bruce D. Marshall (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 69-102; and Mark I. Wallace, *The Second Naiveté: Barth, Ricoeur and the New Yale Theology* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990), 104.

[19] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 37.

[20] See Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, especially 217 and 245.

[21] Frei, *Theology and Narrative*, 43. Cf. also Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 84.

[22] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, x. Loughlin goes in his claims even further when he posits that even though not every theology must necessarily have the same emphases as narrative theology, every theology should presuppose narrative theology's main accent, i.e. the priority of the story of Jesus Christ (ibid., ix-x).

[23] Further on this topic see Michener, *Postliberal Theology*, 2-3 and 14. Cf. also Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 7.

however, it is most important to reiterate the critique elaborated with regard to one of the essential concepts of narrative theology, namely intratextuality.[24] The concept of intratextuality is closely related to the idea of non-foundationality. Christian faith does not need to look for self-justification anywhere beyond the biblical story. It does not need to refer to either experience or reason. It finds inspiration for the "primary way of its expression" in its own "text", i.e. in God's story with the world as told by the Scripture. This axiom is basically correct; however, it becomes problematic when formulated in the way that Stanley Hauerwas tersely expressed the task of the theologian: "[This task is not to make] the gospel credible to the modern world, but to make the world credible to the gospel".[25] It is here that one can see problematic aspects of intratextuality: rigid fixation into two diametrically opposed spheres (Scripture vs. world) and an unrealistically construed one-way flow of influence according to which the world is to be absorbed by the text.[26] A similar critique is voiced by Kathryn Tanner in her argument against the idea of the autonomous identity of Christianity freed from any external influences. Tanner charges postliberals with depicting the emergence of Christian identity as an "internal discourse" matter to which external perspectives play only a negative and optional role.[27] However, Paul DeHart's critique goes even further when he points out the difficulties related to the ability to assess adequately whether the world is in a particular case interpreted through the lenses of the text, or vice versa. If we consider the diversity of the New Testament writings as well

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[24] Among the proponents of narrative theology the concept of intratextuality was most thoroughly elaborated by George Lindbeck. In addition to his *The Nature of Doctrine* see also George A. Lindbeck, "Atonement and the Hermeneutics of Intratextual Social Embodiment," in *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals and Postliberals in Conversation*, ed. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 226-227; and George A. Lindbeck, "Barth and Textuality," *Theology Today* 43, 3 (1986): 374-375.

[25] Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1989), 24.

[26] See DeHart, *Trial of the Witnesses*, 177-184. Cf. also Rowan Williams, "Postmodern Theology and the Judgment of the World," in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 29-43; Miroslav Volf, "Theology, Meaning, and Power," in *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. Miroslav Volf, Carmen Krieg and Thomas Kucharz (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 98-113; and Terrence W. Tilley, "Incommensurability, Intratextuality, and Fideism," *Modern Theology* 5, 2 (1989): 87-111. Medi Ann Volpe brightly points out that DeHart in his critique of Lindbeck modifies Williams' argumentation in a way which suits his own purposes. Cf. Medi Ann Volpe, review of *The Trial of the Witnesses: The Rise and Decline of Postliberal Theology*, by Paul J. DeHart, *Modern Theology* 24, 3 (2008): 526. Nevertheless, even she agrees with the core of DeHart's (and Williams') thesis that the notion of intratextuality is untenable since the Scripture-inspired imagination does not simply level the whole world out into the text. Volpe reminds us that for a Christian no less important than the interaction with the Scripture is also the interaction with the world. And this finds expression in the notion of tradition (cf. Volpe, review, 527).

[27] Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 106. Cf. also DeHart, *Trial of the Witnesses*, 145-146.

as an immense number of cultural contexts in which the church is engaged, it seems utterly impossible to determine not only a unified cultural framework but also the real point of departure and directionality of influence.[28]

The rest of this paper strives to revise the concept of narrative theology by introducing what will be labeled as narrativist theology. The latter will be based on the difference between *story* and *narrative* as introduced into theological discussion by Gerard Loughlin.[29] Loughlin draws from the linguist Gérard Genette who distinguishes between *story time* and *narrative time*, while in the case of a written story narrative time represents the time of reading.[30] Nevertheless, Loughlin goes further when he distinguishes not only between story time and narrative time but also between *story* and *narrative* (or narratives) as such. His argument is as follows:

> The story is not given apart from its telling in narrative, but the narrative is not the same as the story. The order of the narrative can be different from that of the story; the narrative's duration is nearly always different from the story's duration; the narrative can tell many times what happened only once, and tell once what happened many times; and the distance between narrative and story can differ greatly, as also the instant of telling.[31]

Given the differences between story and narrative it is possible, according to Loughlin, to maintain the thesis that the Bible tells one story – in many different ways. It does not tell all parts of the story, while other parts are told repeatedly and from various perspectives.[32]

The distinction between story and narrative is important for what I wish to call narrativist theology. If, theologically speaking, we perceive faith as the entering into the Christian story, if conversion is a witness to how a particular

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[28] DeHart, *Trial of the Witnesses*, 183.

[29] I am of course well aware that the term "narrative" refers to "telling" rather than "story". In spite of that it seems to me that the concept of narrative theology does not adequately enough consider the dynamic aspect of narration. I believe that the suggested "narrativist theology" might help in this respect. This term is not new; it is used, for instance, by Gerard Loughlin in his book *Telling God s Story*. However, Loughlin never defines the difference between "narrative theology" and "narrativist theology"; he seems to be employing the two terms arbitrarily as synonyms (see, for example, Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, x).

[30] See Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 52-53. Cf. also Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 34ff.

[31] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 62.

[32] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 62-63. It is important to point out that for Loughlin story is more important than narrative from a theological perspective. In this emphasis, so Loughlin believes, lies the difference between "narrativists" (he includes George Lindbeck and John Milbank here) and "textualists" (such as Don Cupitt and Mark C. Taylor). In Loughlin's interpretation the former represent orthodox theologians, while the latter are ultimately theological nihilists. Cf. Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 18-19.

human being has become a chapter in the story of "mighty deeds of the Lord",[33] then that human being is in fact one of the tellers of this great God's story. The story of his or her life and the telling of this story provide both a perspective and content to the open and continuing story of God. Through the telling of his or her story – which is, in turn, a telling of God's story – that person co-creates both of these stories. As Loughlin puts it, each new narrative is at the same time a new story, a second story which differs from the first, thus changing it. Each new telling of the story represents in this sense an original story itself.[34]

This paper suggests that the dynamic field of relations between story and narrative can be described by the concept of narrativity. As such, this concept pays attention not only to story (i.e. what is told) and not only to narrative (i.e. how it is told), but also considers the dynamic interaction between various aspects at work in the framework created by these two categories. Narrativist theology thus regards the complexity of the process through which a particular individual (or community) becomes and lives as part of the "great story of God". However, the process in question is not interpreted in intratextual terms; it is not about a unilateral influence of the great story on the life story of an individual. To the contrary, it is more helpful to speak of *multivectorial intertextuality* here since there is a constant "flow" between God's story, embodied (not exclusively but primarily) in the story of the church, the story of a particular individual, as well as many other stories.[35] Steven Shakespeare in this regard says that if "Christianity really is an open narrative, then it cannot prejudge the permanence of its own boundaries, cannot deny its own partiality and its need to be mutually constituted by *other* narratives."[36] A change in thinking occurs under the impact of an encounter with other stories and narratives.[37]

Embodied story

However, narrativity is something which is not desirable to construe on a verbal level only. It is a concept which goes beyond the boundaries of the verbal telling of a story. In other words, it enables exploring not only words

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[33] Cf. Hošek, *Kouzlo vyprávění*, 37.

[34] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 191.

[35] The whole phenomenon becomes even more complex if one also takes into consideration various tellings (narratives) of all these stories.

[36] Steven Shakespeare, review of *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology*, by Gerard Loughlin, *Modern Believing* 38, 1 (1997): 62, italics in the original. Kathryn Tanner points out that all cultures are dynamic, hybrid and interactive. In case of living cultures the process of their formation is never completed. Their formation is influenced by the context of everyday life. Tanner's observations with regard to culture can also be applied to what has been said about narrativist theology. Cf. Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 67, 69, and 70.

[37] Cf. Hošek, *Kouzlo vyprávění*, 13-14 and 42.

but also deeds or symbolic gestures. It is immensely important for a theology which wants to remain faithful to the incarnational nature of Christian faith.

Cultural anthropologist Ronald Grimes has convincingly shown that ritual enactment can effectively play the role of narrative in some, especially non-western societies.[38] This was the core of his critique of narrative theologians whom he had charged with ethnocentrism because of their unspoken axiom that narrative must be construed in exclusively verbal categories.[39] Grimes reproached narrative theology for not allowing sufficient space for ritual-dramatic enactment without which human stories remain mere intellectual ideals, or – which is even worse – sources of heteronomously imposed images. His thesis is that one learns moral behavior through ritual.[40]

Grimes reminds us that it is not enough to narrate stories verbally. Non-verbal rendering is equally important; stories must also be ritually enacted, dramatically performed, embodied in one's own life. In this perspective Christian identity represents an embodied story. The story of the Christian community is a continuation of the Incarnation – the life story of Jesus Christ with all of its aspects. Loughlin says that one enters the biblical story by entering the church's performance of that story. One is baptized into the biblical and ecclesial drama. From this perspective it is not so much about "being written into a book as taking part in a play, a play that has to be improvised on the spot."[41] Similarly, Rowan Williams argues that it is not enough that tellers or readers of the scriptural story remain at the level of tellers or readers but that they are invited to become full-fledged characters in the story which has come to be theirs.[42] For his part, David Ford elaborates on what he sees as the necessary components of such dramatic performance from the perspective of Christian theology. To his mind, there are three main dynamics here: 1.) praise and prayer; 2.) community life; and 3.) prophetic word and action.[43] In addition, Ford examines the issue of embodied story alternatively, from a Ricoeurian perspective, when he understands the self in a dynamic way as defined in its relations, conversations, service or resistance to others within a narrative of characters emerging in time. Humans are therefore social beings rooted in the larger

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[38] Ronald Grimes, "Of Words the Speaker, of Deeds the Doer," *Journal of Religion* 66, 1 (1986): 4-5.

[39] Grimes, "Of Words the Speaker," 4.

[40] Grimes, "Of Words the Speaker," 7-8.

[41] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 20.

[42] Rowan Williams, "The Literal Sense of Scripture," *Modern Theology* 7, 2 (1991): 125. Cf. also Nicholas Lash, "Performing Scriptures," in *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London: SCM Press, 1986), 37-46.

[43] David F. Ford, "System, Story, Performance: A Proposal about the Role of Narrative in Christian Systematic Theology," in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1995), 191.

stories of various communities of which they are part.[44] In his interpretation of Ford, Luther Ziegler notes that the former pays an extraordinary deal of attention to liturgy in his theology.[45] This fact can be explained as an emphasis on the incarnational and holistic nature of Christian faith since liturgy appeals to all dimensions of human existence. This brings us to a statement which is also our thesis, namely, that Christian identity is – and should be – an embodied story.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that there is a close affinity between story and human identity. However, its aim was not to prove the existence of a narrative substructure of human identity. It has rather sought to argue that the concept of story has a central place in Christian theology as Christian identity is embedded in the story of Jesus Christ. Being a reflection on this story which is open and continues in the story of the church, each theology is in fact narrative – it is a story theology. Because of certain weakness of narrative theology, most notably its concept of intratextuality, the paper suggests speaking of narrativist theology instead. The concept of narrativity regards the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the categories of story and narrative. At the same time, it also considers the influence of other stories and narratives on the formation of Christian identity.

I believe that the concept of narrativity can be a valuable contribution to theological reflection. First, it enables appreciating voices coming "from elsewhere" and assessing their role for the formation of Christian identity positively. And second, it is sufficiently inclusive to provide space to construe Christian identity as an embodied story. In this perspective, a Christian not only tells God's story but also is an active actor and co-scriptwriter in it.

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[44] Cf. David F. Ford, *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 82-87.

[45] Luther Zeigler, "The Many Faces of the Worshipping Self: David Ford's Anglican Vision of Christian Transformation," *Anglican Theological Review* 89, 2 (2007): 280-285.

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THE SPLENDOUR OF THE DEIFIED FLESH.
GLORIFICATION (*δεδοξασμένη*) AND DEIFICATION (*θέωσις*) INTO A CONTINUUM OF THEOPHANIES

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ABSTRACT. Saint Paul refers to Christ's ability to radiate his divine light of himself while other OT luminaries like Moses could only reflect that light. This experience of *theosis* is being, also, described as "*transformation into unveiled glory*" (2 Cor. 3.7-18). By this verse deification through the vision of God becomes an immanent and mystical event. This aspect of deification as transformation into glory (*glorification*) is both an inward quality of spiritual knowledge and an outward radiance. The nature of the *glory* of Moses and the visible splendour shining from his face from his direct contact with God (Exod 34.29) signifies God's visible, divine presence. As all believers encounter God directly (with *unveiled faces*) through the Spirit's presence they reflect this glory as mirrors and are themselves glorified in the process (*from glory to glory*). The transformation into this glory is not only noetic but also embodied because it is a visible manifestation. The noetic enlightenment is associated with participation in divine glory in 2 Cor 3-4 and is correlated to the somatic experience of glory in 2 Cor 4:16-5:5. Paul speaks also of this epistemic process of contemplation which generates the ontological mirroring process. And, because for us there is no veil over the face, we all see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and we are being transformed (*μεταμορφούμεθα*) into his image (*τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα*) with ever-increasing glory. But Luke is the only evangelist to use the word "glory" (*doxa*) and the only to mention that Jesus and the three apostles went up the mountain specifically to pray (Lk 9:29-31). This is a detail in spiritual tradition of hesychasm which was richly developed, the vision of light at the culmination of intense periods of prayer is the deification of our nature. This light is an enhypostatic symbol, the uncreated radiance of God, a divine energy. This manifestation of Christ in the divine nature is not something external to ourselves. It is interiorized through the life of ascetism and prayer. Christ will radiate within us. But this pneumatic nature of Christ's luminous body is experienced through Eucharist as well. This holy sacrament accesses the divine light, veiled by Christ's visible body. Also, Sebastian Brock extends forms of light comparison to the internal light of Mary's womb when bearing Jesus. Christ's light transforms her body in which He resided, as it ,gleams from within'. In her, the light-bearing Christ is ,woven' as a garment. Speaking of the hesychast method of prayer and transformation of the body,

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Gregory Palamas also uses this Pauline theology of 2 Corinthians in Tr. I.2.2. But he adds that "We carry this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). So we carry the Father's light in the face (*prosōpon*) of Jesus Christ in earthen vessels, that is, in our bodies, in order to know the glory of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, during the hesychast controversy, St Gregory Palamas defends the reality of the encounter with God of those monks who reported seeing a vision of light at the culmination of intense period of prayer. For the light is nothing less than the uncreated radiance of God – a divine energy accesible to the senses. This manifestation of Christ is not something external to ourselves.

Keywords: Glorification, Deification (*Theosis*), uncreated energies, Kabod (*Doxa*), Thaboric light, *Shem*, Name of Christ, Hesychastic prayer, *Shekinah*, Uncreated light, somatic experience of glory, Eucharist, robe of glory, Theophanies (revelation), Christification, Hesychastic Mariology.

INTRODUCTION

God is both absolutely transcendent and immanent with his creation, so that revelation and redemption are possible through God's energies. Divine energies are God Himself as He has manifested Himself to us. These energies were originally identified as the „uncreated light" encountered through theophanic experiences. For example, all the „anthropomorphisms in Scripture refer not to God in his essence, but to how he acts according to and through his energies".[1] Father Staniloae argues that „*through apophatic knowledge we gain a kind of direct experience of His mystical presence*".[2]

For Gregory Palamas this essence-energies distinction is rooted in God's very being, as „*transcendent and immanent reveald in the Incarnation itself*", but this distinction may seem „*incoherent in light of formal logic, but coheres perfectly with the logic of deification*".[3] Paweł Rojek tried to show that „*Palamas'*

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[1] Jordan Cooper, *Christification. A Lutheran Approach to Theosis* (Eugene, Oregon: Wiph&Stock, 2014), 5. Jordan Cooper propose that a thoroughly Reformational understanding of justification can exist with a patristic understanding of theosis.

[2] Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: The Experience of God, Vol. 1: Revelation and Knowledge of the Triune God* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), 95.

[3] Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God. Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 13, 30. Dionysius and Gregory Palamas are the two great synthesizers of theological apophaticism and the essence/energies distinction. To Palamas this distinction at the heart of Christian ontology become the dogmatic basis for *union with God* in terms of a *real* communion between the created and the uncreated (Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 11, 25).

teaching on energies and deification is no less rational than any other ontological positions".[4]

Deification, however, is the event of a *real* divine-human communion and leads necessarily to antinomy, but „*it is validated doxologically, in that the soteriological principle of deification is a prais of the love of God toward creation*".[5] Palamas is only a witness of this Tradition of union with the transcendent and immanent God in which *theosis* sums up the divine economy.[6]

Within a „mystical realism"[7] based on participation in God as light, St. Gregory Palamas identified three fundamental themes of Eastern Christian spirituality: theology as apophaticism, revelation as light and salvation as deification (*Triad* I.3.17).[8] But Palama's theology has been criticized for creating a new conception about „*theosis*", identified with „*theoria*" or the vision of God's glory, separate from „*deification*" of the old Holy Fathers, which is strictly the reverse of Christ's incarnation and kenosis.[9] St. Gregory Palamas developed a theory of deification through participation in the divine energies. Tabor Light is the intelligible manifestation of the divine glory, this light is like other divine energies, distinct from God's essence. The light of ineffable glory seen by the saints is the enhypostatic, uncreated light. This same vision was seen in the present age by the chosen among the apostles on Thabor, by Stephen when he was being stoned, and by Anthony in his battle for inner stillness Palamas also affirm that the prophets and patriarchs were not without experience of this light. Moses the lawgiver, Stephen the protomartyr, and Arsenius the desert ascetic were visibly *transformed by divine light* (*Tr.* II.3.9). The hermeneutic key is the transfiguration of Christ, because He himself is the deifying light (*Tr.* III.1.16).

Deification is a supernatural gift that transforms both mind and body, making divinity visible (*Tr.* III.1.33). Therefore, in our study we aim to present the roots of the fourteenth century hesychast concept of deification in a holistic

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[4] Paweł Rojek, „The Logic of Palamism," in *Logic in Orthodox Christian Thinking*, edited by Andrew Schumann (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 74-75.

[5] Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 25-27.

[6] Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God. Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press Crestwood, 2009), 53.

[7] Håkan Gunnarsson, *Mystical Realism in the Early Theology of Gregory Palamas* (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 2002), 33-78, 212-24 and 333-43.

[8] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Volume 2: The Spirit of Eastern Christendom 600–1700* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 264.

[9] Reinhard Flogaus, *Theosis Bei Palamas Und Luther: Ein Beitrag Zum Okumenischen Gesprach* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht 1996), 77-284. Another questions which arises is the following: does the real distinction in God contradict the apophaticism or has Palamism sacrificed the divine simplicity in favor of deification? See: André de Halleux, "Palamisme et Tradition," *Irenikon* 4 (1975): 479-494; André de Halleux, „Palamisme et Scolastique. Exclusivisme dogmatique ou pluriformité théologique," *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 4 (1973): 409-442.

view, at the same time biblical, mariological and sacramental: from prophetic vision (glorification, *theoria*) through hesychast Mariology (*deiform* life in Temple) and Tabor light (enhypostatic illumination) to sacramental Christomorphisation (*clothed* in Christ).

1. KABOD as *divine light* (*theosis* as 'glorification' during theophany). *Theophanic Kabod - participatory doxa (revelation and salvation)*

According to Palamas' interpretation of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the terms θέωσις (deification), ἕνωσις (mystical union) and ὄρασης (vision) are synonymous.[10] This means that everywhere Palamas speaks of union between the prophets of the Old Testament and the glory of God or about prophet's vision of the glory of God he is actually speaking of divinization. So, father Romanides said that the Old and New Testaments term for *theosis (Θέωσις)* is "glorification" („lifted up in glory", cf. Exod 15:1; „glorified", cf. John 12:16).[11]

Therefore, the presence of God is commonly said to be associated with light, especially in the act of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Matt.17:1-9), but there is precedens for such an association in Old Testament such as the light that shone on Moses' face after being in God's presence (Exod 34:29-35). This light is also seen by Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3-9) and Stephen at the moment of his martyrdom (Acts 7:54-60). Barlaam argued that such an experience of light was either a mere symbol of God or an angelic presence. In contrast to this, Palamas purported that a vision of light is a display of the uncreated energies of God and these visions of God's energies have a deifying effect. In this regard Mantzarides states that "*the hesychast monk of Mount Athos, in receiving the radiance of uncreated light, were experiencing direct communion with God, together with all the regenerative and deifying consequences of this*".[12] Threat, Stephen Thomas submits that to read the Bible "is not only to gain guidance about how to be deified: it is actually *part of the process* of our deification, as we are lead up into the presence of God".[13]

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[10] Grégoire Palamas, *Défense des saints hésychastes*, 2 vol., trans. John Meyendorff, (Leuven-Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1959), 575: "ή μεν ούν ένωσιν ... ή θέωσις έστι". St. Dionysius says exactly the same: "ή δε Θέωσις έστιν ή πρός Θεόν, ως εφικτόν, αφομοίωσις τε και ένωσις" (*De Ecc. Hierarch.*, I.3, *P.G.*, III, 376A). Also St. Gregory says, "ή δε του φωτός ένωσις, τι γε άλλο η όρασις έστίν" (II.3.36, in Palamas, *Défense*, 359).

[11] For the theological background of this debate see: Flogaus, *Theosis bei Palamas und Luther*, 262-68.

[12] Georgios Mantzarides, *Deification of Man: Saint Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition* (Crestwood, New York: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 99.

[13] Stephen Thomas, *Deification in the Easter Orthodox Tradition: A Biblical Perspective* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2007), 74.

The Eastern Fathers speak of the Old Testament theophanies as appearances of the Logos (simultaneously with the concept of "glory of God" as a manifestation of the uncreated divine presence).[14] The problem occurs when Augustine understands the nature of revelation as *sight of God in the truth of the intellect* (the third type of theophany, the *intellectual* one, alongside *physical* and *spiritual*).[15] In *De Trinitate* II, 19-20 and III, 27[16] Augustine's solution to the theophanies problem is the most drastic in the literature of the period. Properly speaking, there have been no theophanies until Christ, they were only angelophanies (*corporales species*) or simple symbolophanies.[17]

I see the biblical foundations of *theosis* in the terminology of *kabod* (gr. *doxa*), because within the Old Testament texts *kābôd* is closely associates with divine light (Exod 24:17; Lev 9:23f.; Ezek 1:27f.; 10:4; 43:2) or „*shine forth*" (Deut 33:2; Ps 49:2; 79:2; 93:1). This texts are certifying the existence of light that occurs in conjunction with a theophany.[18] The conception of God's presence in

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[14] Robin Margaret Jensen, *Face to Face. Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). See especially chapter 3: „The Invisible God and the Visible Image. Justin Martyr: Refutation of Idols and Divine Theophanies" (Jensen, *Face to Face*, 69-99). In his study, Jensen enable us to understand the function of prophecy while analyzing the nature theophany. So, Justin, thereby, „*explains all the Old Testament theophanies as christological events*" (Jensen, *Face to Face*, 72) and „*Word, has the capacity to become visible... [He] makes God known to humans through the gift of prophecy and visions*" (Jensen, *Face to Face*, 75).

[15] David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 234-37.

[16] Augustin, *De Trinitate*, in *Oeuvres de Saint Augustin* 15, 2ième serie: *La Trinité*, ed. M. Millet and T. Camelot, (Paris: Éditions Desclée de Brouwer, 1955), 183-321. See also: *De Trinitate* II, 19-20 (*La Trinité*, 230-239) and III, 27 (*La Trinité*, 332-334).

[17] Alexander Golitzin, *Mystagogy – God experience in Orthodoxy. Studies of Mystical Theology*, trans. and presentation by Ioan I. Ică jr. (Sibiu: Deisis, 1998), 209-212. See Bogdan G. Bucur, "Theophanies and Vision of God in Augustine's *De Trinitate*: an Eastern Orthodox perspective", *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 52/1 (2008): 67-93. John Romanides argued that St. Gregory must have positively rejected the polemics of *De trinitate* I–IV, which was used by Barlaam on the question of the biblical theophanies, and where Augustine broke with prior tradition in order to deny the *Visio Dei* to the saints. See: John Romanides, "Notes on the Palamite Controvery and Related Topics I", *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 6 (1959-1960): 186-205, for here 194-8 and Romanides, "Notes on the Palamite II," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 9 (1963-1964): 225-270, here at 247-9 and 257-62).

[18] Kerry Muhlestein, "Darkness, Light, and the Lord: Elements of Israelite Theophanies," in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, ed. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Matthew J. Grey, and David Rolph Seely (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 232–54. See also: Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant & Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1995), 333-82; George W. Savran, *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 49-189; Arkadi Choufrine, *Gnosis, Theophany, Theosis: Studies in Clement of Alexandria's Appropriation of His Background* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 123-37. Choufrine conclude that the Light that illumined Abraham is for Clement, just as it is for Philo, the Logos. In Clement's interpretation the Transfiguration and the Sinai theophanies suggest that for him a theophany is a manifestation of God as Light, and its cognitive correlate is illumination. So, the theophany is a Christophany as a manifestation of the preincarnate Christ, who, as the Logos, is the one who reveals God.

the sanctuary was attached to the notions of *kābôd* (the central term of the Priestly theology), and *šēm* (the corresponding key term of the Deuteronomistic tradition). The differences between these theologies may not be neglected: „*Kabod theology follows the theology of immanence promulgated by the Zion-Sabaoth theology, while the Name theology enphasizes instead God's trancendence*".[19]

In Preastly traditional material (Exod 40:34-38 and Ezek 43:1-9) *kābôd* is said to fill the Tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38), because *kābôd* was conceived of as continuously present, visible above the *kapporeth.* The basic notion here is that of divine immanence, divine *kābôd* is constantly present in the tabernacle. If *kābôd* denote a divine attribute in pre-exilic times, now designates God himself, as referring to the complete manifestation of divine majesty. *Kābôd* is used in Ezekiel as a central theological term in text where visual contact with God is important.[20] The omniapresence of God is complementary, rather then contradictory, to his immanence in the Temple.

The *kabod* consists of unspeakably bright light, and this was the semblance of the form of *YHWH's kabod* (Ezekiel 1:26-8). Similarly, in Jeremiah 14:9 the presence of God in the people's midst is equated with God's *shem*. As Benjamin Sommer emphasizes, the notion of 'shem' functions outside deuteronomic and priestly texts both as a "*synonym for God and as a hypostasis or emanation of God that is not quite a separate deity.*"[21] A similar ambiguity can be found in many uses of the term *kabod* which in biblical Hebrew means God's body as "divine Presence": "*kabod* might be a body of God without being *the* body of God; it might be an emanation from but not the entirety of the divine self."[22]

Therefore, the central theme of priestly tradition is "*the desire of the transcendent God to become immanent on the earth this God had created*".[23]

The culmination of the experience into the late currents of mysticism of *merkabah* (hermeneutics) and *hekhalot* (experiential) is transformative, in the sense that the Jewish and Christian mystics "thought they could be glorified in

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[19] Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The dethronement of Sabaoth: studies in the Shem and Kabod theologies* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982), 133.

[20] Mettinger, *The dethronement of Sabaoth*, 106-7. At the same time the frequent use of words like *demut* „likeness", *mareh* „appearance" and *tabnit* „form" serve the same purpose as the smoke and the train on the mantle in Isaiah's throne-vision.

[21] Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59. The term "name" in ancient Near Eastern cultures can refer to the essence of any thing and hence can be a cipher for the thing itself. An Orthodox understanding of this spirituality of God's name is provided by the hesychast method of prayer; cf. Kallistos Ware, *The Power of the Name. The Jesus Prayer in Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford: SLG Press, 1989) 13-59.

[22] Sommer, *The Bodies of God*, 60-62.

[23] Sommer, *The Bodies of God*, 74.

body".[24] Thus, the persistent core of early Jewish and Christian mysticism is the belief that God or his manifestation can be experienced directly and immediately ("*as a rapture experience or as one solicited by a particular praxis*"[25]), not just after death or eschatologically on the last day. The centerpiece of this cosmology is the belief that God has a "body," called the "Glory" or *Kavod* of Yhwh. Here we note the paradox of the Hidden God whose very countenance or face cannot be seen, but only the luminous mask of the Glory that simultaneously covers and reveals him: "*This luminosity of the Kavod acted as a mask or screen, functioning in such a way that protected the seer from direct gaze of Gods body*."[26]

This Jewish *Kavod* doctrine had a profound impact on the development of early Christian mysticism: „*eschatology, the secret revelation of the imminence of the end, is only part of the discussion. The other part is the mystical, the belief in the immediate and direct experience of God*."[27] But the terms of *ruach*, *pneuma* and *shekhinah* also served as "*ways of referring to God's presence and activity, rather than to a being or beings hypostatically distinct from God*".[28]

Another issue is found in some scriptural texts in which glorification (i.e., *deification*) is understood as a *re-creation in the Glory Image.* This state is shown through metaphor of clothing (*put away unclean robes – put on clean robes*). Paul focuses on and adopts this metaphor of putting on God's likeness like clothing. The putting on of the clothing of holiness follows a putting off of unfit clothing (Eph 4:22, 24; Col 3:9, 10 as in Zechariah 3). Another component of the Glory likeness is the *visible glory of transfiguration*, an outward luminosity, a physical radiance. This visual glory is eschatological and it is the glorification that "the redeemed will experience when they behold Jesus, arrayed with the Glory-Spirit, coming in the clouds of heaven".[29] In this context you have to mention that the act of "clothing in the garments of skin" hold the meaning of a "*re-investiture with priestly status and dominion. Clothing made of animal skin had to be procured through sacrificial death*."[30]

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[24] April D. DeConick, "What Is Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism" in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*, ed. April D. DeConick (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 1-26, for here 2.

[25] Peter Schafer, "The Aim and Purpose of Early Jewish Mysticism," in *Hekhalot-Studien*, ed. Peter Schafer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 289-95; Joseph Dan, *Three Types of Jewish Mysticism* (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati Press, 1984), 8-16.

[26] DeConick, *Paradise Now*, 12.

[27] DeConick, *Paradise Now*, 18.

[28] Michael E. Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit. Divine Presence in Jewish and Christian Religion* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 41, 57.

[29] Meredith G. Kline, *Glory in our Midst. A Biblical-Theological Reading of Zechariah's Night Visions* (Eugene Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 114.

[30] Kline, *Glory in our Midst*, 115. Priestly office and function given to man in haven was taken over by the cherubim (Gen 3:24; cf. Exod 20:26; 28:42). Skin clothing operates as a symbol of messianic restoration until the time when through baptism is received again the light clothing lost in Paradise, but, until then, dressing with in skin clothing is represent by the sacrificing the animals in the temple's Levitical priesthood ministry.

Other issues on the interpretation of Old Testament theophanies are related to their angelomorphism. The angelology is very complex, but usually there is one highly exalted angel, such as the "Angel of the Lord," the "Angel of the Countenance," "Metatron," or "Christ."[31] Sometimes, says DeConick, it is difficult "to differentiate between this exalted angel and God's glorious manifestation, the *Kavod* or *Doxa,* who is enthroned on the *merkabah* seat in the holy of holies, the *devir,* the highest of the heavens."[32]

The hesychasts in fact never claim that the deifying light is an angel. "*The vision of angels takes place in various ways, according to the capacities of those who behold it: sometimes in the form of a concrete essence, accessible to the senses, and visible even to creatures full of passions and totally foreign to all initiation; sometimes under the form of an ethereal essence which the soul itself can only see in part; sometimes as a true vision, which only those who are purified and who see spiritually are worthy to behold*".[33]

Bogdan Bucur also reaches to underlining the *the "face" mentioned in Matt 18:10 is none other than the Son. The angels do not have direct access to the Face, but they are rather enabled to see, guided and illumined by the Holy Spirit.* Bucur understands that angelomorphic pneumatology as centered around the phenomenon of prophecy.[34] The prophetic-visionary context leads us to recognizing their mystagogic role. As emphasized by Bogdan Bucur to Gregory Palamas angelomorphism of the Spirit designate the divine energies: "*This author is uninhibited in using precisely those biblical verses that had once supported angelomorphic pneumatology*".[35]

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[31] Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 177-91, 319-29.

[32] DeConick, *Paradise Now*, 15. The celestial *merkabah* is the special wheeled chariot made of four sacred creatures whose outspread wings formed the seat itself, much like the ark of the covenant in the earthly temple.

[33] Tr. II.3.10, in Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, trans. by Nicholas Gendle, introduction by John Meyendorff (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 58.

[34] Bogdan Gabriel Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 69. By analyzing theological authors like Justin, Clement, Aphrahat in there using specific biblical texts (Matt.18:10; Zech 3:9; 4:10; Isa 11:2-3) lead B. Bucur in establishing a connection between "Face" Christology and angelomorphic pneumatology: "'*Face' Christology never became a major player in classic definitions of faith. Like 'Name' christology, 'Wisdom' christology, or 'Glory' Christology - once crucial categories in the age of Jewish Christianity - this concept went out of fashion, giving way to a more precise vocabulary shaped by the christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries... The Shepherd of Hermas and Aphrahat illustrate the link between angelomorphic pneumatology and early Christian ascetic theory*" (Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 190).

[35] Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 192: "In his *Fifth Antirhetikos against Akindynos* (ch. 15; 17), Gregory Palamas identifies the seven gift's of the Spirit in Isaiah 11 with the seven eyes of the Lord (Zech. 4:10), the seven spirits of Revelation, and the "finger/spirit of God" (Luke 11:20; Matt. 12:28). All of these, he says, designate the divine *energies* referred to in Scripture as seven, and should therefore not be considered created. The exact same cluster of passages occurs also in Palamas' *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* (chs. 70-71), and in his *Dialogue between an Orthodox and a Barlaamite* (chs. 27)."

To Barlaam "*the best of our theologians is inferior to the least of the angels*", thus says him, "*a man can only meet God through the mediation of an angel, for we are subordinate to the angelic hierarchy*". Palamas's answer is emphatically expressing his entire conception on the distinction between theophanies and angelophanies: "Tell me, which of the angels was it that said to Moses, '*I am He who is, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,*' (Ex. 3:14-15) if not the Son of God, as the great Basil has written? (*C. Eun.* 11.18, PG 29, 609B). What do these words of Exodus signify: '*The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend*'? (Ex. 33:11) And if He Who spoke to Abraham and '*swore by Himself*' (Gen. 22:16) was only an angel, how could the Apostle have said, '*He could not swear by one greater than Himself*'? (Heb. 6:13) But if God saw fit to speak Himself to those Fathers in the shadow of the Law, how much the more has He manifested Himself directly to the saints, now that the truth has appeared, and the law of grace has been shown forth! According to this law of grace, it is the Lord Himself who has saved us, "*not an angel or a man,*" (Isa. 63:9)? (…) Did He not deign to make His dwelling in man, to appear to him and speak to him without intermediary".[36]

Stephen was not surrounded with angelic assistance when he saw what he did; but, full of the Holy Spirit, saw the glory of God and the only Son of God (Acts 7:55-56). For it is not possible to see the light without seeing in the light, this vision is accessible through the Spirit, and it's not a form of cognition or an act of the intellect, but a direct vision of the uncreated glory of the Trinity through the grace of the Spirit.

Palamas goes on to mention examples from the OT of God appearing to the Patriarchs and Prophets without intermediary. He intends showing how "The Lord dwells in men in different and varied ways according to the worthiness and way of life of those who seek Him. He appears in one way to an active man, in another to a contemplative, in another again to the man of vision, and in yet different ways to the zealous or to those already divinised. There are numerous differences in the divine vision itself: among the prophets, some have seen God in a dream, others when awake by means of enigmas and mirrors; but to Moses He appeared '*face-to-face, and not in enigmas*' (Num. 12:8)."[37]

The experience of God's hiddenness, just as the experience of his presence, is an integral part of Israelite faith. Both experiences derive from the nature of God himself who is both hidden and present.[38] Generally, the dichotomy "hidden vs. manifest" is usually expressed by two connected symbols ("cloud" vs. *kabod*, s*hem* vs. *kabod*, God's "face" vs. hidden God). Instead of describing

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[36] Tr. III.3.5, cf. Gendle ed. (1983), 103-4.
[37] *Triads* II.3.59 and III.1.28, Gendle (1983), 83-84.
[38] Samuel E. Balentine, *The Hidden God: The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 164-175.

the dazzling light of God or asserting the impossibility of seeing the divine face, Philo[39] translates, through the distinction *ousia-hyparxis*, this ancient biblical dichotomy between the hidden and the manifest dimensions of the divine.[40] Therefore, says Giulea "*christians theologians elaborated the apophatic philosophical language predominantly within the exegetical context of the Old Testament theophanies of the kabod.*"[41]

2. Theosis as mirroring „*unveiled glory* (δόξα)". *Identification of Jesus Christ with kabod* (inter-Trinitarian *reciprocal glorification* and its somatic experience)

Kabod is the most important term in the Bible defining God's glory and it is shaped the *doxa* of the New Testament. This glory is seen in theophanies, when God's manifestations as kabod of God proves itself to be much more immanent than transcendent.[42] This glory is intrinsic to God (1 Chr 29:11), not a peripheral manifestation of God's character but an essential quality of His personhood.[43] The *participatory doxa*, as revelation of God is not only manifested as kabod, but also as salvation (*yeshua*, cf. Isa 62:1; 58:8).[44]

Dragoş Andrei Giulea looking into the origins of Kabod soteriology, he sees the connection between the vision of the divine light and the idea of salvation to be an old credence in ancient Israel according to which God's shining face or presence ((פנים) procures salvation (ישועה). So this salvation comes through the manifestation of God's glory and consists of living before the Divine Face: "*the expectation of the visio Dei becomes a key social-soteriological feature*".[45]

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[39] See David T. Runia, "Philo in the Patristic Tradition: A list of Direct Reference" in *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria*, ed. Torrey Seland (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), 268-286.

[40] Jean Daniélou, *Philo of Alexandria* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 90-110. David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Assen-Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1993), 99-101, 103, 224.

[41] Dragoş A. Giulea, "The Divine Essence, that Inaccessible *Kabod* Enthroned in Heaven: Nazianzen's *Oratio* 28,3 and the Tradition of Apophatic Theology from Symbols to Philosophical Concepts," *Numen* 57 (2010): 1-29, ad 20-21.

[42] Philippe Paul-Luc Viguier, *A Biblical Theology of the Glory of God* (California: Sun Valley, 2012), 15-16. God's glory is used nearly 200 times in the Old Testament, and comes from a root meaning "weight."

[43] Viguier, *Biblical Theology of the Glory*, 17.

[44] Viguier, *Biblical Theology of the Glory*, 21-23.

[45] Dragoş Andrei Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology in Paschal Contexts. The Case of the Divine Noetic Anthropos* (Leiden: Brill 2014), 99-103. While in Ps 67:1–2, 80:3, and 80:7 God's shining face or presence ((פנים) procures salvation (ישועה), Psalm 104 makes clear that the manifestation of פנים is the way God grants life to all creatures. Ps 104:1 articulates, the terms of הוד (splendor) and הדר (majesty) seem to refer to Yahweh's garments.

God's doxa, in the New Testament, is more than a continuation of the OT kabod, but make a decisive breakthrough by applying the full weight of the term to the person of Jesus Christ. The „otherness" of Jesus proposed by the Transfiguration narrative ("the appearance of his face become different [*heteron*]" Luke 9:20) becomes a matter of faith.[46] The union in God's glory begins the process of knowing God, which is indeed eternal life (John 17:3), but this "union in God's glory becomes union with Christ".[47] Also, *God's glorification is seen in terms of inter-Trinitarian works of love*, as John depicts the reciprocal glorification of the Trinity.[48]

Salvation, therefore, comes through the divine *kabod* and essentially consists in living within the glory of God: "*glory enacts its salvific operations through direct manifestation.*"[49] Christian glory soteriology distinctive element resides in the identification of Jesus Christ with the *kabod*. In 1 Cor 2:8 Christ receives the title "Lord of Glory" (*Κύριος τῆς δόξης*), a designation of Yahweh used throughout the Old Testament. Regarding *Christ and the Glory-Temple,* Meredith G. Kline refers to the heaven and earth thus have the character of a temple, a place where God's Glory-Presence is revealed. The cosmic Glory-temple, as God's own self-manifestation, constitutes a perpetual epiphany of the divine Presence: "Incarnate Son and endoxate Spirit are alike epiphanic embodiments of the God of Glory."[50]

Likewise, Luke's narrative obviously identifies Mary's baby with the Lord of Glory descended to earth as a veiled divine throne (*merkavah*) in 2:8-20. The old priest Symeon compares the baby with the glory, therefore with the *kabod*: "*a*

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[46] Eugen J. Pentiuc, *The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7.

[47] Viguier, *Biblical Theology of the Glory*, 28. The author says that God's *Shekinah* represents His dwelling place and continuous presence with mankind, manifested with theophanic evidence of glory. The term *Shekinah* gained importance as it replaced *kabod* in later Jewish literature (Targums, Talmuds and Midrash). This is developing of biblical theology: such as the usage of *Memra* for the Word (logos), recognized of speaking of God's own name and character, and of *Shekinah* referring to the second person of the Trinity. The *Shekinah* in Hebrew, like the *doxa* in Greek, becomes mostly associated with light: "*In effect, the Shekinah emphasizes greatly the transcendental aspect of God, found in His light and sublime appearance, and not as much His immanence and man's ability to know Him personally. The God of the rabbinical Shekinah is distant, difficult to understand, and uneasy to describe. This, as we have studied and proven, is contrary to the God of Scripture who manifests Himself*" (Viguier, *Biblical Theology of the Glory*, 34)

[48] Joong Suk Suh, *The Glory in the Gospel of John: Restoration of Forfeited Prestige* (Oxford, OH: M. P. Publications, 1995), 71-73. Father's glorificatin through the Son (13:31; 17:1,4) and of the Son through the Father (7:39; 12:16,23; 13:31; 17:1,5). The Spirit is also said to glorify Christ (John 16:14), which is seen by His work implementing the salvivic power of Jesus (John 14:12).

[49] Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 105.

[50] Kline, *Glory in our Midst*, 225-6.

light (φῶς) *for revelation to the nations, and the glory (δόξα) of your people Israel"*
(Lk. 2:29-41). Into John's Gospel, one notes the depiction of the event of the
incarnation, in glory terminology, as the coming of the divine light. It is obvious
that "*salvation is instantiated through direct intervention of the divine light.*"[51]
Also, Matthew's translation of Emmanuel (1:21-3) applies to Jesus the functional,
messianic character of the divine presence formula, "God with us", Matthew has
given his audience the restoration of the OT promise of divine presence: a static
nature (Matt.18.20), with cultic connotations, and, also, a dynamic presence
(Matt.28.20). The tradition of Jesus' naming as "Emmanuel – God with us" and his
Yahwistic "I am with you" declaration were provocative,[52] describing "*God's saving
immanence, retrospectively and immediately, 'with' his people*".[53]

But Luke is only evangelist to use the word "glory" (*doxa*) and only to
mention that Jesus and the three apostle went up the mountain specifically to
pray (Lk 9:29-31). This is a detail in spiritual tradition of hesychasm which
was richly developed, the vision of light at the culmination of intense periods
of prayer is the deification of our nature. This light is enhypostatic symbol, the
uncreated radiance of God, a divine energy. This manifestation of Christ in the
divine nature is not something external to ourselves. It is interiorized through
the life of asceticism and prayer.[54] Christ will radiate within us like to the desert
Fathers: Pambo, Sisoe, Silvanus, Ramfors. In the later monastic tradition apocalyptic
visions recede and ecstasies come to be connected more with the vision of light (St.
John Climacus in 7th and St Simeon the New Theologian in 10th century).
Transfiguration becomes an interior experience to St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759-
1833) and Archimandrite Sophrony (1896-1991).[55]

This "glory soteriology" doctrine sees salvation coming through the
theophany of the divine glory. Now, still remaining in the context of the New
Testament we will be searching into the Pauline theology the basis of "biblical
theosis" and its link to with theophanies. Thus, drawing from 1 Cor. 15:10, 42-49;
2 Cor. 3:13-18; Rom. 8:14-16, 28 and Phil. 3:21 Stephen Finlan focus on the

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[51] Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 107-8.
[52] David D. Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel. Divine presence and God's people in the First Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 169, 220, 241. This movement entails the dramatic transfer of *exousia* to Jesus (Matt. 11.27 and 28.18).
[53] Kupp, *Matthew's Emmanuel. Divine presence*, 238-39.
[54] Frederica Mathewes-Green, *The Jesus Prayer: The Ancient Desert Prayer that Tunes the Heart to God* (Orleans: Paraclete Press, 2009), 3-32; George Maloney, *Prayer of the Heart: The Contemplative Tradition of the Christian East* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2008), 11-34, 127-146.
[55] Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), 20-21; Archimandrite Sophrony, *We shall See Him As He Is* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1988), 155-156.

association of Pauline theology and *theosis*. He highlights Paul's use of the terminology of being "transformed into Christ likeness, which can truly be called *theosis*". For Finlan "*theosis* in Paul always involves both cruciform and *anastasiform* living (Phil 1:23)".[56] Becoming like Christ or *christification*, is equivalent to becoming like God or *deification*. Christopher Barina Kaiser is looking for the traces of this „*Kyriocentric Visions*" in 1 Cor. 9:1-2. Here Paul justifies his apostleship on the basis of his having seen the Lord Jesus. Paul's language here is clearly visionary – he had never seen Jesus in the flesh (Gal. 1:11-12, 15). The Kyriocentric nature of the vision he describes is indicated by the combination of the verb *to see* (ὁράω,*horáō*) with the title *Lord* (Κύριος, *ho Kyrios*).[57]

Theosis, also, is described as "*transformation into unveiled glory*" (2 Cor. 3.7-18).[58] By this verse (2 Cor. 3.18) deification through the vision of God become an immanent and mystical event. This aspect of deification as transformation into glory (*glorification*) is "both an inward quality of spiritual knowledge and an outward radiance".[59] The nature of the *δόξα (glory)* of Moses and the visible splendour shining from his face (πρόσωπον) from his direct contact with God (Exod 34.29) signifies "God's visible, mobile, divine presence"[60] and "*by virtue of the fact of his presence with God, Moses face was glorified (δεδοξασμένη)*".[61] As all believers encounter God directly (with *unveiled faces*) through the Spirit's presence they reflect this glory as mirrors and are themselves glorified in the process (*from glory to glory*).

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[56] Stephen Finlan, "Can We Speak of *Theosis* in Paul?" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, ed. Michael J. Christensen, Jeffery A. Wittun (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 68-80, here 78. Finlan describes this as a three-stage process: dying to sin, reflecting light and receiving a glorious body.

[57] Christopher Barina Kaiser, *Seeing the Lord's Glory. Kyriocentric Visions and the Dilemma of Early Christology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 121-148.

[58] N.T. Wright, "Reflected Glory: 2 Corinthians 3:18" in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, ed. N. T. Wright (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 175-92, at 184; Morna D. Hooker, "Beyond things that are Written? St Paul's use of Scripture" in *From Adam to Christ. Essays on Paul*, ed. Morna D. Hooker (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 139-154, at 149-50.

[59] S. Finlan, "Can We Speak of *Theosis* in Paul?," 75.

[60] Carey C. Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 190; David A. Renwick, *Paul, the Temple, and the Presence of God* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 103; Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 408, n. 229.

[61] Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 159. About the "glory" of Moses see: Linda L. Belleville, *Reflections of Glory. Paul's Polemical Use of the Moses-Doxa Tradition in 2 Corinthians 3.1-18* (New York: T&T Clark, 1991) 297-302; Paul B. Duff, *Moses in Corinth: the apologetic context of 2 Corinthians 3* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 145-148.

But Christ is not merely reflecting the glory of God as Moses did, He *is* the glory of God, He is the light of this glory. Therefore, transformed into Christ's divine glory, believers are participating in the divine presence. For Paul εἰκών is fundamentally somatic and this implies that the "*transformation into this glory is not only noetic but also embodied because it is a visible manifestation*".[62] The noetic enlightenment is associated with participation in divine glory in 2 Cor 3-4 is correlated to the somatic experience of glory in 2 Cor 4:16-5:5. So, we "*cannot separate christosis from theosis*". Participation plays the structural role within this christo-form soteriology which includes a "*holistic - noetic, moral, and somatic - transformation of the human modelled around Christ's restoration of humanity*".[63] In a similar context, speaking of the hesychast method of prayer and transformation of the body, Gregory Palamas also uses this Pauline theology of 2 Corinthians in Tr. I.2.2: „Paul says: '*God, who has ordered light to shine from darkness, has made His light to shine in our hearts, in order that we may be enlightened by the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. 4:6); but he adds, 'We carry this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). So we carry the Father's light in the face (prosōpon) of Jesus Christ in earthen vessels, that is, in our bodies, in order to know the glory of the Holy Spirit.*"[64]

Therefore, in 2 Cor. 3:18 Paul present a Christian version of theosis as "*sharing in God's reality in Christ*".[65] Michael Gorman says that this text would "*become foundational for the doctrine of theosis*".[66] For him the best description of Paul's soteriology is "cruciform *theosis*" as transformative participation in Lord' kenotic life.[67] Paul speaks also of a noetic illumination through the intimate cooperation between mind (*νόημα*, 2 Cor. 3.14) and hearts (*καπδία*, 2 Cor. 3.15).[68]

In anthropological terms of the theosis, man is *the mirror of divine glory (δόξα)*. In pre-nicene christological theology, borrowed from Jewish mystique of the second temple, Adam's prelapsarian ontological status was presumed to be that of a glorious being, it was luminous and quasi-angelic.[69] The 1 Cor 11:7 illustrates clearly that Paul conceives of the human being as the image of God:

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[62] Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification*, 175.

[63] Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification*, 246-247.

[64] Tr. I.2.2, cf. Gendle ed. (1983), 42.

[65] M. David Litwa, "2 Corinthians 3:18 and Its Implications for *Theosis*," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 2 (2008): 117-134, here 117.

[66] Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), 120.

[67] Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 162.

[68] See the link between δόξα and εἰκών in 2 Cor. 3.18 and 4.4.

[69] Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 150.

"*A man (ἀνήρ) must not cover his head, because man is the image (εἰκών) of God and the mirror of his glory (δόξα)*." Also, in 2 Cor 3:18 the increasing glory of the human being comes actually as the result of contemplating Jesus' divine glory as in a mirror.[70] *Eikonic* soteriology, therefore, represents the transformation from being the *eikon* of Adam into the *eikon* of the glorious Jesus (*τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης*; Phil 3:21).[71] All those who will be saved and deified will be transformed through *Μορφὴ θεοῦ*, the Jesus' Pre-Incarnate and eschatological Form. But this pneumatic nature of Christ's luminous body is experienced through Eucharist as well. This holy sacrament access the divine corporeality of light, veiled by Christ's visible body. The Eucharist is subsequently identified with the "great body of Christ" on which the "light of the world" is set (ἔδυ).[72] In order to access the divine corporeality of light, veiled by Christ's visible body, Christians need to be initiated. Thus, Jesus unveils his Divine and Glorious Form on the Mount of Transfiguration.[73] So, the event of the transfiguration plays the significant pedagogical role of revealing both "*the pre-incarnate Form of the Logos and the paradigm and telos of human destiny, its eschatological, deified, and glorious condition*".[74]

3. MOTHER OF LIGHT concealed in the light of her Son. Mary the first fully deified human hypostasis (*deification precedes salvation*)

At St. Gregory the deiform life from the Holy of holies of the Virgin has a similar interpretation, says John Meyendorff, as the one gave by Gregory of Nyssa to the ascent of Moses on Sinai, expression of the mystical ascent of the soul to God[75]. Thus, in *Homily 53*[76] the Virgin Mary is seen by Saint Gregory Palamas as the biblical prototype of this hesychast life. She realizes in herself the likeness of God, and through the the grace of deification gains the form of God (*morphe tou Theou*; cf. *Hom.* 53, 61). Her deification precedes the Incarnation,

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[70] Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 153. The "epistemic process of contemplation generates the ontological mirroring process": because for us there is no veil over the face, we all see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου), and we are being transformed (μεταμορφούμεθα) into his likeness (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα) with ever-increasing glory (ἀπὸδόξης εἰς δόξαν).

[71] Again, human beings are not transformed into Adam's prelapsarian image or glory, as in Qumran theology, but into Christ's image: the *eikon* of the Heavenly Anthropos and the second Adam; cf., Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology*, 227, 250-1; Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 156.

[72] Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 298-300.

[73] John McGuckin, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 155-7.

[74] Giulea, *Pre-Nicene Christology*, 301-3.

[75] John Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1959), 391.

[76] *Homily 53,* in Saint Gregory Palamas: *The Homilies*, ed. Christopher Veniamin (Dalton, PA: Mount Thabor Publishing, 2014), 339-345.

„God being united with her flesh after she has previously united her mind with Him".[77] In the Holy of Holies attained to the highest and most perfect realization of quiet and mental prayer (νοητὴν σιγήν).[78]

In the *Triads* Gregory had laid emphasis on deification as an experiential reality (*Tr.* I.3.5).[79] Papanikolaou says that Incarnation gives priority to ontology over epistemology. The type of knowledge that results from union with God is manifested in one person – the Theotokos. As a deified person, the Theotokos experiences the fullness of union with God. By being united to Christ through the Incarnation, she offered her human nature to Christ and receives it purified. Therefore, „*Theotokos manifests in her person all the glory that is the goal for all individuals, but also the church*".[80]

In his Mariological homilies, St. Gregory Palamas' intuition of the relationship between deification and salvation, shows a Byzantine theological theme concerned by soteriological report of Virgin Mary and Her Son. Thus, developed on the same hesychastic line by Nicolas Cabasilas, too, Mariology becomes in his case a launching deck of the Orthodox apology of deification, as creational vocation of the human being, in the byzantine-scholastic debate of oikonomic axes (creation-deification versus sin-salvation).

Cabasilas' movement of terminology from the deification to Christomorphisation led him withal to the assertion of a theocentric humanism, represented by the central figure of the Virgin Mary. Adam' predestination was mariological one, man being made in order to Virgin Mary's appearance.[81] Marian *homilies* of Nicholas Cabasilas could be a chapter of the *Life of Christ*, given their complementarity. Thus, gravitating around the the central theme of byzantine mariology (hidden life of the Virgin Mary), Saint Nicholas Cabasilas theological synthesis represent a mystagogical complementarity to the Palamism doctrine, which provides an ontological content to deification, understood as Christification.[82] The American Greek Theologian, Constantinos Tsirpanlis[83], demonstrates that at the basis of Cabasilas's humanist Mariology is a completely different theological anthropology than that of Augustin. He insists upon the ascetic-spiritual nature of purity and

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[77] Meyendorff, *Introduction*, 214-5.

[78] *Homily 53,* in Veniamin (ed.), p. 339-345. This „silence of mind" (noetic prayer stops in ecstatic union), the hesychasm fruit, is achieved when nous unites itself with the Divine Mind beyond its own nature.

[79] Norman Russell, "Theosis and Gregory Palamas: Continuity or Doctrinal Change?," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 50/4 (2006): 357-379, ad 377.

[80] Papanikolaou, *Being with God*, 45-46.

[81] Panayotis Nellas, *Omul – animal îndumnezeit. Perspective pentru o antropologie ortodoxă* (Sibiu: Deisis, 1999), 266.

[82] Nichifor Tanase, "Deification and redemption. Introduction to a mariological hesychasm and theocentric humanism of Saint Nicholas Cabasilas", in *Sv. Nikolaj Kabasilas. Problematika teologie, mystiky a filantropie*, ed. Jan Šafin, et al. (Prešove: Prešovska University Press, 2013), 54-88.

[83] Constantinos Tsirpanlis, "The Mariology of Nicholas Cabasila," *Kleronomia* 11 (1979): 273-288.

holiness of the Virgin, giving expression to a "mariocentric christology" as synthesis between a "mariocentric humanism" and an "anthropological Christology."[84] Marian homilies could be a chapter of Life in Christ, due to their complementarity and his „marianocentrism completes his christocentrism".[85]

For Sherwood, Mary, in Byzantine theology, is co-dweller with Him in the eternal tabernacles and there having obtained unceasing intercession to Him: "*the ascription of the fulness of grace is grounded in her role as Theotokos*".[86] And to Behr-Sigel "*this acquisition of the fulness of grace appropriate to the age to come, could only happen to a deified being*".[87] Also, Lossky notes that "*Incontestably she who was chosen to be the Mother of God was at the summit of Old Testament holiness.*"[88] In such a context Lossky says that the Roman Catholic dogma of the *Immaculate Conception* places her outside the rest of humanity-before-Christ and "seems to break up this uninterrupted succession of instances of Old Testament holiness".[89] Here, in the above statements, the two strong currents of Marian thought, that we have met in Palamas and Cabasilas, come together.

The Scripture and Church tradition only emphasize the three prerogatives: Mother of God (*Theotokos*), Ever-Virgin (*Aeiparthenos*) and over worship (*hyperdoulia*)[90], but Mary's life has as its own characteristic the fact that "*she remains hidden in her Son's light*"[91].

The Ascension of Virgin Mary was not seen because the Light covered her completely, an absorbtion of materiality in the light of her Son's glory. As Indicated by Stăniloae "*the creature deified by God equates with her enveloping and covering by God's glory*"[92]. And this hidden into the light also means a double paradoxal "humbleness" (ascension is humbleness in Orthodoxy). This aspect of Virgin Mary's humbleness, of her hiding into the light of her Son is, in fact,

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[84] Christopher Veniamin, *The Orthodox Understanding of Salvation. „Theosis" in Scripture and Tradition* (Dalton PA: Mount Thabor Publishing, 2014), see, especially, the chapter: "The Sinlessness of the Mother of God according to Saint Nicholas Cabasilas," 45-59.

[85] Yannis Spiteris, *Cabasila: teologo e mistico bizantino. Nicola Cabasilas Chamaetos e la sua sintesi teologica* (Roma: Lipa, 1996), 45-58.

[86] Polycarpp Sherwood, "Byzantine Mariology," *Eastern Chrches Quarterly* 8 (1962): 107-137, here 120-121 and 134.

[87] Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, *The Ministry of Women in the Church* (New York: St Vladimirs Seminary Press, 1990), 91-92.

[88] Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), Chapter 11: "Panagia," 195-210.

[89] Sherwood, "Byzantine Mariology," 130-131. Lossky's doctrine on the Mother of God is clearly in the Palamite tradition; equally clearly it is indebted to Scripture.

[90] Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress. The Virgin Mary and the creation of Christian Constantinople* (New York: Routledge, 2012) 53-141.

[91] Dumitru Stăniloae, "Învăţătura despre Maica Domnului la ortodocşi şi catolici," [The doctrine of the Virgin Mary at Orthodox and Catholics] *Ortodoxia* 4 (1950): 559-609, here 561.

[92] Stăniloae, "The doctrine of the Virgin," 601.

also a so complete union that (as Teophan of Nicaea shown), "*there is a single energy of the Son and His Mother, the uncreated divine energy*". So, the Son is inseparable from both His Father, by hypostatic relationship, and from his Mother, by energy relationship. Christ sent all His graces through His Mother, so all our prayers to Christ passes through her. Prayer is the maximum effect of union with God, while her mediation means her diveing and covering in Christ and in the light of His glory. Her Glory is always a glory from Christ and in Christ. Thus, in his Mariology, "*Orthodoxy reconciles the glory of the Virgin Mary with the most categorically christocentrism*".[93]

Mother of God is full of the divine energies more than anyone else, energies poured from His humanity; therefore, she is "the real mediator of divine energy." As a result, "all the gifts and graces ontologically pass from Christ to us through her" and then "to be united with Christ" means, at the same time, "to be united also with his Mother": "*The idea that Mother of God is also an irradiator, irradiating of the divine energy, not only a prayer to God, can not be taken into disscution without undermining all the essential principles of orthodox spirituality and thinking*".[94] According to Gregory Palama and Teophan, Mother of God is "*God's laboratory of exchanges with us*": through Mother of God we gave Him the humanity in the act of incarnation, so the Son of God doesn't offer us instead deification without mediation of the Virgin.[95] Mother of God is a "*torch full of divine light, one that captures all the light of which creation is capable of*". Becoming light herself, she is "the creation in which God is even from now all in all", in who was accomplished "the mystery of her supreme union [*theosis*] with God".[96] Resurrected and raised beyond death and and judgment, on the throne at the right of her Son in His glory (new *merkabach*), Mother of God is also icon of eschatological glory to which the entire humanity is being called; she is also the anticipated vivid image of accomplished redemption. Mariology represents the inner organic structure and logic of Orthodoxy.

In *Homily* 57, St Grigory Palamas claims that the purity of the Virgin for the the Son of God's incarnation from her, was prepared by the purity of a whole series of predecessors.[97] By preparing herself through personal efforts, Virgin Mary reduced the ancestral sin from her to a pure passive potency, man's condition before the Fall, the ideal original beauty of the adamic man. Also, for Teophan of Nicaea, the "Mariologue" of Byzantine theology, Mary became both Mother of God

[93] Stăniloae, "The doctrine of the Virgin," 608-9.
[94] Dumitru Stăniloae, "Virgin Mary as mediatrix," *Ortodoxia* 5/1 (1952): 79-129, here 84.
[95] Stăniloae, "Virgin Mary as mediatrix," 95.
[96] Stăniloae, "Virgin Mary as mediatrix," 125-6.
[97] *Homily* 57: „concerning the genealogy according to the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Ever-Virgin Mother of God who bore Him in virginity", Christopher Veniamin ed., 2014, 468-476.

and Mother of rational creatures - angels and humans – "deified in Christ through her". And this is because, in Teophan's view, "*the first created receptacle of graces or of divinity's plenitude is Christ's humanity, and the second - the one through which He is disseminated to all rational creatures - is Mother of God*".[98]

A deep theological meditation upon the Annunciation reflected in the episode Lucan's prologue is commented by father Stăniloae starting from amply quoted Mariological homilies of Nicolas Cabasilas. Her position special "*border between the created and the uncreated*" make her the Mediatrix of all graces of God for both angels and humans. At the Annunciation there was't a cleansing, but a 'adding grace'. Now the Holy Spirit gave her the stillness in direct contemplation of God, which is for Cabasilas eschatological states.

As stated by Louis Bouyer and "*from the first moment of her existence, God's grace has taken possession of our nature*".[99] Therefore, there is into The Mother of God a process of growth in holiness from that of the Old Testament in that holiness of the Church (Pentecost) to eschatological kingdom of heaven which they entered by Dormition. So, Mary is "the first human hypostasis fully deified".[100]

Eva, although she hadn't had the stain of an inherited sin, yet she had fell and had tarnished herself. Instead Mary, without having had the saving grace of redemption, had the maximum degree of grace (filling her with grace even before the Incarnation of the Word) and the general power for avoiding evil and for doing good, features that the righteous of Old Testament had them, too. For instance, Ephrem juxtaposes the image of Moses being veiled with Jesus'veiling oh Himself in the Incarnation. Face of Moses shone and he laid veil over his face, just as Lord, from the Womb, entered and put on the veil of the Body (*Hom. on Nativity* 73). Sebastian Brock extends comparison between two forms of light with the internal light of Mary's womb when bearing Jesus: '*brightness which Moses put on' is coming form outside him, but to the river in which Jesus was baptized, He 'put on Light from within'*.[101] Mary's womb weaves a garment of glory and

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[98] Stăniloae, "The doctrine of the Virgin," 589.

[99] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. 3 (București: EIBMBOR, 1997), 214.

[100] Georges Florovsky, "The Ever-Virgin Mother of God," in *Collected Works*, vol. 3 (Belmont, MA: Nordland, 1976) 171-188;

[101] Sebastian Brock, *The Bride of Light: Hymns on Mary from the Syrian Churches* (Kottayam: St Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1994) 29; S. Brock, "St Epherm on Christ as Light in Mary and in the Jordan: Hymni de Ecclesia 36," *Eastern Churches Review* 7 (1975): 137-144, at 138. The doctrine of *Theosis* or divinization, as Ephrem understand it, is just a way of making explicit what it means to become 'children of God' (semitic *bar*, 'son of' means '*sharing in the attributes of*'). As Sebastian Brock upholds "*The concept of divinization in Ephrem is a natural outcome of the pattern of complementarity which he sees between the divine descend ant its purpose, namely the restoration of Adam and the human ascent*"; cf., Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian* (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 145, 152.

reclothes sinful Eve who stripped off the garment of glory. In Mary, the light-bearing Christ is ‚woven' as a garment. Christ's light transforms her body in which He resided, as it ‚gleams from within'.[102]

Summit of Old Testament holiness, Mary is fulness of grace and manifests in her person all the glory. This is why she is the eschatological icon of glory. Thereby, mariology is becoming the Orthodox shield of deification, as creational vocation of man.

4. TABORIC LIGHT and *theosis* through the uncreated divine energy. „He himself is deifying light" (deification as enhypostatic illumination)

Gregory calls the light seen on Mount Tabor 'enhypostatic', i.e. without any hypostasis of its own (*Tr.* III.1.28), for its hypostasis is Christ: „He himself is the deifying light" (*Tr.* III.1.16). Palamas is quoting from Damascene's assertion that the Taboric light is not alien, but natural to the divinity: "*The splendour of divine grace is not something external, as in the case of the splendor possessed by Moses, but belongs to the very nature of the divine glory and splendor*" (*Hom. in Transfig.* 10, PG 96, 561D). But when he speks on the vision of God face-to-face, he recalls the testimony of Maximus and comes to a proper definition of theosis: "*Deification is an enhypostatic*[103] *and direct illumination which has no beginning, but appears in those worthy as something exceeding their comprehension. It is indeed a mystical union with God, beyond intellect and reason, in the age when creatures will no longer know corruption. Thanks to this union, the saints, observing the light of the hidden and more-than-ineffable glory, … the symbol of the authentic and real adoption, according to the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit, thanks to the bestowal of which grace the saints become and will remain the sons of God*" (Maximus, *Ad Thalas.* 61, PG XC, 636C; also *Scholion* 16, *ibid*. 644C).[104]

Saint Gregory Palamas identifies light with God, as deification's source, as the agent of human sanctification, and as deification itself [αὐτοθέωσις, *Triads* I.3.23). The light can be portrayed as Other and external to the human subject and as the transformative power working within. Gregory does not see these two facets of light as either mutually exclusive or inherently opposed. Therefore he quotes Denys: „*This light is a supraluminous and theurgic ray, also called the deifying gift and source of Divinity*" (*Triads* III. 1.29) and in he contends that the light

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[102] *Hymn on the Church 36* (6), in Brock, *Bride of Light*, 29.
[103] In the sense that the divine life finds its personal locus in each of those being sanctified.
[104] Tr. III.1.28, Gendle ed., 83-84.

„*deifies those who contemplate it*" (*Triads* III. 3.9).[105] Gregory combines both tendencies in apparent harmony saying that „*those who see the light consider it as invisible*" (*Triads* I.3.24). Palamas resolves the tension between *see* and *invisible* y stressing that they know this light is God: „*Since the light is a person*, Williams adds, *seeing the light constitutes a species of knowing*".[106]

The knowledge constitutes one form of apprehension and vision is another: „*The logic of the connection between these two cognates and theosis lies in the relation they imply between knower and known, seer and seen. Because what is known and seen is no less than God, this contact is transformative.*"[107]

The intellect is seen as a point of contact with the grace of incarnate God: „*They see the vesture of their deification, their intelligence being glorified and filled by the grace of the Word*" (Tr. I.3.5). Gregory Palamas maintaining that by deification „*a person finds himself above vision and knowledge* [ὀρῶν καὶ ἐνεργῶν]; *that means he sees and acts in a way that exceeds us and is already God by grace*" (Tr. II.3.52).

Vision is an appropriate way of understanding the transforming encounter with God. So, the illuminations is a vision because „*He sees God by God*" (Tr. II. 3.52). For describing this deifying vision Palamas, often uses *seeing* alongside *knowing*, in order to show that the organ of vision was neither the senses nor the intellect: „*their vision is not a sensation* [αἴσθησις] *since they do not receive it through the senses; nor is it an intellection* [νόησις], *since they do not find it through thought* [λογισμῶν]" (Tr. I.3.18).

Contemplation [θεωρία] provides a natural link between knowledge and vision, because it seems to partake of the quality of both*: „contemplation expresses an activity that is both a form of knowing and a form of seeing*".[108] Contemplation is not simply abstraction or negation but a union and a divinization by the grace of God (Tr. I. 3.17): „*Those worthy of this most happy contemplation recognise that this deifying action is superior to any vision, not by way of negation, but by a vision in the Spirit*" (Tr. II.3.26). Contemplation thus functions not only as the means to theosis but as the end itself: „*By unifying perfection* [Denys] *meant the coming and indwelling of God in us, which are accomplished in union and which nourish the spiritual eye by contemplation*" (*Triads* II.3.74). Therefore, *theoria* is rooted both in history and eternity, like theosis, it is the inauguration of the next world.

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[105] „This spiritual light is thus not only the object of vision, but is also the power by which we see" (*Triads* III.2.14). Cf. *Triads* III.3.5: „It is not possible to see the light without seeing in the light" (Psalm 36:9).

[106] A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 115.

[107] Williams, *The Ground of Union*, 111.

[108] Williams, *The Ground of Union*, 113.

The deifying light pertains to God's essence but is not itself the essence of God. The disciples "*from being blind men, they began to see*" and contemplate this light as: "*inaccessible, immaterial, uncreated, deifying, eternal, radiance of the Divine Nature, glory of the divinity, beauty of the heavenly kingdom,* [wich] *is at once accessible to sense perception and yet transcends it.*"[109]

Deification is a supernatural gift that transforms both mind and body, making divinity visible (*Tr.* III. 1. 33). *Our mixed human nature, which was assumed by the Lord, has taken its seat on the right hand of the divine majesty in the heavens* (Heb. 8:1), *being full of glory not only (like Moses) in the face, but in the whole body*" (*Triads* I.3.29). For Gregory the greatest of Biblical images for both deification and light is the Transfiguration, which represents the christological dimension of divinization: „*Our nature has been stripped of this divine illumination and radiance as a result of the transgression...* [On Tabor the Word] *indicated what we once were and what we shall become through Him in the future age if we choose here below to live according to his ways as much as possible*" (*Capita* 66).[110]

Palamas also specifically identifies light with both the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity. He calls Christ the true light, the radiance of glory (*Tr.* III.1.15). With respect to the Spirit, he writes that such a divine and celestial life belongs to those who live in a manner pleasing to God „*participating in the life inseparable from the Spirit*" (*Tr.* III.1.9).

Thus, concludes Williams, Saint Gregory Palamas „*is associating light with what we would call the economic rather than the immanent Trinity. The conclusions one would draw from the texts regarding the divine status of light correlate with what he claims explicitly of the essence-energies distinction: the agent of divinization, that in God which we encounter and which transforms us, is the divine energy, not the divine essence*".[111] Glory operates as an alternate name for divine energy and signifies the communicability of divine life: „*God, while remaining entirely in himself, dwells in us by his superessential power, and communicates to us not his nature, but his proper glory and splendour*" (*Tr.* I.3.23). Palamas appears to equate grace and theosis. Thus, for him this divine energy not only deifies the saints but also dwells in them permanently: „*the spiritual grace that comes into the heart is a permanent energy produced by grace, tied to the soul and rooted in it*" (*Triads* II.2.9).

As a cognate for deification, Gregory uses adoption (υιοθεσία) which functions as a correlative to deification: „*You should not consider that God allows Himself to be seen in His superessential essence, but according to His*

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[109] Tr. III.1.22, Gendle ed., 80.

[110] Saint Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters – A Critical Edition, Translation and Study*, 66, ed. R.E. Sinkewicz (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988), 161.

[111] Williams, *The Ground of Union*, 118.

deifying gift and energy, the grace of adoption, the uncreated deification, the enhypostatic illumination" (*Tr.* III.1.29). He understands by adoption the ontological regeneration , and it is hypostatic: „*The saints clearly state that this adoption, actualised by faith, is enhypostatic*" (*Tr.* III.1.31).

In conclusion, Moses the lawgiver, Stephen the protomartyr, and Arsenius the desert ascetic are examples from the Bible and the Fathers of men who were visibly transformed by divine light (*Tr.* II.3.9). God transcends the senses yet the knowledge of God is experiential.[112] The monks know this. They see the hypostatic light spiritually – in reality not in a symbolic way. The divine light is the „*ineffable glory seen by the saints, the enhypostatic, uncreated light, eternally*" (*Tr.* III. 1. 6). But the „*hermeneutic key*" is the transfiguration of Christ, for what Christ is by nature the Christian can become by grace. The saints henceforth live with the life of God (*Tr.* III.1.35).

Since the light of Thabor is identical with the eternal glory of Christ, it must be a natural symbol. The angels do not only *contemplate and participate in the glory of the Trinity*, he declares, *but also in the glorification of Jesus* through "*participation in the knowledge of His theurgic light*" (*De cael. hier.*, 7.2, PG 3, 20BC).[113]

Although He Himself is deifying light, Palama rejects the identification of Hypostasis with energy. St. Gregory extended Christology in the area of Trinitarian theology, so Tabor light is the uncreated energy of Son, that "*innate motion*" or "*active and essential movement of nature*". So, perichoresis has for Gregory a dynamic character, manifesting the mystery of the Trinity's energy as consubstantiality and mutual indwelling.[114]

The aim of Torstein Tollefsen about activity (he prefers this term instead of the energy) and participation is to interpret the Palamite doctrine of the experience of light according to the principles of the ontology. So, he says that In the image Palamas gives of the Trinity he tries to secure a „*unified dynamic*".[115] The divine nature or essence eternally manifests within its eternal Triadic dynamics:

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[112] Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 308.

[113] Tr. III.1.16, Gendles ed., 77. This light is "theurgic" in the sense of "divinizing".

[114] Amphiloque Radovic, *Le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité selon saint Grégoire de Palamas* (Paris: Cerf, 2012), 170. The term enhypostasized has several meanings for St. Gregory Palamas; Saint Gregory Palamas, *Dialogue Between an Orthodox and a Barlaamite* (New York: Binghampton University, 1999) 45-93, here 38 and 72.

[115] Torstein Theodor Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation in Late Antique and Early Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 185.

„God is dynamically Himself eternally, is the Form in forms as the primal Form and this has to do with participation. Palamas says that all things participate in God, and they are constituted by this participation in His activity".[116]

5. SACRAMENTAL THEOSIS – clothed in Christ as anthropological content of deification. Baptism - „place" of glory and Eucharist - a „veil" concealing the divinity

Adam was to be deified, and through him, all of creation would experience theosis. For Norman Russell theosis is our „*restoration as persons to integrity and wholeness*" by participation in Christ through the Holy Spirit: „*We, thus, transcend our fallen humanity by becoming the body of Christ. It is through participating in Christ intellectually, ascetically and liturgically, in mind anb body, that we receive the gift of theosis*".[117] Also, Eastern tradition proclaim deification, its central soteriological category, as a process, because this „*Participation is a way of speaking about how «in Him we live and move and have our being» (Acts 17:28).*"[118]

Theosis is throughly grounded in the Incarnation by which Lord inaugurates a new human ontology. But „*deification must not remain a general category but must acquire a specific anthropological content*"[119] understood again as Christification. Having an iconic ontology, man's essence is found in the archetipe. So, prior to the hypostatic union (even before the fall), man was „*prechristic*" and had need of salvation, since he was an „*imperfect and incomplete «child»*". Therefore, „*salvation of man is something much wider than redemption; it coincides with deification*".[120] The focus here is soteriological or „economic"[121], as Kharmalov expresses it. For John Behr, too, theosis is equivalent to Christification, because Christ assimilates us to himself and „*we are brought into the identity of Christ, becoming his body – incarnating the Word – so that we can also call upon the one God as Abba,*

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[116] Tollefsen, *Activity and Participation*, 189.

[117] Russell, *Fellow Workers*, 21, 120.

[118] Daniel A. Keating, *Deification ang Grace* (Naples, Florida: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2007), 97.

[119] Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives in the Nature of the Human Person* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987), 40.

[120] Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 24, 33, 39. Redemption is received by baptism, where the process of Christification begins. Deification as proces is a Eucharistic act where the union with Christ is complete and full (ad 121-127)

[121] Vladimir Kharlamov, "Emergence of the Deification Theme in the Apostolic Fathers," in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, Volume One, eds. Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 51-66. In the period of the Apostolic Fathers deification is expressed more in terms of "*economy than of ontology*" (Kharlamov, "Emergence of the Deification," 53).

Father".[122] All believers can share in the deified creation corporeally through sharing in the body of Christ and this transformation take place through the Eucharist, because „*deified creation already exists wholly deified as the body of Christ*".[123]

There is a mouvement from the biblical sharing in the divine attribute of glory to the human nature transformed in Christ. By clothing ourselves in Christ throught the agency of the Spirit we acquire a new identity which enables us to live with the life of Christ. Donna R. Hawk-Reinhard argues that the "doctrine of *theosis* is the hermeneutical key that Cyril of Jerusalem employed in his teachings on baptism and the Eucharist".[124] Our dynamic participation in the divine life is accomplished ontological within the sacraments. In Cyril's later writings „*partaking of the divine nature*" replace „*deification*" (*theopoiēsis*).[125] Our participation in Christ through the Eucharist is both corporeal and spiritual. For St Symeon the Theologian, the same as for Palamas, this is expressed on the one hand through the vision of the divine light, and on the other by union with Christ through receiving him in the Eucharist. These are not two ways, two alternative approaches. As Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev observes, Symeon „*presupposes that the Holy Spirit should be ‚manifested' in the one who has partaken of the Eucharist... on mystical illumination by the divine light through Communion*".[126]

First of all, the affirmation made by saint Gregory Palamas starting with *Homily* 53 of the real deification of the Virgin Mary before de embodiment of the Son of God, has produced difficulties regarding interpretation. So, for some of the occidental savants, the theology of the of the uncreated energies would

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[122] John Behr, *The Mystry of Christ: Life in Death* (Crestwood, New York: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), 177.

[123] Adam G. Cooper, *The Body in St Maximus the Confessor. Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 251.

[124] Donna R. Hawk-Reinhard, "Cyril of Jerusalem's Sacramental Theosis," *Studia Patristica* 66 (2013): 247-256 at 247-8. Cyril thought that a person is made holy by participation (μετοχή), asceticism (ἄσκησις), and prayer (εὐχή) (*Mystagogic Catechesis* 5.19). Through this scriptural reference of 2 *Peter* 1:4, Cyril taught that Christians receive a share in Christ's body and blood, "become of one body and one blood with Christ, and thus have become Christ-bearers who share in the divine nature through the Eucharist" (*Mystag.* 4.2-3). For Cyril's use of 2 *Peter* 1:4 in *Mystagogic Catechesis* 4 see: Donna R. Hawk-Reinhard, *From Christianoī to Christophōroi: The Role of the Eucharist in Christian Identity Formation according to Cyril of Jerusalem* (PhD Diss., Saint Louis University, 2011) and also: Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012) 139-158.

[125] Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 237.

[126] Hilarion Alfeyev, *St Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 90-92.

push in second plan both Christology (H-G Beck),[127] or even the whole triadology (D. Wendebourg).[128] The Jesuit G. Podskalsky has tried to surpass the assertions of H.-G. Beck affirming that the centrality of the Incarnation, sacraments and grace, evident in homilies, is undermined in the polemic writings about energies, through a metaphysical emanation and mysticism climbing of Neoplatonic type.[129] The two tendencies being unintegrable in Podskalsky's conception. More recently, Christiaan Kappes points out that Palamas, in thomistic view, was catalogued as a *„less subtle or feeble imitator of scotistic metaphysics"* and *„little more than an ill-conceived son of Scotus"*.[130] Instead, for the Orthodox theologians (J. Meyendorff, G. Mantzaridis) in the center of the palamite theology stands Incarnation and its extension in the Church Sacraments, would have brought a christological corrective to the evagriano-dionisiene mysticism.

Indeed, as we shall see, in his *Homilies* St. Gregory Palamas has a sacramental vision of deification. Throught the sacraments we will be „clothed" in Christ: *„so that you will be not only in God's image, but eternally and heavenly kings and gods clothed in Me"* (*Hom.* 56.11). As the light of the transfiguration the light-bearing robe of the unfallen Adam has a equally teological importance for *theosis*. Deification means to be „reclothed in cleanliness" and it is built on the idea of Adam and Eve being clothed first in light/glory and then skin/figleaves/shame. Therefore, „the concept of clothing in early Syrian writings is a representation of a state of being, namely *theosis*".[131] Accordingly, *theosis* as a divinizing function of the Incarnation is phrased here as a process of stripping off and reclothing, a symmetrical stripping of the glory of the Godhead to match that lost by Adam, and reclothing of Adam through Jesus being 'clothed in a body'.[132]

As we'll show in the following, this rich Syrian symbolism is used also by Saint Gregory Palamas in his mystical interpretation of the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist as clothing in Christ. In Palama's view there is a complementarity

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[127] Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (München: De Gruyter, 1959), 367.

[128] Dorothea Wendebourg, *Geist oder Energie. Zur Frage der innergöttlichen Verankerung des christlichen Lebens in der byzantinischen Theologie* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1980) 187, 201, 214 and 222.

[129] Gerhard Podskalsky, „Gottesschau und Inkarnation. Zur Bedeutung der Heilsgeschichte bei Gregor Palamas," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 35 (1969): 5-44.

[130] Christiaan W. Kappes, „Palamas among the Scholastics," *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 55/1-2 (2014): 175-220.

[131] Hannah Hunt, *Clothed in the Body. Asceticism, the Body and the Spiritual in the Late Antique Era* (London: Asghate, 2012) 137

[132] This is expressed in *Hymn 23 on the Nativity* (13): "*All these changes did the Merciful One effect,/Stripping off His glory and putting on a body;/For he had devised a way to reclothe Adam/In that glory which Adam had stripped off*", in S. Brock, *The Syrian Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987), xxiv; Cf., Hunt, *Clothed in the Body*, 137-8.

between hesychasm and Eucharist. Because, in order to "*preserve the mystery undiminished*" we need Him "*not just to seeing Him, but also to unite and nourish with Him*" (*Hom.* 56.11).[133] Sacraments bring us adoption, God's radiance, making us anointed (χρίσματος) of God. The Eucharistic bread is „*like a veil (gr. katapétasma) concealing divinity*" (*Hom.* 56.8) and through communion we will „*shape Him inside of our heart*" and we'll become by "clothing in imperial purple dress" *"gods clothed in God"* (*Ib.*). So, in Eucharistic celebration *theoria / theoptia*, or the spiritual vision is united, therefore, with *theosis* or deification.

By appealing to the Holy Eucharisty, Palamas demonstrates the falsity of Barlaam's monastic living „*from the time he came to us, nobody saw him partaking of the Holy Eucharisty*."[134] The palamit homiletic spirituality is a *hristocentric and liturgical spirituality* where, without makeing a so much use of being-energies distinction, it is shown to us „an integrated hesychasm into the sacramental life of the Church".[135]

Saint Gregory Palamas *distinguishes between a corporeal and a spiritual aspect to our dynamic participation in God. Through the Eucharist the Son dwells within us in a corporeal sense, while the Spirit renews us and transforms us spiritually*. The Logic of St. Gregory's theology is as follows: *Christ comes to dwell in us through two means, we partake of him in two ways*, both spiritually (through the Holy Spirit) and somatically (through the Eucharist). Here is the results of our dual participation in Christ: 'participation' (μέθεξις) in the Spirit through Baptism and, at the same time, in the Spirit and in the flesh of Christ through the Eucharist, becoming 'concorporeal' (σύσσωμοι) with Christ, the incarnate Word. For Palamas is Christ integral (*totus*), Spirit and flesh, who is present and is received in the Eucharist, a clear influence Cyrillian. Ezra Gebremedhin points out that Cyril spoke about the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist in termn of an distinction between '*soma*' and '*pneuma*' and that the faithful participate in and are vivified in two manners: σωματικῶς (the level of a physical participation μέθεξις φυσική) and πνευματικῶς (unity of the faithful in the Eucharist not only a Christological but also a Pneumatological dimension). *The somatic mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist represent a corollary of Cyril's doctrine of the Incarnation*. He shows a special preference for the language of 2 Peter 1: 4 ('*partakers of the divine nature*', θείας φύσεως κοινωνοί), which he frequently ties to the notions of *sanctification and a dual 'participation' (μέθεξις) in the Spirit*

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[133] Gregory Palamas, „Homily Fifty-Six: On the Holy and Dread Mysteries of Christ. Delivered four days before Christmas", in Palamas, *The Homilies*, 2ed ed. Christopher Veniamin (Dalton, PA: Mount Thabor Publishing, 2014), 460-467.

[134] *Triade* III, 1, 5, in Palamas, *Défense*, ed. J. Meyendorff, 566-7.

[135] Joost van Rossum, „L'Eucharistie chez saint Grégoire Palamas: l'homélie sur Les saints et redoutables mystères du Christ," *Contacts* 202 (2003): 180-192

through baptism and in the flesh of Christ through the eucharist.[136] With his understanding of the *trinitarian dimension and his integration of the Eucharist and the moral life into how human beings participate in the divine nature*, Cyril "brings the doctrine of deification to full maturity".[137]

If we "dress" ourselves with the Holy Body and Blood "we will shine (*Shekinah*) like the sun": "*We dress the imperial Porfira or rather we dress the imperial body and blood - a! Wonder of wonders! – we trasnsform ourselves for the divine adoption when the divine radiance/brightness of God will mysteriously come to us, this radiance/brightness, above shine and beyond nature, is making us anointed of God, giving us power and His promise thai at His Second Coming we will shine like the sun*" (*Homily* 56, 13).

Nellas affirms that it is insufficient to study the 14th century only through the prism of saint Palamas' theology, without the study of saint Cabasilas theology in paralel, which binds the conflict for *deification* to the *sacramental life* of the Church, placing it on a biblic foundation, offering the logic cathegory of deification a practical content through the „displacement of terminology from deification to christification",[138] in an orthodox vision of a *theocentric humanism*. The pauline expression „life in Crist" is interpreted by Nicolae Cabasila as a true and real *deification*, which he explains as a *christification* [*christopoiēsē*].

Cabasilas as "ascetic layman"[139] and "humanist hesychast"[140], without speaking nowhere in his writings about Tabor light or about the uncreated energies, he was himself an "independent Palamite", receiving selectively the nepolemics themes from Palamite homilies: "*Nicholas Cabasilas and Palama would have been much closer to each other, if polemical needs would not have pushed the latter to force certain features of his thinking into a direction in which Cabasila does not follow him.*"[141].

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[136] Stephen J. Davis, *Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39.

[137] Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, 191-192.

[138] Panagiōtēs Nellas, „Lytrōsē ē theōsē? To erōtēma tou Anselmou «Giati ho Theos egine anthrōpos» kai ho Nikolaos Kabasilas," *Synaxē* 6 (1983): 17-36. Nicholas Cabasilas dedicated number on the occasion of his canonization, in romanian translation, by Ioan Ică sr. as: Panayotis Nellas, *Hristos, Dreptatea lui Dumnezeu şi îndreptarea noastră – pentru o soteriologie ortodoxă* (Sibiu: Deisis, 2012), 253-290, here 260.

[139] R.-J. Loenertz, „Chronologie de Nicolas Cabasilas," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 21 (1955): 214-215. It is significant that Manuel Kalekas belonged also to a „brotherhood" of laics.

[140] The absence of any ecclesiastical or monastic title shows that Nicholas Cabasilas was neither priest, nor monk, but remained all his life a "layman hesychast"; cf. M.-H.Congourdeau in introductory study to the edition of Nicolas Cabasilas, La vie en Christ, Sources Chrétiennes 355 (Paris: Cerf, 1989), 22-25 and 44-47. See, also: Boris Bobrinskoy, „Nicholas Cabasilas and Hesychast Spirituality," *Sobornost* 5/7 (1968): 483-510.

[141] M.-H. Congourdeau, „Nicolas Cabasilas et le palamisme", in *Gregorio Palama e oltre. Studi e documenti sulle controversie teologiche del XIV secolo bizantino*, ed. Antonio Rigo (Florence: Orientalia Venetiana 16, 2004), 191-210, here 201, n. 44.

In his descriptions of the inner presence of Christ in man, Cabasilas relies on the doctrine of deification. According to Pekka Metso' interpretation, Cabasilas would say that through koinonia (as christological perichoresis - mutual interchange of properties of the two natures) and henosis (as mystical union), Christ is more close to man than man is to himself: „*Cabasilas' understanding of* henosis *can be classified as* christification: *through Eucharistic communion man becomes like Christ, sharing his life and operation*".[142]

According to him, the *communicatio idiomatum* or the christological perichoresis also operates in the Holy Eucharist. The human and divine natures come together and are united in a similar manner as they did in the incarnation of the Logos: „What Christ has assumed from humanity He gives to the *communicant: His body and blood... of deified humanity of the incarnate God*".[143] Therefore, the incarnational realism of the Eucharistic mystery is for Cabasilas his understanding of the proper nature of Eucharistic sacrifice.[144]

To complete circularly the four dimensions of theosis, we have to analyze also the sacramental experience of God's glory as theophany. For Alexander Golitzin the mutual indwelling of Son in His Father, Their presence into the *interior of the believer, is nothing but Glory* (*dóxa,* cf. *John 17:5, 22-24*).[145] Through Baptism, at least in potency, the believer becomes himself „the place" of Glory, being called to become a „Theophany".[146]

CONCLUSION

In the first part of this study we analyzed *kabod* theology and its relationship with the deification (glorification) in the uncreated light as a link between the two Jewish and Christian spirituality of Holy Scripture. I emphasized that, since the first human being was created in Gods image, Adam must have been a reflection of the *Kavod* and the restamping of Gods image on the soul, means restoring it to its original Form and Glory. Thereby, man become "glorified" or "angelic"[147] and clothed in shining white garments. These interpretations

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[142] Pekka Metso, *Divine Presence in the Eucharistic Theology of Nicholas Cabasilas*, (Dissertations in Education, Humanities, and Theology 2, University of Eastern Finland: Joensuu, 2010), 190-191.

[143] Metso, *Divine Presence*, 100.

[144] Myrrha Lot-Borodine, *Un maître de la spiritualité byzantine au XIVe siècle. Nicolas Cabasilas* (Paris: Editions de l'Orante, 1958), 111.

[145] Alexander Golitzin, *Mistagogia, experiența lui Dumnezeu în Ortodoxie. Studii de teologie mistică* (Sibiu: Deisis, 1998), 41-43.

[146] Golitzin, *Mistagogia*, 44-45.

[147] Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish. Literature and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 227-235.

assumes the reformation of the mystical praxis into the sacramental rituals of the early Christian church, presented as the vehicles through which one come into the very presence of God and is *reintegrated into the divine immediately and ontologically.*

Also, this theophanic Kabod was a participatory doxa, as revelation and salvation. Participation entails (and guarantees) both a „*a true relation and a real distinction*"[148] and hepls us put together God's transcendence and otherness with the intimate communion with Triune God. „*It is because God is truly transcendent that he can also be truly immanent, without any confusion*".[149]

Throughout our entire presentations we saw that the kernel of theosis is participation in the divine energeis throught communion with Christ in his Body which is the Church. The approaches are different but complementary. Thus, the spirituality of the Orthodox Chruch is both liturgical and monastic and takes full account of our corporeal nature as part of our identity.

The hermeneutic key is the transfiguration of Christ, but Palamas also affirm that the prophets and patriarchs were not without experience of this light. Theosis is experienced as participation in God as light, in this life by practicing the hesychast method of prayer. In the saints this communion is expressed in the way God's glory is reflected in their faces, in anticipation of the age to come.

For Wesche „union with God is the goal of *theosis* and the content of salvation".[150] *In this deified humanity of Christ's, man is called to participate, and to share in its deification. This is the meaning of the sacramental life and the basis of Christian spirituality*".[151]

As we have said, this mingling of human existence, renewed in baptism, with Christ's deified and deifying body, provides the basis for Palamas' teaching on the mystical vision of the uncreated light. The man regenerated in Christ through baptism receives the power to became a son of god and a co-inheritor with Christ (*Hom.* 16 and 59, 2).Through the Holy Eucharist we become not merely one body with Him, but one spirit: „*He has bound us to Himself and united us, as the bridegroom unites the bride to himself, through the communion of this His blood, becoming one fles with us*" (*Homily* 56, 7). This sacramental union is a real union with His deifying grace or energy. The bread of the Eucharist is „*like a veil*

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[148] Daniel Keating, *Deification and Grace. Introductions to Catholic Doctrine* (Naples, Florida: Sapientia Press, 2007), 97-98.

[149] Keating, *Deification and Grace*, 101-104.

[150] Kenneth Paul Wesche, „Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in *Theosis*," *Theology Today* 56 (1999), 29-43, ad 29.

[151] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 164.

concealing the divinity" (*Homily* 56) „*through participation in His holy body, becoming one body with us and making us the temple of the entire divinity*".[152]

R. Flogaus sees at Palamas the juxtaposition of two heterogeneous fundamentally contradictory soteriologies: one, a mystico-hesychast neoplatonic soteriology, based on contemplative deification, and the other, a Pauline-biblical soteriology, where deification is strictly the reverse of kenosis. Palama would propose a new conception of *theosis* identified but *theoria* (θεωρία) or to uncreated glory of God.[153]

Without recepting the Palamit distinction between salvation and deification, Flogaus can not understand the fact that deification is creational vocation of human. So, the visual experience of the uncreated Glory of God's unembodied Logos is possible also before the Incarnation and outside it.[154]

Regarding the theophanies of the Old Testament, the illumination of Moses' face, the vision of Stephen the first martyr, the light on the road to Damascus, and above all, the light of Christ's transfiguration on Tabor – all these are *various forms of the revelation of God's natural light* to men. God, invisible and nonparticipable in His essence, becomes *visible and participable by virtue of His energy*. The Byzantine theologians and Palamas synthesized these two traditions and linked the vision of God with man's deification.

Yannis Spiteris, also, demonstrated that for Palamas Mary is the incarnation of his theology, „the argument/proof of his teaching about grace" and „*the full realization of his ascetic and theological premises*".[155]

So Gregory Palamas operates with a more subtle nuanced understanding of the concepts of salvation and deification, and he states the continuity of theophanies and the identity of revelation and of her deifying experience in the two Testaments. The same uncreated glory of God is being seen by the patriarchs, prophets, Mary, the apostles, saints in a synergistic process of ascetic-contemplative ascent of man and of energetical descent of God.

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[152] Tr. I.3.38, cf. Palamas, *Défense*, Meyendorff ed., 449.

[153] Reinhard Flogaus, *Theosis bei Palamas und Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1997), 228-271, 234, 282: „Die Kontinuität und Identität der Offenbarung und Vergöttlichung vor und nach der Inkarnation" (The continuity and Identity of revelation and deification before and after the Incarnation)

[154] Ioan I. Ică jr, *Maica Domnului în teologia secolului XX şi în spiritualitatea isihastă a secolului XIV: Grigorie Palama, Nicolae Cabasila, Teofan al Niceei* (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), 195.

[155] Spiteris, *Palamas: la grazia e l'esperienza*, 173-4.

Glorification (δεδοξασμένη) through *Kabod* and Deification (θέωσις) by *uncreated light* a continuum of Theophanies			
δεδοξασμένη glorification	*θέωσις* deification	*γνῶσις and ἕνωσις* mystical union	*νοητὴν σιγήν* uncreated energies
Kabod	*Doxa* Thaboric light (τό φώς)	enhypostatic illumination	*χάρις (charis)* „ful of grace"
shem	Name of Christ "Emmanuel – God with us" *psychosomatic method of prayer*	*Kardia* (υιοθεσία) adoption	Contemplation θεωρία Hesychastic prayer
shekinah	Uncreated light (τό φώς) *„His face was shining like the sun, and his clothing became white as light"* Matt. 17:2	ὄρασης (vision) Moses, Stephen, and Arsenius visibly *transformed by divine light*	somatic experience of glory holy relics
merkabah hekhalot	Eucharist *veil (gr. katapétasma) concealing the divinity*	Clothed in Christ sacramentaly *The glory robe „gods clothed in Me"* (*Hom.* 56.11)	co-corporeal (σύσσωμοι), co-participating (συμμέτοχοι) and co-formed (συμμορφοι) with Christ
Theophanies (revelation)	Theology (Christology)	Anthropology (Christification)	Hesychastic Mariology (pnevmatology)
Ex. 33:11, 20-23	Matt. 17:2 Heb. 10:20	2 Cor. 3:18	Lk. 1:28

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DIRECT COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE 21ST CENTURY. AN ATTEMPT TO RECONCILIATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM

ELENA ONEȚIU[*]

ABSTRACT. The person is ontologically a communicational person, a relational being. Through communication we do not communicate just a message formed of words, but most of the times, beyond words we share a part of who we are and we receive a part of what the other is. Communication has as a final target to achieve communion, it is meant to lead us to the other's inner self, to advance from *me* and *you* to the opening of *us*. Social networks, as the most used means of communication today, may enhance the entire process, but they may also limit it. In order to explore the facilities and excesses that pertains the use of social networks, we have used a questionnaire specifically designed for this aim, and the results of this research are presented in the last part of the present study.

Keywords: communication, communion, relationship, social networks, unicity

Introduction

In the theological field, especially in the Romanian environment, there are very few studies that analyze the changes that occurred after the appearance of the socializing networks[1]. Because of this small amount of studies regarding this theme, in the present study I wish to develop a research with respect to the meaning of social network communication, taking into account both the facilities and the limits of this type of communication, in the same time comparing communication through social networks and direct communication, showing how one can complete or limit the other.

In the international space there are many well documented studies, which present the impact that digital communication has on the real communication.

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[1] Amongst the important publications of theologians or researchers that present an interest for the theological field, we mention: Radu Preda, „Comunicare *versus* comuniune. Marginalii social-teologice despre Internet," *Tabor*, no. 10 (2012): 55-70; as well as Constantin Cucoș, „Educație și integrare: Tinerii, față în față cu noile tehnologii," accessed 15.06.2016,
http://ziarullumina.ro/educatie-si-integrare-tinerii-fata-in-fata-cu-noile-tehnologii-63463.html.

Rather few of these studies present both the advantages and the limits of the socializing networks[2], most of them emphasizing only the negative effects that may occur as a consequence of the excessive use of these networks. Most of them state that the use of the Internet for education and communication lead to a significant decrease of the direct interactions in the lives of the young and this decrease of interactions may have serious effects in the development of the social interaction habits[3]. As a result, both because of a small number of national studies (especially in the theological field) regarding the phenomena that accompany communication through social networks and because of the analysis of a large number of studies that present only the negative part of this means of communication, I wish to analyze in this study the changes that occurred after the appearance of the social networks and to present it from a theological point of view.

The current study is motivated by the frecquency with which social networks are used today, which confers them an important part in our lives, especially in the case of youth[4]. Therefore, the positive and negative aspects will be analysed in order to understand more of this current reality that tends to have an increasing importance in our human experience.

In order to relate our discourse from a theological perspective to the realities of today's society, we propose, in the last part of the present study, an empirical research component in which I aimed to understand the perspective of the social network users in terms of the benefits and potential excesses that they themselves foresee/feel in using these communication tools. Also, this component does not constitute the entire base of this study, but represents a complementary element.

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[2] See Thomas Wells Brignall III and Thomas Van Valey „The impact of internet communications on social interaction," *Sociological Spectrum* 25, no. 3 (2005): 335-348.

[3] To this respect I only mention a few of the relevant studies: Brignall and Van Valey, „The impact of Internet communications," 335-348; Norman H. Nie and D. Sunshine Hillygus, „The impact of Internet use on sociability: Time-diary findings," *It & Society* 1, no. 1 (2002):1-20; Aida Abdulahi, Behrang Samadi and Behrooz Gharleghi, „A Study on the Negative Effects of Social Networking Sites Such as Facebook among Asia Pacific University Scholars in Malaysia," *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 5, no. 10 (2014): 133-145; Mohamed El Khouli, „The most important negative aspects of using social networking affecting the family stability in Abu Dhabi – A pilot study," *International Journal of Engineering and Technology* 5, no. 1 (2013): 85-90.

[4] A study conducted in 2014 shows the following frequency of utilization of social networks in users of the on-line environment aged above 18 years: Facebook (70% daily, 17% weekly, 12% rarely), Instagram (49% daily, 24% weekly, 26% rarely), Twitter (36% daily, 24% weekly, 40% rarely), see M. Duggan, N. B. Ellison, C. Lampe, A. Lenhart, M. Madden, „Frequency of Social Media Use," PewResearchCenter – Internet, Science&Tech," accessed 15.06.2016, http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/frequency-of-social-media-use-2/.

The Person – communicational being

The last innovations in the field of technology offered new means that can enhance the act of interpersonal communication. The communicational field was revolutionized by the appearance of Internet and implicitly of the computer because with their appearance communication received a new instrument that can facilitate it. The most outspread innovation in the field of technology and communication is the creation of the social networks that generated new forms of human interaction. But the following questions occur: How can we use the facilities that they offer without falling into the trap of replacing the real presence with the digital one? Is direct communication influenced by the digital one? To what extent is the digital world able to present the person in its unicity? To offer some answers to these questions we think that a few specifications are necessary with respect to the communicational and relational character of the person.

The human person is ontologically communicational and has imprinted in its nature the relational character. The main semantic content of the person is given by the reference to the others and by the dynamic achievement of a relationship. Through the etymology of the word *person* its relational character par excellence is expressed. The preposition πρός (towards) together with the noun ὤψ (which means look, eye, face and image) form the compound concept πρός–ὤπον: I'm looking towards something or someone, I am face to face with someone or something[5].

The theme of the relational being became more and more explored comprising various fields of research. A current that was preoccupied with this theme was personalism, which had Emmanuel Mounier as representative; I will pause on his thinking. He mentions that "the person is by nature communicable"[6] and the first experience of a man consist of "experiencing the second person. The *you* and in it the *us*, precedes the *me* or at least it accompanies it"[7]. Hence, the *me* penetrates the other's interiority, *me* and *you* surpassing in *us*, and through this unity each person grows, through the other it has the possibility of a more complete knowledge, of reaching another stage of development. E. Mounier places love at the basis of the fulfillment of a human being, stating that "You may say that I exist only to the extent where I exist for the other and, in an extreme sense, to be means to love"[8].

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[5] Christos Yannaras, *Persoană și eros,* trans. Zenaida Luca and Mihai Șora (București: Anastasia, 2000): 21.

[6] Emmanuel Mounier, „Introducere familiară la universul personal," in *Filosofia contemporană. Orientări și tendințe* I, trans. Nicolae Frigioiu (București, Universitatea București, Catedra de filosofie, 1955): 301.

[7] Ibid., 301.

[8] Ibid., 302.

Existential philosophy also had representatives that were preoccupied with the relational character of the person, amongst whom Martin Buber became known for his ideas that he developed to this respect. He says that the self exists always in relation, and it never exists only in itself, the self increases from the richness of you, which transmits in its turn from its richness: "I am complete through You; becoming Me I say You […]. All real life is meeting"[9].

Taking into account these psychological and philosophical perspectives, we may state that the relationship contributes to the completion of the person, to reaching the potential of each of us. The dynamics of the continuous receiving and giving leads us to the infinite You, from Whom and in Whom germinate, grow and perfect all the relationships, as M. Buber also states: "The prolonged lines of the relationship with the other are crossed by the eternal You"[10]. This idea is continued by a contemporary author, who states that in communication, God reveals Himself as Person open to the communion. Therewith He lightens the meeting taking it to the real destination, giving it a meaning[11].

After having analyzed a few statements from the field of philosophy and psychology, I will make a brief presentation of the theological view regarding the communicational character of the person. Although each person is unique in its own way, it does not have fully and individually the potentiality of the self-completion, because it is not sufficient to itself[12]. The dialogical dimension, the conversational dimension of the person is the most profound truth that it has. The most obvious consequence of this fact is that man becomes self-conscious only in the presence of the other. This generates the necessity of the dialogue, of conversation and of a concrete meeting between people. Man creates real relationships with the others when he is "in front of a you and amongst an us"[13].

The social nature of man involves his communicational character. By his nature, man cannot avoid communication, he is structurally a communicational being. Man, created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), received the vocation of communication through the act of creation, and his dialogical fundament is in the Word that God spoke at his creation:

> "Man becomes man to the extent to which he is literally called to life by the Word that God Himself addresses. So, in a way, man was created within God's heart because from the very beginning God Himself was *Logos*, Word that is dialogue, conversation. Man is a being called to existence as God's interlocutor"[14].

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[9] Martin Buber, *Eu și tu,* trans. Ştefan Augustin Doinaş (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 1992), 37.

[10] Ibid., 37.

[11] Vasile Cristescu, *Persoană și comuniune în creștinism și filosofie* (Iaşi: Tehnopress, 2008): 35-36.

[12] Ştefan Iloaie, *Responsabilitatea morală personală și comunitară,*(Cluj-Napoca: Renaşterea, 2009): 229.

[13] Ibid., 229.

[14] Marko Ivan Rupnik, *Cuvinte despre om. Persoana – ființă a Paștelui*, trans. Maria-Cornelia Oros, (Sibiu: Deisis, 1997): 70-71.

As a dialogic reality, as a reality created by Someone who addressed the word, man is eventually "a being of the answer". Man's life may be understood as the answer given to the one who addresses the word constantly, continuously[15]. The importance of the dialogic character is given by the fact that the communicational act is not just a mere transfer of information, it does not imply only the transmission of words, but it rather involves unity, mutual participation to the inner reality of the other, communion, entering into the other's interiority, forming a complete unity between the persons, because beyond the emission or reception of words, communication is sharing something from the profound interiority of each of us, something from everyone's unicity, something that only that particular person is.

Man is a unique and non-recurring person, aware of its unique value and of its place in the world, which is represented concretely through communion between persons, with whom my person is in a permanent relationship of reciprocity: "But this relationship is not just a simple communication, a simple exchange of information, but it is a meeting of spiritual attitudes, of dispositions, a need of mine for the other, a permanent tendency of searching my person and concomitantly my need *to be with the other*"[16].

The love directed towards other persons is the one that moves a person towards the other, it is the mystery of the persons and of the divine presence within them. Through the relationship between persons we have an infinite possibility to discover another part of the revelation of God Who speaks differently in each of us and who is lived by the other in a different way and with a different intensity. In this way, the relationships with our fellows transform into the discovery of the beauty and love of God for the world[17].

Beyond the exterior communication the intimate horizon of interior correspondence teethes, of an internal, spiritual reciprocity between persons, which is communion. This correspondence intra- or inter- spiritual is generated by the necessity of meeting between two persons, between a *me* and a *you*, a meeting in which the two persons look for each other, meet, harmonize with or complete each other[18].

The reflections regarding the communicational nature of man will stand at the basis of the approaching of the subthemes that I will present hereinafter. If the person is naturally communicational, if the act of communication is not at all reduced to the transmission of words and if there is a non-recurrent singularity characteristic to each person I intend to answer the following questions: Can we emphasize our characteristic unicity which individualizes us in the on-line space?

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[15] Ibid., 70-71.
[16] Constantin Enăchescu, „Persoana umană ca mister," *Ortodoxia* 1-2 (1992): 192.
[17] Iloaie, *Responsabilitatea morală personală*, 264.
[18] Ibid., 264.

How can we seize what is hidden beyond words? How does the word in the on-line environment relate to truth? How much do the social networks contribute to achieving a more efficient communication?

Advantages and limits of the communication through social networks

Facilities

Before answering the questions presented above, I think it is necessary to see for the beginning what are the advantages that the social networks present. I consider adequate to mention this, all the more so as, in the Romanian environment, lately, when this subject is discussed, only the negative aspects that may occur after using these networks are presented, and the advantages that they offer are unremarked. Lately, we have heard so often about the negative effects of these networks that we almost forgot they have so many advantages. I don't wish to deny the fact that when used excessively, they may present a negative part as well, but I consider that the facilities they offer should be emphasized, and instead of the negative aspects, I believe it would be more favorable to try to benefit as much as we can from the opportunities that they offer.

Once the social networks appeared, the concepts of "space" and "time" received another dimension, and the usual frontiers of communication have been eliminated. After the development of these networks, we benefit from many advantages, amongst which we mention the most important: creating bonds between different points of the world, without necessitating moving in the physical space; rapidity of communication; the possibility of maintaining relationships when we are far away from someone who is close to us; making new acquaintances, and implicitly developing new friendships; affiliation to groups that have the same emotional-affective characteristics; the possibility to enrich our vision on our self, on the community and on the world[19]. Last but not least, the social networks can be very handy to the persons who have difficulties in communication (social phobia, excessive shyness, emotions, introversion etc.), to whom the on-line environment offers the comfort favorable to communication, because these persons can express easier if they are not in front of the other.

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[19] Gwenn Schurgin O'Keeffe, Kathleen Clarke-Pearson and Council on Communications and Media, „The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families," *Pediatrics* 127, no. 4 (2011): 801, accesed 15.06.2016. Additionally, social networks can function efficiently as a support for some individuals, especially in the case of some very united on-line communities, see J. Marti, M. Bolibar, C. Lozares, „Network Cohesion and social support," in *Social Networks* 48 (2016): 192-201.

Nevertheless, the social networks offer us the possibility to be informed about the new discoveries/researches of culture, because we have the possibility to join the groups which share the latest information on a certain theme. Hence, we have extended access to actual researches from various cultures, and this facilitates the mutual understanding of cultures, each of us being able to share the most valuable elements from our own culture. Last but not least, the field of education had a lot to win from the appearance of Internet, and implicitly of the social networks because each institution got the possibility to present the educational principles that it uses, and the teachers/students have the possibility to develop relationships with persons from other institutions, thus being able to achieve new perspectives on their own development and on that of the institution. Students may benefit of methods of self-education, there are forums on-line that support continuing the study and discussions after the school program, in the on-line environment[20].

Of course that the communication from other analogue means (letter, telegraph, telephone, radio) has constituted an important stage in conquering the spatio-temporal limits, but we argue that the on-line environment in general and the social networks in particular generates a more efficient communication that couldn't have been conceived before.

We presented the benefits of a social network, but we also have to take into account the risks to which an excessive use may expose us we cannot say that technology in itself is bad, as long as it stays a useful way that facilitates communication, when the off-line variant is not available. A thing that we must be careful with is not to give up social interaction for the sake of commodity, so that we become subjected to the social networks, spending more time behind the screens than in the real presence of a person.

Limits

Although the social networks have preponderantly a beneficial effect, allowing communication between different parts of the world in time units expressed in seconds, however these means of communication may generate risks which are less visible, related to the positive characteristics that accompany and define them in the first instance. Lately there are more and more studies

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[20] Philippa Collin, *et. al.*, „The Benefits of Social Networking Services A literature review," *Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing* (2011): 13-14, accesed 15.06.2016, https://www.fya.org.au/app/theme/default/design/assets/publications/The-Benefits-of-Social-Networking-Services.pdf.

which prove that the excessive use of the social networks affects the stability of the direct relationships[21]. In this study I will present the main limits of the digital communication, limits that are given especially by the nonverbal and paraverbal language.

The digital world may constitute a real impediment for communication and intimacy between people, despite all the benefits it offers. The main limit of digital communication is the absence of the nonverbal and paraverbal language, which form 93% (55% is formed by the nonverbal language and 38% by the paraverbal language) in transmitting the message and only 7% is conveyed by the words. Practically, the absence of the body language leads to a loss of 93% of the transmitted message[22], favoring the increase of meeting with deceit. Within digital communication we cannot verify if the other is sincere with you, you cannot be sure that the one you talk with is the way he says he is.

Because of the lack of nonverbal and paraverbal language, within communication through social networks it is very hard to distinguish between sincerity and lie, because we don't have the possibility to analyze the body language or the tone of someone's voice. In the transitional forms of communication, the body language, the smile, the eye contact, the distance, tone of voice and other behaviors offer the emitter and the receptor information that they can use in order to maintain, change and control the dialogue. Digital communication, because of the lack of nonverbal language, may not always reach its goal because we don't have the possibility to realize if the discussion was characterized by sincerity and if it fulfilled the needs of the interlocutors[23].

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[21] See to this respect: Emily Drago, „The effect of technology on face-to-face communication," *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* 6, no. 1 (2015): 13-19, accesed 16.06.2016 – the effects of the digital communication are reflected on the direct communication, which means that, practically, today the two means of communication cannot be entirely separated; Al-Sharqi, L., K. Hashim, and I. Kutbi, „Perceptions of social media impact on students social behavior: A comparison between Arts and Science students," *International Journal of Education and Social Science* 2, no. 4 (2015): 122-131, accesed 16.06.2016 – this study offers useful elements in comparing the effects of social networks on youth depending on the academic field (art, science, in our case – theology, etc) and to propose potential remedial solutions; Biswajit Das and Jyoti Shankar Sahoo, „Social networking sites – A critical analysis of its impact on personal and social life," *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 2, no. 14 (2011): 222-228, accesed 16.06.2016 – the study is important in the present when more attention is given to the correlation of an individual's parts of life (professional, personal, social) as forming a coherent whole; this means that the effects (either positive or negative) of social networks do not limit to social life, but trancend this borders, and affect all of the three parts previously mentioned, in other words, the entire individual.

[22] Albert Mehrabian, Ferris R. Susan, „Inference of Attitudes from Nonverbal Communication in Two Channels," *Journal of Consulting Psychology* 31, no. 3(1967): 249.

[23] Sara Kiesler, Jane Siegel and Timothy W. McGuire, „Social Psyhological Aspects of Computer-Mediated Communication," *American Psychological Association* 39, no. 10 (1984): 1125.

In the case of digital communication we may speak of expressing ideas, transmitting precepts, but the nuances and the interpretations of situations are fragmented. Although we have the advantage to choose the most expressive words, to intensify the impact of the message, however nuancing, potentiating or diminishing the message is given by the nonverbal and paraverbal message. Hence, although communication is not always possible in all its forms, still to have a maximum efficiency and to benefit of the complexity of the message it is necessary to have all its elements (words, gestures, mimics, tonality etc.).

The on-line communication must not replace real communication because the true feelings may be observed/transmitted/received only in someone's proximity. Each feeling has a rhythm and a time of self-development, which doesn't always coincide with the rhythm in which we press the buttons. That is why, often, when we try to be as rapid and as concise as we can, we end up expressing less of our feelings. The real feelings can be much more easily remarked in a direct communication, when we often don't need to express how we feel because the other person can observe and understand this.

In the presence of a person you may divine its wishes, you may deduce a part of the message that it didn't succeed in expressing very clearly, you may receive the complete message if it is accompanied by all the elements that are characteristic to a communication. In the face to face communication we may easily scent where our interlocutor transmits a truth or not because we can analyze his body language or we may observe the tone, the rhythm of the voice, the pauses in speaking. The true emotions, the longing of the meeting, the fulfilled expectation, the joy of the meeting, all these cannot be experienced for real in the digital life. The human relationships lose their credibility and complexity, the emotional experiences are reduced and minimalized when we cannot see the expression the emotion that the other one has when reading our message.

We know that each person is, on the one hand, characterized by a manifestation that is characteristic to may persons and on the other hand it is unique and non-recurrent, each person has something unique that belongs only to that person in particular. If we take these into account, we cannot avoid the question: Can the unicity of a person be emphasized in the digital world? I think that in the digital communication it is very hard to express the singularity of the person because it may be noticed especially when you are in the presence of that person. I don't wish to deny the fact that in a conversation in the on-line environment you can still discover a small part of your unicity, but this is only achieved at a low level, especially when we refer to written communication. Indeed, when we express ourselves in writing, we express a part of who we are, but no matter how hard we try to describe what we feel, what we experience, it is rather difficult for the other to discover depth of his own person. In the face to face communication, unicity can be much more easily

discovered because on the one hand the verbal language is completed by the nonverbal and the paraverbal language and on the other hand in the presence of a person we may receive of the inner state of the other.

In the communication through social networks you cannot verify how sincere the other one is with you, you can't be sure that the one you talk with is the way he pretends to be. And this occurs because there is this possibility to create and control your own identity, the "self" ending up being negotiated depending on the choices made out of a multitude of options.

Creating a false identity – an acute reality today – comes with changes within the person, because when you try to present an image that, in fact, does not represent the real one, dissatisfactions and disappointments occur. There will be a permanent preoccupation to hide the real identity, to correspond to an ideal reality that was presented on the page of a social network. Also, there will be an inadequacy between the image that presents only the good aspects and the real image of the self, leading to the burst of inner conflicts and to a decrease of the self-esteem[24].

Building a fake identity, and also replacing the real image of our own person with an ideal image also generates changes of the spiritual disposition. The ideal image after having entered the soul of man, it eats on him, it disorganizes him, it crushes his liveliness, his dynamism, he doesn't have disposition and appetite for struggle and work, precisely because the ideal image takes the man outside reality and produces a split inside him[25]. In this situation, before deciding to create a different identity we should think of the consequences that this decision may have.

Social networks – facilities and limits perceived by users (empirical research)

The previous theories are based both on the existent literature on this subject, as well as on a study that I developed in order to obtain better results for the environment I belong to. I have elaborated a research instrument represented by a questionnaire formed of 24 items in which I tried to investigate several dimensions of the use of the social networks, pausing both in the facilities that

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[24] Nicole Ellison, „Future Identities: Changing identities in the UK–the next 10 years," *DR3: Social Media and Identity* (2013): 7. The level of self-esteem can lower from the on-line „evaluations". Especially among adolescents, a strong influence was observed of the „like"/ „dislike" „evaluations" on the way in which youngsters relate to one another, for details see K. Fujimoto, T. Snidjers, T. W. Valente, „Popularity breeds contempt: The evolution of reputational dislike relations and friendships in high school," in *Social Networks* 48 (2017): 100-109.

[25] Simeon Kraioupoulos, *Te cunoști pe tine însuți? Viața duhovnicească și problemele psihologice*, trans. Cristian Spătărelu (București: Editura Bizantină, 2008): 95.

they offer and on the effects of their excessive usage. I collected the data through the direct application of the questionnaire, in a printed form. 110 persons participated to the study, students of two faculties from Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca: from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology (65 participants) and from the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences (45 participants).

Out of the results I obtained, I present here only what corresponds to the theoretical part developed within this paper. Of the facilities offered by the social networks, the one that was most appreciated as having often (21,70%) and very often relevance (17,92%) for the participants was that of communicating only when, with whom and what you want, and second most appreciated facility was that of expressing easier when you don't have to face someone (often 19,81% and very often 14,15%). Also, integration in groups that have similar preferences as yours, developing connections/relationships without taking into account the physical space, the possibility to know other people or to start new friendships were appreciated by a large number of participants as having frequent and very frequent relevance. I have already mentioned that the social networks offer us the possibility to communicate using a different identity, but the results of the study show that for most of the participants, the possibility to communicate using a different identity is never relevant. This is also supported by the fact that most of the participants declared that they have a single profile on the social network that they use most often and by the fact that they declared they are sincere in communicating through these networks.
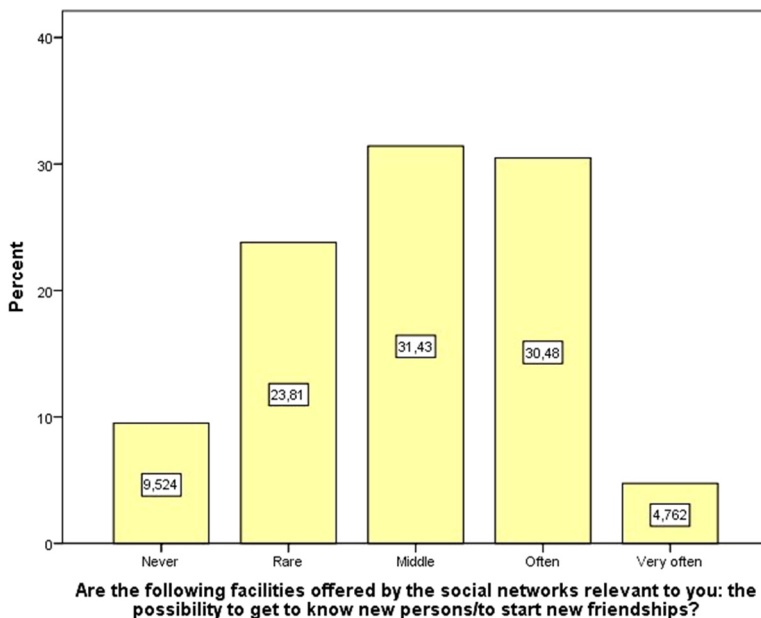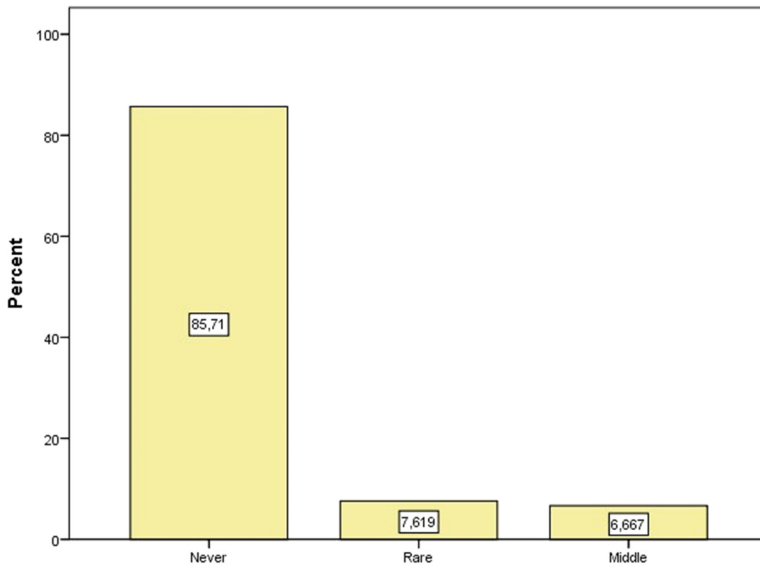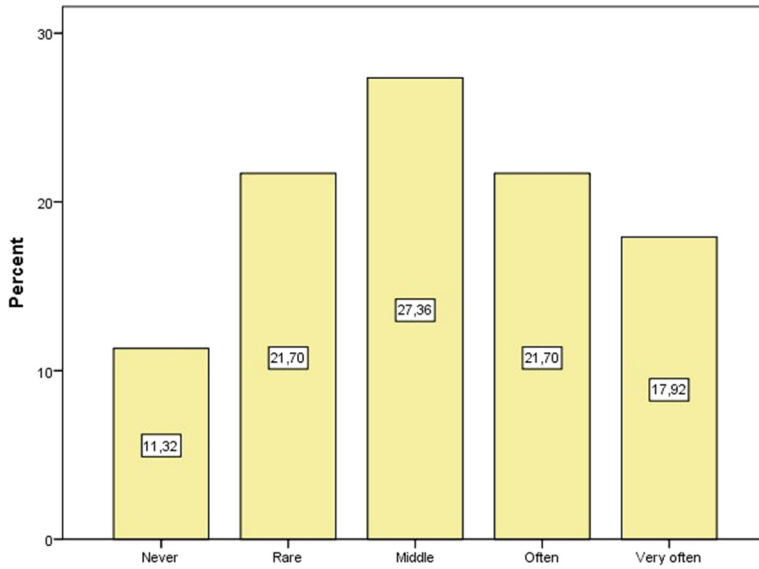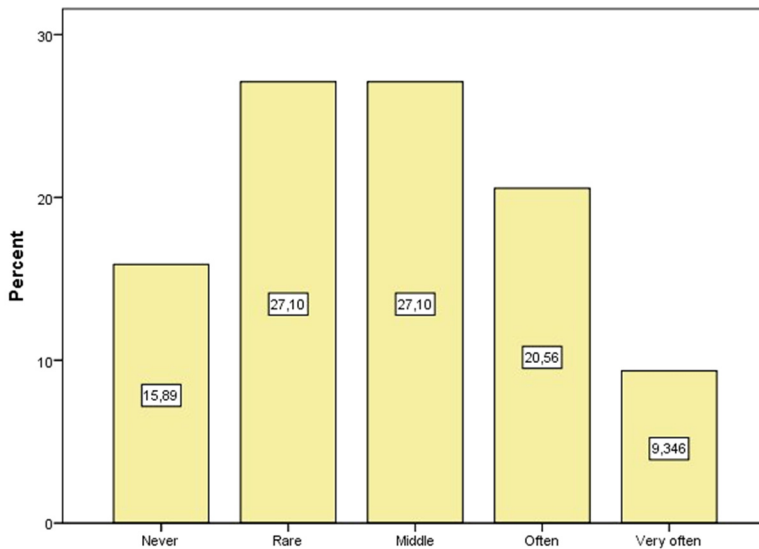

Are the following facilities offered by the social networks relevant to you: the possibility to get to know new persons/to start new friendships?

Are the following facilities offered by the social networks relevant to you: the possibility to communicate under a different identity?
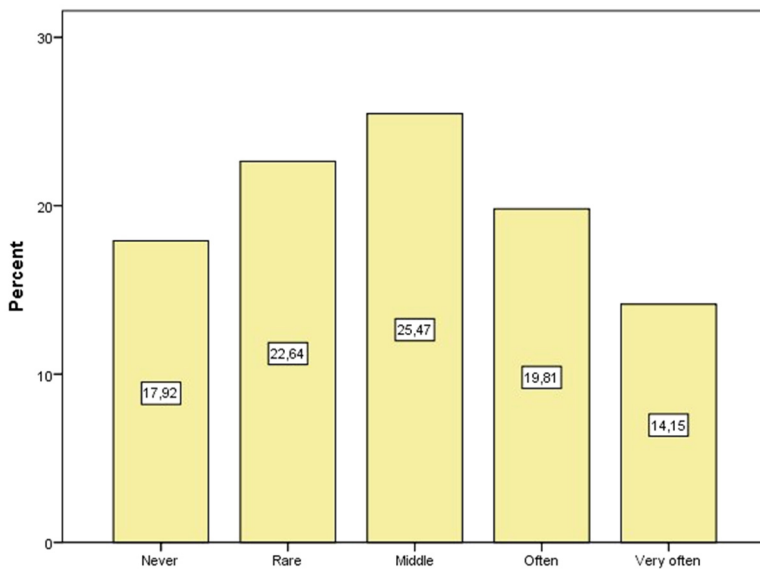
Are the following facilities offered by the social networks relevant to you: expressing easier when you don't have to face someone?

154

Are the following facilities offered by the social networks relevant to you: the possibility to communicate only when, with whom and what you want?


Are the following facilities offered by the social networks relevant to you: developing connections/relationships without taking into account the physical space?

155

Negative effects

Of the negative effects that the participants to the study notice, most of the participants answered for all the items that they never notice the negative effects mentioned by the questionnaire. However, a rather large number of participants said that there have been a few effects which they felt often or very often, amongst which we enumerate: the lack or reduced presence of the nonverbal and paraverbal elements, as well as the reduced time dedicated to the communication with close persons from real life. Although most of the participants said that they don't feel any negative effects of the use of the social networks, there is also the possibility that these persons haven't acknowledged yet these effects. But we may also see the positive parte in this, which shows that 110 persons use the Internet in a rational manner and thus they only benefit from its advantages.
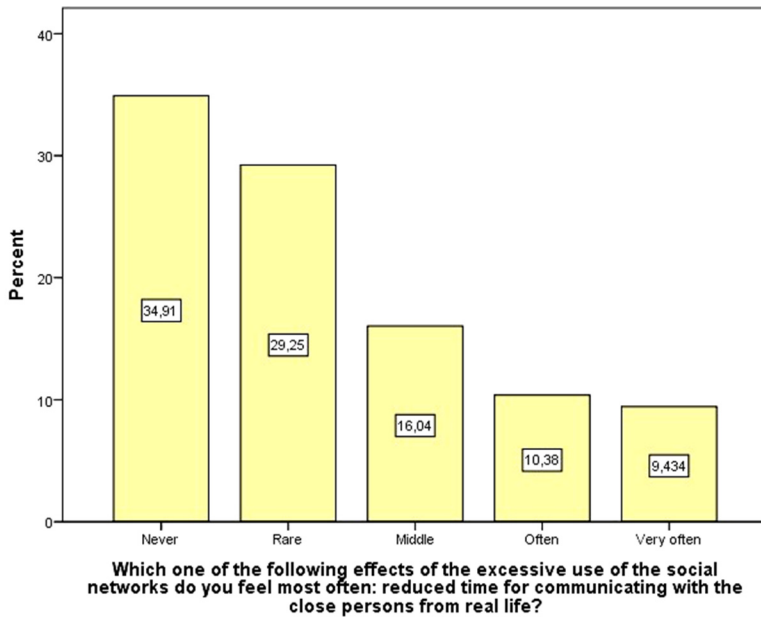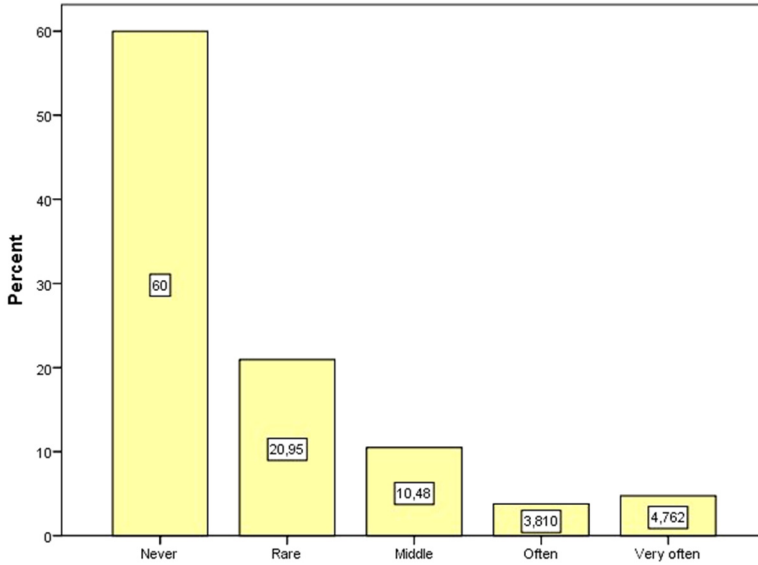
Which one of the following effects of the excessive use of the social networks do you feel most often: reduced time for communicating with the close persons from real life?
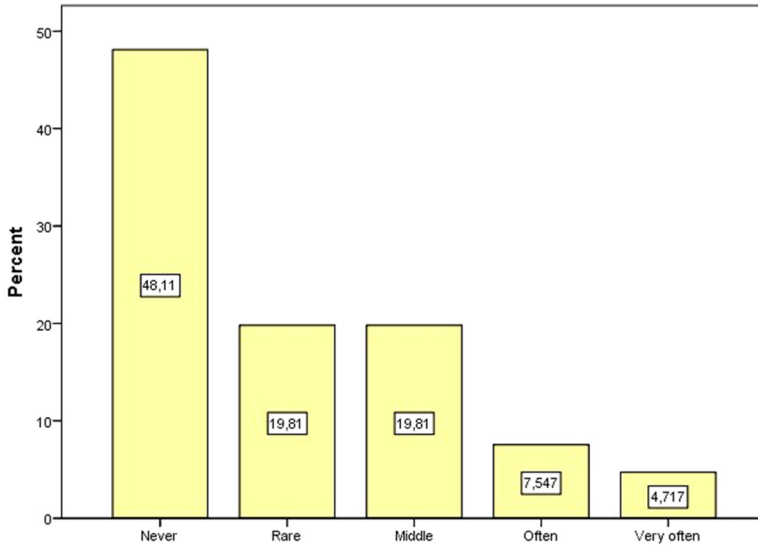
Which one of the following effects of the excessive use of the social networks do you feel most often: decline of the family relationship?
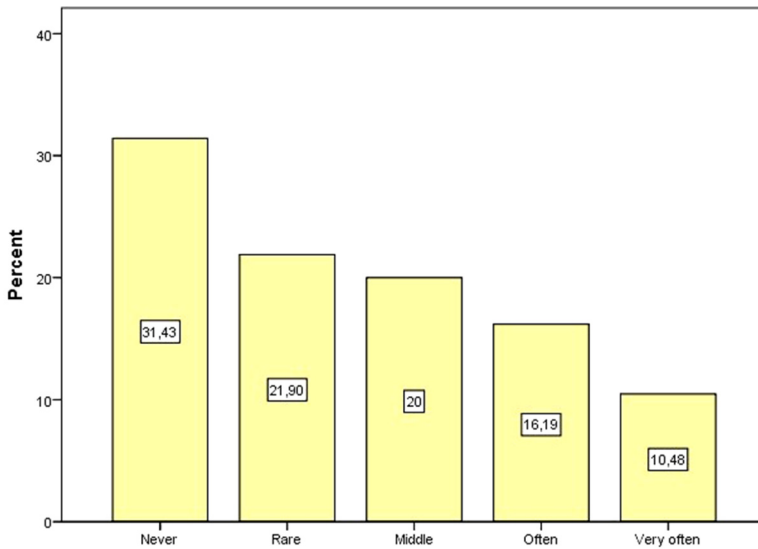
Which one of the following effects of the excessive use of the social networks do you feel most often: lack/reduced presence of the elements characteristic to the nonverbal and paraverbal communication?

Which one of the following effects of the excessive use of the social networks do you feel most often: isolation from the others (the group of close friends from real life)?
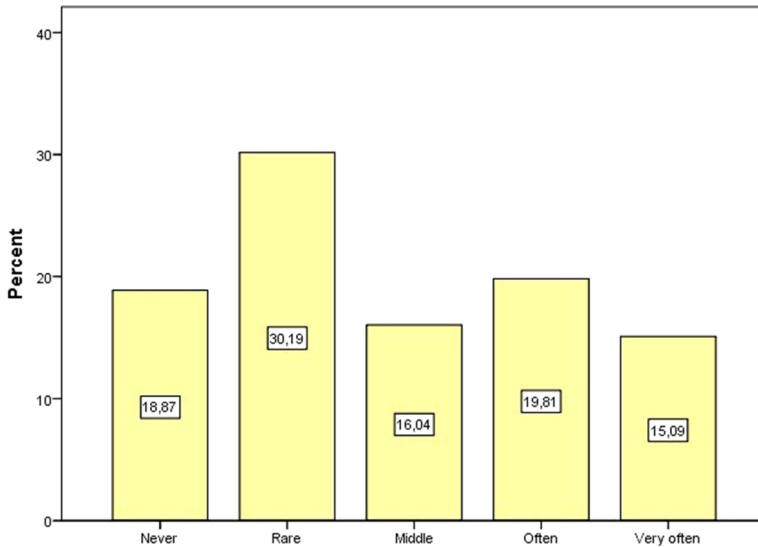
Which one of the following effects of the excessive use of the social networks do you feel most often: it facilitates professing some opinions, but it fragments the nuances and interpretations of situations?

Personal meeting and creator word

After presenting the advantages and the limits of the social networks, I will present why the real presence of the persons is so important for a fuller communicational process. I emphasized previously that within a direct communication we transmit more than a simple verbal message, each person reveals something of its own unicity, something characteristic for each of us. Most of this message is lost in the communication through social networks that is why I consider necessary to bring new arguments to support this idea, which I will present below.

Firstly, I will use the example of the relationship between the master and the disciple from Ancient Greece, and then the example of the relationship between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles. We know that in Ancient Greece each master had a group of disciples that spent a lot of time with the master in order to learn from him "the school of life". Hence, these percepts were transmitted directly, personally. And moving forward we have the example of our Lord, Who formed a group of disciples that stood around Him during His active years. Thus His teaching was transmitted in a vivid, direct, personal manner. The Saint Apostles had the occasion to learn not only from Christ's preaching but also from His manner of living. The Apostles in their turn had disciples to whom they transmitted directly the teaching they received. We see that the Eastern Christianity puts a great emphasis on the personal meeting with a spiritual mentor. Because "whoever climbs a mountain for the first time must take the marked path: he must have as guide and companion a person who has already climbed that mountain and knows the way"[26].

Transposing these elements to our theme, we will say that the digital world offers a lot of opportunities, but in a communicational process it is ideal to have also a face to face meeting, so that the person communicates wholly, not just verbally, but from what it is. And giving from what it is, it completes its own person in a mutual constructive conditioning, in which "each person has to gain the joy of the participation to the other one's completion"[27]. The completion of the existence may be achieved only by personal encounter, only by "the perpetual discovery of the other existences"[28], and the discovery of something from the deep existence of the other can be done when you are close to him.

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[26] Irenee Hausherr, *Paternitatea și îndrumarea duhovnicească în Răsăritul creștin*, trans. Mihai Vladimirescu (Sibiu: Deisis, 1999): 5.

[27] Iloaie, *Responsabilitatea morală personală*, 164.

[28] Ibid., 165.

The true communion is a concrete reality: to have the other person close to you, to hear it speak, to have someone to listen to you. To this respect, the term "word" in Romanian has a very meaningful sense. It comes from the Latin *conventum* which means to be in communion, to be together with someone. It is not just a simple phoneme, it is an action, an act, it is a mutual confession, as well as a promise and a guarantee that those who are dialoguing listen to each other, and as a consequence the word must be used as a sincere confession of one to the other[29].

The word can be a creative or destructive energy that is why we must be very careful to the manner in which we transmit a message. The word may be received differently by people, but when we have a direct dialogue we may observe the effect of a word on the person in front of us. In digital communication due to the absence of the nonverbal and paraverbal message, this effect can no longer be observed, and that is why we need to be more careful with the words we transmit. Every word contains a part of the identity of the one who speaks it and it is full of content, that is why a word is not expressed pointless, it is not expressed in vain. By speaking a word we offer it substantiality, viability, existence, hence speaking a word is not a pale articulation in comparison with reality, it is not an empty expression, but receives unique value which is transferred from the person who speaks it, because it is thought, it is created by it, it belongs to it and it brings the features of its own thinking. That is why we have to use the word in order to convey the truth as much as possible. In this context, the word transforms into an efficient means of communication, representing the mediating essence of information[30].

The responsibility for word is big because it remains bonded through unseen wires to the one who spoke it, to whom it belongs and on whom it depends. The word comes from a person and is directed to another person, intermediating the transmission of the self-knowledge from one to another. Each word has the role to illustrate the reality lived by man and thus it represents the one who speaks it, having value precisely because of the structural identity between the person and what it conveys[31]. Thus, a word which does not correspond to the particularity of the thinking of the one who speaks it loses its value, causing blockages in the process of communication. Saint Apostle Paul in the *Epistle to Ephesians* urges us: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (*Ephesians* 4:29).

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[29] Dumitru Stăniloae, „Persoana și individul – două entități diferite," *Studii Teologice* 5-6 (1993):47.

[30] Ibid., 54-55

[31] Umberto Eco, *Limitele interpretării* (Constanța: Pontica, 1996), 78.

Words can be carriers of grace. By receiving the words that come from the heart, people may change miraculously, because they feel they are treated in a personal manner. We can make the person beside us feel that we are close to him when we are wholly present. That is why when we listen to him, we must listen with all our being. Our eyes must be looking only at that person. Our ears must be listening only to him. Let us rein in the tendencies of our thoughts to move away from the situation we are in, to yesterday, to tomorrow, to something we have forgotten about, to another place we are about to go. Or presence may the thus a healing presence because it is personal[32].

When we succeed to create a mutual dialogue with the ones around us we become richer, receiving the miracle of the presence of the other one, who is the bearer of a unique vocation. An encounter becomes authentic when the conversation is open and sincere and this unicity is necessary in order to be able to discover ourselves through others and for the others to be able to discover themselves through us.

Man communicates through words not only the thought, but also the joys and the pains and even the communication of thoughts is a joy and sometimes a pain that he eases this way. The joy communicated through word increases because it adds to it the joy of the one to whom it is communicated. The pain communicated through word decreases, because its burden is taken by the other: "To have a man beside you means to have a power that decreases the power of your own pain"[33].

We must say that sometimes only the presence of someone can change the disposition of a man, the words are not always necessary to transmit something. It is rather known the example from Paterikon in which we are told that: "Three fathers used to visit holy Anthony every year. And two of them asked him for their thoughts and for salvation and the third always listened and never asked anything. And after a long time avva Anthony asked him: you've come here for such a long time and you never asked me anything! And the brother answered and said: for me it's enough only to see you, father!" Sometimes a simple look is enough, if our sight is capable to go beyond form, to go to the essence of all things.

How many pages do we need to describe the silent dialogue that took place between our Lord Jesus Christ and what each of them felt when "The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Than Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him […]. And he went outside and wept bitterly" (*Luke* 22:61-62). Here the communicational process for that matter is not strictly

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[32] Anthony Coniaris, *Taina persoanei: calea către Dumnezeu,* ediția a doua, trans. Diana Potlog (București: Sofia, 2012), 153.

[33] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iubirea creştină* (Galați: Porto-Franco, 1993), 77.

involved, consisting as we may see only of a look, but it involves the three and a half years that they spent together with all the joys, sorrows, concerns and fulfillments. And, especially, with the immense love that connects our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Disciples[34].

In communion the development of persons takes place, a spiritual strengthening of each of them, and this growth happens only after the love between the persons is strengthened by the love of the Creator[35]. To this respect, father Dumitru Stăniloae says that the real dialogue has a Trinitarian character:

> "The dialogue between person and person is under the power of God, as the one who takes care of our persons and made us so important to each other and capable to help each other and to enrich our existence through each other. It is a dialogue between three persons and between all of us, if we take into account the fact that two persons who speak to each other often speak about their responsibility for a third or more persons. But this responsibility is imposed by God, as a factor on which they all depend. Thus the human dialogue has a Trinitarian character: it is between man and man, but it also includes the dialogue with God"[36].

Communion is relational and what is revealed through it is the presence of another subject, which is a force, and this presence and force imply inseparable relationships. Outside this communion characteristic to the divine image in man we come to the loss of unicity of the human existence, man becoming a being like any other being, with no "identity", with no face: "Only the presence of another transforms completely the personal situation and in the encounter of another subject we must transform ourselves, we must cope with the need of communication, which from now on denies us the pause in our evidences"[37].

Instead of conclusions

In the first part of the study I presented some considerations regarding the fact that the person is ontologically a communicational being, an important fact for the present study because this reality indicates us that we need communication naturally and we can grow only by interacting with the others.in the second part of the paper I presented a few advantages and limits of the communication through social networks. What must draw our attention in this part is that these networks

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[34] Dan Miron, „Educația – dimensiune a vieții," *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 7-9 (1983): 405.

[35] Iloaie, *Responsabilitatea morală personală*, 272.

[36] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Studii de teologie dogmatică ortodoxă*, (Craiova: Editura Mitropoliei Olteniei, 1990), 208.

[37] Vasile Cristescu, *Persoană și comuniune în creștinism și filosofie*, 23.

have many advantages that we may benefit from, but there are also a few limits among which the lack of nonverbal and paraverbal language as well as the retrenches that occur because of the physical absence of the persons, in which case the unicity of the person is very hard to be noticed. That is why the last part of the study underlines the importance of transmitting a message or other values only by personal presence.

As a conclusion of what we have presented within this study, we may say that although there are many studies that emphasize the negative effects which may occur as a consequence of the irrational use of the social networks, however there are many persons who consider that the direct relationships between them and their close ones are not affected by the use of these networks.

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IV. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

LAITY IN THE LEGISLATION OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

ŞTEFAN BARBU*

ABSTRACT. The present study analyzes the role and the rights of the laity, in various Statutes of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The present study shows that within the Romanian Patriarchate there are two different approaches concerning the extent of the involvement of the laity in the three-fold ministry of the Church, in particular as to its role in the field of Church governance. Thus, on the one hand one sees a strong tendency to limit the laity's role and rights in the governing of the local Church (the diocese) or at the supra-local level (the Metropolis or the Patriarchate). On the other hand, there is another position that allows a greater involvement of the laity in the governing of the Church. The lack of laity's involvement in the recently held Pan-Orthodox Council determines us to look again and critical to the situation within the ROC and argue for a return to an old and ecclesiologically sound canonical practice of total integration and active participation of the laity in the Church.

Keywords: laity, rights, Canon law, Romanian Orthodox Church

The Pan-Orthodox Synod that took place in Crete in June 2016 has been criticized, among other things, for not allowing the laity to be involved both in its preparation and in the decision-making process. The question of the laity involvement in the synodal process is rather an old issue among the Orthodox and we have no intention here to go into its long history. What we wish to do in the present study is rather to look anew at the Romanian Orthodox canonical understanding of the role of the laity in the Church since the 19th century until today.

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For this reason, we will analyze the provisions concerning the laity found in several Statutes that governed or govern either ecclesial provinces of, or the whole Romanian Patriarchate[1]. Each Statute will be presented in its historical context for a greater understanding of its canonical approach.

The present study argues that, as far as the Romanian Orthodox Church is concerned, there is a growing tendency, mirrored by the Statutes, to exclude or to limit the active role of the laity in ecclesial affairs. One may even call it the final stage of a process started long before the 19th century.

In 1925 the Romanian Orthodox Church was elevated to the rank of Patriarchate. She came into existence after the unification of four Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan provinces: the Orthodox Metropolitan province of Transylvania, the Orthodox Metropolitan province of Bessarabia[2], the Orthodox Church of the Kingdom of Romania and the Orthodox Church of Bukovina.[3] The four ecclesiastical provinces not only did not share the same canonical order, but they also did not share the same understanding of the place of the laity in the Church, divergence which proved to be a challenging topic when they wished in 1920s to forge one unitary Ecclesial Statute.[4]

We will begin the present study with the first Church Statute in the Romanian provinces, namely the 19th century Organic Statute of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania. We will continue with the 19th and early 20th century state legislation concerning the Orthodox Church in the two unified provinces Moldavia and Ungro-Vlachia. The third part of the present study will discuss the role of the laity in the present (2011) Statute of the Romanian Patriarchate, whereas the fourth and the last part will analyze the role of the laity in three Romanian dioceses from Western Europe and North-America: the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia and Archdiocese of Western and Southern Europe (ROMWEA) with residence in Paris; the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (ROEA), with residence in Jackson, MI near Detroit; and the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of

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[1] We use for convenience "Romanian Orthodox Church" (ROC), not as a technical term but rather to designate the Orthodox ecclesial structures existing in the Romanian provinces both before and after 1925. However, we "Romanian Patriarchate" as a technical, juridical term, only to designate the Romanian Orthodox Church after 1925.

[2] The Diocese of Bessarabia was between 1813-1918 under the Russian Orthodox Church jurisdiction. Richard Potz und Eva Synek, unter Mitarbeit von Spyros Troianos und Alexej Klutschewsky, *Orthodoxes Kirchenrecht: Eine Einführung. Aktualisierte und erweiterte zweite Auflage,* (Coll. *Kirche und Recht*, 28)*,* (Freistadt: Plöchl, 2014), 151.

[3] The Metropolitan Church of Bukovina was autonomous since 1874. Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Liviu Stan, *Biserica şi dreptul: Studii de drept canonic ortodox,* 6 vols., ed. Pr. Conf. Univ. Dr. Irimie Marga, (Sibiu: Editura Andreiana, 2010-2015), III, 63. (Henceforth BD).

[4] The present study will not treat laity's canonical situation in the Metropolia of Bessarabia or of Bukovina because until 1920s these Metropolitan Churches had no a Statute. See Paul Brusanowski, *Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen (1786-2008): Siebenbürgen – Bukowina – Rumänien,* (Köln – Weimar – Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2011), 192ff.

the Americas (ROMA, former Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas - ROAA)[5], with residence in Chicago, IL. [6] Because until the time when this study was finished ROMA did not adopt yet a new statute that would reflect its new canonical rank, we will make use in our analysis of the ROAA's Statute.

1. Laity in Transylvania: *The Organic Statute*

For the Romanian Orthodoxy, the 19th century represented the beginning of the debates concerning the role and the rights of the laypersons in the Church. The main character and promoter of the laity's rights was Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna,[7] elevated by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church among saints. Metropolitan Şaguna gave the Metropolitan region of Transylvania the famous "Organic Statute",[8] which allowed the laity an extensive participation to all levels of Church administration. Already during his lifetime many criticized Şaguna for his understanding of the role of the laity in the Church,[9] which looked too Protestant, although his theological and canonical vision were merely a continuation of the old but forgotten Orthodox practices.[10]

Projects for Church constitutions in Transylvania have existed since 1850s.[11] A first draft of the *Organic Statute* was presented in 1864 to the third Eparchial synod and it will constitute the nucleus of the 1868 Statute's final version.[12] Şaguna's project was discussed by a Commission comprising four clerics and eight laypersons and underwent extensive changes. Thus, from an initial 225 paragraphs, the commission preserved only 174. Changes have also

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[5] Since October 2016 the ROAA has been elevated to the rank of Metropolia.
http://www.romarch.org/en/news.php?id=5867, accessed 8.12.2016.

[6] The two Romanian dioceses in North-America, although only one of them – ROAA/ROMA - is under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Patriarchate, they do share a common past and are in sacramental communion.

[7] Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, *O viață închinată bisericii și neamului: Sfântul Ierarh Andrei Şaguna, Mitropolitul Transilvaniei,* (Sibiu: Ed. Andreiana, 2012); Keith Hitchins, *Orthodoxy and Nationality: Andreiu Şaguna and the Rumanians of Transylvania, 1846-1873,* (Cambridge, MA – London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1977).

[8] The Statute can be found in *Constituția bisericei gr.-or. române din Ungaria și Transilvania sau Statutul Organic, comentat și cu concluzele și normele referitoare întregit de Ioan A. de Preda,* (Sibiu, 1914), more recently re-published in Paul Brusanowski, *Reforma constituțională din biserica ortodoxă a Transilvaniei între 1850-1925,* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitara Clujeana, 2007), 15ff.

[9] Johann Schneider, *Ecleziologia organică a mitropolitului Andrei Şaguna și fundamentele ei biblice, canonice și moderne,* Trans. Ioan Ică Jr., (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008)*,* 236ff;

[10] Liviu Stan, *Mirenii în Biserică: Studiu Canonic-Istoric,* (Sibiu, 1939).

[11] Şaguna himself prepared some projects which only treated the Church organization in broad lines. Furthermore August Treboniu Laurian submitted in 1850 a project of Church constitution to the first mixed eparchy synod. Maria Stan, *Andrei Şaguna and the Organic Statute* (Doctoral Dissertation), (Universität Wien, 2009)*,* 263.

[12] Păcurariu, *O viață închinată bisericii,* 149; Cf. Stan, *Andrei Şaguna and the Organic Statute,* 265.

been made to the content; the organization of the parishes and of the deaneries has been modified as well as well as the manner of the election of the protopresbyters, of the Eparchial Consistory and of the bishops.[13] The Commission has also created new organs, and it removed the bishop's authority in relation to the decisions of the consistory. Furthermore, the Commission accepted that the bishop had full authority only in dogmatic and spiritual matters, in all other questions the Consistory could decide with a majority vote.[14] A second analysis was undertaking by a Commission of 27 deputies established by the 1868 National Ecclesial Congress (NEC).[15] The new Statute was then adopted by the Congress and one year later, in 1869, it was sanctioned by the Emperor Franz Joseph I.[16]

Şaguna saw the Church as a living organism which, in order to fulfill its mission, needs to have all its members functioning properly and in harmony one with another, and it is this ecclesiological vision that underlies his "Organic Statute" (1868).[17] Among the fundamental principles of the *Organic Statute* Şaguna introduced the principle of laypersons' participation in the Church in a numerical proportion of 2/3, while the clergy had 1/3, as well as the principle of ecclesiastical autonomy in relation to the State and the constitutional principle. The constitutional principle involved the separation of legislative and executive powers, the representative-democratic principle, on an elective basis.[18]

The significance of the laity in the Church is clearly established from the beginning of the Statute. Thus, §2 states:

> The constitutive elements of this Metropolitan province [officially called *The Romanian Greek-Orthodox Church from Hungary and Transylvania* (§1)] are the clergy and the faithful people; and its constitutive parts are: 1. Parishes, 2. Deaneries, 3. Monasteries, and 4. Eparchies.

Because they were constitutive elements of the Church, the laity, together with the clergy, has

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[13] Păcurariu, *O viață închinată bisericii,* 150.

[14] Stan, *Andrei Şaguna and the Organic Statute,* 266; 272.

[15] According to Stan, Şaguna did not present in 1868 the amended version of the Statute, but the original one. Stan, *Andrei Şaguna and the Organic Statute,* 267.

[16] Ioan A. de Preda, "Introducere", 14ff; Cf. Păcurariu, *O viață închinată bisericii,*156.

[17] Paul Brusanowski, "The Principles of the Organic Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church of Hungary and Transylvania (1868-1925)", *Ostkirchliche Studien* 60.1 (2011): 110-138, here 111.

[18] Brusanowski, "The Principles of the Organic Statute", 112ff. In his book *Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen,* Brusanowski formulates these principles somehow differently. Thus, here he defines them as: the principle of Church autonomy, in the context of a subsidiary State; the Synodality, understood as collaboration between all the Church elements in the framework of a constitutional organisation; and differentiation between the purely Church affairs (which fall exclusively within the responsibility of committees of clerics) and the economic and cultural affairs (which are treated by associations in which laypersons participated in a numerical proportion of 2/3). Brusanowski, *Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen,* 24.

the right to participate in person or through representatives in all the actions *(affairs)* concerning the Church, the schools and the foundations, having at the same time the duty to sustain all the burdens on which depends the welfare of the Church. (§3)

Concerning the relationship between the various constitutive parts of the Church, the Organic Statute granted them almost total independence in the administration of their affairs, the constitutive parts, be it parish or diocese, being considered equal to the other (§3). Furthermore, each constitutive part had to be governed according to the principle of synodality:

All the action of the constitutive parts (…) are to be realized through the parish, protopresbyteral, and eparchial synods as well as through the National Ecclesial Congress (the Metropolitan Synod) (§4).[19]

Therefore, the laypersons were not only involved in the parish affairs, but also in the diocesan ones. According to Liviu Stan, Şaguna "gave synodality the most classical and the broadest interpretation, without trespassing on the dogmatic and canonical boundaries of the Church".[20] Regarding the Eparchial Synod, the *Organic Statute* defined it as a mixed form of synodality:

the Eparchial Synod represents the Eparchy and is formed of the deputies of the clergy and of the people of the eparchy, and besides the bishop, the archbishop respectively, it comprises 60 members out of whom 20 are clerics and 40 laypersons (§87).

It was this mixed Eparchial Synod that elected the bishop (§97).

The Metropolitan province was governed by the National Ecclesial Congress (NEC), which comprised 30 representatives of the clergy and 60 laypersons (§146). It was the responsibility of the NEC to elect the Metropolitan (§154). In this instance the NEC was enlarged to 120 members (§155). As one can see, these are forms of mixed sinodality. There is however also an expression of the "pure synodality",[21] as Liviu Stan calls the synod formed exclusively of bishops. Art. III § 171 of the *Organic Statute* speaks about the Episcopal synod (*Sinodul episcopesc*):

The episcopal synod is that gathering of bishops under the presidency of the Metropolitan bishop, where are treated spiritual, dogmatic and symbolic ecclesiastical causes.

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[19] According to Ioan A. Preda's commentary to the Statute, §4 refers to the representative and legislative organs in the Church, the administrative and the executive ones being mentioned in art. 5. *Constitutia bisericei gr.-or. române,* 35.

[20] Stan, *Mirenii în biserică,* 198.

[21] Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Liviu Stan, *Biserica şi dreptul: Studii de drept canonic ortodox,* 6 vols., ed. Pr. Conf. Univ. Dr. Irimie Marga, (Sibiu: Editura Andreiana, 2010-2015), III, 32.

It is clear from this that the Statute considered only the spiritual and doctrinal issues of the exclusive competence of the episcopate, whereas all the other issues, that is teaching of religion, administration of the temporal goods or election of the clergy and of the episcopate fell also within the sphere of competence of the laity and all the hierarchical states in the Church.

2. Laity in the Church of Ungro-Vlachia

2.1. The Law of Synodality and the Crisis of Canonicity

The Orthodox Church of the Kingdom of Romania came into being in 1864 after the union of two autonomous Metropolitan provinces, the Metropolitan Church of Moldavia and the Metropolitan Church of Ungro-Vlachia (or Muntenia).[22]

Following the political and administrative unification of the two Romanian provinces, Moldavia and Ţara Românească (or Ungro-Vlachia) in 1859 under the ruling of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the autonomous Metropolitan province of the two provinces have also been united, the newly formed Church declaring herself in 1864 autocephalous, but receiving her *Tomos* of autocephaly from the Patriarchate of Constantinople only in 1885.[23]

As we mentioned already, before the 1864 unification, both the Metropolitan province of Moldavia and of Ţara Românească were autonomous Metropolitan provinces. However, they were not autocephalous, being under the jurisdiction of the See of Constantinople. The situation is totally understandable if one takes into consideration also the fact that politically the two Romanian principalities were under the Turkish suzerainty. During this period, the Divan, composed of boyars, elected the bishops and the metropolitans and the Prince confirmed them. After 1848 the Divans have been replaced with the National Assemblies (a form of Parliament) of the two provinces.[24]

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[22] The Romanian Church is the only Orthodox Church that preserves the metropolitan system of the first four Christian centuries. Anargyros Anapoliotis, "Einführung in das rumänische Statut und in die Strukturen des rumänischen Patriarchats", in Rumänische Orthodoxe Metropolie von Deutschland Zentral- und Nordeuropa (Hg.), *Kirchenstatut der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche (2011), Übersetzt, eingeleitet und herausgegeben von Jürgen Henkel und Anargyros Anapliotis,* (=DRThB, 2)(Sibiu-Bonn: Schiller Verlag, 2012), 27.

[23] Patriciu Vlaicu, *Le statut de l'Église orthodoxe en Roumanie post-communiste (1989-2007). Approche nomocanonique,* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013), 44; Ioan Vasile Leb, *Die Rumänische Orthodoxe Kirche im Wandel der Zeiten,* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitara Clujeană, 1998), 73-124, here 85. For a short historical account of the ROC see also Ioan Moga, "Die Orthodoxe Kirche und die Orientalisch-Orthodoxen Kirchen", in Johannes Oeldemann (Hg.), *Konfessionskunde,* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt- Bonifatius, 2015), 72-157.

[24] Constantin Drăguşin, „Legile bisericeşti ale lui Cuza Vodă şi lupta pentru canonicitate", *Studii Teologice* 9, nr. 1-2 (1957): 86-103, here 87ff.

After 1859 Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza promulgated a series of laws that regulated the life and organization of the Orthodox Church.[25] For the present study the most important of these laws was: "The Organic Decree for the establishment of a central synodal authority for the affairs of the Romanian religion", promulgated on 3 December 1864.[26]

The ecclesial situation of the two Metropolitan provinces was rather precarious in the middle of the 19th century, with no existing form of synodality and the Metropolitans ruling in fact the entire Church single-handedly. In this situation, and to consolidate the independence of the Church mainly in front of the Turkish Sublime Porte's influence, Al. I. Cuza and his government entrusted the task of writing a legislative project that would regulate the affairs of the Orthodox Church, first to Bishop Dionisie Romano from Buzău and then to a Church commission. Bishop Dionisie proposed the establishment of a Holy Synod in which not only bishops would take part, but also representatives of the priests. The project was presented to the eparchies for discussions and then to a Church commission. The Diocese of Râmnic proposed also the participation of laypersons in the Holy Synod. This proposal was however opposed by some bishops, such as Bishop Neofit Scriban from Argeș. Nonetheless, in the *Organic Decree for the establishment of a central synodal authority*, laypeople were also represented in the two synodal structures erected. Thus, when the Minister of Cults after the approval of the Prince (Art. IX) convened the General Synod it comprised: "the Metropolitans, the Diocesan Bishops, the Romanian Bishops (and Titular Bishops), three delegates from each Diocese – elected by the secular clergy, but only from among the parish priests or well-known laypersons and theologians, the Rectors of the Theological Faculties in Jassy and Bucharest" (Art. IV).

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[25] We mention here only the most important of them: the 1859 Law through which the properties of the monasteries dedicated to the Holy Places (either in the Middle East or on Mount Athos) became the property of the state; the 1863 law that imposed the Romanian language as official language of the divine service; "The Organic Decree for regulating the monastic life" promulgated on 30 November 1864, which regulated who can enter the monasteries and from what age and through which procedure. Drăgușin, "Legile bisericesti ale lui Cuza", 92ff.

[26] Drăgușin, "Legile bisericesti ale lui Cuza", 90ff. Before the 1864 law, since as early as the 15th century, the Romanian Orthodox provinces followed the so-called *Pravile*. They were first Slavonic, then Romanian translations of the Byzantine *nomocanons,* in particular the 14th century Matthew Blastares' *Alphabetical Syntagma.* These *nomocanons* that regulated the life of the Orthodox Church circulated in all three Romanian provinces (Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania) and they were: Alexandru cel Bun's *Pravila* (1400-1433), *Coresi's Pravila (1570-1580), Pravila from Govora (1640-1641), Vasile Lupus' Pravila (1646),* and *The Great Pravila (1652)* or *Matei Basarab's Pravila.[26]* Already in 1844, thus only 44 years since its first edition and 3 years since the second one, in Moldavia Neofit Scriban published the Romanian translation of the *Rudder* (Pidalion) of the two athonite monks Nicodim and Agapius. Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Liviu STAN, *Biserica și dreptul: Studii de drept canonic ortodox,* 6 vols., ed. Pr. Conf. Univ. Dr. Irimie MARGA, (Sibiu: Editura Andreiana, 2010-2015), II, 172ff; Victor Alexandrov, *The* Syntagma *of Matthew Blastares: The Destiny of A Byzantine Legal Code Among the Orthodox Slavs and Romanians - 14-17 Centuries*, (=Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte 29)(Frankfurt am Main: Löwenklau-Feselschaft E.V., 2012).

The Eparchial Synods[27] consisted of "the Eparchial Bishop or the Metropolitan as president, three members of the General Synod, the Rectors of the Eparchial Seminaries, in Bucharest and Jassy (Iași) also from the Rectors of the Theological Faculties" (Art. XXIV).

We see thus an attempt to allow laypersons to participate actively in the life and affairs of the Church. This is not by chance, because the main architect of the Synodal Law was the Transylvanian politician, historian, linguist and founding member of the Romanian Academy, August Treboniu Laurian, who wished to integrate into the new Statute the Șagunian principles.[28] Furthermore, some have argued that through these reforms, Cuza returned to the ancient Orthodox tradition, which existed also on the Romanian territory but had long been forgotten.[29]

On 11 May 1865 a new law, comprising only three articles, concerning the election of the metropolitans and bishops was promulgated, according to which the hierarchs were no longer elected by the Parliament and by the episcopal synods, but were appointed by the Prince.[30]

The two issues - lay participation and appointing of the Metropolitan and of the Bishops by the Prince - led, between 1865-1872, to a Church crisis, which has gone down in history as "the struggle for canonicity". The direct consequence of this crisis was that the Synod has met only on three occasions (1865, 1867, 1869)[31] without being able to impose its authority, even some of its members contesting its authority.

The crisis reached its apex in January 1871, when the Archimandrite Clement Nicolau, professor at the Seminary in Jassy, shot four bullets at Metropolitan Calinic Miclescu, without killing him though.[32] The crisis came to an end in 1872 under the regime of the new Romanian King Carol I, when a new Synodal Law was promulgated. According to the 1872 law the Metropolitan and the bishops were elected by the Metropolitan and Diocesan Bishops, by all the titular bishops who are Romanian citizens or who became Romanian citizens, as well as by all orthodox members of the two Chambers of the Parliament (Art.1).

As a result of a deep separation of the episcopate from the rest of Church's life, as well as of the fact that it became highly sensitive to the influences of the Political class, a new reform of the Church was attempted. Thus, in 1909 a new

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[27] The Eparchial Synod refers both to the Metropolitan and to the Diocesan Synod (Art. XXIII).
[28] Drăgușin, "Legile bisericești ale lui Cuza", 94.
[29] Stelian Izvoranu, „Sinoadele de sub regimul lui Cuza Voda: Importanța lor pentru viața bisericească", *BOR* 78 nr. 7-8, (1960), 658- 682, here 659.
[30] Drăgușin, "Legile bisericești ale lui Cuza", 95.
[31] In fact the third time, which is in 1867, the Synod did not take place, because only 4 members showed up. Drăgușin, "Legile bisericești ale lui Cuza", 94; Izvoranu, „Sinoadele de sub regimul lui Cuza", 661.
[32] Brusanowski, *Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen,* 109ff.

law was passed establishing the Church Superior Consistory[33] which had as members: a) all the members of the Holy Synod; b) a representative of the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, c) a representative of all the professors from the Theological Seminaries, d) two starets (abbots) representing the monasteries, e) 17 representatives of the priests and deacons of all the Romanian dioceses (Art.19). The 1909 law also modified the manner of the election of the episcopate, a new category of electing members being introduced, namely "all the elected members of the Church Superior Consistory" (Art.1 §b). The Church Superior Consistory was responsible for "all the disciplinary actions and administrative tasks of the eparchies" (Art.18).

Therefore, the Church of the Old Kingdom or the Romanian Kingdom before 1919 had no Statute issued by the Church itself, being ruled through laws issued by the State.[34] Nevertheless, the lay element, though present in various ecclesial decisional structures, was, in comparison with the Church from Transylvania, considerable reduced. At the same time, the Church-State relationship was significantly different, the State, in Ungro-Vlachia playing a very active role in the life of the Church. This model of Church-State relations reflects the so-called Byzantine Symphonia.

2.2. Laity in the newly established Romanian Patriarchate

Transylvania became part of the Romanian Kingdom in 1918 and between 1919 and 1925 negotiations were led between the Metropolitan province of Transylvania and the Orthodox Church of the Old Kingdom for the unification and the establishment of one national Romanian Orthodox Church. The main problems were the two Şagunian principles deeply embedded in the ecclesial conscience of the Church of Transylvania, namely the constitutional principle, which allowed the laity a very large involvement in the administration of the Church, and the principle of ecclesiastical autonomy vis-à-vis the state.

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[33] The Law of the Consistory in German translation can be found in Brusanowski, *Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen,* 134ff.

[34] Beside the 1872 and 1909 laws mentioned above, the Church guided herself also according to two other laws from 1873, one concerning the "Rights of the Metropolitan Primate" and another concerning the "Discipline of the Clergy". In 1875 a new law was issued concerning the "Election of the Titular Bishops". In 1893 a first law on the lay clergy was given, followed in 1906/1909 by a second one. The distinction between State laws and Church laws can be deceiving for this period, if one considers the fact that the members of the Holy Synod were members of the Romanian Parliament with full rights, and that the Government was represented in the governing bodies of the Church. Paul Brusanowski, „Historische Einführung: Die Dispute innerhalb der Rumänischen Orthodoxe Kirche in der Zwischenkriegszeit über die Rolle der Laien und die Kirchenautonomie", in Liviu Stan, *Die Laien in der Kirche. Eine historisch-kirchenrechtliche Studie zur Beteiligung der Laien an der Ausübung der Kirchengewalt*, Übersetzung von Hermann Pitters, Hrsg. von Stefan Tobler (Coll. *Orthodoxie, Orient und Europa* 4)(Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2011), 19-52, here 25.

In February 1920, the National Ecclesiastical Council (NEC) elected as Metropolitan of Transylvania Nicolae Bălan (1882-1955), a professor at the Seminary and a staunch defender of the Şagunian principles. The main adversary of the introduction of the Şagunian principles in the new constitution of the Romanian Orthodox Church was another hierarch of Transylvanian origins, Miron Cristea (1868-1938), elected in 1920, under the political influence, as Metropolitan Primate of the new unified Church.

In order to achieve a unitary Church organization a commission of 15 representatives of the four Metropolitan Churches that formed the new Romanian Orthodox Church was established in 1921.[35] The compromise was reached in 1925 by way of integrating the Organic Statute[36] in the new Church Constitution with some important changes: the Church autonomy towards the state was reduced; the "organic" nature of the Organic Statute was also reduced, leaving place for a more centralized administrative form of the Church; the autonomy of the dioceses was also reduced, the election of the bishops being transferred from the level of the diocese to the competence of an Electoral Collegium composed of all the members of the National Church Council (henceforth NCC) and of the Diocesan Assembly as well as some State high functionaries; the institutions and associations on the level of deaneries (*protopopiate)* became facultative bodies; it has introduced indirect elections for the NCC, whose members were now delegated by the Diocesan Assembly and not by the Ecclesial body; the Diocesan legislative and executive bodies/ associations lost the right to make decisions independently, the Bishop now receiving the right to appeal against these decisions at the NCC. Therefore, the new Statute from 1925 of the newly established Romanian Patriarchate, though with some changes,[37] preserved nevertheless the Şagunian principles.

The next modification of the Romanian Orthodox Church's Statute was undertaken in 1948,[38] one of its authors being Liviu Stan,[39] and afterwards in 2007 and 2011.

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[35] Maximilian Pal, "Importanţa izvoarelor juridice în Biserica Ortodoxă Română", *Teologia* 9.3 (2005):10-31, here 28.

[36] The political influences were not missing during the discussions for a new Statute. Thus, as Pal argues, the Liberal government at the time preferred the Şagunian Statute because of the place it granted to the Church vis-à-vis the State. Pal, "Importanţa izvoarelor juridice", 28.

[37] Brusanowski, „Historische Einführung", 33-34.

[38] For an introduction to the 1948 Statute with modification until 2003 see Sr. Maria Mihaela Stan, "Die Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenverfassung und ihre Ekklesiologischen Grundlagen", *Kanon* 19 (2006): 95-110.

[39] Irimie Marga, "Concepţia canonică a Pr.prof. Liviu Stan", in *Dreptul canonic în viaţa Bisericii,* 103-116, here 114.

3. The 2011 Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church

3.1. Short introduction

The 2011 Statute is a modified form of the 2008 Statute, which, in its turn, replaced the 1948 Statute[40] adopted under the Communists. The 1948 Statute expressed the political reality in which the Church found herself, in the sense that through the Statute the power in the Church became increasingly centralized[41] and in consequence the Church could be controlled more easily by the State.

At the beginning of the 1990s two positions formed within the BOR vis-à-vis the Statute. On the one side, there was the opinion that a brand new Statute was necessary, on the other side there were those who appreciated the virtues of the existing Statute, and who favored its preservation with some changes that would reflect the new realities.[42] The second opinion prevailed and so until 2006 more than 100 modifications were brought to the 1948 Statute.[43]

Thus, referring to the relation between the 2008 and the 1948 Statutes, P. Vlaicu, Professor of Orthodox Canon law in Cluj-Napoca, remarks that:

> le nouveau [2008] statut n'apporte pas de modifications de principe, par rapport à l'ancienne organisation, mais clarifie seulement certains aspects et précise plus clairement certaines compétences.[44]

In the words of HE Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church since 2007, the 2008 Statute

> on the one hand, continues (*the 1948 Statute*) to a great extent or simplifies it, and on the other hand, brings important modifications, such as the manner of electing the hierarchs, which now follows the general pan-orthodox practice, but also assimilating with discernment the previous Romanian practice. The novelty of the Statute resides in the strong emphasis placed upon the relationship between freedom and responsibility or between one's own autonomy and the cooperation with others, at national, provincial (regional) or eparchial level.[45]

Furthermore, according to HE Patriarch Daniel, the new Statute

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[40] The Statute can be found in *Legiuirile Bisericii Ortodoxe Romane sub IPS Patriarh Justinian (1848-1953),* (Bucuresti: EIBMO, 1953), 5-52.

[41] Brusanowski, *Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen,* 394.

[42] Vlaicu, *Le statut de l'Eglise,* 63.

[43] Patriarch Daniel Ciobotea, "Prefață. Libertate și responsabilitate pentru comuniune în Biserică", *BOR* 126, N°.1-2 (2008): 5-12, here 5.

[44] Vlaicu, *Le statut de l'Eglise,* 100.

[45] Patriarch Daniel, "Prefață. Libertate și responsabilitate", 9.

intensifies the synodality, in the sense that it grants increased responsibility to the Holy Synod, to the Permanent Synod and to the Metropolitan Synod. At the same time, the new Statute makes place for a broader framework for cooperation between the clergy and the laity in the National Ecclesial Assembly, in the Eparchial Assembly but foremost in the parish. [46]

In his introduction to the 2008 Statute, P. Brusanowski, History Professor in Sibiu, regards the changes brought to the 1948 Statute from a rather different perspective than the Patriarch, summarizing them thus:

> The new Statute completed a direction in the development of the Canon law, development which began in 1990, and which accentuates the following things: centralization at the level of administration; the strengthening of the hierarchical synodal organization as well as of the priests' position in the ecclesial community; a narrowing of the laity's rights. The [Church] organizations (*Körperschaften*) in which the laity were also members, lost the decisional right, having now only a consultative character. The Institution of the Ecclesial Electoral College was abolished, the bishops being now elected exclusively by the Holy Synod (to the Eparchial Assemblies has been granted only the right to submit proposals to the Holy Synod).[47]

The Statute was confirmed through Governmental Decision (H.G. nr. 53/16 January 2008). The 2011 Statute has however a rather uncertain status. It has not been until now (December 2016) neither officially published by the ROC, nor approved by the State,[48] raising thus the question of authority.[49]

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[46] Patriarch Daniel, "Prefață. Libertate și responsabilitate", 9.

[47] Brusanowski, *Rumänisch-Orthodoxe Kirchenordnungen,* 479-480. (English translation SB).

[48] The 2011 Statute has not officially been published. Even the German Translation from *Kirchenstatut der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche* is made after "für den innerkirchlichen Gebrauch gültigen Text mit Stand vom 21.Juli 2011". *Kirchenstatut der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche,* 13. One can find the 2011 Statute here
http://www.arhiepiscopiabucurestilor.ro/index.php/documente/viewdownload/7-secretariat-eparhial-relatii-publice/28-statut-bor-aprobat-de-sf-sinod-17-02-2011, (accessed 19.08.2016).

[49] Although the first footnote of the 2011 Statute found on-line states that the amendments marked with red "have been approved by the Holy Synod in its working session from 17 February 2011, through Decision 385/2011", one is rather inclined to argue that the 2011 Statute, as a whole, lacks if not canonical at least juridical force. In support of this position comes the new version of the *Regulamentul autorităților canonice disciplinare și al instanțelor de judecată ale Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* approved by the Holy Synod of the ROC on its working session from 5-6 February 2015 (Decision No.: 937/2015) and where it is affirmed that: "The present *Regulation of the canonical-disciplinary authority and of the ecclesial tribunals of the Romanian Orthodox Church is compiled on the basis of the Statute for the Organization and Functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church,* approved by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church and recognized by the Romanian Government through *Governmental Decision No. 53 from 16 January 2008,* published in *Romanian Official Monitory,* Part I, No. 50 from 22 January 2008". "*Preambul*" to *Regulamentul autorităților canonice disciplinare și al instanțelor de judecată ale Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, 2015). *(Italics in the original).* Nevertheless, the changes brought to the 2008 Statute have the power of the ecclesial law since they have been issued through various Synodal Decisions.

Among the differences between the 2008 and 2011 Statutes, one notices the extensive footnotes introduced in the latest Statute, which are references to various Canons or Synodal Decisions, even some theological concepts and historical presentations of the origins of a particular institution. The new dioceses erected after 2008 are introduced as well as other institution and representations.

Vlaicu argues that the 2011 Statute came into existence due to the impossibility of the old (2008) Statute "to respond to some problems, as well as because some inconsistencies were identified".[50]

In what follows we will focus our attention upon those provisions that concern the laypeople's participation.

3.2. Provision regarding the laity

From the beginning one notices that the Statute (2011) itself is not subjected to the approval of any ecclesial body in which laypersons are members. Among the "Attributions of the Holy Synod", Art. 14 §1 (g.) provides that the Statute is approved through "open vote" procedure and modified by the Holy Synod.[51]

The laypeople are represented in the National Ecclesial Assembly (NEA), which is the "central deliberative body of the ROC for administrative, social, cultural, economical and patrimonial problems" (Art.19).

NEA comprises 1 cleric and 2 laypersons from each eparchy,[52] delegated by the respective Eparchial Assemblies (Art. 20 §1). The decisions of the NEA, in order to become executive, must be "ratified by the Holy Synod" (Art. 20 §4). NEA's President is the Patriarch of the ROC (Art. 20 §3) and, although not mentioned among the members of the Assembly, still the hierarchs of the Holy Synod are mentioned as taking part to its working sessions (Art. 20 §2).

NEA meets once a year in regular session (Art. 21). Among its attributions (Art. 22), the NEA "approves the regulations regarding the manner of application of the Statute" (§b), elects, at the proposal of the Patriarch, the members of the National Ecclesial Council (NEC) (§c), but also approves the Annual General Report of the NEC (§f), of the Patriarchal Administration and of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Patriarchate (§g). Therefore, NEA has no attributions whatsoever in religious matters *per se*. Its role is rather to approve and to endorse budgets and budget proposals of central administrative bodies.

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[50] Patriciu Vlaicu, *Lege și comuniune. Organizarea statutară a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (2007-2012),* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2013), 15.

[51] See Art. 11, the Holy Synod is the highest authority of the ROC in all its domains of activity. Art. 12 §1 lists the members of the Holy Synod, who are: the Patriarch, all the Metropolitans, Bishops and titular bishops. The retired bishops, although are note mentioned among the members of the Holy Synod, are still required to abide the canonical synodal discipline.

[52] In 2011 the ROC comprised 42 eparchies. (See Art. 6)

This institution has its origins in Şaguna's "National Ecclesial Congress" which was the highest decisional forum of the Church of Transylvania. In the modern legislation of the ROC the NEA still preserves its "deliberative" character. However, by having its decisions submitted to the episcopate for approval, its character should rather be considered as consultative.

The next ecclesial body that comprises laypersons is the National Ecclesial Council (NEC), which is a central executive body of the Holy Synod and of the NEA (Art. 28). According to Art. 29 §2, NEC comprises 12 members of the NEA, one cleric and one layperson from each Metropolitan province[53] (with the exception of the Metropolitan province of the diaspora). Besides these, all the patriarchal auxiliary bishops, all the patriarchal counsellors, the administrative patriarchal vicar and the general ecclesial inspector are members *ex officio* of the NEC. Its president is the Patriarch (Art.29 §3). "The members of the Holy Synod may take part at NEC's sessions having a deliberative vote" (Art. 29 §3). The patriarchal auxiliary bishops too have a deliberative vote (Art. 29 §4). However, this is not the case with the rest of the members of the curia (the counsellors, the administrative vicar and the inspector) who have only a consultative vote (Art. 29 §5).

NEC's main responsibilities are to draw up budget projects and to administer the Church's wealth (Art. 30). The role of the laity in Church related issues (though not in directly ecclesial matters) is further diluted through the establishment of a "Permanence of the NEC" (Art.31) which comprises no lay representatives.

In a rather odd manner, the ROC Statute passes from the Central Organization directly to the Local level (Chapter II, Art. 40ff), and only afterwards (Art. 84ff) discusses the regional (Diocese) and supra-regional (Metropolia; Art. 110ff)) administrative levels.[54]

For the sake of logical continuity, we will now treat the presence of laypeople at regional and supra-regional levels, and only afterward investigate their role at the local level ecclesial structures.

At the level of the Metropolitan province, no laypersons are members of the Metropolitan Synod, which is composed exclusively of bishops (Art.111). Neither is there any other ecclesial body of which the laypersons are members, since the Statute mentions no Metropolitan Assembly.

At the level of the diocese/archdiocese however the Statute makes provisions as to the Eparchial Assembly which comprises 1/3 clerics and 2/3 lay members from a total of 30 elected persons. For a person to candidate for the Eparchial Assembly, one needs the bishop's (written) blessing (permission)

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[53] In 2011 ROC had 7 Metropolitan provinces within the borders of Romania.

[54] From a theological perspective, this way of describing the structure of the Church reflects an unclear ecclesiological vision. It is a combination of universalistic and Eucharistic ecclesiologies.

(Art. 91). At the recommendation of the diocesan bishop, the mandate of a member of the Eparchial Assembly whose activity "was hostile to the Church" is revoked (Art. 91 §1).

Among the assembly's attributions the Statute provides the following:

Art. 92 §a: it supports the interests and the rights of the Church and of the eparchy, according to the Statute;

Art. 92 §h: it approves the annual general report prepared by the Eparchial Council;

Art. 92 § i-j: it approves the budget of the eparchy and of its institutions.

It is interesting to see that the Eparchial Assembly can be dissolved by Patriarchal decision when the local bishop requests it, in cases when it "perpetrated actions hostile to the Church" (Art. 26 §u). [55] In this case one can infer that the Church is represented only by the bishop and not by the people (laypeople and clerics). In the eventuality in which the bishop is not in agreement with the decisions made by the Eparchial Assembly, he can request the Patriarch, not to the Holy Synod, to dissolve the Assembly and start the process of electing another Assembly.

The Eparchial Council, which is the "executive body of the Eparchial Assembly" (Art. 95), comprises a total of 9 persons, 6 of which are laypersons (Art. 96).

The Eparchial Council is responsible mainly for approving budgets and for the administration of Church properties. It is however also charged with promoting the catechesis in the eparchy. It is also the diocesan body that confirms, suspends or dissolves the Parish Council at the request of the parish priest (Art. 98 §m). The decisions of the Eparchial Council become executive only after they have been approved by the diocesan bishop (Art. 99).

At the diocesan level one finds also a Permanence of the Eparchial Council whose attributions are far greater than that of the Eparchial Council or Eparchial Assembly, but where no lay delegate is present.

The Parish. Art. 45 is the only place where the rights of the laypeople, or Christian faithful, are mentioned, rights which are very limited in number and in scope:

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[55] This concept of "hostile activity" remains unexplained in the Statute. Undetermined remains also the conditions and the institution which is to determine the perpetration of the act. A possible response to this dilemma might be found in the *Regulation of the canonical-disciplinary authority* (2015), mentioned above, where all the "misconducts" (*abateri*) are defined. However, first of all, the expression "actions hostile to the Church" are nowhere mentioned as such; and secondly, the *Regulation* treats only deviations perpetrated by individuals (clerics or laity), and not by groups or ecclesial organisms (such as the Eparchial Assembly). Therefore, as long as the Church is identified exclusively with the Bishop, one may say that, from an ecclesiological perspective, the present provisions of the Statute are highly questionable.

The Christian faithful of the parish have the following rights: to receive religious assistance; to be chosen in the parish administrative bodies; to receive philanthropic aid, according to the possibilities.

In the same article are mentioned also the obligations of the Christian faithful, which are:

to promote, strengthen and confess the faith of the Orthodox Church;[56] to live according to the teaching of the Orthodox faith; to take part in the divine service; to communicate with the Holy Sacraments;[57] to fulfil the Christian obligations of charity; to support (financially) the Church and her ministers.

The totality of the laypersons (men and women) who have reached the age of majority represent the Parish Assembly (Art. 54), which is the deliberative body. One notices that no other condition is imposed in order to be member of the Parish Assembly.

The Parish Assembly, among other things, elects the members of the Parish Council, approves the Activity Report prepared by the Parish Council, endorses the annual budget of the parish, which will have to be approved by the Permanence of the Eparchial Council, and is responsible for the good administration of the Church property (Art. 55).

The lay representatives compose, together with the parish priests and the other clerics of the parish as well as with the main cantor of the parish, the Parish Council. The number of lay persons in the Parish Council is 7, 9 or 12, depending on the size of the parish (Art. 59). The lay persons are elected by the Parish Assembly for a period of 4 years, but their mandate can be withdrawn by the Permanence of the Eparchial Council for "activity hostile to the Church, offensive or immoral behaviour" at the request of the parish priest (Art.60). The role of the Parish Council is rather to assist the priest in the administrative activity, although Art.64 (1) states that: "The Parish priest is the administrator of the entire Church property (mobile and immobile) together with the Parish Council". This means that they are regarded as a single unit, which is not the case with the National Ecclesial Assembly, whose decisions are conditioned by the approval of the Holy Synod.

Laypersons are also members of the Parish Committee (Art. 66). They are elected by the Parish Assembly and subordinated to the Parish Council and presided by the Parish Priest. The Parish Committee comprises 5 departments (Art. 67): the Social, missionary, cultural, youth, and the administrative department, which have the role to stimulate the pastoral activity in the parish.

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[56] It is interesting to see that the Statute does not use the formula "the Orthodox faith", which is classical.

[57] It is curios that this is not mentioned among the rights of the Christian faithful, but among the obligations.

In regards to the election and appointment of the priests in parishes, the ROC Statute leaves this responsibility entirely to the discretion of the diocesan bishop, the lay members of the parish having no say whatsoever in the matter.

Regarding the lay participation in the ecclesial tribunals, the Statute provides that they can be members of the Protopersbyterial Disciplinary Consistory but only in cases where laypersons are involved, and not in judging the cases of priests (Art. 149).

At the level of the Eparchial Disciplinary Consistory no layperson can be appointed. The same goes for the Metropolitan Consistory and for the Ecclesial Superior Consistory (Art.155).

4. Laity in the Romanian Orthodox Diaspora

4.1. Romanian Orthodox Metropolia and Archdiocese of Western and Southern Europe (ROMWE)

4.1.1. Brief History of the ROMWE

Strictly speaking ROMWEA exists only since July 1972 when Bishop Teofil Ionescu erected the Romanian Orthodox Diocese for Western Europe.[58] However, by establishing this diocese Bishop Teofil broke with the older Romanian Diocese established already in 1949 at Paris by the former Metropolitan of Bukovina, Visarion Puiu and which was called The Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Western Europe[59]. Today the two parallel structure no longer exist, the last stage of their unification taking place on 26 November 2016 when the Diocese (represented by the Sts. Archangels Romanian Orthodox Parish from Paris) officially and juridically joined the Eparchy (now the ROMWE).

Visarion Puiu,[60] former Metropolitan of Czernowitz and Bukowina (1935-1940) and Metropolitan of Transnistria (1942-1944), was Doctor in Theology at the University of Kiev (1909), and was condemned in absentia to the death penalty in 1946 by the Popular Tribunal for cooperation with the Nazi Regime and for "participation in actions hostile to the State and to the Romanian people".[61] To escape the Communists, Metropolitan Puiu flees to Western Europe.

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[58] Iulian Nistea, „Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română a Europei Occidentale", în: *Autocefalie și responsa-bilitate*, pp. 891-902, (București: Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, 2010), here 898.

[59] Nistea, „Arhiepiscopia", 897.

[60] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Visarion Puiu", on-line at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visarion_Puiu, (accessed 19.08.2016). See also Jean-Paul Besse, *L'Eglise Orthodoxe Roumaine de Paris*, (Paris: DUC, 1994); Mircea Basarab, "Rumänische Orthodoxe Kirche. Rumänische Orthodoxe Metropolie für Deutschland und Zentraleuropa", *Orthodoxes Forum* 14 (2000): 25-34.

[61] Besse, *L'église orthodoxe roumaine,* 112.

In August 1949, Metropolitan Visarion Puiu was invited from Switzerland by the Spiritual Council recently formed at the Parisian parish[62] to come and organize the Romanian Orthodox diaspora in a diocese.

Metropolitan Visarion, in agreement with the priests established The Romanian Orthodox Eparchy of Western Europe with the seat in Paris claiming jurisdiction over the Romanian Orthodox diaspora in France,[63] Germany,[64] Sweden, Belgium, UK and Canada. After a week, on 4 September 1949, the Romanian community from Paris is internally divided along political lines, the French Minster of Interior intervenes, closes down the parish church, sets the parish association under judicial control (1949-1952) and forces Metropolitan Puiu to leave Paris (1950).[65]

On 28 February 1950 the Holy Synod of the ROC, under political influence, deposed Metropolitan Visarion Puiu.[66] Under these conditions Metropolitan Puiu entered in communion with the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia and on 26 December 1954 he ordained the hieromonk Teofil Ionescu as titular bishop.[67]

Bishop Teofil Ionescu did his theological studies at Cernowitz and obtained a Doctorate in 1941 at the Protestant Faculty of Paris with a Dissertation on Peter Mogila.[68] Between 1954 and 1958 Bishop Teofil occupied the seat of the Romanian Diocese of America.[69] In 1958, when Metropolitan Puiu decided to withdraw from the seat, Bishop Teofil succeeded him. In 1970, during the Divine Liturgy celebrated on occasion of a Congress organized by the Daco-Romanian Society, Bishop Teofil, then still a member of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, commemorated Pope Paul VI and some Romanian Greek-Catholic bishops. This act, which he justified in the name of the ecumenical movement as well as through the fact that the Greek-Catholics have also been victims of the Communist Regime, not surprisingly, attracted criticism not only from the Romanian community but also from the Russian Synod who demanded an explanation.

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[62] In Paris the Romanian Orthodox community gathered since 1882 in a chapel bought by the Romanian Kingdom. The chapel was called Sts. Archangels Michael and Gabriel and was (and still is) located at 9bis, rue Jean de Beauvais, in the Latin District. Nistea, „Arhiepiscopia", 895.

[63] In France there were at that time only seven priests, all serving in the Romanian Church in Paris. Besse, *L'église orthodoxe roumaine*, 112.

[64] In Germany there were two Romanian Chapels: the Chapel Mihail Sturdza from Baden-Baden, established in 1864-1866, and in Leipzig, established in 1852. Nistea, « Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română », 891.

[65] Nistea, „Arhiepiscopia", 897.

[66] The Holy Synod will rehabilitate Metropolitan Puiu on 25 September 1990. Besse, 112ff.

[67] Besse, *L'église orthodoxe roumaine,* 118. For a biography of Bishop Teofil see also "Archbishop Teofil (Ionescu) of Sevres", on-line at http://www.rocorstudies.org/church-people/lives-of-bishops/2009/06/29/archbishop-teofil-ionescu-of-sevres/, (accessed 8.12.2016).

[68] Besse, *L'église orthodoxe roumaine,* 121.

[69] His relations with the American Church date from the 1940s. Besse, *L'église orthodoxe roumaine,* 122.

In 1972 the Bishop Teofil asked the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church and her Patriarch Justinian, to accept him in the Romanian Orthodox Church. On 12 December and 2 February the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia condemned and deposed Bishop Teofil.

Teofil's gesture also represented the beginning of a schism within the already very sensitive Romanian orthodox diaspora, the Church in Paris, situated at Rue Jean de Beauvais no. 9, refusing to follow her bishop and to enter under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Church.[70] The Eparchy was until 1998 under the canonical jurisdiction of the ROCOR. Between 2000-2009 it was under the canonical jurisdiction of the ROEA (in the OCA). However, if in the 1980s the Eparchy had aprox. 20 parishes in Western Europe, until 1990s the only parish remaining was the Sts. Archangels parish from Paris. Her return to the Romanian Archdiocese happened only in the year 2009.[71] In November 2016 the religious association of the former Eparchy – which was the juridical form of the Eparchy under French law – was united with the ROMWE, thus ending the process of unification of the two Romanian Orthodox dioceses in Western Europe.

In 1974 Bishop Teofil was elevated to the rank of Archbishop and his diocese became Archdiocese. Between Teofil's death, which occurred in 1975, and 1980, the Archdiocese was lead by the auxiliary bishop Lucian Florea. In 1980 *locum tenens* of the Archdiocese is entrusted to the newly appointed auxiliary bishop Adrian Hrițcu,[72] elevated in 1982 to the dignity of Archbishop. Archbishop Hrițcu lead the Archdiocese until 1992 when he retired. Between 1992-1998 Metropolitan Serafim Joantă of Germany was the *locum tenens* of the archdiocese.[73]

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[70] Besse, *L'église orthodoxe roumaine,* 123ff.

[71] Nistea, „Arhiepiscopia", 898-899.

[72] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Adrian Hritcu", on-line at https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adrian_Hri%C8%9Bcu, (accessed 19.08.2016). See also "IPS Adrian Hritcu a trecut la Domnul", on-line at http://www.doxologia.ro/actualitate/arhiepiscopia-ortodoxa-romana-europei-occidentale/ips-adrian-hritcu-trecut-la-domnul, (accessed 19.08.2016); "Monografia Episcopiei Ortodoxe Romane a Italiei", on-line at http://episcopia-italiei.it/index.php/istoric/336-monografia-episcopiei-ortodoxe-romane-a-italiei, (accessed 19.08.2016).

[73] In 1993 from the Romanian Archdiocese of Western and Central Europe a new ecclesiastical entity comes to life, the "Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan province for Germany and Central Europe" with the seat in Nuremberg. The Holy Synod erects the new Metropolitan province through the decision No.436/11.02.1993. Basarab, "Rumänische Orthodoxe Kirche", 33. The official website is http://www.mitropolia-ro.de, (accessed 19.08.2016). As metropolitan was elected in 1994 Dr. Serafim Joantă, (then) auxiliary bishop in Sibiu. However, in the present study, due to its rather under-developed form, we will not focus our attention upon the Statute of the Metropolitan province-Archdiocese for Germany and Central Europe, which nonetheless, provides that the "Diocesan Assembly is formed of clergy and elected members from among the laypersons of each parish" (§16), and that "among the members of the Diocesan Council are five elected members, two clerics and three laypersons" (§30). Seven laypersons are members of the parish Council (§54). http://www.mitropolia-ro.de/index.php/mitropolia/statutul, (accessed 19.08.2016).

Since 1998 ROMWE is headed by Metropolitan Iosif Pop, a 1993 graduate of the "Andrei Şaguna" Orthodox Faculty of Theology of Sibiu.[74] Being proposed by priests and Christian faithful of the Romanian Archdiocese of Paris, the hieromonk Iosif, then postgraduate student at the Institute Saint-Serge, in Paris, accepted to stand as a candidate for the archdiocesan see. In November 1997 hieromonk Iosif Pop was thus elected Archbishop for the Romanian Archdiocese of Western and Southern Europe by the General Assembly of the Archdiocese. The General Assembly that elected him was composed of 93 delegates, clergy and laity, from the Romanian parishes of England, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church ratified the election on December 11, 1997 and on March 15, 1998 the ordination took place in the Greek Orthodox Church "St. Stephen" in Paris. In 2001 the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church elevated the Archdiocese to the rank of Metropolitan province, the Archbishop receiving also the title of Metropolitan.

Regarding the Statutes are concerned, as far as we are aware of, neither Metropolitan Puiu's Eparchy, nor Bishop Teofil's Diocese had a Statute, or a Canonical Charta. Both dioceses followed either the Statute of the ROC (the Diocese), or the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church. The fact that they were Religious Associations under the French Law forced them however to have a form of Statute.[75]

ROMWE's first Canonical Statute was given in 1999, and, according to one of the members of the drafting committee, Fr. Patriciu Vlaicu, it followed the Statute of the ROC.[76]

On November 9, 2002, the Diocesan Assembly adopted a new Statute for the Metropolia-Archdiocese, validated by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in its session from 11-12 November 2003, and through the Synodal Decision 2675/3 December 2003.[77]

In 2007 through the decision 4587/2007, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Patriarchate approved the erection within the ROMWE of a new diocese for Spain and Portugal.[78]

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[74] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Iosif Pop", on-line at
https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iosif_Pop, (accessed 19.08.2016). See also the official website of the Metropolitan province http://www.mitropolia.eu/ro/site/63/, (accessed 19.08.2016).

[75] Unfortunately, we were unable to consult either of the original Statutes. We have however consulted the modified Statute of the Association of the Eparchy as it was adopted on 26 November 2016 and which consecrates the integration of the Religious Association of the Eparchy into the ROMWE. Unlike the Canonical Charta, the Statute of the Association of the Eparchy is a simple juridical document, of little canonical or ecclesiological significance.

[76] Unfortunately we were unable to consult this first Statute.

[77] These information are found on the first page of the Statute which is published both in Romanian and in French on-line at http://www.mitropolia-paris.ro/content/texte/statut.fr.pdf, (accessed 19.08.2016).

[78] Redacţia, "Hirotonia PS Timotei, zi de sărbătoare pentru Episcopia Spaniei şi Portugaliei", (1 Jully 2008), on-line at http://www.apostolia.eu/articol_44/hirotonia-ps-timotei-zi-de-sarbatoare-pentru-episcopia-spaniei-%C5%9Fi-portugaliei.html, (accessed 19.08.2016).

In the same year, on 21 June 2007, the Holy Synod of the ROC approved the proposal of the General Assembly of the Romanian Orthodox Vicariate for Italy, which, due to the large Romanian emigration (almost 1.000.000 Romanians and 76 parishes), requested the erection of a new diocese. On February 19, 2008 took place in Paris the Diocesan Assembly of the newly established diocese who designates the hieromonk Siluan Span as the unique candidate for the diocese of Italy.[79]

On the same day, February 19, 2008, at the "Sts. Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael" Romanian Orthodox Parish in Paris (Rue Jean de Beauvais 9bis) an Extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the Metropolitan province took place, which, in order to reflect the new realities,[80] voted in unanimity a new Statute for the Metropolia.[81]

4.1.2. The Laity in the ROMWE Statute

Art. 3 of the 2003 Statute mentioned the three principles that guided the organization of the diocese: the "constitutional principle", the "hierarchical principle" and the "principle of autonomy". Thus, the Metropolitan province

> has a hierarchical governing structure, according to the canonical provisions in force in the Orthodox Church. It is administered in an autonomous form through its own representative bodies, whose members are clerics and laypeople, elected through the vote of the clergy and of the laity, or appointed by the Metropolitan.

In the 2008 Statute this article disappears. Nonetheless the Statute preserves the principle of autonomy (Arts.1; 4), the hierarchical principle (Art. 5) as well as the constitutional principle, laypersons still being involved, although in a limited way, in various ecclesiastical bodies.

In the 2003 Statute, the Central governing bodies of the Metropolitan province, were: the Metropolitan, the Metropolitan Assembly, the Metropolitan Synod, the Metropolitan Administration (the Curia), and the Metropolitan Council (Art.8).

In 2008 a distinction between decisional and consultative governing bodies is introduced. Thus according to Art. 7, the 2008 Statute states:

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[79] "Monografia Episcopiei Ortodoxe Romane a Italiei".

[80] "Adunarea Extraordinara a Mitropoliei Ortodoxe Romane a Europei Occidentale si Meridionale" (18.02.2008), online at http://basilica.ro/new/adunarea-extraordinara-a-mitropoliei-ortodoxe-romane-a-europei-occidentale-si-meridionale/, (accessed 19.08.2016). One may assume that the Diocesan Assembly and the Metropolitan Assembly took place at the same time and in the same place.

[81] The Statute can be accessed on-line at http://episcopia-italiei.it/media/statute/statutul_moreom.pdf, (accessed 19.08.2016). A French Translation can be found here http://www.mitropolia-paris.ro/content/texte/statut.fr.pdf, (accessed 19.08.2016).

"The Metropolitan province has these central governing bodies:
- the Metropolitan Synod;
- the Metropolitan
- the Metropolitan Assembly
- the Metropolitan Council
  and as consultative body for the pastoral and missionary coordination
- the Metropolitan Congress".

Beside this distinction between consultative and decisional bodies one notices also a different arrangement of the order of the governing bodies, which marks the establishment of a new hierarchical order.

The Metropolitan Assembly. If in the 2003 Statute the Metropolitan Assembly was listed second after the Metropolitan, but treated first, in the 2008 it is listed after the Metropolitan Synod, formed exclusively of the bishops of the Metropolitan region (Art. 8 §1),[82] and the institution of the Metropolitan.

In the 2003 Statute the Metropolitan Assembly was the "central representative body of the Metropolitan province, for all the administrative problems as well as for those issues that do not fall into the competence of the bishops or of the Metropolitan" (Art. 9). In its composition entered members *ex officio*, such as the Metropolitan and the auxiliary bishops, the protobesbyters, the metropolitan counselors, but also the directors of the theological schools and all the parish priests. Elected members were two laypersons from each parish (Art. 10). The president of the Metropolitan Assembly was the Metropolitan or, in his absence, the *locum tenens* appointed by the Holy Synod of the BOR (Art. 14). Among its attributions, the Metropolitan Assembly had in the 2003 Statute the role to elect the members of the Metropolitan Council (Art.15b), to elect the members of the Metropolitan Consistory (Art. 15 §d), to examine the annual general report of the Metropolitan and of the Metropolitan Council, to make decisions for the good development of Church's life, and to approve the diocesan budget (Art. 15f).

The Metropolitan Assembly did not have the role to elect the Metropolitan. This role was entrusted to the Electoral College.[83]

The composition of the Metropolitan Assembly was substantially modified in the 2008 Statute, no further reference being made to principals/rectors of theological schools, to members of the Metropolitan administration or to metropolitan counselors. According to the new Statute the Metropolitan Assembly comprised: members *ex officio* (the Members of the Metropolitan Synod, the Eparchial Vicars, the Protopresbyters, the starets of the monasteries),

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[82] The institution of the Metropolitan Synod, unlike in the 2003 Statute where it was treated under title "Chapter III. Auxiliary Bishops", in a single article No. 25, in the 2008 Statute it receives a preeminent position, being treated in a separated section in 3 articles, Art.8-11.
[83] See below.

and 30 members elected from each diocese (10 clerics and 20 laypersons),[84] delegated by the respective Diocesan Assemblies (Art. 13 §2). The Assembly is presided by the Metropolitan (Art. 13 §3). The Metropolitan Assembly is "a central administrative body" (Art. 13 §1).

Laypeople are also represented in the Metropolitan Council, which is the executive body of the Metropolitan Assembly (Statute 2003 – Ch.V, Arts. 29-32; Statute 2008 – Arts. 17-20). In the 2003 Statute the laypersons were two from each Vicariate, institution that disappeared in the new Statute.

In the 2008 Statute, the Metropolitan Council has members *ex officio*: the Metropolitan Synod, the diocesan vicars, the exarchs of the monasteries; and elected members: a cleric and two laypersons from each diocese,[85] appointed for two years by the Metropolitan Assembly.[86]

The Metropolitan Congress is a new institution introduced in the 2008 Statute and it is a "consultative body (Art. 21 §1, 2). Besides the members of the Metropolitan Council and of the Diocesan Councils, there are members of the Metropolitan Congress, the clergy and the laypersons delegated by each parish. The number of the lay representatives is decided by each parish (Art. 21 §1). The decisions made by the Congress "will be taken in consideration by the Metropolitan Assembly and by the Assemblies of the Dioceses" (Art. 21 §2).

Laity and the election of the Metropolitan-Archbishop and of the Bishops.

In the 2008 Statute the election of the Metropolitan-Archbishop and of the Bishops is entrusted to the Eparchial Council headed by the Metropolitan-Archbishop or by the bishop that assures the *locum tenens* and who designates a special commission for the preparation of the elections and the nomination of the candidates (Art. 30 §1). The Metropolitan or the *locum tenens* convenes then the Eparchial Assembly (Art. 31) who designates the candidates (Art. 34). After the designation of the candidates the Metropolitan-Archbishop */locum*

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[84] This form of limitation can be justified both through the fact that since 2007 when Romania joined the EU a massive wave of emigration in Western Europe took place leading to the explosion of the numbers of parishes. Accepting all the parish priests and two laypersons as parish representatives in the Metropolitan Assembly would mean now to count around 1200 participants. However, the question of having to accommodate so many persons during a Metropolitan Assembly is no real reason to limit the participation of the delegates to only 90, especially since the Metropolitan Assemblies and the Metropolitan Congress have been since organized together in the same place and in the same days.

[85] At the present moment there are three dioceses: the Archdiocese of Western Europe (jurisdiction upon the parishes from France, Belgium, Netherlands, UK and Ireland and Iceland), the Diocese of Italy and the Diocese of Spain and Portugal. Therefore, there are six laypersons in the Metropolitan Council.

[86] The Statute 2008 mentions that "Among the members (of the Metropolitan Council) with deliberative right a treasurer and a secretary are elected" (Art.18). However, no indication is given as to who has a deliberative right and does not. One may however assume that the deliberative right have only the members of the Metropolitan Synod.

tenens presents the list of candidates to the Holy Synod of the ROC (Art. 37 §1) who then elects the new Metropolitan-Archbishop or Bishop (Art. 37 §2).

The Holy Synod of the ROC can also refuse to elect the candidate(s) proposed by the Diocesan Assembly if it wishes to do so. In this case the Diocesan Assembly must propose another candidate.

Let us now focus our attention upon the diocese (the eparchy) and see where and how the laypersons are involved.

According to Art. 23 of the 2008 Statute, the eparchy is governed by:

- the archbishop or the bishop;
- the Eparchial Assembly;
- the Eparchial Council;
- the Permanence of the Eparchial Council.

Art. 24 defines the Eparchial Assembly as "the central governing body in which the parishes and the monasteries are represented".

The Eparchial Assembly is constituted for a period of 4 years of members *ex officio*

- the Archbishop or the Bishop
- the auxiliary bishops
- the eparchial vicars
- the protopresbyters (the deans)
- the elected members of the Eparchial Council
- the members of the Permanence of the Eparchial Council
- the starets of the monasteries
- all the priests and deacons of the eparchy
- and of elected members
- two laypersons delegated from each parish and confirmed annually by the Parish Assembly.

The Eparchial Assembly has among its responsibilities the task to analyze the annual report of activity presented by the Bishop and by the Eparchial Council, making recommendations afterwards; it analyzes the manner in which the parishes and the administrative structures fulfill their obligations; it adopts decisions concerning the erection, the territorial delimitation or the suppression of the deaneries; it adopts the internal By-law of the Eparchy (Art. 28).

Laypersons are also represented in the Eparchial Council. Here their number is set to 6, and together with the Bishops and 3 clerics, thy have deliberative vote (Art. 46).

Between the diocese and the parish, according to the 2008 Statute there is no other administrative structure where the laypersons have a role. The Protopresbyterate (the deanery) is a mere territorial coordinating structure,

administered by a protopresbyter appointed by the bishop (Art. 69-70). However, in the 2003 Statute, between the diocese and the protopresbyterats, there existed another institution, the Vicariate, where the laypersons played a role. Art.34 of the 2003 Statute defined the Vicariate as: "the administrative unit of the Metropolitan province formed of two or more deaneries". At this level of administration two laypersons were delegated by each parish to represent them in the Vicariat Assembly (Art. 35).[87] Among the Vicarial Counselors could also be laypersons, according to the rules defined by each Vicarial Assembley (Art. 41).[88]

The Parish. In the appointment of a priest in a parish the laypeople have no role, according to the 2008 Statute, which is a departure from the 2003 Statute where in appointing a priest the bishop had to consult first with the Parish Assembly and with the protopresbyters (Art.54). The Parish Council's advise is requested in the 2008 Statute only when it comes to the number of priests appointed in a parish (Art. 56). The involvement of the parish in the appointment of the priest seems to be connected with the requirements for the parish to financially support the priest and his family. Thus Art.52 (Statute 2003) required the parish to assure at least a part of necessary funds to support the priest and his family; this requirement disappeared from the 2008 Statute.

The role of the priest in the parish is, according to the latest Statute, defined in terms such as "represents", "convokes and presides", "supervises" and "coordinates" (Art. 55).

The 2003 Statute provided that:

> The Parish priest exercises in his parish his entire Church ministry: the sacramental, the teaching and the governing ministry. Those aspects of the teaching ministry as well as of the governing ministry which are not reserved exclusively to the clerics, may be exercised by other persons or groups of persons who receive in this regard the blessing of the parish priest (Art. 55).

Such provisions are also preserved in the 2008 Statute in Art.66.

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[87] Among the responsibilities the Vicariate Assembly had, was that to resolve patrimonial related problems, cultural or administrative problems; to examine the general report of the Vicar and of the Vicarial Council; to guard that the decanates fulfil their duties (Art. 37).

[88] There are however remnants of these Vicariates in France for example, where an institution called "Doyenné Orthodoxe Roumain de France" is registered as Union Diocésaine Orthodoxe : Association cultuelle n°3/07320 with the seat at the Metropolitan residence (1, boulevard du Général Leclerc 91470 Limours). It is a union of Orthodox religious associations ("une union d'associations cultuelles orthodoxes"), that is, it is a supra-parish and a supra-deanery institution, where the episcopate is still involved in its governing, but it is not the diocese. According to the Reports of its General Assembly the Auxilliary Bishop presents the "Spiritual Report", whereas the financial report is presented by a layperson. The manner of functioning of this kind of religious associations is however determined by the French legislation. (Available on-line at http://www.paroissesaintsilouane.com/sites/default/files/AG du Doyenné 2010.doc, (accessed 19.08.2016).

The laypeople are still involved in the governing of the parish through their presence in the Parish Assembly and the Parish Council. Thus, the Parish Assembly is the deliberative body of the parish and it is composed of "all the members of the parish who have reached the age of majority and who participate in parish life and contribute directly to its support" (Art. 58).

The Parish Council is the executive body of the parish and is composed of all the clerics of the parish, the main cantor of the church and 5 to 12 elected laypersons (Art. 62).

Neither in the 2003 nor in the 2008 Statute are laypersons present in the Consistories that judge the disciplinary deviations of the clergy.

In conclusion one can say that the latest Statute of the ROMWE limits the role of the laity in the Church either by reducing their number or by transforming some ecclesial institutions into consultative bodies. Furthermore, there is a great difference between the extent to which the laity is involved in the central administration of the Church and the local community. Thus, if in the decision-making process of the Diocese or of the Metropolitan the laity has a mere consultative role, in the administration of the parish its role remains however an important one.

Let us now look over the Atlantic and see whether there the laity plays a different role.

4.2. Romanian Orthodox Church in America – ROEA and ROAA/ROMA

4.2.1. Brief History of the Romanian-American Orthodoxy

Today the Orthodox Romanians are dived in two Archdioceses: the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (ROEA) seated in Jackson, Michigan, now headed by Archbishop Dr. Nathaniel Popp;[89] and the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia in the Americas (ROAA/ROMA), seated in Chicago, Illinois, headed by Metropolitan Dr. Nicolae Condrea.[90]

The origins of the two dioceses are found in the late 19th century when, due to large Romanian emigration from territories under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that is Transylvania, Bukovina and Banat,[91] Romanian orthodox parishes were established. The few american parishes that existed before the erection of the diocese were under the canonical jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Transylvania, whereas those in Canada were under the Metropolitan of Jassy.[92]

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[89] http://www.roea.org/hierarchs1.html, (accessed 19.08.2016).

[90] http://www.romarch.org/ro/pags.php?id=8, (accessed 19.08.2016).

[91] Gabriel – Viorel Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America – Parte a ortodoxiei americane*, (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitara Clujeana, 2007), 83.

[92] Ion Casian [Liviu Stan], "Românii din America și viața lor religioasă", *BOR* 68, 11-12 (1950): 588-602, here 593, 596.

On 9-10 March 1918, at Joungstown, Ohio a "national congress" of the Romanians in the USA took place, where the decision to erect an autonomous Romanian diocese was taken. In consequence a letter was sent to Bucharest in which the Romanians declared that they had established a new diocese in the USA and that they wished to put this diocese under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Ungro-Vlachia, thus cutting the relations with Sibiu, which was then ruled by the renegaded Metropolitan Vasile Mangra.[93]

According to Liviu Stan (who writes under the pseudonym of Ioan Casian)[94] there was a sentiment of mistrust among the Romanians in the USA towards the idea of establishing a diocese. Many of them were afraid that through the erection of a diocese the same despotic hierarchy from back home would be brought and imposed upon them. The one that played a decisive role in the organization of the parishes and of the erection of the Romanian diocese in the USA was the Czernowitz professor Dr. Lazar Gherman, who had fled the country in 1917 and since 1918 was rector and professor at the Ukrainian Seminary in Canada. Under his coordination in 1922 two clergy conferences were held during which the organization of the parishes and of the Romanian parish schools was discussed. Under Gherman's presidency two more clergy conferences where organized in 1923 where, among other things, it was decided that the organization of the parishes would be based on the Șagunian Statute. A mixed (clergy-laity) Church Congress was held the same year, which decided on the erection of the diocese.[95]

The Holy Synod discussed the American letter in 1920 responding positively and accepting the Romanian Orthodox diocese under the canonical jurisdiction of the Metropolitan province of Ungro-Vlachia. However, in order to avert a conflict with the Metropolitan from Sibiu, Nicolae Balan, the Metropolitan province of Ungro-Vlachia has done nothing concretely to exercise its jurisdiction in the US.[96] In 1928 the Holy Synod discusses again the idea of erecting a diocese in the US. On 21 November 1929 the National Church Congress approves the decision of the American Church Congress concerning the erection of an autonomous diocese in America. The official Synodal decision was made however on 1 November 1930 through the decision N° 10/219 and re-discussed on 21 October 1931 and on 20 May 1932 it was decided to send a bishop to the USA as soon as possible in order to organize the new diocese.[97]

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[93] The Letter is published in Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 179- 180.
[94] Ioan Casian was a 4th-5th century monk declared by the Orthodox Church saint.
[95] Casian [L. Stan], "Românii din America", 593ff.
[96] Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,*183.
[97] Casian [L. Stan], "Românii din America", 598.

The first bishop of the new American diocese was the archimandrite Policarp Moruşca,[98] the Holy Synod of the ROC electing him in 1935.[99] Moruşca had a great though difficult administrative activity in America, establishing the seat of the diocese at "Vatra Românească", at Grass Lake, Michigan. At the fourth Congress of the Romanians in the USA, which took place on 5 July 1935 in Detroit, under the presidency of Bishop Moruşca, the Statute for the Organization of the Romanian Orthodox Church in America was voted, Statute approved in 1936 by the Church's Central Council from Bucharest.[100]

The first steps towards the schism of the diocese appeared after 1945 when the communist regime from Bucharest wished to replace Moruşca, who after returning to Romania for a short period in 1939 was unable to leave it again for the United States, with another candidate. In 1948 Policarp Moruşca was officially withdrawn as the head of the Romanian Diocese of America.[101]

On 17 May 1950, in Detroit, 8 persons who were in contact with Bucharest, held a "congress", electing a new bishop in the person of Andrei Moldovan.[102] This was a manner by which the Romanian Synod, who during those hard times was under the heavy control of the communist regime, wanted to make the Romanian Orthodox from America, who constantly demanded Moruşca to be sent back to their diocese, accept a new bishop.

On June 5, 1950 a new institution is registered with the State of Michigan: *The Romanian Orthodox Autonomous Diocese of Northern and Southern America,* with headquarters in Detroit.[103] The election of Andrei Moldovan as bishop for the Americas, and the congresses held between 1948-1951 represent the acts of total separation of the ROEA from the Holy Synod of the ROC. The autonomous diocese entered under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church of America (OCA), and in recent years negotiations have been conducted in order to achieve a reunification of the Romanian American diaspora. This is briefly the history of the schism within the Romanian Orthodox community in the Americas.

Concerning the Statute of the ROEA, it was not brought by her first bishop Policarp Moruşca, who only modified it after his enthronement in

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[98] Policarp is his name taken at the monastic tonsure, his baptism name being Pompei. Pompei was a married priest, his wife being the sister of Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan. However, during WW I he is enroled as capelan priest and sent to war, whereas his wife is deported to Hungary. Family tensions then lead to divorce. In 1925 after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem Pompei has a spiritual conversion and embraces monastic life, being tonsured into monachism and entering the Hodros-Bodog monastery, taking the name Policarp. He is a prolific author and is involved in Church administration. Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 232ff.
[99] The Patriarchal Gramata is published in Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 243.
[100] Casian [L. Stan], "Românii din America", 599.
[101] Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 333.
[102] Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 337.
[103] Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 338.

1936,[104] but it was written by a commission of priests from the American diocese, on the basis of the *Şagunian Statute,* and approved by the Diocesan Congress in 1933 and by Bucharest (slightly modified) the same year.[105]

Therefore, in their present form the Statutes of the two Romanian dioceses in the USA still permit the laity a very broad participation in the decision-making process and in the administration of the Church.

4.2.2. The Role of the Laypersons in the Church according to the ROEA and ROAA Statutes

The latest ROEA Statute dates from 1994, whereas the ROAA is from 2006.[106] From the beginning one notices that the ROEA charta is divided in two sections "Statutul", translated into English as "Constitution" and "Regulamentul", translated into English as "By-Laws". A similar division can be noticed in the ROAA Statute, which although it has no other title, still begins with Part 1: "Constitutional Principles".

The ROEA "Constitution" makes a clear-cut division between the "spiritual affairs" upon which the bishop has full authority, and the "secular matters" upon which the "Episcopate Congress" is "the sole legislative and highest administrative authority" (Const. V. §§b,c), following thus the Organic Statute of Şaguna. The same separation of competences, though not so clearly expressed, is to be found in Art. 3.01 of the ROAA Statute.

For both Archdioceses the Archdiocesan Congress plays a central role, having a deliberative character and not a consultative one as in the ROMWE, as we saw above.

In the ROEA, the Congress has extensive role. It is its task to:

"(a) Elect the Bishop;
(b) Elect the Episcopate Council;
(c) Elect two (2) Lay members to the Episcopate Tribunal;

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[104] ROEA, *Constitution and By-Laws,* "Preamble". In this section of the Statute the entire history of the Statute is offered. Moruşca proposed the Diocesan Congress to modify the Statute in an attempt to depart from the Congregationalist mentality that had penetrated the Romanian communities. In this regard he proposed that the bishop to be elected by the Holy Synod of the ROC. However, Gârdan argues that the changes Moruşca brought to the original Statute led to a weakening of the administrative autonomy the diocese had. Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 259. Interesting enough, the ROAA Statute claims the same origins as the ROEA.

[105] Gârdan, *Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America,* 186, 226.

[106] The ROEA Statute can be consulted on-line at http://www.roea.org/officialdocuments.html, (accessed 19.08.2016) and the ROAA at http://www.romarch.org/statut.pdf, (accessed 19.08.2016).

(d) Examine and approve reports on activities of the Episcopate Council, and all other organizations affiliated with the Episcopate;
(e) Examine and approve the budget;
(f) Buy, sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber property of any kind, nature, and description belonging to the Episcopate;
(g) Contract mortgages or any other debts secured or otherwise pertaining to Episcopate property;
(h) Provide material means for the proper functioning of the Episcopate;
(i) Create or dissolve Religious and Educational Institutions affiliated with the Episcopate;
(j) Approve the Constitutions and By-laws of the Auxiliary Organizations, Religious Institutions and Parishes belonging to the Episcopate;
(k) Amend the Constitution and By-laws of the Episcopate;
(l) Establish the policy in external relations of the Episcopate;
(m) Ratify the decisions of the Episcopate Council regarding the acceptance or exclusion of Clergy, Priests and Deacons and Parishes;
(n) Establish and assess the dues and other contributions of the Parishes to the Episcopate;
(o) Make the final, authoritative determination of the acceptance or rejection of Lay Delegates to be seated as voting members of that Congress;
(p) Establish, enforce and amend, as necessary, obligatory Parish standards for Clergy remunerations".

According to the ROAA Statute, the Congress

Except for dogmatic and canonical matters, is concerned with all other matters which affect the life, mission, growth and unity of the Archdiocese and especially the uniform administration of the Deaneries and the Parishes. (Art. 15.02.)

And it "is the deliberative instrument of governance of the Archdiocese" (Art. 15.03).

The Congress is constituted similarly in both jurisdictions, besides the bishops and the clergy, the laypeople participate with two representatives from each parish and two delegates from each auxiliary organization (ROEA By-Laws III.1; ROAA Statute Art. 15.02).

Among the most important tasks of the Archdiocesan Congress is the Election of the Bishop(s) (ROEA By-Laws III.20; ROAA Art. 5.02). There are however differences in the manner of electing the bishops and the role played by the Congress. Thus, according to the ROEA By-Laws, the Congress elects the bishop, entrusting to the Metropolitan/Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) only the task of canonically examining the candidate and the ordination (By-Laws III.12), whereas in the ROAA the Congress only proposes to the Holy Synod of the ROC the name of the candidate for confirmation (Art. 5.05).

The ROAA Statute provides that: "Each institution or organization of the Archdiocese[107] shall have an assembly as its central governing body. In general these shall be in the proportion of one third (⅓) clergy and two thirds (⅔) laity" (Art. 6.04).

In the ROEA By-Laws the laypeople are also present in the Episcopate Council (IV.1). Their number is fixed at 10. The Council is an executive central body of the ROEA having the role to "implement the decisions of the Episcopate Congress and administer the affairs of the Episcopate" (IV.2). Furthermore, the Council has the following powers:

(a) To convene the Episcopate Congress in the event of vacancy in the Office of the Bishop for the purpose of executing the necessary formalities for the election, consecration, and installation of the successor Bishop;

(b) To propose amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws;

(c) To authorize the Parishes to buy, lease, and sell real estate, and other Parish property and to contract mortgages or other encumbrances, where necessary, in conformity with other provisions of the By-Laws;

(d) To study and approve the creation of Missions and new Parishes and Deaneries, and to determine their respective areas of jurisdiction;

(e) To receive petitions of Clergy, Priests and Deacons, and Parishes wishing to come under the spiritual, operational and adjudicative jurisdiction of the Episcopate, subject to the ratification by the Episcopate Congress;

(f) To examine and suggest changes in blue-prints and to authorize construction of new churches and church-related structures;

(g) To initiate and supervise the general activities of the Episcopate;

(h) To hire and establish the salaries of the employees of the Episcopate and the remuneration of the Bishop;

(i) To maintain an inventory of all Episcopate property;

(j) To prepare an annual budget, and to suggest to the Episcopate Congress means of meeting it;

(k) To provide for, and supervise the official publications of the Episcopate;

(l) To recommend to the Bishop the bestowal of honors and/or elevation in rank on persons under the jurisdiction of the Episcopate;

(m) To appoint delegates, as required, to represent the Episcopate;

(n) To exercise supervision over the financial operations of the Episcopate, its Missions, Auxiliary Organizations and Institutions;

(o) To bring an action in the Episcopate Courts against any person or group alleged to have violated this Constitution and By-Laws;

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[107] "The Archdiocese consists of the following institutions or organizations: the Archdiocesan Central Administration, Deaneries, Parishes, Mission Parishes, Monasteries and other monastic institutions, Theological institutions, and such other institutions and organizations as may be created by the Congress" (§6.01).

(p) To request and receive an audit of the financial records of any official, department, fund, Parish, or Parish Auxiliary in question, in the event a charge of financial or administrative irregularity for cause is brought to its attention;

(q) To provide for the maintenance of the archives of the Episcopate;

(r) To carry out the activities relating to church property provided in these By-Laws including, but not limited to, Article IX, Sections 4, 10 and 11.

In the ROAA the Eparchial Council is an executive institution and it is "advisory and consultative to the Archbishop" (Art. 16.10.a). It is formed from: "the Archbishop as President, the Hierarchical Vicar, the Administrative Vicar(s), the Secretary, two Treasurers, four clergy elected by the Congress, eight laity elected by the Congress, the President of the Ladies' auxiliary (AROLA) and the President of the Youth organization (ROYA)" (Art. 16.02).

Among the Diocesan Council's responsibilities one counts:

(b) Except for doctrinal and canonical matters, it is concerned with matters and issues that affect the life, growth and unity of the Archdiocese and makes such decisions thereon as are required.

(c) Together with the Archbishop, it is concerned with and oversees the ministries, institutions and financial affairs of the Archdiocese.

(e) Together with the Archbishop, the Finance Committee and the appropriate heads of the departments of the Archdiocese, it prepares the proposed Budget for recommendation to the Congress.

(g) It reviews all matters of a temporal and financial nature concerning the Archdiocese.

(j) It reviews and ratifies the decisions of the Archbishop with regard to the ordination of the clergy and the appointment and transfer of clergy, according to the provisions of these Statutes.

(l) Following the action of the Congress to purchase or sell real property, the Council shall be authorized to take all such actions as are necessary to effect the decision.

(o) Under extraordinary circumstances, the Council may exercise the deliberative authority of the Congress between Congresses, subject to the ratification of these decisions by the Congress in its next session.

(p) Together with the Locum Tenens, it oversees the administration of the Archdiocese upon the vacancy of the Archiepiscopal throne and directs the procedure for the election of the Archbishop pursuant to the provisions of Chapter XII, Articles 13.05-13.08 above.

(q) The Council shall assist in the selection of a Vicar Bishop(s) pursuant to the provisions of Chapter XIII, Article 13.02 above.

(r) If upon the two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Council it shall be determined that the Archbishop has become incapable of performing his duties as a result of either physical or mental impairment, the Council will address its concerns directly and discretely to the Patriarch, in his capacity as President of the Holy Synod, for consideration. (§16.10)

Let us draw some conclusions as to the role of the laypeople in the two American Orthodox Dioceses at central levels of Church governing.

First of all one notices that the laity is represented in the most important administrative – legislative and executive- bodies: the Diocesan Congress and the Diocesan Council. Therefore, although there are differences between the two dioceses, still the laity shares greatly in the governing ministry of the Church.

A close look into the responsibilities of these two bodies shows that their role is not a decorative one, the two governing bodies mentioned being a strong partner of Church governing to the episcopate. Through the role these institutions have, the laypersons also act as guardians of Church discipline and property, and as promoters of the wellbeing of the diocese.

At the level of the Deanery, the laypeople also play an active role. Unlike the ROMWE and the ROEA where the Deanery is just a territorial administrative body run only by a Protopresbyter, the ROAA still preserve the Deanery Assembly. Thus, according to its Statute:

> The Deanery Assembly is composed of the parish priest, the first chanter, the president of the parish council, the religious education director, the ladies' auxiliary president and two (2) additional lay members from each parish of the Deanery, elected by the parish by the same procedure as the election of Parish Council Members enumerated in Chapter XXXII. The Dean shall be informed by the Parish Priest of those persons representing the parish in each category (Art. 19.01).

At the level of the Parish one observes the existence of the same principle of close cooperation between the clergy and the laypeople. Thus, in the ROEA By-Laws (IX.1) as well as in the ROAA (Arts. 24.03; 35.02) one finds that the priest administers the parish in cooperation with the Parish Council. The Parish Council may affect the removal of a priest from the parish (ROEA IX.21). The Parish Council, which, together with the parish priest, is the executive body, is appointed by the Parish Assembly.

The ROAA Statute (Art. 40.02) and the ROEA By-Laws (Art. XV) allow the participation of laypeople in judicial affairs as well. Thus, the Deanery Consistory, the first instance of judgment,[108] is constituted of two clerics and two laypersons. In the ROAA Statute, the laypersons do not participate however in the cases where priests are involved, but only when laypersons are (Art. 40.03). The laypersons are also members of the Spiritual Court of Second

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[108] In the ROEA the Deanery Consistory is called the "Deanery Peace Court" and it is a "court of mediation and dispute resolution" (XV.5). For canonical and dogmatic related issues the ROEA disposes of a Spiritual Consistory formed of three clerics appointed by the bishop (XV.6).

Instance – the Archdiocesan Court (Art. 40.05), which also receives the accusations against the bishop.

In the ROEA the Episcopate Tribunal, formed of "three (3) members of the Spiritual

Consistory and two (2) Laypersons elected by the Episcopate Congress for a term of two (2) years and of two (2) alternate Layperson members" (XV.7) represents the Court of Appeal for the cases presented to the Spiritual Tribunal.

To the question whether the American Dioceses allow the lay participation to the teaching office of Church, the answer is positive. This is confirmed by the provisions of Chapter IX of the ROAA Statute where the teaching in the parish is not confined to the person of the priests, but is regulated by the Parish Council, as well as by Art. VII.1 of the ROEA By-Laws – The Affiliated Institutions. In this section, which mentions the "Schools" the only two provisions are:

(a) The Bishop shall be the head of all affiliated institutions.
(b) With the approval of the Episcopate Congress, such institutions may be chartered as separate legal entities.

Conclusions

From the presentation we did several conclusions clearly come to the forefront.

First of all there are two distinct attitudes with regard to the role and the rights of the laity in the Church: on the one side there is the dominant position of those who limit the involvement of the laity in Church affairs, and, on the other side, there is the minority group, or part of the Church, that allows the laity a rather broad involvement in the administration of the Church. It is interesting to see that the minority group, represented here by the Romanian American Orthodoxy, in particular by the ROEA, preserves in fact an old Romanian tradition, which, in the 19th century, was (re)established by the Romanian Metropolitan and Canonist, St. Andrei Şaguna.

The second element one notices is that, within the direct jurisdiction of the Romanian Patriarchate, the tendency is to limit even further the lay involvement in Church affairs. To this fact testify the changes that have recently been made to the Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church and to the Statute of the ROMWE.

Let us call Metropolitan Saguna's justification of the greater involvement of the laity in the Church's affairs: "in order for the vitality of the Body of Christ to bear fruit it is necessary that all its vital parts cooperate in an organic harmony".[109] Furthermore, the Transylvanian Metropolitan is convinced that

> Church's external vitality is conditioned by the strong functionality of all the personal and social organs of the Church, because there is no doubt that in that body in which the vital parts are neglected or not nurtured and left in passivity (...) there, the life of the body is numbed and unhealthy and easily perishable. This is why it is necessary that the organic elements of the Church not only not to hinder one another, but all together to be free to collaborate in harmony for mutual support, and for the mutual cultivation and prosperity.[110]

There are of course many arguments brought across the centuries in favor of the larger lay involvement in the Church. Let us add another one to these. By involving the laity at all levels of Church's life it is the only way by which the Orthodox Church can avoid the effects of secularization. To involve the laity in Church affairs does not mean to allow the secularization into the Church, but rather to bring the Church into the world.

Furthermore, by involving the laity in the Church's affairs, especially into the administrative ones, one puts into play various means of checks and balances that prevent the all too common abuses of power or acts of corruption, finally allowing the Church to grow as a transparent, socially responsible, missionary-oriented Body of Faithful that not only preaches social justice, equal rights for everyone, love and mercy, but also lives by these values.

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[109] Andreiu Baron de Șaguna, *Compendiu de dreptul canonic,* (Sibiu, 1913 [1868]), §132.2.
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V. BOOK REVIEWS

Radomir Popovic, *Serbian Orthodox Church in History* (translated in English by Petar V. Serovic, Belgrade and Novi Sad: Art Print, 2005), 135 p.

The history of the Serbian Orthodox Church is known in the Romanian space, but also in the other Orthodox spaces, mostly due to the activity of some important Serbian personalities, like Saint Nikolas Velimirovic[1] or Saint Justin Popovic[2]. The main reason for such a problem is the fact that most of the works dedicated to this subject are not translated in English or France.

Therefore, the publication of some works like the one of Bosko Bojovic[3] about the Serbian Orthodox Church means a lot for the research of this subject in other cultural spaces. However, if the aforementioned work is addressed to specialists, the one of Professor Radomir Popovic, who teaches the History of the Church at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Belgrade, can be read and analysed by anyone who wants to improve his/her knowledge about this subject. It is similar to the synthesis about the history of our Orthodox Church, realised by Father Mircea Păcurariu[4].

His research is segmented in 11 chapters. In the first one (pp. 9-19), he speaks about the arrival of the Serbs in the Balkans and their Christianisation. In simple words, he shows that they became Christians in the 7th century and this process was influenced

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[1] Saint Nikolas, who lived at the end of the 19th century and in the first part of the 20th one, studied in Oxford and, during the First World War, travelled to the United Kingdom and to the USA to support his country. Some of his conferences about the history of his homeland were published in English. For more information about his life and activity, see: Nicolaj Velimirovic, *Religion and Nationality in Serbia,* (Breingsville: PA USA, 2010); Nicolaj Velimirovic, *Short works of Nikolai Velimirovic* (Lexington: BiblioBazar, 2008); Mark D. Chapman, "The Church of England, Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the First Word War, in Vladislav Puzovitzy (coord.), *Pravoslavi Svet i Prvi stecki pat,* (Belgrade: Pravoslavni Bogosloviki Fakultet Universiteta, 2015), p. 385-401; Nicolaj Velimirovic, *Bishops, Saints and Politics* (London: T&T Clarck, 2007); Nicolaj Velimirovic, *The Fantasy of Reunion: Anglicans, Catholics and Ecumenism 1833-1882* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Valentine Chirol, *Serbia and the Serbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914); Nikolai Velimirovic, *Serbia in Light and Darkness,* (London, New York, Bombay, Calcuta, Madras: Longmans Green and Co., 1916); Nikolai Velimirovic, *Christianity and War; Letters of a Serbian to his English Friend,* (Lexoington: Bibliolife, 2010).

[2] For more information about his life and activity, see: Justin Popovic, *Time is a Fragment of Eternity* (Los Angeles: Sevastian Press, 2014); Justin Popovitch, *Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian,* translated by Radomir M. Plavsic (Los Angeles: Sebastian Press, 2009); Irinej Bulovich, Atanasie Jetvich, „Foreword",

in Justin Popovitch, *Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian,* translated by Radomir M. Plavsic, (Los Angeles: Sebastian Press, 2009), p. 7-9.

[3] Bosko Bojovic, *L'Eglise Orthodoxe Serbe. Histoire - Spiritualite – Modernite* (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2014).

[4] See: Mircea Păcurariu, Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române - compendiu (History of the Romanian Orthodox Church-compendium*),* 3rd edition, (Bucharest: Basilica, 2013).

by the Byzantine Empire[5]. Then, he presents the development of the Church under Saint Sava (pp. 21-32), the most important aspects of its archbishopric administration (pp. 32-37), and the history of the institution during the period of the Serbian Patriarchate (pp. 38-50). He shows that the last one of the mentioned moments happened in the moment of a big increase of the territory of the state:

"Serbs occupied Thessaly, the region from the Holy Montain to Christopolis, Epirus and Albaina (during the Emperos Rusan – 1331-1355). King Dusan proclaimed himself Emperor in 1346. Byzantium was greatly weakened by internal crisis and Dusan strove to substitute once powerful Byzantine Empire with his own Serbo-Byzantine Empire. He considered himself the Emperor of Serbs and Greeks. In order to legitimate his title, he needed to elevate Archbishopric to the level of the Patriarchate. This was done on the occasion of a Church-State council held in Skopje in 1346, on the day of the Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem"[6].

The 5th chapter is dedicated to the Turkish enslavement (pp. 51-54), the 6th one to the renewal of the Patriarchate of Pec (pp. 55-58), and the other ones up to the 9th one to the development of the Church in this period. Then, the 10th one (pp. 71-96), segmented in seven small parts, presents the evolution of the Church between 1766 and 1920. In the last chapter (pp. 97-135), Father Radomir presents a list of the Holy Serbs (pp. 109-116), short biographies of the most important Serbian rulers (pp. 119-131), and a list of the Patriarchs (pp. 133-135). His work is, as we can see, a brief presentation of the millenary history of the Church he belongs to, which helps the reader to travel back in time, to see the most important personalities of the Serbian Orthodox Church and to understand what this institution meant for the history of the medieval, modern and contemporary state of Serbia. This is the reason why we strongly recommend to the reader who wants to know more about this important ecclesiastical institution, its rulers and its personalities, to read this book and to complete the information provided by it with data from other similar sources.

Review by MAXIM MORARIU

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[5] "According to a Byzantine writer, the emperor-historian Constantine VII (913-959), Serbian tribes adopted the new faith very slowly, i. e. it took them quite a while to renounce their ancient pagan customs and convictions. Same author recorded that the first occurrence of an en-masse baptism among the Serbs happened during the reign of Emperor Heraclius (610-641). First Christian missionaries among the Serbs came from the East, arriving from renowned Byzantine Christian and spiritual centres such as Constantinople and Thessalonica. However, there is no doubt that Christian influences also arrived from Adriatic coastal towns, where organisation still remained well intact". Radomir Popovic, *Serbian Orthodox Church in History,* translated in English by Petar V. Serovic (Belgrade: Novi Sad, Art Print, 2005), p. 10.
[6] Ibid*.,* p. 37-38.