

TEOLOGIA

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

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UNIVERSITATEA „AUREL VLAICU” ARAD  
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# TEOLOGIA

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### **The mission of theology: explaining transmitting and preaching the dogmas**

Closely related to theology is what we generally call dogma or dogmas, as the truth of faith revealed by God and formulated, explained, preached and defined by the Church, so that people can be saved. So, dogmas express the living and saving faith in Jesus Christ, the incarnated Son of God, and in his work or his saving care. In the mind of wide groups of people, there is a perception about dogmas that they entail a seclusion and rigidity of the spirit which does not allow humans to evolve on the knowledge scale of his fulfilment, keeping them trapped between the limits of rigid schemes of thought. The understanding of the dogmas has nothing to do with their meaning proposed by the Church; from the Church's point of view dogmas are understood by taking into account other coordinates and other significations.

Father Staniloae used to say about dogmas that they represent “the doctrinal expression of the plan for salvation and glorification of those who believe made through the Church by Christ and The Holy Spirit” (Dogmatic Orthodox Theology...). The Church must, for each generation of believers, emphasize the inexhaustible richness of the dogmas' content and message, which become spiritual food for the man in search of a deeper meaning for his existence. Since dogmas are defined in a concentrated and synthetic manner by the Church, they can't be understood and explored in their true depth by man alone, the seeker of true life, light, power and guidance. They must be clarified, explained and highlighted to people; they will thus understand that dogmas are answers – always new – to the problems they face in their lives. These explanations of the dogmas cannot ignore at any moment the content of the Holy Scripture and Tradition on the basis of which the dogmas have been formulated.

Theology would be devoid of any real content, legitimacy and credibility if it did not have as a permanent mission the explaining and deep-

ening of dogmas. Thereby, theology brings an indispensable and blessed service to the Church as a divine-human settlement for the salvation of all people, preparing them for salvation and eternal happy life in the Kingdom of The Holy Trinity. Thus, theology becomes a necessary and useful tool so that the Church can give testimony each time about life and salvation in Jesus Christ. Through its theology, the Church can endlessly deepen the unending wealth of the truths of faith, or of dogmas, revealing lights and directions for their lives, namely all that is necessary for people, supporting them in their search for real joy, wisdom and light, their true humanization. The Church becomes the atmosphere where theology must work, manifest itself and blossom.

Theology must never be fixed within in the concepts of a historical period, marked in a certain way from a philosophical, cultural, scientific and social point of view, but must always remain open towards other horizons of anchorage in different and always new historical contexts. Only in this way will it be able to show to the world “the new wine” of the adaptation of theology to the real problems of the world in which it exists

In order for Theology’s mission of analysing in depth and explaining dogmas to be useful for both Church and people, this work of immersing into the mysterious depth of dogmas must be done while remaining in close relation to the life of prayer and faith of the Church, and while staying always open to the presence of the Holy Spirit, Who makes the Jesus Christ also present and working in the Church and the salvation that he brought to the world through his Passions, his Death and his Resurrection.

The love towards the Church’s dogmas, the passion for their close study, the acknowledgement of their impact on the Church’s life and on that of each member must accompany even today the students of theology, especially as we find ourselves in a historical period marked by secularization, human alienation from the Christian values, by moods and attitudes clearly adverse to the teachings Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

**Rev. Ph. D. Ioan Tulcan**

# STUDIES AND ARTICLES

**Petr B. Mikhaylov<sup>1</sup>**

## **The Eucharistic Sermon Today**

### **Abstract**

Catechism becomes one of most important functions of the ecclesiastical life. This theological problem is one of the most important for the Russian theologians. Today we observe a phenomenon that could be named “Eucharistic discussions”.

The scientific strategies or theological methodologies that can be mentioned in the field of Eucharistic theology are: 1) terminological methodology, when a scholar studies ancient terminology of Eucharist, 2) typological methodology when we are looking for the historical material through some schemes, and 3) mystagogical methodology when the scholar is interested in the testimony of ancient sources and questions like – how an ordinary person must understand the Sacrament and take part in it? This methodology is mostly interesting for us for the reason that this method is related to an exceptionally old tradition of theological education of the Church.

### **Keywords**

*Eucharistic Sermon, Liturgical Theology, methodology, contemporary Russian Theology*

### **1. Eucharistic discussions**

There is no special need to prove that Eucharist Sacrament is the central point of ecclesiastic being. The Eucharist focuses in itself the general goal of our Christian life — the closest communion with God that is partly possible for us during our earthly life. This connection is a pledge of our common being with God and in God. The Sacrament of Communion gives us hope for our future eternal life. We know very well that in our everyday life this understanding is mostly lost, this central meaning of its designation and general goal grows weak. The great theological efforts of orthodox

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theologians — for example Father Alexander Schmemman — has revealed the cause of it in our time. The reason for it lies in some kind of removal of accents in Eucharist theology — in declaration that the central goal of the Sacrament is transfiguration of holy gifts while its real substance consists in our communion to Christ and — at the end times — to His Kingdom.

On the other hand every generation of Christian practitioners has common need to educate the young, to initiate the new members of the Church into the mystic life of Christianity. This need is especially relevant to the Orthodox Churches of Eastern Europe because the great number of mature-age people are coming to the Church for the first time in their life. So catechism becomes one of most important functions of the ecclesiastical life.

This theological problem is one of the most important for the Russian theologians. Today we observe a phenomenon that could be named “Eucharistic discussions”. It includes the international conferences, special discussions and polemic publications concerning this theme. We can mention some of them. For example, the official commission of Holy Synod of Russian Orthodox Church has dedicated its last international Conference that took place in Moscow in 2007 to the questions of sacramental theology in orthodox tradition. It was called “Orthodox teaching of the sacraments of the Church”. Its largest section was dedicated to the Sacrament of Eucharist. A big number of distinguished scholars from all over the world took part in it. For many years Russian Orthodox Church had negotiations with Lutheran theologians concerning the problem of Eucharist. In December 2007 there appeared a conclusive statement: “The mystery of Church: Holy Eucharist in the ecclesiastic life”. At last in 2008 the 17<sup>th</sup> volume of Orthodox Encyclopedia has appeared. The greatest part of it — about one fifth (150 pages) — is occupied by the article “Eucharist”. That’s why we can speak about some kind of “Eucharistic discussions” in Russian theology today that gives us a lot of material for scientific synthesizing.

## **2. The types of Eucharistic methodologies**

So what kind of scientific strategies or theological methodologies can we mark in the field of Eucharistic theology? I think we can speak about at least three directions: 1) terminological methodology, when a scholar studies ancient terminology of Eucharist, its terms, and their contextual signifi-

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cances. For example such terms that were used by ancient authors in connection with this Sacrament as τύπος, σύμβολον, αντίτυπα, μετάληψις, μεταποίησις, μετουσίωσις; 2) typological methodology when we are looking for the historical material through some schemes, for example the schemes that were used by Catholic and Lutheran theologians — “Eucharistic realism” and “Eucharistic symbolism”; 3) mystagogical methodology (from the Greek term μυσταγωγία — that means ancient practice of initiation into the ecclesiastical sacramental life) when the scholar is interested in the testimony of ancient sources and questions like — how an ordinary person must understand the Sacrament and take part in it? The last one is our own proposition, which is based on the ancient tradition of church catechism. This methodology is mostly interesting for us for the reason that this method is related to an exceptionally old tradition of theological education of the Church and also for the reason that christian theology today has the same need to give spiritual and theological education to the contemporary society.

When we follow the terminological methodology the horizon of the research is limited by the atomic elements — separate lexic units that are the main objects of research. It may be characterized as a research at a micro-level with micro-results. No doubt, this approach gives some degree of authenticity in reconstruction of a certain ancient teachings. Nevertheless one should bear in mind that the sphere of actuality of this and that term is limited by the historic borders of its usage. Leaving its chronological borders turns to be very problematic for a scholar. Thus it's a universally acknowledged fact that the term μετουσίωσις/ transsubstantiation (transsubstantiation), considered by many to be the most adequate for the description of turning of bread and wine into Body and Blood in the course of Eucharistic Sacrament, in Greek written tradition appears in its specially eucharistic meaning only by the end of Greek patristic literature, in the writings of Gennady Scolarius in the second third of the XV<sup>th</sup> century. So the research potential of the so called “terminologic method” turns to be minimal.

With the “typological approach” the researcher follows some conceptual generalizations formulated in the course of the previous studies and applied to the given historical material. It may be characterized as a research at the level of macro-observations, or of abstract theoretic gener-

alizations. Of course, this method also has some euristic value. But it also lacks in methodological approach as far as this or that formulated typology not always follows directly from the material under scrutiny and therefore the scholar may sometimes find himself in the surroundings of unauthentic and ungrounded notions imposed on the object of his studies. There are many examples when the teaching of the same author is attributed to the diametrically opposite types. For example the teaching on the Eucharist by John Chrysostom gave grounds to define it (Eucharist) as both “spiritual”<sup>2</sup>, that is – symbolic Sacrament and “realist”<sup>3</sup>. It should be said that both opinions are fully argued and each of them seems convincing in its own way. It is obvious that in this case St John Chrysostom gives grounds for mutually exclusive interpretations. Therefore typological discerning according the line “symbolism” – “realism” is not always effective. The studies of other ancient manuscripts may give grounds for more subtle definitions of this typology that may practically cross out its fixed characteristics. In some cases one may speak about such unusual mixture of terms like “symbolic realism” or “realistic symbolism”. In this case the revealing of the concept of “symbol” itself would become a principal matter.

At last, the third approach we define as “mystagogic”. In this case we have borrowed an ancient liturgical term *μυσταγωγία*, taken by ecclesiastic theologians from the pagan sacred mystery tradition. “Mystagogia” means initiation into the sacrament (or, to use archaic Russian term “tainovodstvo”). Appropriateness of introduction of this term into eucharistic context can be explained by the fact that Eucharist is a Sacrament and the ancient tradition has a long history of initiation. Ancient ecclesiastical scriptures constituted a certain genre of mystagogic literature directed toward newly-converted christians seeking more knowledge and ecclesiastic experience. To this category we may attribute “Mystagogic Homilies” by St Cyril of Jerusalem<sup>4</sup> placed as a conclusion to his “Catechismal Homilies” and devoted to interpretation of the main liturgic and ecclesiastic sacraments: Christening, Anointment and Eucharist. To the same category we may attribute a treatise by St Maxim the Confessor “Mystagogy” written in the early years of his theological activity and devoted mainly to interpretation of mystic profundities of ecclesiastic life. The ancient theologians instructed their proselytes how to proceed to sacraments and by the same token how to understand it.

<sup>2</sup> Michaud E. *St Jean Chrysostom et l’Eucharistie*. Paris, 1903.

<sup>3</sup> I.e.: Ruch C. *et al.* *Eucharistie* // DTC T. 5 (1924). Col. 989-1368.

<sup>4</sup> Its attribution to Cyril is not definitely proved.

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Mystagogic method allows avoiding the above-mentioned setbacks of the first two approaches. On one hand we are insured against anachronisms inherent to the terminological method as far as interpretations of Eucharist can be found in all known mystagogic texts. On the other hand we keep distance from the object of our study. In this case the studied material is less subjected to the volitional intrusion on the part of the researcher and gives enough grounds for theological generalizations. The conclusions from the research that was executed according to the mystagogic method are entirely and completely conditioned by the initial originality of the studied material and as a result are highly authentic from the historical and therefore the theological point of view. We even dare say that this very type of research is the best way to disclose the methodological devices used by the ancient Fathers for initiation into the Sacrament of Eucharist thus building the road to constructing the structure of eucharitic teaching – the Holy Fathers' hermeneutics of Sacrament.

### **3. The mystagogic method**

In the ecclesiastic scriptures of the IV<sup>th</sup> century AD one can find many characteristic fragments where ancient Fathers instruct their pupils *how* one should proceed to Sacrament, in what state of mind and sentiment. In comparison to small number of theoretic and abstract reflections about what happens in the course of the Sacrament, its types and changes in the spiritual substance of a christian embarking on the sacrament, the amount of practical instructions is far broader. Ancient theologians very often address the congregation directly therefore the amount of texts dealing with the theme of Eucharist ranges from Catechismal Orations to codes of moral maxims and church sermons.

First of all it should be noted that all the authors dealing with the theme of Eucharist insistently stress the demand of conscious part-taking in the sacrament. It should be approached “with reasoning”. So the first imperative for the communicant is understanding of the mystical meaning of Sacrament, concealing deep meanings under the visible actions and palpable substances. Let us fix it as the knowledge imperative. If a communicant does not satisfy the demand of conscious part-taking in the Sacrament then it is unsound for him. The reduction of the Sacrament to its ritualistic side makes it lacking in meaning and taking part in it – fruitless.

The meaning of the Sacrament is manifold. St John Chrysostom stresses the main three components – Sacrament’s essence, its purpose and its consequences. The communicant must be clearly aware of the miracle of Eucharist, why was it established and what are its benefits, that is to clarify for himself its essence, its purpose and its consequences<sup>5</sup>.

The applicant to the Sacrament must answer strict requirements. To a great degree even the fulfillment of the Sacrament itself depends on his disposition and general mood. Full understanding of the sacrament’s meaning and absolutely conscious part-taking in it that’s what is expected from the communicant. The final aim, the meaning and the consequences of the Eucharist Sacrament are expressed by St Basil the Great with the word *lógos*, utterly polysemantic in itself: “it is vain when someone that proceeds to the Communion without comprehension its meaning according to this Communion is given, and this one that receives Communion unworthy is condemned”<sup>6</sup>.

So very important role in the Sacrament of Eucharist is played by the factor of faith. And St Basil’s opinion that it is faith and conscious effort on the part of the true believers in the realization of atonement that is needed for the fulfillment of the Sacrament and even for the realization of our Saviour’s words is not a single instance. Thus the claim to receive communion with faith turns to be the second imperative needed for fulfilling of the Sacrament and its fruitfulness for the communicant. This requirement we shall fix as the imperative of faith. It is shared by the majority of Saint Fathers who have wrote and taught about Eucharist. And it was Gregory of Nyssa among the theologians of the IV<sup>th</sup> century who, possibly, reasoned with most depth and detail about the Sacrament of Eucharist. The Eucharist terminology introduced by him has specified future directions of its development in the work of Greek theologians. In his Large Catechismal Oration where a separate chapter is devoted to the Eucharism Gregory writes: “Body also by the indwelling of God the Word was transmuted to the dignity of Godhead. Rightly, then, do we believe that now also the bread which is consecrated by the Word of God is changed into the Body of God the Word”<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> ...ἀναγκαῖον μαθεῖν τὸ θαῦμα τῶν μυστηρίων, τί ποτέ ἐστι, καὶ διατί ἐδόθη, καὶ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τοῦ πράγματος — *Joannes Chrysostomus*. Homilia 46 in Joannem 2 // PG T. 59. Col. 260.

<sup>6</sup> ...οὐδὲν ὠφελείται ὁ ἄνευ τῆς κατανοήσεως τοῦ λόγου, καθ’ ὃν δίδοται ἡ μετάληψις τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, προσερχόμενος τῇ κοινωνίᾳ· ὁ δὲ ἀναξίως μεταλαμβάνων κατακέκριται — *Basiliius Magnus*. Regulae morales 21. 2.

<sup>7</sup> ...τὸ δὲ σῶμα τῆ ἐνοικήσει τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου πρὸς τὴν θεικὴν ἀξίαν μεταποιήθη. κα

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Gregory is very cautious in his choice of words for rendering of what happens in the course of transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. He does not state it as a given historic fact but constricts himself to demonstrating that the changing of the Eucharistic donations that happens in the course of the Sacrament is the result of installation of the Divine Word, consecration by It and our coming to believe in it. This understanding is shared by all the important theologians of the ancient times who have presented us with the fruits of their eucharistic experience. John Chrysostom calls upon his flock to proceed to the Sacrament with faith: So let us proceed to the Sacrament with faith everyone having its own weakness... A proceeding with faith means not only to receive the sacrifice but also touch it with pure heart, to have such mood as if proceeding to Christ himself<sup>8</sup>.

Chrysostom's expression is utterly simple: "to proceed with faith means not only to assimilate what is offered but to touch it with pure heart, to dispose oneself as if you approach Christ himself". In other words to approach with faith means to see the true substance of the Sacrament hidden from sensory perception but accessible for the feat of faith. Now it's time to speak about the nature of the sacrament. And not about the Sacrament of Eucharist only but about any other Sacrament of the Church. It is clear that the purely physical, material side of the Sacrament does not need any special act of faith. Its convincingness is quite understandable. This is a Sacrament as a physical reality. But it is the non-material side of it that is the very focus of the sacrament. At the same time it is the most problematic side of the Sacrament and therefore demands an act of faith on the part of the Sacrament's part-takers.

St John Chrysostom speaks about the nature of Sacrament as such on a full scale and in detail: "For the Mystery wants no argumentation; but just what it is, that only is to be declared. Since it will not be a mystery, divine and whole in all its parts, when thou addest any thing to it of thyself also. And in another sense, too, a mystery is so called; because we do not behold the things which we see, but some things we see and others we believe. For such is the nature of our Mysteries. I, for instance, feel differently upon these subjects from an unbeliever... For not by the sight do I judge

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λῶς οὖν καὶ νῦν τὸν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁγιαζόμενον ἄρτον εἰς σῶμα τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου μεταποιεῖσθαι πιστεύομεν — *Gregorius Nysseus*. Oratio catechetica magna 37.

<sup>8</sup> Προσερχώμεθα τοίνυν μετὰ πίστεως, ἕκαστος ἀσθένειαν ἔχων... Τὸ δὲ προσελθεῖν μετὰ πίστεως οὐ τὸ λαβεῖν ἐστὶ μόνον τὸ προκείμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ μετὰ κθαράς καρδίας ἄψασθαι, τὸ οὕτω διακεῖσθαι, ὡς αὐτῷ προσιόντας τῷ Χριστῷ — *Joannes Chrysostomus*. Homilia 50 in Mattheum 2.

of the things that appear, but by the eyes of the mind. I hear of the “Body of Christ:” in one sense I understand the expression, in another sense the unbeliever”<sup>9</sup>.

Therefore the imperative of faith demands an act of faith in the spiritual, perceived by mind, or “real” side of the Sacrament from the communicant. For this act of faith one should discern in advance the sensory and the apprehended side of the Sacrament (ασθητόν / νοητόν), or in other words its corporal and spiritual sides. This discerning constitutes one of the most fundamental categories of the world apprehension in antiquity. Therefore the functioning of the mind that perceives understandable in the sensual is in the long run reduced to the theological reasoning. Thus Chrysostom writes: “the mind discerns mental, senses — sensual”<sup>10</sup>.

Spiritual experience gives testimony of seeing and understanding limited by its material objective character and stating the lack of faith. It is in this way that Chrysostom interprets the words from the Gospel: *the spirit revives, the flesh does not heel* (Jn 6:52, 66).

To acquire the insight of the spiritual essence of things one needs the “feet of faith” of which St Paul and Basil the Great spoke. Faith intensifies abilities for spiritual insight in a person. The example of such spiritual contemplation is given to us by the Apostles who fully gave themselves to the faith according to the testimony of St John Chrysostome: “For the Jews listened carnally, and with human reasonings, but the disciples spiritually, and committing all to faith. Wherefore Christ said, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit”; that is, “do not suppose that the teaching of My words is subject to the rule of material consequences, or to the necessity of created things. Things spiritual are not of this nature, nor endure to submit to the laws of earth”<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον κατασκευῆς οὐ δέεται, ἀλλ’ ὅπερ ἐστὶ, τοῦτο μόνον ὄν καταγγέλλεται ἔπει οὐκ ἔσται μυστήριον θεῖον καὶ ὀλόκληρον, ὅταν καὶ παρὰ σου τοῦ τι προσθῆς. Καὶ ἄλλως δὲ μυστήριον καλεῖται, ὅτι οὐχ ἅπερ ὀρώμεν πιστεύομεν, ἀλλ’ ἕτερα ὀρώμε, καὶ ἕτερα πιστεύομεν. Τοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ τῶν μυστηρίων ἡμῶν φύσις. Ἐτέρως γοῦν ἐγὼ, καὶ ἕτέρως ὁ ἄπιστος περὶ τούτων διακείμεθαί. Οὐ γὰρ τῇ ὄψει κρίνω τὰ φαινόμενα, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τῆς διανοίας. Ἀκούω σῶμα Χριστοῦ ἕτέρως ἐγὼ νοῶ τὸ εἰρημένον, ἕτέρως ὁ ἄπιστος — *Idem*. In epistulam I ad Corinthios 7. 2 // PG T. 61. Col. 55-56.

<sup>10</sup> ...νοῦς μὲν γὰρ νοητὰ, αἴσθησις δὲ τὰ αἰσθητὰ διακρίνει καὶ κοινὸν ἡμῖν τὸ καὶ δημιουργὸν εἰδέναι τὸν τῶν ὄλων Θεόν — *Joannes Chrysostomus*. Fragmenta in Iob (in catenis) // PG T. 64. Col. 609.

<sup>11</sup> Οἱ μὲν γὰρ σαρκικῶς καὶ μετὰ λογισμῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἤκουον, οὗτοι δὲ πνευματικῶς, καὶ τῇ πίστει τὸ πᾶν ἐπιτρέποντες. Διὸ καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἔλεγεν Πνεῦμά

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Obviously every person is endowed with the abilities for spiritual contemplation. But their developing is the fruit of purposeful efforts on the part of a person. Thus the time has come to formulate the third demand that was posed by the ancients to the communicant: the imperative of readiness for the Sacrament. It is being talked about in many ways. St Basil the Great in his Moral Rules that are designed to instruct any regular member of the congregation in Christian belief formulates this demand in this way: What is peculiar prosperity of Christian? — To purify from every dirtiness of flesh and spirit in the Blood of Christ, to perfect himself in fear of God and love of Christ... but to be holy and pure, and in that way to eat the Flesh of Christ and to drink his Blood. Because a person who eats and drinks unworthily is eating and drinking his own condemnation<sup>12</sup>.

So ancient eucharistic theology has left to us some precious experience of initiation into the Sacrament of ecclesiastic Sacraments – holy Eucharist. So far as we could disclose and describe, this initiation consists of a number of interrelated demands to the communicant: the demand of conscious part-taking in it, the demand of the feet of faith that ascertains the genuine, not merely apparent essence of the Sacrament and lastly the demand of being ready to take part in the Sacrament which is expressed in the spiritual and corporeal purity of the communicant. The important consequence of such mystagogic approach to the Sacrament of Eucharist is expressed in the highest responsibility that we take while proceeding to it, this “feet of faith” that is expected from us. Without intellectual and spiritual proceeding on the way to comprehending the Sacrament offered to us by the Church, restricting our experience to mere doctrinal verification of the things happening, we do not fulfill the purpose of the Sacrament in which we take part according to our abilities.

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ἔστι τὰ ῥήματα, ἀ λελάληκα ὑμῖν ῥητέστι, μὴ ὑπολάβῃς τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀκολουθίᾳ, καὶ τῇ τῶν γινομένων ἀνάγκῃ τῶν ῥημάτων τῶν ἐμῶν τὴν διδασκαλίαν ὑποκείσθαι. Οὐ τοιαῦτα τὰ πνευματικὰ οὐκ ἀνέχεται δουλεύειν νόμοις τοῖς ἐπὶ γῆς — *Idem*. Hom. 47 in Joan. 3 // PG T. 59. Col. 266-267.

<sup>12</sup> *Τὸ ἴδιον Χριστιανοῦ; Τὸ καθαρισθῆναι μὲν ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐπιτελεῖν δὲ ἀγιοσύνην ἐν φόβῳ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀγάπῃ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ μὴ ἔχειν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα, ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἅγιον καὶ ἄμωμον, καὶ οὕτως ἐσθίειν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ πίνειν τὸ αἷμα. Ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων ἀναξίως, κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει — *Basilii Magni*. Regulae moralis 80. 22 // PG T. 31. Col. 869.*

Aristotle Papanikolaou<sup>1</sup>

## Tradition or Identity Politics: The Role of the ‘West’ in Contemporary Orthodox Theology

### Abstract

During a class on “Modernity”, at the University of Chicago, the Roman Catholic theologian, David Tracy, my *Doctorater*, said to me, “Aristotle, the Orthodox have a certain advantage. They did not go through the well-known chain of events within the West, meaning the Reformation, Counter-Reformation, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Modernity, Postmodernity. And because of this, those within the Orthodox tradition have the advantage of knowing what it means *to think like a tradition*.”

I will do two things in this paper: 1) I will illustrate David Tracy’s point by showing how nineteenth and twentieth-century Orthodox theology is a manifestation of “thinking as a tradition” on the what arguably has been the very core of the Orthodox tradition from the early Byzantine period, and, perhaps, earlier: this heart is the principle of divine-human communion. 2) I will argue that “thinking as a tradition” has its potential downside, as it can degenerate into a politics of identity in which the essential aspects of Orthodox theology are chosen as a way of self-identification in opposition to the ‘West’. In short, Orthodox theology becomes a distorted apophaticism—defined by what the ‘West’ is not.

### Keywords

*Contemporary Orthodox Theology, Western Theology, tradition, dialogue*

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## **1. Identity Politics: The ‘West’ in the ‘East’**

It is often underappreciated and more often unnoticed by both non-Orthodox and Orthodox that most of the Orthodox world was oppressed for five hundred years. One could argue that the first signs of a revival of Orthodox intellectual life after the fall of Constantinople started to appear in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia. Although critical of the ‘West’, Russian sophiology was not based on a mutually exclusive opposition between the ‘East’ and the ‘West’. Bulgakov was equally as critical of the Cappadocian Fathers as he was of Augustine.<sup>2</sup> One sees such an opposition between ‘East’ and ‘West’ in the Slavophile movement, which was not, however, theologically sophisticated.

Although Lossky was ecumenical and probably did his dissertation on Meister Eckhart in order to find trajectories in the ‘West’ that were compatible with the ‘East’, I would argue that the first signs of a sophisticated theological basis for a mutually exclusive opposition between ‘East’ and ‘West’ start to appear in the theology of Vladimir Lossky. For Lossky, Dionysius the Areopagite is opposed to Thomas Aquinas; apophaticism and the essence/energies distinction is opposed to the Scholastic notion of rationalism and created grace. This opposition between Dionysian apophaticism and Scholasticism is continued in the theology of John Romanides, who was clearly influenced by Lossky and Florovsky, and who extends the opposition back to Augustine. The rationalism that infects medieval scholasticism and leads to the notion of created grace can be traced back to Augustine, whose thought, according to both Romanides and Yannaras, leads logically to the nihilism of Nietzsche. Metropolitan John Zizioulas further extended this opposition between ‘West’ and ‘East’ to trinitarian theology, by mutually opposing the trinitarian theology of Augustine, who prioritizes the essence in the doctrine of the Trinity, to that of the Cappadocians, who prioritize the person. This self-identification against the ‘West’ continues in a political form today in the rhetoric coming from Orthodox countries against ‘Western’ liberal democracy or ‘Western’ notions of human rights, or ‘Western’ individualism, which ultimately have their roots in corrupted Catholic and Protestant notions of the individual.

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<sup>2</sup> See George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, eds., *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2008).

It is, thus, not difficult to see the negative role the 'West' has played in contemporary Orthodox theology, with the two notable exceptions being Bulgakov and Dumitru Staniloae, whose approach to the 'West' was one of critical generosity. If it is remembered that most of the Orthodox world suffered under 500 years of oppression, then Orthodox theology can be described, in part, a post-colonial attempt to find its intellectual way after centuries of oppression. Normally after oppression, one expects the liberated oppressed to self-identify against the oppressor. The Orthodox situation is different: the oppressors were non-Orthodox, but instead of self-identifying against Muslims or Communists, the Orthodox self-identified against the Catholic and Protestant 'West'. There is, however, a further irony here: rather than liberating itself from the 'West', the attempt to find a purified Orthodox tradition has been dependant on the 'West'; ultimately, what is identified as 'pure' is that which is opposed to the West. The understanding of theology as this purification of the tradition from 'Western' influence is not "thinking as a tradition", but a degeneration into an ideology, which, in the end, is idolatrous. If it is to "think as a tradition", Orthodox theology today must be more self-critical about how its theology is influenced by this opposition to the 'West', which is often based on caricatures of the 'West', especially of Augustine and Aquinas. It must also reexamine to what degree our central theological concepts, such as the essence/energies distinction, are logically implied in the notion of divine-human communion, or simply function as a means to oppose Orthodoxy to the 'West' for the sake of identity formation. In other words, is the essence/energies distinction really necessary for understanding divine-human communion, or is it necessary because the Neo-Scholastics oppose it and, therefore, it's what distinguishes us as Orthodox. It is impossible to ignore the 'West'; but, would it be possible for Orthodoxy to critically engage the 'West'? Rather than a hermeneutics of suspicion, can Orthodox theology approach the 'West' with a hermeneutics of charity, which may lead to discovering points of continuity rather than absolute opposition?

## 2. Thinking as a Tradition: Personhood and its Discontents

In a more positive and constructive way, "thinking as a tradition" is most evident in the remarkable consensus in Orthodox thought on the principle

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of divine-human communion, not simply as the goal of theology, but as the very first principle upon which all theological thinking is grounded. It is a consensus that goes back to the patristic period, and one that does not rely on any opposition to the 'West'. This principle is at the heart of the theologies of such well-known Orthodox thinkers as Lossky, Florovsky, Staniloae, Yannaras and Zizioulas, even if such a consensus has not resulted in the same theological conclusions.

In fact, in spite of the differences in their thought, Lossky and Zizioulas<sup>3</sup> produce a theology of personhood that is remarkably similar. In slightly different ways, both argue that the patristic understanding of the Trinity implies a particular theological understanding of personhood as the most adequate form of expressing this divine-human communion. A debate, however, has emerged on what 'person' means and how its meaning relates to the Trinity. It's this particular debate, which is grounded in this remarkable consensus on the principle of divine-human communion, that I think most manifests in a positive way what David Tracy meant by "thinking as a tradition."

What should we make of this category of 'person' in contemporary trinitarian theology? Any reassessment of the appropriateness of 'person' in trinitarian theology must give some account of why the word was introduced in the first place. The use, and hence, meaning of the word is inherently linked to what I call the grammar of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is my contention that the doctrine expresses a particular Christian grammar of divine-human communion. When I say that the doctrine of the Trinity expresses a grammar of divine-human communion, I'm arguing that its very development is a result of rules for theologizing about Christ and God, which are grounded in a logic of divine-human communion. My use of the word grammar, then, is not technically Wittgenstinian, though I am attempting to make sense of the conditions and contexts in which the use of the word 'Trinity' makes sense. What this means is that if we are to understand the 'point' of the doctrine of the Trinity, then one must look to the reasons why, for example, Athanasius in particular asserted the full, co-equal divinity of the Son, and hence, of the Son incarnate, Jesus Christ, with the Father. It is only by understanding these reasons that one may be

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<sup>3</sup> For more on Lossky and Zizioulas, see Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism and Divine-Human Communion* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

able to discern the point of the doctrine of the Trinity and, thus, elucidate its grammar. A few brief examples will suffice.

One of Athanasius's most perplexing arguments against those he labels as 'Arians' in his *Oration against the Arians* is the one where he attempts to argue for the divinity of the Son by stating that if the Son were not divine, the Father would not be eternally Father. Notwithstanding the fact that Panneberg thinks it's Athanasius's most crucial insight, I never thought it a convincing argument for the Trinity. It took a while to realize that the force of the argument only makes sense if one takes into account the shared presuppositions between Athanasius and the so-called 'Arians'. Among other things, both would agree that the Son is a mediator between God and creation. In order to preserve a particular notion of divine simplicity, the so-called 'Arians' do not identify the Son as the 'true' God, but as something distinct from creation so as to affirm some kind of mediation between God and creation. Otherwise put, the so-called 'Arians' want to affirm a particular notion of divine simplicity and some sort of communion. Athanasius, however, calls them on this incoherency; the attempt to preserve a certain kind of understanding of divine simplicity that doesn't allow for communion with the true God is forcing the so-called 'Arians' to deny an identification of the Son with the 'true' God, the consequence of which is the conclusion that the Father is not eternally Father, which, in the end, destroys the very notion of divine simplicity the 'Arians' are trying to preserve. Essentially he is saying that the so-called 'Arians' cannot have their cake and eat it too. In order to allow for a notion of divine simplicity that would allow for communion with the divine, they must allow for an understanding of divine simplicity in which the Father eternally generates the Son. By identifying the Son with the 'true' God, Athanasius is not simply following any notion of divine simplicity, but one that allows for divine-human communion.

This grammar of divine-human communion is also clearly evident in the *Oration* in Athanasius's discussion of Proverbs 8.22, "The Lord created me as a beginning of his ways for his works," in the second *Oration*. What is suggestive is that Athanasius spends many, many pages arguing why the Son cannot be considered a creature before offering an interpretation of the passage itself. Athanasius ultimately claims that the 'Arians' either give up the idea that mediation is possible, or admit that mediation is in and through the

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Son as ‘true’ God.<sup>4</sup> Not understanding this important hermeneutical key is why the so-called ‘Arians’ misunderstand Proverb 8.22. It would indeed not be difficult to find similar passages in Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian; or, for that matter, Dionysius and Maximus.

If I am correct that governing the theology of the Trinity is the grammar of divine-human communion, then this has implications the categories of *ousia* and *hypostasis*.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding the legitimate concerns surrounding Zizioulas’s interpretation of the Fathers and his theology of the monarchy of the Father, I think Zizioulas’s understanding of personhood as a relational event of freedom and uniqueness is logically implied in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, especially if this doctrine is governed by the grammar of divine-human communion. What is clear, around this period, is that the goal was to avoid non-Nicene interpretations. This was the goal not because there was concern to safeguard an already given faith in a God who is three and one. It was the goal because in these three options

<sup>4</sup> As he says in paragraph 44, “[w]e have taken up these points at such length and have countered the irrational fabrications which they have devised in their hearts before dealing with the passage of the Proverbs, so that they may recognize that it is not fitting to call the Son of God a creature and may thus learn to read correctly the passage in Proverbs, according to its right sense” (2.44). Prior to this, Athanasius argues that “if the nature of originated beings needs a mediator because it is not capable of partaking in the direct activity of God, then it is altogether necessary that the Word, as a creature whose being is also originated, also needs a mediator for his creation, for he too is one of those whose nature is originated and cannot partake of God’s activity but has need of a mediator. And if a mediator is found for him, then there will again be need for another mediator” (2. 26).

<sup>5</sup> Both John Behr and Lewis Ayres are very Losskian in their interpretation of *ousia* and *hypostasis* insofar as these categories cannot imply a dense understanding of personhood, and are simply appropriations of philosophical categories, without any attempt at philosophical rigor, to indicate in an apophatic way, what is common and unique to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Ayres goes a little further than Behr in saying that the use of these categories is governed by the grammar of divine simplicity. According to Ayres, “Within this context pro-Nicenes make use of a wide variety of terminology for the persons: *prosopon*, *hypostasis*, *tropos uparxeos*, *persona*, for example . . . Pro-Nicenes were of course keen to give a coherent account of the terminology they deployed, particularly to show that the logic of differentiation implied in their divisions between essence and persons did not involve them in denying the unity of God” (280). In a not-so-cryptic reference to John Zizioulas, Lewis then, adds, “[t]o be a little more precise, one does not find in pro-Nicenes extended attempts to develop an ontology of divine personhood.” (280).

something less than full communion with the One God is given. Thus, it can be argued that the reworking of *hypostasis* and *prosopon* emerges against the background of a grammar of divine-human communion. *Hypostasis* and *prosopon* are appropriated so as to allow for distinctions within God that would allow for communion with the ‘true’ God in the person of Son; the language of *ousia* simply cannot do that work. Within the context of the grammar of the doctrine itself, ‘person’ is the category that emerges as an attempt to make sense of the God who in love and freedom is incarnate in Jesus Christ, and whose incarnation is the condition for the possibility of our being constituted as free and unique beings, i.e. persons, in an event of communion of the created with the uncreated. What was being clarified in these controversies was not simply language that would identify what is common or particular in God, but the very language of divine-human communion itself.

The more important point, however, is that the contemporary Orthodox theology of personhood is not a result of the influence of ‘western’ existentialism, as some have accused it; in fact, this accusation is just another indication of how the construction of the ‘West’ influences Orthodox theological discourse; instead of “thinking as a tradition” and arguing how a theology of personhood does not logically cohere with the Orthodox notion of divine-human communion, the best that some Orthodox theologians can do is engage in a rhetoric of demonization and simply say: its ‘western’; therefore, it’s not Orthodox. I don’t agree. Even though Lossky and Zizioulas often identify Orthodoxy against the ‘West’, the Orthodox understanding of personhood is a clear manifestation of “thinking as a tradition”, insofar as it is the logical development of the principle of divine-human communion that is at the heart of the trinitarian debates of the fourth century. I would further argue that Bulgakov is doing something similar with the concept of *Sophia* that Lossky and Zizioulas did with the trinitarian categories of *ousia* and *hypostasis*. For Bulgakov, if Jesus is the Christ as the God-Man, then God exists eternally as freedom and love to be in communion with what is not God. The categories of *ousia* and *hypostasis* do not adequate account for the way in which God exists, which requires a further category—which Bulgakov identifies with the category of *Sophia*. I do not mention Bulgakov here in order to assert that he is correct, but only to show how his sophiology must be included in contemporary Orthodox theology’s ongoing work of interpreting the principle of divine-human communion in the face of contemporary challenges and ques-

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tions, such as Orthodoxy's relation to democracy, human rights and religious pluralism. This work does not require an opposition to the 'West', but should actually be done in conversation with certain theological trajectories in the West. This is what it means to think like a tradition, which is nothing more than a tradition of thinking on divine-human communion.

Alexey R. Fokin<sup>1</sup>

## Different Dogmatic Approaches to the Question of the Origin of Human Souls

### Abstract

The study presents the problem of the origin of human souls. Although in regard to the question of the origin of the soul of the first man Church Fathers and Councils have established the doctrine on the creation of the soul by God from nothing, at the same moment when the body was created from the ground, there are still some differences in understanding of the way of this creation of the soul. In regard to the question of the origin of individual souls there is still great dogmatic uncertainty. Although the majority of the Church Fathers inclined to the theory creationism, however because of the insufficiency of the biblical data and great variety of the Patristic views, we should agree with the opinion, that it is unable for us to make a final conclusion, whether human souls are transmitted together with their bodies from parents, or are given to each man directly from God by creation from nothing.

### Keywords

*Creation, Church Fathers, theory of creationism*

1. The question of the origin of human souls is one of the complicated dogmatic questions, which belongs to the theological anthropology. This question is directly connected with such domains of the orthodox dogmatic theology, as doctrine of creation, original sin, soteriology and christology. Although the question of the origin of human souls does not belongs to those questions, which knowledge is necessarily for our salvation, the different solutions of this question may influence upon more general questions of the orthodox dogmatic theology.

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This question actually includes two different but closely connected questions: the question of the origin of the soul of the first man, Adam, and the question of the origin of souls of all other human beings (i.e. individual souls).

In regard to the first question the key biblical text is Genesis 2:7: *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his face the breath of life* (Hebrew: נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים, Greek: πνοήν ζωής); *and man became a living soul* (Hebrew: לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, Greek: εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν). Although from this text it is quite obvious, that the soul of Adam, as well as his body, was created directly by God, nevertheless in the first three centuries A. D. were proposed many different and sometimes even opposite views on how and when did the Adam's soul originate from God.

In regard to the second question the biblical data are even less sufficient and less certain. There are various expressions both in the Old and in the New Testament, which presuppose different origins of individual souls. For example, when the Bible speaks that parents give life to their children by natural way of procreation (see: Gen 1:27-28; Gen 5:3 etc.), it can mean, that human beings as a whole with their bodies and their souls descend from their ancestors. The Bible also often speaks about human soul as «blood» or that soul is in blood or is closely connected to it (see: Gen 9:1, 4-5; Levit 17:11-12). On the other hand, the Bible not less frequently speaks that God is the only source of life of the human being as a whole and of the human soul in particular (see: Eccl 12:7; Isaiah 42:5; Zechariah 12:1; 2 Maccabees 7:22-23; John 3:6; Hebrew 12:9 etc.). However all these statements are not very certain and can be interpreted in different way. Therefore it was not by chance, that, according to the testimony of Origen<sup>2</sup>, during the first three centuries A.D. the Church doctrine on the origin of human souls was not yet clearly formulated, that is why there were different approaches to the solution of this question among early Christian theologians.

2. The doctrine on the origin of the soul of the first man was precisely formulated only during the long Patristic period in the writings of the Church Fathers and in the definitions of the Church Councils. The Church has rejected false opinions of the Gnostics, Manicheans, Priscillianists and other heretics, who derived the origin of the human soul from

<sup>2</sup> Origen. De princ. I. Prooem. 5; cf. Pamphil. Apol. pro Origen. 9.

the very substance of God as an emanation of it (ἀπόρροια, σπέρμα, so-called theory of *emanation*, or *emanatism*)<sup>3</sup>, and has established the doctrine of the direct creation of the soul of the first man by God from nothing (ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος, *de nihilo*)<sup>4</sup>. This doctrine was briefly expressed by St. Augustine in his «Commentary on the Book of Genesis»: «The soul originated from God in such way, that it itself is not the substance of God ... or was not born from the substance of God or was not generated from the substance of God, but it was created by God; and it was created not in such way, that any nature of a body or irrational soul was transformed into its nature, but in such way, that it [was created] from nothing»<sup>5</sup>. This doctrine was also confirmed by some Church Councils, such as the Council of Constantinople of 543 A.D. against Origen and origenists (which Acts were included into the Acts of the fifth Ecumenical Council of 553 A.D.), and the Council of Braga (in Portugal) of 561 A.D., which anathematized heretical doctrines of the Manicheans and Priscillianists<sup>6</sup>.

At the same time, Church Fathers proposed different understanding of the way of the creation of Adam's soul. Many of them, according to the biblical analogy between the «breath» (πνοή, *flatus*) and the «inspiration» (ἐμπνευσις, ἐμφύσημα, *insufflatio, inspiratio*) and the «soul» (ψυχή, *anima*), believed, that the soul as *the breath of life* originated from «the inspiration of God». Thus, St. Justin the Philosopher speaks, that the creation, which God has created, namely Adam, received the soul as «the inspiration from God» (τὸ ἐμφύσημα τὸ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ)<sup>7</sup>. According to Clemens of Alexandria, «the body was made from the ground ... and the rational soul was breathed by God from above into the face [of the man]

<sup>3</sup> See: *Iren.* Adv. Haer. I.5.5-6; I.7.3; I.24.1, 4; I.25.1; I.26.1; II.19.7; *Tert.* Adv. Valent. 24-29; *Clem. Alex.* Exc. ex Theod. III.50.2-3; *Tatian.* Orat. ad Graec. 7; 12-13).

<sup>4</sup> See: *Justin.* Dial. 5-6; *Theophil.* Ad Autol. II.20; *Iren.* Adv. haer. IV 20.1; V 1.3; V 7.1; *Clem. Alex.* Strom. V 14.94; Protr. 10.92; *Tert.* De anima 4, 9; *Joann. Chrys.* In Gen. Hom. 13.2; *Cyr. Hier.* Catech. 4.18; *Nemes.* De nat. hom. 2.27-30, 516-546; *Theodoret.* Haer. fab. comp. V.9; Quaest. in Gen. 23; *Ps.-Athanas.* De definit. VII // PG. 28. Col. 545D-548A; *Phot.* Contr. Manich. I.2.1; *Hieron.* Apologia adv. libros Rufini, II.10; Adv. Iovinianum 2.29; Contra Joann. Hierosol. 21; Ep. 126.1; *August.* De haeres. 70; De natura et orig. anim. 1.4.4; *Leo Magn.* Ep. 15.5; *Isidor. Hispal.* De differen. rer. 101; *Raban. Maur.* De anima 1; *Agobard. Lugdun.* Contra object. Fredig. abb. 14 etc.

<sup>5</sup> *Aug.* De Genesi ad litt. VII.28.43; cf. *Joann. Damasc.* Hom. in sabb. sanct. 6 // PG. 96. Col. 608C: ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος αὐτὴν συστησάμενος.

<sup>6</sup> The 5-th anathema // Enchiridion symbolorum. N 455.

<sup>7</sup> *Just.* Dial. 40; cp.: *Iren.* Adv. haer. V.1.3; cf. IV.20.1; V.12.2.

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(ἄνωθεν ἐμπνευσθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ)»<sup>8</sup>. As explains St. Theodoret of Cyrus, these expressions of the Holy Scripture may mean, at first, the easiness of the action of creation of the human soul by God (τῆς δημιουργίας τῆν εὐκολίαν), and, secondly, may underline the spiritual, rational and immaterial nature of the human soul<sup>9</sup>. St. John Damascus supposed, that «God has given to the man the rational and intelligent soul by means of His own Inspiration (διὰ τοῦ οἰκείου ἐμφυσήματος)»<sup>10</sup>; it means, that «God has created the soul by His Divine and life-giving Inspiration, namely, by the Holy Spirit» (τῷ θείῳ δημιουργήσας καὶ ζωοποιῶ ἐμφυσήματι ὃ δ ἡ φημι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον)<sup>11</sup>. According to St. Augustine, «this inspiration (*insufflatio*) means the very action of God (*ipsam operationem Dei*), by which God has created the soul in the man by the Spirit of His power» (*Spiritu potentiae suae*)<sup>12</sup>.

There were also rejected the opinions of those theologians (such as Origen, Didymus, Evagrius, Hilary of Poitiers etc.)<sup>13</sup>, who believed, that Adam's soul was created before his body, and of those theologians (such as Tertullian)<sup>14</sup>, who maintained the opposite view. In the same time there was established the doctrine of the simultaneous creation (ἅμα πέπλασται) of the body and the soul of the first man by God<sup>15</sup>.

3. In regard to the question of the origin of individual souls the Fathers of the Church could not achieve such unambiguity and certainty in their opinions. That is why already in the Pre-Nicean period there were proposed three basic theories in order to solve this difficult question, namely:

- *first*, preexistence of souls,
- *second*, traduction or transmission of souls from parents (so-called traductionism),
- *third*, creation of souls from nothing by God (so-called creationism).

<sup>8</sup> Clem. Strom. V.14.94. Cf. Greg. Naz. Or. 38.11; 45.7; Maxim. Confess. Scholia in Eccl. 12.89-92.

<sup>9</sup> Theodorit. Quaest. in Gen. 23; Haer. fab. comp. V.9; cf. Joann. Philop. De opif. mund. I.10; VI.23; Procop. Gaz. Com. in Gen. 2.7 // PG. 87. Col 153B.

<sup>10</sup> Joann. Damasc. Exp. fidei II.12 (26).

<sup>11</sup> Idem. Hom. in sabb. sanct. 6; cf. Anastas. Sinait. Serm. in constit. hom. 3.3 // PG. 89. Col. 1164C–1165C.

<sup>12</sup> Aug. De Genesi contr. Manich. II.8.10.

<sup>13</sup> See: Origen. Hom. in Gen. I.13; Dial. Heraclid. 15; De princ. II.8.1

<sup>14</sup> Tert. De anima 9; cf. Adv. Prax. 12; De resurr. 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> Cm.: Joann. Damasc. Exp. fidei II.12 (26); Hom. in sabb. sanct. 6.

The theory of the preexistence of souls, well known from antique tradition (first of all from Pythagoreans and Platonists)<sup>16</sup>, was maintained, at first, by the Christian Gnostics (Valentine, Saturnine, Basilides, Marcion and Docetists)<sup>17</sup>, who at the same time connected this theory to the theory of emanation mentioned above. The theory of the preexistence of souls was also shared by the famous Alexandrine theologians — Clemens<sup>18</sup>, Origen and Pierius<sup>19</sup>, and after them — Didymus<sup>20</sup>, Evagrius<sup>21</sup>, Sinesius of Cyrena<sup>22</sup>, Nemesius of Emessa<sup>23</sup> and some other Church theologians, as well as Manicheans and Priscillianists<sup>24</sup>. This theory became very popular owing to Origen, according to whom, before the creation of the visible corporal world God had created the immaterial rational substances – pure spirits (*πνεύματα*), or pure intellects (*νόες καθαροί*); some of them after abandoning their love for God and spontaneously falling from Heaven became souls (*ψυχαί*), namely «cooled spirits», which required various bodies for their existence<sup>25</sup>.

However as early as in the III century this doctrine was considered non-christian and heretical because it distorts the biblical doctrine on the creation of man and reproduces pagan philosophical ideas<sup>26</sup>. The doctrine of the preexistence of souls was refuted by such authoritative Fathers of the Church as St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus, St. Cyrill of Alexandria, St. Theodoret of Cyrus, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. John Damascus in the East, and St. Jerome, St.

<sup>16</sup> See: *Plato*. Phaedr. 246 a – 249 d; Tim. 34 c – 35 b; 41 e – 42 d etc.

<sup>17</sup> See: *Iren.* Adv. Haer. I 5.5–6; I 7.3; I 24, 1, 2, 5; *Hipp.* Refut. VIII 10.1-2; *Clem. Alex.* Strom. III.3.13; IV.12.83; *Tert.* Adv. Valent. 29, 32 etc.

<sup>18</sup> See: Strom. VI.16.135; IV.26.167; Eclog. prophet. 50.1-3; Quis div. salv. 33; cf. Hypotyp. // *Phot.* Biblioth. 109; Orig. De princ. III.4.2.

<sup>19</sup> See: *Hieron.* De vir. ill. 76; *Phot.* Biblioth. 119.

<sup>20</sup> De Trin. 3.1; Enarr. in Ep. Petr. I.1.1 // PG. 38. Col. 1755.

<sup>21</sup> Keph. Gnost. I.63–65; II.1; II.19; II.87; III.6; III.22; IV.1; IV.58; V.50; VI.20; Ep. fidei 11.4–5; Ep. Ad Melan. 29–30).

<sup>22</sup> Hymn. IX.76-107.

<sup>23</sup> De nat. hom. 2.485-493, 600-603.

<sup>24</sup> See: *Hieron.* Tractatus in psalm. 132.150-151; *August.* De haeres. 70; *Leo Magn.* Ep. 15.10.

<sup>25</sup> See: De princ. I.7.4; I.8.1; I.8.4; II.3.1; II.8.3-4; II.9.6-7; III.5.4; Comm. in Jn. II.30.181–182; XX.7 etc.).

<sup>26</sup> See: *Iren.* Adv. haer. II.33.1-5; *Tert.* De anima, 4, 24; *Hipp.* Refut. VIII.10.1-2; *Method. Olymp.* De resurr. 2-3; *Petrus Alexandr.* Demonstratio quod anima corpori non praexistiterit // PG. 18. Col. 520C–521A.

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Augustine, St. Leo the Great, Gennady of Marseille in the West. It was also condemned by several Church Councils: the Council of Alexandria of 400, the Council of Constantinople of 543 A.D., the fifth Ecumenical Council of 553 A.D.<sup>27</sup> and the Council of Braga (in Portugal) of 561 A.D.<sup>28</sup>

4. Fathers of the Church, while condemned the doctrine of the preexistence of souls, were divided among themselves in two theories: traducionism and creationism, giving various biblical and rational proofs for the benefit of one or another theory.

*Traducionism* (from Latin *tradux*, «offspring», «sprout»), which means the doctrine on traducion or transmission of the soul of human being together with its body from parents, for the first time was proved by Tertullian, who while rejected the Platonic doctrine of incorporeal beings, maintained the Stoic doctrine of corporality of soul<sup>29</sup>. He explained the very mechanism of transmission of soul from parents as follows: every human soul, as well as human body, has its seed (*semen animae, semen animale*), which alongside with corporal seed comes out from a man and penetrates into the womb of a woman<sup>30</sup>. Therefore soul and body of each human being are conceived, shaped, developed and born together and in the same time, without any temporary interval or division in their succession<sup>31</sup>. Tertullian believed, that the words of the Holy Scripture, that the soul and the body of the first man initially have had different origins, do not contradict the theory of traducionism, because they only at the beginning were divided among themselves as *the dust of the ground* and *the breath of Divine Spirit*, but after their connection they formed one man, in whom they were so closely incorporated and mixed with each other, that their seeds became something unified; and thus to the whole human race was imparted the common way of the propagation (*propagandi forma*), when soul and body of a human being are simultaneously transmitted from parents at the very moment of conception<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> See: *Mansi*. T. 9. P. 396; cf. *Edictum contra Origenem* // *Scritti teologici*. P. 72.13-17.

<sup>28</sup> The 6-th anathema// *Enchiridion symbolorum*. N 456.

<sup>29</sup> See: *De anima* 5, 9, 18, 22, 27, 36; *De carn. Chr.* 11; *De resurr.* 45; cf. Stoics doctrine: *Diog. Laert.* VII.159; *SVF* II.804-806.

<sup>30</sup> *De anima* 9, 27; *De resurr.* 45.

<sup>31</sup> *De anima* 27, 36; *De resurr.* 45.

<sup>32</sup> *De anima* 36.

After Tertullian among the outstanding supporters of the traducionism may be counted St. Eustathius of Antioch<sup>33</sup>, St. Macarius of Egypt<sup>34</sup>, St. Gregory of Nyssa<sup>35</sup>, St. Anastasius the Sinaite<sup>36</sup> in the East, and Luciferus of Cagliari<sup>37</sup>, Julianus Pomerius<sup>38</sup> and many others unknown theologians in the West, about whom tell us St. Jerome and Augustine<sup>39</sup>. An important dogmatic proof in favour of the traducionism we can find in the writings of St. Anastasius the Sinaite, who wrote: «Just as God has created the man from the ground, in the similar way a man in accordance with [Divine] grace creates another man from a woman. And just as in the first creation the man received the body from the ground, and the soul generated by God, in similar way nowadays body is shaped from the female «ground» and blood, and soul is ineffably transmitted from a man by means of the seed, like by means of certain inspiration»(διὰ τῆς σπορᾶς ὡς διὰ τινος ἐμφυσηματος ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀρρήτως μεταδίδονται)<sup>40</sup>. St. Gregory of Nyssa gives another rational explanation of the traducionism' theory: every human seed from the very beginning has in its internal structure «an inherent power of the nature» (συνεσπαρμένην τὴν τῆς φύσεως δύναμιν)<sup>41</sup>, which is developed and comes forth gradually in certain natural consequence together with the development of the body; this power is the human soul which is hidden inside the living seed and transmitted together with it from the parents; for «that is separated from the animated [beings] in order to shape another animated being, itself can not be dead, because any death state occurs only because of the absence of soul»<sup>42</sup>.

The theory of traducionism has some advantages. First, it can help to keep the literal understanding of the completeness of the creative activity of God, Who «on the seventh day ended His work» of the creation (cf. Gen 2:2-3). Secondly, this doctrine makes easy to prove the propagation

<sup>33</sup> Περὶ ψυχῆς κατὰ φιλοσόφων // *Leont. et Joan.* De rebus sacr. II // PG. 86. Col. 2040BC.

<sup>34</sup> Hom. 30.1 // PG. 34. Col. 721B.

<sup>35</sup> De op. hom. 29; De an. et res. // PG. 46. Col. 128AB.

<sup>36</sup> Serm. in constit. hom. 3.3 // PG. 89. Col. 1165B.

<sup>37</sup> See: *August.* De haeres. 81; *Gennad. Massil.* De eccl. dogm. 14.

<sup>38</sup> See: *Isidor. Hispal.* De viris illustr., 25.

<sup>39</sup> See: *Hieron.* Ep. 126.1; *August.* Ep. 190.5.18; cf. *Philastr. Brix.* De haeres. 111 // PL. 12. Col. 1233.

<sup>40</sup> Serm. in constit. hom. 3.3 // PG. 89. Col. 1165B.

<sup>41</sup> De op. hom. 29.

<sup>42</sup> De an. et res. // PG. 46. Col. 128AB.

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and the transmission of the original sin from the first people down to all their descendants. This advantage has won sympathies of many catholic theologians in the West during so-called Pelagian controversy (first half of V cent. A.D.), whom Pelagians (for instance, Julian of Eclanum) blamed for traducionism and labeled as *traduciani*<sup>43</sup>. Thirdly, the theory of traducionism can be successfully conformed with the scientific practice of cloning of living beings, which is rapidly developing in the modern sciences. On the other hand the traducionism' theory also has many disadvantages. At first sight it is incompatible with the doctrine of the immaterial, indivisible and indissoluble nature of the human soul, and may discredit the dignity of the human soul which was made according to the image and similitude of God. Besides this, certain difficulties occur in solving the question of the origin of the soul of Jesus Christ, which, according to the traducionistic views, should preexist in His ancestors. That is why many of Church theologians of IV-V centuries A.D. criticized the doctrine of the traducionism<sup>44</sup>, such as Nemesius of Emessa<sup>45</sup> and St. Theodoret of Cyrus<sup>46</sup> in the East, and St. Hilary of Poitiers<sup>47</sup>, St. Jerome<sup>48</sup>, Prudentius<sup>49</sup>, St. John Cassian<sup>50</sup>, Gennady of Marseille<sup>51</sup>, pope Anastasius II<sup>52</sup>, Cassiodor<sup>53</sup> and others in the West.

5. The theory of *creationism*, i. e. of the direct creation of each human soul by God from nothing, it seems, for the first time was put forward by St. Ireneus of Lyon, according to whom, «each of us just as receives his body through the art of God (*per artem Dei*), in the same way he receives his soul»<sup>54</sup>. The clearest expression of the creationism' theory we can find in writings of the Latin apologist Lactance, who supposed, that «body can

<sup>43</sup> See: *August.* Contra duas Ep. Pelagian. III.10.26; *Opus imperf. c. Julianum*, I.6.

<sup>44</sup> See: *Clem. Alex.* Strom. VI.16.135; *Orig.* De princ. I.7.4; *Comm. in Jn.* II 30.182; *Hom. in Job* 10; *Lact.* De opif. Dei, 19; *Pamphil.* Apol. pro Origen. 9.

<sup>45</sup> De nat. hom. 2.485-487.

<sup>46</sup> Haer. fab. comp. V.9.

<sup>47</sup> De Trin. X. 20; X. 22.

<sup>48</sup> Ep. 126.1; *Contra Joann. Hierosol.* 22; *Com. in Eccl.* 12 // PL. 23. Col. 1112B.

<sup>49</sup> *Carmen apotheosis*, 914-920.

<sup>50</sup> Coll. 8.25.

<sup>51</sup> De eccl. dogm. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Ep. ad Gallos // *Enchiridion symbolorum*. N 360.

<sup>53</sup> De anim. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Adv. Haer. II.33.5.

be born from bodies, because something is borrowed from the both [parents]; but soul can not [be born] from souls, because nothing can originate from the subtle and intangible thing... Therefore souls are given not from parents, but from one and the same God and Parent of all things, Who alone possesses the law and the way of birth, because only He makes [it]»<sup>55</sup>.

After Lactance among the outstanding supporters of the theory of creationism may be counted such authoritative Church Fathers, as St. Gregory the Theologian<sup>56</sup>, St. Cyrill of Alexandria<sup>57</sup>, St. Theodoret of Cyrus<sup>58</sup>, St. Procopius of Gaza<sup>59</sup>, St. Maximus the Confessor<sup>60</sup> and St. Germanus of Constantinople<sup>61</sup> in the East, and St. Hilary of Poitiers<sup>62</sup>, St. Ambrose of Milan<sup>63</sup>, St. Jerome<sup>64</sup>, St. John Cassian<sup>65</sup>, St. Leo the Great<sup>66</sup>, Gennady of Marseille<sup>67</sup> and Cassiodor<sup>68</sup> in the West. Thus, St. Theodoret of Cyrus attracts our attention to the direct dependence of the creationism' theory on the story of the creation of the first man in the Book of Genesis: «The Church ... trusting Divine Scripture, speaks, that every soul is created together with the body and has not the origin of its creation in the material seed, but comes to life after the formation of the body by means of the will of the Creator (τῆ βουλήσει τοῦ ποιητοῦ συνισταμένην)»<sup>69</sup>. According to St. Jerome, «God every day creates souls (*quotidie Deus fabricatur animas*), for His will is already the action, and He does not cease to be the Creator, that belongs to the Church point of view (*ecclesiasticum est*), in according with the words of the Saviour: *My Father has been work-*

<sup>55</sup> De opif. Dei 19; cf. De opif. Dei, 17; Div. Inst. VI.20.

<sup>56</sup> Carm. moral. In laudem virginit. 392-396 // PG. 37. Col. 551A; Carm. dogm. 8.79-81 // PG. 37. Col. 453A.

<sup>57</sup> De incarn. Unigen. 6 // ACO. T. I. Vol. 5. Pars 1. P. 225; Contra Nestorium. Lib. I // ACO. T. I. Vol. 1. Pars 6. P. 24.

<sup>58</sup> Haer. fab. comp. V.9.

<sup>59</sup> Com. in Gen. 2.7 // PG. 87. Col 153B.

<sup>60</sup> Amb. 42 (107-108) // PG. 91. Col. 1321CD; 1324CD.

<sup>61</sup> De vitae termino // PG. 98. Col. 104A.

<sup>62</sup> De Trin. X.20, 22; Tr. in Ps. 91.3.

<sup>63</sup> De Noe et arca IV.9.

<sup>64</sup> Ep. 126.1; Contra Joann. Hierosol. 22; Com. in Eccl. 12 // PL. 23. Col. 1112B.

<sup>65</sup> Coll. 8.25.

<sup>66</sup> Ep. 15.9-10.

<sup>67</sup> De eccl. dogm. 14, 18.

<sup>68</sup> De anim. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Haer. fab. comp. V.9.

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*ing until now, and I have been working (Jn 5:17)»<sup>70</sup>. St. Hilary of Poitiers believed, that «the origin of flesh is always from flesh, but every soul is a creation of God» (*onnis anima opus Dei est*)<sup>71</sup>; at the same time he closely connected this view with the christological doctrine of the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ: «Just as [Christ] by Himself (*per se*) accepted for Himself the body from the Virgin, in the same way from Himself (*ex se*) He accepted the soul, which certainly never receives its origin from a man. Indeed, if the Virgin conceived the body [of Christ] in no other way, as from God, it is even more necessarily the soul of the body originates from nowhere, as from God alone»<sup>72</sup>. Although some theologians, such as Theodoret of Cyrus and Gennady of Marseille, believed, that soul is created by God somewhat further, than body is shaped in the womb of a woman<sup>73</sup>, this opinion was subsequently corrected according to the doctrine of the creation of Adam's soul in that way, that any human soul is created by God simultaneously with its body<sup>74</sup>. At the same time, many Fathers of the Church thought, that the very way, by which God everyday creates human souls, remains incomprehensible for us and is known by God alone<sup>75</sup>. Thus, the majority of the Church Fathers inclined to the theory of creationism, which since IV–V centuries A. D. became more and more popular among Christian theologians in the East as well as in the West. The testimony of its dominant position we can find also in that very fact, that since IV century A.D. this doctrine practically was not the object of criticism, though some particular theologian, for instance, Nemesius of Emessa, who believed in preexistence of souls, noticed that the creationistic view, that God continues to create souls from nothing, contradicts the words of the Holy Scripture that God «on the seventh day ended His work» of creation<sup>76</sup>.*

<sup>70</sup> Contra Joann. Hierosol. 22.

<sup>71</sup> De Trin. X.20.

<sup>72</sup> De Trin. X.22; cf. *Hieron. Apol. adv. libros Rufini* II.4.

<sup>73</sup> See: *Gennad. De eccl. dogm.* 14, 18; *Theodoret. Haer. fab. comp.* V.9.

<sup>74</sup> See: *Justinian. Epistula ad synodum de Origene* // *Scritti teologici ed ecclesiastici di Giustiniano*. P. 124.21-23; *Maxim. Confess. Amb.* 42 (107-109) // PG. 91. Col. 1321CD; 1324CD; 1325D; *Joann. Damasc. Exp. fidei* II.12 (26); *Agobard. Lugdun. Contra object. Fredig. abb.* 14 etc.

<sup>75</sup> See: *Hilar. Pictav. Tr. in Ps.* 91.3; *Cyrill. Alex. Contra Nestorium. Lib. I* // ACO. T. I. Vol. 1. Pars 6. P. 24; *Gennad. Massil. De eccl. dogm.* 14; *Maxim. Confess. Amb.* 42 (108) // PG. 91. Col. 1324C; *Alcuin. De ratione anim.* 13.

<sup>76</sup> *Nemes. De nat. hom.* 2. 487-490.

The advantage of the theory of creationism first of all permits to preserve the notion of the human soul as immaterial, indivisible and indissoluble substance with its own superior origin, different from the body. However the supporters of this theory meet with considerable difficulties, as was marked above, in conforming the new creation of souls with the notion of the completeness of the Divine creation. Secondly, there are even more difficulties in explaining of the mechanism of transmission of the original sin, as the souls created from nothing should come into the world without any sin, similarly to the soul of Adam. Therefore in order to explain, how souls can be polluted by sin, the supporters of the theory of creationism used to propose various hypotheses, the most widespread among which is the hypothesis of so-called «maculated conception» of the body in the carnal lust (*concupiscentia, libido*), which transmits the original sin not only from parents to their children, but also from the body to the soul. We'd like to notice, that this hypothesis not only discredits the dignity of the Christian marriage, but also contradicts the data of the modern sciences, which can reproduce a human being without any sexual intercourse. Thirdly, if God Himself directly creates the soul of each human being, it makes God a kind of debtor, Who is every time obliged to create soul at the very moment of the conception of a human body, regardless in what circumstances it is happened and by what motives it was done.

6. Bearing in mind these or other reasons, many Church Fathers, such as St. Methodius of Olympia, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Augustine (especially), St. Fulgentius, St. Gregory the Great, St. Isidorus of Seville<sup>77</sup>, took a neutral position, obviously rejecting the theory of preexistence of souls, but hesitating in making their choice between traducionism and creationism, on account of the absence from the Holy Scripture any sufficient arguments for the preference of one theory before another. Moreover, some of them believed, that though the Church theologians and Councils made many efforts in order to find an optimal solution of the question of the origin of individual souls, but finally it is not clear, whether human

<sup>77</sup> See: *Methodius ap. Phot. Bibil.* 237 // PG. 103. Col. 1161A; *Greg. Naz. Carm. dogm.* 8.79-81, 82-90 // PG. 37. Col. 453A; *Carm. moral.* 14 (De humana natura). 63-68-85 // PG. 37. Col. 760A-762A; *August. De anim. et ejus orig.* I.16.26; IV.1.1-2; *Retract.* I.1.3; *Opus imperf. c. Julianum*, II.178; *Fulgent. De ver. praedest.* III.18.28-19.29; *Ep.* 16.16; *Cassiodor. De anim.* 7; *Greg. Magn. Registr. epist.* IX.52; *Isidor. Hisp. De eccl. offic.* II.24.3; *Alcuin. De ratione anim.* 13; *Raban. Maur. De anim.* 2.

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souls are transmitted together with their bodies from Adam, or are given to everybody directly by God; so it is necessary to recognize, that in this life we are unable to solve this complicated question<sup>78</sup>.

Some of the Christian theologians proposed as a compromise solution the theory of combining of traducionism and creationism by means of distinction between the lowest animal part and superior rational part of the human soul. Thus, early Christian apologist Tatian the Syrian believed, that man has certain «superior spirit» (τὸ μείζον πνεῦμα), or «divine spirit» (τὸ θεῖον πνεῦμα), which comes from heaven and bears in itself the image and similarity of God; at the same time man also has «a lowest spirit», named «human soul», which comes from the earth (κάτωθεν)<sup>79</sup>. In a similar way Clemens of Alexandria thought, that the irrational animal soul of man is transmitted through the corporal seed during the conception, but the superior rational soul comes at this moment from heaven and is united with the animal soul contained in the human seed directly by God or through the mediation of certain angels, foreseeing the very moment of the conception<sup>80</sup>. According to the latin theologian Marius Victorinus, man has a lowest material soul and superior «divine» soul; and both of them has its own origin: while the body of the first man, according to the story of the Book of Genesis, was formed from *the ground*, there was in it, as Victorinus thought, already the material soul, that is way the first man became *a living soul*, which means that the man, as well as all other animals, received this soul together with his material substance. Then to this material soul God attached another «more divine» soul with its superior intellect<sup>81</sup>. Apollinarius of Laodicea<sup>82</sup> and John the Philoponus<sup>83</sup> also believed, that only irrational animal or carnal soul of man is transmitted from parents, while his rational soul comes from outside from God. However, this opinion also has its disadvantages, because it contradicts the principle of unity and indivisibility of human soul.

7. So, from our brief review of different dogmatic approaches to the question of the origin of human souls it is possible to come to a conclusion.

<sup>78</sup> See: *Greg. Magn.* Registr. epist., IX.52 // PL. 77. Col. 990A; *Isidor. Hisp.* De differen. rer. 92; *Anastas. Sinait.* Serm. in constit. hom. 1.2 // PG. 44. Col. 1332BD.

<sup>79</sup> *Tatian.* Orat. ad Graec. 12-13.

<sup>80</sup> See: *Strom.* VI.16.135; IV.26.167; *Eclog. prophet.* 50.1-3; *Quis div. salv.* 26.3; 33.

<sup>81</sup> *Adv. Ar.*, I.62.11-14; 26-37.

<sup>82</sup> See: *Ps.-Athanasius.* Contra Apollin. II.8 // PG. 26. Col. 1143C.

<sup>83</sup> *De opif. mund.* VI.23.

Although in regard to the question of the origin of the soul of the first man Church Fathers and Councils have established the doctrine on the creation of the soul by God from nothing, at the same moment when the body was created from the ground, there are still some differences in understanding of the way of this creation of the soul. In regard to the question of the origin of individual souls there is still great dogmatic uncertainty. Although the majority of the Church Fathers inclined to the theory creationism, however because of the insufficiency of the biblical data and great variety of the Patristic views, we should agree with the opinion, that it is unable for us to make a final conclusion, whether human souls are transmitted together with their bodies from parents, or are given to each man directly from God by creation from nothing.

Svetoslav Ribolov<sup>1</sup>

## A Review of Dogmatic Theology in Bulgaria during 20th century

### Abstract

The study presents the ecclesiastical problem in Bulgaria and the atmosphere of religious freedom and the new revival of creativeness in the field of Dogmatic Theology. Valuable interactions with other local Orthodox Churches and respectively Theological Institutions are the source of the medicine for treatment of the old wounds.

For the local churches that were under pressure in the last century and passed through the persecutions of the atheistic regimes the exchange of spiritual experience, it is the right tool for overcoming all these problems. Dogmatic Theology in Bulgaria is a witness for this fact. In this respect real communion and catholicity (conciliarity) of the Church are the most important principles providing a guarantee for the authenticity of the Orthodox Doctrine. Without them it is doomed.

### Keywords

*Bulgarian Theology, persecution, change, Dogmatical Theology, communist regime*

## 1. Building a National Church

Bulgarian Exarchate was founded in 1870. The basic principle of its emergence as an independent church was ethnic and not a local one. This situation was a serious challenge for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and two years later the Bulgarian Exarchate was condemned as schismatic by the local council of Constantinople in 1872 (16<sup>th</sup> of September). This specific process started developing in the 60s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the results of

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the influence of European developments and especially of Russian Pan Slavism in Bulgaria became already visible. At that time Bulgaria was part of the Ottoman Empire and under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. During the development of these events there is an important historical fact that plays a crucial role. There was a long term program for conquering the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, Constantinople and the Balkan Peninsula by the Russian kings that has been taking place since the time of Empress Ekaterina the Great. This influence, based on the common Orthodox Christian tradition, started growing amongst the Bulgarians in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was strongly forced by the wave of Pan Slavism (in this period Pan Slavism was a very popular idea in Russia and in the Eastern provinces of Austro-Hungarian Empire).

As a result of this intellectual movement in Russia emerged the idea of a specific “Slavonic church model” – the Ecclesiological model of Alexey Chomyakov. I do not know if there was a direct dependence of the Bulgarian schism on Chomyakov’s Ecclesiology but it was a clear sign of the common spirit of the epoch.

Unfortunately both sides in this situation – the Bulgarian leaders in the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the high clergy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate<sup>2</sup> – refused to make a step towards a compromise and this kind of ethnically-driven ecclesiastical practice (so called National church) was defined as Ethno-Phyletism – Bulgarian Exarchate became a schismatic church for a long time.

In spite of the conciliar decision from 1872 the same ecclesiastical practice remained a serious problem for the entire Orthodox Church in 20<sup>th</sup> century and, I would say, especially for the local Orthodox churches in South-Eastern Europe. This ecclesiological problem was born in a milieu of a much delayed forming of the nations in this region. According to an orthodox scholar, archimandrite Gregorius Papatomas, this is the most serious ecclesiological problem for the Orthodox Church in an age of Post-Ecclesiality<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> It is a quite intriguing fact that the extreme circles amongst the Bulgarian elite were a minority but achieved success in these developments in the 60s and the 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the Russian diplomacy and the interference of the Ottoman government that in this period had an interest to divide the Christians in the empire.

<sup>3</sup> See Papatomas, Gr. *In the age of the Post-Ecclesiality (The emergence of post-ecclesiologicalmodernity)*.

In <http://www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/theology/Post- Ecclesiality.pdf>

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This ecclesiological situation in Bulgaria has gradually influenced the theological education. The first generation of teachers in the new-founded seminaries and the high clergy of the Bulgarian Exarchate were graduates of the famous School of Chalki in Constantinople and other educational institutions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Their manner of teaching was very similar to the system in these schools. I shall skip out the teaching of Dogmatics in the church seminaries in the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century because in those years there was not a very strict system of learning Dogmatics and the students used to learn their tradition mainly from the Divine Liturgy. These years the only non-Greek book in Dogmatics was translated from Russian – the five tomes of Bishop Silvester *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology with a Historic Research of the Dogmas* (Kiev, 1884-97)<sup>4</sup>. Until now this is the only book in Dogmatics that has the sanction of the Holy Synod of Bulgarian church.

## **2. Dogmatic Theology in the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

The Faculty of Theology at Sofia University was founded in 1923 after the World War I. The first professors were Alexander Rozhdestvenky, Nikolay Glubokovsky, Michel Posnoff, archim. Euthymius Sapundjieff, Ivan Snegaroff, archpriest Stephan Zankoff etc. Here we can find famous scientists in Bible Studies, Church History and Canon Law but no dogmatists at all. The first research in dogmatic theology that was made by Christo Gyauroff, a professor in the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University: *Dogmatic foundations in the epistles of St. Ignatius Theophorus, Bishop of Antioch* (Sofia, 1924). Gyauroff was a specialist in New Testament Studies, but in the early years after the founding of the Faculty he taught also Dogmatics. Together with Prof. Nikolay Glubokovsky he would become one of the most important persons in Bible Studies in Bulgaria during the next few decades<sup>5</sup>.

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(31.03.2009)

<sup>4</sup> See Bishop Silvester, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology with Historical Research of the Dogmas*. T. I-III, Sofia, 1912 (in Bulgarian transl.). For original titles see the Bibliography on the end of the text.

<sup>5</sup> See Dimitroff, Ivan, "Chair of New Testament Holy Scripture (since it's founding until nowadays)". *Duchovna Kultura* 5 (2000), 1-8 (in Bulgarian).

The professor who succeeded Gyauroff in teaching Dogmatics was Dimitâr Dyulgeroff. He graduated in Russia but soon after the Communist Revolution he left Russia to spend two years in Rome continuing his studies and, after that, one year in Wien. Influenced by his socialist ideas, he was very active in organizing youth Christian movements all over the country. His works are mainly in the field of Missiology and far apart from any serious research in dogmatics. Some of his important works are: *The Pope of Rome under the Judgment of the Church History* (1924), *The Theosophical Society* (1925)<sup>6</sup>, *The Meaning of Dogma* (1927)<sup>7</sup>, *Jesus Christ – New Testament Archpriest and Redeemer* (1928)<sup>8</sup>, *The Mystery of Baptism – Essence and Meaning* (1943)<sup>9</sup>, *Essay on Sophia – The Wisdom of God* (1936)<sup>10</sup>, *A Course in Missiology* (1937), *The Unity of the Church of Christ* (1947)<sup>11</sup>, *Ascension of the Virgin Mary* (1948)<sup>12</sup>, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (1937, sec. ed. 1948), *The Adventism* (1945, 1951)<sup>13</sup>.

All of these works were strongly criticized by archim. Euthymius Sapundjieff, prof. Michael Posnoff, metropolitan Symeon of Varna and many others in Bulgaria<sup>14</sup>. They accused him of too big dependence on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian theologians and German protestant authors. For instance, the *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (1937) written by him in collaboration with his assistant Iliya Zonevsky, was strongly influenced by the Russian textbook of Ivan Nikolin – *Essay on Dogmatic Theology* (1911)<sup>15</sup>. Even Nikolin's textbook is too far from the Orthodox Dogmatic tradition – we do not see any word about such central themes for the Orthodox Theology as οὐσία and ἐνέργεια of God, or κτιστόν and ἄκτιστον. The whole content is classified

<sup>6</sup> With a strong influence from Schomerus, H. W. "Der Seelenwanderungsgedanke im Glauben der Völker". In *Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie* 6 Jahrgang, 2 Vierteljahrsheft.

<sup>7</sup> In *Annual of Theological Faculty at the Sofia University "St. Clement of Ochrid"*, 4 (1924), 1-22 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>8</sup> In *Ibid.*, 5 (1928), 1-83.

<sup>9</sup> In *Ibid.*, 22 (1943), 3-73.

<sup>10</sup> In *Ibid.*, 18 (1936).

<sup>11</sup> In *Ibid.*, 24 (1947).

<sup>12</sup> In *Ibid.*, 25 (1949).

<sup>13</sup> In *Ibid.*, 23 (1946) and 26 (1951).

<sup>14</sup> See critical articles and reviews of all these authors in Archim Euthymius Sapundjieff (edr.), *Our Modern Dogmatic Science*. Sofia, 1934 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>15</sup> This text is published in the Russian periodic *Dushepoleznie chtenia* 1911 (March-November) – in Russian.

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after the manner of the textbooks of Systematic Theology in conservative Protestantism. In this methodology the formulas of the Ecumenical councils are something like philosophic abstractions and have not so much to do with Dogmatics. All the “Dogmas” are based on quoting verses from the Holy Scripture, usually out of context. The Palamitic thought is absolutely missing.

We see also a very strong protestant influence in Dyulgeroff’s books *A Textbook of Missiology* (1937) and *Ascension of the Virgin Mary* (1948). For example, in the last work the author used the Orthodox liturgical tradition in such a selective way that, naturally, his conclusions sounded much more acceptable to a Protestant but not for to an Orthodox Christian. Dyulgeroff briefly explains the position of the Roman Catholics on this theme<sup>16</sup> but provides a fragmentary image of the liturgical evidences of the belief of the Orthodox Church in the Ascension of the Holy Mother<sup>17</sup>. In conclusion he says: “The Ascension of the Holy Mother can not be declared as a dogma, because for this purpose it must be a clearly established fact and not just a statement of faith (?!), i.e. it means to be established as the historical truth... In order to establish it as a historical fact, we need proofs. But they do not exist nor in the Holy Scripture of the New Testament, neither in the Holy Tradition (?!)”<sup>18</sup>. Here as well as in the entirety of his works we are under the impression that a Dogma is something postulated somewhere in some personal mind and has anything to do with the actual liturgical life of the Church.

In a time when Orthodox theologians started seriously engaging in the discussion of Ecclesiology and in the dialogue with the other Christians, the dogmatic theology in the isolated schismatic Bulgarian Church started closing itself. A small work of Prof. D. Dyulgeroff - *The Unity of the Church of Christ* (1947), is a symptom for this process. His work is based on the Russian scholastic research studies from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In

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<sup>16</sup> Dyulgeroff, D. “Ascension of the Virgin Mary”. In *Annual of Theological Faculty at the Sofia University “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 25 (1949), 4-22 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-32.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. We could leave aside the non orthodox separation between Scripture and Tradition but we should point out that in Bulgarian Orthodox Dogmatics there is an obvious tendency to comprehend the Revelation as a reality manifested in these two forms. No one of the Bulgarian dogmatists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not consider Scripture as a natural part of the common Christian Tradition preserving the integrity of Divine Revelation.

this work Prof. Dyulgeroff points out that the lack of organizational and confessional unity amongst Christians results in the impotence of Christianity in front of the external enemies of the faith<sup>19</sup>. The main problems for the entire Christianity, points out the author, are coming from the contradictions amongst the different denominations. And the falling away from the Church is comprehended by Dyulgeroff only as a falling away from the right confession without mentioning at all the catholicity of the Church. The author concentrates his work on the polemic with the encyclical *Mortalium animos* of Pius XI<sup>20</sup> and tries to “unmask the ambitions of the Roman Pope” in achieving a Union with the Orthodox Church but preserving the Primacy of the Roman Bishop<sup>21</sup>. In this context he makes a review of the Ecumenical movement in the 20s and in the 30s. This work shows the signs of an extreme lack of information about what is happening out of the country at orthodox theological forums and in the Orthodox world as a whole.

In this period the idea of ecclesiastical pan-Slavism of Alexey Chomyakov (from the 1860s) is still modern in Bulgaria. The closest collaborator of Prof. Dimitâr Dyulgeroff - Iliya Zonevsky, defended his PhD thesis (titled *Ecclesiology of Alexey Chomyakov*) at the University of Marburg in 1940, but unfortunately he never published this text. In the next years he developed a very active position in the Ecumenical movement (preserving an active interest towards Ecclesiology), but as an academic scholar he started working in Patristics. Eventually, he never published anything interesting in Ecclesiology.

Prof. Archimandrite Euthymius and metropolitan Symeon of Varna were the most emblematic figures in Bulgarian Church at that time. It should be pointed that their critical voices are the first alarms against the process of profanation of the church Dogma and its study at the University in the late 20s and 30s. According to them the work of Dimitâr Dyulgeroff (and respectively of his collaborator Zonevsky) was much more a mission of a left oriented preacher than of a teacher of the Church<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Dyulgeroff, D. “The Unity of the Church of Christ”. In *Annual of Theological Faculty at the Sofia University “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 24 (1947), 3-5 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 sq.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-33.

<sup>22</sup> See Popyordanov, Fr. E., “About the Writing of D. Dyulgeroff: Christian Brotherhood or Church?” In Archim. Euthymius Sapundjieff, *Op. cit.* 58-67; “An Appeal of His Eminence Metropolitan Symeon toward the Academic Council of Sofia University”. In Archim Euthymius Sapundjieff, *Op. cit.* 73-75 (in Bulgarian).

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In this respect it is quite interesting to realize that an ecclesiological problem at the late years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has its results in the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and after, as a lack of ecclesiastical consciousness even in people who teach theology. A serious ecclesiastical problem such as Ethno-Phyletism leads to the secularization of spiritual life. Church and Dogma have a very different role in such kind of secular society. The Dogma in this situation is part of some other system but not of the Mystical Body of Christ in the Eucharist. The Church plays the role of a nationalistic party and the Dogma is part of its internal charter. It has nothing to do with the spiritual life in the Church of Christ. In such ecclesiastical reality there is no need of serious research in Dogmatics. Such research usually needs an ecclesiastical fundament based on catholicity. The lack of catholicity cannot produce an original and fruitful dogmatic theological thought. We can not think Dogma without the Church and a shifted Church reality can produce a shifted Dogmatic science.

In addition, there was also an obvious problem with the understanding of salvation. This problem in Bulgarian theological thought in this period (as well as in the Greek one) before the World War II is not very well studied and comprehended<sup>23</sup>.

First, most of the theologians had an idealistic approach embracing the common opposition in this period between *spirit* and *matter*. The theme of Salvation was usually related to the very close idea that the earthly life is just a road of temptations and the life after death is a free flight of the soul undressed from the body.

This approach puts aside the theme for the Second Coming of Christ and the Orthodox teaching for the eschatological recapitulation of the whole of creation. Spiritual life is restricted to individual piety and salvation and starts looking as an individual co-existence of the undressed souls somewhere around an abstract God. The images of Christ in the icons of the temple start looking as a metaphor and not as an image of the Reality<sup>24</sup>.

Second, a further enhancement of the problem was provoked by another work of Dimitâr Dyulgeroff – *Jesus Christ – New Testament Arch-*

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<sup>23</sup> See Papathanasiou, A. N. “Some key themes and figures in Greek theological thought”. In *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, Cambridge University Press, 2008 (Offprint), 219-220.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

*priest and Redeemer* (1926)<sup>25</sup>. This text exercised an extraordinary influence on all dogmatic (and not only) research studies that had something to do with the soteriological theme in Bulgaria during the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>26</sup>.

Since the time of the appearance of this text we can observe in Bulgarian theological research a very stable tendency of distinguishing between Redemption as an “objective potentiality” for human being and Salvation as a subjective process dependent on the personal responsibility of the faithful<sup>27</sup>. Dyulgeroff provides the following formula of “the dogma of salvation”: “The soul of a Christian is an living altar. On this altar has to burn the fire of love; this fire burns the sin and lawlessness and gives peace, joy, salvation. Salvation is an internal process in which a Christian through creative suffering, and due to the Redemption and the graceful help of Christ, releases himself from evil and sin. Justification is given by God and salvation is an achievement of the human being with the help of God. Suffering pursues the good; striving for the release from sins is fulfilled through suffering. Howsoever this should not disturb a Christian but has to make him rejoice. God send him temptations and suffering according his strength”<sup>28</sup>.

This “internal process” that is taking place in a common Christian, has its parallel in Christ’s archpriest sacrifice. Based on the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, Dyulgeroff points out that Christ has an intermediary role as a New Testament archpriest through His earthly life. Salvation is an exchange of His life for ours. And this exchange is concentrated on the event of Christ’s death on the Cross. The Meaning of Christ’s sacrifice is *a satisfaction for our sins*<sup>29</sup> – an understanding for salvation characteristic for Anselm of Canterbury, which is articulated in detail during the controversies after the Council of Trident. It is a consequence of the conception of *contemplatio Dei*. In the Orthodox Tradition we have a concept of μέ-

<sup>25</sup> In *Ibid.*, 5 (1928), 1-83.

<sup>26</sup> See the works Kiroff, D. *Dimensions of Man (A Study in Christian Anthropology)*. Sofia, 1998; Stamatova, K. *An Introduction in the Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. Sofia, 2007; Idem, *A Supplement to the Introduction to Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. Sofia, 2007; idem, *If I have not love...* Sofia, 2005; idem, *The Church: A Community of Love*. Sofia, 2008 and many others.

<sup>27</sup> Dyulgeroff, D. *Jesus Christ – New Testament Arch-Priest and Redeemer*. Sofia, 1926, 19 sq.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 18.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 20, 79 sq.

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θεζις Θεοῦ, in which is absolutely impossible to have such categories as subjective and objective salvation.

It is a significant fact that the whole text criticizes the “protestant rational conception” for salvation, as well as “the juridical spirit” of the Roman-Catholic scholastics. Despite these declarations we do not see in the text any remnants of traditional Orthodox eschatology – for instance any mentioning of the Christ’s descendance in hell – a central moment in the Eastern Orthodox conception of salvation.

### **3. Under the Atheistic Regime**

The only adequate works on the question about the Church in that period are the ones by Fr. Stefan Zankoff, professor in Canon Law, including: *Unity and Catholicity of the Church* (1951)<sup>30</sup>; *The Unity of the Church* (1959)<sup>31</sup> and *The Search for Unity in the Orthodox churches with other Christian churches. The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (1960)<sup>32</sup>. He is the only Bulgarian theologian who is well accepted in the West (especially before the World War II). He teaches for a while in the University of Berlin and often is a guest lecturer in different European Universities. In fact Prof. Fr. Stefan Zankoff is very well aware of the Orthodox tradition and during these years keeps in touch with a lot of Orthodox thinkers in Western Europe, Greece and Romania. But since the late 40s it was already difficult for him (like for everybody in Bulgaria) to travel outside of the country because of the Soviet occupation of Bulgaria and the new pro-Soviet Communist government confessing an extreme atheism and hostility towards the Church. Even since the academic 1948-1949 year the Faculty of Theology is separated from the University and continues functioning as the Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid” until 1991. In this climate of hostility of the academic circles toward the Church Bulgarian theology found itself in a full isolation from the rest of the scientific and academic circles even inside of the country.

<sup>30</sup> In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 2 (1951-1952), 231-256 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>31</sup> In *ibid.*, 8 (1958-1959), 247-267 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>32</sup> In *ibid.*, 9 (1959-1960), 259-306 (in Bulgarian). However the last work is already influenced by the official course of the Bulgarian state and its reflection on the Church.

The first of above mentioned works of Fr. Zankoff is actually a result of his correspondence with Fr. George Florovsky and of the tension between him and Prof. Dimitâr Dyulgeroff. Here he concentrated his reflection on the dialogue between Western and Eastern Christianity. He makes a short historical survey of the compromises made by the Russian Church in the understanding of the sacraments of the Roman Church and also makes an overview of opinions of theologians from all over the Orthodox World on this subject<sup>33</sup> - something that is absolutely missing from the works of Prof. Dyulgeroff.

Also he reflects on the problem of the Catholicity (Conciliarity) in the West – in both Roman-Catholics and Protestants. He thinks that the Orthodox Church has much more vibrant sensibility for the Catholicity than the Western Church<sup>34</sup>. He pointed out also that in the last few decades (then) the relationships amongst the Orthodox local churches started intensifying and considered this again as a witness for the conciliar character of the Orthodox Church<sup>35</sup>. In this context he can not escape from the local problems of the Bulgarian reality (including the deep dependence on the Russian church). On the basis of the Christocentric character of the Church he criticizes the idea that the Ecumenical Patriarchate should be considered as an over national institution<sup>36</sup>. As Christocentric organism the Church can be found *par excellence* in the sacrament of the divine Eucharist – the center of whole Church reality. He also puts an emphasis on a sentiment towards “the early flourishing of the Church”<sup>37</sup>.

The other two works of Fr. Stefan Zankoff that were mentioned above (*The Unity of the Church*, 1959<sup>38</sup> and *The Search for Unity in the Orthodox churches with other Christian churches. The Orthodox Church*

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<sup>33</sup> Zankow, St. “Unity and Catholicity of the Church”. In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 2 (1951-1952), 231-240 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 240-250.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 252. We may suppose that this critic against the Ecumenical Patriarchate (not very typical for Fr. Zankoff) is a result of the political moment. In this period the Ecumenical Patriarchate was in very close relationships with the state administration of USA and the frontline between the Soviet Camp and the Western World started dividing also the Orthodox local churches according the political orientation of their regimes.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>38</sup> In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 8 (1958-1959), 247-267 (in Bulgarian).

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and *Ecumenism*, 1960)<sup>39</sup> concentrated on the problems of the Ecumenical movement. From them we can make a general conclusion that Fr. Stefan Zankoff accepts (with some reservation) the Roman-Catholics and Protestants as being part of the Church and as having place “inside of the borders of the Church”. This statement shows a dependence on the general course of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church towards the Ecumenical movement in this specific period.

Archim. Seraphim Alexieff is another professor related to dogmatic theology in Bulgaria. He worked since 1962 to 1969 in the Department of Dogmatic theology and Missiology of the Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”. His works are in the field of polemical dogmatic research<sup>40</sup>. His central subject is the “apostasy of the Western Christianity” and somehow he does not feel very comfortable as a Professor of Dogmatics in an epoch when the Bulgarian Church joins the Ecumenical movement (in 1961)<sup>41</sup>. On the other hand, being a graduate of the University of Bern where he studied Old Catholic theology<sup>42</sup> he had not enough strong

<sup>39</sup> In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 9 (1959-1960), 259-306 (in Bulgarian). However the last work is already influenced by the official course of the Bulgarian state and its reflection in the Church.

<sup>40</sup> See the most important of his texts: “Two Extreme Views of the Western Denominations on Holy Mother”. In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 12 (1962-1963); “The Condition of Man before and after the Fall according to the Orthodox Christianity, the Roman Catholics and the Protestants”. In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 12) 1962-1963; “The Redemption as a deed of God’s Love and God’s Righteousness”. In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 13 (1963-1964); “Franz von Bader – an Roman Catholic Philosopher and Theologian in Search of Orthodoxy and its Catholicity”. In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 14 (1964-1965); “The Heresy of the Bogomils from the point of view of the Orthodox Dogmatic basis of Presbyter Kosmas”. In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 15 (1965-1966); “The Union of the Two Natures in Christ according the Orthodoxy and the Non-Caledonian churches”. In *Annual of Theological Academy “St. Clement of Ochrid”*, 17 (1967-1968); (together with Archim. Sergius Yazadzieff) *The Orthodox View on the New and the Old Stile of the Calendar*, Sofia, 1972; *Orthodoxy and Ecumenism. Why we can not be ecumenists?* Sofia 1992 (all in Bulgarian).

<sup>41</sup> See Latkovsky, Iv. “The Theological Heritage of Prof. Archimandrite Seraphim Alexieff”. *Bogoslovska Missal* 1-2 (2003), 114 sq. (in Bulgarian).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* We have to point out that the author of this text about archim. Seraphim was between 2000 and 2004 Assist. Prof. of Dogmatic Theology and Patristic at the Faculty of Theology of Sofia Univeristy. Being maybe dependent on the thought of archim. Seraphim and old Calendar movement in Bulgaria he left Bulgarian Orthodox Church and joined an Old calendar schismatic communion in 2003. In 2004 he left also the

Orthodox theological arguments in his critics against the Roman Catholics, especially in the concept of Salvation.

Eventually, Archim. Seraphim Alexiaff left the Department of Dogmatic theology and Missiology in 1969 because of disagreement with the official course of the Church. In all cases, he is an interesting person: he wrote a lot of popular theological works<sup>43</sup> and had a lot of spiritual children in Sofia. Unfortunately he and his collaborator Sergius Yazadzieff (former professor of New Testament) became very important figures in the Old Calendar schism in Bulgarian Church in the early 90s. Until now our Church did not overcome this long-term schism. From his texts and homilies we can conclude that he put an emphasis on the right confession as central in defining the identity of the Church, so that he never overcame his Old Catholic influence due to his theological education in Bern.

Prof. Totyu Koeff joins the Department of Dogmatic Theology and Missiology in the late 60s. He works mainly in the field of the Ecumenical Councils and this is not occasional. In 1948 the Bulgarian Church overcame the schism and the question of the catholic (conciliar) essence of the Orthodox Church is again in the centre of the theological research. His dissertation, defended in 1955 is on theme *The Dogmatic formulas of the first four Ecumenical councils* (published in 1968) and his habilitation is *The Origin of the Dogmatic Formula of the Council of Chalcedon* (1971). His interests are also concentrated on the Ecumenical movement where he takes part almost in every initiative since the late 60s. He is also one of the well accepted scientists among the socialistic intellectuals in the late 70s and 80s. Being a person of compromise in these circles he had very good achievements in times when any other theologian could not have a chance. He is maybe the most fruitful Bulgarian theologian during the Communist period<sup>44</sup>.

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Faculty of Theology.

<sup>43</sup> It is interesting that some of them are translated in Romanian.

<sup>44</sup> See just the most important of his works: Koev, T. *The Dogmatic Formulas of the First Fourth Councils*. Sofia, 1968; *Orthodox Catechesis and the epistle of the Eastern Patriarchs*, Sofia 1991; *An Introduction to the Christianity* (together with Prof. G. Bakalov). Sofia, 1992; *A Christian manual* (together with Prof. G. Bakalov). Sofia, 2001; "The Origin of the Dogmatic Formula of Chalcedon". In *Annual of Theological Academy "St. Clement of Ochrid"*, 21 (1971-1972). Sofia, 1973; "The Trinitarian Dogma". In *Annual of Orthodox Faculty of Theology of Tyrnovo University*, t. I (1991-1992), V.-Tyrnovo, 1994; "Exposition of the Orthodox Faith" of St. Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher (Dogmatic analysis)". In *Annual of Orthodox Faculty of Theology of Tyrnovo University*, t. I (1992-1993), V.-Tyrnovo, 1998; "Bulgarian and Armenian churches during the centuries". In *Bulgarians and Armenians during the centuries*. So-

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In this period Bulgarian representatives at the Ecumenical movement do not take part in discussions on basic doctrinal themes because of the lack of serious dogmatic background. In the early period of the participation of the Bulgarian Church in the Ecumenical movement Prof. T. Koeff is just an assistant professor, so he does not take part in those discussions. The only one principal position expressed on a doctrinal question at the meeting in Århus (Denmark) in 1964 is the text of Prof. Archimandrite Seraphim Alexieff *The Union of the two natures of Christ according the Orthodoxy and the non-chalcedonians* (1968)<sup>45</sup>. It is interesting that Archim. Seraphim did not take part in the forum, he was not allowed by the Communist regime to leave the country. The text was represented by Ilia Zonevsky, at that time professor of Patristics.

Being aware of the great responsibility in taking part in the Ecumenical movement and the lack of potential for serious doctrinal discussions, Prof. Totyu Koeff was much more moderate unlike other representatives of the Orthodox Church in the movement. The reason for this fact is that he had a good sense for the specific doctrinal obstacles in this process. Actually, he was much more a diplomatic representative than an active member of the movement for union between the churches. His activity in

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fia, 2001; "Bulgarian Church in the Middle Centuries". In *History of the Bulgarians*, t. I, Sofia, 2003; "The Veneration of the Holy Icons in the context of the Incarnation". *Duchovna Kultura*, 3, 1974; "Dogmatic activity of 6<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council". *Duchovna Kultura*, 2, 1982; "The Sacrament of Baptism according to the Orthodox Church". *Duchovna Kultura*, 4, 1985 (all in Bulgarian); "Die Entwicklung des theologischen Denkens in Bulgarien - Hervorragende bulgarische Theologen". In: *Im Dialog der Liebe. Neunzehn PRO-ORIENTE - Symposien 1971 bis 1981*. Wien, 1986; "The Sacrament of Priesthood - an Orthodox Dogmatic elucidation". *Duchovna Kultura*, 2, 1987; "The Formulas of 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council". *Duchovna Kultura*, 11, 1987 (all in Bulgarian); "Religiose Sprache und sakrale Symbole in der Gegenwartsgesellschaft Bulgariens". In: *Kirchen im Kontext unterschiedlicher Kulturen. Auf dem Weg in das dritte Jahrtausend*. Gottingen, 1991; "Das romische Dokument uber den Ausgang des Heiligen Geistes aus bulgarisch-orthodoxer Sicht". In: *Pro Oriente*, Bd. XXII, Tyrolia-Verlag, Innsbruck-Wien, 1998; "Der Beitrag der bulgarisch-orthodoxen Kirche zur Okumenischen Bewegung". In: *Russland und Osterreich. Pro Oriente*, Bd. XXIII, Tyrolia-Verlag, Innsbruck-Wien, 1999; "Auferstehung oder Auferweckung". In: *Orthodoxe Theologie zwischen Ost und West*. Frankfurt am Main, 2002; "An Outlook over Activity of the Council of Sardice". In: *Symposium in honor of 60-years of Prof. Georgy Bakalov*. Sofia, 2003 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>45</sup> In *Annual of the Theological Academy "St. Clement of Ochrid"*, 17 (1967-1968), 313-356 (in Bulgarian).

the Ecumenical movement was concentrated on the representation of the Bulgarian church history and spiritual heritage in the West. He also made very important personal contacts for our academic community in the West and also with Greek professors and clerics in a period when the Greek regime of the colonels and the Bulgarian totalitarian pro-Soviet regime were in not very good relationships. It should be pointed out that he is one of the most important persons for breaking through the isolation after the schism especially in the academic circles.

#### 4. The Wind of Changes in 1990s and Last Developments

After the changes in of 1989 the Bulgarian Church changed its attitude towards Ecumenism. Its former compromise was dictated by the Communist regime which wanted to represent a better picture of the religious rights in the country. But now the Church, having the deep feeling of incompetence and of lack of Dogmatic potential for taking part in this process, left WCC in 1998. It was an immune reaction after a long-term period of compromises with the faith because of the official state policy. A few years earlier at the Faculty of Theology in Sofia many students had organized a protest against the teaching “History of the Ecumenical Movement” in the framework of Orthodox Dogmatics. So, in a few weeks this course was left out of the curriculum of the Faculty. By leaving the WCC the Church just answered an expectation of the ordinary faithful people. On the other hand, it is not an advantage that, since then, this course has become a taboo in our curriculum. And also, until nowadays Bulgarian Church does not take part in any initiatives related to the dialog with the western Church.

In the academic sphere Prof. T. Koeff left a very important heritage after the changes. He was the first Dean and Founder of the Second Faculty of Theology in the city of Veliko Tirnovο (Northern Bulgaria).

In the early 90s started forming a new-old wave of Neopatristic approach in Bulgarian theology. In the late 90s there were already two visibly co-existing tendencies in the academic field of Dogmatic Theology. Form one hand, we can count the successor of Prof. T. Koeff in Tyrnovο University - Prof. Maryan Stoyadinoff, who is seriously engaged in the patristic roots of the Orthodox tradition. He defended his PhD in 1998 on theme *The Grace of God* (publ. 2006), based on the Palamitic tradition<sup>46</sup>. He also

<sup>46</sup> See also Stoyadinov, M. «Η ἀκρίβεια καὶ ὑπομονή στὸ ἀσκητικὸ πρόγραμμα

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contributed to the articulation of the understanding of Salvation in Bulgarian Dogmatic Theology<sup>47</sup>. As a scientist Mr. Stuyadinov has very active relationships with colleagues and clerics all over in the Orthodox world. He spent the period 2001-2002 at the Monastery Pendely in Athens and also in Thessalonika where he attended lectures at the Faculty of Theology of AUTH. He is a translator and an editor of Greek and Serbian theological literature. His interests in Orthodox Dogmatics are concentrated in 14<sup>th</sup> century controversies and the reception of the late Byzantine theology in 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries including the influence of western theology on the different tendencies of the Orthodox Dogmatic Theology<sup>48</sup>.

M. Stoyadinoff also tries to emphasize the ecclesiological foundation of Triadological and Christological thought in the modern epoch, i.e. to reflect on the reasons for the current “retreat – he says – from this truth of the Church”<sup>49</sup>. This is an attempt to consider the ecclesiological themes through the prism of the concept of person. A few of his latest publications are in the field of iconology. In them he tries to decode the Orthodox theology of image as a “visualization” of the hypostatic principle<sup>50</sup>.

From other hand, at the Faculty of Theology in Sofia is the other successor of Prof. T. Koeff – Lyubomir Tenekedzieff. For the last few years he has been trying to overcome the influence of neo-scholastic methodology

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του Γέροντα Ίωσήφ». In: *IM Βατοπεδίου, 2007 (Conference dedicated to elder Joseph Hesychast, Cyprus, October 2005)*.

<sup>47</sup> See Stoyadinov, M. «Τὸ παράδοξο τῆς Θείας ἐνσαρκώσεως». *Διάβαση*, τ. 40, 2002; “Soteriological basis of the Dogmatic works of the Church”. In: *International Symposium in Honor of Prof. Totyu Koev*. Veliko Tyrnovo, 2005 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>48</sup> See “The Services in the Church and the Challenges of Modern World”. In: *Orthodox Theological Symposium “Church and Modern Society”*. Rousse-Sofia, 2005; “Physical knowledge and knowledge of God in the Palamitic tradition”. In: *Ars and Scientia in the Middle Centuries*. Veliko Tyrnovo-Vratsa, 2006; “The Orthodox view on Filioque in the Context of the Council in Ferarre-Florence 1438-1439”. In: *Readings in honor of 600-years from the Dormition of St. Cyprian of Moscow*. Veliko Tyrnovo, 2008; “Disintegration of the Community as an Ecclesiological Problem”. In: *International Symposium “The Church and the Expectations of Modern Society” (University of Tyrnovo, 6-9. 11. 2006)*, Sofia, 2009; *The Right Faith in the Interpretation of Ecumenical patriarch Hieremias II in His Answer to the Augsburg’s Confession, 1576. Some ecclesiological aspects*. Veliko Tyrnovo, 2009 (all in Bulgarian).

<sup>49</sup> “Soteriological basis of the Dogmatic works of the Church”. In: *International Symposium in honor of Prof. Totyu Koev*. Veliko Tyrnovo, 2005 (in Bulgarian).

<sup>50</sup> See “The Light in the Orthodox icon”. In: *Archiv für mittelalterliche Philosophie und Kultur*, Heft XIII, Sofia-Munich, 2007; “Dogmatic Meaning of the icon”. In: *ibid.*, Heft XIV, 2007 (in Bulgarian).

and the specific approach towards Dogmatics of Prof. D. Dyulgeroff. He defended a PhD thesis on “*The Teaching of St. John of Damascus about the Icons*” (1988). He also published two important works for the present Bulgarian milieu: *Confirmation of the Apostles’ Tradition in 2<sup>nd</sup> century* (2008) and *The Teaching of the Church in Theological Thought until the middle of 3<sup>rd</sup> century* (2008). Here we see an attempt to overcome the fragmentation of Dogmatic exposé and to situate it in specific periods of Patristic literature. He has also published his habilitation on *The Mystery of Marriage* (2009). In this work he is trying to analyze the Orthodox conception of Marriage in the framework of the relational dimensions of the person in the Orthodox tradition.

We should also mention Clara Stamatova<sup>51</sup> and her recent dogmatic attempts: *An Introduction in the Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (2007), *A Supplement to the Introduction in the Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (2007), *If I have not love...* (2005), *The Church: A Community of Love* (2008). Interestingly, here we can see the same pattern of dogmatic exposé as the one that can be found in the pseudo-scholastic approach of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – in the works of Prof. Dimitâr Dyulgeroff and of Iliya Zonevsky. It is a strange fact that one is able to bring back to life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century a methodology that became a target of criticism in most of the Orthodox Schools of Theology during the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This could be relatively easy to explain by keeping in mind that Prof. Clara Stamatova is far away from serious theological research because she does not use any of dogmatic sources of the Orthodox Church. She does not use neither the Act of the Councils, neither the Fathers, neither the Liturgical tradition. Her knowledge of the Scriptural texts is also very fragmentary and out of Tradition. Her exposé does not take seriously into consideration any of the Orthodox thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (it seems that she does not read other language than Bulgarian and Russian). Her books look like summaries of compilations dragged out from the works of Dyulgeroff, Koeff, Dimitâr Kiroff<sup>52</sup> and Russian authors from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

We see how the years in isolation not only in schism but also during the Communist period provoked a lot of problems in the Church and its

<sup>51</sup> She works at Faculty of Theology of Sofia University as Ass. Prof. of History of Religion but also was teaching for a few years Dogmatic Theology (2006-2008).

<sup>52</sup> Since the late 80s Professor of Christian Ethics at the Faculty of Theology of “St. Clement of Ochrid”.

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theological education. Its heavy inheritance is most obvious in Dogmatic Theology perhaps because it is the heart of our Orthodox theological education. Bible Studies in Bulgaria are very well represented by a good number of academic researchers who had enough active contacts with their colleagues abroad. Researchers in Church History, as an interdisciplinary field, always keep in touch with colleagues from different sectors of academic community both in Bulgaria and abroad. All of them had always the chance to be part of scientific discussions and working groups. But our Dogmatic Theology was in deep isolation for many years and not only during the Communism<sup>53</sup>. We can hardly expect a living dogmatic work in a situation where there is not much discussion about hot doctrinal problems and about the real dimensions of Dogma in the real world.

After the normalization of the ecclesiastical practice in Bulgaria and in the atmosphere of religious freedom we can expect a new revival of creativeness in the field of Dogmatic Theology. Valuable interactions with other local Orthodox Churches and respectively Theological Institutions are the source of the medicine for treatment of the old wounds. For the local churches that were under pressure in the last century and passed through the persecutions of the atheistic regimes the exchange of spiritual experience, it is the right tool for overcoming all these problems. Dogmatic Theology in Bulgaria is a witness for this fact. In this respect real communion and catholicity (conciliarity) of the Church are the most important principles providing a guarantee for the authenticity of the Orthodox Doctrine. Without them it is doomed.

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<sup>53</sup> See interesting observations of the theological discussions in the country in Traychev, Emil, "Tendencies and Perspectives in the Modern Orthodox Theology and in the Theology in Bulgaria". In: Zidarova, V., Pavel Pavlov (eds.), *Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Traditions and Present*. Sofia, 2009, 188-194 (in Bulgarian).

Nicolae Moşoiu<sup>1</sup>

## The importance of a deeper understanding of the Orthodox *Ordo* of the Holy *Mysterion*<sup>2</sup> of Baptism for the spiritual life

### Abstract

This text is meant to illustrate, in connection with the Holy Mysterion of Baptism, what the Orthodox usually affirm about the close relationship between the Holy Scripture, the content of the liturgical books and the works of the Church Fathers in

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<sup>2</sup> In his contribution at the 3rd Consultation on Ecclesiology organized by CEC and CPCE, Phanar, 2006, professor Hans-Peter Grosshans pointed out that “the word *mysterion* used in the Eastern churches still has elements of its original meaning in ancient religion in its Christian usage... But in the Western churches this emphasis on the obligatory character of the sacraments for believers pushed too far into the background what the word *mysterion* really expresses: the self-communication of the triune God in these sacred actions”(p.4)., “Each mystery is directly rooted in Christ. Christ himself is the primordial mystery (John 1:1-18), and the very celebrant of all the mysteries. The Orthodox Church uses the Greek word *mysterion*, instead of *sacrament*, to denote the divinely instituted rites which manifest and communicate sanctifying divine grace. The word *mysterion* essentially means anything hidden or incomprehensible. It has been applied by the Church to the essential beliefs and doctrines of the faith and appears several times in Holy Scripture; its chief meaning is linked to the hidden and secret will of God related to the salvation of the world, now manifest in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word (Logos). And since the Church is to proclaim that mystery and communicate it to the people, the essential acts by which she is accomplishing this are also called mysteries. Through all these acts we are made participants and beneficiaries of the great mystery of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ”, Rev. Alciviadis C. Calivas, Th.D. , *The sacramental life of the orthodox church*”, on <http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article7106.asp>. In this presentation we shall deliberately use the term *mysterion*, not the term *sacrament*.

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general. By using the terminology, mainly the noun *morphe* (Philip 2:6,7) and the verb *morphoo* (Gal 4:19), this paper gives a new understanding of the way in which Jesus Christ takes shape/form (*morphe*) in us through the Holy Spirit as we receive the Baptism, the Christmation and the Eucharist. As a consequence of this process of receiving the beauty of the Son (christomorphisation), or of changing the garments of skin (Genesis 3:21) with garments of light (Gal 3:27), God the Father acknowledges us as sons and daughters (baptismal *υιοθεσία*). This new status of the human being is the most important aspect of the Holy Mystery of Baptism and has a crucial significance for our spiritual life.

**Key words:**

*Ordo, Baptism, Christmation, Eucharist, Metamorphosis, receiving the form of Christ (christification or christomorphisation), garments of skin, garments of light, baptismal υιοθεσία*

In the introduction of an important book on the ecumenical implications of our common Baptism, Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller noted that

“in the recent decades worship has proved to be increasingly significant for the ecumenical movement. Through the liturgical renewal movement which has developed since the 1950s, many churches have discovered a surprising degree of common ground in their understanding and practice of worship. Yet worship is also the place where the divisions among the churches become immediately and painfully evident – and not just at ecumenical gathering, but also in the life of local congregations. As contacts among local Christians increase, lively and sensitive questions arise about worship, particularly in relation to special liturgical moments such as baptism and eucharist”<sup>3</sup>.

The churches’ delegates at the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order “affirmed and celebrated together «the increasing mutual recognition of one another’s baptism as the one baptism into *Christ*»”<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas F. Best & Dagmar Heller (ed.) *Becoming a Christian. The Ecumenical Implications of Our Common Baptism*, Faith and Order Paper no.184, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1999, p.1. This book records the reflection and experience of some twenty Christians – liturgists, theologians, church musicians, pastors – who gathered at a Faith and Order consultation held in Faverges, France, in 1997, to struggle with the *implications* of our personal identity as Christians, for the churches and for the ecumenical movement.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p.3, passage quoted from the *Worship Book* of Santiago Conference, p.12

„Many churches are now emphasizing that baptism is baptism into *Christ*, not into this or that historic denomination. In baptism one becomes not a Methodist, Lutheran or Roman Catholic, but a Christian”<sup>5</sup>.

This affirmation can be misleading because for us, Orthodox Christians, the Holy *Mysterion* of Baptism offers the Christian identity, but in the same time the Orthodox one. In the prayer of Chrismation the celebrant prays that the Triune God would “confirm him (her) in the Orthodox Faith”. In the Orthodox *ordo*, Baptism is not separated from the Chrismation. One cannot regard Baptism separate from the entire Church life, because the Baptism introduces the candidate in this very Church life. As Rev. Alciviadis C. Calivas noted:

“Baptism unites the believer not only with Christ but with his people, the Church. One is baptized into the community of faith to share its life, its values, its vision. Baptism, by bringing us into the glorified life of Christ and making us part of his deified humanity, integrates us into the Church, His body, where dying and rising is daily experienced in ascetic discipline in the life of prayer and in the Eucharist”<sup>6</sup>.

Professor Grigorios Larentzakis also outlined that through “Baptism and Chrismation, the newly baptized person does not just become a Christian as an individual, but also becomes a member of a most intimate community through his or her life within the existential *mysterium ecclesiae*”<sup>7</sup>.

The Faith and Order Consultation which took place in Ditchingham, England, in 1994, explored the pattern or structure (the *ordo*) of Christian worship as increasingly a point of contact and common experience among many churches. Dealing with the *ordo* of Baptism and its ecumenical implications, Gordon Lathrop wrote from the beginning of his study that a sense of the meaning of Christian baptism and of the common shape of its practice throughout the world may be discovered in surprising places, for example in a classic text from the history of the Church which is not about baptism at all, but it “may disclose to us in clarity the vibrant importance of the basic pattern of baptizing” and about the Eucharist<sup>8</sup>:

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>6</sup> Rev. Alciviadis C. Calivas, *The Sacramental Life* ...

<sup>7</sup> Grigorios Larentzakis, “Baptism and the Unity of the Churches. Orthodox Views”, paper presented at the 3rd Consultation on ecclesiology between CEC and CPCE, Phanar, 2006, p.5

<sup>8</sup> Gordon Lathrop, „The Water that Speaks. The *Ordo* of Baptism and its Ecumenical Implications” in Thomas F. Best & Dagmar Heller (ed.) *Becoming a Christian* p.13. In the introduction of this presentation I rely a lot on this study.

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“Do not speak Jesus Christ yet set your heart upon the world.... My desire (*eros*) has been crucified and there is not in me any fire which feeds off material stuff (*pyr philoulon*), but rather there is water living and speaking in me, saying to me from within, «Come to the Father!». I do not delight in the food of death nor the pleasure of this life. I want the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, descended from David, and I want the drink of his blood, which is deathless love (*agape*)”<sup>9</sup>.

In this way Saint Ignatius describes the martyrdom „he expects and for which he longs, using the imagery of the central matters of the Christian community: the word of God, the water of new birth into the body of Christ, the love-feast of the Eucharist”<sup>10</sup>. Proclamation and conversion, the speaking water, the meal, such was the *ordo* of the making of Christians in Antioch. Gordon Lathrop added that

“one was to live through this pattern repeatedly, not repeating the water-washing but listening to its «voice», acting on its invitation. Furthermore, although this *ordo* could be taken to reflect the practice which Ignatius would have known at Antioch, he could expect it to be understood at Rome: in these central matters the churches were at one.... The local church of Antioch is in communion with the local church in Rome”<sup>11</sup>.

Going back to the „Ditchingam *ordo*”, this outlines the baptismal event as two things, „formation in faith” (which might include both „speaking Jesus Christ” and renunciation the ways of evil and death) and „water-washing”, side by side, leading to a third thing, „participation in the life of the community”. The same pattern can be found in Saint Ignatius’s words quoted above:

proclamation, conversion, turning away from evil;  
the „speaking water”;  
the meal of God/witnes in the world.

Gordon Lathrop also quoted the text from Saint Justin the Martyr and Philosopher (+165), described as “the first full direct description which we possess of what happens in Christian baptism”:

“We shall now also explain the way in which we dedicated ourselves as votive gifts to God, having been made new through Jesus Christ, lest

<sup>9</sup> Saint Ignatius, *To the Romans* 7:1b, 2b-3; Greek text in Kirsoop Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol.1, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1959, p.234,

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Lathrop, „The Water that Speaks”, p.13

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p.15

in omitting this we should appear to do something wrong in our explanation. As many people as are persuaded, as believe these things taught and spoken by us to be true, and as promise to try to live thus, are taught to pray and ask God, while fasting for the forgiveness of sins, while we pray and fast together with them. Then they are led by us there where water is, and they are reborn in the way of rebirth with which we ourselves were reborn. For then they do the washing in the water in the name of the Father and Lord God of all things and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit... And this washing is called illumination, since the understanding of those who learn these things is illuminated... But, after thus washing those who are persuaded and who assent, we lead them to those who are called brothers and sisters, where they are assembled to make common prayer with strength for themselves and for those illuminated and for all others everywhere... When we have ended the prayers, we greet one another with a kiss. Then the brothers and sisters set out before the president bread and a cup of mixed wine.... And for the rest we continually remind each other of these things. Those who have the means help all those who are in want, and we continually meet together. And over all that we take to eat we bless the Creator of all things through God's Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. And on the day named after the sun, all, whether they live in the city or the countryside, are gathered together in unity..."<sup>12</sup>.

The pattern resulting from this text would be:

- teaching the faith and enquiring about the conduct;
- praying and fasting of candidates and community;
- procession to the water;
- washing;
- procession to the place of community prayer;
- Eucharist;
- continual reminding, through Sunday Eucharist and care of the poor<sup>13</sup>.

From the probably earlier Syrian book: *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (The Didache)*, we also find out the way in which the Baptism was performed:

„Baptize thus: having first recited all these things, baptize «in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost», in running water.

<sup>12</sup> Saint Justin the Martyr and Philosopher, *I Apology* 61-67, PG 6:420-432

<sup>13</sup> Gordon Lathrop, „The Water that Speaks”, p.19

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If you have no running water, baptize in other water; if you cannot baptize in cold water, use warm. If you have neither, pour water on the head thrice «in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost». Before baptism, the baptizer and baptized should fast, and others who can: and you must order the baptized to fast for a day or two<sup>14</sup>.

In this ancient writing, one can find a similar *ordo*:

- moral instruction (1:1-6:3)
- fasting and prayer (7:4-8; „before the Baptism”, 7:4);
- Baptism in the name of the Triune God, in „living water” (7:1-3)
- Eucharist after Baptism (9-10);
- the life of the community, including reception of travelling teachers (11-13), giving to the poor (13:4), the every-Sunday Eucharist (14).

„In fact, this primitive order for making a Christian ultimately becomes the order of the «catechumenate», known to us from many sources from the 3rd century on:

- enquiry about willingness to change conduct;
- hearing the gospel/teaching the words for faith;
- prayer (and fasting);
- washing;
- leading to the meal,
- to «mystagogy», the learning of the mysteries in which one was now participant;

- and to the resultant weekly assembly, witness and care for the poor<sup>15</sup>.

In the New Testament, although it is not a book of rituals, we can find references to the *ordo* of Baptism. For example the episode of the healing of a boy with an unclean spirit:

*„... And Jesus said to him, «If you can! All things are possible to him who believes». Immediately the father of the child cried out and said: «I believe; help my unbelief!». And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, «You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again». And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, «He is dead». But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered*

<sup>14</sup> *Didache*, VII; English translation in : *The Early Christian Fathers*, edited and translated by Henry Bettenson, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.50

<sup>15</sup> Gordon Lathrop, „The Water that Speaks”, p.20

the house, his disciples asked him privately, «Why could we not cast it out?». And he said to them, «This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting<sup>16</sup>» (Mk.9:23-29).

We can discern in this text most of the constitutive elements of the baptismal *ordo*:

- the explicit confession of faith in a wonderful, humble way: „I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mk.9,24);
- the exorcism done by Jesus Christ;
- the great importance of prayer and fast;
- death, rebirth, resurrection and a new life in Christ<sup>17</sup>.

The founding of the first Christian community in the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and its spiritual and community life implied the:

- preaching (“formation in faith”);
- reception of the message („they were cut to the heart”);
- repentance and conversion;
- Baptism for the forgiveness of sins;
- receiving of the Holy Spirit;
- formation in faith („they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching – te didahe ton apostolon, doctrina apostolorum);
- community life („fellowship – koinonia), *agape* carried out by the distribution of goods to „all, as any had need”;
- Eucharist („breaking of bread – te klasei tou artou);
- prayers (tais proseuhais).

It is important to outline the close relation, from the beginning of the Church, between the preaching (i.e. the word) and Holy *Mysteria* (Baptism, receiving of the Holy Spirit and Eucharist preceded by repentance - in the Orthodox Church the candidate receives the three *mysteria* in the same day -). In other words the Church was constituted by word (preaching) and *mysteria*.

<sup>16</sup> The word *fasting* was added by „other ancient authorities”, according to: Nestle-Aland, *Greek-English New Testament*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994, footnote *i*, p.119

<sup>17</sup> As it is outlined by Saint Paul in the epistle to the Romans (6:3-11), text read during the office of Baptism : “(...)all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his (...). So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus”. The boy was “like a corpse; so that most of them said, «He is dead»”.

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„Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, «Brethren, what shall we do?» And Peter said to them, «Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit»... „So those who received his word were baptized... And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching- *te didahe ton Apostolon*, *doctrina Apostolorum* and fellowship- *te koinonia*, *communicatione*, to the breaking of bread- *te klasei ton arton*, *fractionis panis* and the prayers- *tais proseuhais*, *orationibus*”(Acts 2).

In Acts 2:42 we find the four biblical foundations of the universal Church (the apostles' teaching- *te didahe ton Apostolon*, *doctrina Apostolorum*-, the fellowship - *te koinonia*, *communicatione*-, the breaking of bread- *te klasei ton arton*, *fractionis panis*- and the prayers- *tais proseuhais*, *orationibus*) in which the identity and integrity of the Church are expressed. The unity of the Church in the New Testament is a symphony of local churches with specific local elements, however they are in communion of faith, love and *mysteria*. Today we must observe the same pattern, because it is impossible to envisage an authentic unity of the Church without the common confession of the faith, followed by an authentic *koinonia*, the sharing of Holy Communion - *communio in sacris* and prayers for all (cf. 1Tim 2:1).

Rom 6 is an explicit text regarding the meaning of the Baptism: death, cleansing from sin, resurrection, new life. Saint Paul depends on the Christian baptism leading to the meal for his analogy with the crossing of the sea leading to eating the manna and drinking from the rock (1Cor10).

Gordon Lathrop also pointed out that if 1 Peter may be considered to be a baptismal catechesis and a church order, the order of making Christians is the same there too:

- proclamation of the resurrection and teaching about ethical transformation (1:3- 21);
- purification (1:22) and “new birth” (1:23)
- communal love (1:23; 2:1)
- eating and drinking (2:2-3)
- participation in the community, royal priesthood, people of God (2:4-10)
- moral instruction (2:11sq.).

As a conclusion we should outline that every Baptism into Christ is a participation in His Baptism (Mark 1:9-11 and parallels; although Jesus

received Saint John the Baptist's Baptism, what happened there – the immersion, the *parousia* of the Holy Spirit, and the voice of the Father - is a model for the Christian Baptism, because the entire *oikonomia* of salvation was accomplished for us), passions, death, resurrection and ascension. The candidate goes into the water with Christ, the Holy Spirit confers the gifts (in the Orthodox "rite of initiation" the Chrismation immediately follows the Baptism) and the voice of the Father calls the neophyte a beloved child (i.e. the newly baptized is adopted by God the Father, baptismal *γιοθεσία*), a participant in the body of Christ by receiving for the first time the Holy Communion. The candidate is buried into the water together with Christ in order to be raised with Him and receive a new life.

### 1. The Orthodox *ordo* of Baptism<sup>18</sup>

At the 3rd Consultation on ecclesiology between CEC and CPCE, Phanar, 2006, professor Grigorios Larentzakis affirmed that "Baptism in the Orthodox Church today has the same central significance as it had in the early church"<sup>19</sup> and then presented the *ordo* of the Orthodox Baptism. We can find many explanations about the Baptism in the works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Saint John Chrisostomos, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Saint Ambrose of Milan and Saint Nicolas Cabasilas.

I would like to present briefly the significance of the *baptismal ordo*<sup>20</sup> and then I shall call your attention on the baptismal adoption (*γιοθεσία*) by the Father, which is possible due to Christ who takes *form* in the candidate through the Holy Spirit.

The term *baptism* comes from the Greek noun *to baptisma* which means immersion, the verb *baptidzo* which means to dip, to place into a liquid, to dunk. There are many prefigurations of the Baptism, in the Old Testament, e.g.:the primordial water, the flood, circumcision, the crossing of the Red Sea, the water which burst out of the rock when Moses hit it with his crook (Exod 17,1-7), the crook envisaging the cross. .

The Orthodox Church has three rites for infants which are closely linked to Baptism. The first rite is for the mother and child on the first day of birth. In this rite the Church expresses her thanksgiving for the safe

<sup>18</sup> The Orthodox text of Baptism on: [http://www.goarch.org/chapel/liturgical\\_texts](http://www.goarch.org/chapel/liturgical_texts)

<sup>19</sup> Grigorios Larentzakis, "Baptism and the unity..." p.4

<sup>20</sup> I shall use here available resources e.g.: <http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith>; <http://www.3saints.com/baptism.html>

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delivery of the mother and her joy at the appearance of a new life. Blessing the newborn infant the Church anticipates its new and second birth through water and the Spirit (John 3:5). A second rite is conducted on the eighth day after birth, when the newborn child receives its name from its parents. The child is given a Christian name as a sign of its new identity with the faith community. The third rite is conducted on the fortieth day after birth. The new-born child is to be brought to the Church in imitation of the New Testament event, when Saint Mary, the Theotokos, brought the infant Christ into the Temple to fulfill the requirements of the Law. On this day the mother is blessed and the infant “churches”, or is accepted as a peripheral member of the Church, until it is fully incorporated into her life through baptism.

The first act of the baptismal service begins in the narthex (entrance) of the church. This is to show that the one being received is not yet a member of the Church. The purpose of baptism is to bring him into the Church. To enter into the temple of God is to be with Christ, to become a member of His body. The priest then calls upon the sponsor (or the candidate if he is adult) to renounce the devil and all his works for the child: “Do you renounce Satan, and all his angels, and all his works, and all his services, and all his pride?”

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann explains the meaning of this renunciation

“The first act of the Christian life is a renunciation, a challenge. No one can be Christ’s until he has, first, faced Evil, and then become ready to fight it.... The exorcisms mean this: to face Evil, to acknowledge its reality, to know its power, and to proclaim the power of God to destroy it. The exorcisms announce the forthcoming baptism as an act of victory”<sup>21</sup>.

The renouncing of Satan is done facing the west because the west is where the sun disappears and was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the place of the gates of Hades. Then the priest faces east whence the light of the sun rises and asks the godparent to accept for the child Him who is the Light of the World. “Do you unite yourself to Christ?” The priest then makes the sign of the cross on the child’s body. This is repeated often during the service. The cross is essentially is the sign of victory which puts the devil to flight. In the old days, slaves were branded, as are animals today, to show to what master they belong. Today, the sign of the cross brands us as belonging to Christ.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Schmemmann *For the Life of the World*, New York, 1997, p.13

The godparent is then asked to confess faith in Christ on behalf of the infant. At this point the godparent reads the confession of faith contained in the Nicene Creed. By reading the “*symbolon tes pisteos*,” the godparent confesses the true faith. From the moment the child is received into the Church, emphasis is placed on his individuality. He is given his own particular name by which he shall be distinguished from every other child of God. This expresses our belief that the child has the dignity of his own selfhood in the eyes of God. It is the Church’s acceptance of him as an individual in his own right. The new name expresses also the new life received through baptism.

Olive oil is blessed and then applied by the priest to the various members of the child’s body: hands, feet, ears, mouth, in order to dedicate them to the service of Christ. Especially in the Greek Church, the sponsor then anoints the entire body of the infant with olive oil. This custom had its beginning among the ancient Greek wrestlers who anointed their bodies with olive oil to make it difficult for the opponent to maintain a grip on them. In Baptism, the child is anointed with olive oil to express our prayer that with Christ’s help the infant may be able to elude the grip of sin. We discover the significance and purpose from the text of the prayer of consecration of the oil<sup>22</sup>.

The baptismal font in the language of the Church Fathers is the Divine Womb whence we receive the second birth as children of God. Baptism is truly a birth.

*“But to all who receive him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13).*

The baptismal font is not only a womb but also a tomb where we die to sin. We believe that Christ died for our sins. To show that we, and not Christ, are worthy of death because of our sins, we are immersed in the

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<sup>22</sup> “Sovereign Lord and Master, God of our Fathers, Who did send to them in the Ark of Noah a dove bearing a twig of olive in its beak as a sign of reconciliation and salvation from the Flood, and through these things prefigured the Mystery of Grace; and thereby have filled them that were under the Law with the Holy Spirit, and perfected them that are under Grace: do You Yourself bless this Oil by the power (+) and operation (+) and descent of the Holy Spirit (+) that it may become an anointing of incorruption, a shield of righteousness, a renewal of soul and body, and averting of every operation of the devil, to the removal of all evils from them that are anointed with it in faith, or that are partakers of it”

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baptismal font. The immersion in water symbolizes death, since a person cannot live long under water. Through baptism we share mysteriously in Christ's death. As Saint Paul says,

*"We were buried therefore with him [Christ] by baptism into death so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life"*(Rom 6) .

The baptized person rises out of the baptismal font a new man, cleansed of every sin and promising, like Saint Paul, to surrender his life to Christ, his Saviour:

*"He died for all that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them"*.

The triple immersion symbolizes the three days our Lord spent in the tomb as well as the Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity (the human being is *imago Trinitatis*) since the baptismal formula used in the Orthodox Church is:

*"The servant of God — is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*

The water symbolizes the life and it is also used for cleansing. In Baptism it expresses the fact that through this *mysterion*, Christ cleanses us from the original and personal sin. Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae emphasized<sup>23</sup> the relation between the baptismal water and the water<sup>24</sup> from the first day of the creation<sup>25</sup>. The Holy Spirit made actual the virtual forms imprinted in it by the Logos, so that the forms of life started to appear. Likewise the baptismal water is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, the Giver of life, the candidate is recreated, the *imago Dei* is cleansed and he (she) receives the *form*, the beauty, i.e. the light of Christ – the incarnated Logos is the human being's Archetype - , and therefore is adopted by the Father.

The infant is baptized in its naked state to denote that just as we came out of our mother's womb naked so we emerge naked out of the womb of God—the baptismal font. The removal of all clothes also signifies the old slough of skin which will be cast off entirely through Baptism. Nakedness without shame refers also to the original state of man in Paradise where he

<sup>23</sup> Preotul Profesor Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, [from now on we shall use for the footnotes: *TDO*] București, 2003, p.35-39

<sup>24</sup> See the fascinating documentary about the water on: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-2933349021550318008&hl=ro>

<sup>25</sup> The prayer of the consecration of the water is also a hymn addressed to the Creator of all.

was not ashamed of the body which God had created and had called good. The new clothes signify the entirely new life that we receive after we are “buried with Jesus in His death” (Rom. 6:4). In the early Church the newly baptized did not put on the old clothing he had taken off. He put on a new white robe, which was worn at all the services during Easter week - in the early times most baptisms were performed at Easter. The white robe expresses the purity of the soul that has been washed from sin. It recalls also the shining robe in which Christ appeared at the Transfiguration. There is now a likeness between the one baptized and the transfigured Lord. Saint Paul calls it a putting on of Christ: “*For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have you put on Christ*” (Gal. 3:26, 27). Baptism is more than an external cleansing. It is a deeply rooted ontological transformation.

However dark may be the night that surrounds us, Baptism remains the *mysterion* of entrance into light. It opens the eyes of the soul to see Christ, the light of the world (John 1:19). It makes us sons of light (I Thess. 5:5). In the early Church, the baptismal candle was always kept by the one baptized. It was given to the newly baptized with the scriptural admonition:

*“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven”* (Matt 5:16).

The baptismal candle was brought to Church on feast days, on the anniversary of one’s Baptism and for the midnight Easter liturgy. If the person was married, the same candle was lighted at the wedding. If he was ordained, he would light it at his ordination. When the final hour of life approached it was lighted again as the soul went forth to meet its Judge. It was a constant reminder for the Christian to live and die by the light of Christ.

The newly illumined Christian is then robed in a white garment, the symbol of regeneration, newness, kingship, and future immortality. The white garment, which is the color of royalty, symbolizes the gifts of baptism and reminds the neophyte of his responsibility to remain whole and be faithful to the baptismal pledge. At this point the mystery of the holy Chrism (*myron*) is administered. The neophyte is anointed with the consecrated oils by the celebrant using the liturgical formula “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen”. Chrism is applied to the sense and other parts of the body in the pattern of the Cross, signifying the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit takes the neophyte beyond the restoration of the fallen nature. The continuous presence of the Holy Spirit

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makes possible the constant, progressive, personal growth of the Christian into the image and likeness of God. He or she is also given a cross to wear. The Holy *Mysterion* of Chrismation is anchored in the events of Jesus' Baptism and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, yet, in the Lord's declaration "*unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God*" (John 3:5).

In the apostolic period this *mysterion* was celebrated in two ways: through the laying of hands and through the anointing with the special oil, this latter practice appeared because the apostles could not be present at every baptism. We have several important biblical references: Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-6; IICor 1:21-22; I John 2:20-27. The liturgical formula "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen" is based on the words of Saint Paul. The ones who have heard "*the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed- esphragisthete with the promised Holy Spirit which is the guarantee of our salvation*" (Eph 1:13-14; cf. also 4:30, where "*the day of redemption*" may also refer to the Baptism).

From the comprehensive study on Chrismation<sup>26</sup> signed by Pere Cyrille Argenti, we learn (due to the patristic references quoted) that in the second, third and fourth centuries the receiving of the Holy Spirit took place both in East and in West immediately after Baptism<sup>27</sup>. In Saint Ambrose of Milan's *De mysteriis*, the pattern is: Baptism, first anointing by the bishop, washing of the feet by the bishop (in Milan, but not in Rome), the second anointing by the bishop, the Chrismation (*signaculum* is the Latin equivalent of *sphragis*). In the time of Saint Hieronimus and Saint Augustin, the Gospel reached the countryside, so it was impossible for the bishop to celebrate everywhere the Eucharist together with the priests, followed by the Baptism, so the priests performed the Baptism and the first anointing, while the bishop was to confer, later on, the second anointing and the laying of hands. In the West, the name *Confirmation* was given to this new ritual, from 2Cor1:21 (*bebaion, confirmat*). The term *confirmation*, appeared in the history of the Church in the period of the councils of Riez (439) and Orange (441), Pope Saint Leon the Great talked for the first time about the sacrament of Confirmation in 458<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Pere Cyrille Argenti, „La Chrismation”, in *Contacts*, no.2 (118)/1982)

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p.115

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, 99

It is very important to mention that Saint Hieronimus argued the opinion that the Holy Spirit is conferred only through the prayer of the bishop<sup>29</sup>. The first Eastern critique of the practice of Confirmation appeared at the Council which took place in Constantinopol in 867 because of the dissatisfaction caused by the Frankish bishops sent by Pope Nicholas I to anoint the Bulgarian Christians. Among the Greek polemicists arose from now on the misconception of the double Baptism of the West, while in the XIII century, the Western authors came to deny the existence of the Confirmation among the Eastern Christians. Pope Alexander IV (1243-1254) imposed the recognition of the Confirmation among the Eastern, as a distinct and separately conferred sacrament; it was then also established by the Confession of faith imposed to the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII and especially by the Council of Lyon (1274). Starting with the Confession of faith signed by patriarch Dositei of Jerusalem (1672) in which the three terms: *bebeosis/to hagian myron* and *to hagian chrisma* are equaled, we speak in the Eastern Church about Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist as about the three out of seven *Mysteria*.

But there is both an intrinsic unity and a distinction between the *mysteria* of Baptism and Chrismation. They are intimately related theologically and liturgically<sup>30</sup>. Chrismation is the second *mysterion* but it is also, together with the Eucharist, the very fulfillment of Baptism. While Baptism incorporates us into Christ's new risen existence, Chrismation makes us

<sup>29</sup> Edmond Chavaz, *Foyers chretiens*, Lyon, 1981, no.50, p.12, quoted by Pere Cyrille Argenti, op.cit., 119-120

<sup>30</sup> This idea is outlined in the prayer before the Chrismation, „Blessed are You, Lord God Almighty, Fountain of Blessings, Sun of Righteousness, Who made to shine forth for those in darkness a light of salvation through the manifestation of Your Only-Begotten Son and our God, granting unto us, though we are unworthy, blessed cleansing in Holy Water, and divine sanctification in the Life; effecting Anointing; Who now also has been well-pleased to regenerate this Your servant newly illuminated through Water and Spirit, giving him (her) forgiveness of his (her) voluntary and involuntary sins: do You Yourself, Sovereign Master, Compassionate King of All, bestow upon him (her) also the Seal of Your omnipotent and adorable Holy Spirit, and the Communion of the Holy Body and Most Precious Blood of Your Christ; keep him (her) in Your sanctification; confirm him (her) in the Orthodox Faith; deliver him (her) from the Evil One and all his devices; preserve his (her) soul, through Your saving fear, in purity and righteousness, that in every work and word, being acceptable before You, he (she) may become a child and heir of Your heavenly Kingdom. For You are our God, the God of Mercy and Salvation, and to You do we send up Glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages”.

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partakers of His Spirit, the very source of this new life and of total illumination. Chrismation causes a mysterious new and hidden life to flow in us. It imparts to persons the energies and the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:23 and Gal 5:22). Chrismation is called the seal (*sphragis*). The neophyte receives the Holy Spirit as the source, the pledge and the seal of unending life. Anointed with the chrism, we are marked forever as the sheep and soldiers of Christ. We belong to Him and to His holy Church. Human nature purified by Baptism is made ready to receive the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit. As Fr. Schmemmann says:

“Confirmation [Chrismation] is thus the personal Pentecost of man, his entrance into the life of the Holy Spirit...his ordination as truly and fully man.... His whole body is anointed, sealed, sanctified, *dedicated* to the new life: «the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit», says the priest as he anoints the newly baptized «on the brow, and on the eyes, and the nostrils, and the lips, and on both ears, and the breast and on the hands, and the feet».... The whole man is now made the temple of God...”

The Greek word for confirmation is *chrisma*, which means anointing. The one anointed with “chrisma” becomes *christos*, that is, the anointed one, which is the meaning of the name Christ. Thus, by this *mysterion* we are made Christians or other *christs* (anointed ones), due to Christ’s presence in us through His Holy Spirit. Chrismation is the ordination of the laity. According to Orthodox belief, every baptized lay person is ordained a priest by this *mysterion* (cf. 1 Pt 2:8-10), receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit to become a deputy or an ambassador for Christ in this world. Thus Chrismation, once canonically performed, cannot be repeated.

The chrism that is used for the ritual of anointing is a mixture of olive oil, balsam, wine, and some forty aromatic substances, symbolizing the fullness of sacramental grace, the sweetness of the Christian life and manifold and diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit. The chrism is also called the Holy Myron, and is the antitype, the visible tabernacle of the Holy Spirit. By ancient custom the right to prepare and consecrate the chrism belongs to the bishop and its administration to the presbyters. Each autocephalous Orthodox Church, through all her bishops, has the right to prepare and consecrate chrism, periodically on the Holy Thursday.

In the ancient Church, Baptism was immediately followed by the celebration of the Eucharist. The newly-illuminated Christians, holding lighted candles proceeded from the *baptisterion* with the clergy to the nave of the

Church to join the faithful for the Eucharist. Vestiges of this ancient practice form the next sequence of actions in the baptismal rite. A procession around the font, with the singing of "*As many as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia*" (Gal 3:27) is followed by the reading of two excerpts from the New Testament: the Epistle to the Romans (6:3-11) explains the meaning of Baptism; and the Gospel of Matthew (28:16-20) recalling the command of the Lord to the Church to instruct and baptize. The neophyte then receives Holy Communion. The new life in Christ, given in Baptism, is renewed again and again in the Eucharist. In the Orthodox Church, every baptized and confirmed infant becomes a full member of the Church and is entitled to receive Holy Communion.

After a set of petitions called the "Fervent Litany", the neophyte participates in three additional rites. These were originally conducted on the eighth day after Baptism; they now form the last part of the baptismal rite. The celebrant washes the neophyte's forehead as an indication that the visible signs of the mysteries must now become inner realities and the very essence of life. This is emphasized with the laying on of hands upon the candidate<sup>31</sup> and the tonsure. Through the laying on of hands, the neophyte and those concerned for his growth in Christ, are reminded that the Christian is armed with the Holy Spirit to war against all adverse powers. After confirming the child, the priest cuts three locks of hair from the child's head. This is an expression of gratitude from the child, who having received an abundance of blessings through the *Mysteria* of Baptism and Chrismation and having nothing to give to God in return, offers part of its hair, which is the symbol of strength (see Samson in the Old Testament). The child, therefore, promises to serve God with all its strength. The ton-

<sup>31</sup> It is important to note that the blessing „through the hand of” the celebrant so that the newly baptized be “visited” with the Holy Spirit”, is preserved, even if the Chrismation has already taken place: “O Lord our God, Who through the fulfillment of the baptismal Font have, by Your Goodness, sanctified them that believe in You: (+) do You bless this child here present, and may Your blessings come down upon his (her) head; as You did bless the head of Your servant David the King through the Prophet Samuel, (+) so also bless the head of this servant (*Name*), through the hand of me, the unworthy Priest, visiting him (her) with Your Holy Spirit, that as he (she) goes forward to the prime of his (*her*) years, and the gray hairs of old age, he (she) may send up Glory to You, beholding the good things of Jerusalem all the days of his (her) life. For to You are due all glory, honor and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages”. The final doxology is addressed to the Holy Trinity, because the human being is “*imago Trinitatis*”.

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sure, or cutting of the hair, indicates both a sacrificial offering that does not require the mutilation or humiliation of the human body and a sign of servitude and obedience. The new Christian proclaims his willingness and readiness to negate the world with its false values and to serve God with faithful devotion.

In early times, Baptism and Chrismation were not administered in the church, but in a separate edifice called the *baptisterion*. Following anointment with Holy Chrism, the newly baptized, wearing their white robes and carrying candles, were led by the clergy to the church for the celebration of the Eucharist. Here they would receive their first Communion. This is the origin of the present procession of the priest accompanied by the sponsor holding the newly baptized infant, around the baptismal font just before the neophyte is given the *Mysterion* of Communion. The purpose of Baptism and Chrismation is expressed by this procession to the Eucharist. The door is now open to full and complete communion with God. During the procession the priest sings, "...as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia" (Gal. 3:27).

**2. "Kai morphoson sou ton Christon, en to mellonti anagennasthai..."<sup>32</sup>, the receiving of the form-morphy of Christ at the Holy *Mysterion* of Baptism - the christification or the christomorphism<sup>33</sup> (- morphisation) of the human being - , the premise of the adoptive divine sonship**

After this short presentation of the significance of the Orthodox *ordo* of the Baptism, which is somehow classic and can be easily found in detail<sup>34</sup>, I think that it is important to outline the fact that we may not reduce, as it often happens, the effects of this Holy *Mysterion* to the receiving of the

<sup>32</sup> *Mikron Euchologion, e Agiasmatarion, Ekdosis*, Apostolikes Diakonias tes Ekklesias tes Ellados, en Athenais, 1962, p. 71

<sup>33</sup> Gaspar Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God .Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies* (Continuum, New York, London,2002). The author notes that David Tracy replaced the former Christian christocentrism by theocentric christomorphism, „in other words, the Christian God, the very centre of Christianity, can only be rendered through the Christ form". (p.235). One can say that the opposite is also true, i.e. for God, the human being can totally be rendered only when he (she) received the form of Christ, his beauty (see infra).

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith>; <http://www.3saints.com/baptism.html>

remission of sins – original and personal, if the candidate is not a baby- and of the membership of the Church. In the prayer of the blessing of the baptismal water the celebrant says:

“But do You, O Master of All, declare this water to be water of redemption, water of sanctification, a cleansing of flesh and spirit, a loosing of bonds, a forgiveness of sins, an illumination of soul, a laver of regeneration, a renewal of the spirit, a gift of sonship, a garment of incorruption, a fountain of life”.

Therefore Baptism also means redemption - not just as remission of sins but as communion with the Holy Trinity; sanctification - due to the receiving of the Sanctifier, the Holy Spirit; illumination- due to the receiving of the garment of light; regeneration (*anagennesis*) - the candidate dies and is born again with Jesus; renewal of the lifesupporting power of the human spirit due to the communion with the Holy Spirit, the Giver of life, that is why the Baptism is “a fountain of life”; the gift of sonship i.e. the *πνευμα υιοθεσία*, *spiritum adoptionis filiorum* (Rm.8:15) – adoptive baptismal *υιοθεσία*.

The adoptive sonship, which is especially highlighted in the Orthodox Theology, is possible because the neophyte receives the “form- *morphe* of Christ”. In the prayer before the consecration of the baptismal water the celebrant invokes the Holy Trinity saying:

“Form the Image of Your Christ in him (her) who is about to be born again through my humility”.

This English translation might be misleading because in the original Greek we read:

“Και morphoson sou ton Christon, en to mellonti anagennasthai...”<sup>35</sup>.

So the meaning is that Christ would take form – *morphe*, not image – *eikon*, because every human being is created according to the image of the Image of the Father (Col 1:15), human being is *eikon Eikonos*, the incarnate Logos is the Archetype of the human being<sup>36</sup>. It is unacceptable to consider that only through Baptism the human being receives the *imago Dei*. At the Baptism the candidate receives the „form of Christ”, His likeness - in an ethical but also in an ontological sense- which means

<sup>35</sup> *Mikron Euchologion, e Agiasmatarion, Ekdosis*, Apostolikes Diakonias tes Ekklesias tes Ellados, en Athenais, 1962, p. 71

<sup>36</sup> Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1987.

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His garment of light, the same garment as the one seen by the three Saints Aposteles on Mount Tabor at the Transfiguration- *Metamorphosis* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important to underline that after the immersion, the candidate asks: „A robe of divine light bestow upon me, O You that for vesture array Yourself with Light; and bestow many mercies, O Christ our God, who are plenteous in mercy” and only after the Chrismation it is possible to sing: “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ”, because the Holy Spirit is the One who *conforms* the neophyte to Christ.

In order to understand what it means to “put on Christ” or to receive His *form* we have to make reference to the *Carmen Christi* from the epistle to the Philippians which seems to be the most interpreted text of the New Testament<sup>37</sup>: “*Who being in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant*” (Phil 2:6-7).

To begin with, however, a few brief definitions of terms are needed,: a) *morphe* – *shema* - *eidōs*; b) *morphe* - *ousia*; c) *morphe* - *eikon*; d) *morphe* - *doxa*.

a) *morphe* – *schema* - *eidōs*. In Greek, except for Homer, but usually later, *morphe* means *form*, the external aspect, and even the owner of the form, the person.<sup>38</sup> In its basic sense, *morphe* is synonymous with *eidōs*, *idea* and *schema*. Despite their interchangeable use, there are obvious differences. *Morphe*, the form particular to a being, is not the same as *eidōs*, the entire visible aspect. *Eidōs* describes what can be perceived and known by others, whereas *morphe* describes what is objectively there. *Morphe* is different from *schema* in that it describes the individual exterior aspect as it is, whereas *schema* pertains to the outward representation. *Morphe* is the whole ( e.g. of the body) in and for itself, whereas *schema* is what pertains to the whole (the *form*, exterior characteristics, mode of presentation, etc.); *morphe, forma dicit quiddam absolutum... schema, habitus, cultus, vestitus, victus, gestus, sermones et actiones*. Despite all these subtle differences, there are no clear-cut borders in their use.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Markus Bockmuehl, “The Form of God” (Phil. 2,6) Variation on a theme of Jewish Mysticism”, in: *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New series, April 1997, vol. 48, part 1, Oxford

<sup>38</sup> Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of New Testament*, translator and editor Geoffrey W. Bromiley, D. Litt., D.D. vol. IV, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1969, p.742

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p.743, 744.

Even in the philosophical terminology *morphe* does not have an unequivocal and definite sense. Parmenides, the first to use it, talks about light and darkness as two forms of being. Plato does not use it much, but uses it as equivalent to *eidos* or *idea* signifying exterior aspect or *form*. For him,

“to know the form of *x* does not imply knowledge of the nature of *x*; thus, the philosopher who, for example, knows the form of righteousness will know not only what is right but also why it is so. Similarly, Aristotle sees the form of a thing as what makes it intelligible, it being (similar to the Forms of Plato) accessible to the intellect”<sup>40</sup>.

For Aristotle, *morphe* gains a fixed sense, and it becomes the centerpiece of his thinking. The four principles of existence: form or nature, matter, the moving cause and motive can be paired down to two: form (*morphe*, *eidos*) and matter (*hyle*, *to hypokeimenon*). This distinction is also made in different ways by L. B. Lightfoot<sup>41</sup>, R.P.Martin<sup>42</sup>, and Rev. M.R.Vincent.<sup>43</sup>

b) *morphe* - *ousia*. Exegetes underline the distinction and the indissolubility of these terms. While many of the Holy Fathers stressed their indissolubility, in their wish to stress the unity of being, they did not thereby equate the two terms, as affirmed by R.P.Vincent: “A common error of the Greek fathers, adopted by Calvin, Beza, and the others, was the identification of *morphe* with *ousia*, ‘essence,’ and *physis*, ‘nature’<sup>44</sup>. J. Heriban has a list on this subject<sup>45</sup>. J. B. Lightfoot states:

“Though *morphe* is not the same as *physis* or *ousia*, yet the possession of the *morphe* involves participation in the *ousia* also: for *morphe* implies not the external accidents but the essential attributes”<sup>46</sup>.

Therefore we can't have the *form* of something or someone without having the corresponding *ousia*, because *morphe* pertains to the essential attributes of being.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Flew, *Dicţionar de filosofie și logică*, Ed. Humanitas, 1996, p.145

<sup>41</sup> J.B.Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle To The Philippians*, London, 1888, p.127-132

<sup>42</sup> R.P.Martin, *Carmen Christi, Philippians 2,5-11. In recent Interpretation and in the setting of Early Christian Worship*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 100.

<sup>43</sup> Rev. Marvin R. Vincent, D.D., *Critical and exegetical Commentary of the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, Edinburgh, 1955, p. 79-80

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p.82

<sup>45</sup> Heriban Josef, *Retto kai phronesis. Studio Exegetico su Filip. 2,1-5; 6-11*, LAS Roma, 1983, p.234

<sup>46</sup> J.B.Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle To The Philippians*, p. 110

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c) *morphe - eikon*. R. P. Martin states that *eikon* and *morphe* are interchangeable terms in the Greek version of the Scriptures, and are treated as synonyms, like “image” and “likeness” in Hebrew (*selem* and *demuth*), and that in conclusion *en morphe Theou* is equivalent to *kat'eikona Theou*<sup>47</sup>. P. O'Brien presents the same point of view, but with reservations, saying that in spite of the link between the two terms, there are differences. Certainly neither the Septuagint nor the New Testament affirms that Adam is *en morphe Theou*<sup>48</sup>. This same view was shared by many others, including G. F. Hawthorne, who stated:

“it is strained and unnatural to interpret *morphe* by *eikon*, in order to compare and contrast Adam with Christ, unless one holds the view that this hymn refers not at all to the preexistent Christ but only to the human Jesus, his life of humility and his exaltation to an earthly position of glory”<sup>49</sup>.

J. Heriban<sup>50</sup> and D. Steenburg express the same opinion in a semantic study which argues that the two terms are not synonyms<sup>51</sup>. The distinction between *morphe* and *eikon* is clearly emphasized by the use of the expression *morphe doulou* in *Phil. 2:7*.

d) *morphe - doxa*. If R. P. Martin states that these are synonyms (comparing 1Cor15:49 and Phil 3:21, and interpreting in this light 2Cor 3:18 and Rom 8:29). M. R. Vincent states their distinction:

“*Doxa* is the manifestation, the ‘unfolded fullness’ of the divine attributes and perfections, while *morphe Theou* is the immediate, proper, and personal investiture of the divine essence. *Doxa* attaches to *Deity*; *morphe* is identified with the inmost being of *Deity*. *Doxa* is and must be included in *morphe Theou*, but *doxa* is not *morphe*”<sup>52</sup>.

The impossibility of identification of the two terms is clearly underlined when replacing *doxa* with *morphe* in texts such as Psalm 19:1: “*The heavens declare the glory (doxa) of God*”, Psalm 84,10 “*that glory may dwell in our land*” or Isaiah 11:10: “*And in that day there shall be a root of*

<sup>47</sup> R.P.Martin, *Carmen Christi*, p. 108, 116

<sup>48</sup> Peter O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Michigan, 1991, p. 263, 264

<sup>49</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, World Biblical Commentary, Vol. 43, Word Books, Texas, 1983, p. 82

<sup>50</sup> Heriban Josef, *Retto kai phronesis*, p. 237

<sup>51</sup> D. Steenburg, *The Case Against the Synonymy of Morphe and Eikon*, JSNT 34, 1988, p. 77-86

<sup>52</sup> M. R. Vincent, *Critical and exegetical Commentary* p. 81

*Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious”.*

In the Old Testament it was impossible to think that God had a *form* open to human perception, or that He would have revealed Himself in an accessible *form* to the senses. Even though there are many references to God as a being similar to us, having a face, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, lips, tongue, arms, fingers, clothes, shoes, these are such evident metaphorical expressions that the *Septuagint* did not include any corrective interpolations, in order to preserve the purity of the concept of God. None of the frequent Old-Testament theophanies (not even Genesis 18:1 or 32:25) describes the heavenly beings in a human *form*, and there is no description of the visible *form* of the Godhead. On the contrary, in the Old Testament the *theomorphic* understanding of man is more important than the *anthropomorphic* attributes of God. Presenting God in a human form does not imply that He became a man. The complete lack of any image in the cult of Yahweh reflects a personal and ethical concept able to resist any attempt to give His *form* a sensory description. Not even in Judaism, where the transcendental aspect of God is especially emphasized, is there any place for positive assertions about the *form* of God.<sup>53</sup>

In conclusion we can say that it is not about a Greek philosophical understanding of the term *morphe* from the text in question, and neither a supposedly popular concept about *morphe Theou* as *ousia* or *physis*. Likewise, what Paul understands by *morphe Theou* and *morphe doulou* is totally foreign to the epiphany of myth and legend. Christ did not play the role of a god in human *form*. The uniqueness of Christianity is that the two natures, divine and human, were united in the Person of the Son unmingled, undivided, inseparable, unchanged, and therefore it is not about a shape-shifter, the two natures being forever united. It is not *metamorphosis* either, as in the Hellenistic belief or superstition. Paul does not talk about the exchange of someone's *form* with that of someone else. In 1Cor 2:8 the man Jesus is the Lord of Glory - *Kyrios tes doxes*. Essentially, if not literally, the expression *morphe Theou* is entirely within the biblical understanding of God. It is highly difficult, though, to find a replacement for *morphe*, and especially for *morphe Theou*. One might suggest “mode of existence”, “condition”, or “status”.

<sup>53</sup> Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of New Testament*, p. 749

*The importance of a deeper understanding of the Orthodox ...***2.1. Metamorphosis, metamorphote – “Christ’s transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the anticipated proof of the light of the Holy Trinity that shall emanate from His resurrected body and the bodies of all who show their faith in their deeds”<sup>54</sup>.**

Christ’s Transfiguration has nothing in common with the Hellenistic meaning of *metamorphosis*.

Matthew 17:2 “*kaì metamorphote émprosthén auton, kaì élampsen tò prósopon autoû os helios, tà dè himátia autoû egéneto leukà os tò phos.*”

Mark 9,2-3 “*kaì metàmorphote émprosthén auton, kaì tà himátia autoû egéneto stílvonta leukà lían oía gnaphèus epì tes ges ou dúnatai óutos leukânai.*”

The text suggests that the Holy Transfiguration took place for the three apostles<sup>55</sup>. They became “pillars” - *styloi*<sup>56</sup> in the primary Church (Gal 2:9) in part because of their role as witnesses to this momentous event .

D. A. Moses sees *morphe*, *eikon* and *doxa* as interconnected but not interchangeable. The *Septuagint* describes the *transfiguration* of Moses using the word „*dedoxastai*” (Exod 34:29): “*kai en dedoxasmene e opis tou chromatou tou prosopou autou*” (v.30) and *dedoxastai* (v.35). Matthew uses the verb *metamorphote*, probably to draw a parallel with Moses’ “glorification” – *dedoxastai*. The wording: “*Kai elampsen to prosopon autou os ho helios*” is not used just as a reference back to Exodus 34,29, but as a pointer to the future. The fact that the light of God’s glory covered Moses is attested by other Judaic writings<sup>57</sup>. In Judaic tradition the light that shone on Moses’ face on Sinai and stayed with him is the primordial light lost by Adam and Eve<sup>58</sup>. Moses is shown as a “new Adam”. It was even strongly believed that the Messiah would have this light, and thus the light of

<sup>54</sup> Dumitru Staniloae, *Iisus Hristos Llumina lumii si Îndumnezeitorul omului*, Ed. Anastasia, București, 1993, p. 201

<sup>55</sup> A. D. A. Moses, „Matthew’s Transfiguration Story and Jewish Christian Controversy”, in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series 122, 1996, p. 120

<sup>56</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, Exeter, 1982, p. 123 states that this word was used for the Apostles Peter, James and John, and after the martyrdom of the second his place was taken by Saint James, the brother of the Lord.

<sup>57</sup> Ps.-Philo 12,1; Memar Marqah 4,8; 6,9; Asatir 9,22

<sup>58</sup> Ginzberg, *The legend of the Jews*, vol. I, p. 8-9; G. C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Scheme*; SBLDS63, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1983, p. 91-98; E. Haenchen, *John I: A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 1-6*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1930, p. 204, at A. Moses, „Matthew’s Transfiguration Story and Jewish Christian Controversy”, p. 122

Transfiguration is a defining characteristic that confirms Jesus as Messiah. In conjunction with the voice from on high, it confirms the legitimacy of Christ's teachings, as the shining of Moses' face confirmed the words he addressed to Israel<sup>59</sup>. But the shining of Moses' face cannot be confused with the shining of Christ's face, Moses received the beauty (*dedoxastai*) of Adam before the sin, but in Christ the human nature is united with the divine one and it shares its *form* (*metamorphote*), i.e. the divine uncreated light<sup>60</sup>. Saint Gregory Palamas affirmed that on mount Tabor, Jesus Christ

<sup>59</sup> A. Moses, „Matthew's Transfiguration Story and Jewish Christian Controversy”, p. 121, 122

<sup>60</sup> The dominant concept in Saint Maxims the Confessor's understanding of Christ's Transfiguration, and indeed his entire theological “system”, is that of man's deification. The Transfiguration is correlated to the deification of the human nature of the Logos, and thus our own deification. St. Maximus's teaching on Christ transfigured on Tabor has two key points: first that of the deified humanity of Christ, and second the knowable manifestation of His Deity. Both elements are evidenced in his treaty on the Dionisian expression “visible theophany” – *tes orates autou theophaneias* (*De Divinis Nominibus*, 1.4, p.g. 3, 592 BC, at Christopher Veniamin, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Greek Patristic Literature from Irenaeus of Lyon to Gregory Palama*, mss, doctorate thesis, Oxford 1991, p.186) in which St. Maximus declares that the term *visible* pertains to the sight of Christ's “Holy body” – *to theion autou soma* or “his animated body” – *he empsychomene sarx*. He then contrasts the visible theophany with what he calls the “noetic” theophany (i.e. the intelligible revelation of Christ's divinity, received through the mind – intellect- *nous*) corresponding to the *noetic* illumination described by St. Dionisius – *tes noetes autou photodosias*. However, in this life *noetic theophany* can be experienced only partially, only in the next life will we have a deeper understanding through the mind (intellect) – *hetis kata noun estai hemin methekte tote teleiotos*. Yet even in *eschaton* God will remain beyond the grasp of the human mind. God's supreme lack of intelligibility is the existential difference between creature – *he ktisis* and uncreated God – *aktiston*, between finite – *hoi peperasmenoi* and infinite – *to apeiron*. Nevertheless even in this life, man has a calling to participate in a *noetic* and *intelligible* way (with all his being) to God. On Mount Tabor the three Apostles, because of their eagerness in virtue – *di' aretes epimeleian* – had achieved the cleansing of their spiritual and physical senses – *te enallage ton kat'aisthein energion*, through the Grace of the Holy Spirit – *en autous to pneuma energese*. The three moved from body to spirit, before leaving this earthly life. This happened through the cleansing of their senses, caused by the Holy Spirit, lifting the veil of sin from their intellect (*nous*) – *perielon tes an autois noeras dynameos ton pathon ta kalymmata*. Through the cleansing of the spiritual and physical senses the Apostles are taught to know the spiritual reasons of the sacraments shown to them – *ton paradeichthenton autois mysterion tous pneumatikous ekpaideuontai logous* (*Liber Ambiguum* 10, 1125D-1128A). The presence of the Sanctifier effects a change in the senses of the

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did not receive what he had not already had, nor did He become what He was not, but He showed His apostles what He was, opening their eyes and giving sight to the blind. Because staying the same He made Himself seen to the Apostles differently than before. Because He is the true light (John 1:9), the beauty of glory<sup>61</sup>.

In *Capita theologica et oeconomica*<sup>62</sup>, Saint Maximus the Confessor talks about the two *forms* in which Christ reveals Himself to those who study the Scriptures in detail. First he talks about the “common and public form” (*koinen kai demodesteran morphen*), through which he understands the Incarnation, about which Isaiah said “*he hath no form nor comeliness*” – *kai eidomen auton, kai ouk eihen eidos oude kallos* (Isaiah 53,2). Second, there is a “hidden form” – *kryphiotera morphe* through which Christ manifests himself, as he did on Mount Tabor, “*Thou art fairer than the children of men - oraios kallei para tous yious ton anthropon*” (Psalm 45:2)”. This aspect of the Lord was not reserved exclusively for the three Apostles, but for all those who in time will excel in virtue<sup>63</sup>.

## 2.2. Paschal Christ’s conversion/passing on into the human life under the form of the Church

The verb *morphoo* is found just once in the New Testament: “*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you – tekna mou, ous palin odino mehris ou morphote Hristos en hymin* (Gal 4:19). Christ has to have human form in order to make the *life in Christ* possible. He has to become incarnate in each and every one of us – a common idea in Christian mysticism<sup>64</sup>. This metaphor, based on human intrauterine development, suggests that Christ has to reach maturity in the

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Apostles – not a natural one but one above nature, through which the “veil of passion” was lifted from their “power of understanding.” Therefore, as Saint Gregory Palamas later demonstrates, there is no contradiction between the light on Tabor (seen by ascetics too) and the ability of bodily eyes to see it. Ordinarily human eyes are blind to it, but the Grace of the Holy Spirit transforms them.

<sup>61</sup> „*The Tomos of Mount Athos in Defense of the Hesychasts*”, written by Saint Gregory Palamas and signed by all the leading Athonites in 1340-1; in *Filocalia VII*, București, 1977, p. 418-419

<sup>62</sup> Saint Maxims the Confessor, *Capita theologica et oeconomica* I, 97, P. G. 90, 1121C-1124A

<sup>63</sup> *Idem*, *Quaestiones et dubia* 190 (CCSG 10, 131, 6-12), at C. Veniamin, *op. cit.*, p. 193

<sup>64</sup> G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, p.753

believer, grace to the ecclesial community. This is a never-ending process, a gift and a duty, as God claims His gift, establishing thus the relationship gift – Gift-giver- the one who receives the gift, the believer becoming in turn a gift-giver: “*let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God*”<sup>65</sup>.

Father professor Vasile Mihoc identifies in the above Pauline text the third aspect of the maternal metaphor (after the love and the care for them), the painful process of birth:

“Christ’s *formation* in us is a slow and continuous process in which the Apostle has an irreplaceable role. Saint Paul said that he suffers «again» the pain of birth «until Christ be *formed* in you»<sup>66</sup>.

The verb *morphousthai* (the passive form of *morphoo*) means “to be modeled,” “to receive a predetermined *form*”. The expression *mechris ou* found in Gal 4:19 indicates not only the moment of completion of this process of spiritual growth, but its duration and continuity as well, and therefore we can translate this expression in “as long as”<sup>67</sup>.

Becoming a Christian is described in terms specific to the process of birth, its scope being the *formation* of Christ in us, or in other words, to grant us the *form of the Church*, His Body, to which the whole of mankind is called to be a member. According to Saint Paul, Christ lives in Christians: “*Christ liveth in me*” (Gal 2:20); “*Christ is in you*” (Rom 8:10; 2Cor 13:5); „*Christ in you*” (Col 1:27); “*Christ is all, and in all*” (Col 3:11) He lives in their hearts: “*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*” (Eph 3:17)<sup>68</sup>. There is no danger of confusion between Christ, Head of the Church and Christians, body of the Church, a fact stated clearly by Fr. Staniloae<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> From the *Divine Liturgy*

<sup>66</sup> Pr.Prof.Dr.Vasile Mihoc, *Epistola Sfântului Pavel către Galateni*, Bucureşti, 1983, p.170

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>68</sup> A bibliography on this theme on: <http://www.christinyou.net/pdfs/unionwithchrist.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> “The unity Christ–Church does not imply a transformation of the Church into Christ. The humanity of the believer, however deified, is not *transformed* into Christ – the Head of the Church. The Head, whilst having a human, personal aspect, is God in nature. The religious humanity of the believer never becomes a constituent part of the Head, as His personal human aspect, but remains “body” of the Head. It is never united hypostatically with the One who is God by nature, but believers assume His uncreated works through the energies pouring out of Him, not the hypostatic aspect or His being. The relation Christ – Church cannot be likened in a strict sense with the

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Saint Cyril of Alexandria identifies Christ's role as head of the body with the role of a begetter who rose to the deified, having in Himself the power to pull all men to Him and *conform* them to His likeness. It is a beginning, a principle, with the power to reach full potential; Christ was appointed Head, beginning (*Arche*) of those who *form* (*anamorphoumenon*) themselves through Him into incorruptibility through sanctification in the Spirit<sup>70</sup>.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa writes that Christ made the Church His body, and through the adding of those who are saved the Church is built in love, until all of us will become perfect, at the measure of the fulfilled age of Christ (Eph 4:13). If, therefore, the Church is the body (*soma*) of Christ, and Head (*Kephale*) of the body is Christ, Who forms (*morphon*) the face of the Church (*tes Ekklesias to prosopon*) with His own likeness (*to idio charakteri*), the hearts of the friends of the Groom, looking upon this, were stolen (they fell in love – *ekardiothesan*), for now they see clearer the unseen One<sup>71</sup>. It means that the Church (the saints, the first christians were called saints) has (have) the same beauty (*form*), i.e. light, as Christ has.

Although the verb *morphoo* appears just once in the New Testament, some derivatives of it can be found<sup>72</sup>.

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relation seed – plant, because the seed loses its existence in becoming a plant, whereas Christ remains always a spring which cannot be confused with the Church”- Fr. D. Stăniloae, *Autoritatea Bisericii*, Studii Teologice (București), 3-4, 1964, p. 186. In a conversation with Rev. Dr. John B. Webster from Christ Church College, Oxford, I had the occasion – after a short presentation of Fr. Stăniloae's expression the „*form of the Church*” – to observe a reserved attitude caused only by the unexpressed concern of confusing Christ with the Church, and he recommended that I read as soon as possible two of his studies: *Christology, Imitability and Ethics*, Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 39, p. 309-326; and *The Imitation of Christ, The Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture*, 1985, in Tyndale Bulletin 37, 1986, p. 96-119; likewise, Gene Outka, *Following at a distance: ethics and the identity of Jesus*, in the volume *Scriptural authority and Narrative Interpretation* edited by Garret Green, Fortress Press Philadelphia, 1987, p. 145-160, in which the absolute distance between Christ and believer is shown, suggested by the famous expression “*imitatio Christi*,” versus the expression “*life in Christ*” and the words in the title of the work last cited: following at a distance

<sup>70</sup> Giovanni Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Florence-Venice, t. IV, Col 804

<sup>71</sup> Saint Gregory of Nyssa, In *Canticum Canticorum*, hom.8, vol. VI, Jaeger edition, edited by H.Langerbeck, Leiden 1962

<sup>72</sup> Rom 8: 29 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son – *symmorphous tes eikonos tou Yiou autou*, that he might be the

firstborn among many brethren.” Here is evidenced the distinction between *eikon* and *morphe*, and we can deduce the synonymy between *likeness* and *form*.

Phil 3:10 “That I may know him, and the power – *dynamin* of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” - *koinonian [ton] pathematon autou, symmorphizomenos to thanato auto*.

Here the accent is on the two subjects in the accusative – *dynamin* and *koinonian*. Saint Paul wishes to have *part* of the Lord’s passion so that he could know the *power* of His resurrection better.

The word *symmorphizomenos* is in the passive, indicating that he *is conformed* to the likeness of Christ’s death through the work of the Holy Spirit, and that he could not have been *conformed* on his own. The present tense indicates the continuity of the process of *conformation* to Christ’s death. The future tense is not used, as it would have placed the accent on the “kingdom to come,” nor the past tense, which would have suggested the moment of baptism, which is just the beginning of the aforementioned process.

Christ’s death as a metaphor for *incorporation*, is the most appropriate interpretation of this text, fitting in with the Pauline teaching on Christ’s death and resurrection. Even if the apostle talks about the Christian’s union with Christ in His death as a past occurrence (Rom 6: 4-6; Gal 2:19; Col 2: 20; 3:3), the verb *gegonamen* in Rom 6:5 (Gal 2:19) indicates that this past event continues to have effects in the present, and *symmorphizomenos* in Phil. 3, 10 shows those effects: Saint Paul, who was united with Christ in His death on the cross, continues to be *conformed* to that death because he partakes of Christ’s suffering. The decisive break from the old age of sin and death must be reaffirmed perpetually: “*For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.*” (Rom. 8, 13). “*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*” (Col 3: 5) That Christ’s death is an ever present reality is shown by the text in Phil. 3: “*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ*” (v. 8; cf. 2 Cor. 4, 7-10). It is clear that it is about epektasis: “*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD. – metamorphoumeta apo doxes eis doxes kathaper apo kyriou pnevmatos.*” (2Cor.3,18)

Rom 12:2: “*And be not conformed – me syschematizeste to this world: but be ye transformed- metamorphousthe by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*” The Christian must reach the point where he has the “*mind – nous of Christ.*” (I Cor. 2,16)

Phil 3:21: “*Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. – hos metaschematisei to soma tes tapeinoseos hemon symmorphon to somati tes doxes auto...*”

This passage recalls Phil 2:5-11: *symmorphon* recalls *morphe*, and *metaschematisei* recalls *schema*. The reference to vileness *tapeinoseos* recalls the verb *etapeinosen*,

*The importance of a deeper understanding of the Orthodox ...***2.2.1 The Church bestows a unique form - morphen and divine nomination to everyone altogether, through the Holy Mysteria**

Fr. professor Dumitru Stăniloae uses the phrase *the form of the Church* a number of times in his *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*<sup>73</sup>. It is possible that the expression “the form of the Church” to come from Saint Maximus the Confessor who, in turn was inspired by the Christological hymn in the Epistle to the Philippians. Saint Maximus designates man’s new status of sonship of God, as the new relationship (*schesis*) that substitutes for the old relationship of cause and effect, taking up the Pauline term *morphe*. The *slave* form taken by Adam (as a consequence of sin) is replaced by the Church, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, with the *form* and vocation (*prosegorian*) unique to the filial relationship of man and God, which is also the second birth (*anaghenomenon*) and the new creation (*anademiourgoumenon*). All this is possible through the Son of God, Who assumed our “form” in its fallen state, to restore our sonship, the new creation (2Cor

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and likewise the words *doxa* and *panta*, and the expression *kyrios Iesous Christos*. The Jews thought that the resurrection was a simple restoration of the earthly body. Pauline teaching includes an organic link with the present body, but not its resurrection. The new body is not identical with the present body. There will be a change of substance, but not the destruction of personal identity.

*Symmorphon to somati tes doxes autou* – the effect of this wonderful transformation is that believers will be conformed to “His glorified body.” This conformity is not apparent. If *metaschematisei* indicates a change of the exterior aspect, *symmorphon* indicates a profound interior change, due to the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Our vile body will be changed and conformed – *symmorphon* to His glorified body. St. Paul uses here, as in 2Cor. 8, 9; 5,21; Gal 3:13; 4:4 the idea of “becoming”: the Son of God became one of us so that we might become what He is. The power of God will transform us so that we might be in conformity with Him, to become like Him, in the sense that the righteous will shine in the Kingdom of heaven “as the Sun” (Matt 17:2), but like the sun – Christ, with an uncreated light.

The bodies of the righteous, in the future life, will have the same heavenly order, will partake of the condition of the Lord’s resurrected and glorified body, bodies that are not antithetical to the *pneuma*, but on the contrary, are spiritual. “And as we have borne the image of the earthy – *ten eikona tou choikou*, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly – *ten eikona tou epouraniou* (1 Cor 15:49)”.

<sup>73</sup> E.g.: „The work of salvation whose groundwork was laid in the human nature of Christ was fulfilled in the *form of the Church*, which is our union with God and each other” (TDO2,206); „The Church remains the domain in which the Revelation is relevant and through which is vouchsafed the saving grace of Christ through the Holy Spirit, as a domain in which some ask for and receive Christ and grow in Him and conform to His model” (TDO1,68).

5:17) which is the Church, through the Baptism in the Holy Spirit<sup>74</sup>. Alain Riou observes that Saint Maximus the Confessor, in the first chapter of *Mystagogia*, tackles the theme of the ontology of the ecclesial mystery, whose fundamental categories have their origin in Christology and pneumatology<sup>75</sup>. The title of the first chapter is: “How and in what way is Holy Church the icon and likeness of God” (*pos te kai poio tropo eikon esti kai typos Theou e aghia Ekklesia*)<sup>76</sup>. It is about the *tropos* of divine sonship through which God made Himself present in the human world, making of men His *eikon*, in the measure in which, being in the Church, they will imitate through synergy the uncreated energy of God. The Holy Church is in a spiritual sense, *typon* and *eikona* of God, as one that has the same work (*energean*) as Him, through imitation (*mimesin*) and imagination (*typon* - in New-Greek, *morphe*)<sup>77</sup>. The incarnation of the Word, “*the mystery hidden of ages and by angels unknown*” makes possible the *adoption* of the human being, not as an individual, but as a consequence of his hypostatic vocation, personal and collective, that embodies the entire creation. The church is that unifying *tropos*, which returns the world to God, not from the outside, by imposing an almighty power, but from inside the world, from its heart and man himself<sup>78</sup>.

In the same way (*tropon*) the Holy Church of God shows itself doing the same things with us as God, imitating Him, as an icon (*eikon*) imitates its model (*arhetypo*). Countless numbers of people are part of her and are reborn (*anagennomenon*) and recreated in the Spirit (*anademiurgomenon to pnevmati*): men, women and children, different in kind and look, by kin and tongue, by life, age, opinion, trade, mores and ability, by knowledge and occupation, by fate, character and habit. But to all of them the Church gives a single *form* and deified name (*morphen kai prosegorian*), meaning

<sup>74</sup> Alain Riou, *Le monde et l'Eglise selon Maxime le Confesseur*, Ed. Beauchesne Paris, 1973, p.142.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 135, 136

<sup>76</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, 664C P.G. 91, translated into Romanian by Fr. Dumitu Staniloae, in *Revista Teologica* (Sibiu), no. 3-4, 1944, p.170; *Mystagogia tou Agiou Maximou tou Omologetou, Eisagoge – scholia protopresbyteros Demetrios Staniloae*, Ekdoseis apostolikes diakonias tes Ekklesias tes Ellados, Athenai, 1973 –the parallel Greek and New-Greek of *Mystagogia*, edited, with the introduction and notes of Fr.D. Staniloae, by Panayotis Nellas, Athens, 1973

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*, 664D; parallel text cited, p. 107

<sup>78</sup> A. Riou, *Le monde et l'Eglise selon Maxime le Confesseur*, p. 140

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the existence and name from Christ; and a single and undivided relation through faith, simple and without partiality, without letting the many and countless relations of each one be known, not even as existing, because of the universal concentration and rapport of all to her.

Fr. Staniloae underlines the fact that

“all the statements of the blessed Apostle Paul pertaining to the death, resurrection, transfiguration of man, imprinting and clothing him in Christ, as ethical-ontological moments are recalled in the rite of Baptism. ... Through this participation in the crucified and resurrected Christ, the baptized take on the *form* of Christ, or become co-bearers of the *form* of Christ (*symmorphoi*). Their new *form* is the *form* of Christ imprinted in them, and through this in the Church”<sup>79</sup>.

Indeed, the text of Baptism makes a clear distinction between likeness (*eikon*) and form (*morphe*) and derived verb. In the prayer before the blessing of the water, the celebrant prays to the Holy Trinity – the man is “*imago Trinitatis*” – saying the words: “And let Your Christ take form in this one who will be reborn...”<sup>80</sup> The original text is: “Kai *morphoson* sou ton Christon, en to mellonti anagennasthai...”<sup>81</sup>. The candidate is immersed in the baptismal water as a “faceless and amorphous matter” (*hyle aneidōs kai amorphos*) and emerges bearing the beautiful face of Christ<sup>82</sup>. We are modeled and imprinted, and our amorphous, undefined life receives form and definition<sup>83</sup>. It is important to stress that, according to the order of Baptism text, we may sing that we have received Christ’s clothing, Christ’s *form*, only after Chrismation, because the Holy Spirit is the one Who imprints (*sphragis*) Christ’s *form* in us. Through Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, and the rest of our spiritual life we are united in Christ, we receive the Christian way of being, centered on Christ and formed in Christ, as well as the respective form and befitting life. In this way, the Father recognises on our faces His own Son’s form (*morphēn, formam*) and recognizes in us the parts of the Only Begotten Son<sup>84</sup>. The nature of man takes the form,

<sup>79</sup> Dumitru Staniloae, *Transparența Bisericii în viața sacramentală*, in *Ortodoxia*, no. 4, 1970, p. 508

<sup>80</sup> *Molitfelnic*, București, 1972, p. 32

<sup>81</sup> *Mikron Euchologion, e Agiasmatarion*, Athenais, 1962, p. 71

<sup>82</sup> P. Nellas, *Omul – animal indumnezeit*, Sibiu, 1994, p. 86-87

<sup>83</sup> Saint Nicolas Cabasila, *De vita in Christo*, PG 150, Lib. II, 525A, 537D, at P. Nellas, *Omul – animal indumnezeit*, p. 87

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, Lib. IV, 600B, at P. Nellas, *Omul – animal indumnezeit*, p. 85

in other words the constitution and function of the deified human nature of Christ<sup>85</sup>. *Here we have the key to understanding why God the Father adopts as son (daughter) the nephyte.*

Fr. Staniloae outlined that

“the human body of Christ shines with the endless spiritual beauty of purity, kindness and wisdom of God, who restores and uplifts the wonderful human spirituality. This radiance shines from Christ upon the souls and bodies of those united with Him, *forming the Church*”<sup>86</sup>; “The glory filling the Church coincides with the full acquisition of the status of sons of God on the part of its members, a status which represents the most intimate communion with the Father. It consists not only in the beholding of the glory, but in partaking in the glory of the Son possessed by the Word incarnate and the Head of Church as man. Inasmuch as He is organically linked with the body, His glory spreads upon the whole body”<sup>87</sup>.

#### 2.2.1.1. *From garments of skin*<sup>88</sup> *to garments of light.*

At Baptism, the candidate asks of God the following: “Give me clothing of light, O One Who are clothed in light as with a cloth.” St. Paul writes: “...*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image (kat’eikona, secundum imaginem) of Him that created him.*” (Col 3:10). Here the “image” is the equivalent of “*eikon*” insofar it refers to the creation of the human being. Adam was not naked before sin, much less the one who lives “the life in Christ”. Fr. Staniloae said that the human body of Christ shines with the endless spiritual beauty of purity, kindness and wisdom of God, who restores and uplifts the wonderful human spirituality. This radiance shines from Christ upon the souls and bodies of those united with Him, forming the Church<sup>89</sup>.

Saint Basil the Great writes that through Baptism we are formed after our inner man in conjunction with Christ, in the measure of His incarnation, meaning the measure of His assumed humanity modeled by His Godli-

<sup>85</sup> P. Nellas, *Omul – animal indumnezeit*, p. 87

<sup>86</sup> Fr. Pr. D. Staniloae, „Transparenta Bisericii...”, p. 514

<sup>87</sup> *Idem*, *TDO2*, p. 218

<sup>88</sup> *Genesis 3:21*: “*And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them*”; which means the mortality but also the possibility to survive bodily after the sin.

<sup>89</sup> Fr. D. Staniloae, „Transparenta Bisericii...”, p. 514

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ness<sup>90</sup>. We become like Christ on a spiritual basis through His Spirit's work in us. This transformation consists in becoming spiritual, "transforming our way of being, thanks to the strengthening of our inner selves through the Holy Spirit" (*ton tropon metaschematisthentes dia tou krataiothenai Pnevmati ton eso anthropon*)<sup>91</sup>. Saint Basil continues:

"Whoever receives from someone the right form of faith (*ten morphosin tes eusebeias*), is somewhat shaped by that someone (*diaplattetai par autou*) and is brought to perfection by his mentor, just like a child (*to brephe*) formed in the womb of the mother. That is why Saint Paul refers to the whole Galatian church as sons (*tekna*), fallen from the first teaching and somewhat aborted. Saint Paul took them again (*analambon*) and formed (*morphon*) Christ in them, from above (*anothen*)"<sup>92</sup>.

Fr. Stăniloae quotes Saint Cyril of Alexandria saying that "all who are in the body of Christ, having Him as Head, 'are formed' (*anamorphomenon*) through Him toward incorruptibility"<sup>93</sup>. To explain the text from Exodus 21: 22-23, Saint Cyril states that the fruit and offspring of the mind is faith in Christ, who models us through perfect knowledge (*anaplattoussa*) again according to Him and forms us according to the divine type (*eis theion diamorphousa typon*). This being said, believers cry out with Isaiah: "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen" (Isaiah 26,18). And the divine Paul told those who foolishly fell from full knowledge to the lowest, partial level of knowing, meaning the Galatians: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Gal 4:19) Having begun in the spirit, they sought perfection in the body, subjecting themselves to the law. Therefore they did not accomplish the formation (*morphosin*) of Christ's form in the fullest, rejecting the good seed laid in them as in a womb. Thus progress in knowledge and purity in faith leads, in all our souls, to the formation (*morphosin*) of Christ's form"<sup>94</sup>. Fr. Staniloae explains:

<sup>90</sup> Saint Basil the Great, *De Baptismo*, Lib. I; P.G. XXXI, 1553, at Fr. D. Staniloae, *Transparenta Bisericii...*, p. 508

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1561

<sup>92</sup> Saint Basil the Great, Hom. at Psalm 33, PG 29, 369A

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>94</sup> Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *De adoratione in Spiritu et veritate*, PG 68, Lib. VIII, 545 D- 548 A

“Christ’s form takes shape slowly in us, as the embryo in the womb... like a seed at first, it takes clearer form as we come to know Him better, and our being is imprinted with virtues through which it imitates Him”<sup>95</sup>.

This imprinting refers to the seal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Saint Ambrose of Milan compares the clothing received at the Baptism with the clothing of Christ on Mount Tabor.

“Christ transfigured reveals humanity perfect and sinless, not naked but clothed in snow-white cloth, the uncreated light of Divine Glory”<sup>96</sup>.

If the divine form refers, as we have shown, to Christ’s “clothing,” the baptized also receives this, though not in the sense of a human or pantheist autonomy. Christ dwells in the baptized, and implicitly gives them His own *form*. They reach full brightness as they fulfill the commandments. If Christ is hidden in us from the very moment of Baptism, as stated by Saint Mark the Ascete, He grows with our advance in spiritual life, as we grow in the intimacy of the Holy Spirit, and begins to radiate in the saint. It is not the saint who radiates, like Christ transfigured on Mount Tabor, nor does the saint somehow reflect the radiance of Christ, rather it is Christ Himself Who radiates in the saint. This is what it means to see the divine Light - something very different from an exterior, impersonal phenomenon. Here is the third step of apophatic knowledge, supreme knowledge of God, the foretaste of everlasting life in His Light of unending *epektasis*.

### 3. From *πνευμα δουλείας* to *Πνευμα υιοθεσία*, *spiritum adoptionis filiorum* (Rom 8:15) – adoptive baptismal *υιοθεσία*

Whereas the Saint Evangelists, Matthew and Luke show us our Lord Jesus Christ’s genealogy as man<sup>97</sup>, describing to us how He, the One Who had been born from the Father “before all ages”, was born from a human being, from the Virgin Mary, the Saint Apostle and Evangelist John describes us how a human being can be born by God’s will. It is so remarkable to think how delicately God works with the human being, nothing is forced, amazing, artificial in this work. First the human, the Virgin Mary accepts to

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>96</sup> Saint Ambrose of Milan, *De Myst.* 34. The same idea appears at Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Hom, 1, In Can. Cantorum*

<sup>97</sup> *Matt 1 și Lk 3*

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bear God in body, so that afterwards, God might bear the human in water and in the Holy Spirit. First the man, Joseph, adopts the Son of God made human, so that afterwards the human being consecrated by baptism to be adopted by God; He comes to us first, in the most delicate and most exquisite imaginable way, as an innocent baby in a manger in Bethlehem for us to be able to most naturally come closer to Him, and, receiving Him, to be ourselves received by God; „ *but to all who received Him, who believed in his name, He gave power to become children of God* (tekna Theou genesthai), *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God*” (John 1:12-13).

Our Saviour Jesus Christ reveals the mystery of this birth from God to Nicodemus<sup>98</sup>: „*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3). As Nicodemus was baffled by such a statement, Jesus explained him: “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*” (3:5). In the prologue of the fourth Gospel (1:13), the birth “*from (or in) God*” is named in chapter III, birth “*from above*” ( v.3 și 7), birth “*from water and Holy Spirit*”(v.5) or birth “*in the Holy Spirit*” (v.6 și 8). In this wonderful work, God is the one who gives birth and we are the ones who are born. Saint Jacob says: “*the Father of lights...gave us birth to His own will through the Word of Truth, so that we could be the beginning to his own creatures*” (1:17-18). Saints Apostles Peter and Paul also refer to this godly birth:

“*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew (anagennesan) to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*” (1Pt 1:3); „*You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God*”(1Pt 1:23); „*He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration (dia loutrou palingenesias) and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior*” (Tit 3:5-6).

The second birth, the birth in God comes about through the Holy Baptism. Jesus Christ did not receive Saint John’s baptism to cleanse Himself, but to consecrate the waters, to entirely unify the vivifying power of the Holy Spirit - the Lord and Giver of life - with the water. By the Holy Bap-

<sup>98</sup> Pr.Prof.Dr. Vasile Mihoc, *Predici exegetice la Duminicile de peste an*, Sibiu, 2001, p.8

tism, through the water that is consecrated by the descent (*parousia*) of the Holy Spirit, the candidate is born again as a wonderful creature bearing the seal of the holy gifts. That is why praising the God as Creator and anticipating that which will happen to the one coming for illumination, the priest marvels and says: “Great You are God, and great are Your workings, no word can suffice to praise Your wonders!”

The term *γιοθεσία* (adoption as son, not just sonship) occurs in the New Testament only in the writings of Saint Paul (Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15,23; 9:4; Eph 1:5) and never in Septuagint or other Jewish sources<sup>99</sup>. Furthermore, Saint Paul is apparently the first to have used *γιοθεσία* in a theological context, let alone of divine adoption. In the conclusion of the work quoted, James M. Scott outlines the fact that although, by using *γιοθεσία*, Saint Paul clearly avails himself of a Hellenistic term, it does not necessarily follow that the Apostle, all whose extant epistles are written in Greek, has a Hellenistic legal procedure or metaphor in mind, let alone a Roman one. The Hellenistic *meaning* of the term must be distinguished from a Hellenistic *background* of the term. For example the line of argumentation in Gal 4:1-7 and Gal 3 and 4 as a whole leads to the sure conclusion that *γιοθεσία* in Gal 4:5 refers to a specific Old Testament/Jewish background, being set in a context framed by the *Exodus* typology: just as Israel, as heir to the Abrahamic promise, was redeemed as son of God from slavery in Egypt at the time appointed by the Father (vv.1-2), believers were redeemed as well to adoption as sons of God from slavery under the *stoicheia tou kosmou* at the fullness of time and thereby became heirs of the Abrahamic promise (vv.3-7)<sup>100</sup>. But we might not confuse the status of sons of God, which was more as a promise in the Old Testament, with the one in the New Testament. As the author who has just been quoted noted, although the term appears in Rom 9:4, as one of Israel’s historical privileges, the broader context of Gal 3-4 makes it clear that believers are sons and heirs only insofar as they participate by Baptism - „*For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were bap-*

<sup>99</sup> James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Υιοθεσία in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT, 2.48; Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992, p.175. This is a very well documented and elaborated doctoral thesis (353 p.), dealing with the greco-roman, Old Testament/Jewish background and the pauline letters, an authentic reference to the very important theme of *γιοθεσία*- adoption as son

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem* p.267-268

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tized into Christ have put on Christi” (Gal 3:26-27) – in *the* Son of God who was sent to redeem them (Gal 4:4-5). Strictly speaking, Christ is *the* heir of Abraham (Gal 3:16) and *the* messianic Son of God promised in 2 Sam 7:12-14. Seen in context, *υιοθεσία* in Gal 4:5 must refer to the Jewish eschatological expectation based on 2 Sam 7:14. The adoption formula from 2 Sam 7:14 was applied by the subsequent Judaism not only to the Davidic Messiah but, under the influence of the New Covenant theology (cf. Hos 2:1), also to the eschatological people of God. Specifically, the 2 Sam 7:14 tradition expects that, at the advent of the Messiah, God would redeem his people from Exile in a Second Exodus; He would restore them to a covenant relationship; and He would adopt them, with the Messiah, as His sons (cf. Jub. 1:24; TJud. 24:3; 4QFlor. 1:11). In fact, 2 Cor 6,18 actually cites the adoption formula of 2 Sam 7:14, and that in the context of the same Exodus typology and the same New Covenant theology. As in the 2 Sam 7:14 tradition, Gal 4:5-6 connects divine adoption with the reception of the Spirit (of the New Covenant) in the heart<sup>101</sup>.

The interpretation of *υιοθεσία* in Gal 4:5 also applies to the closely parallel passage of Rom 8. Here, too, participation in the messianic Son of God by adoption is so integrally connected with the reception of the indwelling Spirit that the Spirit is called the *Πνευμα υιοθεσία* (v.15), the Holy Spirit by Whom also the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled (v.4). Rom 8 contains elements of the *Exodus* typology, and divine adoptive sonship implies heirship with Christ in the Abrahamic promise (v.17). In the conclusion of the section dedicated to Rom 8, James M. Scott noted that despite the attempts to minimize or deny one aspect or another, Rom 8 contains both present and future aspects of *υιοθεσία* which are related as successive modes of participating in the sonship of the messianic Son of God by means of the Spirit<sup>102</sup>. In the present aspect believers receive the Spirit of *υιοθεσία* through Baptism and the continuous renewal of the baptismal gifts by means of an authentic Christian life, called by Symeon the New Theologian, Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The reference to the Baptism is presupposed in Rom 8 (e.g. v.1.: „*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*”; v2.: „*for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death*”), also

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, p.268

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*, p.265

because Rom 6 is a clear description of it. In the eschatological aspect of *γιοθεσία* (v.23), believers, who already have the indwelling Spirit as the means of resurrection (v.11), participate in Jesus' resurrection to the messianic Son of God in power (Rom 1:4) when Christ comes at Parousia (Rom 8:29), and they enter into the Abrahamic inheritance of universal sovereignty with the Son (Rom 4:13; 8:17,32), the Firstborn among many brothers (8:29). Here again, the influence of 2 Sam 7:14 can be felt, for the Spirit-mediated resurrection/adoption of the Son (Rom 1:4), which is proleptic to that of the sons, is interpreted in light of the promise of divine adoption in Nathan's prophecy<sup>103</sup>.

Human beings are virtually sons and daughters of God, but actually they are recognised as such at the Holy Mysterion of Baptism, when they become brothers with Christ and therefore His Father becomes their Father too<sup>104</sup> and His Mother becomes their Mother too, and they are really brothers and sisters.

To conclude I would like to invite you to reflect more upon the process of receiving the *form* of Christ through Baptism, Christmation and Holy Communion, and upon baptismal *γιοθεσία*, because I consider them to be essential for the Orthodox Soteriology, for the spiritual life and for the ecumenical dialogue, the more they are almost ignored in the document "Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry"<sup>105</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, p.266

<sup>104</sup> „Our Father” is the only prayer taught us by Jesus Christ. It is true, as Charles M. Mead pointed out, that God the Father is in a very special sense called the Father of Jesus Christ. Whatever may be the meaning of the passages which speak of this relation, it is clear that there is something unique in it. No one else is son to God in the same sense in which Jesus is. He is *the* Son, as no one else is; and God is his Father, as he is Father to no one else. In speaking to his disciples He calls God “your Father”; and in speaking of God he says “my Father, but He never associates Himself with his disciples, saying of God “our Father”. But God is also called Father of the redeemed, or the regenerate, as distinguished from men in general. In this sense of the word Christ calls God the Father of his followers ; and Paul says (Rom 8) that Christians have received the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry “Abba, Father” (Charles M. Mead, “The Fatherhood of God”, in *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. 1, No. 3. (Jul., 1897), pp. 577-600).

<sup>105</sup> In this document, under the heading „The meaning of Baptism” we read: “ Baptism is the sign of new life through Jesus Christ. It unites the baptized one with Christ and with his people. The New Testament scriptures and the liturgy of the Church unfold the meaning of baptism in various images which express the riches of Christ and the

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gifts of his salvation. These images are sometimes linked with the symbolic uses of water in the Old Testament. Baptism is participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–5; Col. 2:12); a washing away of sin (I Cor. 6:11); a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Eph. 5:14); a re-clothing in Christ (Gal. 3:27); a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the flood (I Peter 3:20–21); an exodus from bondage (I Cor. 10:1–2) and a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division whether of sex or race or social status are transcended (Gal. 3:27–28; I Cor. 12:13). The images are many but the reality is one". The only reference is in the chapter dealing with *"The Gift of the Spirit"*: "The Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of people before, in and after their baptism. It is the same Spirit who revealed Jesus as the Son (Mark 1:10–11) and who empowered and united the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2). God bestows upon all baptized persons the anointing and the promise of the Holy Spirit, marks them with a seal and implants in their hearts the first instalment of their inheritance as sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit nurtures the life of faith in their hearts until the final deliverance when they ..... enter into its full possession, to the praise of the glory of God (II Cor. 1:21–22; Eph. 1:13–14)".

Adrian Murg<sup>1</sup>

## Magic in the New Testament: A Brief History of Research

### Abstract

The resemblances between magical jargon and practice and the miracles performed by Jesus and His followers led to accusations brought against them by their adversaries. This dispute has a long history about which we try to give a brief account here. The early Jewish and Christian sources witness to the fact that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE already Jesus was considered a magician by the opponents of the Church. The response of Origen is paradigmatic of the early Christian anti-magic apologetic: he asserts that Jesus is distinct from His contemporary magicians in respect to His motives, not to external appearances. The scholarly debate intensified long after, with the rise of the German history of religions school. The comparative study revealed the similarities between the New Testament miracle accounts and the forms, themes and motifs found in the pagan and Jewish miracle stories circulating at the time. The emergence of the “New Quest” in the mid 20th century gave a new impetus to the study of the miracle in the New Testament. Now the ontological question is brought to the fore again: Was Jesus a magician or not? The responses vary according to the definitions and the sociological methods used. In the end we propose a line of research based upon interpretive questions.

### Keywords:

*New Testament, magic, miracle*

The Gospels indicate that Jesus’ opponents questioned the source of his miracle-working power. In response to his healing of the blind and mute demoniac the Pharisees claimed, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons” (Mark 3, 22, TNIV).

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This accusation by his opponents was evidently intended to suggest that Jesus was in league with Satan and that his powers were diabolical in nature. There is no suggestion that Jesus' methods, techniques, or results distinguished him from other exorcists. However, it is important to note that in the first century exorcism was considered in the repertoire of magicians, and magicians were regularly accused of being demon-possessed<sup>2</sup>. It was urgent that the Gospel writers and the early Christian apologists show that Jesus' and the Church leaders' activities were not magical in character, especially since Christians' practice of casting out demons and healing the sick "in the name of Jesus" looked very much like the feats of conventional magicians. And so a debate started that is still going on. In the following we try to present a sketch of its history.

#### **1. Ancient Witnesses**

If we look outside the biblical witness it becomes evident that by the second and third centuries opponents of the Christian faith were accusing Jesus of being a magician. In his debate with his Jewish adversary Trypho (c. 160 C.E.), St. Justin the Martyr acknowledges that some of the witnesses to Jesus' miracles had considered them magic: "Yet, though they witnessed these miraculous deeds with their own eyes, they attributed them to magical art; indeed, they dared to call him a magician who misled the people"<sup>3</sup>. Clearly then, being a magician carried a negative connotation (they "dared" to say that about Jesus) and magic was in keeping with deception. We know also that by the second century, if not before, the accusation of magic was used by the Jewish leaders in their anti-Christian rhetoric. Jewish tradition attributed Jesus' miracles to his magical power, and he is said to have been executed as a sorcerer<sup>4</sup>. In the Babylonian Talmud an older tradition (first or second century) is referred claiming that, "On the

<sup>2</sup> Graham N. Stanton, „Jesus of Nazareth: A Magician and False Prophet Who Deceived God's People?," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 69.7 (Falls).

<sup>4</sup> John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition*, Studies in Biblical Theology; Second Series, vol. 28 (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1974), p. 1.

eve of the Passover Yeshu [Jesus] was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy'"<sup>5</sup>. According to Old Testament law, magic and sorcery were prohibited and punishable by death (Lev 19, 26; Deut 18, 10; Exod 22, 18). Here again the claim that Jesus was a magician was an accusation by which his opponents intended to impugn his reputation, not a commentary upon his techniques or the results of his wonders. Celsus, a pagan philosopher writing in the late second century, argues that Jesus was a magician who picked up the tricks of his trade while laboring in Egypt (an argument that twentieth century scholars would revive): "After she [Mary] had been driven out by her husband and while she was wandering about in a disgraceful way, she secretly gave birth to Jesus...because he [Jesus] was poor he hired himself out as a workman in Egypt, and there tried his hand at certain magical powers on which the Egyptians pride themselves; he returned full of conceit because of these powers, and on account of them gave himself the title of God"<sup>6</sup>. Again, the accusation of magic comes from an opponent of Christianity, but now we have an argument that Jesus' miracles were learned techniques, rather than the result of demonic possession. Origen's response to Celsus' claim is paradigmatic of the Christian anti-magic apologetic that would develop in the following centuries: "They [Jesus' miracles] might have been comparable if he [Celsus] had first given sufficient proof of the similarity to those who employ trickery. But in fact no sorcerer uses his tricks to call spectators to moral reformation; nor does he educate by the fear of God people who were astounded by what they saw, nor does he attempt to persuade the onlookers to live as men who will be judged by God. Sorcerers do none of those things, since they have neither the ability nor even the will to do so"<sup>7</sup>. Here, Origen asserts that Jesus is distinct from his contemporary magicians in respect to his *motives*. Magicians do not concern themselves with issues of morality and behavior, as Jesus did.

## 2. The Enlightenment to World War II

During the Enlightenment, the field of biblical studies underwent enormous changes that would significantly impact how people understood the life and

<sup>5</sup> *b. Sanh.* 43a (Epstein).

<sup>6</sup> Origen, *C. Celsum* 1.28 (Chadwick).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.68.

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works of Jesus. Prior to the seventeenth century, the Bible was generally considered the ultimate authority in all fields of knowledge. By the end of that century, science, history, and philosophy became fields of their own, freed from biblical authority<sup>8</sup>. This new, rationalistic approach fostered a skeptical attitude toward the veracity of the Bible. By the middle of the eighteenth century the historical-critical method had emerged, casting doubt upon the “supernatural” elements of the biblical record. According to the historical-critical approach, reality is uniform and universal and one’s experience of reality in the present can provide the objective criteria by which the historicity of past events can be determined<sup>9</sup>. Out of this stream of thinking emerged the “Original Quest of the Historical Jesus,” which sought to recover, using historiographical means, a “historical” Jesus<sup>10</sup>. Unfortunately, this trend of thought led to a scholarly disinterest in Jesus’ miraculous activity, which was considered both unhistorical and irrelevant to modern audiences. At the turn of the twentieth century, as the Original Quest dwindled, a new school of Protestant scholars in Germany emerged which would have enormous influence on biblical studies. Scholars such as Wilhelm Bousset and William Wrede sought to understand the religion of the Old and New Testaments within the context of their historical and religious environment (*Sitz im Leben*), including the other religions of their time and region<sup>11</sup>. This school of thought, known as the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* or the “history of religions school,” sought to demonstrate the enormous differences between the ancient and modern worldviews. These differences would have to be understood and applied to the interpretation of the Bible. The *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* and its progeny drew attention to the various parallels between the miracles of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels and the miracles (as well as magic) found in pagan and Jewish sources of the period<sup>12</sup>. Form critics (notably Bultmann and Dibelius, but including later scholars such as Gerd

<sup>8</sup> Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 87-88.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159-161.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167-168.

<sup>12</sup> John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, 1st ed., 3 vols., The Anchor Bible Reference Library, vol. 2: *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 535-6.

Theissen) then took up and expanded the approach, examining numerous Jewish and pagan parallels to the gospel miracle stories<sup>13</sup>. In these studies, scholars claim that Jesus' miracles reflect the forms, themes, and motifs found in the pagan and Jewish miracle stories circulating at the time. Notable among the parallel sources used by this school are Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, the rabbinic tradition of the holy man, and the Greek Magical Papyri. While often valuable, these form-critical studies sometimes degenerate into pure formalism, in which the medium (form and structure) becomes the message<sup>14</sup>. While the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* made great contributions to biblical studies and the study of miracle and magic, it was opposed in some degree by both liberal and conservative scholars.

Rudolf Bultmann, in his existentialist theology, which dominated biblical studies for decades, dismisses the search for objective, historical knowledge as misleading and "objectifying"<sup>15</sup>. He insists that faith is rather a subjective response to the preached gospel, not an intellectual act dependent upon historical inquiry. Hence, Bultmann rejects miracles outright as objective "proofs" of God's existence, which are contrary to the necessity of faith for salvation. Furthermore, he claims that miracles and magic are inherently repugnant to the modern man<sup>16</sup>. The study of miracle in the New Testament would remain dormant until after World War II and the emergence of the "New Quest" of the 1950's and 60's.

While not as dismissive of the miraculous as their liberal colleagues, conservative scholars researching miracle and magic in the twentieth century were hampered by two presuppositions: first, that magic is easily separated from religion and second, that magic is a decadent cultural phenomenon<sup>17</sup>. Classicists of this era and conservative New Testament

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 536.

<sup>14</sup> See Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, ed. John Kenneth Riches, trans. Francis McDonagh, 1st Fortress Press ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

<sup>15</sup> Rudolf Karl Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, trans. Schubert Miles Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

<sup>16</sup> „We cannot use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament.” *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> David E. Aune, „Magic in Early Christianity”, in *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), p. 1510.

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scholars drew distinct lines between religion and magic, portraying the latter as a vestige of the early stages of religion, or as a corrupt form of religion<sup>18</sup>. Illustrative of this thinking is Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.

In his monumental work on the origins of magic and religion, Frazer draws sharp distinctions between religious miracles and magic. Frazer examines the divergent worldviews at the heart of religion and magic, contrasting them at length. Central to the magical understanding are two laws that govern all interactions: the law of similarity and the law of contact (or contagion)<sup>19</sup>. Simply, the law of similarity declares that like produces like, a principle at the heart of homeopathic medicine. The law of contact (or contagion) states that two things that were once in contact continue to exert influence upon each other. Both laws constitute the basis of *sympathetic magic*, the ability to influence the world through an invisible ether (e.g. *mana*<sup>20</sup>, invisible energy, unconscious forces)<sup>21</sup>. The magician, understanding these sympathetic unions (theoretical magic), can, on the ground of these principles, automatically effect his or her will (practical magic). To Frazer, the chief difference between religion and magic lies in how they depict the forces that control the universe. Frazer contends that magic is a primitive form of science, a set of laws based on a (flawed) understanding of cause and effect. Unlike religion, magic is not involved with deities or higher beings who can influence events. Religion, in distinction, is concerned with belief in a higher, conscious being and the desire to please or persuade this being. Yet, because religion involves a higher will, such attempts to persuade are not automatic or based upon techniques (unlike magic). To Frazer, the distinction between magic and religion is clear: "The former involves the direct coercion of natural forces, based on the assumption that like produces like, and that things once together influence each other after they have been separated; the latter is based on the propitiation of the gods by the believer"<sup>22</sup>.

Later in the twentieth century, yet reflecting the same anti-magic stream of thought as Frazer, was Walter Grundmann and his 1964 *Theological*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1511.

<sup>19</sup> James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 1<sup>st</sup> Touchstone: Abridged ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> *Mana* is a supernatural force or power, believed to reside in a person or sacred object.

<sup>21</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 13-14.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56-60.

*Dictionary of the New Testament* entry for *dynamis*. There are several biblical texts that are troublesome for those who wish to clearly delineate biblical miracles from magical activity. One particularly troublesome text is the healing of the woman with the hemorrhage (Mark 5, 21-43 // Matt 9, 18-26 // Luke 8, 40-56)<sup>23</sup>. With its peculiar use of *dynamis*, which behaves in a seemingly automatic fashion, this passage has been used to suggest a magical understanding of Jesus' healings. In his article, Grundmann argues strongly for a non-magical understanding of *dynamis* in the New Testament. He notes that Luke's healing descriptions, especially his use of *dynamis*, are at first glance in keeping with a magical worldview, but he deemphasizes this point<sup>24</sup>. Like Frazer, he sharply contrasts magic with religion, arguing that one is dealing with impersonal, pervasive, magical forces (*mana*), whereas the second is concerned with a personal deity. He focuses instead on the miracle-working word of Jesus, which he contrasts to the techniques or instruments used by magicians. Importantly, he emphasizes that Jesus' religious worldview and motivation, especially his announcement of the kingdom of God, was in stark contrast to the magical worldview of the magicians<sup>25</sup>.

In spite of his compelling arguments, Grundmann's claim that "The NT miracles of Jesus have no connection with magic, or with magic means and processes, like the majority of miracles outside the NT" is overstated<sup>26</sup>. His view, reflecting a somewhat uncritical understanding of Jesus' miracles, is a broad generalization, and does not represent the case for many biblical examples. Several miracle stories have undeniable magical overtones, including the use of methods and materials (e.g. mud, spittle, washing)<sup>27</sup>, but especially the seemingly *automatic* healing of the woman with the hemorrhage. Grundmann is criticized by later scholars for

<sup>23</sup> David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, trans. George Eliot, 3 vols., vol. 2 (London: George Woodfall and Son, 1846; reprint, Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1998), p. 314-23.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Grundmann, "*dynamai, dynastos, dynateo, adynastos, adynateo, dynamis, dynastes, dynamoo, endynamoo*" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), vol. 2, p. 306, 310, 312.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294, 302.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>27</sup> The healing of the deaf-mute (Mark 7, 32-35); the healing of the blind man (Mark 8, 23); the use of mud in healing (John 9, 6); the woman with the hemorrhage (Mark 5, 30).

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not acknowledging the materialistic view of divine power evident in the usage of *dynamis* in this passage<sup>28</sup>.

In 1965 the Dutch scholar Hendrik van der Loos, in his immense *The Miracles of Jesus*, continued the tradition of conservative evangelical scholarship. Loos, like Grundmann, is wary of the magical overtones in Jesus' healing miracles, and anything "too reminiscent of 'mana' and those charged with it"<sup>29</sup>. For example, Loos portrays Jesus' use of spittle not as magical, but as condescending to the predominant magical worldview, by which he "enters the mental world of the patient and gains his confidence"<sup>30</sup>. Similarly, in regard to the use of anointing oil, Loos explains the medicinal benefits of such practice, minimizing any possible magical interpretations. Rather than attributing magical techniques to Jesus, he places Jesus among his religious and medical contemporaries in terms of therapeutic methods<sup>31</sup>.

**3. After World War II: The New Quest**

After World War II anthropologists began in varying degrees to treat religion and magic as non-distinguishable phenomena. One of the earliest scholars to assert that miracle and magic were less than clearly distinguishable was John M. Hull. His 1974 *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* is an assessment of Hellenistic magic based primarily on the Greek Magical Papyri. Hull begins his study by correctly noting that there existed an ancient belief that Jesus was a magician, notably among the Gnostics, Celsus, and within the Jewish tradition. He notes that a magical interpretation of the Synoptic miracles is possible and that there was no clear distinction among the ancients between miracle and magic<sup>32</sup>. While Hull does not argue that Jesus was a magician, he contradicts the assertion that there exists a clearly definable difference between magical and religious worldviews. Hull asserts that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between magic and miracle in the ancient world and he often

<sup>28</sup> Aune, „Magic in Early Christianity”, p. 1536.

<sup>29</sup> Hendrik van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus*, ed. W. C. van Unnik et al., trans. T. S. Preston, Supplements to Novum Testamentum, vol. 9 (Leiden,: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 316.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311-2, 315.

<sup>32</sup> Hull, *Hellenistic Magic*, p. xiii, 2-3, 36.

refers to what he calls “miracle-magic.” He outlines some characteristics of what might be considered *pure* miracle and shows that even unarguably magical acts can contain these elements, and vice-versa<sup>33</sup>. For example, although miracle is generally characterized as being independent of ritual, many of Jesus’ (religious) miracles involve the use of prayer (the raising of Lazarus), techniques (the use of spittle or mud), or verbal imperatives (the exorcisms and healings), which can all be considered ritualistic. Important among Hull’s assertions is that the earlier traditions of Jesus’ miracles were less self-conscious and more freely reported healings and exorcisms that contained magical elements (e.g. the use of spittle, words of power, *dynamis*). He maintains that later, in response to accusations that Jesus was a magician, the gospel tradition was purged of magical elements, a fact which is reflected chiefly in Matthew’s Gospel<sup>34</sup>. It is by this supposition that Hull portrays Mark’s and Luke’s Gospels as more clearly portraying the earlier understanding of Jesus’ miraculous activities. In his chapter “Luke: The Tradition Penetrated by Magic,” Hull examines the story of the woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8, 42b-48) from a magical perspective. He asserts that *dynamis* “is regarded by Luke as a substance, a *mana*-like charge of divine potency, spiritual in so far as it emanates from the world of spirits, but as actual, as vital as the beings who possess it”<sup>35</sup>. He notes that there is an “impersonal” nature to the *dynamis*-power insofar as it is transmitted immediately and impersonally<sup>36</sup>. However, he also notes that merely touching Jesus was not sufficient for the transmission of power, but that a deliberate, willful act was necessary. In his discussion on the parallel passage in Matthew (Matt 9, 20-22), Hull notes that the author retains the motif of touch (possibly because the author did not associate touch with pagan Hellenistic techniques, but rather with Old Testament themes), but changes the order of events to make it clear that there was no automatic healing<sup>37</sup>.

Chief among works that compare Jesus with magicians is Morton Smith’s 1978 *Jesus the Magician*<sup>38</sup>. Smith begins his work with the assertion that in order to understand an issue fully one must explore *both*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54-57.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116, 144.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>38</sup> San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978.

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sides of the debate. Most of his work, however, explores the records of those critical toward Jesus, both during his lifetime (e.g. the Pharisees and Scribes) and in the centuries to follow (e.g. Celsus, Tacitus, Lucian, and Jewish leaders). His primary point of comparison with Jesus is the Greek Magical Papyri and Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*<sup>39</sup>. Smith makes numerous comparisons to demonstrate that Jesus' methods were similar to those of contemporary magicians. Importantly, he effectively demolishes the popular notion among some conservative scholars that the first-century magician was merely "a miracle worker whose wonders are illusory, transient, produced by tricks or by the help of demons controlled by spells, sacrifices, and magical paraphernalia"<sup>40</sup>. Smith's work is an important refutation of this simplistic attitude toward magic. He provides evidence that there were at least a few ancient magicians of that day (e.g. Apollonius) who had significant similarities to Jesus, and that some of Jesus' activity indeed had magical parallels and overtones. Smith argues that we should expect the gospel authors to minimize or erase any evidence that Jesus was a magician, but emphasize any points of distinction<sup>41</sup>. He therefore minimizes any features of the gospel record that distinguish Jesus from the magicians of his day (e.g. his teaching, his kingdom theology, his emphasis on the necessity of faith) while emphasizing the similarities (e.g. both performed healings and exorcisms). Unlike Hull, who notes that "the records of magic contain nothing like the self-sacrifice of the Gethsemane Christ"<sup>42</sup>, Smith portrays Jesus as exemplifying a first century Jewish magician and dismisses all distinguishing features as the work of later Christian apologists. Smith asserts that Jesus' contemporaries, both his followers and opponents, viewed him as a magician (suggesting that the Beelzebul controversy, among other things, proves this), but mostly relies on later witnesses to prove his point<sup>43</sup>.

David E. Aune, in his 1980 work, *Magic in Early Christianity*, adopts a sociological approach to the study of Jesus' miracles. Aune acknowledges that many have already articulated the differences between magic and religion (or miracle) and he provides a good outline of their

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, p. 1, 75, 84.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92-93.

<sup>42</sup> Hull, *Hellenistic Magic*, p. 145.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, p. 31, 32, 77, 98.

arguments<sup>44</sup>. However, he notes that both magic and religion share similar goals, namely, “providing protection, healing, success and knowledge for magical practitioners and their clients, and harm for their opponents”<sup>45</sup>. Their difference, he argues, lies in the fact of magic’s illegality. He cites M. Mauss; “A magical rite is any rite which does not play a part in organized cults – it is private, secret, mysterious and approaches the limit of a prohibited rite”<sup>46</sup>. Aune goes on to develop this sociological approach, adopting a structural-functionalist definition of magic, as being “that form of religious deviance whereby individual or social goals are sought by means alternate to those normally sanctioned by the dominant religious institution...Goals sought within the context of religious deviance are magical when attained through the management of supernatural powers in such a way that results are virtually guaranteed”<sup>47</sup>.

Using this structural-functional definition, Aune concludes that the gospel records include characteristics similar to those found in magical accounts of Jesus’ time. Like Smith, Aune bases his comparison primarily upon the Greek Magical Papyri. Although he regards Jesus’ wonderworking as essentially magical in nature, he concludes that sociologically Jesus was not a magician but rather a messianic prophet<sup>48</sup>.

Howard Clark Kee’s 1983 *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* adopts a sociological approach to interpreting the gospel miracles. Kee insists that we must exercise a proper hermeneutic when reading the miracle stories, trying to understand and experience them as the original audiences would have. He argues that it is not helpful to simply compare the superficial similarities of miracle stories from disparate sources, but that it is necessary to understand the *significance* of the miracle stories to the communities involved. Kee argues against

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<sup>44</sup> Aune summarizes the distinctions as follows: 1) Magic is manipulative, religion is supplicative, 2) magic is for specific goals, religion is an end in itself, 3) magic focuses on the individual, religion focuses on the group, 4) magic adopts a professional-client relationship, religion a shepherd-flock relationship, 5) magic tends to act impersonally with little emotion, while religion makes greater use of emotion and evokes awe and worship („Magic in Early Christianity”, p. 1512).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1518.

<sup>46</sup> Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 24, 32.

<sup>47</sup> Aune, „Magic in Early Christianity”, p. 1515.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1527, 1538-9.

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other scholars that miracle and magic are quite distinguishable. While religion involves communication with beings, magic consists instead of the manipulation of impersonal forces<sup>49</sup>. While most scholars would fault Frazer's work for its oversimplification, Kee defends the central premise of Frazer's argument, namely that "magic and religion are two different modes of the social construction of reality in the attempt to bring order and meaning to personal and social existence"<sup>50</sup>. It is this analysis of the *metanarrative* in which the miracles stories exist (in both Christian and pagan contexts) that distinguishes Kee's work from his contemporaries. Kee points out many important differences between Jesus' miracles and the work of magicians. Chiefly, he roots the miracle tradition in the overarching gospel theme: God's saving work in history. Healing and exorcism are not merely acts of kindness or compassion (to say nothing of mercenary motivations), they reveal the in-breaking kingdom of God, as prophesied in the Old Testament. It is this controlling theme, the defeat of Satan by the in-breaking kingdom of God, *not* particular techniques or methods, that distinguishes Jesus' exorcisms and healings from those of his contemporaries<sup>51</sup>. Kee notes that significant work has been achieved in distinguishing miracle from magic. He cites Lucy Mair: "The efficacy of magic may be thought to depend essentially upon the correct treatment of substances used (includes words spoken over them) independently of assistance from any supernatural being... If resolution of the difficulty is sought through the manipulation of forces, the activity is primarily magical. If aid is sought through communication with beings, then the activity is primarily religious"<sup>52</sup>. While this definition may not hold true for some magical activities that involve spiritual beings (namely magical exorcism), it applies as a general rule. Also, of primary importance in magic is *efficacy* (whether or not a technique works), whereas religion (and thereby miracle) is concerned foremost with morality and relationship with a divine being<sup>53</sup>. Kee acknowledges that some aspects of the gospel healing stories closely resemble magic, especially the seemingly automatic healing of the woman

<sup>49</sup> Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 62.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>52</sup> Lucy Philip Mair, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 225, 229.

<sup>53</sup> Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World*, p. 213.

with the hemorrhage. He does not explain this resemblance, but warns against imposing absolute distinctions and rigid categories in the analysis of ancient worldviews<sup>54</sup>. While Kee allows that “there are traces of magic-type thinking in some of the healing stories,” he goes on to assert that “the worldview of the writers of the Gospels and Acts is fundamentally religious rather than magical”<sup>55</sup>.

Gerd Theissen’s 1983 *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*<sup>56</sup> is a structuralist interpretation of the gospel miracle stories. Theissen does not chiefly argue for or against a distinction between miracle and magic, or whether Jesus was a magician or not. His chief aim is to analyze the function and form of these miracle accounts and to study their role within communities. Nevertheless, his observations regarding many of the motifs employed in the miracle stories impact our understanding of Jesus as a miracle worker. In his study on the motif of *faith*, Theissen notes, “The interaction of faith and miracle can even be regarded as the distinctive feature of the New Testament belief in miracles which places it far above all ancient magic and miracle-seeking”<sup>57</sup>. He contrasts the concept of faith in the ancient world with that in the New Testament. In the former it was an attitude *to* a miraculous event (by those listening to the miracle story), whereas in the latter it is an attitude on the part of the people involved (the principal actors in the story itself) that is *internal* to the miraculous event<sup>58</sup>. The necessity of faith is an important distinction between magic and religious miracles, which other scholars have examined at length<sup>59</sup>. In this light, he sees the story of the woman with the hemorrhage as exemplifying a faith motif which emphasizes the crossing of boundaries (the boundary between an unclean, bleeding woman and a holy man), rather than as a magical transfer of energy. This passage demonstrates “faith as a crossing of the boundary created by the barriers of legitimacy” rather than “magical

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>56</sup> Translated by Francis McDonagh. 1st Fortress Press ed., ed. John Kenneth Riches. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.

<sup>57</sup> Theissen, *The Miracle Stories*, p. 130.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>59</sup> See Christopher D. Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark’s Narrative*, ed. G. N. Stanton, Monograph Series; Society for New Testament Studies, vol. 64 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

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faith”<sup>60</sup>. Theissen argues that “most rituals and religion contain magical features,” but that three features distinguish ancient magic from religion: cosmopolitanism, individualism, and optimism. In magic, “Anything that has power is recognized,” regardless of its origin. Practitioners often included ritual elements from divergent origins. Secondly, because power is dissociated from official religion and religious communities, magic is individualizing. Finally, magic was optimistic in contrast to the predominately apocalyptic religious beliefs of the time. According to these criteria, Jesus and his disciples were not magicians, but were instead “charismatic miracle-workers”<sup>61</sup>.

In his 1994 *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Volume 2: *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, John P. Meier asserts that there is a substantive difference between magic and miracle. The ancient audience made a clear distinction between the two, regarding miracle as positive and magic as negative. Rather than claiming that there are no clear distinctions between miracle and magic (e.g. Hull, Smith, Aune), or that there are no similarities (e.g. Frazer, Grundmann, Loos), Meier argues for a magic-miracle continuum with an “ideal type” of magic on one end and an “ideal type” of miracle on the other (and a gray area of magical-miracle in-between). Meier then goes on to show that the gospel miracles tend to fit the ideal type of *miracle*, while the Greek Magical Papyri tend to fit the ideal type of *magic*<sup>62</sup>. Meier dismisses those who allege that magic and miracle are basically the same thing and systematically demonstrates their differences, using the Greek Magical Papyri and a gospel miracle (the raising of Lazarus) as points of comparison<sup>63</sup>. Summarizing Meier’s distinctions, the characteristic typology of miracle includes: 1) a personal relationship with a deity, 2) a worshipper or disciple rather than a business client who receives the benefit, 3) brief commands, rather than lengthy incantations, 4) a response to an urgent request, instead of coercion, 5) the gospel context of obedience to the Father, 6) symbolism—the kingdom of God, and 7) a non-punitive action. On the other hand, the characteristic typology of magic includes: 1) manipulation or coercion of a deity, 2) benefits that are often petty or selfish, 3) requests for magic as discrete

<sup>60</sup> Theissen, *The Miracle Stories*, p. 134.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238-43.

<sup>62</sup> Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, p. 539, 541, 547.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 541-52.

cases, without overarching context, 4) no circle of followers or disciples, 5) multiplication of names and nonsense syllables in magic spells, and 6) a secret, esoteric nature<sup>64</sup>. Insofar as a particular wondrous event demonstrates one set of properties over another, it is definable as magic or miracle (or in-between).

Graham H. Twelftree's 1999 *Jesus: The Miracle Worker* is a thorough overview of the gospel miracles. Of particular relevance is his discussion of Luke's redactional tendencies and distinctive emphases. In the story of the healing of the hemorrhaging woman in Luke, Twelftree acknowledges that the *dynamis*-power seems to work impersonally at times, but he does not accept a magical interpretation. Instead, he emphasizes the contributing role of faith in the healing and the fact that the *dynamis* is connected with God, not an intermediate force (as in the magical worldview). He argues that the *dynamis*-power is to be associated here with the Holy Spirit, bestowed upon Jesus by God. Twelftree maintains that Luke's use of *dynamis* in this story, while admittedly carrying some magical connotations, originates in the biblical worldview, not the Greco-Roman magical worldview of that day. In addition, Twelftree emphasizes that in Matthew's parallel account we are clearly shown that it is not the touching of Jesus' clothes that effects the miracle, but the faith that precedes it<sup>65</sup>. Twelftree, like Grundmann, appears uncomfortable with the magical overtones particular to the Markan and Lukan versions of this miracle, which suggest an automatic and therefore magical healing. The story of the healing of the deaf-mute (Mark 7, 32-37) is sometimes used to demonstrate the magical nature of Jesus' healings, but Twelftree argues against this interpretation. He contends that *Ephphatha* was not a "secret word" (as suggested by Hull)<sup>66</sup>, but a known Semitic word, which Mark then translates for the reader<sup>67</sup>. Unfortunately, Twelftree does not go on to discuss Jesus' other peculiar healing techniques in this story, such as putting his fingers in the man's ears, spitting, or touching the man's tongue. A further explanation of these seemingly magical (or at least quasimedical) methods would help counter the claims that Jesus employed magical techniques.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 548-50.

<sup>65</sup> Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological Study* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), p. 75, 119, 171-2.

<sup>66</sup> Hull, *Hellenistic Magic*, p. 82-86.

<sup>67</sup> Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, p. 81.

#### 4. Possible directions to follow

Clearly, the debate as to whether there is a true distinction between magic and miracle, or whether Jesus was or was not a magician, is not settled. There appears no consensus on the issue and scholars continue to debate at great length the proper understanding of Jesus' and Church leaders' miracle-working activity.

As recent studies have shown, in the Greco-Roman world, especially in polemical contexts, there was seldom a clear-cut answer as to the significance of extraordinary deeds. Criteria according to which wondrous deeds ought to be evaluated were a source of constant dispute; even when conflicting parties ostensibly agreed about the criteria, they would subtly reinterpret these according to both their own view of the world and the polemical or apologetic needs of the moment. Alan F. Segal observes that the meaning of "magic" changed as the context in which it was used changed<sup>68</sup>. One can carry this argument a step further by suggesting that in the Greco-Roman world assertions about magic were useful in so many different contexts precisely because magic had no unambiguous, universally acknowledged meaning. E. Gellner has argued that "nothing is more false than the claim that, for a given assertion, *its use is its meaning*. On the contrary, its use may depend on its lack of meaning, its ambiguity, its possession of wholly different and incompatible meanings in different contexts, *and* on the fact that, at the same time, it as it were emits the impression of possessing a consistent meaning through-out – on retaining, for instance, the aura of a justification valid only in one context when used in quite another"<sup>69</sup>. Gellner asserts that the very lack of a clear-cut denotation can govern the use of a particular concept. In such instances, the effort to provide such a denotation will do violence to the concept and prohibit a deep comprehension of its use. Given the broad range of its connotations in antiquity, it appears that "magic" was an irreducibly ambiguous concept. Recognition of this ambiguity in turn casts a shadow

<sup>68</sup> Alan F. Segal, "Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition", in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions*, eds. R. van den Broek și M. J. Vermaseren, EPRO 91, Leiden: Brill, 1981, p. 350-351.

<sup>69</sup> "Concepts and Society", in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan Wilson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979, p. 45 (italics his).

on those recent studies of magic and the New Testament that employ rigid definitions of or sets of identifying criteria for magic. Such definitions or criteria take for granted that which early Christians regarded as open to dispute.

During the earlier phase of research on magic and the New Testament, little attention was given to the questions about the ontological status which would come to dominate later research on the subject: Was Jesus a magician or not? Were such deeds as St. Peter's action against Annanias and Sapphira and St. Paul's action against Bar Jesus magic or not? Scholars who have recently addressed such questions assume that it is possible to define an essence of "magical" action and belief which transcends social, cultural or temporal boundaries. Often this essence is said to involve the presence of certain attitudes, such as a "manipulative" attitude versus the "supplicative" attitude of "religion", and the use of goal-oriented techniques. Interpreters who put the question in these terms see their task as one of measuring the persons, actions and ideas depicted in the New Testament or other early Christian literature against preestablished definitions of "magicians" or of "magic" in order to determine whether there is an objective fit between them.

But this line of questioning is not helpful, because efforts to pinpoint the essence of magic have been futile. Anthropological studies in past decades have repeatedly shown that "magic" is as much a locative or relational category as it is a substantive one: it serves to differentiate between the person(s) labelling and the person(s) so labelled<sup>70</sup>. The effort to define an unchanging, transcultural essence of "magic" is therefore like trying to define such an essence of "vulgarity" or "deviance". The task is impossible, because usage of the labels depends on the culturally governed behavioral norms of the persons involved, on their relative social locations, on the complex particularities of the given situation. How the labels are applied and received will vary as the configuration of actors, norms and social circumstances varies. Applying an absolute definition of magic when analyzing such a configuration will oversimplify the complexities and muffle the contrasting opinions of the persons involved. To avoid these pitfalls, the interpreter must ask a different set

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<sup>70</sup> See Jonathan Z. Smith, "Towards Interpreting Demonic Powers in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II. 16. 1, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978, p. 425-439.

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of questions altogether – questions that permit as many as possible of the various actors engaged in a dispute about magic to make their voices heard.

In the Greco-Roman world, accusations of magic typically occurred in situations of social conflict. Because the use of magic was regarded as socially unacceptable, labelling someone a “magician” was an effective way to squelch, avenge or discredit undesirable behaviour. Thus Apuleius of Madaura, who married a certain “Pudentilla” (a wealthy widow some years his senior), found himself in court rebutting charges that he had wooed her with magic, brought against him by relatives disgruntled because they stood to lose a large inheritance<sup>71</sup>. In bringing such charges, the relatives were engaging in a form of social discourse; in other words, by their actions they were *saying something*, not only to each other, but also to Apuleius, Pudentilla and the community. For the modern reader of the *Apology* the ontological question (Was Apuleius a magician?) is not likely either to find a definite answer or to cast light on the interaction between Apuleius and his accusers. More useful will be interpretive questions. For example, what did the concerted action of Pudentilla’s relatives say about their values, rules and expectations pertaining to such matters as courtship, inheritance, the behaviour of distinguished widows, interaction between town members and intruders, and acceptable methods of recourse against various types of wrongdoers? What were the culturally governed presuppositions about magic and magicians that made the charge against Apuleius plausible to some of the persons involved? What presuppositions shaped Apuleius’ own defence? Analogous interpretive questions could be fruitfully addressed to materials concerning magic in the New Testament.

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<sup>71</sup> The incident is known from Apuleius’s *Apologia* (or *Pro se de magia*), which is a transcription of his courtroom defence (possibly revised). For the Latin text (with German translation), see Apuleius Madaurensis, *Verteidigungsrede; Blütenlese*, ed. and trans. R. W. O. Helm (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1977). For an English translation see H. E. Butler, trans., *The Apologia and Florida of Apuleius of Madaura* (1909; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970).

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## The Autonomous and Semi-Autonomous Regime of the Church of Crete

### Abstract

The study presents the problem of the autonomous and subsequent semi-autonomous presence of the Church of Crete in relation to the Ecumenical throne, certain essential historical events which have been defining to its status, the polymorphism in the ecclesiastical legal order of the Orthodox Eastern Church and the degree in which each territory was administratively dependent on the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

### Keywords

*Canon law, the Church of Crete, autonomy, Ecumenical Patriarchate*

The law-canonical status of the Church of Crete is one of the five statuses currently standing in Greece. It is well known that the gradual liberation of the Greek territories from the Turkish yoke created this polymorphism in the ecclesiastical legal order of the Orthodox Eastern Church. This sort of polymorphism constitutes a unique phenomenon within the boundaries of ecclesiastical history. A regulatory factor, which contributed to the establishment of five particular geo-ecclesiastical areas of authorities, was the degree to which each respective territory was administratively dependent on the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Church of Crete, established by Apostle Paul, possesses a long-standing and eventful history. Its course through history has been under the direct influence of numerous political whirls, periods of the island's foreign occupation and captivity by heterodox nations, and the diversification, a process frequently encountered

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throughout the past, of its historical fate from the main, continental part of Greece. In order to better understand the autonomous and subsequent semi-autonomous presence of the Church of Crete in relation to the Ecumenical throne, one must be aware of certain essential historical events. In 732 the Church of Crete followed the fate of Eastern Illyricum and was placed under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. During the Byzantine era, it had the status of an Archdiocese with its own Provincial Synod and an Archbishop elected by it. The Arabic occupation (826-961) and the Venetian administration disorganized the Church of Crete. In 1645, Crete passes from the authority of the Venetians to that of the Turks. Those latter conquerors strove to replace the catholic bishops of the island with orthodox ones and to reestablish the orthodox Metropolis of Crete. It was not until 1647 when Neophytos Patellaros (1646-1679), first Metropolitan of Crete, started taking action on the island, his main aim being the reorganization of the Church and of the particular dioceses. There still exists the first deed of assignment (April 1654) according to which Patellaros places under the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch five villages and seven monasteries as “stavropigia”<sup>2</sup>. In this Deed of assignment Patellaros addresses the Patriarch as his “παναγιώτατο αυθέντη και δεσπότη” (Greek for “*most reverend lord and despot*”) and stresses that the assignment was made “οίκειοθελῶς” (“*willfully*”). Indeed, this document is extremely important since it reveals that, despite the long period of Venetian occupation, the Orthodox Church of Crete had inseparable spiritual bonds with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and that reconnecting the local church with it, during the Turkish occupation, was self-evident. However, it would not have been achievable if, in the first place, the Turkish conquerors had not allowed it. It is widely known that each of the sultans, the first being Mehmed II the Conqueror, would cede decrees and firmans to the head, of the orthodox church, the Ecumenical Patriarch. The Turkish conquest of Crete initiated the issue of such Decrees, written assignments of privileges to its ecclesiastical hierarchy; otherwise, the reestablishment of the Orthodox Church of Crete would not have been legally feasible. In chronological terms, the first document of this kind is the Decree and firman of Crete’s Metropolis dating in 1756, which provides us with extremely important information: a) on behalf of the

<sup>2</sup> “Stavropigia”: convents under the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch and not the bishop of the area.

Church of Crete, the act of submitting requests for the issue of a Decree was performed by the Ecumenical Patriarch, b) the election of the Metropolitan of Crete and of the bishops of the island was executed by the Patriarch and the Synod of the Patriarchate. Therefore, this document, in addition to others, provides us with evidence that the island of Crete was placed under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Throne. Things start to change after the Turkish yoke had been overthrown and the Constitution of the Cretan State (1899) had been passed. Based on articles 31 and 112 of the Cretan Constitution of 1899, the politically autonomous state of the Cretans delimits the up-to-then absolute ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Throne over the local church of Crete. Article 31 designates that the Sovereign has the power whether to consent or not to the placement of the Metropolitan of Crete, who was elected by the Ecumenical Patriarch and his Synod, as well as to the placement of the bishops of Crete, elected by the Episcopal synod. Article 112 confers upon the Sovereign the right to settle with the Ecumenical Patriarch the matter of commonly delineating the way of exercising the right to place the Metropolitan and the bishops of the synod of Crete. These articles exemplify that the aim of the state legislator was not to alter the spiritual jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate over the Church of Crete but to ensure that, on the level of people's selection for the hierarchy, the Sublime Porte would not be able to intervene. However, this additional, state-originating condition, aiming to observe the lawfulness of the election of the Cretan Church hierarchs, has not diminished the degree to which the Church was spiritually and administratively dependant on the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The State of Affairs also changes with the agreement between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Cretan State, signed on behalf of the autonomous Cretan state by Eleftherios Venizelos, Minister of Justice at the time, and, on behalf of the Ecumenical Throne, by Eymenios Xiroudakis, Metropolitan of Cretan. On the basis of this agreement, signed on the August 4 and legalised on October 14, 1900, Crete is placed under an essentially autonomous state but not an autocephalous one. We are not able to talk about an autocephalous state since the election of the Metropolitan of Crete still remains under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Throne; the main difference is that the electoral procedure is not carried out in a free and dominant way among those potential candidates having the canonical qualifications but through a choice among three persons (τριπρόσωπο)

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decided upon by the High Commissioner of the Cretan State. Under the provisions of this agreement, we have the formation of the Constitutional Law of 1900 (Law 276/1900). In this law, the only regulation referring to the Ecumenical Patriarchate was that of article 112, which designated that the Patriarch was to be mentioned in the masses of the monasteries under the authorities. On the other hand, article 8 specifies that all bishops of the Cretan State “μηδὲ τοῦ Μητροπολίτου ἔξαιρουμένου” (without the exception of the Metropolitan) are subject to supervision by the Provincial Synod, they refer to it in relation to ecclesiastical issues pertaining to their spiritual duties and they execute its decisions. Their reference is performed via the Metropolis. In spite of this spiritual supervision, the Synod does not acquire the right to elect its members. Its members are elected by the Sovereign after the Metropolitan has submitted his three-person choice. Although this is a counter-canonical regulation impinging on the democratic system of the Church’s administration (a way of administration with foundations in the Holy Scriptures and the election of the twelfth apostle in the Acts), there are also two more regulations which allow us to speak of a politeiocratic system of the Church’s administration<sup>3</sup>. Article 31 specifies: “Αἱ ἐκκλησιαστικαὶ ἀρχαί, καθόσον δὲν υπερβαίνουν τὰ ὅρια τῶν καθηκόντων αὐτῶν, ἀπολαύουσι προστασίας καὶ υπερασπίσεως παρὰ τῆς πολιτικῆς ἀρχῆς...” (*Church authorities, as long as they do not exceed the limits of their duties, are entitled to protection and defence by the political authority...*) whereas article 33 designates that, during the holy masses and services, be mentioned first the name of the Sovereign and then that of the Bishop according to the form “καθορισθησόμενον” (*designated*) by the Holy Synod.

The Constitution of the Cretan State (1907) with its article 37 includes the same provision as article 31 of the previous Constitution (1899), namely that the High Commissioner “παρέχει ἢ οὐ” (*offers or not*) his consent on the establishment of a Metropolitan of Crete elected by the Ecumenical Patriarch and of the bishops elected by the Episcopal Synod of Crete.

After the end of the Second Balkan War (1913) the new geopolitical situation in Greece inaugurated the beginning of a period of intense changes in the field of defining the limits of the Ecumenical Throne’s

<sup>3</sup> Politeiocratia (Staatskirchentum) is the political system of relations between State and Church, according to which the State has (up to a particular degree) regulatory and an interventional role in ecclesiastical affairs.

ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Crete and the other areas annexed to Greece. A worthwhile attempt was the plan of the Charter of the Metropolises of the «New Territories»<sup>4</sup>, (1926) by the government of Kondylis. In essence, this plan extended Crete's status of autonomy to Metropolises of Macedonia, Thrace, Epirus and the Aegean islands and it also merged the already existing dioceses of Crete in one local Metropolis and three Dioceses. The Synod of the Hierarchy would have Thessalonica as its chair and the Metropolitan of Thessalonica each time as its chairperson.

This attempt was not successful. However, the status of the «New Territories» was settled with the Patriarchal and Synodical Act of 1928, whose regulatory coverage did not include the Church of Crete.

In 1941 the canonical Metropolitan Timotheos Veneris was not allowed to continue performing his duties due to a law of the dictatorship during the Greek-Italian war. The Ecumenical Patriarchate did not react to that obstruction because of the warfare. In 1950, the Ecumenical Throne, following the guidelines of the government of Plastiras, elected Eygenios Psalidakis, regardless of the fact that everyone was expecting that the learned Lampis Fanourakis be elected.

The latter, alongside with the bishops of Kydonia, Rethymnon and Kissamos ceased mentioning the name of the elected Bishop and the communion with the Patriarchate. However, the death of three out of four opposing priests contributed to the termination of the crisis. All that remained from the motion was the request for enhancement of the dioceses of Crete to Metropolises according to the prototype of the New Territories.

In parallel, as of 1947 the Provincial Synod had formulated a plan of the present Constitutional Charter. There followed a long period of cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs for the final formation of its contents. It was considerably influenced from Law 671/1943 Constitutional Charter of the Church of Greece which was in use at that time. Moreover, in many points, as in article 54, there is direct reference to standing issues of the Church of Greece.

Law 4149/61, after an agreement of the Greek State with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, introduced the present standing Constitutional Charter of the Church of Crete, which annuls the former autonomous state of the Church and establishes a new status of the local church's semi-autonomy

<sup>4</sup> «New Territories» (Νέες Χώρες): the regions of northern Greece which were liberated in 1913.

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in relation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Via this Constitutional Charter a series of legislative, administrative and judicial powers were conferred on the Patriarchate. Dependence on the Patriarchate is now evidently more immediate.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate did not immediately respond to the request of enhancing the dioceses to Metropolises. It was only after the Patriarchal and Synodical Act 812/1962, validated with legislative decree 4562/66, that the dioceses of Crete were finally enhanced to Metropolises. This enhancement was deemed «ψιλή» (naked) by Tomadakis since it took place “honoris causa” and only by renaming the dioceses as Metropolises and the bishops as Metropolitan. In fact, neither was the Metropolitan of Crete enhanced to Archbishop nor the Metropolis of Crete to Archdiocese. Furthermore, it was stated that, from then on, the Metropolitan would mention the name of the Ecumenical Patriarch, not that of the Metropolitan of Crete. This Act demoted the institutional role of the Metropolitan of Crete, who reacted claiming that such a thing was against canon 14<sup>5</sup> of the «Protodeftera» Council of Constantinople (861) and canon 12 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council<sup>6</sup>. The Patriarchate’s denial to acknowledge the title of Archbishop for the Metropolitan of Crete was based on the assumption that there should be only one Archbishop in Greece, thus, not taking into consideration that it was a title of a different significance according to the system of the Church of Illyricum.

At a later date, the enhancement of the Metropolitan of Crete to Archbishop took place through the Patriarchal and Synodical Act 283/1967, validated with compulsory law 137/1967. Following a series of statuses, the dependence relationship of the Church of Crete from the Ecumenical Patriarchate became even stronger.

Conclusively, the Synod of the Church of Crete does not have supreme administrative authority, and this is the main reason we call this Church semi - autonomous. The Church of Crete is under the direct ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Church of Crete is a

<sup>5</sup> Canon 14 of First- Second (Protodeftera) Regional Synod: «If any bishop, on the allegation that the charges of crime lie against his own metropolitan, shall secede or apostatize from him, shall be deposed».

<sup>6</sup> Canon 12 of Fourth Ecumenical Synod: «One province shall not be cut into two. Whoever shall do this shall be cast out of the episcopate. Such cities as are cut off by imperial rescript shall enjoy only the honour of having a bishop settled in them: but all the rights pertaining to the true metropolis shall be preserved».

metropolis as the term is used in the holy canons, that is in its ancient meaning. We refer to canons 4<sup>7</sup>, 5<sup>8</sup>, 6<sup>9</sup>, and 7<sup>10</sup> of the First Ecumenical synod, canon 2<sup>11</sup> of the Second and 9<sup>12</sup> of the Synod of Antioch. The first chapter of the Introductory report of the present standing Constitutional Charter of the Church of Crete, specifies that by law 4149/61 «καθορίζεται η μορφή και η σχέση της Εκκλησίας της Κρήτης προς το Οικουμενικόν Πατριαρχείον, του οποίου από αιώνων είναι Μητρόπολις, κατοχυρουμένης της εσωτερικής αυτοτελείας και αυτοδιαθέσεως, συμπληρουμένου ούτω κενού υφισταμένου εις την ισχύουσαν νομοθεσίαν» (“[...it] specifies the form and the relationship of the Church of Crete with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the former since long being a Metropolis of the latter, [it also] entrenches its independence (αυτοτέλεια) and self-determination, thus bridging an existing gap in the standing legislation”). Such a form of semi-autonomous administration of an ecclesiastical territory may not be elsewhere encountered but in Crete. The orthodox churches are essentially either autocephalous or autonomous. The Provincial Synod of Crete does not elect its Chair and does not hear bishops’ lapses entailing deposition. On the other hand, it possesses consultative, not decisional, power as far

<sup>7</sup> Canon 4 of the First Ecumenical Synod: «A bishop is to be chosen by all the bishops of the province or at least by three, the rest giving by letter their assent; but this choice must be confirmed by the metropolitan».

<sup>8</sup> Canon 5 of the First Ecumenical Synod: «Such as have excommunicated by certain bishops shall not be restored by others, unless the excommunication was the result of pusillanimity, or strife, or some other similar cause. And that this may be duly attended to, there shall be in each year two synods in every province- the one before Lent, the other toward autumn».

<sup>9</sup> Canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Synod: «The Bishop of Alexandria shall have jurisdiction over Egypt, Libys, and Pentapolis. As also the Roman bishop over those who subject to Rome. So, too, the Bishop of Antioch and the rest over those who are under them. If any be a bishop contrary to the judgement of the Metropolitan, let him be no bishop. Provided it be in accordance with the canons by the suffrage of majority, if three object, their objections shall be of no force».

<sup>10</sup> Canon 7 of the First Ecumenical Synod: «Let the bishop of Elia be honoured, the right of the Metropolis being preserved intact».

<sup>11</sup> Canon 2 of the Second Ecumenical Synod: «No traveller shall introduce confusion into the Churches either by ordaining or by enthroning. Nevertheless in Churches which are among the heathen the tradition of the Fathers shall be preserved».

<sup>12</sup> Canon 9 of the Synod of Antioch: «Bishops should be bound to the opinion of the metropolitan, and nothing should they do without his knowledge except only such things as have reference to the diocese of each, and let them ordain men free from blame».

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as the administrative organization of the dioceses is concerned. All the aforementioned powers pertain to the Ecumenical Throne.

However, it should be noted that the preservation of the three-person choice suggested to the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the Greek state (article 19 paragraph 2) regarding the election of an Archbishop is counter-canonical and directly disputes the 4<sup>th</sup> canon of the First Ecumenical Council and canon 3<sup>12</sup> of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### **T**heological Conference in Volos

Between the 3rd and the 6th of June 2010, an international conference called “Neo-Patristic Synthesis or Post-Patristic Theology: Can Orthodox Theology be Contextual” was held at the Academy for Theological Studies in Volos (Greece). The meeting was organized by the Academy for Theological Studies in Volos (Greece), the Department of Orthodox Studies of the University Fordham (New York), the Department of Orthodox Theology of the University in Münster (Germany) and the Romanian Institute for Inter-Orthodox, Inter-confessional and Inter-religious Studies (Cluj).

Getting together distinguished representatives of the present Orthodox theology from three continents, the conference aimed at critically and constructively interrogating what the much-promising “neo-patristic synthesis”, proclaimed by George Florovsky in the first decades of the last century, has brought about. The initiators of this debate started from the generic observation that the desirable rebirth of the patristic theology failed in one essential point: the contextualization of the message of Christ’s Church, that is, the establishing of a dialogue between the Gospel and the contemporary world. Or, if the Holy Fathers of the first centuries succeeded in converting the data of the ancient culture, in defending the Church faith by explicating it from a dogmatic point of view, in celebrating this faith liturgically, in giving the Christian theology the consistency of a system of life and thinking, all these were accomplished only because they knew how to develop that kind of inculturation or contextualization through which that which is immutable meets that which, by nature of the freedom it enjoys, is in continual movement. That “Christian Hellenism”, which was seen by Florovsky as the perennial pattern of any successful synthesis between the Gospel of Christ and the specific data of a country or a community from a certain period of time, was born exactly from the dialogue between Revelation and Creation. The conference set for itself the

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purpose of identification the ways through which the Orthodox theology of the beginning of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century will bring about a communication bridge between eternity and history, and will express the old truths in a language relevant to the present world.

The participants were the following: Rev. Dr. **Vladan Pericic**, Professor of Patrology, former Dean of the Theological Faculty, University of Belgrade, Serbia; Dr. **George Martzelos**, Professor at the School of Theology, University of Thessaloniki, Greece; Dr. **Marcus Plested**, Director of Studies, Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, UK; Rev. Dr. **Pavel L. Gavrilyuk**, Associate Professor, University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, USA; Rev. Dr. **John Behr**, Dean, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, New York, USA; Dr. **Tamara Grdzeldze**, Programme Executive, Faith and Order, WCC; Dr. **Daniel Ayuch**, Associate Professor, St. John of Damascus Orthodox Theological Institute of University of Balamand, Lebanon; Dr. **John Fotopoulos**, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Saint Mary's College at Notre Dame, USA; Dr. **George Demacopoulos**, Associate Professor of Theology, Co-Founding Director, Orthodox Christian Studies Program of Fordham University, New York, USA; **Alexei V. Nesteruk**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Mathematics, University of Portsmouth, UK; Visiting Professor, St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute, Moscow, Russia; Rev. Dr. **Demetrios Bathrellos**, Visiting Lecturer, Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, UK; Priest of the Aghia Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, Drafi, Attica, Greece; Dr. **Assaad Elias Kattan**, Director of the Center of Religious Studies and Chair of Orthodox Theology, University of Münster, Germany; Rev. Dr. **John Panteleimon Manoussakis**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, College of Holy Cross, Worcester, USA; Metropolitan **John Zizioulas**, Member of the Academy of Athens, Ecumenical Patriarchate; Fr. **Andrew Louth**, Professor of Patrology, University of Durham, UK; Dr. **Michail Neamtu**, Senior Fellow of CADI/ Eleutheria, Romania; Dr. **Radu Preda**, Associate Professor of Social Theology, Babes-Bolai-University, Cluj-Napoca, Director of the Romanian Institute for Inter-Orthodox, Inter-confessional, Inter-Religious Studies-INTER, Romania; Dr. **Aristotle Papanikolaou**, Associate Professor of Theology, Co-Founding Director, Orthodox Christian Studies Program of Fordham University, New York, USA; Dr. **Peter Bouteneff**, Associate Professor, St Vladimir's Orthodox

Theological Seminary, New York, USA; Dr. **Eleni Kasselouri**, Teaching at the Hellenic Open University, Member of the Academic Team of Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Greece; Rev. Dr. **Emmanuel Clapsis**, Professor of Dogmatics, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, USA; Dr. **Athanasios N. Papathanasiou**, Editor in Chief of the Theological Journal *Synaxis*, Greece; Dr. **Pantelis Kalaitzidis**, Director of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Greece.

The papers presented treated various important issues related to the general theme of the conference. The limited space available here does not allow for an extensive abstract of each of the lectures delivered. So here there are some significant ideas advanced by the authors:

- **Vladan Perišić** (*Can Orthodox Theology Be Contextual?*): Understanding of certain phenomena requires understanding of their context, but conversely the very context is understandable only from the phenomena we investigate (i.e. every interpretation necessarily goes in circles). A question remains: what comes first? The next problem we meet in the hermeneutical process of understanding the text is the relationship between context and truth. In order to grasp some biblical truth, it is desirable to understand the cultural circumstances (i.e. the context) in which it is settled. This is one thing. Entirely other is to claim that this truth is so tied with that culture that it is culturally dependent. The truths of divine revelations cannot be judged by the criteria of culture. Also, culture can sometimes contribute to the understanding of some revealed truths, but more often than not it can prevent it. So we have always to keep in mind that the Christian message is in space and time, but it is not about space and time. The main question we have to answer is: what is the proper context for theological reflection? In the author's view, the proper theological context is philosophy. According to this, contextual theology would be the one which is conscious of its philosophical presuppositions. Every theology has philosophical presuppositions, but we can call contextual that one which is conscious of them (if somebody thinks that this name carries some advantages). This is not to affirm that contextual theology has only philosophical and no other (social, cultural, etc.) presuppositions. Nevertheless, its presuppositions as theology's are first and foremost philosophical. That could be shown in the cases of triadology, christology, personology, creationism, iconology, and every other theology.

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- **George Martzelos** (*The role of Contextual Theology in the orthodox Tradition*): It could be said that Orthodox theology is the contextual theology par excellence because it dared to formulate the gospel in a way that was unique and unprecedented in history, based on the contextual figurative images and terminological presuppositions of the Greek world. Without this venture, the “marriage” between Christianity and Hellenism, or rather the Christianization of Hellenism would not have been possible. In continuity with the illustrative examples from the Orthodox tradition, modern Orthodoxy is called to enter into a fruitful engagement with the contextual images and ideas of our time, without any kind of fear that the potential development of the gospel’s message to the modern world will ultimately be impeded or at least made extremely difficult.

- **Marcus Plested** (*The Emergence of the Neo-Patristic Synthesis: Content, Challenges and Limits*): The neo-patristic synthesis remains conditioned by precisely the kind of imitative-reactive dynamic it sought to overcome and transcend.

- **Paul L. Gavrilyuk** (*Florovsky’s “Christian Hellenism”: A Critical Evaluation*): Florovsky’s idealization of Christian Hellenism seems to have encouraged what might be called ‘patristic fundamentalism’, ecclesiastical triumphalism, a posture of spiritual superiority vis-à-vis the Western ‘Other’, intellectual isolationism, and Hellenocentricity verging on idolatry. On the other hand, properly understood, Florovsky’s neopatristic synthesis leads in a different direction. Far from sanctioning triumphalism, Florovsky’s searching criticism of Russian religious thought invites intense ecclesial self-examination. Instead of endorsing ‘patristic fundamentalism’, Florovsky summons Orthodox theologians to acquire patristic mind, to enter into the spirit of patristic thought. Rather than encouraging isolationism, one of the functions of the neopatristic synthesis is to provide a foundation for healing the division between the East and the West. Christian Hellenism is a theological vision, which refuses to subordinate the historical divine revelation to any philosophy that compromises the centrality of the divine incarnation.

- **John Behr** (*Passing Beyond the Neo-Patristic Synthesis*): In appealing to the “mind” of the Fathers, rather than more concretely to their texts, Florovsky drew from the same well-spring of Romanticism and Idealism. The legacy of the Neo-Patristic synthesis is mixed: it was a breath of fresh air and stimulated many great works, but it has also stymied theological

reflection by, first, not paying close enough attention to the particularity of each Father and, second, by giving the impression that theology can only be carried out under a patristic guise. The future of Orthodox theology may lie not so much in returning to some lost golden age of purity, which in reality is always our own projection of self, but in hearing the dialogue of the Christian witnesses, learning to take part in that conversation, and then, with all the resources now available to us, to address the Word of God to the twenty-first century.

- **Tamara Grdzeldze** (*A Dialogue with Living Tradition': Contextualisation of the Fathers/Teachers of the Early Church in the Ecumenical Context*): The challenge for us lies in bringing together the traditional patterns of theology, like orthodox theology, with today's context/contextes. But bringing the two together is the only way to keep faith alive.

- **Daniel Ayuch** (*Biblical Courses: A new approach to an old discipline. The Relationship between Biblical and Other Theological Discipline*) pointed out the theological arguments for the necessity of biblical courses with modern methodological premises within the curriculum of any Orthodox faculty of theology.

- **John Fotopoulos** (*Orthodox Christianity and Historical Criticism of the Bible*): Historical criticism of the Bible cannot be ignored by Orthodox scholars today and simply replaced by patristic exegesis. Rather, Orthodox scholarly use of the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation and a search for the literal sense can facilitate a fruitful engagement with and application of the Scriptures in the life of the Orthodox faithful, assisting with an application of the Scriptures in liturgical preaching, as well as facilitating dynamic engagement with the message of the Scriptures in worship within Orthodox liturgy.

- **Alexei Nesteruk**, (*Orthodoxy in a Scientific Age: from a Neo-Patristic Synthesis to Radical Theological Commitment*): There is a need of a radical commitment conceived as a priority of Christian faith and existential theology over all secular forms of thought. This commitment can be characterized as a further synthesis of premodern ideas of the Fathers of the Church and their ecclesial theology with contemporary philosophical and scientific thought reflecting the present human condition. The aim of this synthesis is a) to reassert the importance and values of Christian civilization in those times when the extreme secularization of societies, as

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well as dehumanization of nature and life, threaten the stability of human existence and fulfillment of its Divine tasks; b) by fighting the militant and hidden atheism in contemporary world to reassert the sacramental sense of human life and indispensability of ecclesial and Eucharistic dimensions of existence for a relational transcendence and salvation.

- **Demetrios Bathrellos** (*Systematic Theology as a New form of Orthodox Theology?*): Systematic Theology is the creative attempt to re-conceive and reshape the Christian message in the light of our historical, cultural, and theological challenges. The latter must be based on the former but also move further in an attempt to keep theology alive and able to address people in different times and places. He argued that the development of systematic theology is of paramount importance for the future of Orthodox theology.

- **Assaad Kattan** (*Essentialism Reconsidered. The Myth non Hermeneutical Approach to Orthodox Tradition*): It is no more permissible for a genuine approach to the issue of Tradition in Orthodox theology to bypass postmodern hermeneutics both in terms of the implications of historical distance on the act of understanding as well as in terms of the dynamic involvement of our presuppositions and expectations in the act of interpretation.

- **John Zizioulas** (*Actuality and Temporality of the Neo-patristic Synthesis*) presented some fundamental keys for the understanding of the modern orthodox theology as contextual theology (e.g. an existential interpretation of the Trinitarian theology, a pneumatological ecclesiology as a response to the relation between the individual and the community, the eucharistic character of the orthodox theology, the eschatological ontology and interpretation of the tradition)

- **Andrew Louth** (*The authority of the Fathers in post-patristic Orthodox theology*): Abandoning the wisdom and witness of the Fathers is unconceivable. He proposed some principles for a better recourse to the Fathers. First, some negative points: We need to abandon any idea that the Fathers all said the same thing; rather we need to accept that they constitute a chorus of different voices. It will often seem a cacophony; to hear the harmony is part of our task as theologians. The thought of the Fathers should not limit our thought; we have to raise questions that they did not raise, because they did not occur to them. Next, some positive

points: The patristic achievement involved a profound engagement with the worldview of their day, not uncritical, certainly, but it was deeply indebted to many aspects of the common wisdom of the day; Therefore, if we are to follow the Fathers, we need to cultivate a similar attitude; what we need is a critical engagement with the common wisdom of our day—the cosmological views of modern physics (relativity, etc.), the theory of evolution, many of the perceptions of modern social and human sciences—without our abandoning our conviction about the cosmos being created by a personal God and our inhabiting a moral universe which allows genuine self-determination and responsibility.

- **Michail Neamtu** (*Ethno-theology in the Social Discourse of Modern Orthodoxy. Remarks and Questions*) addressed the question of ethno-theology in view of its predominance in the modern apologetic discourse of some Eastern European theologians. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, modern Orthodoxy has shaped its self-legitimizing discourse by playing with ideas stemming from a collectivistic, and not just communitarian, approach to history and society. An ethno-theological celebration of local identity has often led to the blind triumph of secular nationalism, at the expense of the more original Christian (and patristic) appreciation of the human person, seen as an irreducible and iconic reality.

- **Peter Bouteneff** (*Liberation and the Poor: Challenges for Contemporary Orthodoxy from Contextual Theologies*): One of the explanations for the paucity of Orthodox voices on such subjects has to do with the perception that „theology” consists in Trinitarian, Christological, and anthropological reflection; what remains is praxis, which is properly the subject of pastoral and homiletic reflection. A more problematic factor lies with the hermeneutics of Scripture. Orthodox theologians tend to read Scripture as a source of Trinitarian and Christological data. Yet, as the liberation theologians frequently remind us, the Scriptures speak about poverty and justice more than they speak of almost anything else

- **Aristotle Papanikolaou** (*Orthodox Liberalism: Political Theology after the Empires*): Political theology within the history of Orthodox Christian thought is virtually non-existent. This absence of a political theology demonstrates that theology within the Orthodox tradition is contextual insofar as it reveals that theological expression depends on the urgency within the tradition to address particular questions that it can no longer ignore—theology cannot go beyond the questions that it's being asked

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to answer. an Orthodox political theology in the current global situation requires an affirmation of a modified form of political liberalism, and that such a political theology is most consistent with the core of Orthodox theology-the principle of divine-human communion.

- **Radu Preda** (*Orthodox Social Theology as Contextual Theology*). The fertile antinomy of being inside Tradition and, at the same time, considering the present as anteroom of the eschaton, is not possible except by assuming the type of actualizing and contextualizing used by the Fathers of the Church. How difficult this process is and, symmetrically, how easy the remaining in the comfort „of the taking over of the ideas for nothing” is - quoting Flaubert - this is visible in the process of articulating an Orthodox social theology

- **Emmanouel Clapsis** (*Toward An Orthodox Theology of Religions*): It was asserted that a sacramental and charismatic perspective of the Church does not allow the scope of God’s salvific grace to remain only within the canonical boundaries of the Church. It was argued that the operation of God’s Spirit in other Christian churches and in the world cannot be affirmed at the expense of the importance of the canonical limits of the Church. While maintaining that the fullness of God’s salvific grace can be found within the canonical boundaries of the Church, the author suggested that there is a need to move beyond the understanding of God wherein He is limited to being either fully present or not present at all in the lives and actions of secular and religious others

- **N. Papathanasiou** (*Mission as a challenge for Orthodox Contextual Theology*): The Orthodox Churches (especially in modern times, with a few exceptions) has not yet worked upon the relationship between Gospel and contexts; they have not puzzled over the eventuality that ecclesiastical expressions different from the Greco-Roman ones would emerge; they do not concern itself with the differences between the various models of meeting between the Gospel and the world (adaptation, indigenization, inculturation, contextualisation, etc.) which occupy modern sociological and missionary theory.

- **Pantelis Kalaitzidis** spoke on *Toward a „Post-Patristic” Theology?* His paper has brought together many of the leading ideas of the conference and that’s why we present it in more details. The „return to the Fathers,” which was the dominant theological „model” for Orthodox theology in the 20th century, contributed greatly to the renewal of Orthodox theology and

its release from its „Babylonian captivity” to Western theology in terms of its language, its presuppositions, and its thinking. It did, however, have some negative consequences, such as: 1) the theoretical justification for the widespread devaluation of biblical studies in the Orthodox milieu; 2) the mythologization and ahistorical approach to patristic theology; 3) Orthodox theology’s absence from the major theological developments and trends of the 20th century; 4) the polarization of East and West, and the cultivation of an anti-western and anti-ecumenical spirit; 5) the preservation of the historic tension between Orthodoxy and modernity. These ramifications make a new incarnation of the Word and a contextual reading of the Fathers absolutely imperative, while raising at the same time the question of the possibility of a post-patristic Orthodox theology. The issues and areas that need to be a part of the discussion about a post-patristic Orthodox theology can be very briefly summarized in the following points: 1. The concept and content of tradition, the authority and consensus of the Fathers, and the appeal to their authority. 2. The relationship between patristic theology and Greek modes of thought, between Patristics and Hellenism, and the question of the theological language of a post-Greek world such as our own. Can „Christian Hellenism” really form an „eternal category of Christian existence”? 3. The diachronic and normative character of the use of ontology and Greek philosophical categories in theology. The intermediary role played by philosophy and ontological language in the dialogue between theology and the world. New forms of mediation (and universality), such as, for example, literature, human sciences, etc. The Gospel and philosophy, ontology and mission. 4. The authoritarian, patriarchal, pre-modern model and its relationship with patristic theology, and the absence of any concept of religious pluralism and otherness. A re-examination of the paired idea of catholicity-heresy, in relation to the paired ideas of otherness-heresy and diversity-unity. The tolerance and persecution of „heretics” in the patristic texts and the current cultural conditions. 5. The Church’s and theology’s complicated relationship with imperial ideology. For example, the Councils and the issue of their infallibility, especially when the imperial interventions and imperial „interests” are taken into consideration. 6. The anthropological summits of the theology of the Fathers, as well as the flawed anthropology of the Fathers: problematic anthropological aspects of patristic theology, e.g. concerning women (the „image of God” is attributed to her only

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through man); the metaphor of the woman with the devil; the catastrophic fire, etc.; the justification of the arbitrary nature of the Fathers' view that unmarried women are the „property” of their fathers (see Basil the Great); the labeling of Gregory the Theologian's support for women and John Chrysostom's exposition of a theology of marriage and affection as „hapax legomena”; the general anti-feminism of the Church and patristic theology; the new anthropological challenges of bioethics and biotechnology, etc. These observations make ever more necessary a contemporary Orthodox post-patristic theology, as well as a re-interpretation of what it means to be faithful to the patristic tradition. In the framework of this paper, „following the Holy Fathers” does not mean simply the continuation, the updating, or even the re-interpretation of this tradition, but-according to the precedent set by the early Christians and the Fathers themselves-the surpassing of it when and where it is necessary.

Within and without the Orthodoxy, this new generation of theologians (though some of them are no more ”new”) must be given proper hearing. They handle a common language, grace to their familiarity to contemporary culture, and already hold important positions in some very important Western universities.

It is difficult to predict the aftermath of this conference. On short term, probably, the conservative groups may manifest resistance to the idea of going beyond neo-patristic synthesis. On average term, many thing will depend on the theological exchange between the Orthodox Diaspora and the mother-Churches. An important factor seems to be the revival of the Russian theology, which is already quite active and is feeding on a remarkable tradition. We must not neglect however the competent contribution of the Eastern Europe theologians, some of them being deeply involved in the dialog between theology and culture.

**Rev. Adrian Murg**

## The Fourth Congress of the Faculties of Orthodox Theology in Romania

At The Patriarchal Palace in Bucharest was held in the 26-th and 28-th of September in “Conventus” Hall, the fourth edition of the National Congress of the Faculties of Theology in the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate, which had the theme “The Theological Research in Present-Day”. In two days, the representatives of high education institutions have supported several theological essays about theological research in the area of Romanian collegiate.

The Congress was opened by His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel, who blessed the work and expressed the hope that “the work of this National Theological Congress will contribute to strengthening the collegiality and academic cooperation, increasing the fraternal communion among the faculties of theology of the Romanian Patriarchy which, in the new European competence and academic performance in scientific research are invited to a thoroughly research, so that Romanian Orthodox theology will be internationally appreciated”. His Holiness then spoke about the importance of theological research in contemporary society and launched a research topic on the need to study the history and life of the Romanian Patriarchate parishes; later, on this basis will be developed and published a history of Romanian parish life.

The opening of the Congress was supported by Fr. Prof. Dr. Stephen Buchiu, Dean of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest. Also has presented their speeches Prof. Pânzaru John, rector of Bucharest University, conf. Adrian Lemeni, Secretary of State for Religious Affairs, and the Fr. Michael Săsăujan from the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, who presented the main essay on “Autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in the diplomatic documents”.

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Work continued with the lecture on the different essays by representatives of the theological faculties in the country. Thus, in Session I, whose moderator was His Eminence Lawrence, Metropolitan of Transylvania, was debated the theme "The Theological University Research in Romanian Space". In Session II, whose theme was "The Priority Research Themes in Orthodox Theology" was moderated by His Eminence Irenaeus, Metropolitan of Oltenia, and were presented the essays: "Priority Topics for Research in Biblical Theology", by Fr. Prof. Constantin Coman, who displayed the Romanian biblical research priorities. Fr. Prof. Dr. Vasile Leb lectured the essay "Priority Research Themes in the Theology of History", and Fr. Univ. John Tulcan lectured the essay "Priority Research Themes in Systematic Theology", in which he stressed which research directions should be considered in the near future, while Fr. Univ. Viorel Sava revealed the "Priority Themes for Research in Practical Theology".

The third Session was moderated by His Eminence Barlaam Ploiesteanul, Patriarchal Vicar Bishop and the theme was "Theological Research and the Life of the Church". At this Session attended also His Eminence Calinic, Archbishop of Muscel Arges and His Grace Bishop Timothy of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Spain and Portugal. The lectured essays were: "The Life of the Church as Object of Theological Research" (Prof. Jurcan Emil, from the Faculty of Theology in Alba Iulia), "Methods, Theological Perspectives and the Goals of the Research" (Conf. Cristinel Ioja from the Faculty of Theology in Arad), "Towards an Orthodox Theological Identity" (lect. Radu Preda, from the Faculty of Theology in Cluj-Napoca) and "The Theological Research and the Continuity of the Tradition" (Fr. lect. David Pestroiu). At the end of each essay, were held in plenary extremely constructive discussions, which clarified several issues.

The next day there were held discussions on the three separate groups, according to the three sessions of the Congress. At the end were presented in plenary the conclusions and group discussions and the final communiqué was adopted. Congress ended with the welcoming of the participants at the patriarchal residence of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel.

The Fourth Congress of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Romania was a good opportunity for discussions about the current state of theological research that lies in our Church, giving the guidelines for further developments in this regard. On the other hand, the Congress was also a good

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opportunity to meet teachers from different faculties of Orthodox theology in the country and set the foundations for future collaboration.

The next national congress of theological higher educational institutions will take place over two years, in Cluj-Napoca.

From the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Arad attended Rev. Prof. Ph.D. John Tulcan, Dean, Deac. Lect. Ph.D. Caius Cuțaru, Scientific Secretary of the Department and Conf. Ph. D. Cristinel Ioja, Scientific Secretary of the Theological-Historical Studies and Missionary Pastoral Forecast Centre of the Faculty.

**Deac. Caius Cuțaru**

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: With Related Texts on the Three Chapters Controversy. Vol. 1: General Introduction, Letters and Edicts, Sessions I-V. Vol. 2: Sessions VI-VIII, Vigilus, Constituta, Appendices, Maps, Glossary, Bibliography, Indices. Translated with an introduction and notes by Richard Price. Pp. XIV+370 and VIII+347. (Translated Texts for Historians, 51.) Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.**

The translation of texts, even when joined by annotations and commentary as extensive as in these two volumes, is very interesting for all universities. The translations in this series have notably improved historical understanding and none, I think, more so than those edited by Richard Price, who here gives us the Acts of a much misunderstood council along with accompanying documents. There is, first: an English translation of the minutes of the council, mostly from the surviving Latin in the absence of the Greek originals. This is preceded, after a lengthy general introduction dealing with the church-historical matters and theological issues at stake, by translations of the two letters from Africa important for understanding the pained reception there of Pope Vigilius' attitude to the proposed condemnation of the „Three Chapters” (viz. the works of Theodore of Mopsuestia *en bloc*, the anti-Cyrrilline polemics of Theodoret, and the Letter of Ibas, denouncing Cyril, to Mari); of Justinian's edict *On the Orthodox Faith*; of three letters explanatory of Vigilius' treatment in Constantinople and of problems with his flock; of three important pieces, Vigilius' two *Constituta* and second letter to Eutychius in which the Pope eventually condemns the Three Chapters and the long process of aligning papal and imperial wills reaches a conclusion; and, as an appendix, of the

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anti-Origenist Canons (543 and 553) and Justinian's letter to the council denouncing the same Origen's abominable opinions. There follow notes on the attendance lists, maps, and bibliography.

To list the documents here exposes some of the critical issues raised by the council with which the editor must deal. First, why do the Acts survive entire only in Latin? Richard Price's answer neatly tells the tale of how, when the next oecumenical council met in 680, the confirmation of its predecessor ran into difficulties because Vigilius had (certainly) used the now discredited phrase „single energy” of the incarnate Christ and the text of the Acts had (very probably) been tampered with elsewhere. The tampering occasioned the production of a bowdlerized second edition of the Acts which again was allegedly interfered with. The Greek manuscript tradition having been discredited and well nigh lost, „it is sheer luck that the Latin version of the text survived in the West”. That Latin version has the strange renderings of the Greek originals, as Richard Price points out, characteristic of the genre. His own English translation is, I judge from the soundings I have taken, reliable.

The minutes of the meetings do not have the verve and excitement of the Chalcedon's. There is plenty of drama in the whole conciliar event but it takes place offstage and there are not those episcopal quarrels about ordinations and pensions for displaced clergy and the like which make the non-doctrinal sessions at Chalcedon such fun to read and so instructive. That is partly compensated for by the report of a synod at Mopsuestia in 550 which attested that Theodore never had been venerated in the diptychs there: it illuminates the logistics of the Mopsuestian clergy. As for the doctrinal issues of the opposing Christologies of Cyril and Theodore and the consequent status of Cyril's Twelve Chapters, these are amply dealt with in the general introduction. The council also condemned Origenist teachings in canons not included in the Acts, which repeated those issued ten years before. That Justinian's authority lay behind the condemnation both of the Three Chapters and the Origenist theses is abundantly plain. Whether, and if so how, the two condemnations are linked is obscure. Richard Price works hard on the problem but I find the matter no clearer at the end. The emperor certainly had a tidy and bureaucratic mind and

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thought it appropriate to settle two problems at once. Perhaps that is the most that can be said and it is futile to delve deeper for an intrinsic and/or extrinsic connection; but I salute a good try.

Much to be valued is the account Richard Price gives of the two important persons in the drama, most of which, as I remarked, takes place offstage: Vigilius and Justinian. The lights and shades in the portrait of the first are well caught. It was (one can imagine a prosecuting counsel saying) a disgraceful and cowardly thing to take flight from Rome and a city under threat of siege; no wonder that the hostile crowd of abandoned churchpeople resented it and pelted him. It served him right that he was available for exploitation by a clever and subtle emperor. But he was made to suffer for it and he did not, in the end, betray his office even if he wriggled and tried unsuccessfully to deceive. In Justinian we meet a confident and competent theologian, even though, as with all royal compositions, one can never be quite sure who wrote them. Everybody who discusses him since Schwartz speaks of the „zigzag” policy on church unity, meaning that he favoured now the non-Chalcedonians, now the Chalcedonians. Certainly he tried hard to secure church unity after the Acacian schism and, I think, can be credited with a high degree of success. Richard Price sees in the decisions of the council of 553 an attempt not so much to conciliate the opponents of Chalcedon (for that was by then clearly impossible) as to clarify the decisions of its predecessor and define their true extent. Not only, and not principally, are the non-Chalcedonians in view; the aim is to show Chalcedonians what they are committed to. They were committed to the Twelve Chapters of Cyril and that meant rejection of their opponents, Theodoret and Ibas, along with Theodore, who was behind the Nestorian error in the first place. I find this convincing as I do all the main judgements of Richard Price. Not only so, but there are many amusing and clever asides which make these two volumes not only an important contribution to historical scholarship and research but a pleasure to read.

**Rev. Constantin Rus**

***Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400-700.* Edited by Richard Price, and Mary Whitby. Pp. VIII + 205. (Translated Tests for Historians, Contexts.) Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.**

These eleven essays, preceded by an introduction by Averil Cameron, derive from a conference held in Oxford in 2006 to mark the publication in 2005 of the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon in an English translation by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis. L. R. Wickham reviewed that three-volume book in *Journal of Theological Studies*, ns. 59 (2008), p. 380-383 and he add to what he wrote there that it notably advances historical understanding of the council and its business: it has rendered more accessible its records and, by the generally candid and unpartisan respect evident in the annotations and mostly well-judged comment, it enables all students to evaluate the long-standing, if not indeed permanent, theological significance of the council. Also, I would add that the same approach and the same virtues are evident in the present companion volume.

Without exception the essays are worth reading; each evokes thought, each invites questions and responses beyond the scope of such a review as this. I catalogue and describe the studies. David Gwynn writes „The Council of Chalcedon and the definition of Christian tradition”. Tradition at the council is visibly in process not merely of definition but of creation as authorities were chosen and designated. He quotes Gibbon who writes, with some perceived justice, of the ossification of the ancient theology as it became fixed and inviolate; Newman, on the other hand, seems to be preferred, who appealed to what one might call the Church’s dynamic conservatism in remembering its pasts. Gwynn lightly evokes (he can scarcely do more in the space he has) the duty of historical theology to discriminate between „remembering” and „fabricating”. Examples of duty being done appear throughout the contributions here. Thomas Graumann, „Reding” the First Council of Ephesus”, looks at the way the Acts of Ephesus 431 were composed and creatively construed at Chalcedon 20 years on. The „apple as discord” (as Theodoret called Cyril’s Third Letter to Nestorius with the 12 chapters) and explanations of how successive councils disposed of it figure here and in Richard Price’s „The second council of Constantinople and malleable past”; the title sufficiently

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explains the content. Fergus Millar's „The Syriac acts of the second council of Ephesus (449)“ adds to the sum of knowledge by description and analysis of the Syriac versions. Price's „The Council of Chalcedon (451): a narrative“ neatly recapitulates the burden of the story as already given in the published Acts; and in „Truth, omission and fiction in the Acts of Chalcedon“ Price reassuringly, and I judge truly, concludes that „we have no reason to suppose that the Acts of Chalcedon are seriously misleading as to the proceedings of the council“, despite some examples to the contrary. Andrew Louth asks the difficult question „Why did Syrians reject the Council of Chalcedon?“ and answers „for the same reason as most of the east: because they judged Chalcedon to have betrayed the faith of Cyril, in which they saw the faith of the Church“. All historical theologians must regret that an alleged intrinsic contrast and opposition between Antioch and Alexandria and their Christologies (as though it were somehow owing to the water supply) still figures in the histories of doctrine. Very rightly Louth rebuts this quasi-scholastic simplification and goes to the heart of the matter: what Cyril said was what people knew (and, of course, that is always a matter of epistemology) was the Christian religion, and the Syrian thought the council and Leo in particular had sold the pass to Nestorius. Catherine Cubitt writes on „The Lateran council of 649 as an ecumenical council“. Maximus the Confessor claimed it was so and constructed (but did not fabricate) the records and „tradition“ itself. Judith Herrin writes on „The Quinisext council (692) as a continuation of Chalcedon“ particularly in the connection with notorious „Canon 28“ and the status of the see of Constantinople. Charlotte Roueché on „Acclamations at the Council of Chalcedon“ describes their important function in the context of assembly and debate. This essay leads neatly into the last, by Michael Whitby, „An unholy crew? Bishops behaving badly at church councils“. Church councils were, he thinks, mostly well conducted affairs, but Chalcedon presented unusually contentious matters, and was clearly noisy and liable to become almost uncontrollable at critical points.

If there is a fault in the book (and when there is so much that is well said, true, and worth saying that it seems hypercritical to mention it) there is a tendency to improve the drama. It make a better tale, maybe even a truer tale, if Dioscorus merely made Cyril's heirs „disgorge what they had improperly purloined out of church funds“ (p. 77); but the complaint against Dioscorus by the allegedly injured parties was never brought to

trial and its justice cannot now be known. And is not Dioscorus too easily cast as heroic victim when it is said that he refused the summons to appear for judgement „not out of cowardice still less of a guilty conscience, but to spare his supporters” (Ibidem)? Can that sort of thing be known except by face-to-face encounter in court: must you not have seen the defendant and looked him in the eye? The drama is improved if Cyril is portrayed as ever on the march, as it were, tracking and eradicating the heresy of Nestorius and his master Theodore, and forced only by the imperial court to moderation and peace. I think that impression will be the one conveyed. Certainly when Richard Price writes, „Under imperial pressure Cyril of Alexandria made peace with his Syrian opponents in 433” (p. 124), he appears to have reversed the narrative. Cyril paid out lavish sweeteners at court to make them oblige John of Antioch to engage in dialogue. Theodosius the emperor distanced himself as a matter of policy; no reconciliation would happen without intervention on the part of the court because John was in law, and I should have thought in reality, the aggrieved party: an Esau to Cyril’s Jacob, who had tricked his brother into allowing him to start the conciliar meeting without him. „Using imperial pressure” would fit the case. Similarly, I think that neither the knowledge that the emperor would be much relieved if Cyril refrained from excommunicating the dead (if Cyril in fact had been told so) nor „Theodosius” intervention, demanding that the dead be left in peace” (p. 128) moved Cyril to pronounce against such condemnation in the cases of Theodore and Diodore. I suggest that he was content if Theodore and Diodore were recognized as seriously in error, dangerously misleading, and as having their teachings implicitly condemned at Ephesus 431 (see *On the Creed*, para. 5). Cyril thought Origen’s speculations pernicious but he did not curse him. As for the notion that he rebutted Nestorius by assimilating him to Arius (p. 130), that is wrong way round: the argument against Cyril was that like Arius and Eunomius (and Apollinarius, too, of course) he did not acknowledge a human rational soul in Christ. But these modest criticisms and suggestions imply no disrespect for the virtues and merits of this collection of essays and only gratitude for the value of the enterprise undertaken in the translation and presentation of the Acts of one of the greatest events in the history of the Church.

**Rev. Constantin Rus**

***Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*, by Everett Ferguson.  
Pp. XXII + 953, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2009.**

This study is best described as an omnibus edition of what but for a most generous publisher should have been at least two, if not three separate volumes. Everett Ferguson has undertaken an exhaustive study of as many documents as at present are known which mention or describe or treat baptism, from the classical and Jewish antecedents through to the fifth century. This is certainly a marathon undertaking.

The author begins with a survey of earlier works on baptism relating to this period, in English, German, and French, from 1702 until the reviewer's own work of 2006, as well as topical studies and collections of relevant texts. With the introduction excepted, the first 198 pages deal with detailed discussion of the New Testament material, akin to the study by Beasley-Murray, though with the benefit of more recent scholarship. Some chapters seem to be an excursus, discussing, for example, the baptism of Jesus in later writers and in art before returning to further New Testament passages. The exhaustive treatment of the Jewish antecedents yields the conclusion that a fundamental difference was that, for all its lustrations, foundational for Judaism was circumcision, whereas, for the New Testament church, it was baptism. Furthermore, in Judaism lustrations and baths were self-administered, whereas in Christianity baptism was administered to a person. The same exhaustive treatment is given to the apocryphal literature. The patristic literature receives the same in-depth analysis, though sometimes – for example in the case of Hippolytus – documents are listed which actually yield practically nothing, and one wonders whether discussing every document of an author separately is the best way of approaching the literature. Subsequent chapters discuss authors in their linguistic or geographical areas, and commentaries and homilies are trawled for teaching on baptism.

One of the concerns that Ferguson states from the outset is when and why did the early church baptize infants. Reviewing the theories, Ferguson suggests that the first clear reference is from the time of Irenaeus, and he later proposes that it developed from the Johannine belief that baptism

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was the means of entry into heaven, and the practice arose out of baptism of necessity for infants who were not expected to live. Although he distinguishes this view from that which he attributed to the late David Wright, in fact this is precisely David Wright's argument, and is certainly not an alternative to that of Wright (p. 378). Yet, for all the discussion of this issue, it remains a fact that we simply do not know for sure one way or the other whether baptism in the early church included infants, and, if so, how widespread and common the practice might have been. Nothing in all the evidence that Ferguson sifts sheds any further definite evidence on this question. Another question Ferguson explores, but without definite conclusion, is whether baptism entailed complete or partial nudity.

The conclusions of the 852-pages study are summarized in seven and a half pages. The origins of Christian baptism are with the baptism of John, itself derived from but also distinct from Jewish lustrations. There is little evidence of any pagan influence. Doctrine differed between writers, but all agreed that baptism gave remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit. Water was indispensable (though it appears to have been dispensable for certain groups represented by the Syrian *Acts of Thomas*), and the rite was extended to babies who were in danger of dying without baptism. The rite included a profession of faith, triple immersion, and anointing. The rite was administered by immersion, with the candidate standing in water and the head being bent forward and dipped under the water, or water being poured over the head.

By any standards this is an impressive piece of work, and very detailed in its discussion of the various texts. However, it is so exhaustive as to be exhausting. Furthermore, the minutiae seem to stifle any clear conclusions of significance to each section. "The final conclusion, according to Bryan D. Spinks, blurs what has been well established by many recent writers, and that is the diversity of liturgical practice as well as diversity of theological emphases, which only in the fourth century were coming together to form a synthesis". While this book is essential reading for thorough discussion of documents and patristic authors, the student and scholar alike might be forgiven for asking, "And so?" What might have been developed as particular geographical particularities in theological emphasis or liturgical practice seems to have been muted in comparison with the interest in infant baptism, and discussion of art and fonts. Some firmer identification of some of the distinctive themes that emerge from the documents would have helped make this book as clear as it is exhaustive.

**Rev. Constantin Rus**

**Nicéphore Blemmydès, Œuvres théologiques. Tome 1. Edited by Michel Stravou. Pp. 363. (Sources chrétiennes, 517), Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2007.**

Nichifor Blemmydes (1198-c. 1269)-erudite monk, philosopher and theologian- is a Byzantine intellectual personality from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. His theological works, published in this first volume of Sources chrétiennes publishing house-are concerned with some problems about the Holy Trinity and first of all about the stemming from the Holy Spirit. Blemmydes developed his conception for about 30 years. He was inspired by the Holy Fathers and offers a rich work about the Holy Spirit's theology in Byzantium creating a synthesis between Saint Photios and Saint Gregory Palamas. Second of all, Blemmydes reflects on the dialogue with the Latins. He evaluates the eternal connection between the Father and the Holy Spirit which, according to the Holy Fathers' opinion the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father by Son". So he tries to formulate again the first intuition of the theologian's current concerns about the dialogue between the churches.

Nichifor Blemmydes is today the best-known author due to his autobiographical work "The partial sentence", which has been published and translated by Joseph Munitiz in 1980. He was very appreciated from the very beginning as a philosopher (he may be considered as a "wise ascetic"), a founder of monasticism, a respected theologian and even a saint. His theological knowledge is highlighted in his theological works which have been published and translated in French by Michel Stravou, Professor at the Orthodox Institute Saint Berge from Paris. Blemmydes was involved in the theological discussions that took place after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 till 1247 when the Council of Lyons took place. Most of the discussions were about *Filioque*, the addition to the Nicene Creed which says that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son.

His theological work represents a real contribution to the theological dialogue about *filioque*. It is divided in two main parts: a detailed introduction, -the *editio princeps* text- and Emathia's monk comment about four theological studies. The introduction is divided in seven chapters and talks about Nichifor Blemmydes personality, work and theological doctrine. Stravou proves that these studies are a challenge not only to reject

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*filioque* but also get involved in the eternal connection in the Holy Trinity. Blemmydes' knowledge relies on the old Church Fathers' works, Saint Chiril of Alexandria and Saint Maxim the Confessor especially. They both say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through His Son or, as Saint John Damascene says "the Holy Spirit dwells in the Son". We must also take in consideration the very extensive bibliography about Blemmydes' personality, work and doctrine.

The texts presented here are the documents related to the dialogues that took place in 1234 and 1250. They are carefully defended by the Eastern position against the Western's. Theodor II Lascaris's letter to a king contains a developed discussion about the expression "Through the Son". Although, Blemmydes criticizes the Western because it relies more on syllogistic argument than on the Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition's authority even if he uses the deductive argument himself. The texts are very short and someone might consider them insufficient for Blemmydes theological acuity because it's difficult to understand the commitment between the Eastern and the Western, between the fall of Constantinople and the Council of Lyons.

To sum up, this work offers a very detailed presentation of Byzantine's theology about *filioque* and a very good understanding of Byzantine's theological problems that until now have been very little known.

**Rev. Constantin Rus**

**Rev. Ph. D. Ioan Chirilă, *Holy Bible – The Word of Words*, Renașterea Edition, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, 414 p.**

The publication of the specialized work by priest Ioan Chirila, PhD. the Dean of the Orthodox Theology Faculty in Cluj-Napoca is, for us PhD students, as well as for MA students, theology undergraduates, priests and believers a gift from God, not only for its authoritative and objective orientation in the study of the Old Testament itself, but also for those who want to live according to God's word.

The book is rich in content (414 p), divided into four major parts, preceded by a short "Introduction" and finalized with an ample specialized

*Pr. Ioan Chirilă, Sfânta Scriptură – Cuvântul cuvintelor...*

bibliography, whose content comprises the most important editions of the Holy Scripture, in the original language Hebrew, the classical languages and the modern ones, as well as dictionaries, lexicons, biblical concordances, learning books and specialized papers from the most important Romanian authors and from abroad.

The major incontestable role of the Holy Scripture in Romanian culture, highlighted in the Introduction can be compared to the Prefaces of the great translators of God's word in our language from the 17th century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century in which they got involved completely.

In the first part, "Scripture, reading and Christian testimony", (p 19-55) the author anchors the discovery of God's word in the whole Tradition of the Church, in the liturgical cult and in the inspired writings of the Holy Fathers, mainly in the works of Saints John Chrysostom and Basil the Great. The exegetic of the two Holy Fathers of the Christian Church can be considered a standard and a model for the writing and the preaching of god's word up to these days.

The translation, printing and spreading of God's word from the Holy Scripture in the Romanian area, first that of the Old Testament, and then of the whole Bible, make up the second part of this wonderful biblical study. (p 71-153). Along the centuries (XVI-XX0) the Romanian translations of the Holy Scripture were based on the original Hebrew text (the Old Testament), as well as on the Greek one (Septuagint), using less the Slavonic one and those with other linguistic influences.

In the third part, titled "Old-Testamentary exegetic fragmentarium" (p 161-271), the author debates the spreading of God's word through the mission of the Church, especially making known the content and the message of the Pentateuch, opting in this case for a trans-confessional exegesis of the work by the prophet Moses.

The author has in mind here "the human person", in its daily condition as well as after death, in the vision of the prophets of the Old Testament, also taking into account some "prefigurative types for the Pauline ecclesiology".

The last part of this work offers the reader, but mainly the specialized theologian a hermeneutical guide, a key for opening some mysteries of the Holy Scripture, for interpreting and understanding God's word as discovered in the Old Testament, recommending as a model "Judaic interpretation principles",<sup>0</sup> continuing with "patristic arguments for a pastoral reading of the Holy Scripture" and ending with "modern hermeneutic per-

spectives”, all of which are analyzed and recommended to those qualified to interpret the biblical text.

The bibliography used and recommended to the reader and to the Bible scientists is impressive.

Through his vast specialized study, but also through a current interdisciplinary vision of temporal perspective, the author gives us a new concept approaching and understanding the authentic meaning of the Holy Scripture, which is thorough, dynamic and worthy of being followed by all those who follow and study God’s word.

Lucian-Victor Baba

**Rev. Prof. Ph. D. Nicolae D. Necula, *Tradition and Renewal in Liturgical Ministry*, Vol. I, Editura Cuvântul Vieții, București, 2010, 211 p.**

During 2010, the publishing house “Cuvântul Vieții” of the Metropolitan of Muntenia and Dobrogea appeared the fourth volume of the work of the renowned professor Nicholas D. Necula, from The Liturgical theology Department at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology “Patriarhul Justinian” from the University of Bucharest. This volume comes to complete the first three of the same work, and published by the Diocese of the Lower Danube (Vol. I and II) and Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romania Orthodox Church published the third volume. The paper is structured according to a manual of liturgics configuration, consisting of five chapters. In these chapters, the author answers many questions about the competence of liturgical and pastoral life of the Church, seeking to explain which should be the attitude of the priests of the Holy Shrine, but also of the Orthodox Christians regarding different practices in the cult and facing various challenges of the daily reality.

The volume is prefaced by the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Daniel, and by the author. In the foreword, His Beatitude Patriarch, referring to the Orthodox public divine worship shows that “for this cult to achieve its purpose, i.e. to be effective in the life and the spirituality of the Orthodox Christians, it should be preserved as the Church made it, unaffected and untouched by the liturgical innovations

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and explained to be understood by the faithful, who should love and to participate with all the warmth to the cult” (p. 5). In this context, the Patriarch appreciates that the questions and the answers of Father Professor Nicholas D. Necula are “genuine catechesis that clearly, firmly and unequivocally explains with biblical patristic and logic arguments, which are the sources of the tradition and the limits of the renewal in liturgical ministry” (p. 5). It is in this regard, such work is required to the “theology students and students which are in their liturgical and pastoral training, priests in their ministry, but mostly to the faithful and to their religious training” (p. 5).

In the *Preface* the author explains how this work was done, pointing out that “the explanation and the clarification of the issues raised today by ministers, priests, young pupils, students, theologians, and not the least our believers is a concern for the several years, by which we strive to give the clearest and accurate answers to the many questions that we ask or receive by mail” (p. 7).

The first chapter of the book, *The Divine Cult*, includes a series of questions which are responded to and argued with great precision. The issues raised in this first chapter are: What is co-ministry and which are the types it expresses itself? How important were the service books in the liturgical uniformity? What are the meanings and limits of “renewal” in the Church?” Another discussed issue was a change or the abbreviations operated by some of the priests in the Sacraments. The author shows that the liturgical innovations, omissions and additions are permissible only with the consent of the authorities of the Church, namely the Holy Synod. Other questions which the author answered are: What formulas and liturgical utterance, grammatically and theologically improper are still common for some priests? Is it necessary the existence and the printing of a rule for ordinances a heterodox to Orthodoxy? Is there a ritual or an order of exorcism in the Orthodox Church? The author answered these questions with competence. The last questions which are responded to in this chapter are: What the Gospels and what services are to be read in the first week of Lent? What is the meaning of the “Blessing” in the life of the Orthodox Church?

In the second chapter of the work we present, called *The Church, place of worship*, Father Nicholas D. Necula answers to three questions. In the first, what new legislation brings the latest legislation on the restoration of religious painting? Father Nicholas responds that in the act of restoration,

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the artists working on site must take into account the fact that the church which they paint is not a museum and it will further maintain the character of place of worship (p. 80). When asked if there is 'kisch' in Romanian Orthodox Church art, analyzing facts, the author provides several milestones to the priests and the believers in the orientation towards an authentic art and to avoid the influences foreign of the Orthodox spirit (p. 84-85). Last question mentions what's new in the latest state of the Holy Synod decision on church painting.

In Chapter III, *The Liturgical Year; the Church's calendar and Holidays*, Father Nicholas shows what is the proclamation of beatification and what are the conditions and what is the purpose of icons in the life of the believers.

Chapter IV, entitled *The Sacraments*, refers to the many facing practical issue for priests and believers in the administration or the commission of the Sacraments. In this respect it shows what we ought to know about the Sacrament of Baptism. Other questions that the author answered are: how they take care of 'the sacred' in the life of the priest and the believer? What details are required regarding the administration of the sacrament of Holy Communion? At the question: Is there a formula for the oath of Orthodox ritual sacrament of matrimony? author contends that the Church can not talk about such an oath. Other problems which arise are: Is there a "marriage" between same sex partners? What is the attitude of the Church regarding the incest? And what negative consequences may have the modifications of the penal code relating to adultery? The author shows that these issues "can not but worry us, because it gives a blow to the family" (p. 166). In another answer also shows that it is not allowed to defame the Church and its ministry and to mislead the faithful, because all of us, priests and believers, will respond before God's Judgment for our actions. Also in this chapter are clarified other two matters, namely: What is the meaning of "Binding" in sacramental work of the ministry of the church? and What is the meaning and the importance of prayer for "dispensation" as a form of application of power and priestly ministry?

The last chapter of the book is titled *Pastoral Issues*. In its content, are discussed issues such as: What is consciousness and what importance it has in the pastoral life? Is it properly for Christians to believe in horoscopes or astrology? What priorities are imposed in the theological university education in Romanian today? Is the Romania's EU entry a concern

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for the Romanian Orthodox Church? Another issue discussed is that of commuting priests, which Father Nicholas calls to be “incompatible with pastoral life” (p. 178).

At the end of the work is annexed a rich list that includes 26 bibliographic sources, typical church service books and 80 books, studies and articles which demonstrate the scientific rigor and validity of the author.

The reviewed work, constitutes itself as a necessary guide, we dare say indispensable to any minister of the Holy Shrine, but also to students and scholars and the faithful, from which we can find pertinent answers to controversial issues we often face on liturgical and pastoral realm, very often being difficult to find the best solution. In these situations we can confidently call the answers were already given to these issues in the work of Father Nicholas D. Necula, a well known personality of Romanian theological education and a very good connoisseur of the rites of worship and tireless servant at the Holy Shrine.

Rev. Lucian Farcașiu

**Lecturer Ph D. Florin Dobrei, *The history of the ecclesiastic life of the Romanians in Hunedoara*, Eftimie Murgu Publishing House, Reșița, 2010, 734 p.**

He happily take notice of the bookish issue of the lector dr. Florin Dobrei, after it previously had been presented and delivered as a doctoral thesis at the faculty of Orthodox Theology Andrei Saguna in Sibiu in 2009.

We find ourselves in front of a consistent paperwork (over 700 pages) so that we can easily call it a monograph, encyclopedia, history, with the certainty that there is no error in this judgement.

The historiographic structure of the author draws attention from several points of view. First of all, the book represents the first unitary approach of the theme it discusses, which we discover in the introduction (p.14). Moreover, the academic rigor, which is obvious throughout the entire paper and the multitude of the bibliographic sources, is another argument in favour of considering it representative.

*Rev. Prof. Ph. D. Nicholas D. Necula, Tradition and Renewal...*

After the “Benediction” of the Reverend Gurie, the Bishop of Deva and Hunedoara and the “preface” of Reverend Ph. D. Mircea Pacurariu, a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy, the paper is continued with the introduction in which the author makes a review of the bibliography of the theme.

The first of the eight chapters of the book, suggestively entitled “Hunedoara – pages of a stormy history”, present historiographical details from the past of the Romanians in Hunedoara, starting with paleolithic, Daco – Romanian period, the era of the great migrations and it is continued with the reference to Romanian principalities in Hunedoara and information regarding the Hunedoara county within the autonomous Principality of Transilvania. The presentation of the difficult past of the Romanians in this part of the country is continued with the events taken place during the Habsburgic domination, and then of the dualist Austro – Hungarian state and it naturally ends with the events occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1918 when “the 165 delegates of Hunedoara shouted in one voice “we want to unite with the country” (p.73), hereby, forever sanctifying the union of all Romanians. The paper is continued with historical aspects from the inter-war period, of the communist regime, and the chapter is ended with an inventory of the places in the county of Hunedoara after “the December 1989 moment”.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter – “The ecclesiastic life of the Romanians in Hunedoara” which is the largest of all (p. 86 - 438), highlights all the details of the ecclesiastic way of these Romanian land blessed by God. The spread of Christianity in that area (2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century) is backed up by the many paleo-Christian materials archeologically discovered in several places: Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetusa, Micia (Vețel), Deva or Baia de Criș. The time between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century is when the Christianity has become generalised among the people of Hunedoara, regardless of the ethnic groups they were part of (p.106), the Romanian Church being part of the Eastern Christianity. The following centuries are presented from the perspective of the impact that Catholicism and the Reform had on the medieval Orthodoxy. According to the existing documents, it is from this period of the middle age that we know the first hierarchs that came from Hunedoara area. The metropolitan Ioan of Caffa (1455 - 1456), the bishop Danciu, the bishop Ioan from Pesteană, the bishop Ioan from Prislop and others are known. The author describes in his presentation, both the consequences of

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the union in the county of Hunedoara and the challenges the Romanians have gone through without any alterations of the Orthodoxy in Hunedoara.

For the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the author marks the fight of the people of Hunedoara for protecting the Orthodoxy (1744-1761), and, from this point of view, the attempts of the queen Maria Tereza and of general Bucow of disestablishing the Orthodoxy, which had to face the true faith of the people in these areas. The historical description continues with the following representative moments which Hunedoara Church went through, among which we cannot overlook the considerations regarding the communist oppression and the steps that the new government has taken against the Church. Despite of these realities, the spiritual life has been maintained and it has been expressed by building many churches, even during a time of atheistic propaganda.(p. 427).

The next chapter is devoted to the evolution that the Hunedoara Orthodoxy has met from the point of view of the administrative canonical structure, referring to the archpriestships and parishes, starting with the conscription of the bishop Iochentie Micu in 1733 and ending with the current organisation.

A special chapter is devoted to the churches in Hunedoara, the bimilenary Christianity in this part of the country being very expressive in this sense. The author refers to the churches from the paleo-Christian period, of the Transilvania principality, the ones from the times of the union and the churches built nowadays.

Monarchism is also not forgotten and a whole chapter is devoted to this topic, as all the Orthodox sanctums from the past and present are mentioned.

The ancient faith has lasted in the hearts of the Christians, and the priests have had an essential role in this sense. The priests in Hunedoara have always been very close to their people, actively participating in all the events of the Romanian people and these realities are discussed in the following chapter.

Another special chapter describes aspects which regard the religious – moral life of the Christians, and their involvement in the life of the Church.

The last chapter is devoted to the church culture and the author hereby presents an inventory of the old manuscripts and prints in the county of Hunedoara, starting with the ones which are kept today in the Library of the Romanian Academy: Codex Neagoeanus, copied by the priest Ioan

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from Sanpetru in 1619/1620, continuing with the discovery of the first religion book printed in our country, the Slavonic ritual of the mong Macarie at Alun (p. 602), and many others.

This chapter also presents references to the confessional education, starting with remembering the first Romanian schools in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, those from the time of the worthy hierarch from Ardeal, Vasile Moga, who was the inspector of the orthodox schools and last but not least, the schools connected to the name of the great patriot and man of culture Andrei Saguna. (p. 618).

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked in Hunedoara, as throughout entire Transilvania, by anti – Romanian measures taken by the Government in Budapest, which brought about a decrease in the number of Romanian confessional schools. The author also mentions here the church press and its role in promoting national consciousness.

Last but not least, the author mentions the theologians who have had a contribution to the development and improvement of the Romanian cultural heritage. Both clerics and laics are mentioned: Rev. Ioan Moța, Prof Ph. D. Silviu Dragomir, Rev. Ph. D. Ilarion Felea, Rev. Ph. D. Liviu Stan, Rev. Arsenie Boca, Rev. Ph. D. Mircea Păcurariu and many others.

Finally we can only eulogize the author for his effort and admit that the paper recommends itself, both through the variety of the themes approached and through its originality, it being a valuable working instrument and as I may dare to say, even indispensable for the historians, theologians but also for the Christians who are eager to learn about the ecclesiastic past of Hunedoara.

**Cosmin Mirică**

# Writing requirements for the studies included in the “Teologia” review

## *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;

**Writing requirements**

*Title: 14 Times New Roman Black, Bold, Center, one line.*

*Author: University degree, name and surname, name of the institution, country, one under the other, written in 12 Times New Roman, Italic, one line, Align Right.*

*Summary: 12 Times New Roman, Italic, one line, Align Justify, no longer than 15 lines. It will be in Romanian, English, French or German.*

*Keywords: A list of 4-5 keywords written in 12 Times New Roman, Italic, one line, Align Left in English.*

*The content of the article: In Word, format A4, Align Justify using 12 Times New Roman, one line.*

*Footnote: example (Dumitru Stăniloae, *Spiritualitate și comuniune în Liturgia ortodoxă*, Ed. a II-a, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2004, p. 109-110).*

*The title of the article structural elements: written in 14 Arial Black, Bold, Align Left, one line.*

*Subtitles of the article, imposed by the structure and given by the author: written in 12 Arial Black, Bold, Align Left, one line.*

*Remarks:*

- the author is obliged to specify the domain of the scientific research of the study;
- the consultant and the editorial staff 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 staff guarantees the author the feedback right, during the first week after receiving the article;
- the editorial staff will, confidentially, send and comment both the positive and the negative feedbacks;
- the consultant and the editorial staff will accept for publication the rejected articles, in an improved form.

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