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The Contribution of Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște to the Development of the Romanian Liturgical Theology

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Abstract

This study approaches the contribution of rev. Prof. Ene Braniste to the development of the Romanian liturgical theology. Analyzing the work of this great theologian, I have presented in this paper just two major directions that can be derived from the contents of his rich theological works. I considered him to be, first, a brilliant mystagogue of the Holy Liturgy and secondly, a creator of a historical vision of the Church's worship.

Keywords

Rev. Prof. Ene Braniste, mystagogue, Holy Liturgy, historical, Church's worship

Examining the work of Rev. Prof. Ene Braniste, which is so varied in thematic, I developed in this study only two major directions that can be derived from the contents of his rich theological works. I considered him to be, first, a brilliant mystagogue of the Holy Liturgy and secondly, a creator of a historical vision of the Church's worship.

I. Rev. Prof. Ene I. Braniște, mystagogue of the Holy Liturgy

The beginning of the theological research of Fr. Braniște is the exceptional liturgical monograph dedicated to the author of the Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, Nicholas Cabasilas. The work of Fr. Braniste is certainly the most brilliant Romanian approach of the Commentary of Cabasilas, representing a work of undeniable value, both because of the critical examination of Nicholas Cabasilas Commentary of the Divine Liturgy, supported by a rich footnotes and bibliography, and by the structure of the work that shows us that its author has dealt the theme with a lot of passion and dedication.¹

The merit of Fr. Braniste in evaluation o Commentary on the Divine Liturgy by Nicholas Cabasilas derives from the fact that he not only reproduces everything that is expressing Cabasilas regarding the mystical and symbolic meaning of the Divine Liturgy, but manages in all regards to express in a comparative, scientific and critical manner everything that has been written on the issue, both in liturgical commentaries made before Nicholas Cabasilas and in all theological literature of the West and the East, until the twentieth century. The aspect is emphasized by Fr Ene Braniște in his prologue:

“We will strive to show, as faithfully and accurately, both orderly and systematically, everything that our author says, often piecemeal and without much order... Concepts and ideas of the commentary will be exposed not only systematic but critical. In parallel with the liturgical exposing of Cabasilas system, we will consider... the other Greek commentators of Orthodox liturgy, in order to show... the similarities and differences between them and to highlight more clearly the characteristic notes of the commentary”².

By the method approached in the study of the liturgical interpretation of Nicholas Cabasilas, the work of Fr. Ene Braniște constitutes a real example of this kind of research.

¹ See, in this regard, the review of rev. Vasile Coman to Fr. Ene Braniste’s work, *Di-aconul Ene Braniște, asistent la Facultatea de teologie din București: Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii după Nicolae Cabasila*, București, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1943, p. XVI+238, in „Revista Teologică” year XXXIV, no. 11-12, p. 517.

² Pr. Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște, *Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii după Nicolae Cabasila*, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Publishing House, București, 1997, p. 195.

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At the beginning of his work, Father Braniste explains the meaning of the term commentary on the Liturgy also systematically showing the dividing of the liturgical commentary according to their characteristic. Father Braniste shows that these are: verbal or literal commentary, i.e. approaching the meaning of the text of the Liturgy, catechetical commentary, i.e. those pursuing the training or catechizing the faithful, ascetic and moral commentary, whose authors are concerned primarily of moralizing or spiritualizing believers. Finally, the last category is of the theological commentaries, dealing with the science or theological speculation, they manifesting a polemical - apologetical concern. Their authors defend the Orthodox practice and the liturgical tradition against the unorthodox liturgical heresies.³

“The commentary of Cabasilas - shows Fr. Braniște - will exceed the mere liturgical interpretations... Explaining the Liturgy, the author draws a lot of dogmatic issues, giving us the most successful realization of the liturgical comment in a theological and speculation manner”.⁴

This proves that the interpretation of Cabasilas as a method, gathered more types of liturgical comments, mentioned above.

Within the paper it can be seen the contribution of Fr. Ene Braniște to the clarification regarding the personality of Nicholas Cabasilas, who was always confused with Michael Cabasilas, Nile Cabasilas or Demetriu Cabasilas. Fr. Braniște explains and shows that Nicholas Cabasilas is a layman and a prominent personality of the fourteenth century, the penultimate age of the Byzantine Empire.⁵

Father Ene Braniște presents the content of the work of Nicholas Cabasilas in a systematic and critical manner. All the information regarding the Divine Liturgy presented in unsystematic way in Cabasilas commentary, are organized in a logical and systematic review in the liturgical commentary of Fr. Braniște, which is actually the great merit of professor emeritus.

When referring to the purpose of the Holy Liturgy, following the vision of Nicholas Cabasilas, Father Braniște shows that it is nothing but “the sanctification of the believers – i.e. their communion with the

³ *Ibid.*, p. 130-131.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 192-193.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

Mysteries”. This constitutes “the main and ultimate purpose of the Liturgy and in relation with it, the sanctification is a purpose – mid”.⁶

Also, Fr. Braniște highlights the merit of Nicholas Cabasilas as an interpreter of the Liturgy, he explains with unsurpassed subtlety the characteristic as real and bloodless sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy, without neglecting its characteristic as mystery, through which the Liturgy reaches its ultimate goal: the sanctification of believers. In this respect, he shows that “in the Divine Liturgy we must distinguish on one hand *the sacrifice*, through which the Gifts are consecrated, and on the other, *the mystery*, which sanctifies the believers who share the effects of the sacrifice.”⁷ Following the vision of Nicholas Cabasilas, Fr. Braniste points out that in each Holy Liturgy takes place the updating of the sacrifice on the cross of Jesus Christ.⁸ The importance of the underlining the of sacrificial character of the Eucharist is explained by Fr. Braniște in a wider theological context, emphasizing the fact that the sacrificial character of the Liturgy “is an ancient and general faith of the whole Christian Church before the protestant Reformation and which both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox theology stressed since the fourteenth century onwards, so many times against Protestants and rationalists of all kind”.⁹ This statement is supported by an extensive bibliography, particularly in Western theology, which proves the deeply theological well documented work of Fr. Braniste, on both Eastern and Western sources.

In the following chapters of his work, Father Braniște presents the mystical and symbolic meanings regarding: the matter of the Gifts, the stages of bringing the holy sacrifice, the presentation of the orthodox thesis on the Eucharistic epiclesis and its relevance vis-à-vis to the Catholic teaching, the moment of changing of the gifts as the essential work of the liturgical sacrifice. Referring to the importance of the moment of the epiclesis Fr. Prof. Ene Braniște, engages himself in a polemic dialogue between the views presented in this regard by the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox perspective on the same issue, showing that Orthodox theology it is emphasized the change of the Gifts in the moment of the epiclesis, while in Roman Catholic theology is sustained that the transformation of elements takes place when is pronounced the words of Jesus Christ

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

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from the Last Supper, but this “does not mean that the Orthodox would belittle the value and power of divine words, as the Westerns suggest, but - on the contrary - precisely because we address God a special prayer for the consecration of the Gifts it proves that we trust more in His power than ours.”¹⁰ Fr. Braniste also highlights Cabasilas opinion on the issue of the Eucharistic epiclesis, when he says that “not the Latin Church itself opposes to the epiclesis, but some isolated members of it, who want to innovate the faith.”¹¹ With this Cabasilas statement Fr. Braniște shows that “it is interesting... to emphasize that many of today’s western liturgists have acquired, perhaps without realizing, the view held by Cabasilas in fourteenth century”,¹² referring to the existence of a epiclesis formula within the Western Liturgy. Fr. Braniste cites a few names of these scholars: L. A. Hoppe, Dom P. Cagin, A. Fortescue, Maurice de la Taille, W. C. Bishop, Dom Bernard Botte O.S.B., Ephrem II Rahmani. In conclusion Fr. Braniște shows that “the most representatives nowadays liturgists affirm the existence of the epiclesis in the Western Roman Mass, or – to be more precise – of an old formula of epiclesis equivalent to the one from the Oriental Liturgies; they also confirm , though perhaps unwittingly, the aspect that Cabasilas found highlighted six hundred years ago”.¹³ It is also interesting the emphasis made by Fr. Braniște regarding

“among the matters that became theme of liturgical controversy between the Greeks and Latins, the epiclesis is the only one that is brought into question by Cabasilas in his commentary. The two chapters devoted by him to this issue is the first, most developed and most thorough defense of the Eucharistic epiclesis. By saying this, we do not understand, however, that Nicholas Cabasilas would be the parent or creator of the orthodox doctrine of the consecration of the Gifts as Roman Catholics insinuate. He wasn’t the first to formulate the theory of the necessity of the epiclesis within the Liturgy, he did nothing else but to put in place for the first time and like no other after him according to the strictest patristic doctrine *some Latins* who began to propagate their new theory in East”.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The affirming of the Orthodox teaching concerning the epiclesis is made by Nicholas Cabasilas not necessarily as a desire for polemic, but more because of the challenges from some Latin, as he shows in his commentary. Being in a position somewhat intermediate between the supporters of the Roman Catholic theory concerning the consecration of the Eucharistic elements at the words of our Savior from the Last Supper, in the Divine Liturgy, “Cabasilas has... a synthetic position ...: according to him, we cannot deny the divine words some role in sanctification and change of the Gifts, these words do not work just by their simple saying, but only to the express prayer and request of the pries, i.e. by *epiclesis*”.¹⁵

In the same liturgical commentary on Cabasilas is also made an important emphasis regarding the role of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and of the priest at the service of the Divine Liturgy. Regarding the role of the priest as a representative of the ministry of Jesus Christ in the Liturgy, Nicholas Cabasilas “says nothing, instead he speaks about the other aspect of the mission of the priest, i.e. the intermediary of the Church or of the congregation of believers.”¹⁶ Also, Fr. Braniște presents the vision of Nicholas Cabasilas concerning the sanctification of the faithful, as the transcendental purpose of the Liturgy. There are also presented liturgical resources for preparing the subjective sanctification of the priest and the faithful, the objective sanctification through the receiving of the Gifts and its effects. Thus, the effect of the partaking of the priests and the faithful with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is a threefold one in the view of Cabasilas: the union with Christ, the remission of sins and life everlasting.¹⁷ It is also presented the view of Cabasilas on the issue of the participation of the dead and the livings to the effects of the liturgical sacrifice.

Father Professor Ene Braniște presents the Divine Liturgy as means of the divine cult and the symbolic significance of the Liturgy, as it is reflected in the work of Nicholas Cabasilas. Thus, presenting a summary of the interpretation and significance of the symbolism of the Divine Liturgy, according to Nicholas Cabasilas, Fr. Braniste emphasizes that

“is a gradual epiphany or acknowledgement of the presence of our Savior among us. From this point of view, the Liturgy can be divided into three successive moments: a) first moment, i.e.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 278, 281, 282.

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Prothesis, the presence of the Savior is affirmed only by typical elements, that is by the *types* or the *typical elements* as in the Old Testament (τυποὶ καὶ γραφαὶ), b) the second moment, the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the faithful (until the moment of epiclesis) now have a moral presence, facilitated by *symbols*. Till the Little Entrance, this moment reflects the unknown part of the life of Christ, and hence, His life and public work prior to the passions c) the third moment of the Liturgy begins with the change and the consecration of the Gifts. Now the *real* and *mystical* element predominates; the presence Christ becomes now a reality (πραγμα). From now on, the Liturgy does not symbolize, but makes actual and present, again and again the sacrifice of the Savior, the sacrifice on Golgotha, in the bread and the wine changed in the true Body and Blood of the Savior, the same body in which Christ died, rose again and then ascended to heaven. To these we could add a fourth moment, that is the one in which the believers start to take the Communion when Christ becomes present not only in the middle of the church or community of believers, but in each of ourselves, so that He unites us to Himself individually and all together in His mystical body, becoming one with Him...".¹⁸

The last part of the paper presents critical considerations on the commentary of Cabasilas on the Liturgy. There are presented the value and merits of Cabasilas as commentator of the Liturgy. Further on, Fr. Braniște assesses the influence of the commentary of liturgical theology of Cabasilas in Greek and Latin theology, in the commentaries and liturgical collections, in dogmatic controversies about the Eucharistic sacrifice, in the history of the attempts of rapprochement between Orthodox and Protestants and also, its influence in nowadays theology.

Fr. Ene Braniște is not only a good connoisseur, but also an exceptional analyst of the liturgical issues and a great dogmatist. The theological issues contained in the Commentary of Cabasilas are treated and analyzed with the clarity and maturity of a great theologian. In this regard it is sufficient to follow just how Fr. Braniște expresses the Orthodox teaching concerning the epiclesis or how he refers to the sacrifice on the Cross of Christ the Savior in each Holy Liturgy issues which proves his exceptional quality of dogmatist, i.e. good connoisseur of the teaching of the faith of the Church.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 354-355.

The paper of Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște was received immediately after its publication with great interest in our theological literature, and appreciated at its true value. The first review of the work of Father Ene Braniște is made by Father Vasile Coman and published in "Revista teologică" in 1944. Fr. Coman says that Fr. Ene Braniște is an "enlightened and penetrating mind", stressing that

"the priest that will read "Commentary on the Divine Liturg by Nicholas Cabasilas" will get closer to the Holy Altar an awakened and consciousness mind and will have a deep fountain from which he can gave to the believers the water of divine teachings, as they were expressed in the Liturgy".¹⁹

Also in the review made three years later, in 1947, to the second edition of the work of Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște after the first edition was sold out in a very short time, Rev. Dr. Teodor Bodogae especially appreciates the efforts and the research of Fr. Braniște, showing that all the information contained in this paper are presented by professor Ene Braniște with a rare thoroughness and through an impressive scientific information.²⁰

To all these theological, scientific and critical considerations to the work of Father Professor Ene Braniște, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy by Nicholas Cabasilas*, I allow myself some personal considerations on the personality of the Fr. Braniște looked like mystagogue of the Liturgy:

1. First, in assessing the commentary of the Holy Liturgy by Nicholas Cabasilas Fr. Braniște addresses the original Greek text of this work. From this perspective, Fr. Braniște remains a model of research for us today, creating a rigorous working method, which is based on the sources, i.e. from the original text of patristic work.

2. Fr. Braniște is not a simple mystagogue of the Liturgy, but the scientific and spiritual commentary he makes on the Liturgy springs from his own personal experience and the real joy of meeting with God in the Holy Altar. It should be noted that this regard that Fr. Braniște Ene combined

¹⁹ Rev. Vasile Coman, *Diaconul Ene Braniște, asistent la Facultatea de teologie din București: Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii după Nicolae Cabasila*, in „Revista Teologică”, p. 518.

²⁰ Rev. PhD. Teodor Bodogae, *Diaconul Ene Braniște: 1. Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii după Nicolae Cabasila, teză de doctorat, 1943; 2. Tâlcuirea Dumnezeieștii Liturghii, studiu introductiv și traducere românească, 1946, București, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, XVI+238; VIII+133 pagini* (review), in „Revista Teologică”, year XXXVII (1947), no. 3-4, p. 185.

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the work of a teacher with that of a clergyman. Even while he was student (1st of May, 1937 - 30th of September 1938) he was a church singer at the Church "Oborul Vechi", in the Capital, continuing this activity until 26th of October, 1940, when he was ordained a deacon on account of the old chapel "St. Sava" of the University of Bucharest, although he continued to serve as a church singer at the Church "Oborul Vechi". On 15th of May, 1950 he was ordained pries on account of church of the Theological Institute in Bucharest. In this service he remained until his death, serving frequently in the chapel of the Institute, "being a perfect servant, his voice warm and beautiful, with dignified elegance but without ostentation, with prestige and authority, admirable combining the service at the Holy Altar with the one of professorship"²¹, as he is characterized by his close disciple and successor in professorship, Rev. Prof. Dr. Nicolae D. Necula. As PhD. Laurentiu Streza, Metropolitan of Transylvania appreciates

"the studying and deepening the *significance of the Liturgy* will mark ... not only *scientific activity*, but also the *personality* of the priest to be and professor of theology, Father Braniște, becoming his *life criterion*. From the service and experiencing the mystery of the Divine Liturgy will arise *the strength of his faith* as the *true servant of God*, an *endless love* for the *priesthood*, as divine institution, for the *divine ministry* and for *de servants of the Holy Altars* ... The *Holy Liturgy*, he lived and explained for us all ... is a *school of prayer*, so that the liturgical prayer becomes the criterion of our personal prayer"²².

Characterizing him as a servant of the Holy Altar, Fr. Bishop Laurentiu Streza emphasizes the following:

"The quality of "*liturgist*" of *Father Braniște* was constantly doubled by the *liturgist*. In serving the Holy Altar, Fr. Braniste paid special attention to the quality in expressing *the liturgical word*, the beauty and accuracy of interpretation of *hymns* and *liturgical chants* and especially respecting *the melodic compli-*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 563-581. See in this regard also the study of Rev. Prof. PhD. Nicolae D. Necula, *Părintele Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște, comemorare a 100 de ani de la naștere*, in vol. Pr. Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște, „Liturghia – sufletul etern al Ortodoxiei în rugăciune – Studii de Teologie Liturgică”, vol. 1, Editura Andreiană, 2013, p. 14-15.

²² Prof. PhD. Laurențiu Streza, Archbishop of Sibiu and Metropolitan of Ardeal, *Viața ca o Liturghie – Părintele Profesor Dr. Ene Braniște*, in vol. Pr. Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște, „Liturghia – sufletul etern al Ortodoxiei în rugăciune ...”, vol. I, p. 6, 8.

ance for solemnity and beauty of the divine service. The *calm and warmth* of his voice, which stemmed from the singing of *liturgical formulations* ... contributed to expressing the *divine mystery* of the service and *liturgical contemplation*”²³.

Concluding on the theological and spiritual personality of Father Professor Ene Braniște, Metropolitan Streza Laurențiu believes that “his whole life was a constant Liturgy, a continuous link with heaven, bringing an offering to God as gifts all his qualities, in order to share the grace of divine love. He left us to *contemplate* and study the liturgical, theological and spiritual experiences. All had the same source - the Divine Liturgy.”²⁴

3. The Commentary on the Divine Liturgy is made by Fr. Braniște not only in a scholastic, educational manner, in a scientific and academic rigor, but is considered also practical issues regarding the Holy Liturgy and its effects in the lives of believers. The Br. Braniste stresses the need for direct participation of the faithful in the Liturgy, showing that the role of the believers in the church

“is not ... just to be present at the service, i.e. to watch or listen as mere spectators ... They must participate in the true sense of the word, to work together effectively in the Holy Sacrifice, which is brought for them and in their name... The first manifestation of this active collaboration of the faithful in the Liturgy is singing in church”²⁵.

This idea requires to be asserted, shows Fr. Braniste, starting from the reality that “today we can speak rather of the assistance of the laymen at the Liturgy”²⁶. Considering this problem of very high actuality, he will recur to this theological debate concerning the participation of the faithful at the Liturgy in a very extensive further study, in which he will reveal practical way by which can be enhanced the presence of the believers at the Divine Liturgy.²⁷ Even in the Commentary on the Divine Liturgy by Nicholas Cabasilas Fr. Braniște identifies as ways of enhancing the

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9-10.

²⁵ Rev. Prof. PhD. Ene Braniște, *Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii după Nicolae Cabasila*, p. 254-255

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

²⁷ Idem, *Participarea la Liturghie și metode pentru realizarea ei*, in “Studii Teologice”, year I, 1949, no. 7-8, p. 567-637.

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participation of the faithful the Divine Liturgy, the common singing at the service, showing in this respect that “the author commentary never mentioned singers, choir or chorus, but preferred to put all the answers on the laymen.”²⁸ Another practical problem raised by Fr. Ene Braniște is related to *the issue of frequent communion*. He says that “the frequent communion with the Holy Body and Blood of our Savior is ... not only necessary, but absolutely indispensable, not only in this life, but even on to the next to maintain the souls in a permanent relation with Christ”.²⁹

4. Fr. Ene Braniște understands and emphasizes that in order to understand the symbolic significance of the Holy Liturgy we need an original, uncorrupted text of it, a good and faithful translation of the original Greek text. Fr. Braniste examined, in a very comprehensive study, the language of the Liturgy and some discrepancies in the Romanian text, because of its translation from the Greek, discrepancies which makes difficult the mystical understanding of the Liturgy.³⁰ From this perspective we mention that he not only made a commentary on the Divine Liturgy, he but also reviewed the text of the Liturgy, the edition in Romanian published in 1980, studying the original Greek text and made a beautiful translation into Romanian.³¹

5. Finally, we mention the fact that being convinced of the beauty and depth of the meanings of the Orthodox Liturgy, Fr. Braniste approached it in several comparative studies with the Roman Catholic Mass and with the Eastern ancient Liturgies, highlighting in this way its beauty and richness.³²

²⁸ Idem, *Explicarea Sfintei Liturghii după Nicolae Cabasila*, p. 255. See also the article of Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște, *Temeiuri biblice și tradiționale pentru cântarea în comun a credincioșilor*, in „Studii Teologice”, year VI (1954), no. 1-2, p. 17-29.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

³⁰ See also the articles of Fr. Ene Braniște, *Observațiuni și propuneri pentru o nouă ediție a Liturghierului românesc. Contribuție la problema revizuirii cărților noastre de ritual*, in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, year LXIII, 1945, no. 11-12, p. 599-613; year LXIV, 1946, no. 4-6, p. 194-217 and no. 7-9, p. 333-351; and *Limba Liturghierului românesc, evoluția și importanța ei pentru formarea și unitatea limbii noastre literare*, in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, 1982, no. 3-4.

³¹ See also the articles of Fr. Ene Braniște, *Noua ediție a Liturghierului românesc în comparație cu cele anterioare, studiu comparativ*, in “Studii Teologice”, year III (1951), no. 9-10, p. 563-580, and Rev. Prof. PhD. Nicolae D. Necula, *Părintele Profesor Dr. Ene Braniște la aniversarea a 70 de ani de la naștere*, in „Studii Teologice”, year XXXV (1983), no. 7-8, p. 576.

³² See also the articles of Fr. Ene Braniște, *Liturghiile romano-catolice în comparație cu*

II . Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște – the creator of the historical vision on cult

The textbooks of Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște, the *General Liturgical* and *Special Liturgical*, which remained normative until today in Universities, are showing Fr. Braniste as a great specialist in this discipline. I believe, however, that in addition to all the qualities that they acquired the courses within those manuals and the studies published in the periodicals of the time are showing Fr. Braniste mainly as a *creator of a historical vision of the Church's worship*.

To justify this, we must necessarily see the main textbooks and scientific papers, published in our country since the beginning of the studying of the Liturgy in theology faculties, until Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște's time.

The first serious scientific contribution was the one of Fr. Vasile Mitrofanovici of the Faculty of Theology in Chernovtsy, who published the first manual, entitled "Academic Lectures on the Liturgy" wide-spread in lithographed form.³³ Father Vasile Mitrofanovici was a good connoisseur of Slavic and German languages and he used the Russian and German sources of information, neglecting the sources of patristic literature, Byzantine and Modern Greek.³⁴ These initial gaps of the manual of Prof. Vasile Mitrofanovici will be revised by Professor Teodor Tarnavschi, from the same Faculty of Theology, this time the manual was entitled "Academic Lectures on the Liturgy of the Eastern Church" in Chernovtsy in 1909. Rev. Prof. Theodore Tarnavschi was a connoisseur of classical languages, Greek and Latin, his contribution to this manual being very important especially regarding the study of the history of Christian cult; the sources consulted by him were from the Byzantine patristic literature.³⁵ The first

cele ortodoxe, in "Ortodoxia", year IX, 1957, no. 1, p. 119-138; and *Cultul Bisericii Creștine vechi din Orient. Liturghiile riturilor orientale*, in "Ortodoxia", year XVIII, 1966, no. 1, p. 85-131.

³³ Idem, *Literatura liturgică în Teologia românească*, in vol. „Pr. Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște, *Liturghia – sufelul etern al Ortodoxiei în rugăciune ...*”, vol. I, p.76. This article was initially "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", an LXXXIX, nr. 1-2, p. 121-134.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, în vol. cit., ed. cit, p. 77

³⁵ *Ibidem*, în vol. cit., ed. cit, p. 77. Părintele Profesor Ene Braniște referindu-se la opera părintelui profesor Teodor Tarnavschi arată că „prin activitatea sa la catedră și publicistică ... a ridicat știința liturgică românească la nivel european, operele sale nefiind cu nimic inferioare celor publicate de marii liturghiști străini contemporani cu el” (*Ibidem*, în vol. cit., ed. cit, p. 78).

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two editions of the manual published were followed by a third edition of Metropolitan Nectarie Cotlarciuc, published in Chernovtsy in 1929. This edition is a better than the one in 1909. This manual of Liturgy is the first of its kind in Romanian liturgical literature, however, is not very elaborate regarding the terms of the historical information. About the evolution of Church worship the information is quite limited and poor vis-à-vis “to the progress history of Christian worship made even until the appearance of the previous edition”.³⁶ However, in the absence of another manual “the course of Mitrofanovici - Tarnavschi has long been the most complete and best of all textbooks in Liturgical Orthodox theology”³⁷, used even beyond the borders of our Church, the first edition being translated into Serbian language.³⁸

Another textbook of liturgical is published by Professor Badea Cireșanu from the Faculty of Theology of the University of Bucharest, entitled “Liturgical Treasure of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Christian Churches” in three volumes (Bucharest, 1910, 1911, 1912). The manual exceeds the previous ones (Mitrofan-Tarnavschi), both by volume (with a total of 1278 pages) and by the wording. Meanwhile, the textbook written by Badea Cireșanu is poorer than the ones edited in Chernovtsy, the lack of a shared vision of the author of the content and the limits of his topic, and there are included several chapters that had no relevance on the topic (such as those relating to places of worship of pagan religions, vol. II, p 7-49) and also by some negligence on the scientific method.³⁹ The textbook of Badea Cireșanu is

“not an academic course of Liturgy, edited in an systematic and scientific manner, but a «treasure», comprising a material quite rich and varied, but written without much order, but the nowadays researcher can still find and use with the necessary caution and checking valuable information and helpful suggestions”⁴⁰

as professor Ene Braniște stresses out.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ The translation was made by Prof. L. Mircovici from the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade, entitled *Pravoslavna Liturgika*, 3 volumes, published in Belgrade and Karlowitz, 1918, 1920 and 1926.

³⁹ Rev. Prof. PhD. Ene Braniște, *Literatura liturgică în Teologia românească*, in volume „Pr. Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște, “Liturghia – sufelul etern al Ortodoxiei în rugăciune ...”, vol. I, p. 79.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

A new period in the evolution of our liturgical literature is inaugurated between the two world wars by the coming of Fr. Professor Petre Vintilescu from the Department of Liturgy and Pastoral of the former Faculty of Theology in Bucharest. As Professor Ene Braniște characterized him, Professor Petre Vintilescu was “very documented about the best writings about liturgical literature in West (especially French and German)” - he raised “Romanian liturgical theology at a high scientific level”.⁴¹ Being a connoisseur of classical languages, Father Petre Vintilescu “gave special attention to the study of the history of Christian worship in patristic sources, developing... the poorer aspect of the liturgical study: the historic one”.⁴² The studies and the courses developed by Professor Vintilescu regards the general historical development of religion. We recall in this respect that he developed a course of General Liturgy, entitled

“Principles and the Being of the Orthodox Christian Cult”, which without claiming an exhaustive approaching of this part of the Liturgy, develops mainly the historical aspect of the development of the cult. Also Vintilescu developed a special course of “History of Christian Worship”⁴³.

We recall of the same series of studies on the history, the work of Father Petre Vintilescu “Byzantine Liturgies, a Historical View on their Structure and Ordinance”.⁴⁴ Thus, Father Petre Vintilescu creates in the Romanian liturgical theology a new direction, leaning mostly on the historical dimension of worship development.

The work of research on the history of the cult will be continued by his disciple and successor at the Department, Rev. Prof. PhD. Ene Braniște. If the Fr. Peter Vintilescu developed within his studies mainly the historical aspect of the Orthodox Liturgy and worship in general, Fr. Ene Braniște,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 81-82.

⁴³ Published only partially in the volume *Încercări de Istoria Liturghiei. Liturgia creștină în primele trei veacuri*, București, 1930. This work appeared in a more complete edition, including a special chapter about *The Liturgical Rites*, in year 1940, under the guidance of Fr. Ene Braniște.

⁴⁴ The work is published in Bucharest in 1943. About this work, Fr. Ene Braniște appreciates that it can be considered „the work of maturity and most valuable of the author”, being „a remarkable study because of the accuracy of the scientific method and the sobriety of style” (Rev. Prof. PhD. Ene Braniște, *Literatura liturgică în Teologia românească*, p. 82).

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we dare to say, fulfilled and perfects the historical aspect, extending it to the entire contents of the discipline, all liturgical concepts mentioned in the two books of Fr. Braniște were presented first in a historical perspective, with particular reference to the emergence and development of the Church's worship in time until our days. Therefore, Father Professor Ene Braniște brings forward and perfects the concerns regarding the history of cult of his teacher, Fr. Petre Vintilescu.

In the manuals and studies of Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște are mentioned the aspects of the committing of the services and their symbolic significance, but the historical elements regarding the appearance and development of Christian worship. If we refer to the first part of the manual of "General Liturgy", we see that almost all the topics in this volume are presented primarily in terms of evolution. For instance: such thorough presentation of the bibliography of which are not missing the patristic sources regarding the liturgical life of the early Church and the studies made in the East and West on the history and evolution of Orthodox worship. There are also mentioned notions regarding the establishment and development of Christian cult in an historical manner. The author dedicated a whole section to the clergymen and the liturgical participation of the believers of the cult of the Church in the past and today. There is a chapter about the evolution of the calendar of the Church and the Christian holidays; here we find a wealth of historical data relating to the origin and development of Christian holidays, mentions about the fasting periods and the days of general commemoration of the dead, all presented from a historical perspective, insisting on their emergence and development in time. The chapter regarding the objects, vestments, liturgical material and books is elaborated from the point of view of historical development, and finally, the last part of the manual is about the word and its forms in worship, poetry, Christian hymnography, and hymnographers of the Church and their writings used in the cult.

Regarding the second part of the manual, "Special Liturgy", father Professor Ene Braniște analyze the liturgical ordinances of the Orthodox Church from a threefold perspective: primarily - the liturgical aspect, secondly - the historical evolution and third - in terms of their symbolic significance. The bibliography presented at the end of each chapter and subchapter is a rich, especially regarding the historical development of these liturgical ordinances (The Seven Canonical Hours, the Liturgy, The Sacraments and the Hierurgies).

The Historical presentation of Orthodox worship is made by the Fr. Braniște from a threefold perspective.

Primarily, it is biblical, being used an exceptional scriptural documentation, with long strings of biblical references in which the author extracts the important information regarding the commission of the cult in the primary ages of the Church by Christ the Savior and His Holy Apostles.

Secondly, the presentation follows the historical development of the Church's worship and patristic perspective, there are made many references to the works of the Holy Fathers regarding the Christian cult, some translated into Romanian, others cited from the original Greek text, Fr. Braniște knew very well classical languages: Greek and Latin. Fr. Braniste is a real model for us today, from this perspective, pointing out that in order to make a valuable theological research we must refer to patristic sources and their original text.

Finally, in presenting the historical evolution of the Church's cult Fr. Braniste uses a modern, rich liturgical literature, both from the East and the West. We recall in this respect that he uses in presenting the themes of the textbook "Liturgical Theology" an impressive Orthodox bibliography - Greek, Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian and Western, large collections of Byzantine liturgical texts and commentaries published in the West, as well as important works the Orthodox cult, especially in a historical overview, written by Eastern and Western writers. In this regard, recall that the Fr. Braniste was very familiar with German, French and Italian, and he could study more specialized materials published in these languages. His international relations his presence at many symposia and scientific liturgical manifestations in all over the Orthodox world and in the West put him in contact with theological literature written in these geographical areas, so that the works cited in impressive lists of the bibliography at the end of each chapter in both his books were not only well known by the author, for the theological information, but many of them were studied by him. This aspect results from a clearly and careful analysis of the content of these lectures.

The review made at the textbook "Special Liturgy" by Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște,⁴⁵ Rev. Prof. Sebastian Chilea, refers both to the theological

⁴⁵ *Liturgica Specială, pentru Institututele teologice, the first edition appeared at Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing Press, Bucharest, in 1980.*

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method used by the author, as well as the scientific value of the work and highlights the following:

“... the author is building himself a tool, an appropriate method for the requirements and goals of the catechetical teaching... every statement is based on the consultation and use, fair and objective, of the most reliable sources... The entire work of Father Professor Braniște is designed organic and orderly exposed according to the inner order which is found only by the one who deepens the demands of intellectual creation... Fr. Braniste... excels in... vivid and more comprehensive synthesis... the Synoptic images... are like illustrations in text... The author has read everything written or done about liturgy. From the valuable treaties to modest articles he became aware of everything that it has been thought about the Liturgies... Selective bibliography is proof that he select from a huge production liturgical... It's a work... very useful. This work of Father Prof. Ene Braniște is a living synthesis that reunites both the efforts of the liturgists from the past with the critical revaluation of the documentary texts made by modern liturgists. The work of Fr. Braniște is developed... and exposed as a spiritual conversation between an imaginary reader and his spiritual guiding... It is a work of reference for all Orthodoxy”.⁴⁶

This presentation, far from being just a flattering characterization of the author and his work, highlights the extraordinary value of such a theological treatise, needed in theological education, a well-made textbook, unsurpassed to this day in the Romanian academic education.

The special concern of Fr. Braniste for the historical and symbolic aspect of Orthodox worship should be regarded in the context of his time. Thus, we should mention that Father Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște lived, studied and created in the area of Liturgical Theology in the early years of the twentieth century, a century that had an increased interest in liturgical service: its history, its spirit, its need for reform. In the West, this phenomenon, known commonly as “liturgical movement” stimulated

⁴⁶ Rev. Prof. Sebastian Chilea, *Pr. Prof. Dr. Ene Braniște. Liturgica Specială, pentru Institutele teologice. Tipărită cu binecuvântarea Prea fericitului Părinte Patriarh Iustin, patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Buucurești, 1980, 510 p.*, in „Studii Teologice”, year XXXIV (1982), no. 1-2, p. 143-146.

and, in return, ”was stimulated by a real flow of edits of the collections of the patristic sources, scientific journals and pastoral dictionaries and monographs - in brief, various academic and popular studies”.⁴⁷ Many of the liturgical documents of crucial importance for the development of this discipline have been known and researched by Rev. PhD. Ene Braniște, which appears in the footnotes and the bibliography given by him within the studies and the works he has developed, but especially in the academic textbooks “General Liturgy” and “Special Liturgy”. A thorough analysis of the work of Father Professor can give us a fairly comprehensive picture of how it were perceived and used in the Romanian liturgical theology the results reached in this theological discipline within the *Liturgical Movement* in the West, throughout the twentieth century. The use of liturgical sources relating to the Eastern cult, published in the West, by Fr Braniște Ene must be regarded in a positive way, because not only once the leaders and founders of the Liturgical Movement said that for them, the Orthodoxy testifies about “the great liturgical prayer” of the early Church”. “The Orthodox Church, wrote a Catholic historian of the Liturgical Movement, has preserved the spirit of the Liturgy of the early Church and continues to live through this and gets life that spring from it.”⁴⁸ This is how must be seen the especial interest in the West for the Orthodox liturgical tradition and the sympathy westerns for Orthodoxy. Therefore “for the Orthodox theologian, the material and experience of the Liturgical Movement in the West is not something foreign, but instead, is one of the most valuable aids in his work.”⁴⁹ We believe that this is the way in which we must see the entire work of using the liturgical material published in the West, by Rev. Prof. Ene Braniște. The using of the Western sources regarding the Orthodox cult was made by him in a creative manner, all this information was used in a critical manner and highlighted from the perspective of the Orthodox researcher.

From all the aspects presented above, we ca see the profound theological training of Rev. PhD. Ene Braniște, his professionalism, his pro-

⁴⁷ Robert F. Taft, *O Istorie a Liturghiei Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur. Vol. II. Transferul darurilor și celelalte rituri preanaforale. Partea 1. Intrarea cea mare*, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, p. 35

⁴⁸ Dom Olivier Rousseau, *Histoire du Mouvement Liturgique*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1945, p. 198.

⁴⁹ Alexander Schmemmann, *Introducere în Teologia Liturgică*, Σοφία Publishing House, București, 2002, p. 55.

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found teaching vocation, the synthetic exposure of great clarity of ideas. We can say with conviction that Fr. Ene Braniste is the creator of a method in theological research, outlining is a real research model in the Liturgical Theology area, but also as the servant of the Holy Altar, worthy to be followed by us today.