TEOLOGIA

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The review publishes studies, translations from Holly Fathers, notes, comments and book reviews.

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EDITORIAL

Holy Unction - Mystery of God's Healing Mercy

The Saviour Jesus Christ came into the world to bestow upon it a flood of Godly love. People got sick, reaching into the darkness, weakness, corruption and death, because, since they sin, they could not share God's love. This maintains the integrity, health and natural joints of human nature, built according to the image of God's love.

Therefore, Jesus Christ came in maximum closeness to the human beings so they can enjoy the power of God's embracing love, which put on the clothes of divine mercy for the man found in sin and death. The Heavenly Father always felt and feels compassion, encouraging and healing mercy towards human suffering. Thus, we can understand how the Saviour came near the people in distress, disease, sin and needs, bringing each one of them the needed antidote. He touched them, prayed for them and freed them of the burdens which oppressed them. The consequences of Jesus Christ closeness to the people were immediate and complete: forgiveness of sins, healing of diseases, removing of evil spirits.

God's grace comes in overwhelming evidence in the service of the Holy Unction Mystery. Only the Merciful can share compassion to those who need it. The verse repeated in every ode of the canon of Holy Unction illustrates the healing power of divine mercy: "O Master Christ, have mercy on Your servant and heal him". These words are pronounced several times just to show, on the one hand, that God is full of infinite mercy to man and on the other hand, that man has a real need to share the mercy of God. The heavenly Mercy asked for in prayer is directly related to people's deepest needs. Moreover, God's mercy represents the Heavenly Father relation to all His creation. Keeping the world into existence by divine providence, leading the nations to share the gift of salvation and the humanity healing through the intervention of God himself is proof of divine mercy.

"The whole earth is full of Your mercy, O Master. Wherefore we, in faith, implore You, that You will bestow upon us, who today shall be anointed with Your divine and precious oil, Your mercy which is beyond under-standing" (the Troparion of the first Ode of the Holy Unction Canon).

For the mystery of God's healing mercy works in people's lives, they must be opened to the divine grace by their strong faith. By faith, they give themselves to Him who is "The Doctor of our souls and bodies," the only One who can intervene where human possibilities prove to be little or none. Therefore, faith is the door through which God's healing grace enters human life, to work bright and positive changes. God's response to the praying human faith and to the Church faith that prays and asks the mercy above is sending His grace upon the sick soul and body. This grace empowers the sick, eases their suffering, gives forgiveness of sins and heals their spiritual and bodily diseases. The Church prays with this conviction when singing: "O Christ, Who alone are wonderful and merciful to faithful men: Grant Your grace from on high to Your servant who lies in great sickness." (the 3rd Ode of the Holy Unction Canon) or: "O Savior, You are as incorruptible chrism emptied upon the world by grace and purifying it. As God, in Your compassion, show mercy upon the bodily wounds of him who, with faith is now about to receive Unction." (the 4th Ode of the Holy Unction Canon).

The descent of the sanctifying and healing Grace upon the person or the persons who participate in the Sacrament of Holy Unction, shared through holy oil, which the sick are anointed with, is the answer God gives the Church prayers for the sick, emphatically and repeatedly raised to Him. God's answer addressed to the suffering human being is the manifestation of His infinite mercy, through which He loves, forgives, eases, makes peace and heals the suffering believer. Like a hopeful conclusion, the Church prayer ascends to heaven divine mercy, pleading manifestation of heavenly mercy, as following: "Look down from heaven, O Compassionate One, and show forth Your mercy upon all men. Give now Your protection and Your strength to him who draws near to You through Holy Unction at the hands of Your Priests, O Lover of mankind." (the 9th Ode of the Holy Unction Canon).

Especially this year, dedicated by the Holy Synod of our Church to the service of Mystery of Holy Unction and care of the sick, the whole fullness

of the Church must reflect more deeply and more often upon the multiple meanings of this Mystery, but not least, to participate, to service it and to enter into its inner, mysterious and powerful world. Each member of the Church should pray for the grace of God pour over all. Thus, and by this the human suffering and their bodily and spiritual diseases will lessen and they will be reconciled with each other and with God - the inexhaustible source of healing mercy.

Rev. Ioan TULCAN

STUDIES AND ARTICLES

Andreas Heiser

Johannes Chrysostomus und die Taufe - Tod, Grab und Auferstehung in spätantiker Perspektive[1]

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag ist darum bermuht, die Frage des Todes und der Auferstehung Christi im Bezug auf die Taufe zu bringen, indem man die Aufassung von Johannes Chrysostomus ins Betracht geyogen wird.

Das Problem in der Auslegung von Röm 6 entsteht dadurch, daß im Mysterien-kult der Gott stirbt und wieder aufersteht, dagegen kennt die paulinische Deutung der Taufe in Röm 6 drei relevante Stufen im Taufgeschehen, das „Mitsterben mit Christus" das „Begraben werden" im Akt des Untertauchens, und die dadurch verbürgte Hoffnung auf Auferstehung im eschatologischen Leben oder bei Chrysostomus in ein bis dorthin andauerndes ethisch einwandfreies Leben. Würde man das dreimalige Untertauchen (Immersion) isoliert als Taufe betrachten, dürfte man ausschließlich auf Röm 6, 4 und die Deutung der Taufe als Grab schauen[2]. Da man aber in der Regel nur Tote beerdigt, wäre es ein ernstzunehmendes Verbrechen, wenn der in das Grab der Taufe steigende Täufling noch leben würde. Er muss also zuvor durch den Glauben mit Christus „mitgestorben" sein.

Stichwörter
Johannes Chrysostomus, Taufe – Tod, Auferstehung

1. Einstieg

Der antiochenische Priester und spätere Bischof von Konstantinopel Johannes Chrysostomus (um 350-407) war einer der berühmtesten spä-

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[1] Ph.D., Humbold University of Berlin, heisers@freenet.de

[2] Bereits Ferguson, *Baptism* (wie Amm. 5), 551 Anm. 11 weist darauf hin, daß Chrysostomus den Begriff „Taufe" für die ganze Zeremonie gebrauche.

tantiken Lehrer der Taufe. Die Analyse seiner Tauferklärungen, die er aufgrund des paulinischen Römerbriefes entwarf, entfaltet die Anwendung der paulinischen Leitsymbolik der Taufe als Begräbnis. Um vorzuführen, wie Chrysostomus wegen der in Antiochien geübten Taufpraxis andere Motive der Taufdeutung jenem Leitsymbol zu- und unterordnete, wird nach der Einführung (1) die Fragestellung entfaltet (2), sodann der Umgang mit dem Paulustext in den *Catecheses baptismales* (3) und außerhalb der *Catecheses baptismales* (4) analysiert, bevor einige Schlussfolgerungen (5) formuliert werden.

Die Schriften des Apostels Paulus lagen bereits früh in Teilsammlungen vor[3]. Dennoch wurde *Röm* 6, 1-13 zur Ausdeutung der christlichen Taufe erst in der nachkonstantinischen Zeit prominent[4]. Erst jetzt trat verstärkt eine Auslegung hervor, die in jenen Ausführungen des Apostels (auch *Kol* 2, 12-15; 3, 1-4) die Taufe als „Tod", „Begräbnis" und „Auferstehung" verstand[5]. Auch wenn Taufbäder bereits im frühjüdischen Raum mit der Vorstellung einer neuen Geburt oder Auferstehung vom Grab verbunden waren[6], ist diese Auslegung im christlichen Kontext zuerst bei dem alexandrinischen Exegeten Origenes greifbar. In seiner nach 230 in Caesarea entstandenen Auslegung des Buches Exodus beschreibt er die Taufe als ein Mysterium, das das Mitsterben und die Auferstehung mit Christus bewirke.

„„Wir wollen eine Dreitagesreise in die Wüste machen, und wir wollen unserem Gott opfern' (Ex 5, 3) Das waren die drei Tage, um die Mose sich bemühte und dem Pharao widersprach … Der Pharao erlaubte nicht, daß die Kinder Israels an den wunderbaren Ort gelangen, er erlaubte nicht, so weit zu reisen, daß sie die

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[3]   S. dazu D. Trobisch, *Die Entstehung der Paulusbriefsammlung. Studien zu den Anfängen christlicher Publizistik*, NTOA 10, Fribourg/Göttingen, 1989.

[4]   Zur marginalen Rolle des Textes in den ersten Jahrhunderten s. A. Benoit, *Le baptême chrétien au second siècle. La théologie des pères*, EHPhR 43, Paris, 1953, p. 227-230 und R. Schlarb, *Wir sind mit Christus begraben. Die Auslegung von Röm 6, 1-11 im Frühchristentum bis Origenes*, BGBE 31, Tübingen, 1990, p. 223-246, bes. p. 235-230; sodann U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer, 2. Teilband: Röm 6-11, Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 6/2*, Zürich u.a./Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1980, 24f.

[5]   K.H. Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter. Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1-11*, 2. Auflage, Düsseldorf 1959, p. 197-217; T.M. Finn, *Baptismal Death and Resurrection: A Study in Fourth Century Eastern Baptismal Theology*, Worship 43, 1969, p. 175-189 und G. Kretschmar, *Die Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes in der Alten Kirche*, „Leiturgia" 5, Kassel 1970, p. 145-179, bes. P. 148. 173-179.

[6]   Kretschmar, *Geschichte* (wie Anm. 3), p. 1-348, 11.

Geheimnisse des dritten Tages genießen. Ich habe nämlich einen Propheten gehört, der sagt: ‚Gott wird uns nach zwei Tagen gesund machen, und am dritten Tag werden wir wieder aufstehen und wir werden unter seinem Blick leben.' (Hos 6,2) Der erste Tag ist für uns der des Leidens des Herrn, [und] der zweite, der, an dem er in die Hölle hinabstieg, der dritte jedoch ist der Tag der Auferstehung. Und deswegen ‚ging ihnen Gott' auch am dritten Tag ‚voran, am Tag in einer Wolkensäule, in der Nacht in einer Feuersäule' (vgl. Ex 13, 21). Wenn also demnach, was wir oben sagten, der Apostel uns richtigerweise lehrt, in diesen Worten das Mysterium der Taufe mit einzuschließen, ist es notwendig, daß ‚die, die in Christus getauft werden, auf seinen Tod getauft werden, und mit ihm selbst begraben werden' (Röm 6, 3) und mit ihm selbst am dritten Tage von den Toten auferstehen, was auch nach dem, was der Apostel sagt [stimmt]: ‚er hat uns zugleich mit ihm aufgerichtet, und er hat uns zugleich einen Thron im Himmel gemacht.' (Eph 2, 6) Wenn du also das Geheimnis des dritten Tages angenommen haben wirst, wird Gott beginnen, dich zu leiten, und er selbst wird dir den Weg zum Heil zeigen."[7]

Nun kann man freilich fragen, warum die klassische Deutung von *Röm* 6[8] erst ein Jahrhundert später die Theologie der Taufe des antiken Christentums bestimmte. Thomas M. Finn sieht in Anlehnung an Odo Casel und die religionsgeschichtliche Schule den Grund für die historische Verzögerung der Bezugnahme auf *Röm* 6 in der Bedrohung der Kirche durch den Gnostizismus auf der einen und durch die paganen Mysterienkulte auf der anderen Seite[9]. Diese Auffassung arbeitet jedoch mit mehreren

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[7] Origenes, *Hom. in Ex.* 5, 3 (GCS Origenes 6/1, p. 186, 5-21 Baehrens); englische Übersetzung bei Finn, *Death* (wie Anm. 3), 175f. mit ganz falscher Angabe der Stelle; B.D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism. From the New Testament to the Council of Trent, Liturgy, Worship and Society*, Aldershot u.a. 2006, p. 35: „He also took up Pauline imagery of death and resurrection, …"; an anderen Stellen werden die Worte des Paulus bei Origenes ethisch und nicht rituell gedeutet; vgl. Or., *comm. in Rom.* 5,9 (FC 2/3, 166,5-18; Übersetzung 167 Heither) und Schlarb, Mit Christus begraben (wie Anm. 2), (p. 151-206) 161; eine Überblick über die Taufe bei Origenes bietet E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church. History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*, Grand Rapids, MI u.a. 2009, p. 400-423.

[8] Kretschmar, *Geschichte* (wie Anm. 3), 178 spricht von einem „locus classicus der Tauftheologie".

[9] Finn, *Death* (wie Anm. 3), 176 beruft sich dabei auf J. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, Notre Dame 1959, p. 152-163 und O. Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, ed. B.

nicht haltbaren Hypothesen. Ich möchte nur die wichtigsten nennen. Zum einen wird mit der Voraussetzung gearbeitet, daß es bereits in den ersten Jahrhunderten im Raum der Mehrheitskirche eine feste Tauftheologie gegeben habe, die man aufgrund von äußeren Bedrohungen zurückgehalten habe[10]. Diese Konstruktion besagt somit, man hätte von Seiten der Mehrheitskirche gern die Taufe in den paulinischen Begriffen des Grabes ausgedrückt, traute sich aber nicht.

Zum anderen wird vorausgesetzt, daß die antiken Christen im Paulustext selbst die Nähe zu paganen Initiationsriten erkannt hätten und die Ausführungen des Apostels wegen dogmatischer Bedenken gemieden hätten.

Zudem muss man sagen: Es bedarf der Annahme der direkten Abhängigkeit der christlichen Taufdeutung von den paganen Mysterien gar nicht. Die Mysterien vermitteln wie die christliche Taufe die Erfahrung neuen Lebens für Eingeweihte. Das geschieht entweder durch Belehrung oder dramatisch, indem das Schicksal der Gottheit nachvollzogen wird. Diese Nachahmung kann, muss aber nicht in der Form eines Bades geschehen[11].

Plausibler für den Aufschwung von *Röm* 6 in der Taufdeutung scheint dagegen zu sein, daß die veränderte politische Lage in der nachkonstantinischen Zeit den Christen überhaupt erst ermöglichte, in ihre Kirchenanlagen nun auch Baptisterien zu bauen. Die Taufe wurde zu einem stadtöffentlichen Ereignis, und die Taufhandlung in öffentlich präsenten Baptisterien bedurfte eines entsprechenden Deutetextes. Hier legte sich die paulinische Deutung der Taufe als Grab (*Röm* 6) nahe, da die Baptisterien in ihrer baulichen Form eine Ähnlichkeit zu Grabbauten[12]

Neunheuser, Westminster 1962; andere sehen bereits bei der Abfassung des Römerbriefs den Einfluss der paganen Kulte wirksam; s. H. Rahner, *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung*, 3. Auflage, Zürich 1966, Basel u.a. 1989, p. 22-24.

[10] Die Bedrohungslage habe sich nach Finn, *Death* (wie Anm. 3), 176 derart gewandelt, daß die Autoren des vierten Jahrhunderts sowohl die Begriffe als auch die Konzepte von den ehemals gegnerischen Religionsausprägungen übernehmen konnten. Der Einfluss paganer Mysterienkulte auf die Theologie der Taufe der antiken christlichen Autoren ist jedoch umstritten. Odo Casel sah die Mysterienkulte als den Vorläufer der christlichen Mysterien; einen Überblick der Kontroverse gibt: J. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, Notre Dame 1959, p. 152-163.

[11] Vgl. G. Röwekamp (Hg.), Cyrill von Jerusalem. *Mystagogicae Catecheses. Mystagogische Katechesen*, übersetzt und eingeleitet v. dems., FC 7, Freiburg u.a. 1992, p. 35.

[12] J.G. Davies, Art. *Baptisterium*, TRE 5, Berlin/New York 1980, p. 197-206, p. 199:

aufwiesen. Wenigstens aus dem fünften Jahrhudert ist die halbrunde *piscina* aus dem Martyrium des Babylas in Antiochien mit einer Beckentiefe von 60 cm erhalten[13]. Von einer weiteren Beschreibung der zeitgleich aufkommenden Bautätigkeit der Baptisterien in Kreuz- bzw. Grabesform ist in dem knappen Beitrag abzusehen[14]. Ich beziehe mich allein auf die schriftlichen Quellen[15]. Jedenfalls leuchtet die gegenseitige Beeinflussung von Taufbauten und Taufdeutung auch deswegen ein, weil die Bezüge auf *Röm* 6 vor allem von solchen Vätern hergestellt werden, die ihren Dienst an großen kirchlichen Anlagen vollzogen und vor allem mit der Unterweisung der Taufanwärter (Katechumenen) betraut waren. Zu nennen sind Cyrill von Jerusalem (um 313-386/387), Gregor von Nyssa (zwischen 335 und 340-vor 400), Ambrosius von Mailand (339-397), aber auch Johannes Chrysostomus (um 350-407), Theodor von Mopsuestia (um 350-428) und andere[16]. Daß man zeitgleich in christlichen Gemeinden anderer Kontexte auch im vierten Jahrhundert die Taufe noch ohne jeden Bezug auf *Röm* 6 deuten konnte, zeigen die in zwei Arbeitsgängen um 337 und 344 entstandenen *Demonstrationes* des ostsyrischen Asketen Aphrahat (um 270 um 345 n.Chr.)[17].

Daß christliche Baptisterien heidnischen Grabbauten in der Form von viereckigen Kuppelbauten nachempfunden sind, zeigt beispielsweise, daß manche von ihnen wie die Gräber der Nekropole in Dermesch-Duimes (Karthago) ein Ambulatorium aufweisen. Dabei handelt es sich um ein Element heidnischer Grabanlagen, das bei der christlichen Taufe keine Funktion hat. „Für jedes christliche Baptisterium könnte man einen fast identischen Grabbau anführen." (ebd., 199)

[13] Abbildung bei G. Downey, *The Shrines of St. Babylas at Antioch and Daphne*, in: Antioch-on-the-Orontes 2: The Excavations, 1933-1936, ed. by R. Stillwell, Princeton 1938, Plan 4; im Katalog antiker christlicher Baptisterien bei F.W. Deichmann, Art. *Baptisterium*, RAC 1, Stuttgart 1950, (1157-1167) 1165 und bei Kretschmar, *Geschichte* (wie Anm. 3), 183f., zudem bei S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, JbAC.E 27, Münster 1998, # 644 und ein Hinweis bei Ferguson, *Baptism* (wie Anm. 5), 826.

[14] Die Form wird erst in byzantinischer Zeit prominent, findet sich aber bereits in Concordia-Sagittaria nahe Venedig. Davies, *Baptisterium* (wie Anm. 10), p. 201; zur Verbindung von Kreuz und Taufe s.u., p. 10-13.

[15] S. beispielsweise A. Khatchatrian, *Les baptistères paléochrétiens*, Paris, 1962 und Ristow, *Baptisterien* (wie Anm. 11).

[16] Vgl. Davies, *Baptisterium* (wie Anm. 10), 197f.

[17] Zur Ausdeutung der Taufriten bei Aphrahat, die stark an der Vorausdeutung alttestamentlicher Motive orientiert ist, s. E.J. Duncan, *The Administration of Baptism*, in „Studies in Syrian Baptismal Rites", ed. by K.A. Aytoun/J. Vellian, *The Syrian Churches*, Series 6, Kottayam, 1973, p. 16-73 und Aphrahat, Unterweisungen. Erster

2. Fragestellung

Eine große Zahl der erhaltenen Taufkatechesen aus dem vierten Jahrhundert orientieren sich eng an der paulinischen Erläuterung der Taufe in *Röm* 6[18]. Dabei wird häufig behauptet, im Hintergrund der Deutung stehe eine gemeinsame Auffassung von der Taufe[19]. In den Erklärungen der Kirchenväter ziehe sich auch ein traditioneller Symbolismus durch. Dabei werde einstimmig vertreten, die Taufe sei Erinnerung (*anamnesis*) des Todes und der Auferstehung des Herrn und ihre Wirkung sei „symbolische Kausalität"[20].

Geht man dieser gemeinsamen Auffassung in den prominentesten Erklärungen der Taufe im vierten Jahrhundert nach, so stellt sie sich folgendermaßen dar:

Cyrill von Jerusalem entfaltet die Vorstellung von der Nachahmung[21]. Bei dem Jerusalemer Kirchenvater ist der Hintergrund des paganen Mysterienkultes am stärksten wahrzunehmen, da er seinen Fokus auf die Kräfte richtet, die in der Taufe wirken. Taufe ist symbolische Wiederholung des Christusschicksals. Sie aktualisiert das historische Geschehen und ist darin wirkliche Anteilnahme am Tod und der Auferstehung Christi und gibt Anteil an der Gnade, die dies bewirkt.

Theodor von Mopsuestia entfaltet seine Lehre zwischen einer platonischen Weltsicht und der biblischen Lehre der zwei Zeitalter (Katastasen)[22]. Auch er analysiert das Wesen der Repräsentation des Christusschicksals in der Taufe. Das Taufhandeln ist „symbolische Realität". Es markiert die „Zwischenzeit des Glaubens" zwischen den

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Teilband, aus dem syrischen übersetzt und eingeleitet v. P. Bruns, FC 5/1, Freiburg u.a. 1991, 62-64; zuletzt Ferguson, *Baptism* (wie Anm. 5), p. 489-498.

[18] Cyrill von Jerusalem, *Mystagogicae catecheses* 1-5 (FC 7, p. 93-165 Röwekamp); Ambrosius von Mailand, *De sacramentis* 2, 19-23; 6,7; *De mysteriis* 21 (FC 3, p. 110-114; 184. 220 Schmitz); Theodor von Mopsuestia, *Katechetische Homilien* 14,5f.; 13 (FC 17/2, p. 363-365. 371 Bruns); Gregor von Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna* 35,1. 4-11 (SC 453 Mühlenberg/Winling); s. zur Rezeption des Paulustextes auch die Erläuterungen bei Schelkle, *Paulus* (wie Anm. 3), p. 197-217.

[19] Ebd.

[20] Finn, *Death* (wie Anm. 3), p. 189 spricht von „symbolic causality".

[21] Sie wurde nicht vor dem dritten Jahrhundert wirksam vertreten; vgl. Finn, *Death* (wie Anm. 3), p. 176-181. 189; Röwekamp, FC 7, p. 33-38.

[22] Finn, *Death* (wie Anm. 3), p. 184-189.

zwei Zeitaltern. Diese Zeit liegt zwischen dem historischen Tod und der Auferstehung Christi auf der einen und der zukünftigen Auferstehung aller auf der anderen Seite. Die Taufe vergegenwärtigt historische Vergangenheit und mystische Zukunft, indem sie Anteil an beidem gibt[23].

Neben dem Mysterienkult und der philosophisch-biblischen Weltsicht versucht Johannes Chrysostomus ein Drittes[24]. Wie kein anderer der katechetischen Väter nimmt er die Lehre und Begriffe des Apostels Paulus auf. Er versucht dabei nicht (wie die beiden anderen Väter) die Wirkung der Taufe zu erklären, wenn er die symbolische Nachahmung des einen Osterereignisses entfaltet. Auch für ihn ist klar, daß mittels Nachahmung das historische Ereignis aktualisiert wird.

An dieser Stelle ist nun zu fragen: Was wird nach Chrysostomus in der Taufe nachgeahmt? Bei Chrysostomus zeigt sich, daß die Aneignung des „Paulinischen Symbolismus"[25] exegetische Mühe bereitet, weil die unterschiedlichen Akte des Mysteriums, nämlich „Sterben" und „Begraben werden" und „Auferstehen" (bei Christus) und „Glaube" und „Taufe" und „Auferstehen" (bei den Christen) bei Paulus lediglich in *Röm* 6, 4 eindeutig zugeordnet werden. Dort sagt er nämlich, wir seien in der Taufe mit Christus begraben worden. Das „Begraben werden" ist somit bei Paulus das Leitsymbol seiner Taufdeutung.

Chrysostomus ist als Exeget dem Paulustext verpflichtet ist. Daher verbietet es sich ihm, die einlinige Zuordnung des Sterbens in der Taufe, wie sie beispielsweise die im arianischen Lager Antiochiens beheimateten *Apostolischen Constitutionen* vertreten, aufzunehmen: „Die Taufe ist auf den Tod Jesu gegeben, das Wasser an Stelle des Grabes ... das Untertauchen ist das Mitsterben, das Auftauchen das Mitauferstehen."[26]

Wenn Georg Kretschmar in seiner magistralen Darstellung der Taufe in der alten Kirche daran anschließt: „Dieselben Aussagen finden wir bei

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[23] „It is a partizipation in real benefits without losing its symbolic character." (Ferguson, *Baptism* [wie Anm. 5], p. 537); auch Theodor verbindet das Untertauchen mit dem Tod, dem Grab und das Auftauchen mit der Auferstehung Jesu (ebd., 525f.).

[24] Finn, *Death* (wie Anm. 3), p. 181-184; die derzeit umfassendste Untersuchung der Taufdeutung des Johannes Chrysostomus bietet: P. de Roten, *Baptême et mystagogie. Enquête sur l'initiation chrétienne selon s. Jean Chrysostome*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 91, Münster, 1999.

[25] „This essentially Pauline paschal symbolism simply takes possession of fourth-century Eastern baptismal theology, though, of course, different emphases of interpretation occur." (Finn, *Death* [wie Anm. 3], p. 178).

[26] *Const. App*. III 17,1f. (nach Kretschmar, *Geschichte* [wie Anm. 3], p. 174).

Johannes Chrysostomus" stimmt das so nicht[27]. Darum möchte ich heute nach dem Verhältnis von „Tod", „Begräbnis" und „Auferstehung" in der Taufdeutung des Chrysostomus nach *Röm* 6 fragen. Damit wird freilich schwieriges Terrain beschritten. R. Meßner warnt in seiner ausgezeichneten Einführung in die Liturgiewissenschaft:

> „Die Bestimmung des Verhältnisses zwischen Christusgesche-
> hen und Taufgeschehen ist das wohl schwierigste Problem der
> Tauftheologie (ja der Sakramentstheologie überhaupt). Sind wir
> am Kreuz mitgestorben oder in der Taufe? In Welcher Bezie-
> hung steht der Tauftod zum Kreuzestod?"[28]

Die von Meßner angezeigte Problematik wird bereits in der Ausein-andersetzung des Chrysostomus mit dem Text des Römerbriefs greifbar. Dabei lässt sich unter den Taufkatechesen des vierten Jahrhunderts an der Exegese des Chrysostomus am deutlichsten sehen, wie er die Differenz zwischen Paulus und dem paganen Mysterienkult aufrecht erhält und anders als Cyrill von Jerusalem vermeidet den Mysterienkult als Hin-tergrund seiner Auffassung von „Sterben", „Grab" und „Auferstehung" im Taufgeschehen zur Deutung heranzuziehen.

3. Das Problem mit dem Paulustext in den *Catecheses Baptismales*

Als Quelle der Untersuchung dienen die *Catecheses Baptismales* (Tauf-katechesen), die Chrysostomus zur Unterweisung der Taufbewerber in

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[27] Kretschmar, *Geschichte* (wie Anm. 3), 174; der Bezug geht auf *Catech.* 2/3,11 (FC 6/2,16-19 Kaczynski), wo lediglich von „Begräbnis" und „Auferstehung" die Rede ist.

[28] R. Messner, *Einführung in die Liturgiewissenschaft*, UTB 2173, München u.a. 2001, 79f.; die extremste Position vertrat M. Barth, *Die Taufe - ein Sakrament? Ein Beitrag zum Gespräch über die kirchliche Taufe*, Zollikon-Zürich 1951, p. 229-235, der die Taufe bei Paulus nach *Röm* 6 allein als „Begräbnis" verstanden wissen wollte, daß die vorherige Aneignung des Kreuzestodes voraussetzt und besiegelt; er kommt zu dieser Auffassung, weil er die paulinische Metaphorik ernst nimmt. „Beerdigt" werden nur bereits „Verstorbene", und das die Taufe als Begräbnis mit Christus bezeichnet wird, muss sich das Sterben zuvor vollzogen haben; die Position wurde von seinem Vater aufgenommen: K. Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, vierter Band: Die Lehre von der Versöhnung, vierter Teil: Das christliche Leben (Fragment): Die Taufe als Begrün-dung des christlichen Lebens, Zürich 1967, 128f.

seiner antiochenischen Schaffensperiode hielt[29]. Für Paulus ist die Taufe in *Röm* 6 ein „Begräbnis". Begraben wird, wer zuvor gestorben ist. Dieser Tod, der als „Mitsterben" und „mit Christus gekreuzigt werden" ausgedrückt wird, ist nach Paulus nicht eindeutig mit dem Taufakt gleichzusetzen[30]. Was eindeutig ist, ist daß die Taufe nach *Röm* 6 das Christusschicksal des Menschen komplettiert, indem neben dem Mitsterben nun auch die Graberfahrung des Gläubigen steht und damit die künftige Auferstehung verbürgt wird.

Wenn man untersucht, wie Chrysostomus als Exeget mit dieser Vorlage umgeht, fällt zunächst auf, daß er die Vorstellung der Taufe als „Begräbnis" von Paulus übernimmt[31].

„Man bezeichnet sie auch als Begräbnis (καλεῖται ταφή): ‚Ihr wurdet mit ihm begraben durch die Taufe in den Tod'." (nach *Röm* 6, 4)[32]

Daneben tritt die Vorstellung der Taufe als „Kreuz".

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[29] Die Ausgabe von R. Kaczynski umfasst die wichtigsten Taufkatechesen und unterrichtet über ihre spannende Überlieferung (FC 6/1, p. 30-48). Bis zum Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts waren einzig die *Catech.* 2/1 (nach der Zählung Kaczynskis), seinerzeit bei PG 49, p. 223-232 und *Catech.* 1, ehemals PG 49, p. 211-222, die heute als 21. Säulenhomilie identifiziert ist, bekannt. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus veröffentlichte 1909 vier griechische Predigten (Predigt 1 entspricht der bereits zuvor bekannt gewesenen *Catech.* 2/1, darum: *Catech.* 2/1-4) aus einem Manuskript der damaligen Bibliothek des hl. Synod zu Moskau: A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου κατήχησεις*, in „Varia graeca sacra", hg. v. dems. = Studia byzantina lucis ope iterata 6, Leipzig 1975, p. 154-183 (= St. Petersburg 1909). In 1955 entdeckte A. Wenger im Codex 6 des Athos-Klosters Stavronikita weitere acht zweifellos echte Taufkatechesen des Chrysostomus: A. Wenger, *Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites*, SC 50bis, 3. réimpression de la 1. éd. rev. et corr., Paris, 2005.

[30] Vgl. die bemerkenswerte Ausführung von Barth, *Taufe* (wie Anm. 26), 229f. 244-283; wer begraben wird, hat den Tod bereits hinter sich; vgl. Messner, *Einführung* (wie Anm. 26), 79.

[31] Damit liegt der Fokus auf einem Teilaspekt der Chrysostomischen Tauflehre, deren Vielfalt er selbst in *catech.* 2/1,8-13 (FC 6/1, 162,3-172,5 Kaczynski) entfaltet. Anhand der Verben καταδύω/αναδύω macht Ferguson, *Baptism* (wie Anm. 5), 542 deutlich, daß das Untertauchen des Kopfes unter Wasser bedeute, daß der alte Mensch in einem Grab begraben, für immer abgesunken, ganz verborgen sei. Wenn er seinen Kopf wieder aus der Taufe hebe, stehe er zu neuem Leben auf, was drei Mal durchgeführt werde.

[32] *Catech.* 2/1,8 (FC 6/1, 162,19f.; Übersetzung 163 Kaczynski); W. Slenczka, Heilsgeschichte und Liturgie. Studien zum Verhältnis von Heilsgeschichte und Heilsteilhabe anhand liturgischer und katechetischer Quellen des dritten und vierten Jahrhunderts, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 78, Berlin/New York, 2000, p. 250 weist auf die ethische Verwendung von Taufe und Tod an dieser Stelle hin.

„Auch Kreuz (σταυρός) ist ein Name für die Taufe: ‚Unser alter Mensch wurde mitgekreuzigt (συνεσταυρώθη), damit der von der Sünde beherrschte Leib vernichtet werde'." (*Röm* 6, 6)[33]

Trotz dieser eindeutigen Bestimmungen der Taufe als „Begräbnis" und als „Kreuz", lässt Chrysostomus sehr dezent offen, welchem Moment des Lebens das „Sterben" bzw. „Mitsterben" zugeordnet ist.

> „Hört nun, was Paulus sagt, wie er beides von der Taufe be-hauptet, daß sie der Tod der Sünde ist und das Kreuz: ‚Wißt ihr denn nicht, daß ihr alle, die ihr auf Christus getauft wurdet, auf seinen Tod getauft worden seid?' (Röm 6,3) und andernorts: Un-ser alter Mensch wurde mitgekreuzigt, damit der von der Sünde beherrschte Leib vernichtet werde.' (Röm 6, 6) Damit ihr nicht erschreckt, wenn ihr ‚Tod' hört und wenn ihr ‚Kreuz' hört, fügte Paulus hinzu, daß das Kreuz der Tod der Sünde ist. Habt ihr gesehen, wie die Taufe ein Kreuz ist? Erkennt nun, daß Christus auch das Kreuz eine Taufe nannte, indem er für dich die sich widersprechenden Begriffe austauscht[34]. Deine Taufe nannte er ‚Kreuz'; ‚mein Kreuz nenne ich Taufe', sagt er."[35]

Diese Stelle ist bezeichnend für die Auslegung von *Röm* 6 durch Chrysostomus. Er hat Mühe, die paulinischen Aussagen, in denen der „Tod" dem „Begräbnis" der Taufe vorausgeht, und das „Mitgekreuzigt sein" mit der Taufe zu verbinden. Etwas ausweichend hebt er darum auf die schaurige Wirkung der Begriffe „Tod" und „Kreuz" ab. Die etwas verlegen wirkende Frage: „Habt ihr gesehen, wie die Taufe ein Kreuz ist?", müssten die Hörer darum mit „nein" beantworten.

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[33] *Catech*. 2/1,8 (FC 6/1, 162,23-164,1; Übersetzung 163f. Kaczynski); in expliziter Form liegt die Kreuzsymbolik in *Catech*. 2/2,3 vor: „Die Schrift sagt: ‚Er wurde am Holz gekreuzigt' (vgl. *Gal* 3,13). Laß du dich durch die Taufe kreuzigen! Denn die Taufe ist auch ein Kreuz und ein Tod (Σταυρώθητι σύ διά του βαπτίσματος˙ σταυρός γάρ τό βάπτισμα καί θάνατος): Sie ist der Tod der Sünde und das Kreuz des alten Menschen." Slenczka, *Heilsgeschichte* (wie Anm. 30), p. 243 verweist auf die mysti-sche Bedeutung des Ostertermins als Taufzeitpunkt hin. Da die Taufe als Kreuzigung des „alten Menschen" zur selben Zeit wie die Kreuzigung Christi stattfinde, bestehe eine Teilhabe „gemäß der Zeit".

[34] Kaczynski übersetzt die schwierige Zeile αντιδούς σοι καί αντιλαμβάνων τά ονόματα: „Taufe und Kreuz waren für ihn austauschbare Begriffe" (FC 6/1, 204,10f.; Übersetzung 205 Kaczynski).

[35] *Catech*. 2/2,4 (FC 6/1, 204,1-13 Kaczynski).

Und der Pauluskenner Chrysostomus bemerkt selbst, daß er die Verbindung von Tod bzw. Kreuz mit dem eigentlichen Taufakt nicht anhand von Paulus erläutern kann, da die Taufe in *Röm* 6 als Begräbnis (ταφή) vorgestellt wird. Darum wird die Verbindung von Taufe und Kreuz bzw. Tod über *Lk* 12,50 hergestellt, wo Jesus von seinem Tod am Kreuz vorhersagt: „Ich muß mit einer Taufe getauft werden, die ihr nicht kennt." Ebenso dient die Antwort an die Mutter der Zebedaiden „Könnt ihr ... die Taufe auf euch nehmen, mit der ich getauft werde" zur Deutung der Taufe als Kreuz[36].

Um die Vorstellung vom Mitsterben mit Christus in die paulinische Schilderung des Taufaktes einzubringen, ist es nun notwendig, was in *Röm* 6,4 über die Taufe als Begräbnis gesagt ist, auch in *Röm* 6, 5 einzutragen. Darum zitiert Chrysostomus: „Deswegen sagt Paulus: ‚wenn wir durch die Taufe in der Ähnlichkeit mit seinem Tod ihm verbunden sind' (Διά τουτο καί ο Παυλος φησί. ‚Ει σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τω ομοιώατι του θανάτου αυτου διά του βαπτίσματος).[37]

Dasselbe Problem tritt wenig später zu Tage, wenn *Röm* 6,8 ausgelegt wird: „Sind wir nun mit Christus gestorben, so glauben wir, daß wir auch mit ihm leben werden." Denn die Auslegung lautet überaschender Weise nicht, daß „Tod" und „Auferstehung" in einem Augenblick in der Taufe geschehen, sondern:

„In der Taufe geschieht beides im selben Augenblick, Begrabenwerden und Auferstehen ('Ομου γάρ καί ταφή καί ανάστασίς έστιν εν τω βαπτίσματι κατά τόν αυτόν καιρόν)."[38] „Seht ihr, wie er die Auferstehung erwähnt? Aber warum ereignen sich unsere Auferstehung, unser Begrabenwerden und unser Tod im selben Augenblick - denn wir werden zugleich begraben und auferweckt -, während sich dies beim Herrn länger hinzog?"

Man sieht deutlich, daß die Gleichzeitigkeit von „Tod" und „Begräbnis", die durch das Hinzuziehen der Evangelientexte entstanden ist, in der paulinischen Konzeption von „Begräbnis" und „Auferstehung" als Fremdkörper wirkt, so daß Chrysostomus den Tod in der Taufe, in der Auslegung der Leitsymbolik des Begräbnisses unterordnet.

[36] *Catech.* 2/2,4 (FC 6/1, 204,13-206,12 Kaczynski).
[37] *Catech.* 2/2,4 (FC 6/1, 206,6-8; Übersetzung 207 Kaczynski); Wilckens, *Brief* (wie Anm. 2), 12 läßt die Zuordnung offen.
[38] *Catech.* 2/2,5 (FC 6/1, 206,19f.; Übersetzung 207 Kaczynski).

Unabhängig von der direkten Auslegung des Römertextes kann Chrysostomus freier agieren und das paulinische Leitsymbol von „Begräbnis" und „Auferstehung" entfalten: „Denn die Taufe ist sowohl Grab als auch Auferstehung (Καί γάρ τάφος εστί καί ανάστασις τό βάπτισμα). ‚Der alte Mensch wird mit der Sünde begraben, und der neue steht auf, der nach dem Bild des Schöpfers erneuert ist.'" (nach *Kol* 3, 9f.)[39]

4. Das Problem mit dem Paulustext außerhalb der *Catecheses Baptismales*

P. Rodgerson Pleasants machte darauf aufmerksam[40], daß Chrysostomus in den Taufkatechesen kaum Bibelstellen des Paulus zur Taufe heranziehe, weil ihm daran liege, den neuen christlichen Lebenswandel, der aus der Taufe resultiere, vorzuführen. Den neuen Lebenswandel illustriere er vor allem an der Person des Apostels. Darum ist auch die Auslegung von *Röm* 6 in Chrysostomustexten außerhalb der Taufkatechesen zu besprechen, wenn wir seine Vorstellung von „Tod", „Begräbnis" und „Auferstehung" nachzeichnen möchten.

a) *hom. in Rom.* 10,4

In der Auslegung von *Röm* 6, 2 in den *Homiliae in epistulam ad Romanum* stellt Chrysostomus zwei Auslegungsmöglichkeiten vor. Entweder sind Menschen „durch die Sünde" (instrumental) gestorben, oder sie sind „für sie (sc. die Sünde)" (commodi) gestorben, was er für wahrscheinlicher hält. Das Sterben „für" die Sünde setzt er nun mit der Taufe in eins:

> „Denn dies bewirkte freilich ein einziges Mal die Taufe, sie hat uns für sie (s.c. die Sünde) tot gemacht. Es ist nun nötig, es durch unseren Eifer ständig zu vollbringen, so daß wir ihr, auch wenn sie uns tausendfältig befehle, nicht gehorchen, sondern unbeweglich bleiben wie ein Toter."[41]

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[39] *Catech.* 3/2, 11 (FC 6/1, 340,16-19; Übersetzung 341 Kaczynski).

[40] P. Rodgerson, *Pleasants, Making Christian the Christians. The Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom*, "Greek Orthodox Theological Review" 34, 1989, p. 379-392.

[41] *Hom. in Rom.* 10,4 (PG 60, 479,53-58; 1, 525CD Field).

Bezeichnenderweise hält Chrysostomus die Stelle für „unklar ασαφές"[42]. Er setzt nun aber auch ohne die Erläuterung aus den Evangelien „Kreuz" und „Grab" in eins:

> „Was heißt: ,Wir sind auf seinen Tod getauft?' (Röm 6, 3) Daß wir sterben wie er. Ein Kreuz ist nämlich die Taufe (σταυρός γάρ εστι τό βάπτισμα). Was für Christus das Kreuz und das Grab war, das ist für uns die Taufe, wenn auch nicht in derselben Beziehung. Er starb nämlich und wurde begraben dem Fleische nach, wir erfahren beides in Bezug auf die Sünde."[43]

Das Verhältnis beider Schicksale zueinander ist bei Chrysostomus das der Ähnlichkeit (τω ομοιώματι). Die Glaubenden haben Kreuz und Grab mit Christus in der Taufe gemeinsam. So werden sie auch das ewige Leben mit ihm gemeinsam haben. Auch wenn Chrysostomus im Zusammenhang der Taufe den eschatologischen Horizont der Auferstehung herausarbeitet, spricht er von einer anderen Auferstehung ins sittliche Leben. Beiden Auferstehungen ist gemeinsam, daß die Sünde tot ist und nicht mehr herrscht.

b) *hom. in Rom.* 11,1-3

Wenn in der Auslegung von *Röm* 6,5[44] erläutert wird, daß die Taufe als Frucht die Auferstehung hervorbringt, wird wieder das „Grab" und die „Auferstehung" mit der „Taufe" und „Auferstehung" parallelisiert.

> „,Wenn wir zusammengepflanzt sind.' Durch das Wort ,pflan-zen' legt er den Gedanken an eine Frucht nahe. Wie nämlich das Begrabenwerden des Leibes Christi in die Erde die Erlösung der Welt als Frucht gebracht hat, so hat unser Begrabenwerden in das Wasser der Taufe als Frucht die Gerechtigkeit, Heiligung, Gotteskindschaft und tausend andere Güter gebracht; als weit-eres Geschenk wird sie uns noch die Auferstehung bringen. Weil wir nun begraben worden sind in das Wasser, er aber in die Erde, wir der Sünde nach, er dem Leibe nach, darum sagt der Apostel nicht: ,zusammengepflanzt zum Tode', sondern: ,zur Ähnlich-keit des Todes'. Ein Tod nämlich ist das eine wie das andere, aber nicht in derselben Beziehung. - Wenn er sagt, wir seien

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[42] *Hom. in Rom.* 10,4 (PG 60, 479,62; 1, 525D Field).

[43] *Hom. in Rom.* 10,4 (PG 60, 480,3-8; 1, 525E Field).

[44] *Hom. in Rom.* 11,1-3 (PG 60, 483,1-488,31; 1, 530A-535B Field).

zusammengepflanzt zum Tode und werden es auch ‚zur Aufer-
stehung' sein, so meint er hier die zukünftige Auferstehung"[45]

Das „Mitgekreuzigt sein" (*Röm* 6,6) verortet Chrysostomus nun
eindeutig in der Taufe, indem er wesentlich den Paulustext paraphrasiert.
Darin geht die Unterscheidung der einzelnen Akte von „Tod", „Begräbnis"
und „Auferstehung" unter:

*„Hiermit spricht der Apostel zugleich den Grund und den Beweis der
zukünftigen Auferstehung aus. Er sagt nicht: ‚ist gekreuzigt worden',
sondern: ‚ist mitgekreuzigt worden', indem er die Taufe nahe an das Kreuz
führt (εγγύς άγων τό βάπτισμα τω σταυρώ). In demselben Sinne hat er auch
oben gesagt: ‚Wir sind zusammengepflanzt worden zur Ähnlichkeit seines
Todes.' – ‚Damit der Leib der Sünde vernichtet werde'; er meint damit
nicht diesen (unsern) Leib, sondern die Sünde in ihrem ganzen Umfange.
Wie er nämlich (an einer andern Stelle) (Kol 3,9f.) das Böse überhaupt
‚den alten Menschen' nennt, so bezeichnet er im gleichen Sinne das aus
verschiedenen Teilerscheinungen bestehende Böse als ‚den Leib' dieses
(alten) Menschen."*[46]

c) *hom*. in *1Cor* 40,1

In der 40. der *In epistulam I ad Corinthios argmumentum et homiliae*
wird aufgrund der anwesenden Katechumenen nur andeutungsweise über
das Geheimnis der Taufe geredet. Chrysostomus verwendet dabei zur
Deutung der Taufe aus *Röm* 6 ausschließlich das Leitsymbol des Grabes auf:

„Nachdem wir nämlich jene geheimnisvollen und schauerli-
chen Worte gesprochen, und jene vom Himmel geoffenbarte
Glaubensregel hergesagt haben, fügen wir am Ende - vor der
Taufe - die Worte hinzu: ‚Ich glaube an die Auferstehung der
Toten' und auf diesen Glauben werden wir getauft. Denn nach-
dem wir mit den Übrigen dieses Bekenntnis abgelegt haben,
werden wir hinabgelassen in die Quelle jener heiligen Wasser.
Daran erinnert nun Paulus und spricht: Wenn es keine Auferste-
hung gibt, warum lässt du dich taufen für die Toten? d.h. für die
Leiber. Denn darum wirst du getauft, weil du glaubst, daß der
tote Leib auferstehen und nicht tot bleiben werde. Du bekennst
die Auferstehung von den Toten mit Worten; der Priester aber
zeigt dir wie in einem Bilde, was du geglaubt und mit Worten

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[45] *Hom. in Rom.* 11,1 (PG 60,484,3-17, 1, 530DE Field); englische Übersetzung ohne
Kommentar bei Ferguson, *Baptism* (wie Anm. 7), p. 553.
[46] *Hom. in Rom.* 11,1 (PG 60, 485,13-23; 1, 531C Field).

bekannt hast, auch durch die Handlungen selbst. Wenn du ohne Zeichen glaubst, dann hält er dir doch das Zeichen vor Augen; wenn du das Deine getan haben wirst, dann wird auch Gott dich ganz erfüllen. Wie und auf welche Weise? Durch das Wasser. Denn getauft und untergetaucht werden und dann wieder hervortauchen ist ein Symbol (σύμβλον) des Hinabsteigens in die Unterwelt und des Heraufsteigens aus derselben. Darum nennt auch Paulus die Taufe ein Grab (διό καί τάφον τό βάπτισμα ο Παυλος καλει), indem er spricht: ‚Mitbegraben sind wir folglich mit ihm durch die Taufe auf den Tod.' (Röm 6, 4) Und daraus macht er denn auch das Zukünftige glaubwürdig, nämlich die Auferstehung der Leiber; denn es ist ja weit mehr, die Sünden auslöschen, als einen Leib auferwecken. "[47]

Kaum ein Text enthält die Taufauffassung des Chrysostomus so fokussiert. Was zuvor im Glaubensbekenntnis bekannt wurde, wird nun in dem priesterlichen Handeln (διά των πραγμάτων αυτων) der Taufe gleichsam bildhaft (ώσπερ εν εικόνι τινί) nachempfunden. Die Taufe erscheint als symbolische Vollendung des Glaubens, der zuvor bekannt wurde. Und in diesem Akt verbürgt nicht das Mitsterben, sondern das Begräbnis mit Christus die künftige Auferstehung.

d) *hom. in Col.* 6,2

Ganz ähnlich führt die Auslegung von *Kol* 2,12 knapp die Beziehung von „Grab" und „Auferstehung" an und spart die Vorstellung des „Mitsterbens" im Kontext der Taufe aus:

„Es ist jedoch nicht bloß vom Grab die Rede (αλλ' ου τάφος μόνον εστίν), denn schau, was er sagt: ‚In welchem ihr auch mit auferweckt worden seid durch den Glauben an die Kraft Gottes, der ihn von den Toten auferweckt hat.' Er sagt es ganz treffend. Denn das Ganze ist Sache des Glaubens. Ihr glaubtet, daß Gott die Macht hat aufzuerwecken, und so wurdet ihr auferweckt. "[48]

5. Schluss

Johannes Chrysostomus parallelisiert das Schicksal der Täuflinge wie andere Exegeten des vierten Jahrhunderts mit dem Christusschicksal durch

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[47] *Hom in 1Cor.* 40,1 (PG 61, 348,15-35; 2, 379B-D Field).
[48] *Hom. in Col.* 6,2 (PG 62, 340,19-24; 5, 367D Field).

die Ähnlichkeit (τω ομοιώματι). Diese Ähnlichkeit sieht er zunächst im Tod, wobei der Unterschied im Objekt des Todes besteht: Bei Christus ist der Tod ein Tod des Körpers, bei Christen hingegen ist der Tod der Tod der Sünde.

Obwohl nur in *Röm* 6,4 die Taufe explizit als Begräbnis mit Christus verstanden wird, wird das „Begraben werden mit Christus" zum Leitsymbol in der Taufdeutung bei Chrysotomus. Da er die Gleichzeitigkeit von „Sterben" und „Begräbnis" aus *Röm* 6 nicht ableiten kann, ermöglicht ihm eine „kanonische Exegese"[49] die Gleichzeitigkeit von „Tod" und „Begräbnis" in der Taufe zu vertreten.

Das Leitsymbol des Begräbnisses nötigt dazu, den Glauben als Voraussetzung der Taufe zu entfalten, - im Bild gesprochen - das „Mitsterben" also geschehen zu lassen, bevor die Beerdigung geschieht[50]. Und gerade dieses Verständnis prägt bei genauem Zusehen die Deutung der Taufe in den Taufkatechesen:

> „Deswegen schreibt Paulus auch: ‚Denn wer zu Gott kommen will, muß glauben, daß er ist' (Hebr 11,6). Daher müßt auch ihr, wenn ihr zu Gott kommt, zuerst an Gott glauben und dann dieses Wort (s.c. das Glaubensbekenntnis) aussprechen. Wenn das nämlich nicht der Fall wäre, könntet ihr sonst nichts sagen oder verstehen."[51]

Dazu führt Rainer Kaczynski aus, daß von den neutestamentlichen Anfängen an auf Glauben hin getauft wird. Dieser Glaube müsse bekannt werden. Für Chrysostomus ist das so selbstverständlich gewesen, daß er darauf in seinen Katechesen kaum zu sprechen kommt. Denn im Antiochien des späten vierten Jahrhunderts wurde der Glaube im Taufritus wahrscheinlich zweimal bekannt, ein Mal zum Ende der Unterweisung, ein anderes Mal während der Initiationsfeier[52]. Diese Situation im vierten Jahrhundert ist noch immer mit der paulinischen zu vergleichen: Erwachsene Menschen werden auf ihren Glauben hin unterrichtet und getauft[53]. Das Problem in der Auslegung von *Röm* 6 entsteht dadurch, daß

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[49] Der Ansatz entsteht durch eine kanonische Exegese, die *Lk* 12,50 par benötigt, um die Taufe als Tod zu verstehen.

[50] „Chrysostom's approach is heavily Pauline, and the heart of it is sacramental death and resurrection." (Finn, *Death* [wie Anm 3], 184)

[51] *Catech.* 2/3, 3 (FC 6/1, 236,29-238,2; Übersetzung 237-239 Kaczynski) und s.o., S. 17 mit Anm. 46 und o., S. 16f.

[52] Vgl. Kaczynski, FC 6/1, p. 77-79 und 84-86.

[53] Vgl. Kaczynski, FC 6/1, p. 77.

im Mysterienkult der Gott stirbt und wieder aufersteht, dagegen kennt die paulinische Deutung der Taufe in *Röm* 6 drei relevante Stufen im Taufgeschehen, das „Mitsterben mit Christus" das „Begraben werden" im Akt des Untertauchens, und die dadurch verbürgte Hoffnung auf Auferstehung im eschatologischen Leben[54] oder bei Chrysostomus in ein bis dorthin andauerndes ethisch einwandfreies Leben[55]. Würde man das dreimalige Untertauchen (Immersion) isoliert als Taufe betrachten, dürfte man ausschließlich auf *Röm* 6,4 und die Deutung der Taufe als Grab schauen[56]. Da man aber in der Regel nur Tote beerdigt, wäre es ein ernstzunehmendes Verbrechen, wenn der in das Grab der Taufe steigende Täufling noch leben würde. Er muss also zuvor durch den Glauben mit Christus „mitgestorben" sein.

Nun macht aber die Tauftheologie des vierten Jahrhunderts keinen Hiat zwischen „Glaube" und „Taufe", da die Taufe als Ritengefüge das Bekenntnis des Glaubens einschloss[57]. Der Taufritus enthielt in Jerusalem zumindest ein Bekenntnis des Glaubens[58], in Antiochien zwei[59]. Erst die spätere Theologie, die die einzelnen Akte zwischen zum Glauben kommen und Taufakt isoliert, konnte die Entwicklung der Taufe im vierten Jahrhundert als „unpaulinisch" erscheinen[60]. Damit jedoch tut man den Vätern unrecht. Für heute bleiben sie in ihrem Verständnis der einen Taufhandlung, die als Ritengefüge den Glauben und den Taufakt umschließen Vorbild unserer Taufdeutung.

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[54] Par *1Kor* 15,3-5 im grundlegenden Christuskerygma.

[55] Vgl. Ferguson, *Baptism* (wie Anm. 5), 562f.

[56] Bereits Ferguson, *Baptism* (wie Amm. 5), 551 Anm. 11 weist darauf hin, daß Chryso-stomus den Begriff „Taufe" für die ganze Zeremonie gebrauche.

[57] Vgl. zu der reichhaltigen Verschränkung von Riten Messner, *Einführung* (wie Anm. 26), 85-103; die noch immer wichtigste und umfassendste Darstellung von Kretsch-mar, *Geschichte* (wie Anm. 3), 1-348.

[58] Egeria, *Itin*. 46,5f. (FC 20, 298,18-300,3 Röwekamp); Cyr. H., *catech*. 5,12 (1, 148-150 Reischl/Rupp) und Röwekamp, FC 7, 19f.

[59] S.o. Anm. 50.

[60] Das wäre als Kritik an Barths These (s.o., Anm. 26) anzubringen.

Eirini Christinaki–Glarou

The Principle of Legality in the Seventh Century[1].
A Parallel View in Byzantium and Islam[2]

Abstract
This study tries to establish to what measure Byzantine Christianity and Islam can be restricted or determined by their law. In order to do that the author expounds the structure of their legal system and the particular way in which each one considers the principle of legality. The research focuses mainly on the seventh century which proves to be of paramount importance for both religions. It is the author's conclusion and conviction that neither Islam nor Orthodox Christianity need to choose between legal tradition and legal evolution, as long as they stay close to the spirit of authenticity and enthusiasm of the seventh century.

Keywords
Byzantine Christianity, Islam, law, principle of legality

There is a crucial question that should be answered before any attempt of interreligious approach: to what extend the action of each part can be restricted or determined by its law. There is a lot of space between the utmost of the legalization of the religious phenomenon to the full rejection of any legal aspect. This space is not empty. It is filled and fulfilled by the way each religious community conceives the principle of legality. The answer to this last question could turn out to be much more easier, if we focused

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on the structures of their penal system. The principle of legality, in the field of penal law, is a legal idea, identified with the doctrine of nullum crimen nulla poena sine lege.[3]

Not only the hypostasis of a crime depends on the existence of a previous legal provision declaring it to be a penal offense but also the imposition of a specific penalty in a certain case requires that the penal legislation was in force at the time when the crime was committed. The generic prohibition of ex post facto laws to the disadvantage of the defendant has resulted to the application of the more lenient law, in case of legal amendment of the threatened penalty before judgment[4].

Detecting the starting point of the principle in many non Christian sources led to the creation of a certain number of legal theories. None of them is dominant or generally accepted. Not until the midst of the 20th century, did any researcher claimed that the first concrete formulation of the principle was constructed by Paul the Saint and Apostle at Rom 4:15 "*for where no law is there is no transgression*" and 5:13 "*For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law*". Since then, this connection has been increasingly reckoned as valid by the scholarly community.

However, if we are truthfully determined to measure the distance between the Islamic and the Christian concept of the principle of legality, we have to throw light in the seventh century A.C., which happens to be the century of Egira.

According to the Orthodox doctrine, the Ecumenical Synod is the supreme ecclesiastical authority, the meeting point of the ultimate legislative, judicial and administrative power of the Church. For the Orthodox Churches, the legal and juridical decisions, methods or even attitudes of

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[3] It is considered a most important accomplishment of the 19th and 20th jurisprudence, the cornerstone of the modern penal systems of civilized world. The principle is rendered in contemporary constitutional legislation of most nations and in international law by the term "no punishment without preexisting law".

[4] In the Western legal systems the principle of legality is closely related to the "rule of law", associated with the ideals of democracy and Rechtstaat, the separation of powers, the equality of all before the law, the protection of the citizens from any kind of authority discrimination and high–handed acts. In the Islamic legal systems the purpose of the principle is to protect the individuals from the abuse of power by authorities, thereby leading to the loss of life, liberty or property. In addition, the protection against governmental repression of the political, economic, social and other rights of the individuals or any group of individuals.

the Ecumenical Synods are absolutely compulsory and inviolable. Only the canons instituted or ratified by an Ecumenical Synod are called "sacred" and "holy" and belong to the so called corpus of orthodox canon law. A Synod is recognized as Ecumenical by the consensus of the whole body of the Church. After the schism of the 10th century, the Orthodox Christians face the dramatic reality of losing the potential of a new Ecumenical Synod. But, according to the dominant legal doctrine of Orthodox Canon Law, only an ecumenical Synod can produce infallible and divine law. The legislative works of the Church thereafter are applications of the holy canons, through interpretation and analogy.

There is a similar situation of consensus (*ijma*) and analogy (*qiyas*) in Islamic law. *Qur'ān* and sunna are infallible and divine law. The ijma is the absolute consensus of *umma*, which was a natural consequence soon after the Prophets death, but as in the next centuries became less obvious. This is why the 7th century is so important. It is the historical foundation of the principle of homogeneity in Islamic Law. Later, *ijma* started to function as a meticulous interpretation and declaration of the legal sources revealed from God. This interpretation based on the consensus of the scholars of a certain period was limited by dogmatic teachings and the strict canons of moral and social behavior of *Qur'ān* and *sunna*. As the years went by the scholars used analogy (*qiyas*) for the interpretation (*ijtihad)* of law to fill the legal gaps. In Islam the stabilization of the major collections of *hadith* was followed by the "closure of the doors" of *ijtihad* (early 10th century). Hereinafter, the idea that the next generations of scholars had no authority for individual legal reasoning became dominant[5]. The "closure of the door" doctrine determines the limits of legal thought in a narrower area of initiatives: application and interpretation of the unalterable rule of Islamic law[6].

In my opinion, both Islam and Orthodox Christianity have not abolish legal interpretation but they have specified the chronological limits of its legislative power under the division line of the tenth century. My research

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[5] J. Schacht, «Law and Justice», in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Bernard Lewis, vol. I, ed. A. K. S. Lambton and P. M. Holt, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1978, p. 539-568.

[6] Those who question the rightfulness of the closing of the door is a weak minority is a small minority of scholars (W. B. Hallaq, «Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?», *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16 (1984), p. 3-41).

on the principle of legality in Christian law of the 7th century[7], based on a meticulous case study of the corpus of the Holy canons, resulted to the following conclusion: There is not a single violation of the "no punishment without law" doctrine in law-making and law application. The sanctions for a particular crime are never increased with retrospective effect. This conclusion leads to a most important result: The prohibition of retroactivity in penal provision is a general, fundamental principle of orthodox canon law. In the seventh century and specifically in 692 eastern bishops took part in the so called "Penthekti" Ecumenical Synod, and they passed disciplinary canons to complete the work of the Fifth and the Sixth Ecumenical Councils. The "Penthekti" codified and ratified the legislative work of the Church and formulated a corpus of all sacred canons. This synod is very important for our theme, because, somebody could claim, that the principle of non retroactive force of the penal orders of the Holy Canons is grounded on a coincidental level, since there is not a general preview of the principle, a panegyric declare among the legislative work of the First Six Synods. However, there is no place for coincidence, if we just admit that Penthekti's main target was to codify and systematize Church law.

So, the results of my research turn out to be quite interesting in point of the canonical exceptions to the rule of non–retrospective penal provision. Retroactive force is given to those sacred canons that introduce a more lenient to the defendant or to the lawbreaker regulation.

Furthermore, hermeneutic canons that interpret former ones may be retrospective, giving authentic definitions of their true meaning. Incorporated into the former canon they interpret, they might seem to increase retroactively the rank of the imposed penalty of the formerly established ecclesiastical crime, but they never amount to the institution of a new penal offense.

The principle of legality is not violated in the judicial holy canons, whereas the Synod acts as Supreme Court. The Fathers of the Synods are definitely bound by the preexisting laws and creeds rather than acting upon them. Historical and theoretical paradigms occur in the texts of the holy canons in order to clarify the meaning of their penal provisions. However

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[7] Ειρ. Χριστινακη-Γλαρου, *Η αρχή της νομιμότητας στους ιερούς κανόνες (Nullum crimen nulla poena sine lege). I. Η αρχή της νομιμότητας στους κανόνες των Οικουμενικών Συνόδων (Nullum crimen, nulla poena sine lege praevia). «Η σπουδή της περιπτώσεως»*, ed. Ant. Sakkoulas, Athens - Komotini 2007, p.2.

they do not establish retrospective applications. The same stands for the "present" abnormal situations that the Fathers of the Synod describe, so as to take measures against them. The "no punishment without law" principle is not questioned in the canons which do not furnish explicitly retrospective regulations. Nevertheless, if the Synod introduces new law, the threaten of the respective sanctions refers to crimes expected to be committed. However, as long as there is a special provision, the penalty is imposed at a further point of the future transgression, that of the confirmed disobedience to the "επιφώνηση" (= admonition, warning) of the Bishop[8].

In the 7th century the established Byzantine Empire, was served by a totalitarian form of power, which was being revived, on legal terms, through constant revolution[9]. The power of the emperor on a symbolic level does not have limits, although in reality it certainly has. The way of succession of the Emperors is not legally predominated. The dynasties were not based on a hereditary constitution but on the factors that safeguarded the stability of the political power of a certain family: the Senate, the people, the army, the yard of the King and his family, and definitely the Church. The King is a chosen vessel of God, dedicated to protect the people[10]. There is a saying of the 4th century, repeated in the 6th and the 13th:

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[8] The sacred canons apply and follow the "no punishment without preexisting law" principle, which was firstly introduced in ecclesiastical law by Paul the Apostle. They also service the admissible exceptions of the nullum crimen nulla poena sine lege doctrine, in almost the same way they are instituted in contemporary public penal law. Nevertheless, there is a difference: Upon ecclesiastical level, the principle of legality is not regarded as an evolutionary element of jurisprudence, but as a sign of Revelation, an item of divine law, having been applied by the Church long before jurists "discovered" it. Christianity, in many ways, affected positively European, Anglo–American and universal legal thinking. Such important and radical influence, among others, is the legal completion and verbal formulation of this fundamental principle.

[9] For the revolution in Byzantium see Κ. Μπουρδαρα, *Καθοσίωσις και Τυραννίς κατά τους μέσους Βυζαντινούς χρόνους (867-1056)*, vol. 1, Athens, 1981, vol. 2, (1056-1081), Athens, 1984.

[10] Κ. Πιτσακη, «Αντίσταση κατά της εξουσίας και επανάσταση στο Βυζάντιο: Η θέση του δικαίου της Εκκλησίας», *Αμφισβήτηση της εξουσίας*, Εθνικό Ιδρυμα Ερευνών, Athens, 2003, p. 49-65, *ibid*: 51.

Normally the successors of the King inherit his value, but if they do not follow God' s will, then God withdraws His Grace, and the army and the people are entitled to seek for the new "chosen by God" King. Although a bad Emperor serves God' s will to punish the people for their sins, the successful resistance and revolution of the people turns out to be also God' s will.

«ἔστι γὰρ βασιλέως μὲν τρόπος ὁ νόμος, τυράννου δὲ νόμος ὁ τρόπος»[11]: *The law becomes the manner of a Kings, while the manner of a Tyrannous becomes the law*. In Byzantium the King is animate Law[12]. His constraints are moral, not legal. The virtuous leader, accepts and lives inside the outfit of the law, although he has the power not to do so. Although the byzantine constitution is not a democracy, it lets the people speak. The people are not only citizens but are also members of the Church. Church and State are two faces of the same reality. The Church does not offer support to the Emperor against to the future revolution. He is protected by God as long as he exercises justice and philanthropy. Revolution stems from the puplic idea that the King is unjust[13].

Church has a different law, an autonomous legal system. Church, does not previews the crime of kathosiosis[14] (revolution), does not declare sanctity to the dead soldiers at war, does not expel from Its body people for political reasons, and Its Synods do not legislate referring to state law but to God's will, which is revealed by the Scriptures and the Holy Tradition. For the Church the "no punishment without preexisting law" is a compulsory general principle of law, since the Scriptures is source of the rule of law. However, there cannot be claimed that the principle of legality is a present in the same way in State Law. Since the Emperor is the animate law, he can change his will. If he does nobody can claim the protection of the *status quo* of his rights. For the Emperor the no punishment without preexisting law principle remains a moral not legal constraint.

The Penthekti which codified Church law took place in the 7th century, the century of Egira. Muhammad unifies religious and political power. There is one God, one Power, one Law, according to his preaching. The seventh century, for the Muslims, is the period of Revelation of God, His power and his Law, by *Qur'ān* and the *sunna*, the two ground stones of sharī'a.

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[11] Συνέσιος Κυρήνης, *Εἰς τὸν Αὐτοκράτορα περὶ Βασιλείας*, publ. N. Terzaghi, Synesii Cyrenensis Opuscula, Roma, 1944, 6d (15.4).

[12] For the imperial power and its relation to the rule of law, see Κ. Παΐδα, *Η θεματική των Βυζαντινῶν "κατόπτρων ηγεμόνος" της πρώιμης και μέσης περιόδου (398-1085). Συμβολή στην πολιτική θεωρία των Βυζαντινῶν*, publ. Grigoris, Athens, 2005, p. 111-152.

[13] Κ. Πιτσακη, p. 51.

[14] Three exceptions, Alexios Stoudiou, Michael 3rd Achialos, Josef 1st, never accepted by the tradition: Κ. Πιτσακη, p. 58.

The Principle of Legality in the Seventh Century

During the first period of Islam rebellion was a most often method of political succession. The assassination of the Caliph was followed by the election of a new one by mutual consultation (shura) of the community. *Qur'ān* spells two positive comments for shura (Q 42:38, 3:159). Later, this practice was abandoned[15].

The principle of legality finds its origins in these two sources. *Qur'ān* contains a good number of verses which are very clearly indicative of the principle (Q 17:15[16], 28:59[17], 5:95[18], 8:38[19]). In the 4th chapter verse 22-3 proscribes certain conduct and activities and warns those who commit such conduct or activities of great punishment, although its two verses declare that such punishment will not apply retroactively. Q 4:23 reads: Except for what is past; for God is Oft–forgiving, Most Merciful[20].

G. Hussein concludes that the "*Prophet Muhammad declared that Islam proscribed and criminalized blood offences and usury and that punishment would apply, but he also declared that such punishment would not apply retroactively. Those who committed such crimes before these offences were proscribed were forgiven, provided they did not repeat the commission of any of the said offences*"[21].

It should be noted that *Qur'ān* and the *sunna* impose the general idea that individuals should acquire knowledge of the law, and that the malefactor's awareness of the prohibition shall measure his liability[22]. The Islamic

[15] See, Μαξιμ Ρεντεσον, *Ἰσλάμ καί καπιταλισμός* (transl. Δημοσθένης Κούρτοβικ) publ. Kalvos, Athens, 1980, Κυρ. Νικολαου-Πατραγα, «Ἡ ἀναχαίτησις τῆς ταξικῆς συνειδήσεως εἰς τὸ Ἰσλάμ», *Analekta* 9 (2009) [Institute of Eastern Studies of Patriarchal Library of Alexandria], 89-96, here: 91.

[16] «Who receives guidance, Receiveth it for his own benefit: Who goeth astray doth so to his own loss: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: Nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent an apostle [to give warning]».

[17] «Nor was the Lord the one to destroy a population until He had sent to its Centre an apostle rehearsing to them Our Signs; nor are We going to destroy a population except when its members practice iniquity».

[18] «God forgives what is past: For repetition God will exact from him the penalty. For God is Exalted, and Lord of Retribution».

[19] «Say to the unbelievers, if [now] they desist, their past would be forgiven them; But if they persist, the punishment of those before them is already [a matter of warning them].

[20] G. M. Hussein, *Criminal Justice in Islam, Judicial Procedure in Sharī'a,* ed. M. A. Haleem, A. O. Sherif and K. Daniels, publ. I. B. Taurin, London, 2003, p. 37.

[21] G. Hussein, p. 37.

[22] Y. K. Saadu, «Sharī'a and the attributes of the rule of legality», *Unilorin Sharī'a Journal* (2000), p. 1-11.

sharī'aʾs classification according to the gravity of the criminal offences and on the basis of the corresponding punishment for each one, follows three levels: *Hudud* and *qisas* offences formulate the most austere and strict application of the principle of legality in human history[23].

Tazir offences constitute a separate category which applies to a more elastic model of the principle of legality, comparable to the concepts of contemporary legal systems[24]. *Hudu* offences are severe assaults against God, the peaceful organisation of an Islamic State, public peace or the interest of society as a whole[25]. Punishment of this crime is determined by God in the *Qur'ān* or by the Prophet in the *sunna.* The judge is obliged to award the penalty fixed by sharī'a and he is not entitled to increase or decrease it. Once a *hudu c*rime is proven before the judge, he has no discretionary power to pardon punishment, give forgiveness or even take a more lenient or austere view of the case[26], since the execution of the penalty is the only way to earn absolution[27].

On the other hand, in *Qur'ān,* the punishment of *qisas* offences*,* (= intentional, semi–intentional, unintentional or by mistake, murder, intentional cutting of limbs, unintentional wounding and unintentional cutting off limbs) follows the rules of equality or retaliation. Since, the *sunna* also spells out such cases in detail, we can safely conclude that the principle of legality is firmly applied on *qisas* offences, as well as on cases of compensation (*diya*)[28].

Tazir crimes are either not included in the categories of *hudud* or *qisas* offences under *sharī'a*, or, although they are defined as *qisas* offences, the punishment is determined by the victim or his blood relatives on the terms of retaliation, or both retaliation and compensation[29]. The ruler or the leg-

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[23] G. Hussein, p. 37.

[24] G. Hussein, p. 37.

[25] Abu-Zahra, al-Jarima wal'-Uquba fi Fiqh al-Islam, vol. 1, Cairo, 1998, p. 195-204. Y. K. Saadu, *op. cit.*

[26] These crimes are adultery, launching a false charge against a chaste person (qadhf) unjustified and violent disobedience to the Muslim Ruler in the Islamic State, turning back from the Muslim Faith (*ridda*). See, G. Hussein, p. 38-42.

[27] Κυρ. Νικολαου-Πατραγα, *Γενετήσιος παραβατικότης κατά τό Ἰουστινιάνειον καί τό Ἰσλαμικόν Δίκαιον, Ἡ μοιχεία καί ἄλλα συναφῆ ἐγκλήματα* p. δ΄, [Athens Faculty of Law dissertation].

[28] For *qisas* offences and penalties, see al-Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunna*, II, Jeddah 1985, p. 372-404.

[29] For *tazir* offences and penalties, see Machmud Shaltut, *al-Islam: Aqida wa Sharia*, Cairo, 1989, p. 291-294.

islative body defines *tazir* crimes and proscribes the relevant punishments, taking under consideration the protection of Islamic law, the legitimate benefit of the individuals and/or society and the interests of the state. In *tazir* cases the judge may have a more lenient view of the case, claiming that the lighter penalty serves public interest and crime prevention[30]. This a more flexible option of the principle of legality, close to modern systems, which "*entrust the judge with wide discretionary powers concerning the selection of sentences to be applied*"[31].

The obligation of obedience in Muslim Rulers, and the obligation of the latter to take measures to protect existence, unity, continuity and progress of the Muslim *umma*, enlarges the flexibility of the principle of legality, and consists the essence of the permitted adjustment of Islamic laws to contemporary needs, through the use of analogy and the criterion of historical consensus of the scholars (*ijma*) towards the appointment of more lenient penalties, not for the interests of the individual criminal, but in favour to the unity and peace of Islamic society.

Islamic law finds its chief source in the will of Allah as revealed to the Prophet[32]. It contemplates one community of the faithful, though they may be of various tribes and in widely separated locations. Religion, not nationalism or geography, is the proper cohesive force[33]. The state itself is subordinate to the *Qur'ān*, which leaves little room for additional legislation. This ancient Arab concept of *sunna* became one of the central concepts of Islamic law[34].

It has been claimed by Khadduri and Liebsny that

> "during the greater part of the first century of Islam, the Law, in the technical meaning of the term, did not yet exist. As had been the case in the time of the Prophet, law fell outside the sphere of religion, and since there were no religious or moral objections to specific transactions or modes of behavior"[35].

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[30] G. Hussein, p. 44.

[31] Paradigms of tazir crimes include lie under oath, bribery, defamation and slander, libel, embezzlement, contempt of court violations of law and regulations and other offences determined by the competent authority. G. Hussein, p. 45.

[32] Ι. Μαζη, *Γεωγραφία του Ισλαμιστικού Κινήματος στην Μ. Ανατολή,* Athens, 2002, chapt. Α΄.

[33] Ι. Μαζη, chapt. Α΄.

[34] Κυρ. Νικολαου-Πατραγα, «Ἰσλάμ καί Ἐθνισμός», *O Politis* 142 (2006), p. 28-32.

[35] M. Khadduri and H. J. Liebsny, *Law in the Middle East*, I, *Origins and Development of Islamic Law*, (1955), publ. The Lawbook Exchange, Clark-New, Jersey 20082, p. 35.

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They claim that early Muslims adopted legal and administrative institutions of the conquered territories, drawing on Roman (including Roman provincial) law, Sassanian law, Talmudic law, and the canon law of the Eastern churches[36]. The aforementioned researchers finally point out that, although the sharī'a professes to be a single logical whole, yet in practice there is still an immense diversity of opinion, not only between the different schools of law, but even between different teachers in the same school. They add that accordingly, modern reformers have had recourse to the expedient of building up from the various conflicting opinions a composite law so as to be more suitable to the modern world. To support their view, they note that it is accepted in Hanafī law school that "the provisions of the law vary with the change of the times" and that al-Zurqānī, a Mālikī writer, says that "new decisions can be given with regard to new conditions"[37].

However, this rather sociological than legal approach is influenced by the western way of thinking. Nevertheless, the substance of Islamic law is that it was built on the concept of Divine Revelation. There are fundamental theological roots in Islamic law[38]. No legal scientist is entitled to ignore the basic rule of Islam, that places on a legitimate basis the differentiation and variety in Islamic Law. This basic rule is the doctrine of predomimation. Law is not an instrument of personal salvation, since the obedience to the law cannot force God to show his mercy. Diversity in law is acceptable, since it does not impose polytheism, the unforgivable sin. Since it is accepted that God is the one who changes the historical conditions, God is the one who decides who is going to take new decisions, and what these decisions are going to be. So, the "startling liberty of the Muslims between conflicting doctrines" is an honest conclusion for Libsney's view of Islam, but on a legal level, it does not make a difference. It is just a resourceful way to convey through a different channel of communication the message of the full obedience in God᾿ s schedules and wills. In Islam the greek words eusebeia (= piety) and *dikaiocratia* (= true justice) are synonyms[39].

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[36] *Ibid*, p. 35. This opinion is argued or almost fully rejected by others researchers (See, A. I. Hassan – Κυρ. Νικολαου-Πατραγα, «Ἡ σχέσις τοῦ Ρωμαϊκοῦ Δικαίου πρός τά ἀρχαῖα ἀνατολικά δίκαια», *Alexandrinos Ametos*, The Patriarchal Library of Alexandria, Alexandria, 2008, p. 169- 184.

[37] *Ibid*, p. 110.

[38] See, Κυρ. Νικολαου-Πατραγα, «Κοράνιον καὶ μεταφυσικὴ ὑπὸ δικαικὴν ὀπτικήν», *Parnassos* ΝΑ΄ (2009), p. 147-154.

[39] See, A. I. Hassan – Κυρ. Νικολαου-Πατραγα, «Ἡ ἔννοια τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἐν τῷ Ἰλαμικῷ Νόμω (Ssharyia)», *Ekklesiastikos Faros* ΟΔ΄ (2003), p. 159-179, here: 163.

In both Christian and Islamic Law, no credit can be given to any attempt of identification of their juridical methods with either the so-called "legal formalism" of the past two centuries or its very opposite, "instrumentalism". Both of them are *sui generis* legal systems whose chronological end of formation does not exceed the first ten Christian centuries, but as Divine laws still remain in force. On the one hand, the Bible and the Holy Traditions, and especially the Holy Canons, and on the other, *Qur'ān* and the *sunna* formulate two early "case law" legal systems. Therefore, even the judicial Christian canons or the particular decisions on specific differences by the Muslim rulers, can be applied in the future as non-retrospective rules of law, without undermining the principle of legality.

In my opinion, both Islam and Orthodox Christianity do not need to choose between legal tradition and legal evolution, as long as they stay close to the spirit of authenticity and enthusiasm of the seventh century. It is the middle of Byzantium, an era of legislative and juridical maturity. It is the time when the Christian Revelation formulated a perfect legal-technical profile in its law. The enthusiasm of the first steps of Christian Revelation is replaced by the sense of the historical glory of the Church and the fulfillment of the need of the legal establishment of its moral and social rules. This need became a universal idea. This is why Islam, reinforces its huge enthusiasm of its first steps in history, by exercising, from its very beginning, a *legal perfectionism*, which finally turned out to be recognized as one of its fundamental characteristics. Islam enters in human history targeting to an ideal rule of law, which, according to the Prophet, emerges from and consists of full obedience in God's orders.

However, Fullness and Perfection follow a reverse way in Christianity and Islam. In the former the fullness of the Trinity᾽s Revelation guarantees the perfection of Christian law. In the latter the fullness of the Prophet's law reflects the perfection of Allah's Revelation.

Vasile Vlad

Secularization - the Fundamental Feature of Modernity[1]

Abstract

The secularization and the modernity are terms, which cannot be dissociated. Wherever secularization appears we can speak about a certain amount of modernity. Apparently, the sphere of modernity is larger than that of secularization, although all the aspects of modernity, as they were consecrated in the 18th-19th centuries, imply a certain amount of secularization. What the sociology of religions call secularization is, in fact, the effect of modernity on different levels (economical, political, intellectual, and symbolical). Modernity is a global phenomenon and secularization, the way in which modernity is present in the different aspects of the social life. We will deal with the technical-economical aspects, the institutional aspects and the credibility structures.

Secularisation and technical

Between the phenomenon of secularisation and technological explosion, arising from the industrialisation and urbanisation is an obvious link. We show elsewhere that modern science, born as a result of the concept that nature is autonomous, issued the idea that the world would be knowable in principle and in its totality. This thesis, together with that of a self-sufficient nature and devoid of any transcendence, plus the promise of science to create a more just world than the traditional past, a world of prosperity and

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happiness, boosted an unprecedented process of technicality. Technique is defined as the totality of the processes by which people endowed with scientific knowledge dominate nature and manage to release its potentials, to recombine them so as to obtain effects able to improve conditions of human survival in the world. The way nature looks as a result of technical intervention on it and how techniques have an impact on the human condition to change it fundamentally, could be the start point to discuss the problem of secularisation. This is because, in contrast to the relative stability that anterior technique left to human existence, the modern technology (from the eighteenth century), implies the imposition of an existential mechanistic and desecrated universe. The relation between man and world and nature manifested in a new form under the conditions of modern technology. This created a new world around us, a new "natural environment" - that is a second nature. And this new nature (new world) began to overwhelm the man, to dominate him, paradoxically, in a direct proportion relation to that of human dominion over nature through the knowledge of its laws. The more man disposed more arbitrary and more secular by nature, the deeper this reconfigured nature by technique enslaved man. Nature becomes a real master (and another cruel master) of human beings, only by the organic involvement of man in technical work.

> "Technique, Karl Jaspers wrote, radically transformed the factual everyday being of man in the surrounding world, forcing society and the working style to move to new channels. It oriented them to mass production and transformation of the whole factual being in a perfect technical mechanism, and of the planet, in a single factory. Thus the detachment of man from any root took place and it still happens. He becomes a stateless inhabitant of Earth. He loses the continuity of tradition. The spirit is reduced to the acquisition of summary knowledge and to the training to fulfil useful functions."[2]

The de-insertion of man from his natural environment and from tradition and the loss of his roots meant the secularisation of individual conscience. In fact, we are dealing with mutual determination between the objective - ambiental secularisation of environmental conditions - and the subjective one that Peter Berger talked about. Industrialisation,

[2] Karl Jaspers, *Texte filosofice*, selectate de Bruno Würtz şi George Purdea, trad. George Purdea, Editura Politică, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 186.

urbanisation and technical formulation of modernity occurred in history "a rupture, destruction or immersion of the past, to an extent that baffles any attempt to establish analogies or comparisons to something happened over millenniums of history."[3] The technique is as old as man is[4]. From the dawn of his history man "made" things from the material world to intervene on the nature of the world. The meaning of technique was to acquire human freedom from nature. It should free man from his biological dependence on nature and on its needs. In fact, this is what happened when the wheel was discovered, and also producing agricultural tools, weapons, sails, boats, the domestication of animal nature, producing fire, the appearance of antique mechanical techniques. These made possible for enormous weight materials to be removed and used for the erection of the old buildings or construction of roads, ships, etc. This technique, however, remained within limits controlled by man. In all that was done, intervened skills, intuition and human force, supplemented by the use of force animals and natural circumstances (water, fire) but, nevertheless, within the limits of natural human world. Such a technique did not de-sacralised the man and his social universe and did not make him hostile to the nature. On the contrary, the technique hooked and deepened the man in the world he lived. For centuries, techniques and the traditional way of living were harmonised in the most natural manner.

The situation changed completely since the last decades of the eighteenth century. Modernity pushed the technical development in an unprecedented way before by a decisive leap. In the last two centuries, human life put on a technical appearance as a whole. After centuries of building a technical and technocratic vision on the world by making more or less shy steps (bold, perhaps), the 19th and 20th centuries overcame any idea or dream that could have been imagined at the beginning of positivist science. The *mutation* of technique and science as well, in modernity, refers to their *meaning*. If by then (the eighteenth century), their meaning was implicitly subsumed to the transcendent meaning the man himself existed for, starting with the dedicated modernity, technology and science became autonomous and transformed into purposes and then, they were *absolutised*.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

[4] From Christian perspective the technique - that is creating tools to facilitate human approach in mastering nature - is post Eden.

"Where, in everyday work, wrote Karl Jaspers, the whole meaning is lost, as reason and horizon, the technique degenerates into an infinitely diverse activity, meaningless and oppressing for those who perform it. If the operations acquired through exercise become self-satisfied routine, being part of the essence of the technical work, then instead of improving life (i.e. by providing rudimentary activities and services), technique rather impoverished it. Without spiritual effort, work becomes self-sufficient instead of being indispensable tool in the service of a developed conscience. Thus, man dives in unconsciousness or loss of consciousness."[5] Independent technique or technology of modernity kills the spirit.

It becomes not only an agent of man and world secularisation, i.e. de-christianisation, but a factor of secularism - becoming an aggressive force that denies the reality a different meaning than of the technique itself or of science for the sake than science, without finality in human destiny. In addition, by this, technique becomes a way of human slavery and ends up getting an exactly opposite sense to that was created for. Accordingly, the original meaning of technique was subordinated to the production of tools and ways to serve the process by which man humanised the world and nature. Through technique and science, man should extend himself in the world and this world had to enter the unity to man up to the extent of humanisation (spiritualisation). For animals, the world is *already* a fact and they remain unconsciously dependent on it. The world is *already* a fact of life for man too, but he creates his own environment through science and technology. Human life becomes a reality in the natural fact of life and in the life he creates by his technical and scientific extension in the world, this being the hallmark of human dignity. Man finds himself in the world created by him, not only in satisfaction of liberation or overcoming biological needs but also in the beauty and joy of a self-adequate world. Human reality is amplified by the expansion of man in the surrounding world. Moreover, when technology and science are self-sustaining, then, instead of humanising the world and nature, they end to be means by which man becomes an instrument and a thing. Karl Jaspers concludes:

"As almost all people become links in the technical process of work, organisation of work becomes a matter of human being.

[5] Karl Jasper, *op. cit.*, p. 191-192.

The ultimate goal for man is man and not the technique, and the latter must be in the service of man and not man in the service of technique. But in the modern technique conditions there started a socio-political process that tends to totally subordinate man (as labour force) to technical and economic purposes - and not by accident as it was originally"[6].

Thus the technique ends to be man's enemy - becomes it transforms him into a part of the machine and a piece of a huge technical gear.

In this manner, technical formulation extends from processing the nature to changing the whole human life. Technique penetrates into all the social-cultural and political spheres. It is also present in the area of leisure and entertainment to the extent that man, when not resting and dreaming, does no longer know what to do with his leisure when it is not filled with technical organised activity. Here's one picture of modern man, who was secularised by technical life:

"Man was uprooted and pull apart from his home and his native land, and placed in front of the car. The house and its garden are not a unique landscape, but is just like machines he works on: temporary, replaceable. The earth becomes a clearly mechanical landscape; man's view on the past and future in very narrow, he loses his tradition and aspiration towards a final goal, and he lives only now. The present, however, empties itself as it is no longer fed by the memories, and the possibilities that lie in it and constitute the germs for future become more restricted. Work becomes simple stress, and is done by tension and hastily. So after so much spent energy there comes exhaustion; nor work or what follows it, bears the seal of reflection. After hard work, the man is carried away only by instinctive pleasures, and by the need of pleasures and sensations. He lives through cinema and newspapers, through news he hears and pictures he see, that make up a conventional and mechanical universe"[7].

A compulsory question arises: since modernity promoted autonomous technique -, and it stressed, sometimes up to radicalisation, the secularisation of the world and man, must we see the technique era just like a fatal destiny, or at the same time, a possible chance for the human life?

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 196-197.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 205-206.

Secularization - the Fundamental Feature of Modernity

The answer was already suggested above. *Science and technology can be ways to humanise and spiritualise the nature and the world*. Denying or convicting the technique because of the consequences listed above would be a huge mistake. The priests in ancient Athens, after sacrificing the bull at the Buffoons feast, established a legal process and convicted the tool that killed the sacrificed animal. The knife was sentenced to be thrown into the sea because it was guilty of the death of the ox sacrificed. We would do the same if we found technique and science guilty and repudiated them because of the deviations the spirit of modernity brought them. There is undoubtedly a link between secularisation of life and its technical formulation. However, religious recession is not just a simple (and still) fatal consequence of the radical change of living environment through science and technical formulation[8]. Rather than invoking the environmental fatality and external causes, we believe that it would be more appropriate to understand the emergence of new mental circumstances or newly established rationality of modernity that diverted science and technology from their true purpose in relation to man and the world. *The technique problem is not technical, but is the spirit of technique!* Technique reveals both the possibilities of matter (nature, world) and type of the spirit! Technique updates potencies placed in the materiality. They are endless, as the spirit that moves and discover them, re-composing them in a new (technical) formula! In addition, by this "finite infinite" of technical and scientific possibilities, they placed themselves near God! Therefore, we could glimpse the meaning of technique - to be a *symbol* that manifests the divine energies present unmixed in the creation. That is why for the religious man there can be a spiritual use of any technological and scientific products. In his social life, the planetary man of the third millennium will be increasingly conditioned and reconfigured by the scientific knowledge and technical achievements. He will live in a radically "disenchant" world

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[8] In his book *La Cité seculière*, Tournai, 1968, H. Cox alleges this Islamic and Asian civilisation. Their major religious cultures do not seem to be very much shaken - at least temporarily - because of modern European technologies, which invaded their physical spaces of existence. In the West the modern reason as economic, social, political and philosophical rationality, won only by paying the price of a war against religion, that is by amputating any relevance in the social space. It is not necessarily fatal to be the same with the other major space and culture civilisations. It seems that, for now at least, the Asian and Islamic world do not seem to be able to combine the prodigious purchases of modern technology and the spirit of traditional religious cultures.

(pantheistically speaking), but in a re-created and radically transformed world by future techniques. The problem the hyper-technical world of tomorrow will not be the technique but the spirit of technique. In addition, man will impose this spirit. Eventually the technique problem refers to anthropology and cosmology[9].

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[9] In his study "Orthodoxy and Technique", Rev. Dumitru Popescu tries to do a theological analysis on the technique providing the following of radiography: the history of civilisation is in its largest and most expressive part, the history of technology. The great inventions exercised a considerable influence on the development and progress of humankind. Of course, technique satisfies human necessities for the most part, but as a reverse of the coin it raises them and multiplies them to infinity. For this reason modern man is always more dissatisfied than men from other epochs. The technique created from an independent reason seems to be good and serves many vital human interests, but it also can turn against the man with a terrible destructive power. Accordingly, the technique that wants to be independent has three negative consequences from a Christian perspective. First, the technique that lost the relationship with God forces man to stick to the natural outside, world, and neglect the inner life, spiritual. The man was pushed by the vital needs and was enchanted by the accuracy of the natural sciences, by their geometric character, by the accuracy and precision of their applications. He started to walk on the wide open way to the outside world, neglecting himself and cultivating the spirit sciences to a much lesser extent compared to the former. The primary need to live forced the man to be interested in conquering the outside world, aiming it at the expense of the inner life of the person. In the second place, autonomous technique tends to turn into goal in itself and to make man forget the meaning of his life and existence. Technique is not and can not be but an instrument, and not a purpose. There are no technical goals of life, but only technical means. The purposes are part of the spirit subject. By its very nature, the technical instrument remains heterogeneous to the man, to the spirit and the meaning. However, it tends to replace the purpose, and being considered very important today, it might mask or even delete the human consciousness, even the meaning of life. The definition of man as homo faber sees him only as the tools maker; it shows that the goals were substituted by the means. Of course, man is, by nature, homo faber, but only for some higher purposes. Hence the importance of metaphysical and religious problem of the technique. In addition, the third negative consequence of autonomous technology is the abrupt separation of man from God and from the meaning of the creation. God entrusted the world to man for a higher purpose than the consumerist one, namely to raise the cosmos in God to be penetrated by His eternity. However, man exploits the world discretionary through the autonomous technique and under an excessive anthropocentrism, ignoring the theonomous nature of the world and imposing his own laws. With this attitude man, not only gave rise to an artificial and secular worlds, but caused a crisis that puts into question the very possibility of the world's existence. Dumitru Popescu, *Ortodoxie şi tehnică*, în vol. *Ortodoxie şi contemporaneitate*, Editura Diogene, Bucureşti, 1996, p. 162-164.

Secularisation and Social Field

In his work *Public Religions in the Modern World*[10], Jose Casanova approaches the theme of secularisation determining from the dynamic that modernity imposes to social organisation. Thus, in pre-modernity the Western Church was so strong that it could actually structure and control the whole social reality. Nevertheless, in modernity the Church dominance not only goes into a shadow but also lost any centrality it had in any social organisation, at least legally speaking. By contrast with traditional sacral type society, modern society is defined as a fundamentally secular, pluralistic and democratic society. *The new autonomy of the State in relation to power of the Church is synonymous with secularisation.*

In the social field, individual life is dominated and shaped by autonomous State, according to its own reasons for being. Scientific thinking and capitalist economy, as levers of the modern state, are the ones to structure social reality, while religion receives (only) the status of "another social sphere" (by no means dominant). Public institutions under the aegis of the Church are taken over and controlled by the State. Political parties, trade unions, and journals - which until then claimed to be the religious, or at least under the patronage of the Christian spirit - are secularised, i.e. take distance from the ecclesial space, both in content and the forms of organisation[11].

> "Since the 1960s, Y. Lambert writes, the social functions of the Church lost their importance. There were no sufficient reasons to maintain ongoing, competing statal, and church institutional structures (with the same objective). The social field got autonomy from the religious field, so that the processes of social life become particularly secular and the social relations mainly contractual and impersonal "[12].

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[10] Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago, 1994, p. 212-213.

[11] The differentiation of secular spheres and their emancipation from religious institutions and rules is for Casanova, "the real essence" of the theory of secularisation and "remains a modern trend" that "works as a primary characteristic of differentiating the modern structures". Moreover, Casanova argues that "traditional churches are incompatible with independent modern states. He claims that merging the religious and political community is incompatible with the modern principle of citizenship." Being decentralised the church becomes a voluntary association. Jose Casanova, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[12] Y. Lambert, *Dieu change en Bretagne*, Paris, 1985, p. 398.

The distinction between the public life and private life sphere becomes a favourite theme of the modern world, this distinction marginalising even more radical the Church presence in the social field. Accordingly, faith has to be discovered only from a personal perspective and concern and it has to be moved from the social space - which must remain neutral - to private life only. In modernity, the quality of Christian or member of a church is the most unimportant aspect in the field of social relations. One can maintain and undertake commitments with others in public space, only in a political and economic horizon, without any religious beliefs or their type to have any importance. *The immediate consequence is the denial of the Church authority in ethics*. Since the church is one of the spheres of social life, since faith is a personal affair, since social relationships are contractual and impersonal and without religious connotation, then the Church teaching is no longer relevant in the area of social ethics. The secular ethics appears and it has its own foundations, the religious Church morality being just a subassembly. Therefore, in the social field there are no transcendent moral truths. In fact there is no Truth, only truths or arbitrary and subjective preferences of individuals. After several decades of such a perspective, modern society generated a social space for giving up the truth. Even the faithful and the members of a church come to have a very vague idea about their own religion. It has no longer any effective influence on their thinking or acting; it is just like being separate from the rest of their existence. René Guénon observes: "Basically, believers and unbelievers behave almost the same, for many Catholics, (but not limited to them, nn), affirming the supernatural is only a theoretical value, and would be very embarrassed if they had to be in a position to find a miracle"[13]. This means the secularisation of social field brings a practical materialism, a materialism of the deed. The social gear lacks the Truth and the social action is reduced to material efficiency. And this materialism of doing is more dangerous than the theoretical one, being acknowledged and supported, precisely because the people captured by it, are unaware of this fact[14].

Lacking the transcendent Truth that is repudiated from social field - in modernity, the religion as a manifestation of those who compose society,

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[13] Réne Guénon, *Simboluri ale ştiinţei sacre*, trad. Marcel Tolcea şi Sorina Şerbănescu, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1997, p. 10.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

is closer to the sense[15]. Secularisation of the social environment led to the secularisation of Christianity (Western) itself like a boomerang. Church tries an aggiornamento to adapt to the new society. From this point of view, Protestantism and neo-Protestantism are the religious formulas of social space secularisation. These formulas give up the Truth, reduce the role of the doctrine to a maximum extent and present themselves with vaguely and convenient religious accents that make the modern spirit feel very comfortable.

In the mentioned work, Casanova believes that decentralisation of the Church in social field and its marginalisation in the public space, with all the consequences resulting (some mentioned above), will not lead however to decay and loss of faith and of religious practices in the society. This is because the decay of religion, on which the positivism has gloomy prophecies, based not on empirical observations but on the ideological critique perspective of Enlightenment on faith and the Church. Furthermore, the precepts of liberal thinking penetrate modernity (19th and 20th centuries) in all political, constitutional and economic structures of Western Europe. The modern liberal state liberalises somehow the report between modernity and religion, enabling modern societies both to decentralise and centralise the religion[16]. Extensively, in the dynamic of social being, many Christian communities were not only able to adapt and survive in the modern world, but assimilated and fully harmonised the practical facilities of modernity with the religious precepts. The fact

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[15] "For most people, writes René Guénon, religion refers only to the sense, without any intellectual dimension. In this case, it is confused with a vague religiosity, and reduced to the moral. The doctrine part is extremely diminished even if it plays the essential role and to which the rest should not exist except consequently", cf. R. Guénon, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[16] "Decentralisation is determined externally by structural trends of differentiation that are prone to forced transformation of religion in a religious sphere, almost invisible, differentiated circumscribed, and marginalised. Equally important is that decentralisation is ideologically mandated thought the liberal ideologies precepts. They not only enter the political and constitutional theory, but the whole structure of Western thought. For this reason, the sociological theory and liberal political analysis hardly found an appropriate conceptualisation and understanding of the new phenomenon which I call the decentralisation of modern religion ... The public role of religion does not oppose modernisation and both centralisation and decentralisation remain alternatives of modern societies ".Jose Casanova, op. cit., p. 215.

is more possible as modernity failed to overcome the suffering and death mysteries or to find a more or less relevant answer in relation to religion[17].

The structures of Credibility and the Secularisation

The process of rationalisation of the whole reality proposed by the Enlightenment questioned the credibility of all traditional truths, usually metaphysical, which nourished the societies for many centuries. Horia Roman Patapievici proposes an analysis on secularisation, which shows how the modern world reached the impasse or the impossibility to accept a transcendent Truth, or to be able to credit any institution or authority with any credibility[18]. The cited author explains that the ontological separation between God and the world, which radical modernity operates with, puts the uncreated and the created in a full discontinuity. This thinking will reflect on the relationship between the creation of the world by God and His presence in any of the subsequent moments of world existence. The radical distance between the origin and the present of the world

> "conveniently ensures the position of philosophical and scientific Deism (which states that in order to explain the current causes we do not have to analyse the final causes; nature is exhausted by secondary causes, and ignores the first one; and causality is reduced to the inventory of efficient causes, ignoring the final one). It also ensures the position of religious Deism (which states that God had active contact with the world only when creating it) and of political Deism (which states that separation of church [the origin] and State [the actuality] is sown in the nature of things, cosmologically and ontologically speaking)"[19].

So far, the difference between origin and present entitles secularisation in the most natural way. However, things do not stop here. If the origin is separated from its consequences, then the value of any "foundational argument" becomes unnecessary, superfluous and insignificant for any of

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[17] Y. Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

[18] H.–R. Patapievici, *Omul recent. O critică a modernităţii din perspectiva întrebării «Ce se pierde atunci când ceva se câştigă?»*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2001, p. 78-83.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

the current moments of creation development. Since the Creator is absent from His creation and while the creation (the world) works as a viable and self-sufficient mechanism, then the truth of the Creator has the value and credit that the reason of the creation (the world) gives it. In other words, the separation between the origin and the present gives up the possibility of a transcendent truth, valid for the creation. The only *valid, safe, healthy and normal* things are the impersonality of creation, the mechanics, the rigidity and the repetitiveness that science finds and records. For several centuries, the West created the representation of a comprehensible world only for the scientist reason, and that any object of research and knowledge is exhaustible by positivist science approach. This is because the world is radically devoid of the presence of its Founder and of the founding reason. Modern natural science was born just from this reasoning that (science) promoted itself as the reality standard. The rift between the origin and its consequences generates a "dogma of modernity" that

> "origins are outside the operating logic of the world if the world already exists. It is not relevant how it exists. The origins are un-important not because they were never important, but because in time they automatically cease to be important. The consequence is the strange statement that the theories of the present are always more complete, more comprehensive, more consistent than past theories. In short, the present is superior to the past. If the origin really does not matter, the inevitable consequence is that recent time is always right against the past. The theological reason is that the immanent-justifiable reason increases as the transcen-dent-founder reason departs. This mechanism is what we might call the axiom of the validity argument "through temporality" (we the modern people know better than anyone thought before us) or the founder argument of modernity. Modernity is the era in which the fact of being modern is itself a value - and we can-not think of a more important one (better, more comprehensive, human, etc.)"[20].

So, without God as "transcendent limit", the emancipation of modernity came on a path that lacks stability and criteria, with no possibility of stopping. Any constraints by tradition, any ethic of duties were shattered, and the values (especially the moral ones) had no consistency or their own

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

nature. When everything becomes immanent, when the content of values is not founded vertically, when the market principles swallows everything, when structures of credibility (the Church par excellence) are denied, then the only "conceptual" horizon that is left, swings between totalitarian ideologies (which assert their unique truth) and nihilism. Nevertheless, modernity knew and still knows them both.

On the other hand, the loss of credibility of the old (traditional) religious concepts on the origin of the world and man, on heaven and hell, beautiful and ugly, good and evil, etc., does not coincide only with the emergence of the new scientific and technical reason. It also refers to the "negotiation" with modernity tried by the traditional Western church. This is how Catholicism responded to the modern world. First, a rigid inflexibility (which in time proved to be an adaptation of the message and work in society following secular models) and then the emergence of non-dogmatic and non-liturgic Protestantism. At one place, Catholicism and Protestantism (the former through excessive dogmatisation and conceptual and clerical totalitarianism on society and the latter, by accommodation and even absorption by the secular relativism) endorsed the idea that dogma and ritual (and the truth and life) are relative. *The Church itself enhances the secularisation and undermines its own credibility by adjusting its message according to "what is for believing or what can be believed by modern reason".* So the comfortable theologies were born - that gave people what they wanted to hear - and the pietistic sliding that gave churches rather a secular aspect than a charismatic and mysterious one.

We will insist on the aspect of adapting Christianity to modernity, presenting the analysis Geoff Kimber made on the answer to secularisation given by various English churches[21]. The author shows that secularism derives from Enlightenment that challenged our view and understanding on the place of God in creating and maintaining the world and the possibility of the miracle. It also challenged the scriptural truths and the right of the Church to impose its ethical rules in the society. Science must be independent, religious belief must be a private and not public fact, morals are summarised to values that express the arbitrary claims of the individual,

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[21] Geoff Kimber, *Church responses to secularisation Being in the world but not of it (Răspunsurile Bisericii la secularizare – fiind „în" lume, dar nu „din"lume)*, traducere de pr. lect. dr. Florin Botezan, în vol. *Omul de cultură în faţa descreştinării*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba-Iulia, 2005, p. 511-525.

and what is not verified by any empirical scientific method is necessarily untrue. The religious codes that refer to rules of conduct must be rejected as encroaching on individual freedom. Defined dogmatic religious beliefs should disappear as they introduce dissension between people.

Trying to face the intolerant and totalitarian secularism, the English churches adopted at least three positions: ignoring, adapting and dealing with it.

Ignoring the secularism is the position that churches use to "avoid the problem" either by seeking to separate from the world, or by closing the eyes to what is happening, or by giving the people the most facile message. The isolationism of certain Christian communities is reflected in an attempt to avoid the media (refusing to go to the theatre, the cinema, or to have a TV). Then there is the fear of secular creative arts, or the refusal to be involved in politics or civic issues. It can also involve the refusal to allow children to pursue high education due to its effect corruption. It may be also an insistence on their home schooling education in all respects, or moving in areas where they can go to special Christian schools[22]. Therefore the world (modernity) is evil and the Christians must avoid contact with it as much as he can.

The isolationism of the Church and the refusal of dialogue in response to modernity, cancel any credibility just from the beginning and turn it into a source of secularisation. The attitude of patient resistance is no less damageful, saying that "the wheel of time spins, things repeat and the church needs to sail its own boat and to go ahead with hatches (curtains) pulled until the storm passes." This way of (not) talking to modernity means a cruel indifference to the eternal destiny of each person who perishes in the storm. While in terms of secularisation, it is help towards the dilution and loss of consciousness and of Christian terms of reference. The author of the study, Geoff Kimber, an Anglican believer, ascertains the irreparable damage that the clergy ignorance brought to: "only very late in the day, when only a small percentage of our people was Christian rather nominally, I realised that there is not just a change of a passing phase but an undermining of our whole system of faith in the hearts and minds of the people"[23]. The same disservice is made by "the comfortable theologies"

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 514.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 515.

which give up the requirements of "Gospel the apostles and church fathers taught", in favour of modern concepts of comfort[24].

Adapting - is another way to deal with modernity, namely the chameleon attitude. "Christianity became a chameleon that can not be distinguished from the tree leaves behind"[25]. In the context of the modern world, different Christian churches tend to fit the modernity up to the complete disfigurement of their Christian image. The "Church" is transformed into a place to express religious feelings of individuals and in a space of a theology, which preaches sociologizing faith that only considers the position, and social and economic profitability of the persons. In this sense the doctrinal and historical truth of Christianity is dimmed and the support of all spiritualities is promoted, no matter how similar are or not with the traditional perspective. This "theology" sees the church as a meeting place where people can come and tell God in their own way and at their own understanding what they want and what makes them feel good. As people have an "inarticulate faith", the work of the church would be to encourage this belief even if it contradicts the traditional one, because any form of faith is ultimately an aspiration after genuine spirituality and therefore, it is good in its essence and should be promoted. Because "the inarticulate faith" is a kind of "putting on the road" to the orthodox spirituality, the theological message of the "church" should not discourage through criticism the "Christians'" way of life, even if it is immoral. For example, because most of the people live in concubinage and far away from any kind of asceticism, "the church" does not have to preach chastity before marriage or any ascetic practice, not to make those in concerned, feel guilty. For example the Anglican Church did another step on the way of this indulgence, namely to give up all the traditional doctrinal elements of faith and to replace them with the secular precepts of modernity. Things happened the same manner in the liberal Anglican churches. During the sixties, the liberals developed a new "theology" of the Holy Spirit, according to which the Spirit speaks only through the

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[24] "The comfortable theologies " means the assimilation of secularisation precepts presented as the Church's message in a Christian language. For example, the proposition that all people, regardless of their moral state, have the right to see and treat themselves a being good, or theologies of welfare that tell the rich men the money they have are a sign of their blessing and approval by God, so on.

[25] J. Moltman, *The Crucified God*, SCM Press, 1974, p. 38, cf. Geoff Kimber, *op. cit.*, p. 517.

world, and "church" must listen to this message. This was shortcut that secular society asserted its standards and beliefs in the "church". It led to the famous book "Honest to God" written by the Bishop Woolwich who shows the modern man weakness to accept any form of traditional faith any longer. After him, David Jenkins, Bishop of Durham, issued the idea that the church should give up even to the faith in the resurrection because it goes beyond the frameworks of modern secularism. This way of thinking conquered even partially much of Western denominations and particularly the U.S. Episcopal Church[26]. In the "church" people need to hear only what they are willing to hear and believe and all that exceeding the credible in the modern world must be removed[27].

On the other hand, the faith in God and in the supernatural is perceived and preached differently by various church denominations. However, since all religious beliefs are equally valid, the confessional preaching might be called imperialism and intolerance. The only conclusion is: we must give up any doctrinal message about God and embrace a new preaching - the social Gospel. The secularised thinking adheres to and promotes this new gospel as it does not harm anyone's yet sensibility and at the same time, the communities may fully manifest "horizontally" as they have to content the daily material and social needs of the people.

All the above methods by which "the churches" stemming from the reform adapt to the secularised world up to their disfigurement, transform the "Christianity", even involuntarily, in object of promoting the secularism. On the other hand, the Church is thus irreparably deprived of its credibility to the modern world.

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[26] Geoff Kimber, *op. cit*., p. 518.

[27] Many theologians and pastors were so much influenced by this liberal trend that they waived any content and language item that could "harm" the rational faith. A report of Norfolk England wrote, "Mentioning in the church services "the Body and Blood of Christ" can make children believe that Christians are cannibals, and references to "Holy Spirit" might reflect too much on ghosts, warns the official working group for the religious education in English Norfolk region. It would be good for teachers to avoiding such terms and images, including references to the "Wall of Crying" in Jerusalem rather than "Western Wall" because it may make children believe that Jews are mourning people", *Ibid*., p. 519.

Michael Nai-Chiu Poon

Loh I-to as Bridge-Builder: Communication and communion in the Asia Pacific[1]

Abstract

Professor Loh's ministry is connected with a momentous time of transitions in Asian churches and peoples: rising from the ashes of the Pacific War in the mid 1940s, to the diverse experiences of nation building and the increasing socio-economic polarisation among Asian peoples in the present-day. India and China have reasserted their dominating presence. Super-cities like Hong Kong, Singapore, and Tokyo have emerged with living standards that have far exceeded their counterparts in the West. Amid breath taking changes, the 'Asian Revolution' that began with Japanese military occupation in 'Southeast Asia' in 1942 is far from over. Suffering and dislocation, economic and social polarisations, dislocations, and the expectancy of social change are still the experience of most Asians today.

My research on spiritual movements in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia gives me a fresh impetus to fill the gaps in my theological understanding. Professor Loh I-to, above all others, has helped me to bridge the gaps and expand my horizons. This publication of Loh's collected essays, drawn from his papers and presentations from mid 1985 to the present, aims to share the intellectual and spiritual journey of this distinguished Asian theologian at the turn of the third millennium. This book serves as well to complement a recent CSCA publication on Shoki Coe, *Christian*

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Mission and the Test of Discipleship, introducing present-day readers to two Taiwan-born Asian theologians whose works are of huge significance to the study of world Christianity.

To contemporary Asian Christians, Loh I-to seems at first appearance to be somewhat remote, aloof, and irrelevant. Along such views, Taiwan has little to do with the rest of Asia. Loh's ethno-musical interests immediately place him to be someone out of touch with pop-music cultures – and therefore with the younger generations. Further still, music may have little to do with theology proper. After all, Asian church music is not a core subject in seminaries, nor are professional composers commonly recognised in Asian churches.

Remarkably, Loh finds a more appreciative reception outside Asia. Dietrich Werner of the World Council of Churches gave a more judicious assessment in his tribute to Loh in June 2011:

Your collections of hymns from Asia, including *Sound the Bamboo*, the CCA Hymnal 2000 and the new Presbyterian Hymnal in Taiwan have left a mark on the landscape of Christian worship in Asia for decades. Several noteworthy aspects have marked your theological passion and discernment on church music and its future over the past decades: respect for the cultural and spiritual authenticity; interest in the biographical background of composers and Christian witnesses behind certain hymns; a critical resistance over against hasty and insensitive adaptation and musical misappropriation of hymns into different, western musical styles as well as a superficial selling out of authentic Asian music to the monotonous and shallow brained praise song culture.[2]

Carlton Young, *editor of The United Methodist Hymnal* in the United States of America, added in the same occasion:

[Daniel T.] Niles' passion for Asian hymnody and liturgy would have died with him in 1970 was it not for scholar composer hymnist I to Loh and his distinctive, four decade contributions to Asian hymnic pedagogy and bibliography. Dr. Loh's work culminates in *Sound the Bamboo*, 2000, and its recently published magisterial companion *Sound the Bamboo: Asian Hymns in Their Cultural and Liturgical Context.* The comprehensiveness of this latter volume places it in a class with other one author, labor intensive, magisterial works such as Louis F. Benson's *The English Hymn*,

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[2] "Professor Loh I-to: A Music Tribute," Trinity Theological College, Singapore, http://www.ttc.edu.sg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=289.

1915, and Egon Wellesz's *A history of Byzantine music and hymnography*, 1949. However, Dr. Loh's volume is distinguished from these because the author is also the prime enabler of the hymnic repertories and liturgies he chronicles and discusses.[3]

Loh's ministry is connected with a momentous time of transitions in Asian churches and peoples: rising from the ashes of the Pacific War in the mid 1940s, to the diverse experiences of nation building and the increasing socio-economic polarisation among Asian peoples in the present-day. India and China have reasserted their dominating presence. Super-cities like Hong Kong, Singapore, and Tokyo have emerged with living standards that have far exceeded their counterparts in the West. Amid breath taking changes, the 'Asian Revolution' that began with Japanese military occupation in 'Southeast Asia' in 1942 is far from over. Suffering and dislocation, economic and social polarisations, dislocations, and the expectancy of social change are still the experience of most Asians today.

For the sake of convenience, we take Loh's active ministry to span the two decades from 1982 to 2002. This marks the start of his ministry in the Asian Institute for Music and Liturgy in 1982 to his retirement at Tainan Theological College and Seminary in 2002. These years spanned a transitional period in Asian theological development. Loh belongs to the second generation of Asian leaders that succeeded D. T. Niles, Shoki Coe and Kosuke Koyama in the post Pacific War years. The conditions in the 1950s and 1960s were more conducive to collaborative work. After all, the practical need to build a shared infrastructure from scratch pulled the churches in the newly independent countries together. From the 1950s to the 1970s, East Asia Christian Conference and the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia (ATSSEA) were the two main vehicles for inter-church and Asia-wide collaborations. The results were impressive. By the early 1970s, accreditation and faculty development infrastructures were set in place. The founding of the South East Asian Graduate School of Theology and the ATSSEA Doctor of Theology programmes epitomised the exceptional accomplishments in that period.

Subtle changes already began in the 1960s with the introduction of United States of America Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965, which opened wide America to Asian immigrants, and with it, brain drain from Asia to North America. One Malaysian church leader spoke with an

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[3] *Ibid.*

air of resignation: "There are more Malaysians with higher theological degrees and doctorates outside Malaysia than there are in Malaysia… We have not been able to arrest this 'brain drain' and perhaps we never will."[4] From 1959 to 1983, the *South East Asia Journal of Theology* was arguably the authority on Asian theology in the post western missionary times. New immigration policies and the ease of air travel allowed Asian theology to be pursued in the West, which after all, offers more conducive conditions for academic pursuits. As a case in point, C. S. Song wrote his Asian theology mainly from his base in California. Scott Sunquist's *The Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (2008), Sebastian Kim's *Christian Theology in Asia* (2001), and Peter Phan's *Christianities in Asia* (2010) are more recent examples of substantial works that were executed in the West. John England's three volume *Asian Christian Theologies* (2003) is a notable exception.

To be sure, Asian theologians continue to write and research on Asian theologies in Asia, at the same time, most merely focused on their own immediate situations. Churches and societies in Asia are developing in separate ways, with little intentional effort for Asia-wide and longer-term collaborative work. To date, no textbook on the history of present-day Asian Christianity has yet appeared. This means Asian Christians, most of whom are citizens of newly-independent countries, are ill informed of one another's history, and therefore cannot truly understand their own immediate past as well.[5] Asians however can ill afford to live in fragmented and separate ways. To be sure, ethnic communities in the West can live separate lives and pursue separate goals in western post-liberal societies. The questions "Which Asia? Which Christianity?" that Peter Phan raised in his recent book however are not merely of theoretical interest to churches and societies in Asia. They need to nurture common grounds and common goals in order to face common challenges under the same roof. To do this,

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[4] Tan Kong Beng, *Leadership Formation and Training in Malaysia*, in *Church Partnerships in Asia*, ed. Michael Poon, Singapore: Trinity Theological College, 2011, p. 175.

[5] Michael Poon, *The History and Development of Theological Education in South East Asia*, in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*, ed. Dietrich Werner and others, Regnum, Oxford, 2010, p. 375-403; *The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, 1959-2002: A Pilgrimage in Theological Education*, in *Supporting Asian Christianity's Transition from Mission to Church,* ed. Samuel Pearson, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2010, p. 363-402, 417-431; *On Volatile Grounds: A History of Church Partnerships in Asia*, in *Church Partnerships in Asia,* p. 21-50.

they need to connect with one another in deeper ways than they have done so far.

More worryingly, from the mid 1970s, theological engagement began to take place mainly in "big and expensive" conferences. Shoki Coe was concerned that contextualisation was at risk of becoming "merely a slogan or a fad" for grant application purposes. This was the main contention behind a sharp exchange between Shoki Coe and ATSSEA executive director Emerito Nacpil in 1977.[6] The series of ATESEA sponsored Theological Seminary-Workshops ended by mid 1990s, near the time when FTESEA (Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia) funding support could no longer be taken for granted.[7]

The above sketch of Asia's situation puts Loh's contribution in sharp relief. Loh offers a fresh theological approach towards understanding world Christianity in the present-day. C. S. Song once argued, "There will be no creative theology in Asia until we have mastered the grammar of cultures in Asia, deciphered its syntax, and penetrated its semantics."[8]Little progress has been made since Shoki Coe sketched out the vision for contextualising theology in the 1970s. Post-colonial considerations seem to provide a fruitful way to re-examine the types and grammar of theology. Such focus on the missionary and colonial legacy may in fact bind Christian theology even more to the Christendom legacy. Theology in the 'global South' is often still interpreted along conservative, Biblicist, or charismatic lines within the grids of western forms of theology. Similarly, to demarcate realities in terms of dormant cultural and political forces may in fact restrict our ability to explore inner connections across seeming divides. For example, in his three-volume work on *Asian Christian Theologies*, John England mapped out Asian theologians and theologies according to countries in the three "South Asia and Austral Asia," "Southeast Asia," and "Northeast Asia" regions. While such classification may be convenient for information gathering purposes, it prevents readers from exploring the theological interplay that transcends 'regional' and political lines.

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[6] See Michael Poon, *The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, 1959-2002: A Pilgrimage in Theological Education*, p. 386-387.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 399.

[8] C. S. Song, *Dragon, Garuda and Christian Theology*, in *Doing Theology with Cultures of Asia*, ed. Choo Lak Yeow, ATESEA, Singapore, 1988, p. 31.

The year 1941perhaps offers a fresh reference point to us to explore the character of present-day world Christianity. The Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and the conquest of Southeast Asia the following year announced a profound global shift from the trans-Atlantic to the trans-Pacific. It announced the emergence of America as the new global power. The Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia unleashed nationalist sentiments, undermined the impression of omnipotence of Christendom powers and paved the way for America's presence at the western seaboard of the Pacific Rim. Japan as an Asian power achieved what no European power before could accomplish, and for the first time gave Southeast Asia a regional identity. In this sense, 'post 1941' is a more significant turning point for Asia than 'post 1945,' which after all, refers to the ending of the war in Europe. 1941 draws our attention to the growing importance of the Pacific Rim in international affairs, which have been mainly dictated by the transatlantic for at least the past millennium.

The geological and geographical configurations of the Pacific Rim contrast sharply with that of the transatlantic world. Such structural configurations form the basis for discovering new theological grammar, syntax and semantics. In this sense, the trans-Pacific theology is vital to making Christian theology truly ecumenical. It opens up horizons that have so far been limited by Christendom experiences. The reasons for this are clear. Christendom was about applying the principles of the Gospel and of canon laws to all aspects of social life. Stable geological conditions in Western Europe and the east coasts of North and 'Latin' America make this construction of a common cultural and linguistic world possible. The cathedrals "towering o'er the wrecks of time" witness to a form of Christianity that rests on confessional statements, institutional uniformity and historical stability: one church, one bishop, one king, one realm.

This stands in sharp contrast with the experiences of disorientation and volatility in present-day human societies. Migrant workers, refugees of war and stateless peoples testify to the fragile and fluid conditions in human life that are punctuated by the eruptions of wars, tsunamis and earthquakes. Makeshift tents and huts replace cathedrals to be carriers of Christianity at the start of the third millennium. Peoples are on the move; and so too faith is on the move. There is no resting place in present life. For many, life is apocalyptic. They live under the constant threat of impending end.

The southeast corner of the Asia continent, or to change the perspective, the southwest Asia Pacific Rim, in which Loh I-to has devoted much of his life work, especially epitomises these deep shifts in human experience. This stretch of lands and seas consists of more or less twelve countries from Indonesia, to Malaysia, the Indochinese nations, the Philippines and Taiwan. Norton Ginsburg's magisterial treatise *The Pattern of Asia* arguably gives the best characterisation of this variegated region.[9] Historically, it was a passage rather than a focus of developmental concentration. It has been a maritime passage between continents, as well as a funnel for migration of peoples under the pressure of political events in South Asia and China. Southeast Asia is therefore multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious: it is a gathering and dispersing place for peoples. John Paul's encyclical *Ecclesia in Asia* depicted Asia as

> "the cradle of the world's major religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. It is the birthplace of many other spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Sikhism and Shintoism. Millions also espouse traditional or tribal religions, with varying degrees of structured ritual and formal religious teaching… This "being Asian" is best discovered and affirmed not in confrontation and opposition, but in the spirit of complementarity and harmony."[10]

More so, southwest Asia Pacific Rim is the crucible in which these traditions interact with one another, and therefore, more than any other places, peoples who live there need to acquire the "capacity for accommodation and a natural openness to the mutual enrichment of peoples in the midst of a plurality of religions and cultures."[11]

In similar ways, there is no clear single reference point in the southwest Asia Pacific Rim. Jakarta, Singapore, Yangon, Bangkok, Hanoi and Manila capitalise on their own historical ties and geographical locations to connect with Asia and the wider world in their unique ways. Within each country, there are sizeable minorities of different ethnic, linguistic and religious origins. Even the ethnic Chinese themselves cannot readily communicate with one another because they speak different Han-languages.

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[9] Norton Ginsburg and John E. Brush, *The Pattern of Asia*, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1958, p. 290-320.

[10] *Ecclesia in Asia*, 6 November 1999, p. 6.

[11] *Ibid.*

Equally significant, geologically, Southeast Asia rests on two stable continental platforms, and two major arcs of volcanic instability that stretch from the Indonesian to the Philippines islands. The region consists of a series of geographical conversations between lands and seas, highlands and lowlands, rivers and mountains. Social life depends mainly on maritime routes and air connections, even within the same country.

Such are the settings in which Loh and his fellow editors of *Sound the Bamboo* hymnal traversed "all over the Asia region" with their cassette recorders to capture songs of the common people amid "the traffic noise of busy city streets, beside the village fire at night, in huts and homely settings." [12] These are instances of mastering the grammar of cultures in Asia, deciphering its syntax, and penetrating its semantics. No other way is possible to contextualise theology to describe the "pattern" of the present day world, when impatient generalisation and conventional approaches could deafen us to the nuanced keys of hope and suffering of God's people. The 'monophony,' 'scale and melodic characters,' 'non lexical syllables,' and the symbolic acts in worship that Loh identified in his music journeys do not merely refer to the nature of Asian music. They in fact offer a new theological vocabulary and grammar, through which Christians can emotionally tune in to the hearts and minds of the peoples in Asia, understand the grass roots realities, and therefore can more ably connect their life and witness to God's saving purposes.

In this respect, more than any other, Loh advanced Shoki Coe's contextualising concerns. To one extent, Coe drew heavily on Karl Barth. Loh I-to, his student and future successor at Tainan Theological College, belonged to the second generation of post 1941 Asian theologians. The Pacific Rim is formative to his intellectual and spiritual understanding. Loh's own mental shift from Christendom to the Pacific Rim happened in his move from Union Theological Seminary to University of California for doctoral studies. This was geographical as well as spiritual relocation. Loh moved from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from western classical music traditions to the music in the Pacific Rim. It marked the beginning of a lifelong quest for Asian sounds and symbols. Music composition using the musical instruments and textures of the southwest Asia Pacific Rim opened him to a new way to do theology. Setting texts to music compositions are

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[12] Preface, in *Sound the Bamboo: CCA Hymnal 1990*, Trial Ed., Quezon City: Christian Conference of Asia/Asian Institute for Music and Liturgy, 1990, p. 11.

by nature holistic, communal and collaborative exercises. They cannot be merely intellectualist. Hearing, sensing, meditating, contemplating, imagining, and above all, connecting to the cultural symbols are indispensable to musical understanding. More recently, Loh began pan-Asian experiments, setting texts in local and English languages, and combining them with music languages from different Asian countries. The "Hunger Carol" (*Sound the Bamboo*, No. 144) and "God of the Bible, God in the Gospel" (*Sound the Bamboo*, No. 255) are instances of such work. Therefore, *Sound the Bamboo* (2000) and *Seng-si* (2009) arguably are theological work proper. They are prime examples of contextualising theology – the continuing attention to the interplay between text and context in concrete situations among the common people. Ironically, John England puts Loh I-to at the last in his list of Taiwan "key people," behind younger and lesser-known theologians.[13] This shows how an intellectualist approach to theology can numb spiritual sensitivities.

More important, Loh's works underline the crucial role that hymnology plays in effecting reconciliation. Human history, on one level, is a story of stolen goods. In Oliver O'Donovan's words: "The monstrous inequity of generational succession is that all our possession becomes a kind of robbery, something we have taken from those who shared it with us but with whom we cannot share in return."[14] The reticence that often greets discussions on nation building experiences underscore the secret guilt which still infect every Asian nation on their immediate forebears. Nation making in Asia was accompanied by a history of ethnic riots, border disputes, religious violence and regional rivalry. The nuanced spiritual worlds of peoples can as well be bulldozed in homogenising nation-building processes.

Music composition and hymn writing, however, reconnect Asian peoples with one another, and therefore restores communion and communal life. Revelation 7 discloses the vision of a restored and transformed community. All the tribes of Israel, including those that have lost their land, as well as a great multitude "from every nation, tribe, people and language" stand before the throne and before the Lamb. Would there be in that eschatological gathering the near extinct tribes and peoples in the

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[13] John England and others, *Asian Christian Theologies. Volume 3: Northeast Asia*, ISPCK, Delhi, 2004, p. 699-701.

[14] Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1996, p. 187-188.

Asia Pacific? This vision points to the day when the whole creation is fully in communion with one another and before God; and all human goods are affirmed and human community is truly empowered in the act of common sharing. In what ways can Asian Christians give expression to this? Peoples in newly independent nations have largely channelled their energy to secure the future of their own nation. When can we embrace our neighbours' welfare as well, so that they too would live in security, and in fact, they and we can share the same roof? Loh's pan-Asian musical works and his mission to revitalise spiritual traditions that are near extinct are acts of love that point to this eschatological vision. Clearly, such work is against the stream. The two dominant powers of the Pacific Rim, namely, China and the United States of America, exercise huge influence on the ways that churches approach worship and music. Such can undermine the longer-term need for churches in the Asia Pacific to learn from and connect with their immediate neighbours. For example, Singapore churches may be singing the latest popular hymns from America and at the same time see little need to understand the music languages and styles in Indonesia. Loh's work, therefore, is a labour of love that is undertaken in hope.

The inner unity between music and liturgy has been Loh's lifelong concern. He prefers as well the term 'church music' to 'Christian music.' For him, music contextualisation is an ecclesial and liturgical undertaking, which would be meaningless apart from it. Here, Loh stands out to be a rare Asian composer from Protestant traditions whose work resonates with recent Roman Catholic concerns on music inculturation.

In his incisive 2000 book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, written before Benedict XVI became Pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger underlined that liturgy as "the prayer of the Church, a prayer moved and guided by the Holy Spirit himself, a prayer in which Christ unceasingly becomes contemporary with us, enters into our lives."[15] Liturgical singing, he pointed out, arises out of the overwhelming experience of God's saving power amid desperate situations. The 'Song of Moses' (Exod. 15) and the 'Song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb' (Rev. 15) form the interpretative framework for understanding the connection between music and liturgy.[16] The Psalter

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[15] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2000, p. 7. Original German edition *Einführung in den Geist der Liturgie*, published in 2000 by Verlag Herder, Freiberg.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 136-138.

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especially gives expression to this theological reality. It is the prayer book of the early church, which, at the same time, has become a church "that sings her prayer."[17] Liturgical singing, therefore, is Trinitarian:

Singing, the surpassing of ordinary speech, is a "pneumatic" event. Church music comes into being as a "charism," a gift of the Spirit. It is the true *glossolalia*, the new tongue that comes from the Holy Spirit, It is above all in Church music that the "sober inebriation" of faith takes place – an inebriation surpassing all the possibilities of mere rationality. But this intoxication remains sober,… because this drunken speech stays totally within the discipline of the Logos, in a new rationality that, beyond all words, serve the primordial Word, the ground of all reason.[18]

Ratzinger then traced the occasions in the historical development of music in which demand for artistic autonomy made music alienate liturgy from its true nature. The present-day crisis in music is of special concern. First, "there is the cultural universalization that the Church has to undertake if she wants to get beyond the boundaries of the European mind." "What inculturation should look like in the realm of sacred music if, on the one hand, the identity of Christianity is to be preserved and, on the other, its universality is to be expressed in local forms?" But then there are two equally worrying developments:

Modern so-called "classical" music has maneuvered itself, with some exceptions, into an elitist ghetto,… The music of the masses has broken loose from this and treads a very different path. On the one hand, there is pop music,… It is aimed at the phenomenon of the masses is industrially produced, and ultimately has to be described as a cult of the banal. "Rock", on other hand, is the expression of elemental passions, and at rock festivals it assume a cultic character, a form of worship, in fact, in opposition to Christian worship. People are, so to speak, released from themselves by the experience of being part of a crowd, and by the emotional shock of rhythm, noise, and special lighting effects. However, in the ecstasy of having all their defences torn down, the participants sink, as it were, beneath the elemental force of the universe. The music of the Holy Spirit's sober inebriation seems to have little chance when self has become a prison.[19]

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[17] *Ibid*., p. 139.
[18] *Ibid*., p. 140.
[19] *Ibid*., p. 147-148.

Pope Benedict XVI could well find in Loh an unexpected and welcomed ally from the Reformed traditions. Loh's attention to the spirit of the common people in Asia; his devotion to the true calling of music contextualisation and his refusal to be distracted by the music of the masses; his insistence on the centrality of the Incarnation of the Word in church music – these are crucial elements in the "cultural universalisation" that the church has to undertake. Indeed, church music arguably embodies the most creative form of theology today. It connects contextualisation to the "wordless groans" of the Holy Spirit for God's holy people amid their intense suffering (Rom. 8), without which theology is nothing more than self-absorbing and technical exercises. In this sense, the hymnals that Loh executed represent some of the finest theological works in these times of huge transition in world Christianity.

Pontifex (bridge builder) is a term that is often applied to bishops, especially to the Bishop of Rome. We can take this to mean Rome is the seat of authority; after all, all roads lead to Rome. However, *pontifex* also carries a missiological meaning: all roads connect us to the world. The bridge builder embodies the vocation to connect, to communicate, and to bring about communion. It gives expression to the Incarnation of the Word. In this sense, Loh I-to is a *pontifex*. He shows Asian churches a new way to be a theologian. A theologian is a *pontifex*: to bridge the heart with the mind; to discover the organic unity amid the diversities and polarities in Asia; to underpin music with theological rigour; and to put worship at the heart of all theological pursuits.

The following pages invite us to embark on this communicative journey with Loh I-to.

Liviu Petcu

Στάσις and κίνησις. The mobile stability or the stable mobility of the man's ascent towards God in St. Gregory of Nyssa[1]

Abstract

This study further examines the aspects of the mobile stability and the stable mobility of the man's ascent towards God in St. Gregory of Nyssa. The man's deification here on the Earth as well as in eternity involves a permanent progress and an endless stretching. It is also a type of stability since the soul is happy while taking part to God, but also an upward continuous movement without limits to the heights, as any step that it climbs always gives on to a superior one and thus the soul has an increasing desire of going higher and higher. It is a continuous desire beyond any satiety of the one who is wrapped up in the sight of God, who gives him a new eternal sight.

Keywords

στάσις, κίνησις, *mobile stability, stable mobility, man's ascent, continuous desire, eternal sight.*

The man's ascent to the union with God involves an aspect of stability and an aspect of infinite movement towards God. Several questions related to this theme may arise: is it possible for us to find certain stability in the spiritual life, even on the highest peaks? "The movement" which can be found at the root of our being wouldn't constitute the final obstacle of the stability? Would it be preferable that this "movement" ends? How shall we reconcile perfection with "movement" or with "progress"? Nevertheless

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reconciliation is possible: stability and perfection in the progress itself, but this stability can be found only in love[2].

Saint Gregory reconciles this paradox of stability and of "the movement or of the stable mobility" from our ascent to God by noticing the state and movement aspect of the constant progress (epektasis)[3]:

> "This is the most paradoxical thing of all, that stability and movement would be the one and the same thing. (στάσις ἐστὶ χαὶ χίνησις). Thus, usually, he who goes up does not sit and he who does not sit does not go up. Or, here he advances by the fact that he has become stable. The meaning is the following: The more someone remains firmer and more unflinching in doing well, the more he reaches the end of the virtue road. Thus he who does not have a firm good steadiness does not advance to the peaks of virtue"[4].

We can mention that here we have one of the most wonderful explanations of the epektasis. It involves participation to the divine life, but at the same time it means an orientation of the soul to what is before, to God; it means that people should never stop on their way while running towards their target, while proceeding towards the goodness, and the latter takes places only by settling constantly in the real goodness.

In Saint Gregory's vision, the desire is pointed towards what is before and towards which it always runs, not knowing any satiety of the goodness. And the run is actually a state, as the one who goes up does not sit and the one who sits does not go up. In fact here, sitting means nothing else but going up. The more someone remains steadier and more unflinching in doing well, the more he reaches the end of the virtue road. The unstable one has an uncertain state of goodness and shows that he does not go up

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[2] Jean Laporte, *Părinții Greci ai Bisericii*, trad. de Stanca Pavai, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu Lăpuş, 2009, p. 196.

[3] Epektasis (gr. ἐπέκτασις – stretching, ascent). It is the teaching developed by Saint Gregory of Nyssa actually constituting one of the most original aspects of the great Cappadocian's thinking. Epektasis is an endless progress in virtue and God's knowledge, as the Christian life supposes a continuous ascent to the completion whose boundary is the lack of limits. According to this teaching, the soul attracted to God is in a continuous ascent to the superior steps of the grace's plenitude. The man's deification, here on the Earth as well as in eternity, involves a permanent progress and an endless stretching.

[4] Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis*, PG (*Patrologia Graeca*) 44, col. 405CD.

or he does not proceed towards the real goodness; only the one who settles constantly in the goodness proceeds towards it.

The unstable one is similar to the ones who build on the sand and try to go up a sand dune: they do not have stability and slide downwards. While going up through the sand, even trying to walk with big steps, he toils in vain as he slides continuously downwards inside the sand; he moves, but his movement does not bring him any advance, it is purely Sisyphean, we might say. He is also similar to the children who build sand castles or to the Jews when they used to make clay bricks for the Egyptians. But according to the psalm singer, if someone withdrew his feet from the deep running river and rested them on the rock (whereas the rock is the Christ, the perfect virtue), the more he strengthens in the goodness and becomes unflinching, according to the advice of Saint Apostle Paul, the faster he traverses the road, making use of his steadiness like a rock and giving wings to his movement for the ascent by means of steadiness and strengthening in the goodness. Thus, the ones who build on the Christ build on the rock as He is both the rock and the mountain. They soothed the passions, removed them and acquired a steadiness on the rock - Christ. And the steadiness is like a wing[5] for the soul, it appears not as immobility, but as the calm of a river[6], being a steady movement, an epektasis[7]. "Look, he says, a place near Me"[8]… by saying "place", he did not close what he said between limits (as what is without a quantity does not have a measure), but by using a face which is written all around and measured, he leads the listener to what is endless and limitless. And it seems to me that the Holy Scriptures want to present such a meaning as your desire is pointed at what is before and at what you always run towards, since you do not know any satiety of the goodness, but the desire always looks to what is more. "The place near me" is so large that the one who penetrated it never reached its end. And the run is a state in another meaning as (God told Moses) "I shall place you (I shall settle you on the rock, he said)". But this is the most wonderful thing of all: that the same thing is both state and movement). There is no doubt that the one who goes up does not sit; and the one who

5 *Ibid.*, col. 405CD.

6 *Ibid.*, col. 977C.

7 Tomáš Špídlik, *Spiritualitatea Răsăritului Creştin*, trad. Diac. Ioan I. Ică Jr., Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2005, p. 110-111.

8 Tomáš Špídlik (*op. cit.*, p. 392) considers that the term "God's place" stimulates a movement towards an immediate encounter.

sits does not go up. But here sitting means going up. And it means that the more someone remains steadier and more unflinching in the goodness, the more he traverses the virtue road. The unsteady one slides deep down among his thoughts, not having a certain state of goodness, and being carried away by the waves to and fro, according to the Apostle, and bending and changing his opinions about things, he will never be able to proceed to the virtue height[9].

They are similar to those who walk through the sand, even if they try to walk with big steps, they toil in vain and they always slide downwards inside the sand, and they move, but their movement does not help them proceed ... Thus, the one who showed Moses "the place" urged him to start

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[9] While making comments on this text, professor-priest Dumitru Stăniloae mentions: The real progress into good takes place only by the steadiness in the real goodness. A steadiness cannot take place in the goodness that seems only goodness without being good, but this specious good always produces a passage of the created aware person from a thing that seems good to another one that seems good, because neither of them has infinity in itself. And when this steadiness is absent, the created aware being proves that it does not advance in the real goodness. As the real goodness being infinite, only the one who remains in it proceeds to the infinite, by really completing itself endlessly. The goodness is an endless depth or height; only if we stand up or go deep down we always reach other and other steps of his. Whoever moves in the steps above the surface, as they are limited, always feels the need to pass from one to another, not getting deep into anything. That one cannot find himself either as the own self is the only one going deep into the infinite. He, who cannot find his steady identity, looking into his essence, does not remain identical to himself. He is in a continuous change on the surface, in an original alienation from himself, in a waste in the objects that lack originality, in a continuous self-denial. He is carried away by the passionate impulses that appear on the surface of his being, like the waves that appear on the sea surface moved by the winds outside. This continuously changed "new" lasts only for a few moments. The first for a continuous new in this way is a runaway from the own self, it is a runaway in the emptiness, in the monotony, a sign of unsteadiness in the own self, of not knowing her. If he does not impose limits for anything, he does not understand anything how he should in his essence. We must stay steady on the rock, in what does not pass, in what has roots in the deep steady infinite, so as to proceed in our deep self, by proceeding into the deep without an end where we find ourselves rooted, thus becoming and getting more and more identical with ourselves. As our deep is rooted and can become even deeper in the endless existence, subsistent by itself. Only if we remain in it, we can remain in ourselves, and viceversa. The steadiness and the progress into goodness, which are similar to the existence since our foundation, are done by virtue". (explanatory note no. 74, *Părinţi şi scriitori bisericeşti* (*PSB*), vol. 29, Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucureşti, 1982, p. 95-96).

walking, and by promising him the steadiness on the rock, showed him the way of that divine run"[10].

According to the theological teaching of Saint Gregory, seeing God means never stop wanting to see Him or easier, in the Gospel language, "follow Him". The search of God becomes thus a perpetual movement. But God tells Moses, "I shall place you on the rock" (Exodus 33, 22); thus this movement is also a type of steadiness. The rock is the Christ (I Cor. 10, 4). According to Saint Gregory, if we want to grow up, we have to be persevering in Christ, Who represents the perfect absolute virtue. The paradox of Saint Gregory represents a profound truth of the spiritual aspiration. And again the Christian typology makes it possible its expression as well as the nature of the Christian belief that expresses it[11].

Nevertheless there appears a new problem that seeks a solution. Is eternal life static or dynamic? This question constituted a preoccupation for Origen and Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Origen had come to an unsatisfying dualism of the state and the movement since he considered that the movement was related to the finite world, but he did not consider the state as a complete movement, but only as a stop that involved the danger of boredom.

Saint Gregory audaciously introduced the idea of the eternal complete and happy movement which exceeded the contradiction between state and movement, and even achieved an identity[12]. Saint Maximus the Confessor also seeks reconciliation, but makes a more categorical distinction between the movement in the finite world and the movement element which enters the state in the eternal life. Related to this synthesis he talks about "the immobile mobility" or "the mobile immobility"[13], or about an endless tasting of the spiritual goods, not for growing up, but for preserving the acquired perfection.

As a reflexion of Origen's conception – which was not accepted by the Church as it was considered wrong – about the initial movement of the souls, caused by a certain satiety of the absolute passivity state in which they lived, there appeared a problem: the possibility of a similar situation

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[10] Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa, *Despre viaţa lui Moise*, trad. Ion Buga, în *PSB* 29, p. 95-96.
[11] C. W. Macleod, *Allegory and Mysticism in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa*, in "Journal of Theological Studies", 22, 1971, p. 378.
[12] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis*, PG 44, col. 406.
[13] St. Maxim the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalasium*, PG 90, col. 769A.

related to the souls which would move in the endless century of the eternal life, which sooner or later would get bored of this state. But Saint Gregory excludes this hypothesis. The movement is no longer considered as a fall. The continuous transformation in better as a move "from glory to glory" does not involve a fall backwards. Therefore the soul which reached a certain state of perfection – in fact the one which reached perfection – is no longer liable for the fall, precisely due to this stronger steadiness in the goodness and to the fact that according as it makes a progress, it has a comprehensive knowledge of the fact that the objective it chose is the most adequate and that any deviation from it can be fatal.

Professor-priest Dumitru Stăniloae, referring to the subject of mobility and steadiness, writes:

"…Certainly, there seems a contradiction between rest and the endless movement. But they reconcile when the mind penetrates the Endless one. Then it reached the limitless movement and its rest. The infinity of the movement found its end from which it does not have to move to something else; it found its rest in the Endless one. It reached that "steady movement" or "mobile steadiness" that Saint Gregory of Nyssa talked about. This "object" is no longer a proper object. As the object has comprehension, so it is limited. The infinite "object" of the mind is a subject, it is the divine supreme Subject. Generally a subject is really understood by another subject; a comprehension is achieved only between them…The object cannot be understood by itself. Then it leaves me in the dark, it does not help me understand. But while understanding another subject I proceed endlessly at the same time, especially while understanding the divine Subject. I rest in Him, as I do not have to pass to anything else and something else; nevertheless I proceed in my understanding. I never exhaust Him in my understanding and I do not exhaust myself in my understanding and by understanding Him, I understand the objects, too"[14].

Father Stăniloae continues:

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[14] Professor priest Dumitru Stăniloae, explanatory note, no. 722, în *Filocalia*, vol. VIII, traducere, introduceri şi note de Dumitru Stăniloae, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2002, p. 376-377.

"The mind cannot use what is its own that is its endless movement, which has to be a rest at the same time, rather than in the Limitless one, from whom it must not go beyond, so in which it rests or it becomes stable, but at the same time it moves to more understanding. Only in Him "it is stable by movement" or "it moves in stability"[15].

Consequently, usually, a person who goes up does not rest and inversely, but in the case of Moses, the ascent appeared paradoxically by resting. The more the man remains still in the goodness, the more he achieves his goal, while the man who has an unstable thinking shall never reach his objective. For the one who sits on the truth rock, the rest is a movement, and the latter finishes the race with "a winged state"[16].

The soul is satisfied by knowledge, but according as it grows, the desire grows, too. Thus, we must not consider that the soul is totally deprived of satisfactions. On the contrary, according as it makes a progress in knowledge, it constantly obtains something from what it wants, but without ever acquiring the satiety and with a desire that grows constantly, too.[17] The soul is always satisfied, but a new desire grows in each moment of the satisfaction. According as the knowledge grows, the desire grows, too.

περὶ τελειότητος. In reaching perfection, there is no creationism, but a continuous dynamism

The notion of perfection (τελειότης) is classical: the Ancient Greeks considered it as being something stable, acquired and immutable. In Plato's opinion, in order to find God – the perfection itself – the soul must purify itself from all the unknown elements and thus resemble or imitate the divine archetype. Opposed to Plato, Saint Gregory develops the original perspective according to which the perfection consists in the progress itself. This point of view represents an audacious step forward since the progress had had for the Greeks the meaning of movement and consequently the

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[15] *Ibid.*, no. 725, p. 378.

[16] Paul Plass, *Transcendent time and eternity in Gregory of Nyssa*, in „Vigiliae Christianae", No. 34, 1980, p. 184.

[17] H. J. M. Turner, *St. Gregory of Nyssa as a Spiritual Guide for Today*, in "Eastern Church Review", vol. VII, 1975, no. 1, p. 23.

meaning of instability and imperfection. As Jean Danielou shows, Saint Gregory associates the change with the created nature, not with the evil, and consequently the human nature is called to change perpetually, according to the free will. This crucial reality of Saint Gregory's anthropology and spirituality must never be forgotten if we have to evaluate his contribution to the Christian mysticism. The soul takes part to God and develops continuously, but is never finalized; therefore it must consent, that is to practice virtue (ἀρετή).[18]

The perfection of anything that can be measured by senses is marked by certain defined limits. For example, the quantity admits both continuity and limitation as each quantitative measure is circumscribed by certain limits which are its own. The person who looks at an ell or at number 10 knows that their perfection consists in the fact that they have both a beginning and an end. But in the case of virtue, we learnt from the Apostle that its own perfection limit is the fact that it has no limit. Since that divine Apostle great and noble in understanding who runs ceaselessly on the virtue road never stopped making efforts (aiming at) (ἐπεκτεινόμενος) winning those things that are about to come (Filip. 3, 13). Reaching a point of stop in the race was a danger for him. Why? Because God has no limit in His own nature.

The notion of "perfection" is associated to the notion of "apophaticism", that of epektasis movement or the eternal progress towards God. God, Who is the infinite perfection, cannot be limited. Saint Gregory claims that, if it is impossible to obtain perfection in a platonic way, then perfection must be redefined: we take part to perfection with a greater and greater capacity, and indeed, this eternally increased participation constitutes our own perfection. Thus, in another inversion of the Greek prejudice, Saint Gregory talks positively about mutability as indeed the most delicate aspect of our mutability is the possibility of growing into better: and this improvement capacity transforms the soul according as it changes into something more and more divine. We should not worry when we take into consideration this tendency in our nature; on the contrary, we should change ourselves so that we could evolve continuously to what is better, being transformed from glory to glory (II Cor. 3, 18) and thus it improves and it becomes eternally perfect by growing daily, never reaching any limit

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[18] Brother Casimir, *Introduction* to *On perfection*, in „The Greek Orthodox Theological Review", Vol. 29, no. 4, 1984, p. 350.

of perfection. That perfection consists in never stopping us from growing into better, from never circumscribing us the perfection by any limit[19].

Since the continuous transformation into better as a movement "from glory to glory" never represents a real stability, it does not involve the fall either. Consequently the continuous progress and the real stability can be identical and in accordance with this understanding, the man can benefit from permanence into better. This is the freedom foundation of the man who has God's face inherently different from his archetype as a subject to the change. Such a change, in which Plato saw a sign of detachment from the archetype, is presented by Saint Gregory as being the means by which the man can win back the resemblance with his archetype by the positive exercise of freedom.

In Saint Gregory's conception, the perfection in the virtue is infinite[20]:
"The perfection in relation to the other things that are measurable by the perception of senses is delimited by certain defined boundaries… But, in the case of virtue, we learnt from the Apostle that the only limit of the perfection is that it has no limit… The goodness has no limit by its nature, but it is limited by the presence of its opposite, as life is delimited by the death and the light, by the dark "[21].

Saint Gregory ends the passage with the definition of the virtue quoted at the beginning. "Perhaps the perfection of the human nature consists in its increase in goodness"[22]. According to this teaching, the soul being attracted to God is in a continuous ascent towards the superior steps of the grace's plenitude. The man's deification here on the Earth as well as in eternity involves a permanent progress and an endless stretching.

It is also a type of stability since the soul is happy while taking part to God, but also an upward continuous movement without limits to the heights, as any step that it climbs always gives on to a superior one and thus the soul has an increasing desire of going higher and higher. It is a continuous desire beyond any satiety of the one who is wrapped up in the sight of God, who gives him a new eternal sight. This movement was cre-

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[19] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On Perfection*, in W. Jaeger (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera (GNO)*, Vol. 8/1, Leiden, 1952, p. 213.

[20] Everett Ferguson, *God's infinity and man's mutability*, in "The Greek Theological Review", vol. XVIII, no. 1 & 2, 1973, p. 65.

[21] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis*, I, *PG* 44, col. 300CD.

[22] *Ibidem*, col. 301C.

ated by "the always infinite distance between what he owns from God and what God is"[23].

Since God's nature is the nature of Good (Perfection), if God is infinite, the perfection is infinite, too. God's infinity is the basis of the virtue's infinity. A series of passages approach this aspect. God is boundless in goodness as God's eternal substance "contains all the perfection in itself and cannot be limited"[24]. The goodness, boundless of its opposite, continues endlessly[25]. There is no limit of the progress that can be made towards the goodness as the goodness has no limit. Consequently Saint Gregory provides us with a foundation for the idea of perpetual progress in the infinity of the virtue, which in its turn, is a corollary of God's infinity[26].

In the light of what was said about perfection and change, in his treatise – περὶ τελειότητος, the Cappadocian saint offers the monk Olympios a general framework for the perfection considered as a creative promise. As it is known, Saint Gregory was the bishop of Nyssa and fought against the Eunomian heresy not only by emphasizing the divine nature of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, but also by the final substantiation of God's incomprehensibility; he emphasized on knowing God as a result of His presence in ourselves by glory, the field of the mystical life.

In order to indicate the relationship between the incomprehensibility of God, a favourite theme for the Greek Fathers and the sphere of human existence, we discover a clue when Saint Gregory uses the text from Evr. 1, 3[27] in his work *De perfectione*: God as "the shining (splendour) (ἀπαύγασμα) of the glory and the seal (χαρακτήρ) of God's nature"[28]. A biblical root of ἀπαύγασμα is constituted by the biblical book "The Wisdom of Solomon" 7, 25: As it (the wisdom) is "the breath of God's power and the clean overflowing of the glory of the Almighty One". The fluidity of the words in this excerpt to which the words in the verse 22 are added (subtle, alive, unequivocal, untainted) acquire a certain stability and outline in χαρακτήρ. Both words, ἀπαύγασμα şi χαρακτήρ, express the

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[23] J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et Théologie Mystique*, Aubier, Paris, 1944, p. 305-307.

[24] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum*, *PG* 44, col. 873C.

[25] Idem, *De anima et resurrectione*, *PG* 46, col. 96C-97A.

[26] Idem, *Oratio catechetica magna*, XXI, *PG* 45, col. 57D-60A.

[27] „Which, being the shining of the glory and the face of His being and which keeps all the things with the word of His power after having done by Himself the cleaning of our sins, He sat on the right side of the glory, in the all-high things".

[28] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On perfection*, in *col. cit.*, p. 187.

secret of beauty, where an axis corresponds to χαρακτήρ, while its reflexion (activity) is associated to the dynamic ἀπαύγασμα.

Here we have a synthesis of ἀπαύγασμα and χαρακτήρ in μορφή, "shape, face". God in the man and the man in God – Who goes down and goes up, Who takes His face from us according to Gal. 4, 19: until the Christ takes His face (μορφωθη) from you.

What can be found within the Gregorian introspection about the following being to Christ is ἀπάθεια, the purpose of virtue or the daily participation to the divine life. According to Jean Daniélou, there are two types of ἀπάθεια: one is eschatological, that is the removal of mortality and sexuality on a biological level, while the other is not destructive, but it uses the passions for the restoration of the destroyed order in the soul, which means that it submits them to νοῦς. Thus, in the Gregorian vision, what is mutable and subject to passions was transformed into impassibility by its participation to the immutable[29].

Saint Gregory's philosophical treatise called *De vita Moysis* uses the biblical recording of Moses' life as an allegory for the development of the theme and motivates that for the human being created dialogued and self-governable, the virtuous life is a continuous progress based on God's infinite kindness. Actually the theme of the work *De vita Moysis* is the perpetual progress in virtue. In Saint Gregory's vision, the perpetual progress to what is better represents the way of the soul to completion[30]. "The perfection is the increase in kindness"[31]. It also represents the theme of the Gregorian Commentary about *The Song of Songs*.

> "The created being changes perpetually into better while growing up to become complete; no limit can be imagined along these lines, and this progressive growth into completion cannot be limited by any term. In this way, its present state of completion, regardless of how great and perfect it could be, represents only the beginning of a stage even greater and complete. Thus, the Apostle's words are demonstrated: the tendency towards what is before involves forgetting what has already been attained (Filip.

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[29] Brother Casimir, *op. cit.*, p. 352-355.
[30] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis*, II, *PG* 44, col. 425A.
[31] *Ibid.*, I, *PG* 44, col. 301C. In Saint Gregory of Nyssa's vision, this is the genuine completion: never stop in the growth towards what is better and never have any limit related to the completion (*De perfectione*, *PG* 46, col. 285C).

3, 13). At each stage, the greater and superior goodness has the attention of those who enjoy it and does not allow them to look to the past; the pleasure of the superior stage erases any memory related to what was inferior *''*[32].

Or again, although the new glory that we can attain is greater than what we had previously, it does not impose a limit to our final goal; but rather for those who go up in their perfection, the limit of the attained goodness becomes the beginning of the discovery of greater states of goodness. Thus, they never stop growing and they move from a new beginning to the next one; the beginning of the always greater glories is never limited to itself"[33]. The Cardinal Jean Daniélou and others noticed that a fundamental doctrine for Saint Gregory consists in understanding the completion or the perfection as a perpetual progress. It constitutes an original contribution of Saint Gregory to the theology of the spiritual or confessor life[34].

Saint Gregory ends his treatise *De perfectione* even with this word: "perfection", as he started it (in the verbal shape of the term). In *De vita Moysis*, the bishop of Nyssa emphasizes the similitude between "end" and "goal" (τέλος), a term that is tightly associated to "perfection" (τελειότης). The Τέλος of life is the salvation, but since God is "blessed" in the most proper meaning, we are blessed, too, by participating into God, and thus, both the definition of the human happiness and the τέλος of the life in virtue consist in acquiring God's grace. The continuous "focus" on our divine goal brings us to the angelical life (ἰσάγγελος, or, even better, the life on the same plan with the angels). This is dynamics, the ongoing process of ἐπέκτασις, a movement beyond any experience, towards the goodness, which is not circumscribed by any limit[35], as Saint Gregory emphasizes so often.

The progress in perfection is like a continuous creation: „In this way, in a certain meaning, (the bride of *the Song* – n. n.) it is constantly created, always changing to better during its growth in perfection"[36]. There will always be a new beginning[37]: „Due to the transcendence of the graces that the bride always finds beyond her, it will always seem that she starts it all over again"[38].

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[32] Idem, *In Canticum canticorum*, *PG* 44, col. 885D-888A.

[33] *Ibid.*, col. 941C.

[34] Everett Ferguson, *op. cit*, p. 59-60.

[35] Brother Casimir, *op. cit.*, p. 356-358 *sq*.

[36] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum*, *PG* 44, col. 885D.

[37] Everett Ferguson, *op. cit*, p. 62.

[38] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum*, *PG* 44, col. 876B.

Consequently, the perfection in virtue has no limit; this is what we are taught by the divine Apostle Paul who always ran on the virtue road and never stopped from tending to the things that were in front of him (Filip. 3, 13). Then, Saint Gregory motivates that no goodness has boundaries in its nature, but it is limited by the presence of its opposed, just as life is limited by death and the light by the dark. Since the divine nature is the Goodness itself and does not admit its opposite, God is infinite and limitless.

For the understanding of Saint Gregory's exegesis it is crucial to become aware of his preoccupation for the penetration of the implications of God's infinity: the voyage to perfection is simply endless because no created being can understand God's infinite being which is in principle incomprehensible. The language of the desire and craving expresses the eternal ἐπέκτασις, precisely the craving and the perpetual progress, that never cease and constitute indeed the dynamic perfection of a finite creature. And this means that the goal is not suppressing the passion, but redirecting it to the corresponding object, while the soul, whether the person is a man or a woman, takes the feminine role in relation to God[39]. According to what we noted previously, an insatiable craving for the infinite divine – ἐπέκτασις – is fundamental for Saint Gregory's spirituality, and the Cappadocian Father counteracts the notion of a-passionate with a vision of the passions re-oriented to an adequate goal[40]. It is easily understood that the human perfection is touched not only by constraint, but by a strong desire. Saint Gregory of Nyssa mentions that "the completion must not be imposed, it must be voluntary and free from any constraint"[41].

Consequently the perfection or the virtue that constitutes the goal of life is not something static. Jean Danielou explains it in an essay about Saint Gregory: "It is...a mistake to imagine perfection as a state of total immobility… the perfection is the progress itself: the perfect man is that man who progresses continuously. And this progress cannot have a limit"[42].

[39] Frances Young, *Sexuality and Devotion: Mystical Readings of The Song of Songs*, in "Theology and Sexuality", Vol. 7, No. 14, 2001, p. 91.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

[41] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum*, VI, *PG* 44, col. 892D.

[42] Cf. Herbert Musurillo, *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*, Scribner, New York, p. 52; see also Abel Donald C., *The doctrine of Synergism in Gregory of Nyssa's 'De Instituto Christiano'*, în "Thomist; a Speculative Quarterly Review", 45:3, July, 1981, p. 434.

Each perfection represents the beginning of a greater goodness[43]. And yet, the final stage of the previous shares of the soul becomes the beginning of the introduction for all the others who are in front of the soul.

This apogee (God's sight) of all the attained things until now becomes the beginning of her hope (the bride in *The Song of Songs –n.n.*) for the things that are in front of her.

Even better, the soul that goes up to the transcendent truth on the ways of the superior understanding should be willing so that each stage of the possible perfection for the human nature represents only the beginning of the desire for sublime things"[44].

Saint Gregory considers that the greatest obstacle in front of the grace is the weakening of the efforts to make a progress.

> "For he who strives for a superior life, what was said previously constitutes the genuine wisdom. For he who shows weakness in the endeavour towards virtue, there would be no gain regardless of how much would be written…The continuous development of life towards the good things represents the soul's way to perfection *"*[45].

The need for the human effort is permanently emphasized. At the same time God gives us the power. "Consequently we must give impulses constantly and never stop from the objective of the race. As each time he tells us: «Stand up and come to Me», He also gives us the power to stand up and to advance"[46]. Here we come across the synergism of Saint Gregory. God opens the way of the progress to the human effort.

Saint Gregory concludes by a declaration that corresponds to its initial definition about perfection: „Thus, the ascent to God is not circumscribed by any limit because a limit of the goodness cannot be identified and the amplification of the desire to do well has no end because it would be satisfied"[47]. Moses' desire for what is ahead was amplified and is not satisfied in its progress. Since it cannot see the end of the goodness, it

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[43] Everett Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[44] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum*, *PG* 44, col. 889B, D and 892B.
[45] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis*, II, *PG* 44, col. 425A.
[46] Idem, *In Canticum canticorum*, *PG* 44, col. 876C; see also Everett Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[47] Idem, *De vita Moysis*, *PG* 44, col. 405A.

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desires more and more[48]. Thus the demonstration of the thesis declared in the *Introduction* is perceived– the perfection must be assimilated to the progress.

In order to sum up, we emphasize that the goal of the human life is to progress continuously to the perfection of the divine life, as it means being known by God and becoming His friend. The perfection is the progress itself; the perfect man is the one who continuously progresses in kindness. The voyage of the ascent on the mountain of perfection and of God's knowledge starts with the purity, that is the removal of evil, which in its turn allows the initiation into "the divine secret" and the approach to God "in the impenetrable dark". It means the person's birth; becoming the sculptor who sculpts in his own heart the divine virtues which are "the true nature" of the human beings. He who has come to resemble God and who has not gone far in any way from the divine character bears on himself his distinctive marks and shows in all his things the conformation to the archetype; he beautifies his soul with what is incorruptible, unchangeable and does not share evil. Thus, the friendship among the divine and human Persons represents the genuine perfection.

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[48] *Ibid.*, col. 405B.

Simina-Carina Pascal

Introductory Notions into the Ontology of the Sacred[1]

Abstract

According to Heidegger, „ontology is the theory of being”, having as concern the research of the ways of structuring the relationship between human being and existence, between universal and individual (between the world „beyond”, absolute and the world „ in here”, relative) - relationships which, moreover, form the reflection object of all philosophical doctrines, considered as a fundamental issue of them. Mircea Eliade conceives the sacred as „the experience of reality and the consciousness source of existing in the world”. The two fields, sacred and profane, are alternative, mutual, complementary, the sacred can be disguised into profane, and the profane can establish the sacred.

Codoban considers the sacred as „a human's spidle from the unconscious through conscious towards transconscious”. The sacred's manifestation in this world is performed through hierophany and kratophany, and ontophany makes the transition from the religious experience to religion, since it transposes the sacred manifested individually into sacred on the transindividual level, the sacred's interpretation being apophatic, leading back to the religious symbol and the magical thinking or cataphatic, and coming to light as a religious ontology.

Keywords

Ontology, sacred, homo religiosus, mysterium tremendum, numinos, hierophany, ontophany, kratophany, symbol.

1. The Sacred's Manifestation

Studies in the history of religions, that is, from those about the primitive religious beliefs such as animism, totemism, shamanism, to those about universal religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam point out

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that the sacred is perceived by *homo religiosus* under the shape of hierophanic events. The term hierophany is coined by Mircea Eliade to define the retrieval of sacred into profane.

Mircea Eliade, in *The Sacred and the Profane*, conceives the sacred and the profane as two ways of being, as "possible dimensions of human existence."[2] In what concerns the sacred his manifestation through hierophanies establishes the world ontologically. Eliade describes how in the neutral space of the profane, the hierophany creates a fixed point, and in unidirectional and nameless flow of time, the hierophany updates and restores *the primordial mythical time* of the world's foundation. Nature becomes animated through hierophanic action, that is to say it is believed that the world is a real, alive and sacred body. Hierophanies create also *homo religiosus*, that under the sacred's influence fulfills his existence through a series of successive initiations, and projects his ideal on a superhuman level. Hierophany challenges man in the sense of assuming a limit and a mystical desire to save his condition by establishing a relationship with the transcendent[3].

Phenomenology of the sacred manifests itself from the most basic hierophany, such as the manifestation of the sacred in any thing, a stone or a tree, until the supreme hierophany, which is for a Christian, the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. For *homo religiosus* it seems not to be a split, that is there is always the same mistery: the manifestation of something which is „different", the manifestation of one reality that does not belong to our world, in things that form an integral part of our „natural" and „profane" world.

The man realizes the existence of sacred because this manifests itself, it portrays as a thing entirely different from the profane, from his world composed both of natural and artificial elements, cultural creations and civilization respectively. To render the act of this manifestation of the sacred, the researchers use the term hierophany, which is handy, doubly so as it does not require additional edification: it expresses only what is contained in the etymological content, meaning it shows us something sacred.

The modern westerner feels somehow embarrassed in front of certain forms of manifestation of the sacred and can not believe that this might manifest itself, for some human beings, in rocks or in trees. Or, as we shall

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[2] Mircea Eliade, *Sacrul şi profanul*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1995, p. 15.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 51-52.

see below, it is by no means the worship of a stone or a tree in themselves. The sacred stone, the sacred tree aren't worshiped as such, but because they are some hierophanies, for "showing" something that is no longer a stone or a tree, but sacred, *ganz andere.*

It was pointed out on numerous occasions and it should be stressed again that any hierophany, even the most basic, is a paradox. By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes something else, without ceasing to be itself, as it continues to be part of its cosmic environment. Ass sacred stone is also a stone; in appearance (or rather from a profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from other stones. For those who were shown a sacred stone, its immediate reality transforms into supernatural reality. In other words, for those who have a religious experience, the whole Nature may appear as cosmic sacrality. Cosmos as a whole, can become a hierophany.

The man of archaic societies tends to live in the sacred or near dedicated objects as much time as possible. The tendency is understandable: for "primitive", and also for the pre-modern societies' man, the sacred is power and, ultimately, reality. The sacred is saturated of being. The sacred power means at the same time reality, perenniality and efficiency. The opposition sacred-profane is often understood as an opposition between real and unreal or pseudoreal. Do not expect to find in archaic languages the philosophers' proper terminology, that is real and unreal and so on, but the idea exists. Religious human's desire to form part of reality, to feel saturated of power is therefore as natural as possible.

How religious man tries to stay as much as possible in a sacred universe; how his total life experience is portrayed in relation to the experience of the man without any religious feeling, of the man who lives or wants to live in a desacralized world: here's the main theme addressed in the pages below. We must show from the beginning that the profane world in full, the Cosmos totally desacralized is a recent discovery of human mind. We don't intend to show by means of what historical processes and as a result of what changes of spiritual behavior modern man has desacralized his world and assumed a profane existence. It's enough to see that desacralization is proper to the total experience of modern societies' non-religious man, to who is therefore increasingly difficult to find existential dimensions of archaic societies' religious man.

2. Nature and the sacred's functions

The idea of sacred seems to be common to theories encountered at philosophers such as Rudolf Otto, Emile Durkheim, Mircea Eliade, Georges Dumézil etc. The sacred is seen as an absolute reality, but not isolated, and enters into a relationship with the man, so we can talk about fully sacred man, about a man having a vocation for deification. Aware of the fact that the sacred is not stuck in a particular religion, both Otto and Eliade seek it in the Western spirituality and also in the eastern one. Their quest involves all methods of knowledge: linguistics and ethnography, history of religions and theology, psychology and mysticism, metaphysics and aesthetics. It is therefore a reasonable effort by excellence.

The rational approach is found in the first definition that we might give to the sacred, namely the opposite of *profane*[4]. The distinction between sacred and profane was proposed by Emile Durkheim. The division of the world in two parts, one containing all that is sacred, and the other all that is profane, is the distinctive feature of religious belief, writes Durkheim in *Elementary forms of religious life*. The sacred is qualitatively different from the profane, so Mircea Eliade argues that the sacred is connected to the domain of conscience and as such it is the essence of religion. But what is truly important is the emphasis on the fact that the sacred is different from the profane because is „saturated of being" and manifests itself as creator principle of the world. "Man realizes the existence of the sacred - Eliade says - because this manifest likes a thing entirely different from the profane"[5].

About sacred-profane categorial pair it can be said therefore that „there are two modalities of being in the world, two existential situations assumed by man throughout his history (…). In fact the two ways of being, the sacred and the profane are determined by the different positions that man has conquered in the Cosmos."[6] For archaic mentality those activities without mythical significance are profane, but one can't speak of a rupture from sacred since both structures are constituents of the human world.

These introductory considerations allow us to come closer to the way in which Rudolf Otto resorts to extremely detailed phenomenological ana-

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 12-13.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 13-14.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

lysis. He had a double background, of theologian and that of historian and religions philosopher, so he looked for mediation between rational and irrational. In this way, he has come to promote living and religious feeling as the premise from which to start. Rudolf Otto will entail the category of sacred as fundamental in the religious studies, defining the sacred with the term *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. The stages of the sacred's theory of the german philosopher are: 1) *das ganz Andere* - defining sacred as transcendent, ,quite different'; 2) *majestas* – the sacred's image entails before human; 3) *numinosum* – sacred by essence; 4) *mysterium* - mystery as a form of qualitative content of numinosum; 5) *tremendum* - fear felt in front of the sacred's image and 6) *fascinans* - astonishment felt before the sacred's image[7].

Thus, Rudolf Otto establishes the term numinous for the sacred, through which he wants to express the necessary presence of God and the fact that this concept, this *a priori* category of interpretation and evaluation, ,,does not exist as such, but only in the religious field"[8]. The shattering, terrifying and fascinating effect of notification of this *mysterium tremendum*[9], the energy and *majestas (*absolute power) associated to his manifestation and the collosal, which is described in spatial terms – they all are consequences of the *numinous*' manifestation in our world[10].

Eliade introduces in his work *The Sacred and the Profane* a few standard definitions of the sacred: ,,the first says that the sacred is opposed to the profane"[11]. The sacred appears as a hierophany, which suddenly makes a certain object become in the same time ,,something else without ceasing to be itself"[12].

The sacred contains the idea of transcendence as well as that of immanence. It is metahistorical and it is manifested by hierophanies and symbols, called by Michel Meslin its ways[13]. Sacred's knowledge is made through spiritual experience and especially, through mystical feeling. Sacred is a category for consciousness. The sacred can be present at all levels of

[7] Rudolf Otto, *Sacrul*, trad. by I. Milea, Editura Dacia, Cluj – Napoca, 1992, p. 18.
Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Éditions Payot, Paris, 1949, p. 5.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 20-34.
[10] Augustin Ioan, *Spaţiul sacru*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, p. 15.
[11] M. Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[13] Michel Meslin, *Ştiinţa religiilor*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1993, p. 158.

the psyche, from the unconscious to the superconscious. It aims to reunite them, but is rather something that transcends the psyche, because it induces axiological attitudes, but especially because it is a revelation of the absolute. To know the sacred means to understand the religious phenomenon and to spiritually value the human existence. The entry into the sacred universe produces „a level-split", as shown by Mircea Eliade[14], because we move into a new way of existence.

Anna – Teresa Tymieniecka emphasizes that through the sacred we find in the human soul it is manifested the revelation of the divine message. She sees the sacred as the foundation of religion and speaks of a spiritual itinerary of the sacred into the divine[15]. The sacred's nature is *a priori*, it represents real, and the entire human existence runs its course in a space full of sacredness. The basic function of the sacred is the mediation between transcendent reality and the religious man. This mediation is expressed mainly by: symbol, myth and ritual.

3. The Ways of the Sacred

The twentieth - century imposed itself by the physiognomy of an uncharmed world. This century, the waiting-room for Malraux's mystic century, is the final act of a long process which involved the sacred, a process that according to some authors would have started around year 3000 BC in the Sumero – Babylonian space. This process - as Vasile Tonoiu points out - is „a single trajectory: from the primitive religious to the religion of *escaping from religion*." Paradoxically, „the process of secularization is no longer seen as something external to the religious metamorphosis", that is having its cause in the existence of fully autonomous forces, but as a "specific absorption (...) of the sacred element".[16] From this present perspective, as the author emphasizes, we see clearly how the release of great religions has caused the weakness of the sacred by rationing the dogmas and deepening the notions of transcendent. Quoting Marcel Gauchet, Vasile

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[14] M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, p. 5.

[15] Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (editor), *From the Sacred to the Divine. A new Phenomenological Approach,* Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Boston, London, Kluwer, 1994, p. X.

[16] Vasile Tonoiu, *Archaic Ontologies nowadays*, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1989, p. 378.

Tonoiu eliminates any ambiguity on the decline of the sacred as a religious phenomenon, due to the world religions, meaning "the rational religion of a single god is precisely that, through which it could be operated the way out of religion".[17]

Rudolf Otto spoke about the negative effect of religious phenomenon's rationalization emphasizing that it is the interference of the intellect that brought the occultism of the sacred. From an ahistorical perspective we could now understand the meaning of the commandment given by God to Adam: „And from the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2, 17) as a command that was guarding the sacred being from reason perfidy who stands to demolish. *Homo religiosus* as a product of the sacred and also as an agent of nature's and world's sacralization, it seems to be the equivalent of paradisiacal man, who has not entered in history. History is the deterioration of Creation.

„Areligious man – as Eliade shows – fully developed only in modern societies. Modern areligious man assumes a new existential situation: he recognizes himself only as subject and agent of history and refuses any call to transcendence".[18] And Eliade emphasizes the same idea already mentioned that „this areligious man comes from homo religiousus and, whether he wants it or not, he is his work"[19], being the product of the process of desacralization. Man of history, this has as main reference value, the freedom and considers - Eliade says - it will not be free untill the moment it would have killed the last god.

But areligious man keeps unconscious traces of *homo religiosus* behavior. In the modern man's world disguised mythologies and degraded rituals are conducted. Thus, for example, „New Year or the installing in a new house takes place, even in secularized form, after the structure of the renewal rituals. Mythologies – says Eliade - are hidden in the performances, cinema, literature and art".

It is very interesting Eliade's observation on the „mythological structure and eschatological meaning of communism". Classless society has „its' previous most accurate in the Golden Age myth, according to many

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 379
[18] Mircea Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 188-189.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 189

traditions, characterizing the beginning and end of history".[20] Eliade cata-logues a series of displays hidden in small religions, political mystics and nudism.

Desacralization has been caused due by human reason, which itself became an idol of the uncharmed world. But „a perfectly rational man is an abstraction", says Eliade. Every man is psichologically defined in terms of two coordinates, conscious activity and irrational experiences. „But the content and structures of the unconscious present amazing similarities to the images and mythological figures".[21]

Desacralization is also an existential crisis before anything. And when a crisis occurs in a man manifests himeself through a supreme court, the *philosophical consciousness* which was tackeled by Lucian Blaga, and which reveals the tragedy of existence. And for the areligious man this tragism manifests itself in self-justification difficulty, but perhaps especially in hidden thoughts, the suicidal thought of self-dissolution. This sin of the modern areligious man we do not know if it has a chance of salvation, but certainly it has to be expiated.

Retaking the expiation myth of Eden, Eliade notes that after the "first *drop*, religiosity had fallen to the level of torn conscience, after the second, it fell below in the depths of the unconscious: and it was forgotten".[22] He adds that the historian stops here, the issue being taken by the philosopher, psychologist and even to the theologian.

„Washing his hands" Eliade is indirectly treating the areligious man disease and that of himself. „To this man *from after religion* addresses in fact Eliade. He, himself is among those who wanted *the balm of the solu-tion*, but whom are not able to give up the *freedom's issue*".[23] Areligious man is a rarity hard to find including nowadays world. The various facets of homo religiosus are present. One can say that regardless of the historical context, *homo religiosus* always believed that there is an absolute reality, the sacred, which transcends this world but manifests in it and therefore makes it real. He believes that life has a sacred origin and that human existence is updating all the potentialities to the extent of its religiosity, that

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 192.
[21] *Ibid*., p. 195.
[22] *Ibid*., p. 199.
[23] Vasile Tonoiu, *op. cit*., p. 398

is the way in which is participating in reality. Refreshing the sacred history by rituals, imitating divine behavior, man seeks to be close to the gods, in an exemplary world.

So the sacred exists. This existence is the being itself - Eliade tells us, referring to ancient cultures. Absolute reality of the sacred, which transcends the human world, is seen in hierophanies that is in something that is shown. Hierophanies are not only signs, ways of expressing the sacred, but also possibilities of *homo religiosus* to participate in the sacred, a participation which gives legitimacy and reality of his world. The mystery opens both from the absolute transcendent, and the human world, and this opening, this crossing place is the truth of the hierophanies. The shapes of these hierophanies are life forms, undepraved of *logos* or *historia*. So if we want to understand the sacred, we must recognize it as real and the facts of *homo religiosus* ,,as human acts, as acts of culture, as creations of the spirit, and not pathological outbursts of instincts, as bestiality or childishness".[24]

Clearly delimiting himself from those who consider sacred as ,,something it can not really exist", an area of ,,illusion", Mircea Eliade realizes that in order to be better understood and interpreted the sacred's significances he must accurately describe and analyze the formal and morphological structures of the specific ways of this phenomenon. He identifies and describes hierophant displays, myths, rituals, symbols.

These live forms, both in the original shape and also degenerated or hidden, must be categorized and classified. ,,Mircea Eliade's interpretation method relies constantly on a series of schematic constructions - theoretical and heuristic - achieved through simplification, unification and summarization of myths and symbols in the form of scenarios"[25]. Thus, the morphological variety of mythical universe – is symbolically structured and acquires unity. This comprehensive unit, as shown in the previous paragraphs is solidary to the ontological unit which describes the living manifestation of the sacred, starting from cosmogony, the initiations and ending with the eschatological act.

The sacred can be found in some specific ways of expression, specifically through the sacred experiences of homo religiosus.

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[24] Mircea Eliade, *Aspectele mitului*, Editura Univers, Bucureşti, 1978, p. 3.
[25] Adrian Marino, *Hermeneutica lui Mircea Eliade,* Editura Dacic, Cluj-Napoca, 1980, p. 78.

3.1. Hierophany

Hierophany in the etymological sense means something sacred that shows itself. Hierophanies are *the fixed point*, the ontological element that generates and according to which the religious phenomenon is organized. ,,You might say that the history of religions, from the most primitive ones to the most developed, consists of the hierophanies accumulation and the manifestation of the sacred realities"[26]. Hierophany is a mystery whether we talk about an animal - totem, the stone of Kaaba, the ladder in Jacob's dream or God's incarnation in Jesus Christ (the ultimate hierophany for Christians). Solving this mystery involves initiation, and by initiation the human condition of the initiate is transformed, that is his ontological status.

To better understand what the mystery of hierophanies is, we must address to Eleusinian hierophants. For nearly two millenniums these priests of ancient Ellada conducted the initiation rituals in the secrets of posthumous life, under the sacred aegis of goddess Demeter. It seems that Eleusinian mysteries have prehellenic origin and were related to agriculture, the goddess Demeter was called ,,The mother of the grain" and her daughter Core ,,the young girl of wheat". The hierophants were organizing initiation ceremonies for ten days in the month of *boidromian,* that is autumn, celebrating ,,the young girl of the wheat's return to light" and the great mystery that was shared to the initiates was ,,a hope of immortality"[27].

Eleusinian mysteries are based on ancient myth related and commented in detail by Mircea Eliade in *History of religious beliefs*. We will summarize it. The goddess Demeter, seeking for her daughter, Core, becomes Demophoon's nurse, who was the son of Queen Metaneira. From obscure reasons, the goddess wants to turn the child into a god, hiding it in a fire at night like a smut. The goddess Demeter is surprised by Metaneira and so the magic transformation providing the transition from mortal to immortal and eternal God of the young child is interrupted. Of course, the hierophants didn't have the power of the goddess, but yet they provided for the initiates a modification of the human condition. After the participation in rituals ,,the initiate's soul soul will enjoy a happy existence after death.

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[26] M. Eliade, *Sacrul şi profanul*, p. 13.
[27] André Bonnard, *Civilizaţia greacă*, vol I, Editura Ştiinţifică, Bucureşti, 1967, p. 161-162.

He will not be at all a sad and fallen shadow, without power and memory, a dreaded condition of Homeric heroes"[28].

After this brief detour at Eleusis, we believe that now we understand better the fact that hierophany does not mean a simple pointing of something sacred, a simple vision, but the disclosure as a possible reality of a new human condition, immortality or at least the understanding of life, of its meaning and the abolishment of death fear. The hierophants didn't satisfy a simple sacerdotal function, but their vocation was to fill the sensible world of the profane with the mystery of the sacred. They made hierophanies understandable, and those revealed to the one undergoing the initiation process the ontological mark of sacramental transformation. Hierophanies don't appear anywhere and anytime. The regime of events is perceived by man as unpredictable, that is where you least expect it and when you least expect. The hierophany may be „*a certain sign*" and it „comes to indicate the sacred place"[29]. Through sign, *something* transcendent of this world is manifested apodictic, establishing the need for a decision or a certain behavior.

But signs can be *caused* – says Eliade - by a kind of *evocatio*, especially when seeking for a sacred place where to build a sanctuary. At archaic populations this search is made with the help of wild animals. Man doesn't choose this sacred space, but he discovers it making use of mysterious signs. Yet Eliade speaks of the existence of some „guidance techniques", which in fact are „constructions techniques of the sacred space"[30].

Jacob's dream is a sign of meeting with God. Waking up, terrified Jacob shouted, „How scary is this place! This is truly the house of God and here is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28, 17). He named the place Bethel, meaning „house of God". Another example given by Eliade, in which *sign* has played a role in revealing a sacred space, is the legend of a musulman monk who founded El - Hemel. So the signs put an end to the homogeneity and relativity of natural space.

But Eliade states that this sacred space may have a higher value can provide better human encounter with the sacred, when reproducing the work of the gods. Referring to different tribal traditions, to the Indian texts

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[28] M. Eliade, *Istoria credinţelor şi ideilor religioase,* vol. I, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1981, p. 307-308.

[29] Idem, *Sacrul şi profanul*, p. 27.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

or christian experiences, he finds that the idea of consecration includes them in the same archetypal scheme. Thus „to cosmicizate unknown territories is always to consecrate them: organizing a space, we repeat the exemplary work of the gods"[31].

The *idea of consecration* of the two worlds, the sacred and man's world become ontologically related. The example of *the sacred pillar*, carved by Numbakula - a deity in the Australian tribe named *arunta,* is revealing in this respect. Numbakula shaped the pillar, created the tribal ancestor and climbing up on this pillar he disappeared in heaven. In this way the pillar became *axis mundi,* both to man and God, linking the two worlds.

In more developed cultures, the rupture made by hierophany indicates three cosmic levels: heaven, earth, infernal regions, levels linked by *axis mundi*. This sacred column is situated in the Center of the World. The symbolism implied by World Center „makes understandable the traditional behavior related to *the space where we live*"[32]. This *center* is found at different people in a sacred mountain, a temple, a city and so on. In *the Center*, where is realized the communication between the three cosmic areas, we find the true world. Thus, a „whole country (Palestine), a city (Jerusalem), a sanctuary (the Temple of Jerusalim) represents without distinction, an *imago mundi*"[33].

The world of *homo religiosus*, created step by step, starting from the sign and up to complex hierophanies has become cosmos, order. Any attack against it is an assault of chaos, mythically perceived under the image of monsters. So whoever struggled to keep the world safe was seen as a god, a mythical hero or like in the tradition of the Old Testament „anointed of the Lord". Those who founded or builted a city, a castle, a temple fall in the series of sacred approvals also using the sacrifice ritual.

From a prevalent profane perspective of the present the mentality of *homo religiosus* manifests itself as nostalgia of origins, of an ancestral time when he lived near the gods, that is the Center of the World. „The experience of sacred time will allow the religious man to periodically find Cosmos, as it was *in principio*, in the mythical moment of creation".[34]

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[31] *Ibid*., p. 32.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 37.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 41.
[34] *Ibid*., p. 63.

The world is renewed annually, the man recovering its origins, holiness, as came out of the hands of the Creator, during the holidays. In feast the man ritually repeats the moment of creation. A feast is celebrated in a sacred place and always takes place in an original time. The celebration is therefore a religious valuation of the world.

Hierophanies are reducible to *ontophanies*. Is not something shown, but which comes to life and life means birth, growth, death. From a religious perspective these moments have spiritual substance, meaning *rebirth*, *initiation*, *initiatory death* and thus return to the origins, so the sacred effectively opposes the profane.

The term of *ontophany* (the manifestation of the sacred as reality) was introduced by Mircea Eliade. His meaning is similar to *hierophany* (manifestation of the sacred as a form) or *kratophany* (manifestation of the sacred power, of the power of the sacred). So, hierophany finds full expression in myth, kratophany in ritual and archaic ontology is the developed form of ontophany. This becomes the final result of the religious experience.

3.2. Kratophany

From Eliade we learn to understand the archetypal ways of manifestation of the sacred. Kratophanies are almost explicitly connected to the ambivalence of the sacred, to both the beneficial displays and the evil ones. In this respect, Eliade admits a complex ontological regime of the sacred, different from everything that belongs to the sphere of the profane. He considers, for example, desecrated objects or human beings as being practically prohibited to the profane experience. You can not simply come close, to a desecrated or dedicated object without the risk of being in danger of death. Hence the establishment of taboos tackled by JG Frazer in *The Golden Bough* and the kratophanies of the unusual and the new, the alien, analyzed by Eliade. For example, the sky is not only the symbol of divinity, of inaccessibility, of space saturated with holiness, but also the referential by excellence of the manifestations of power: thunder, lightning, meteors. But kratophanies are not only related to the sky. Also the earth carries with it a force that seems to transcend beyond what seems to be natural.

,,The hardness, the roughness, the material permanence – argues
Mircea Eliade – become for the primitive religious conscious-

ness a hierophany. Nothing more immediate and more autono-
mous in the fullness of its force, and nothing nobler or more
frightening than the lofty rock, the block of granite that rises
boldly. First of all, the stone is and remains the same, exists;
and what is more important, it hits (...) The rock reveals him
something that transcends his precarious human condition (...)
in its greatness and its strength, in its shape or color, man meets
a reality and a force that belong to another world, other than the
profane world"[35].

,,Lithic kratophanies" were studied by Mircea Eliade, supporting the
idea that the stones can be ,,instruments of spiritual action". Their function
was to create a spiritual connection between earth and heaven, a point in-
ferred from the existence of some stones placed in the most sacred places
on earth. As examples, we may consider ,,the omphalos" from Delphy or
the stone where Jacob's head stayed when he dreamed the ladder con-
necting earth with heaven, a stone ritually anointed with oil and the place
marked by this stone was called Bethel (House of God).

Kratophany represents a manifestation of the sacred (The absolute)
through its forced intervention in the natural, profane order in the progress
of events, by imposing a miraculous order of conducting them by aug-
mentation or cancellation of their effects. The context of this difference is
larger: the one between Being and Becoming, Form and Fluency, Discon-
tinuous and Continuous, status and movement.[36]

3.3. The Symbol

The term *symbol* originally denotes a *seal*, which means that this word
contains in itself a world. Thus, the very word *symbol* symbolizes the pre-
sence of a mystery, of a hidden and forbidden truth to man. But also if we
put the seal on this world in a state of potency it testifies as real what is
hidden. This certainty provides us indirectly with the truth through a her-
meneutic operation of interpretation of what is hidden. However, out of
hiding place - in Heidegger's mind - means the being itself: the truth, the

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[35] M. Eliade, *Tratat...*, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1992, p. 177.
[36] Aurel Codoban, *Sacru şi ontofanie. Pentru o nouă filosofie a religiilor*, Editura Poli-
rom, Iaşi, 1998, p. 91.

human being. The symbol is accessible only through interpretation, and the interpretation gives us the sacred truth sealed in the concrete substance of the symbol. We can say that the symbol has two faces, one noticeable, revealing by hiding, the other becomes intelligible only through interpretation, revealing only what the other face was hiding. This is the symbol as mediator of the sacred.

We knowingly omit the current theory of symbols, which accepts the symbol only as a formal linguistic reality, depleted of any spiritual, religious, metaphysical content, a theory so ineffective in the case of Mircea Eliade.

To understand the symbol, eliminating any scientific explanations, we will stop in front of Janus. But which face? What sees one and what sees the other? And from here, what can we read in the eyes of Janus Bifrons? This God, according to some researchers, is a god of the beginnings, preserving in one of his faces the image of primordial chaos and in the other order. „In the time cycle - says Eliade - he is governing the beginning of the year. Similarly, in historical time, Janus represents the start: he was the first king in Latium and the sovereign of a golden age, when men and gods lived together".[37] He was the one who watched in the doorstep and at the gates, that is the inputs and outputs, being also the protector of the roads. Taking into account the many attributes he had, Janus was pictured wearing a key and a stick as a symbol of total wakefulness.

Let's now draw out the ideas for which I have chosen the god Janus as a symbol of the symbol itself:

a) is a god of the beginnings, when gods and men lived together. The symbol must give us the originated time in which the sacred and the profane were caught in an ontological connection, just like a hierophany;

b) is a god of the crossing gate which has two locations, one from which you leave and another in which you enter. Thus, for example, the bird as a concret element (the place from where you leave) symbolizes flight, overcoming of the human condition and the meeting with the sacred (the place you enter);

c) is the god that symbolizes total wakefulness, including both the beginning and end. In this sense, the stick means the road and the search effort and the key represents the possibility of the beyond world and the

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[37] M. Eliade, *The history of religious beliefs and ideas*, vol. II, p. 123.

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understanding of the sacred truth. And the symbol with a face that reveals by hiding implies the search effort and the other one has a key, which enables the entry into the phenomenon of the sacred.

Let's not forget where we started, from the native meaning of the word *symbol*, namely *seal*. So now, we consider this indirect testimony of the sacred, meaning the symbol, which is what we find in the profane world. The more we can appreciate Eliade's effort to decipher the symbols of *homo religiosus*. He, himself said that the origin of a symbol values as much as the discovery of a pharaohs dynasty. "To update the ontological and metaphysical value of the symbol is therefore in the intellectual conditions of our age (so Alexandrian - formalized in many of its western aspects), a true act of culture"[38].

Mircea Eliade considers the symbol as an element that allows the researcher to know the archetypal infrastructure of archaic cultures imbued with the sacred. The symbol is the key that opens the world beyond. „Far from the cult and immobilized in mythologies, Heaven maintains its presence in the religious life through symbolism"[39]. But through *symbol* the sacred is not only revealed but it also acts. The sacred sends his message to man, asking not just his intelligence, imagination and memory, but also his affective faculties. So we need to understand, now from the human perspective, that every gesture of *homo religiosus* has a symbolic sense that transforms it, and the communication with the world becomes communion. We also find in the symbol the same connection between the ontological and the gnosiological.

We can say that all myths form a symbolic system and the system acquires an imperative character towards its components, namely myths, forcing them to integrate according to the ontological sense of creation- eschatology. This ontological ordering sense transforms the system of myths into a mega- symbol of cosmic cycle's reality. „The symbol existentializes the reality - says A. Marino - which it incorporates pulling its validity from this incorporation".[40]

Looking for his idea and referring to the hermeneutic circuit part – all, he shows that „the symbol is a typical example of ontological wholeness,

[38] A. Marino, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
[39] M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* p. 119.
[40] A. Marino, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

able to establish and to justify a true hermeneutics of wholeness"[41]. In this respect, even when shown that the temple symbolizes something..., or the serpent symbolizes something..., or the chimney symbolizes something... we must understand that the deep meaning consists in the fact that the symbol concerns the entire world, that is the part through which the whole is expressed.

The symbol can reach levels that are completely beyond the profane understanding. Thus, returning to the example given with the bird as a symbol of flight, a symbol that is comprehensible, the flights of biblical prophet Ezekiel instead, are incomprehensible. We can say that the experience of the sacred is accessible through the symbol, but it implies initiation, that is the means of *Homo religiosus*.

Without classifying, thus rejecting the modern spirit inclined to formalization and schematics, Mircea Eliade enters the symbols in a vast system that reflects the sacred. The hermeneutic model overlaps the ontological one, as if Eliade would be another prophet inspired by the gods. He knows it and says that ,,the gods created the world in such way that it reflects their existence".[42] Thus, he speaks in the system of:

a) *celestial symbols*. In this category we include the cosmic tree, the cosmic mountain, the chain of arrows that unite the sky with the earth, World Center etc. He includes here also the magic flight, etc.

b) *aquatic symbols*. Waters symbolize the universal totality of virtualities. Primordial waters, as shown in the Bible in Genesis, were hiding the Earth. The flood is a correction of Creation. Water and aquatic symbolism is exemplary valued by the baptism that is linked death and resurrection to a spiritual life. The symbolism and the mystery of the baptism imply through the model of Jesus Christ the whole Christianity and the rebirth of all mankind. Of course the symbolism of water is found in all cultures.

c) *the symbols of the earth*. The man saw in the earth the feminine factor generator of life. This initial image of Mother-Earth has an universal dispersion. The biblical Adam was made of earth. Eliade recalls here the symbolism of human procreation and childbirth as microcosmic variants of exemplary acts commited on Earth. The woman is mythically solidary with Earth. Cosmic creation is the result of hierogamy between god - Heaven and Mother - Earth.

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[42] M. Eliade, *Sacrul şi profanul*, p. 119.

d) *the symbolism of the cosmic tree*. Although noted in celestial symbols, this symbol should be remembered because it transcends the area, suggesting the wholeness of cosmic life. The cosmic tree symbolizes life, youth, immortality and wisdom. The tree symbolizes the periodic regeneration of the Cosmos, which is death and resurrection.

History adds new meanings, but they don't destroy the structure of the symbol, like it occurred with the advent of Christianity. Not even desacralization managed to reduce the myth to literature, and the symbol to a figure of speech.

3.4. The Ontophany

Mircea Eliade introduces the term of *ontophany* in the philosophy of religions. His meaning is similar to hierophany (manifestation of the sacred as a form) or kratophany (manifestation of sacred power, of the sacred as power). The term of *ontophany* means manifestation of the sacred as reality[43]. Ontophany finds full expression in archaic ontology, just as hierophany finds its full expression in myth and kratophany in ritual. Aurel Codoban believes that religious experience aimes at the Absolute, which is mediated by the sacred. The sacred is manifested in the wholeness of human being. For *homo religiosus*, it is a transcendental category that makes possible the religious experience, and namely the establishment of hierophanies. In the unconscious, the sacred can be found as an intesity given by the transfiguration of a rupture between heaven and earth, to use a metaphor. Therefore, Aurel Codoban identifies this relationship as ,,a man's axis from unconscious to transconscious by conscious"[44]. The manifestation of the sacred in the world produces significant changes, primarily the objects through which it manifests are imbued with its substance.The manifestation of the sacred is found in various forms for hierophany and in magical powers of some energies for kratophany. Aurel Codoban believes that we can not speak properly on cognitive account about the knowledge of the sacred, but rather of meanings, namely it can be said that the interpretations of the myths are similar to the interpretations of the world and man. In his opinion, the outcome of religious experience is ontophany, which means the revelation of the sacred as being the truth to which we

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[43] A. Codoban, *op. cit*, p. 113.
[44] *Ibid*., p. 68.

report to understand the world. The elaborate form of ontophany is found in archaic ontologies. Referring to its ways of expression in ancient Greece, the author observes a certain development of religious experience. The first stage is the pansemy, polysemy and panontism a kind of *coincidentia oppositorium*. The heterogeneity of sacred's ways of expression are identified in the ground, blood, birth and death. In the second stage there is a segregation of reality, which means eliminating the possibility of evil as principle, being removed from the ontology. Greek ontologies are focused on hierophany, which induced the idea of anthropomorphism, meaning that gods are like people, have their history and their place - Olympus. Greek ontophany differs from the Jewish one, because the Greek gods are part of the world, Iahwe is the creator of the world and is not in it, but it manifests itself in it by communicating with people and conducting their history. In what concerns the Christianity, the human-divine relationship is realized through Jesus Christ, which is the same being with God, but is born and lives in man's world also. On a doctrinaire level it is believed that the person of Jesus Christ is a hypostatic divine-human union. What follows? Ontophany make the transition from religious experience to religion, which means a change in the manifestation of the sacred that is from the individual level to the level of one community. This is how by religion a religious ontology appears. Sacred history interferes with human history, and so the dialectical relationship between sacred – profane comes to life, clearly laid out by Mircea Eliade. Ontophany becomes the final result of religious experience.

Caius Cuțaru

The intrareligios dialogue - the upper limit of the interreligious dialogue in the vision of Raimundo Panikkar. A critical analysis[1]

Abstract
R. Panikkar looks at the intra-religious dialogue as a fulfillment, as an upper limit of the inter-religious dialogue, as a way walked together in an attempt of establishing an open dialogue with the partner. During this dialogue, the partners even take the risk of converting to each other's faith. This image has as starting point the pluralist theory of religions sustained by R. Panikkar, but rejected by the Catholic Church .The ending of the study sees R. Panikkar's theory from the Orthodox point of view, rejecting it because it promotes the religious relativism and the idea that truth can be reached only through the intra-religious dialogue.

Raimundo Panikkar - a theologian of the meeting of religions

The Roman Catholic Church of the last century witnesses a strong interreligious opening, manifested at various levels. Second Vatican Council, in the conciliar Declaration *Nostra aetate* came to confirm and encourage the already existing tendency among some believers and some theologians have said[2] or have ex-

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[1] Ph.D., University "Aurel Vlaicu" of Arad, c.caius@yahoo.com.

[2] Among the leading Catholic theologians, who have expressed their opinion on other religious traditions, but still remained within the boundaries of their denominations (churches), we mention: Karl Rahner, Henri de Lubac, Jean Danielou, Hans Urs von

perienced dramatically this opening.[3] Raimundo Panikkar is one of them. It is difficult to analyze and assess, in terms of Orthodox life, the theological expression of a man not yet fully perceived even by the Roman Catholic Church, which he served for a lifetime. We dare call him a "theologian of the meeting of religions", but it would have been fairer to say that he is a theologian who has analyzed the results from the encounter between religions, those feelings and thoughts *born* inside *hominem* when the religious man receives the dialogue with a maximum opening of the soul.

Before we express the specificity of Raimundo Panikkar's theology, original Catholic theologian, we characterize him by resorting to two witnesses, the first representing a self portrait: "'I left' (India, Ed) Christian, 'I found myself' a Hindu and I 'get back' a Buddhist, without having ever ceased to be Christian"[4] and the second is a Catholic theologian well acquainted with the work. It's Pierre-François Béthune, who characterizes R. Panikkar as follows: "Listener to the inner lifetime call to dialogue, Raimundo Panikkar has set a direction. Not everyone can follow it fully, because every life is unique and requires a particular commitment."[5]

R. Panikkar was born in Barcelona in 1918 of a Spanish Catholic mother and a Hindu Indian father. He studied in Europe and in India for a long time, trying to reconcile in his life a plurality of religious and cultural traditions: Indian and European, Hindu and Christian, scientific and humanistic. He took a degree in chemistry, philosophy and theology, was ordained priest in 1946 and lectured at major universities in Europe, India and America. He is a member of the International Institute of Philosophy and founded several journals of philosophy and intercultural studies centers. Currently, he lives in a mountainous area of Catalogne, where he continues his active and contemplative life, living the encounter between

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Balthasar, Hans Küng Jacques Dupuis, the last two with some objections from the Catholic Magisterium.

[3] Among those who have broken the barriers of their own confession, in an attempt to approach another kind of spirituality, we mention Thomas Merton, M. Enomya-Lasse etc.

[4] This statement will be made by Raimundo Panikkar on his return to the West after fifteen years of absence.

[5] Raimundo Panikkar, *L'Incontro indispensable: dialogo delle religion*, Transl. Giuseppe Jiso Forzani, Jaca Bock Publishing SpA, Milan, 2001, p. 14, which is a recast of the English translation of *The Encounter of Religions: The Unavoidable Dialogue*, Janadeepa, vol. 3, n. 2, Pune, 2000 inaugural article *der Begegnung Religionen: Das unvermeidliche Gespräch* in Dialogue magazine der Religionen, Munich, 1991.

religions in the most personal and intimate part of his being, not for any profit, but in humble recognition of the unique value of the two spiritual traditions of his origin. The right of the city that he has acquired during the existence of different religious traditions can only be explained by its dual religious and cultural affiliation to the European and the Indian. We believe this is the reading key for his entire theological production.

Among his works of reference, published recently, we mention the following (the original edition in Italian translation): *The experience in Trinidad y religiosa,* Obelisco, Barcelona, 1989, (trams. it) *ed. Trinity esperienza dell'uomo religiosa,* Cittadella Editrice, Assisi, 1989, *La torre di Babele. Peace is pluralismo,* Culture della Pace, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), 1990, partially inserted *Pluralismo is intercultural,* Tomo I di *Culture is religion in dialogo,* Vol VI dell *'Opera Omnia,* Jaca Book, Milan, 2009, *he Silencio de Dios,* the Publicaciones Guadiana, SA, Madrid, 1970, (trams. it.) *Il Silenzio di Dio. At risposta di Buddha,* Edizione Borla, srl, Rome (1992 [2)] *The nova innocence,* I Llare del libre, Barcelona, (transl. it.) *The innocenza nuova* I, II, III, census, Milan, 1993, 1994, 1996, and *La nuova innocenza. Innocenza cosciente,* Servitium, it Monte Sotto (BG) 2003 (collection of texts and 2005 [2)] *La torre di Babele. Peace is pluralismo,* Culture della Pace, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), 1990, partially inserted *Pluralismo is intercultural,* Tomo I di *Culture is religion in dialogo,* Vol VI dell *'Opera Omnia,* Jaca Book, Milan, 2009; *Icon del misterio: The experience of Dios,* Peninsula, Barcelona, 1998, (transl. it.) *L'esperienza di Dio,* Queriniana, Brescia, 1998, *at pienezza dell'uomo. One cristofania* Jaca Book, Milan (1999, 2000), also contains not only the first edition: *Cristofania. TESI Nove* Centro dehoniano editorial, Bologna, 1994, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics,* Paulista, New York, 1979, (transl. it.) *Mito, Federal Ermeneutica ed. Il velo della triple Realtor,* Jaca Book, Milan, 2000 etc. His most known work is *Il Cristo sconosciuto dell'Induismo,*[6] translated into several languages.[7]

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[6] See Panikkar R., *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1964, (trad. it.) R. Panikkar*, Il Cristo sconosciuto dell'Induismo, Vita e pensiero,* Milan, 1970.

[7] See Michel Delahoutre, Panikkar Raimundo, in Paul Poupard (Dir.) *Grande Dizionario delle Religioni. Dalla preistoria ad oggi* (GDDR), Edizione Piemme Spa, Casale Monferrato, 2000, p. 1575.

Panikkar's basic intuition is teandrism or cosmoteandrism, doctrine which is found in both Hindu and Christian thought and that the cosmos, God and man can not be understood without each other, Christ and the Hindu Ishvara linking these three realities. The topics on which he leaned most attention were: sacrifice, worship, spirituality, Christology, Trinitarian theology and the religion dialogue. In this context, we also have to mention two ways in which the distinguished Professor R. Panikkar manifested himself, on one hand the close encounter of cultures and the philosophical meeting, on the other hand, the theological reflection and spirit of seeking God, of seeking the sense and simplicity. But in recent years, he increasingly emphasizes that these two should be combined in the practice of the interreligious dialogue.

We used this bio-bibliographic summary presentation of R. Panikkar because he is a theologian scholar little known in Romanian, but his vision of the intrareligios dialogue as upper limit, as fulfillment of the Interreligious Dialogue, places his at the forefront of dialogue between religions. He conceptualizes what he has lived in practice, being in this respect a very interesting theologian.

2. The interreligious dialogue as a dialogue of knowledge

2.1. Man - dialogical being by definition

The dialogue is an integral part of the relationship between people of different faiths and ideologies involved in the life of the human society. There is a great attention given to the timeliness and the need[8] of the interreligious dialogue, the fact that there is no aspect of human life in which contemporary man can feel self-sufficient. In search of himself he meets the other, who he can not avoid, given the current conditions of living. But the other is not found to be only my dialectic interlocutor, but he can trigger a sudden reflection on the self. The meeting causes a double reaction: each raise in the other a problematization, a consciousness feverish.

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[8] About the need of the interreligious dialogue, see also the preface of Father Nicolae Achimescu, *Religii în dialog*, Editura Trinitas, Iaşi, 2006, p. 9-10, and the work of Leonard Swindler, *După Absolut. Viitorul dialogic al reflecţiei religioase*, Trad. of Codruţa Cuceu, Editura Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2002.

In other words, above the *dialectical dialogue* is *the dialogical dialogue.*[9] The latter involves the discovery of the other as being the one who speaks and acts for himself, as a you and not as another I.[10]

More than that, the theological anthropology sustains the subject of the human person, the other acts as the subject and not object, which involves a dialogical relationship between the image bearers of God, for if "the supreme conscious spirit can only have character of a subject, the consciously created spirit is the image of the uncreated Spirit. Therefore, he has the character of the subject. But a conscious subject is always in dialogue with another conscious subject or subjects."[11] Thus, the inter-personal relationship ontology related to human-dialogical image of God. And all theological anthropology is one that says that among those bearing the image of God is the natural relationship of love, the model of perfect love relationship between persons of the Holy Trinity. Only this way we can understand the Gospel precept to love your neighbour as yourself, not as another myself. This requires awareness of personal responsibilities towards his destiny. The dialogical relationship in the binomial I-you is extended by Father D. Stăniloae to a triangle relationship in trinomial I-you-he, to which he sometimes added the whole world. Here is what the Romanian theologian said:

> "How to reconcile this contradiction of my centrality and of my dependence to other centralities? How to reconcile the fact that I know everything through myself, but without you and him I know nothing for sure? The answer is in the fact that you and him are not outside me, but in a sense you and he are related to

[9] R. Panikkar, *Intra-religious Dialogue,* Paulista Press, New York, 1979, (trad. it.) R. Panikkar, *Il dialogo intrareligioso*, Editrice Cittadella, Assisi, 1988, p. 15.

[10] There is - in R. Panikkar - a clear distinction between the dialectical dialogue and the dialogical dialogue. The first is seen as an arena of struggle with arguments and counter arguments, with winners and losers in the dialectic exercise. This type of dialogue is aimed at indicating the source of who is right and wrong. Very present and fruitful in Western philosophy, the Indian philosophy even given pride of place. Unlike the dialectical dialogue, dialogical dialogue is existential. This time there is the wish not to convince but to discover himself, to penetrate more deeply into their own interiority, by knowing the mystery of the other. Its limit can be the exchange of religious beliefs, which allow even converting. This is the great risk or the great opportunity, let us think as R. Panikkar.

[11] Priest Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, Vol. I, Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucureşti, 1996, p. 259.

my inner I and together form a multiple triangle. I have a fixed angle position, but an angle that is not out of touch with the other two angles ... I know I will not fulfill myself without answering their requests and my need to communicate to myself to them"[12].

The question we will try to answer is whether this interpersonal dialogical relationship, in which I exist for the other and with the help of the other, can be extended to the macro social and macro religious levels- if we can put it this way, the affirmation of my religious addiction in close relation with the other person's religious addiction, as implied by R. Panikkar.

2.2. From the interpersonal dialogue to the interreligious dialogue

Religion is not primarily a sociological fact[13] and not one of individualism, but a constitutive dimension of man,[14] events involving both social and individual. Religion requires a dialogue expressing the human achievements, both inside and outside. "Religion requires an inner dialogue to overcome the danger of religious stagnation. Without growth there is no life. But growth is achieved from within, even if it is fed from the outside."[15] To know another religion is not an easy thing, because it can't be known only from hearsay or just reading. We need dialogue in this respect, the personal testimony of the believer, the religious man involved. But to be ready for the dialogue we need to be opened intellectually and spiritually. The dialogue between religions is not just satisfying a curiosity, and it is part of the personal pilgrimage into the mystery of the other person.[16]

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[12] See D. Stăniloae, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Volume I, Editura Cristal, Bucureşti, 1995, p. 66. See this entire chapter entitled *Raportul între eu, tu şi el şi transparenţa Sfintei Treimi prin el*.

[13] Reductionist theory that religion is reduced to society was supported by Émile Durkheim and the French sociological school founded by him. Refer to this effect Emile Durkheim, *Formele elementare ale vieţii religioase*, Trad. by Magda Jeanrenaud and Silviu Lupescu, Polirom, Iaşi, 1999.

[14] In his interpretative key St Augustin made the famous assertion: "We've made it for you and our hearts are restless until they rest in you", I cf. *Confessions*, I, according to St. Augustine, *Confessions - Confessions*, Trad. by Nicolae Barbu, Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucureşti, 1994, p. 85 and M. Eliade had a famous assertion that "the sacred is not only a stage in the evolution of consciousness, but a item structure of the conscience", one of the deepest thoughts ever made outside of supernatural revelation.

[15] R. Panikkar, *Il dialogo intrareligioso*, p. 9.

[16] Moreover, R. Panikkar sees each religion requirement to be in dialogue with itself and with all other religions, as one who not only knows his own religion knows no one,

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Considered in terms of partners' experience, the dialogue is interreligious when it takes the form of research, a discussion of the teachings, values and documents of those participating in the dialogue. The practice of this type of dialogue requires us to perceive the other in his status of faithful, of the *homo religiosus,* the other having a different identity from my own spiritual identity, which inevitably seems to threaten the dynamism of my personal testimony, it seems that it drives me away from myself.[17]

The dialogue between religions is part of the mental frameworks of modern man, who no longer designs seclusion boundaries or limits to his own denominations and even religions. We do not intend to discuss the truth of such mentality. On the other hand, he is challenged by the new socioeconomic and political realities and the extraordinary evolution of the media and all those means which facilitate communication between people belonging to different religious traditions. Father Stăniloae when explaining the expression "fullness of time" referred to the feeling of universalism existing regarding The Incarnation in history, capital event for humanity, but also refers to modern universalism seen as a sign of our times.[18]

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not even his own. Religions as living forms can not close each inside itself but has to stay in dialogue, otherwise theology turns into archeology - R. Panikkar argued. The previous observations have a certain amount of bias, because even if by comparison we find important aspects of their religion or denomination, we can not make the knowledge of their religion by engaging in interreligious dialogue. We get into such an absurd situation in which no party would invalidate his own religious expression. However, as shown in M. Eliade, any religious expression is autonomously, has its own dignity, consistency and internal logic, even if the comparison reveals Himself important aspects of their religion or denomination. See *About initiation – an interview with Mircea Eliade* - in Cristian Bădiliţă (ed.), *Eliadiana*, Polirom, Iaşi, 1997, p. 32.

[17] There were still fears of both parties of the dialogue: some Christians feared that joining this exchange of ideas will lose their Christian identity, facilitating the proliferation of religious syncretism, and non-Christians feared that interreligious dialogue is only one form camouflaged by religious colonialism. In this respect, Tarek Mitri said that interreligious dialogue "can not be so secret weapon of aggressive Christianity, but a way of living faith in Christ, together with the neighbor and serving the human community", according to Tarek Mitri, *Dialogue interreligieux*, in Ion Bria, Philippe Chanson, Jacques Tickling, Marc Spindler (Dir.), *Dictionnaire œcuménique of missiologie. Cent mots pour la mission*, Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, Labor et Fides, Genève, Les Éditions Cle, Yaoundé, 2003, p. 81-82.

[18] See D. Stăniloae, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Volume II, Editura Cristal, Bucureşti, 1995, p. 63.

"Perhaps a similar phenomenon is generally much alive today, the fast moving media to get to know people and people around the world and see that, in fact, differences which they have given a great importance in the past, and which made them feel separated, are minor to the essence of faith, required by the true reason. Man raised to a higher idea of his human being, knowing people everywhere, may not be animated by a sense of universalism. He sees more and more that brotherhood among men, higher sense of human brotherhood finds its real fulfillment of all people."

As an ecclesial reality, the interreligious dialogue is recent and is part of a broader ecumenical movement, is regarded as an appendage of the ecumenical dialogue that takes place among the various Christian denominations. There was even an attempt, in the Roman Catholic Church, to integrate the dialogue with Judaism in the scheme on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council, which wanted to show the privileged relationship it had with the Jewish religion the Christian Church.[19] But beyond the present sympathies, arising from past guilt beyond this intentional confusion, interreligious dialogue takes a different specific than ecumenical, according to the base for starting the discussions and the concrete results that can be reached.

Currently, the interreligious dialogue is an aspiration, a potential challenge, a possible hope. It is not, in itself, a technique that provides an easy solution to be found at the end of a road travelled together to the problems under discussion. Therefore, today we witness more reactions to what opposes us or to what afflicts us, the dialogue becoming thus an unavoidable consequence of a crisis.[20] But the interreligious dialogue must be prepared

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[19] See *Evoluzione dei testi conciliari sull'ecumenismo*, the Juan Carlos Dominguez, *Storia del Concilio Vaticano II*, *Dispense ad uso degli studenti*, Rome, 2000, p. 143. See also volume and documents *Tutti i documenti del Concilio*, Massimo Editrice, Milan, 2002, p. 446-447.

[20] Since the Renaissance Nicolaus of Cusa imagined inter-religious dialogue gathers several representatives of different religions, each stating their beliefs freely and explicitly seeking ways of true peace, a peace of faith. So nothing is new in this regard. Refer to the work of Nicholas of Cusa, *Pacea între religii (De pace fidei)*, Trad. Wilhelm Tauwinkl, *Despre Dumnezeul ascuns* (*De Deo absconditus*), Transl. by Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 37 -119. Now remember World Conference to promote peace, but also meetings in Assisi, see PS Antim Târgovişteanu, *First World Conference of Religions for promoting peace (Kyoto - Japan, 16 to 22 October 1970)*, în „Biserica Ortodoxă Română" 9-10 (1970), p. 959-975.

by a sustained conscious effort, by us and between us, until it becomes something natural. In this respect, Anca Manolescu ask

> "Today, especially when religion is brought into position directly in the ground to meet our globalized world, when their meeting is often used to power the hard conflicts, religious reflection has to put this problem acutely. What can be thought of, within Christianity, religious meetings? It is perhaps this meeting, by the reflection that it requires a great opportunity to discover the fundamental truths of their own traditions, to contemplate them with fresh eyes that give us newness of meeting with the other, facing the same target? It is our time, of late modernity, a great opportunity to explore religion in terms of their common target, to meet them in the infinite truth that is at their basis?"[21]

R. Panikkar believes that there is a fall in the desired dialogue, because the dialogue between religions often does not go beyond sociology and then it turns into a discussion between representatives of these religions. Thus, the dialogue becomes an intellectual exercise, which studies various doctrines, and the influences exerted upon one another over time. This is the interreligious dialogue only seen as an expression of a purely formal meeting.[22] Too seldom can we see a dialogue developed in the privacy of the person, making him to take off the mask and to appear as a *homo religiosus*, deeply involved in his own religious tradition and really opened to other knowledge.

The same Catholic theologian speaks about the strong interfaith dialogue, presenting it as a universal phenomenon of incorporation of the new religion. Christianity is seen as the fruit of the dialogue between different groups and references: Jewish layer, then the dominant Greek culture and the Roman politics.

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[21] André Scrima, *Teme ecumenice*, Trad. from the French by Anca Manolescu, Trad. in English by Irina Vainovski-Michael, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 5-6.

[22] We bring this testimony of R. Panikkar: "While we have established an intrareligios dialogue, dialogue between religions is likely to be only a step diplomatically, politically, a power initiative trying to find peace - and good - but is unable to go to the heart of the problem", see R. Panikkar, *Entre Dieu et la cosmos*, Entretiens avec Gwendoline Jarczyk, Editions Albin Michel SA, Paris, 1998, (trans. rom.) R. Panikkar, *Între Dumnezeu şi cosmos. O viziune non-dualistă a realităţii. Dialoguri cu Gwendoline Jarczyk*, Trad. de Cornelia Dumitru, Editura Herald, Bucureşti, 2006, p. 144.

> "When you begin to defend such a great genius as St. Paul - and
> when you say 'genius' you do not forget some troubling aspects
> of his doctrine – you say that Paul had a Jewish heart, a Greek
> mentality and a Roman life. Such a synthesis or symbiosis is not
> without struggle or tension of all varieties, but is fruitful."[23]

The idea of subtext is that those who oppose the present inter-and in-
trareligios dialogue are not the natural offspring of a religion which prac-
ticed this typology of meeting with each other from the beginning.

There were theologians, even Orthodox ones, who thought the key to
interreligious dialogue, scholars who have lived for such a dialogue. One
of them was Father André Scrima who was saying that he's never written
as an author who creates autonomous work, his work becomes speech only
in relation to the other, only during the dialogue. Therefore, he held out,
in detail, the circumstances in which the text was produced: request, audi-
ence, time, path text, even his way of recording. They all had the aim to at-
tract attention to a meeting model, a model for developing and "transition"
of knowledge among living people with living and common questions.[24]

If we were to establish the limits between which runs the dialogue
between religions in Panikkar's vision, then you should say that the lower
limit would be given by the beginning of the interreligious dialogue, un-
derstood as a dialogue of a meeting, the first contacts between representa-
tives of different religions, while its upper limit should be the intrareligios
dialogue, understood as a dialogue of knowledge, which leads to the onset
of a serious reflection on the truth believed and confessed by the other.
Proposed by R. Panikkar, the intrareligios dialogue typology is not yet in
current use,[25] being present in the Catholic theology, but here it is regarded
with some reservations. Therefore, the intrareligios dialogue must be sub-
ject to a rigorous criticism in terms of teaching of the Orthodox faith and
we have to express our opinion regarding the possibility of using the typol-
ogy of the meeting of religions. Anticipating the conclusions we believe
that the intrareligious dialogue may be accepted, but with great difficulties,
after deep reflection, to see what aspects of the Orthodox teaching of faith
and ethos are discussed and confirmed.

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[23] R. Panikkar, *Între Dumnezeu şi cosmos...*, p. 123.
[24] A. Scrima, *op. cit*., p. 10-11, note 1.
[25] Julien Ries, *Dialogo delle religion* in (GDDR), p. 535.

2.3. R. Panikkar about the imperatives of the interreligious dialogue

The first imperative of the interreligious dialogue, proposed by R. Panikkar, is the vital need for dialogue.

> "It is natural and inevitable - he said - the world's religions to meet one another, sometimes peaceful, but often putting into opposition and conflict. Such meetings are usually due to political and economic activities [...] religious meetings are so vital that, in fact, more or less all the major religions of today are the result of these meetings. What would be the church today without syncretism, deeply religious roots flourished in Hebrew, Greek, Roman or Germanic? What would be what we call Hinduism, without the contributions of the many religions of the Indian subcontinent?"[26]

But this vital dialogue, absolutely required, runs on three distinct levels: the personal level, the religious traditions and historical level.

Scholars involved in the interreligious dialogue talk about the absolute necessity we call into question ourselves prior to the opening of the epistemological meeting, releasing any bias that would fall, even unconsciously, our tendency to seize hold of the other. The opening mentioned above is absolutely required from Christian theologians because of their concealed superiority. The Christian world has seen, especially in recent centuries, the historical gap that subsists and deepens between Christianity and "unchristian" religions. It has always been emphasized the inferiority or underdevelopment index which separates non-Christians and Christians. Thus we are witnessing an imperceptible shift of the historical superiority of Christianity over the other by a predominance of the perception of God by Christian theology on His perception by other religions.

On the other hand, do not forget the somewhat ahistorical character of other spiritual traditions, the weak emphasis they have on the historical background compared with the Christian tradition. The non-Christian religious traditions behave "suddenly and directly to God by means of a traditional doctrinal corpus of creative experiences, recorded by personal beings, not by means of history."[27] This should not lead us to a contempt

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[26] R. Panikkar, *L'Incontro indispensable: dialogo delle Religion*, p. 21.

[27] A. Scrima, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

marked by a high goodwill towards them. R. Panikkar draws attention to this danger when speaking about the need for entering into a dialogue with others, because no one is excluded a priori. "Not only is every human being permitted to take part in this dialogue, but any ideology, any world view and every philosophy also have the right to participate. The so-called religions have no monopoly on religion".[28]

The interreligious dialogue should then be inside, because the dialogue is not only a question, it comes from a source far deeper and more inside. This spring may be called, in the author's view, silence or human thirst for truth. "Without this thirst, the dialogue remains locked in a superficial exchange of views. If the dialogue has to be something more than simple manipulation of ideas, then it must come from the deepest mystery of our being."[29]

The interreligious dialogue is linguistically because man is revealed to be *homo locquens* and words are more than just signals of our feelings or signs to express our concepts. The world is a symbolic world and the language is the main human faculty to participate in live and symbolic reality of this universe. And this imperative language is presented by R. Panikkar as a triple aspect: the dialogue is the vehicle of speech,[30] and is Dualogical,[31] bilingual linguistic pluralism given. We must give up the exaggerated claim - said R. Panikkar - use only English in the encounter between religions, a residue of the colonial behaviour.

The dialogue is not just having to do with the *logos,* means to open the *logos (dia-ton-logon)* a passage to *mythos*. This openness gives the interreligious dialogue mythological character and comes to question the unlimited faith in the Enlightenment rationale assiduously promoted. *Mythos* and

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[28] R. Panikkar, *Have Religions the Monopoly on Religion?*, in „Journal of Ecumenical Studies", 11, 3 (1974), p. 515-517.

[29] Idem, *L'Incontro indispensabile: dialogo delle religion*, p. 33.

[30] Refer to this effect R. Panikkar, *Words and Terms in Esistenza, mythical, ermeneutica,* vol. II, a cura di M.M. Olivetti, Cedam, Padova, 1980, p. 117-133.

[31] This would mean that the dialogue claims the meeting, the confrontation of two *logoi*. Therefore Dualogic does not mean two monologues, but custody of ideas, thoughts, insights, experiences of each other. It claims that the dialogue should take place from the start in both directions. He would like to understand the other platform is only half the dialogue because I myself should be understood by others and must be prepared for any misunderstandings. Hence deduce the difficulty of dialogue and all the shortcomings that may rest with them.

the *logos* are seen together and Panikkar says that interreligious dialogue is not alive if you leave out the *mythos from the Logos.*[32]

Another issue is the religious dialogue. The dialogue among religions should be in itself a religious spirit, representing a genuine religious expression. "For too long, the religion, claiming that bind *(religo)* people to the divine (infinite transcendence or mystery), have tended to neglect the links between them ... Religion has to do not only with God but with man" - says R. Panikkar.[33] The dialogue is a means to overcome solipsism and selfishness of any kind. Moreover, the interreligious dialogue is meant to purify the religious events of any deviant trend, any fanatic manifestation, knowing that institutionalized religions too often represented the most serious obstacle in the way of peace and blessed wars, some even wearing religious aspect. This openness of the dialogue belongs to the very dynamics of the religious spirit. The dialogue itself is a religious act - Catholic theologian concludes as a kind of conversion requires internal and can not be a way to win others to your point of view. By this statement, R. Panikkar enters into conflict with what the Catholic Church supports, the mission and the dialogue do not excluded each other, and their intertwining is even advisable, as we shall see below.

There are, of course, other imperatives of dialogue among religions, among which its political character, full and continuous, but we will not deal with them.[34]

2.4. Types of paradigms of the religious meetings

2.4.1. About changing the paradigm

We have been witnessing, for nearly a century, a paradigm shift in theology,[35] although in this area, the old paradigms rarely disappear, "sometimes they get a new life and are renewed, on the other hand, scholars use

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[32] See R. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, Paulista, New York, 1979, (transl. it.) R. Panikkar, *Mito, fede et ermeneutica. Il triplice velo della realtà*, Jaca Book, Milan, 2000.

[33] R. Panikkar, *L'incontro indispensabile: dialogo delle religioni*, p. 59-60.

[34] See this in R. Panikkar, *L'Incontro indispensable: dialogo delle religioni*, p. 45-51, 65-75.

[35] About changing the paradigm of religion see Caius Cuțaru, *Premisele dialogului interreligios*, în „Teologia" 1 (2005), p. 46-47.

more than one paradigm at the same time."[36] Even if they have changes in Christian theology, paradigms must be founded on the gospel. Theology must lie in a certain relation to the many social changes, but should never make any rebate of the revealed word, just following the desire to adjust to society. The paradigm,[37] Hans Küng means a pattern of interpretation and he shows that Christian theology can not be interpreted in a non-historical way or just meta-history, because a non-historical interpretation would produce a mythological theology and meta-historical interpretation would lead to philosophical theology.[38]

If I were to exemplify we would have to say that in the heart of the Christian faith lies the divine-human person of Christ the Savior. In Christ, Christian paradigm is the ultimate model, then, they will set the human person and society as a whole. The Savior's life gives us a model of authentic human existence, a standard of integrity and love, that gives some form of our own way of acting.[39] Christ reveals man God's love for him and his supernatural and eternal destiny. But Jesus can not be seen just as a human model for emulation, but as his Savior, the source of life and eternal life (cf. Jn 4, 10, 13-14). Abandoning the central paradigm of Christianity would mean abandoning the basic structure of Christian revelation. But this paradigm is bound to others, which may change according to social requirements, but each retaining its scriptural foundation. One of these paradigms is that of the dialogue between Christian denominations and between religions. There was such a mutatation from confrontation to dialogue. But for this new reality the dialogic grounds must be found in the Revelation.

Father Nicholas Achimescu shows that the objection was raised on the notion of "dialogue", which would not be found in Scripture and thus the dialogue would be deprived of the biblical authority. Although

> "the 'noun' dialogue 'not found in the Holy Scripture, however,
> friendly relations and frequent personal meetings suggested by

[36] Mariasusai Dhavamony, *Teologia delle religioni. Riflessione sistematica per una comprensione cristiana delle religioni*, Edizione San Paolo, Milan, 1997, p. 37.

[37] The paradigmatic event is also characterized by the fact that highlights significant events and produce a new orientation of thought and action. It has a wider significance. Christian paradigmatic events feature is that these events are focused on the nature of Christian faith, in that regard acquiring human salvation and Jesus Christ, the universal Savior of mankind.

[38] *Paradigm Change in Theology*, edited by Hans Kung - D. Tracy, Crossroad, New York, 1989, p. 7, u.

[39] See M. Dhavamony, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

the active verb are prominently highlighted in its pages. God's chosen people contact and other nations, relations and real obligations involved in his covenant with Noah and Abraham, kings and judges work, the book of Job, some writings of the prophets and psalms which gives people back to God, all these are far from the forms of a monologue".[40]

And in the New Testament, where we depict how the Saviour come into contact with people, the dialogue seems to be contrary to the spirit in which He speaks to Nicodemus, to the Samaritan woman, to the centurion and to his own disciples.[41] The Act of the Incarnation of the Son of God is the highest, but the most intimate form of dialogue of God with humanity.

In fact, the dialogue covers very different realities, such as conflict of affirming truth, comparing religious systems, spiritual convergence to communion of believers, called to get rich traditions complement each other or near missionary to convert partners.[42]

Christian understanding of world religions in a pluralistic society has created several paradigms that contain enough insights, but are evaluated in light of valid theological grounds. These are inclusivism paradigm, the exclusiveness and religious pluralism, in which R. Panikkar adds two paradigms: the parallelism and interpenetration, which we'll refer later on.[43]

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[40] N. Achimescu, *Atitudini mai noi ale Consiliului Ecumenic al Bisericilor față de religiile necreștine*, in "Theological Studies" 4 (1991), p. 84.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 84-85.

[42] W.A. Vissert'Hooft, *Nouvelle Delhi* in 1961, C.O.E. Neuchâtel, 1962, p. 81 said: "Dialogue is an effective form of evangelism nowadays" and documents the Second Vatican Council see no incompatibility between dialogue and non-Catholic missionary community applied. They go together. In fact, Catholicism always says doubling the path of dialogue with the missionary, not rejecting each other in the eyes of the Church. See to the documents of the Magisterium of the Catholic or of the International Theological Commission, such as: Pontificio consilio per il dialogo interreligioso. Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei popoli, *Dialogo e annuncio. Riflessioni e orientameti sul dialogo interreligioso e l'annuncio del Vangelo di Gesù Cristo*, Edizioni Dehoniane Pontificio consilio per il dialogo interreligioso, Edizione Dehoniane Bologna, Bologna, 1991, p. 5-45; Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, *Dominus Iesus. Dichiarazione circa l'unicità e l'universalità salvifca di Gesù Cristo e della Chiesa*, Paoline Editoriali Libri, Milano, 2000, p. 38-45; Comissione Teologica Internazionale, *Il cristianesimo e le religioni*, Paoline Editoriali Libri, Milano, 1997, p. 15-18, 58-67.

[43] An extensive overview of all these paradigms see Iulian MISARIU, *Religiile, căi de mântuire sau expresii ale omului religios*, în "Studii franciscane" 1 (2002), p. 49-95. Refer also Anca Manolache, *Europa și întâlnirea religiilor. Despre pluralismul religios contemporan*, Polirom, Iași, 2005, p. 19-25.

2.4.2. Inclusivism paradigm

The inclusive paradigm has several aspects, including the fulfillment theory illustrated by Catholic theologians such as Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Jean Danielou and the theory of the mystery of Christ's presence in religious traditions, speaking on this, and Karl Rahner, and normative model: Christ over religion, supported by a number of theologians who do not share anonymous Christians theory proposal.[44]

According to this paradigm, Christians claim for Christ the Savior in a unique position and argue that Christianity is only one religion, but a religion in an absolute sense, a true religion for all. This uniqueness can be understood in the inclusive sense, meaning that everything is good in other religions may be included in the transfigured Christ and Christianity. The inclusive position is supported by the Roman Catholic Church.[45]

The scriptural basis of this paradigm is the prologue to the Gospel of John, where Christ is identified with the eternal Logos (the Word of God), that enlightens every man that cometh into the world. According to this position, every time God speaks, has spoken or will speak to mankind through the great religious leaders (Moses, Buddha, Muhammad, Jesus, etc.) integrates them all. The claim of uniqueness for uniqueness of Christ for a total inclusion, not exclusion. In this sense, Christ that died, was risen and glorified in the Father is called in the New Testament, Lord of the universe, the cosmic Christ. To claim that the Word became flesh in Christ means that Jesus expressed in a human person, in everything God may speak in this world. Jesus is God's last word in this world.[46]

The Orthodox theologian André Scrima supports, as well, this inclusive vision. When we are asked how we can approach the truth of Christ's uniqueness, we can answer that this concept seems to be uniquely reduced to the concept of exclusion of others. If Christ is the one whose secret is that he came from the Father and returns to Him, being always maintaining an open condition for receiving the whole creation (Revelation 5, 6), it is indisputable that he conducted the man and the world horizon of inclusion, not rejection. Relying on the truth of Christ himself an exclusion of the members of other religions would be so contradictory.[47] Christ the Savior

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[44] I. Misariu, *art. cit.*, p. 70.
[45] M. Dhavamony, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[47] A. Scrima, *op. cit.*, p. 81-82.

does not reject anyone. The question: "am I right – in my faith or my understanding" to define him, and having imprisoned within my own understanding, to possess him, to design in him the smallness of things coming from a world which he cam to "open", not to shut? The theologians of this vision say that those who regard Christianity as a religion of exclusion are not in Christ's spirit.

2.4.3. Paradigm of exclusion

The exclusive tendency has also several issues, including: historical perspective of gender: all religions are relative (represented by Ernst Troeltsch), exclusivism gospel which says that "one religion is true" (represented by Karl Barth) and exclusiveness modified, that "Salvation is in Christ" (supporters: P. Althaus, E. Bruner).[48] In this perspective, only Christianity is true, all other religions are false. Protestant theology supports this vision, which is called dialectic because it is the support of the dialectical theology. Theologian Emil Bruner said that while the primitive religions, polytheistic and mystery do not claim any claim of revelation which have universal validity, such claim is advanced by three major religions, but only the Christian claim is objective, Zoroastrianism and Islam being reduced to a moralist-rationalist theism without the mystery of salvation, and Judaism awaiting for the Messiah can not support a final revelation, or reduce it to the same type of theism. He claims that other religions are the product of religion planted in creative and original sin.[49] Another scholar, Heundrik Kraemer, proposed the same vision. Referring to what is defined as "biblical realism", he says that the self-revelation of God in Christ is an event absolutely sui generis. Karl Barth in the first volume of his Dogmatics distinguishes between Christian faith, which is based on the revelation of God in Christ, and any other religion that is a vain attempt by man to reach an ultimate truth. This search is doomed to failure, because God is totally a different Other.[50]

The paradigm of exclusivity, which would mean denial of the other, by closing in yourself to protect yourself, is a disguised aggression. All this is provincialism, apprehension (a vague fear), fear and lead to deforma-

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[48] This division can be found in I. Misariu, *art. cit.*, p. 53-60.
[49] Emil Bruner, *Revelation and Reason*, SCM Press, London, 1947, p 200, cf. M. Dhavamony, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
[50] M. Dhavamony, *op. cit.*, p. 42-43.

tions of the living God in man. But opening statements are not sufficient to fulfill the image of God.[51] It is not sufficient to claim that all religions are equal. The resulting interrogation requires much more demanding.

R. Panikkar feels that when we refer to the official Church, whether Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant, the claim of exclusivity of the revealed truth remains, but that is changing, but not the same thing is true for the ordinary faithful.

> "But if we consider the attitude of many Christians, especially of faithful Catholics, things are different. In fact, I know many theologians (Catholic, perhaps, note) that now take the position that you described it [...] I, therefore, believe that in the last thirty or forty years, there have been giant changes in terms of theology and even the official Church (Roman Catholic Church, nn)"[52]

2.4.4. Raimundo Panikkar and the paradigm of the religious pluralism

This paradigm involves a near relativistic perspective. The pluralist paradigm, as well, has several directions, since this is a relational pluralism or convergent (supported by R. Panikkar), about a relativistic pluralism type: more direct routes to the center (supported by J. Hick) and a plurality units (supported by P. Knitter).[53] In practical terms we are in the presence of a cultural relativism, epistemological and theological. According to the cultural relativism any religion is an appropriate expression of its own culture. Thus, Christianity is the religion of the West, Hinduism is the religion of India, and Buddhism can be seen as a religion of Southeast Asia. Religion is just an effect of culture. Then, there is an epistemological relativism according to which we can not know the absolute truth, but only what is true for us. This kind of relativism has its outlet in syncretism, which is trying to put together different religions in order to bring them to a common denominator. The theological relativism understands that all religions are different paths that lead to the same goal. Thus, the chosen path is only a matter of personal choice.[54] Among the supporters of the theologi-

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[51] A. Scrima, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[52] See R. Panikkar, *Între Dumnezeu şi cosmos ...*, p. 130.
[53] See I. Misariu, *art. cit.*, p. 74-84.
[54] M. Dhavamony, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

cal relativism is R. Panikkar, too. About specific of living in a pluralistic world, the Catholic theologian says the following:

> "Pluralism is today an existential human problem, which raises acute interrogations on how to live our lives in the midst of so many options. Pluralism is not only the old problem of the one and the many, but has become a common dilemma, generated by the meeting of the world concepts and philosophy, incompatible with each other."[55]

Pluralist perspective, the interpretation of other religions shows that they each contain the essence of religion in various degrees of imperfection and partial realization, while Christianity is the full manifestation of the essence. John Hick is one of the advocates of pluralist paradigm. He develops the idea of "revolution Copernican" the theology of religions and is a paradigm shift from a hristocentric model (having Christianity center) to a model of the universe Theo centric beliefs. World religions are, for him, different human responses to a single divine reality. According to these theologians, the Christian religion to seek genuine dialogue with other religious traditions should give up the claim of uniqueness of the person and saving work of Jesus Christ, He was among the great founders of religion.[56]

In R. Panikkar we can see an evolution (in fact involution, becoming more pluralistic) of its pluralist conception.[57] pluralistic theological position can be identified in R. Panikkar since Il Cristo sconosciuto dell'Induismo work, arguing that Christ is present not only in personal and subjective sincere Hindus, but saw Hinduism as religious and social phenomenon "Christ does not belong to Christianity, but belongs to God alone. Christianity and Hinduism are those who belong to Christ, though in different ways."[58] However, some can find a hidden superiority of Christianity in relation to Hinduism. But the subsequent writings[59] reveals a

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[55] R. Panikkar, *The Myth of pluralism: The Tower of Babel*, in "Cross Currents" 29 (1979), p. 210.

[56] See in this regard Jacques Dupuis, *Gesù Cristo incontro alle religioni*, Cittadela Editrice, Assisi, 1982, p. 143.

[57] On exposure to these developments in detail, see J. Dupuis, *Il cristianesimo e le religioni. Dallo scontro all'incontro*, Editrice Queriniana, Brescia, 2001.

[58] R. Panikkar, *Il Cristo sconosciuto dell'Induismo*, p. 59.

[59] It is reviewed and developed the paper edition *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism. Toward an Ecumenical Christophany*, Longman, Darton and Todd, London, 1981, and in works such as *Il dialogo intrareligioso of 1988, Salvation in Christ. Concretenees and Universality: The Supername*, Santa Barbara, California, 1972.

real shift in meaning deepening a pluralistic vision, in which Christianity is equated with any religion. R. Panikkar argued now that is absolutely necessary to a reassessment of the traditional concept of the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ from the distinction between a universal Christ - Jesus manifestation of the Logos and particular, not be identified with Christ, the reality of Christ Logos is much larger than the event Jesus of Nazareth.[60]

> "First is the definitive symbol of 'mystery' - or transcendent principle of the various religious experience - which engages the whole reality, second, is just one manifestation of this mystery, as founders of religions are but partial manifestations ... think of Jesus of Nazareth as the perfect manifestation of Christ universal, is to worship a particular history. Christ takes the contrary, many other names like Rama, Krishna, Ishvara etc."[61]

Continuing in the same note the distinction between Christ and Jesus, in his Il dialogo intreligioso, R. Panikkar introduces the distinction between belief (federal - in Italian) seen as a fundamental religious experience of the human person, being a constituent part of it and has Mystery and faith as content (credenza - in Italian), viewed as a particularization of that faith which has as content constitutive various myths, such as Jesus and other myths from other religious traditions.[62]

Of course that this vision can be shared by the Orthodox theology, which makes no distinction between Christ as the eternal Logos and the historical Jesus, but two appointments overlap perfectly. Without insisting on the rejection of the thesis, which shocks all Christian theology, we confine ourselves to saying that Jesus Christ is the Son of God made flesh and He is given the whole fullness of deity, so there is no other customization of the divine Logos, another human being in which to incarnate.

All these types of pluralist paradigm, which stands between pluralism and pluralism while specializations, merely to obscure the specificity of Christianity as the only religion revealed.

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[60] R. Panikkar, *La Trinidad y la experiencia religiosa*, Obelisco, Barcelona, 1989, (trad. it.) R. PANIKKAR, *Trinità ed esperienza religiosa dell'uomo*, Cittadella Editrice, Assisi, 1988, p. 87-88.

[61] I. Misariu, *art. cit.*, p. 76.

[62] See in this respect R. Panikkar, *Il dialogo intreligioso*, p. 59-94.

3. The intrareligios dialogue as spiritual experience

3.1. The specific of the intrareligios dialogue

The intrareligios dialogue is seen as a religious act in itself, an inner opening that goes beyond mere discussion. This means maximum opening dialogue, so that it becomes possible to convert. It also implies, putting in question their own religious identity so you can approach each other.

Specific dialogue on the meaning of life is under interrogation experiences crystallized in different religious traditions which have been treated more or less than the actual person. This inner dialogue often leaves man in solitude that can be purifying or destructive. R. Panikkar said that "true encounter between religions is itself religious. It made the heart of the human person seeking his own way. In such cases the dialogue is intrareligios, otherwise it becomes a religious act in itself, a search of saving truth."[63]

The Catholic theologian believes that all people are called to engage in such an action, and not all are capable of this. Beyond a particular mental form, this act can assume a particular character trait and cultural provision allowing a person to undergo such an experience without being contaminated by exotic or exhibitionism. On the other hand, one can not predict what will result from such a meeting. The one who participates in it must be prepared to put in action the whole truth of faith, and could even reach a conversion, the more dramatic as permanently lose beliefs and beliefs can be taken or they may suffer profound changes.

If we refer to a religious criterion, the interreligious dialogue is situated on an inferior level, compared to the intrareligios dialogue, because the latter involves a religious experience and not simply a scientific, rigorous and objective as would be the latter. Religious meetings, which means making the religious crisis of conscience and therefore need the option (if I had to resort to the Greek etymology of the word crisis), becomes a religious act in itself, a search for truth.[64] Pierre-François Bérthune shows that "today we are called to move from one type of meeting, reluctant and

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[63] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[64] In this context R. Panikkar said that "If you find me skeptical, doubting, Muslim and many other facts, are unable to enter into dialogue with others. Because then there would be a dialogue - *dia ton logon* - for that logos should be crossed from side to side ... ", see R. Panikkar, *Between God and the cosmos ...*, p. 139.

focused ourselves to another kind, humble, respectful and intended recipient. But this development is a true and own conversion."[65] This type of dialogue is involved not only on the heights, towards transcendent reality, or back to the original tradition, but also horizontally, the world of other people, and they are leading the way towards human destiny (identify this vision plural).

Intrareligios dialogue makes no noise. It takes place in privacy, being an open and deeply human consciousness not closed in his selfishness. Adepts of the dialogue of this kind prove to be opened to reveal their religion to other religions. This religion becomes a personal religious issue, because the participant does not remain focused on his own, but opens the true human communication.

The dialogue is deep because it is only in dialogue with its spiritual tradition, or others seen as others but with himself that he absorbed in his own way, a conception of reality obtained from different sources. When the contact with others is superficial – implies R. Panikkar – it is easy to show tolerance and even sympathy, but no question of personal truth. Too often hides behind a respectful attitude contemptuous indifference.

The intrareligios dialogue is seen as an inner dialogue by R. Panikkar, they struggle with the angel, with Daimon and with himself. He does not appear as monologue or as soliloquy with God, even as a simple meditation on faith over another party or religion. No confusion or to study a different conception, study prompted by curiosity and sympathy.

> "In this dialogue - says Panikkar - man is in search of salvation, but agrees to learn from each other, not only of their clan (within the meaning of religious tradition, n.n.) [...] intrareligios dialogue is, by nature, an act of assimilation, which I would call the Eucharist. He tries to assimilate our own transcendence in immanence."[66]

The dialogue does not come with ideas intrareligios already made, the mental construction that resists because it believes that they cause a fight between *logoi* which discusses deaf or faces. Therefore, in a true dialogue "must take into account factors related to the reality of personal, individual, existential, temporal and political ... *Dia-logos* is not an exercise in pure logic."[67]

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[65] R. Panikkar, *L'Incontro indispensable ...*, p. 12.
[66] Idem*, Il dialogo intrareligioso*, p. 18.
[67] Idem, *Între Dumnezeu şi cosmos ...*, p. 139.

Philosophical anthropology is seen as a broader dialogue that can be classified intrareligios because it appeals to the very constitution of man, which is seen as a knot of relations, a person and not an isolated individual, an atom unconscious. The other is an *alius*, another node in the net of relations, another person and not an *aliud,* which is another thing, another human atom without any relationship with those around him. Man is an open association, not only because it can be penetrated by the universe, but because he can impregnate the whole reality. And in this context is seen as a microcosm of man.

The intrareligios dialogue, helping us to discover the other in ourselves, contributes to achieve personal and mutual fertilization between religious traditions of humanity, which can not live in a state of isolation, separated by walls of mutual distrust, or state of conflict, more or less hidden.[68]

3.2. The stages of the intrareligios dialogue

A first step in the dialogue is the need for mutual intrareligios understanding. This implies, in turn, to speak the same language, otherwise, expressing the same idea with different words the risk of reaching a different understanding. But the language to express the same concepts we need a fundamental principle, which lies beyond the linguistic context.

The stage which follows concerns the need for understanding the other's position and there is a difficulty here because the other can never be understood as he understands himself (and it is only a matter of self-understanding), only if I share his own religious persuasion, only if I consider true to some extent. Panikkar says that it is contradictory to think I understand the concept that while other consider it false. Understanding is achieved only under *ratione veritatis*, for if I consider it false, then, surely, I do not use the same point of view as the person who considers it true.

The conclusion that can be released from this is that true religious commitment begins when two concepts confront themselves inside one person, it causes a reflection of an authentic religious dialogue and even a religious crisis, and the interpersonal dialogue becomes intrapersonal monologue.[69] An example may be an attempt to harmonize two totally

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[68] Idem, *Il dialogo intrareligioso*, p. 21.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

different religious teachings, such as that supreme manifestation of God, which leads to salvation and is achieved through faith in Krishna or Christ as Savior only mediator between God and men, came into the world "for us men and for our salvation." In this context, the dialogue is not a mere academic opportunity, as an intellectual yoke, as a simple methodological approach, but as a matter of prime importance as a religious act. For only the recognition of the other's faithfulness can arise true love - says Panikkar. We note, in this case, the lack of the love of the neighbor, the love that we are proposed is based only on the important considerations that we have for the true value of teaching others.

But drawing near the other does not stop there, but is still a spiritual adventure that requires real effort, to understand the profound and selfless religious specifics of the man inside. Henceforth the known spiritual tradition will become possible, will become the own spiritual faith tradition, the archetypes, the culture, the myth and the conceptual foundations of the other. In short, it is a serious attempt:

> "The existential incarnation of himself in another environment, which involves prayer, initiation, study and worship? He does not do this in a spirit of experimentation, but rather from one of faith, faith in a truth that transcends us and a goodness that sustains us when we sincerely love our neighbor."[70]

Reviewing, we see how we pass from the need to move to the verbal understanding of conceptual correspondence to practice the true religion of the interlocutor of the interreligious dialogue. We are witnessing a process of introspection, which has its starting point in the dialogue with each other outside, to make a dramatic confrontation inside and even a cultic practice, which is unacceptable for a Christian.

R. Panikkar proposes his own model. We do not know how to reconcile the inner Christian Hindu tradition, but his own approach can be easily explained by the membership of both worlds, without thereby constitutes itself as a role model.

4. Critical view over R. Panikkar's vision

The intrareligios dialogue seen as an itinerary in search of truth, together with the other can not succeed in the Orthodox view as to the Christian

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[70] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

truth is a person - Jesus Christ (cf. John 14, 6) and not a concept. If there is a search for inner truth, to rediscover Christ dwelt in us at Baptism and was employed by the other Sacraments of the Church. Sentence that starts our itinerary is an Augustinian spiritual "Did not you have looked if I would have found." Our search is not carried out as if we possess the truth and I hope in finding it in a different spiritual tradition or on the road together.

R. Panikkar proves to be a theologian of religious pluralism, because, for him, that there are many religions that claim to be holders of absolute truth and they individually cast doubt on the possibility of communion with absolute truth. Here's what he said it: "There are still question whether you can have access to all religious truth since the neighbor seems to have different beliefs as radical as mine."[71] The Orthodox Christian can not hold with such a religious pluralist conception that truth is relative, is fragmented into many truths, the truth or the truth for each individual.

The same key must be understood and pluralistic claim that is not enough to believe that we can find in their religious tradition all you need in terms of religious and that would be enough just to know it deeper. If we understand this way the question of religious search, we may fall into the net of relativisation of any religious traditions, including Christianity, and in this case, the question is: how can we articulate the doctrine of salvation through Christ? Or salvation is attained only by religious syncretism, or intrareligious following dialogue?

Travelling in search of truth is proper for the human being living before Christ. But after the moment of the Incarnation there came the "the fullness of time" (cf. Galatians 4, 4-5), unique moment in the religious history of mankind, to seek truth and giving up, traveling the way to Him is nonsense. R, Panikkar's vision could have a certain amount of truth and truth where Christ would incarnate successively in other important religious figures in history, which is supported by R. Panikkar, with the mention that the doctrine of the Avatar is not a Christian one.

The intrareligios dialogue involves internal reflection indeed that is raised in the Christian speaker by the meeting with the other testimony which is brought to him. That reflection is ultimately natural, caused by the participation in a dialogue with a person that can never be deprived of the status of object, but always remains a topic of a dynamic dialogue. However, the testimony of the other party's soul can produce some problem-

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[71] *Ibid*., p. 18.

solving, some questions raised by the mystery of the other person, the truth of faith professed by him, the depth of his religious experience. But we can not agree that R. Panikkar supports relativism openly when referring to religious truth supported by the other person:

> "This (the fact that the other is a subject and not an object, note) involves our individual consciousness limits, so a certain relativization of our personal opinions [...] In all human consciousness appears as a relatively [...] No religious environment not avoid this relativity. In today's global context can not speak clearly because it is not shared the same myth. Religious conception of the world is one with another in the life of the city."[72]

However, these we can not agree with these statements because even if the post-modern society we live no longer say there is a single truth - Christ, but many truths and every truth in Christianity there is only one truth, truth-Person. On the other hand, we disagree with any suggestion that the current situation, where everything is relative, we can believe in something which can be absolute. Man, as a limited person, has always felt that being limited needed to anchor in a transcendent reality, in an absolute one, founded by himself.

Christian participation in the dialogue is both witness and mission of evangelization, witness of Christ to others who do not know him. Direct relationship between interreligious dialogue and evangelization mission of the Church is expressed very well in the Catholic documents relating to any type of dialogue with others. Supporting the intrareligios dialogue, Panikkar rejects any form of Christian missionary, the proclamation of the Gospel, the learning of all peoples, as the Savior taught: "Wherefore, going, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and here I am with you always, until the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28, 19-20). It gives a new meaning to the exhortation of the Savior, arguing that the meaning of the text is to serve and to love their brothers and they are neither loved nor served if the person has to do things their way require the other to be served. However, the biblical exegesis of any entirely different Christian denominations understand these verses, connecting them with others, such as Mark

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[72] *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

16, 15-16: "And he said, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Lack of self-sufficiency, of sincerity, sharing the suffering of others think they are positive aspects intrareligios dialogue that must concern us all and these goals should fully adhere.

5. Conclusions

The challenge of the idea of what I believe and profess to approach the other witnesses who think differently is very generous, but has not lots of success, because I can never get completely rid of the truth that we live.

In the view of R. Panikkar, the intrareligios dialogue appears as a purely religious act. It implies full personal freedom (inner), search and apprehension of a truth which exceeds the travelers. It involves mutual trust in a higher reality which is in ourselves, but while standing in front of us and guides us. The intrareligios dialogue limit is given by transforming into something else, the adoption of other religious traditions, to embrace their religion by another. Always, however, the result of this type of meeting is qualified as a Catholic theologian "mutual fertilization".

The intrareligios dialogue aims to convert, but it is not obstinately sought, revealing the truth is that an increase in the other, a deep conviction of the other mystery. In doing so imposed shall not be made mandatory truth dialectically, as is perhaps in interreligious dialogue, seen more as a dialogue of conflicting opinions, which we are witnessing a triumph of dialectics. Dialogue always aspiring R. Panikkar is the dialogue.

The quality of the religious act which may take a dialogue between world religions assess positively, because it runs between religious people. We believe that the religious phenomena must be treated in terms of religious, spiritual experiences as sui generis, but regarding their contents, we manifest some reservations.

We believe that the intrareligios dialogue, with its full fairness and objectivity, may be a unifying factor of all, but I see Christ as the center of unity. Universal and unifying Love of Christ rejects no differences between people, but each involves developing the universal, that is in communion with all others. By his divine love, Christ promoted each man to

the maximum level to which humanity can reach, or to the state of God by grace, but in union with all others, that it wants included in himself. Father Stăniloae called this reality or universalism, universalistic personalism.

The intrareligious dialogue is seen by R. Panikkar as a purpose and fulfillment of the interreligious dialogue, but it is only possible if we adopt the pluralistic reading key of the religious phenomenon, proposed by the Catholic theologian.

BOOK REVIEWS

Teofan Mada, *Evanghelia în versiunea Hollywood. Iisus în cinema***, „Vremi", Cluj Napoca, 2010, 240 p.**

The Very Reverend Father Dr. Teofan Mada's book was published at the young but already (well) known publishing house "Vremi" from Cluj Napoca, which is managed with great dedication and devotion by the young theologian Vasile Tomoiagă. This study, like all the other (twelve in number), is the result and fruit of many years of research and deep theology study, which the author has taken in various higher education institutions abroad: Jerusalem, Mirfield, Leeds, Durham, Regensburg and especially Thessaloniki - Greece.

According to the allegations of several scholars who know and appreciate the author, Father Teofan is a contemporary theologian with a tireless work capacity and a rich activity - studies and service too. He is a worthy clergyman of the Romanian Church Orthodox, who stands for the Church and Theology, and provides solutions to the contemporary social issues and contemporary thinking requirements, without compromises and deviations from the faith, piety and Orthodox tradition, knowing that the Church is "yesterday, today and forever the same ". The Very Reverend Father Teofan proves to be a worthy clergyman by his life and presence, with recognition of his merit in researching and dedication to the service, by the written or oral word, by his vocation to deepen the studies and in general, by his formation. He also provides a rich testimony of Jesus Christ, thus being an example and imitation, especially for young people and servants of our altars.

In other words, the book "Evanghelia în versiunea Hollywood. Iisus în cinema" („The Gospel according to Hollywood. Jesus in the Movie") by Father Dr. Teofan Mada is a must for the personal library of a scholar interested in audiovisual, and of a moviegoer too. The book was published by the publishing house „Vremi" from Cluj in 2010, and was supported by the Monastery Crasna – Prahova, but it had not a proper promotion, although richly deserves it. Prodigious author of theological literature dedicated to

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the Holy Fathers of the golden age and current problems of Christian ethics and psychology, Father Dr. Teofan Mada surprisingly addresses a domain usually accredited as one of the most profane and rebel culture areas: the movie. Considered dangerous for ascetic and contemplative life, and not in vain, the movie may be ground of religious meditation, and theater for development of various Bible, scriptural and hagiographic scenarios. This is Father Teofan Mada research area and the way of approaching the chosen subject - Jesus' image in the movie - is exemplary for its reliability, accuracy of documentation, the academic discourse and, not least by the eloquence and elegance of writing.

The naïve-sentimental approaches that totally ignore the phenomenon of cinema possibly centered on a single film and enthusiastically expanded to a volume level that we can find sometimes in the local Orthodox literature are far from The Very Reverend Father Teofan Mada. And also it is far from him the juvenile-iconoclastic subjectivism of a young monk cinephile who wants to prove his wit and „actuality thinking" by taking the fight with the latest film blockbusters, and finding didactic accounts of Christian morality, but also slipping dangerously the banana peels of subliminal textures. What is the historical, human and spiritual veracity of the scriptural and biblical episodes made a screenplay? What is the angle of the director's interpretation of the Gospel message? What are the narrative threads and characters cut from the biblical text and what is the declared or undeclared, goal of this choice? From the record film production notes to the interpretative issue and other movie language elements, that are sensitively captured and smartly exposed, and to the psychological and spiritual message of the movie, objectively justified on grounds of psychology and to the reaction to press, the author follows step by step the soteriological efficiency of interpretation of the Gospel message by the seventh Art.

His speech is thrilling and surpassing boring famous tomes of Universal movie history, by the objectivity of demonstration and the science of argumentation. The author's freedom of movement in an extremely vast and inaccessible filmography and bibliography for the Romanian public is amazing. The information, collected from various sources, does not enslave him but instead gives him intellectual creativity. The generosity with which the erudite theologian becomes a spectator (a sensitive and informed one), and watches dozens of rare films, in order to present them to the reader and to notice some detail, escaped from the attention of chroniclers,

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can outrun a lot of historians and chroniclers of cinema in Romania or elsewhere.

The bibliography list at the end of the book, composed mainly from most relevant Western studies (of „religious film" history, or „religion in cinema", filmmakers monographs, major specialist periodicals, general philosophy and anthropology), shows a seriousness rare in the show-biz, even at scholars.

Lucid, subtle and without pathos, without religious or ideological fundamentalisms and punch set theses (unlike Western filmology often imbued with Marxism, freudism or other political-correct ideologies of the present) Father Teofan Mada knows to preserve the Orthodox religious spirit barely visible in the subtext of the writing, making him transpire - always in style - and show effectiveness only when needed.

I have seldom met an Orthodox theologian with so much sensitivity and understanding of the artistic phenomenon, and also so much knowledge and assimilation of art analysis terminology, presented in modern, flexible and inconspicuous speech, captivating by the beauty of intellectual demonstration, but free, elevated, but natural and without grandiloquence. Creatively synthesizing an impressive and very diverse Western literature – of Catholic, (neo) Protestant and (crypto) Marxist origins - Father Teofan exceeds it by the scale of comparative analysis and penetration capacity specific to the orthodox aesthetic model.

Therefore, anyone who wants to know and understand the phenomenon of evangelical screenings (and dare I not only think about the Romanian readers ...) should start with Father Teofan Mada's book (according to Mrs. Elena Dulgheru asserts, made with great competence on this book in the daily paper „Lumina" of the Romanian Patriarchate, dated January 14, 2012 http://www.ziarullumina.ro/articole;1838;1;67893;0;Evanghelia-in-versiunea-Hollywood.html).

So, this volume sits in front of the contemporary religious-moral and spiritual realities never met before. We are witness, sometimes weak, sometimes ignorant and indifferent, to our desacralization, secularization, our conscious compromising and dehumanization that take place through various methods, tools and means. The author detects and notifies them to all of us, in order to combat these spiritual contagious diseases, and to heal all our bodily and spiritual diseases which dwell in our very destabilized and upset physically and spiritually lives, and bring us to unhappiness.

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After this very eloquent observation, we claim that "as to this book competence, there is a fact that emerges out, in form and substance, from the whole theological approach that the author supports with force and conviction. The timeliness and competence thoroughly presented in this book are joined by originality. In fact, there is a certain originality revealed in the discernment which selects the suitable data and ideas from the wealth of information that form and compos an impressive bibliography. This creative process mark that is stated directly succeeds to render us the correct reflection of our contemporary Christian life drama, in its specific social, which actually reveals the sin, aggression, violence, hypocrisy and imposture in all seriousness of their aggression." What provokes our interest in this book is the participation at "the one and the same kingdom of God, which the author shows us in its many instances and manifestations."

Therefore, being "judiciously conceived, written with impressive inner dialectic, imbued with theological and philosophical thinking of accents, illuminated by a suitable style, Father Teofan Mada's book has the merit to seriously approach a very complex issue. The horizons this book opens are not the only important thing, but its courage to seek such problems and put them together is impressive."

Finally, we support the Church's missionary approach (claimed and raised by Father Teofan Mada as the unique and ultimate solution that can cure, restore and save us, her sons of this time) that must include the notion the Church is not only the community with numerous or very numerous members, but the small churches too, where dwells the spiritual testimony on our authentic living in Jesus Christ. "Thus understood, the mission is not represented by a grand project, like an octopus, which includes everything in itself – this is only desired to give unity of system and action plan - but the intervention in micro level, the fulfillment of the mission of souls pastor and follower of the Saviour, as any baptized Christian is, not only the clergy and not only those with certain responsibilities in the Church." So, here we see that Orthodoxy is a very fine and noble form of Christianity (un-secularised and uncompromised in its intrinsic content and background), that few of the present time know, appreciate and enjoy its depths from the very beginning, for which we pray God - exalted one in Trinity, to help us and enlighten our minds and our consciences, covered by the shadow of sin and death!

Ph.D. Stelian Gomboş

Alexander Schmemann, *Mother of God*, translated by Cesar Login, Patmos Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, 117 p.

In late 2010, the Patmos Publishing House of Cluj-Napoca, in the translation of the young, but promising, theologian Login Caesar, publishes a work less known but no less valuable of the well-known theologian and liturgist Alexander Schmemann.

The paper is structured in five parts, distinct from each other by their contents, but referring to the one and same mysterious reality, namely, the image of the Mother of God in theology and in the life of the Church. Although the content is not unitary, this volume brings together studies of Mariology edited by Father Professor Alexander Schmemann, in separate times and circumstances the unity of the volume is given by the coalition of all topics treated in it around the same truth of faith of the Church, namely Mariology.

The foreword of this volume is signed by Paul Mayendorff also a known theologian and liturgist, who now conduct his scientific activities at the Orthodox Theological Seminary "St. Vladimir" in Crestwood, New York. In the introduction to the volume presented to us, Professor Mayendorff shows that it includes a series of sermons and lectures of Father Schmemann Alexander on a subject very dear to him, the Virgin Mary. The author of the introduction also shows that "... for a more developed Mariology, we must study the Eastern liturgical tradition, the writings of the Eastern hymnographers, based both on Scripture and early Christian apocryphal books, as well as a rich theological tradition...". In this regard "...Father Schmemann uses all these sources in order to explain the Mariology to the believers of our days" (p. 7). Professor Paul Mayendorff also shows that in its first part this volume brings together a series of sermons of Father Schmemann, spoken on Radio Liberty in Russian and translated for the first time now, and in the second half of his book is addressed to the Western believers in a series of academic lectures of the same Father,

first published in *Marian Studies* and *The University of Dayton Review* magazines (p. 7-8).

Part I of the book, entitled *Mother of God*, includes the sermons spoken on radio by Father Alexander, sermons addressed mainly to the formal Soviet Union listeners, unfamiliar with the Church. In *The Introduction* of the first part of this volume the author shows that today "many people, even those who declared themselves «interested» in religion and who came from atheism to faith, are questioning the purpose of honoring the Mother of Jesus Christ" (p . 12). Therefore, Father Schmemann shows that "it is necessary to try to explain the meaning, the content and the authentic orientation of the old and ceaseless honor by the Church of what she said about herself: "for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1, 48) (p. 12). In another chapter of this first part the author seeks an answer to the question *Why do We Venerate the Virgin Mary?* Father states that because "The New Testament tells us very little about Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ ...the argument of Protestants in the sixteenth century, was «your Church celebrates the Nativity of the Theotokos, The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, or the Assumption. But none of these events are mentioned in the Scriptures, the Bible, the New Testament and thus all these holidays are human inventions that have tarnished the original purity and simplicity of the Christian teaching» (p. 14-15). The Church is put in a position to respond to such challenges, and the relevant answer of Fr. Schmemann for these facts, is: "Instead of counting how many times is Jesus' mother mentioned in a text or another we could address the question in a different way, using the "inner" method ... Can our love for Christ be so barren - Father wonders - that they do not feel anything for what happened when she gave birth to Him, do not feel nothing for the one whose purpose in life was to be His Mother?". Thus, "the whole honoring brought by us to the Virgin, all our love for her, all our knowledge of her are gifts that come only through our personal experience, as the fruit of love" (p. 16-17). Another chapter of Part I of the book is a brief presentation about the *Ever Virgin*, specifying in short words the mystery of the Virgin. In Chapter 3, entitled suggestively The Face of the Woman, he stresses that "the image of the Virgin shows, first of all, the face of a woman. Christ's first gift given to us, the deepest revelation of His teaching and calling it is given to us in the face of a woman" (p. 24). This fact may be essential, especially for our world which, appreciate Father

Alexander, "became wholly ... masculine, governed by pride and aggression, where all is reduced to power and its weapons, the production and its instruments, to violence, the refusal to voluntarily withdraw and make peace in any respect, or not to speak and we plunge into the silent depths of life". Image of Virgin Mary, the peaceful face of this woman "opposes and rejects them by its mere presence: the image of boundless humility and purity, but still full of beauty and power; the image of love and the triumph of love" (p. 25). The next are short sermons, lively meditations about the Feasts of Our Lady. At the beginning of the sermon about the Nativity of the Theotokos, Father Schmemann shows that "the honoring brought to Mary by the Church, has always been rooted in her obedience to God, in her voluntarily choice to accept a call, humanly impossible" (p 26). Through the icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos, "The Church wants to say that every birth, every entry in the world and in life of a new human being is a miracle of all miracles, a miracle beyond any routine that marks the beginning of something that is never-ending, the beginning of a unique and unrepeatable human life, beginning of a new person ... The Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos is a celebration of human history, a celebration of faith in human being, a feast of human being" (p. 28). The Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the Church also has a profound message, saying that "from now on, man himself became temple (or church)" (p. 32). The message of the Feast of the Annunciation is also impressive, being wonderfully expressed in the icon of the Feast, for "looking at this image, it is so easy to believe in the beauty of the heavenly world, and in the heavenly, transcendent calling of man. Joy springs from the Annunciation of the angel's proclamation of joy which tells us that people have found grace before God and that soon, very soon, through her, through this Galilean woman, completely unknown, the mystery of God will begin to fulfil the redemption of the world" (p. 36-37). Synaxis of the Virgin, the feast of the day after the Feast of the Nativity expresses in the most meaningful as possible the "perception of the Church of Our Lady that as a gift brought by the world to God, as the gift of the humanity to Him who comes into the world... Mary, the perfect and most beautiful fruit of creation... In Mary, we can say that the world became engaged with God as the fullness of their mutual love" (p. 40). The feast celebrated on 1st of October, "calls us to go back again... to find healing and rebirth" (p. 46), under the cover of Holy Mother. Expounded the significance of the latter of the Feasts of Our

Lady, Father Alexander stated: "contemplating this death and stand before the catafalque, we understand that there is no death, that it became an act of life, the entry into a larger life, where life reigns" (p. 48).

The second part of the book, entitled *Mary: the Archetype of Humanity*, includes six chapters. In this part Father Alexander Schmemann shows that the understanding of the experience of Mariology of the Church must be seen against the heresy that it denounces. The heresy denounced by Mariology is above all, an anthropological one. The anthropological minimalism refers to the current tendency to reduce man to "a phenomenon caused by an entirely impersonal natural laws network, man himself being only a result and a «tool». From this heretical anthropological vision "is missing... exactly freedom, the human capacity of having a real, personal self-determination" (p. 56). In contrast, maximizing the anthropological aspect is based on the fact that "our whole culture is ...based and impregnated with an unprecedented "aggradation" of human being, expressed in "the endless affirmation of human rights and freedoms, the search of liberation and self-achievement, the rejection of any limitation of "human being potential". According to the two visions man is "nothing", but he must be "everything". There is no trace of "freedom" in him, but he is free. The person does not exist as subject who "transcends" his own living nature, but man has "personal" rights. He is determined by his body, but he has the right to "dispose" of it. He does not have a "soul", but he is an "absolute value". These visions are above all "a mutilation and existential distortion, not just theoretical, leading, sooner or later, to a total chaos and darkness" (p. 57). Mother of God, according to Fr Schmemann, is the image that mankind can fully overcome anthropological minimalism, being the most vivid expression of anthropological maximization, "an eternal epiphany of it" (p. 63). Thus "properly understood, Mariology is, by excellence, the *theological locus* of Christian anthropology" (p. 64). The Person of the Virgin finds human being both in its total dependence to God, on one hand, and as an expression of total freedom, on the other hand (p. 65).

In the third part of the book is presented *The Mariology in Orthodoxy*. At the beginning of this part of the work, Fr. Schmemann starts from the premise that there is no «Mariology» in the Orthodox Church - if this term is understood as referring to a separate theological discipline... The veneration of Mary enters, we might say, the whole life of the Church; is a «dimension» both of the dogma and the piety, both of the Christology and

of ecclesiology" (p. 72). In the section titled *Understanding Mariology*, Fr. Schmemann shows at the beginning the relationship of Mariology with Christology, noting that "the Orthodox way of understanding Mariology was always presented in «Christological terms»" (p. 73). Even in the liturgical life of the Church, the author shows, the Feasts of Our Lady were developed in relation to those of Jesus. The liturgical veneration of Mary "was part of the contemplation of the Church of the mystery of the Incarnation" (p. 73-74). The main place of expressing the mystery of Mariology in Orthodox Church remains the Holy Liturgy, because "Mary never became subject to any special or separate theological speculation" (p. 74). The last important dimension of expression of the mystery of the Mariology is the Orthodox icon, as Father Schmemann appreciates (p. 75). Also, in this third part of the book, Father Alexander identifies two dimensions of Mariology. The first dimension would be that of Mary as the second Eve. This theme actually emphasizes the «cosmological» size of Mariology" (p. 76). A second theme is that of Mary as Temple: "the Temple is the place of the divine presence, of the meeting between God and man, of the discovery of the glory God" (p. 76). Father Schmemann then refers to the relationship between Mariology and ecclesiology, showing that "the Church is... the «Mystery» of the Kingdom of God... It is that «not yet» and at the same time, that «already here». From this perspective - of the Church as life, not only as a structure - we understand the unique role of Mary in «ecclesiology» in the trust to understand the Church from within" (p. 79), for "Mary... is not «object» of the prayer and of the veneration, but their expression itself. Mother of God is the Church understood as prayer, as joy, as wholeness" (p. 81).

The four Part of the book refers to the relationship between *Mary and the Holy Spirit*, i.e. the relationship between Mariology and pneumatology. In the introduction to this part of the work, Father Alexander refers to the receiving of Mariology in Catholic theology after Second Council of Vatican, the "Mother of God is scarcely mentioned. It seems that the new concerns of theology... exclude, if not tacitly condemns the previously emphasis placed on the Mother of Christ... As strange as it seemed, not even the very modern interest in the role of women in the Church, the world and in society, or the great wave of «feminism» have revived the interest in Mariology". In this new context, Fr Schmemann appreciates that the chance to recover the Mariology theology of the Church would be a close

relationship with the pneumatology, because he believes that "Mariology and pneumatology and organically related in the experience of the Church and therefore must be bound in its theology" (p. 88). Mother of God is "the highest, the purest fruit of the Holy Spirit in all creation, revealing by her presence the true nature and true effects of the descent of the Holy Spirit, fountain of life of the Church. In other words, Mariology, properly understood, is a "criterion" of pneumatology (p. 92). In another part, Father Alexander appreciates that "the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary is unique and archetypal. It is unique in that it reveals Mary to us as a unique human being... It is archetypal in that it reveals the nature of the Holy Spirit in relationship with the creation" (p. 93). Father Schmemann appreciates, in the same perspective, that the "great ecclesiological crisis of our time will find its solution only when we understand again the mystery of the Church inseparable from the mystery of Mary, and this is the mystery of the Holy Spirit" (p. 97). In conclusion, Father Schmemann shows that "Mariology and pneumatology far from being two distinct and separate areas of theology and Christian experience are instead linked in the most organic and vital way as possible". So, he appreciates "if Mariology fall in decline today, this occurs precisely because it was separated too much time from pneumatology and began to stumble in its internal closed horizon" (p. 99).

The fifth and last part of the work is suggestively titled *Mother of God in the Eastern Liturgy*. This part includes very interesting reference of the author, regarding the "true contemplation and understanding of the Theotokos in the Orthodox tradition" (p. 107), as it is reflected in the work of the hymnographers John Damascene and Andrew of Crete, whose poetic creations entered in our service books. In a chapter of this last part is also drafted a possible history of the cult of the Virgin. Here the author refers to the formation of the worship of the Church for Mother of God in relation to feasts of Christ the Saviour, but also to the Biblical expression of the Mariology themes. Then references are made to the origin of certain feasts of the Virgin Mary in relation to the rising and the consecration of churches in places where certain events in sacred history happened. Father Alexander ends the string of historical references regarding the cult noting that "the honor of Mary did not developed as a result of the theological reflection, but the Liturgy - as experience of «heaven on earth», as sharing and knowledge of the heavenly realities, as an act of love and worship –

revealed ... the unique place of the Virgin Mary in the mystery of salvation and in the mystery of the "age to come". Mary ... is the inner mystery of the Church understood as communion with Christ" (p. 109). Among the byzantine Liturgy themes are developed the soteriology, that of the face of the Mother of God as icon of Christ and of the Church and "foretaste of the Kingdom of God present among us, the presence among us of that «already fulfilled eschatology» through Virgin Mary. Father Schmemann clearly emphasizes that "Eastern Christianity has never rationalized this mystery, did not expressed it in the categories of the original sin or of the Immaculate Conception. Unlike Western Mariology, East said that she had in common with the humanity the original sin and that she fell asleep – i.e. she died... What is wonderful in her presence is not the fact that she had the original sin, or she did not died, but her death itself was filled by the capacity to live in God and therefore was changed in a "happy uplifting" (p. 115-116).

The very interesting book of Fr. Alexander Schmemann, although not primarily a theological treatise, scientifically elaborated, but rather a humble reflection on Mother of God, comes to show her face and her place Eastern Christian life and spirituality. Concluding the message of his book Father Alexander Schmemann states that "the cult of Mary is not an independent element in the rich traditions of the Church, something that can be studied as «freestanding». It is an essential dimension of cosmology, anthropology, ecclesiology and Christian eschatology. It is not an object of faith, but a fruit of it, not a "creation" of the Church, but a "self-revelation" of it, is not even a doctrine, but the life and the sweetness of the Christian teaching" (p. 117).

Rev. Lucian Farcaşiu

Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Exposition*, 3rd edition, Platina: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2005, 434 p.

Michael Pomazansky's *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (available now in a third edition with extensive new footnotes) has long been seen as a significant textbook of conservative Orthodox theology. Pomazansky was born in western Russia in 1888, and he studied at the pre-revolutionary Kiev Theological Academy from 1908 to 1912. He served as a theologian and missionary in Russia and then, after the revolution, as a priest and editor in Poland and Germany. In 1949 he moved to the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York, where he remained until his death in 1988 (just days before his 100th birthday!).

Pomazansky's work is intended to be an Orthodox testimony for the Western reader. Encounters with Orthodoxy have many times proved to be a bewildering experience for the Western Christians. As Georges Florovsky once remarked, while Catholics and Protestants speak a similar language, there is fundamentally no "common universe of discourse" between East and West. This does not mean that understanding is impossible – but it explains the great difficulties involved in such dialogue, and it helps to account for the comparatively slow progress of ecumenical understanding between East and West.

In *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Pomazansky himself is more or less closed to Western influences: he refers to Catholic and Protestant ideas only where a polemical point is in order; and much of the book is concerned with implicit or explicit controversy with more liberal Orthodox theologians like Vladimir Soloviev and Sergei Bulgakov.

In spite of this, however, Pomazansky's work provides valuable insight into the distinctiveness of Orthodox dogma in contrast to Western patterns of thought. Indeed, Pomazansky is at his best when he is engaged in critique of Catholic dogma (see for instance pp. 89-93 on the *Filioque*),

or when he explains that an apparent similarity between Eastern and Western views is in fact masking a much deeper divergence.

His criticisms of "legal" patterns of thought in Western doctrine are especially incisive. He vigorously criticizes Western doctrines which define redemption as "satisfaction of wrath," for instance (pp. 213-15); and in an excellent chapter on sin, he criticises the Western tendency towards a "very legalistic, formal" doctrine of original sin and inherited guilt (pp. 162-69). Again, in a very fine discussion of Mariology (pp. 189-97), he notes that the Catholic dogmas of the immaculate conception and the assumption are logically derived from a misleading forensic doctrine of original sin.

In contrast to more progressive tendencies in modern Orthodox thought, Pomazansky's is a highly conservative theologian. Indeed, his entire conception of the theological task is primarily one of conservation: Dogmatics consists in "the confirmation in the consciousness of the faithful of the truths of the faith which have been confessed by the Church from the beginning" (p. 46). Nevertheless, we may speak of a progress in Dogmatics which corresponds to revealing "new aspects" or "new understanding[s]" of dogma (p. 47). Indeed, dogma itself cannot "develop," since there is simply "nothing to add to the teaching of faith handed down" (p. 355). From a Western Protestant perspective, of course, one could easily connect such themes to a certain conception of divine eternity and immutability: "For God there is neither past nor future; there is only the present" (p. 67); "God is perfection, and every change … is unthinkable" (p. 72).

Nevertheless, even such conservative emphases give expression to the depth and beauty of theological reflection, for, in Pomazansky's view, "theologizing is not an abstract mental exercise, … but a dwelling of one's thought in Divine truths, a directing of the mind and heart towards God" (p. 48). And, in its best moments, Pomazansky's work is indeed characterised by a spirit of reverence and adoration – something one does not always encounter in a typical modern scientific and "objective" treaty on Theology! To believe in God, Pomazansky writes, means "not only to acknowledge God with the mind, but also to strive towards Him with the heart…. Christian faith is a mystical revelation in the human soul. It is broader, more powerful, closer to reality than thought" (p. 53).

One easy to notice deficiency of Pomazansky's work is that, despite of its criticism of the Western way of theologizing, it seems trapped in Western scholastic categories. It appears to be insufficiently founded on

Patristic theology. It fails to say anything about the distinction between created and uncreated and between God's essence and His energies, which is so characteristic to Orthodox Dogmatics. In fact the term "energy" is completely missing from the text. However, this book remains a useful compendium of Orthodox dogmatic theology for Orthodox Christians living in the West, where general culture has been influenced more by the Western theological assumptions.

Admittedly, one can find more exciting and more creative Orthodox thinkers: Lossky, Schmemann, Meyendorff or Staniloae for instance; or, more recently, John Zizioulas and David Bentley Hart. But for a sober, serene and straightforward exposition of Byzantine dogma, Pomazansky's *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* remains valuable and instructive.

Rev. Adrian Murg

INTERVIEWS

„Teologia" Magazine – a Research Platform in Continuous Ascent

According to the last CNCS academic evaluation (National Council of Scientific Research) of religious magazines, „Teologia" Magazine was included in the B category that is the highest score received by a magazine edited by an Orthodox Theology school. Therefore, we took an interview to the editor of this magazine, Dr. Cristinel Ioja.

– Can you tell us what represents the „Teologia" Magazine for the Orthodox Theology Faculty „Ilarion V. Felea" from Arad"

– This magazine is a platform of expressing the scientific research results of the professors from our faculty. At the same time, the magazine is open to other national and international scientific contributions of the same object as well. Hence, there are works of Romanian and foreign authors from Europe, America and Asia. At the same time, „Teologia" Magazine is an excellent visit card that reflects the work of an academic school in continuous ascent and confirmation of its spiritual and scientific goals.

– Please explain us what CNCS evaluation means.

– The CNCS evaluation focused especially on the national and international echo of this magazine and the way we managed to publish thoroughly argument works, along with abstracts and key-words, in English, German, and French. Other aspects that CNCS was interested in were the magazine continuity, its age, the existence of a magazine professional site, and the review system, the editing team and the publishing frequency. Another evaluation goal was the way our magazine is present in the catalogues of more national and international libraries and the way we started and continued the exchange with other academic Romanian and foreign magazines. These are just a few of the criteria accomplished by the enthusiastic work of the editing team.

– What does the B category mean for the „Teologia" Magazine?

– As you very well know, this is a joy and a reward for our many years work and an impulse to improve the quality of the magazine research. There also means a rating of the studies published in the periodical. I think the Romanian Orthodox theology should fight to have more such rated platforms necessary for a better research work of the Orthodox theologians. Furthermore, if we manage to improve the quality of our studies, our research will become a point of interest for famous international universities. This could mean a better echo of our studies and of the Orthodox ethos as well.

– Who are the „Teologia" Magazine readers?

– Our periodical targets the Romanian and foreign specialists, as it is edited in international languages as I mentioned before. We also found the way to publish the message of its best studies during a year. There will be a volume containing the best works of Romanian and foreign researchers, edited in Romanian. This velum will enrich the Romanian theology literature and it could be read on the internet and on paper as well. I have to mention that the Theology Faculty has a weekly newspaper called „Calea Mantuirii", an effort of its pastoral and missionary work. By reading it, the Christians can assimilate more easily the belief teaching of our Church.

– What is the future of the magazine like?

– We can build its future only in a team work. Its coordinates should be: reliability, the rigorous accomplishment of the research standards, the more refined accuracy of the orthodox message, the continuous openness to interdisciplinarity and a permanent co-operation between the Romanian and foreign academic school, based on promoting the Christian and general human values. The „Teologia" Magazine is and must remain a central scientific concern of the theologians from Arad and of its editing team in order to succeed its assertion in the present scientific research.

Writing requirements for the studies included in the "Teologia" review

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The description of the theoretical framework of the theme
- accuracy in description and presentation;
- present interest and relevance of the bibliography used in connection with the theme;
- relevance of the information regarding the theme;

The aim of the study
- accuracy of expression;
- originality;
- relevance of the aim for the analysis and the innovation of the suggested theme;

The objectives of the study
- accuracy of expression;
- relevance and operational degree according to the stated aim;
- relevance regarding the stated theme;

The advanced hypothesis and the considered variables
- accuracy of expression;
- relevance of hypothesis according to the stated theme, aim and objectives;
- correlation between hypothesis and variables;

The description of the research methodology
- accuracy of building up research techniques;
- accuracy in applying the research techniques;
- relevance of the used methodology according to the theme, aim and
- objectives;

The presentation of the resultus of the investigation
- relevance of the results according to the theme, aim and objectives;

- quality of the results and their presentation according to the stated aim;
- quantity of results;

Interpretation of the results obtained
- relevance of interpretation according to the hypothesis, aim and objectives ;
- relation of the interpretation with the theoretical framework of the theme;
- accuracy, originality and extent of interpretation;

Suggestions
- innovative degree of suggestions;
- capacity of the suggestions to solve the identified problems;
- transferable value of the launched suggestions;

Remarks:
- the author is obliged to specify the domain of the scientific research of the study;
- the consultant and the editorial stuff reserve the right of publishing the article according to the epistemic or/and the editing requirements;
- each article will be analyzed according to the requirements of the domain it belongs to, the above requirements being the reference framework;
- the editorial stuff guarantees the author the feedback right, during the first week after receiving the article;
- the editorial stuff will, confidentially, send and comment both the positive and the negative feedbacks;
- the consultant and the editorial stuff will accept for publication the rejected articles, in an improved form.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Contributions should be written in English, German, French or Italian. The article should not be longer than 12.000 words, including footnotes.

Articles should be accompanied by an abstract (max. 150 words), preferably in English. The abstract should present the main point and arguments of the article.

The academic affiliation of the author and his e-mail address must write at the first note of the article.

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF A FULL ARTICLE

- Title
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Main text:
    - Introduction
    - Methods
    - Results
- Conclusion

MAIN TEXT

Authors are kindly asked to submit the final form of their article, carefully edited according to the instructions below, proofed for language, spelling and grammar. Articles with spelling and grammatical errors cannot be accepted.

Please use Normal Style, with Times New Roman, 12 point font, single line spacing, justified, first line indented at 0.8 cm. (0.32 in.). For headings use Heading 2 Style.

For Hebrew and Greek quotations please use Bible Works fonts (BWhebb, BWgrkl), Hebraica, Graeca, or Scholars Press fonts (the latter can be downloaded from the Biblica site)

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes are numbered continuously, starting with 1.

Footnote numbers in the text should be inserted automatically (Insert footnote), placed in superscript after the punctuation mark. Do not use

endnotes or other methods of inserting notes. For Footnotes use Footnote Text Style with Times New Roman, 10, single, justified, hanging indent at 0.5 cm. (0.2 in.).

QUOTATIONS WITHIN THE BODY OF THE ARTICLE:

Please avoid unnecessarily long quotations, unless they are very important for your point. Quotations shorter than four lines should be included in the text, between quotation marks, followed by the footnote indicating the source.

Please use quotation marks according to the rules of the language in which you write: "English", „German", and «French» or «Italian».

Quotations longer than four lines should be written as a different paragraph, without quotation marks, indented 0.5 cm (0.2 in.) left and right.

REFERENCES

References to books and articles have to be placed in the footnotes. Do not add a bibliography.

The last name of the author(s) should be written in SmallCaps, the title of the book, article, periodical, volume in italic.

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Once the full information on a book or article has been given, the last name of the author should be used. If you refer to several works of the same author, mention the short title after the first name (for example, Wolff, Hosea, 138), without any reference to the first note where the full title was given. Please avoid general references to works previously cited, such as op. cit., art. cit.. Also avoid f. or ff. for "following" pages; indicate the proper page numbers.

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