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Scholastic Order vs Symbolic Order. Protestant Reform as Expression of a Language Crisis

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate matters related to the scholastic order before Reform, the original symbolic order established by God in creation and expressed by the Church in its cult, and what really Luther has realized through his Reform from the symbolic order perspective. The symbolic order we are dealing with in this study is an extrapolation of the same syntagma from the philosophy of religion and art domain into, specifically, the Christian Religion and Church life. The Reform has appeared due to misunderstandings in 16th century Christianity because of different languages and orders of that age. On the one hand, there is the original mystagogical and symbolic order developed in the first millennium, especially in Byzantium, existing also in Catholicism. On the other hand, there is the scholastic order developed artificially by catholic theologians, and finally simplified by the Reform.

Keywords

symbolic order, mystagogy, scholasticism, Reform, Luther, Dyonisius, Augustin.

I. Introduction

Writing about Reform and Orthodoxy, we will approach a somehow reversed perspective trying to describe the Protestant Reform as a language crisis of the Roman-Catholic Christianity in that age. We will compare this with the original synthesis between the Bible message and antique culture already accomplished in that time by the Byzantine Church. In fact, when the Reform appeared, the Roman-Catholic Christianity was submerged in a profound crisis of understanding her proper teaching and cultural practice, rigidized in what could be named a scholastic order. This was expressed by her appropriation of the Aristotelian categories as explanation means of the dogmas and sacred mysteries as well as by the overdeveloped system of canonical law. Consequently, scholastic order was shown as an anarchic and corrupt application of these principles in the moral and cultural church life. Opposed to it, in the Byzantine world, also with specific critical misunderstanding and bad practices, a symbolic order was developed, based on the continuous presence of divine works and energies in the world. Finally, these two orders inspired, to the Byzantine and Western worlds, two distinct and different kinds of languages – an external one centred in the West, and an internal one centred in the East – with their secondary branches, determining multiple misunderstandings and crises between the Western Roman-Catholic world and the Byzantine Orthodox one. We will try to explain what these two distinct orders and languages mean, what their structural content is and how the first one determined the outburst of the Protestant Reform. Similarly, we will show what were the gains and the positive accomplishments through Reform, and what could have been realized if the Protestant Reformers had had access to an understanding of the world, creation, and church based on the original symbolic order. We dare to make this comparison because in the Protestant world – in spite of the organised suppression of it by the Protestant authorities – many centuries after the Reform, a profound mystical and spiritual tendency and behaviour survived, giving testimony about this symbolic order which, in fact, is the original order of creation.

II. What Was Scholastic Order before the Reform?

To better understand what was and, actually, is scholastic order in Catholicism, we must anticipate ideas about symbolic order. The original

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and God given order in creation, confirmed also by modern science¹, is the symbolical and hierarchical order understood as a chain of beings and things having similarities, affinities and relationships between them altogether and with God. Symbolic order reveals the metaphysical and divine domain of existence from which beings in the above-mentioned relationships are originated and sustained towards. This symbolical and hierarchical order was used by Platonic Greek philosophy and developed in the Christian Byzantine tradition, and has provided, as we will see, a holistic understanding of creation and of all aspects of man's relationship with God.

Contrary to it, the scholastic order was inspired by the Aristotelian philosophy introduced in the medieval thinking, successively, by Saint Augustin, Arabic philosophy and the scholastic thinkers. Scholastic order represented a means and an apogee of a fragmented understanding of cosmos and world which were not defined as a chain of beings and things connected with God and altogether in a symbolic relationship. They were defined as a multitude of things and beings isolated and named or categorized according to their common features. Thus, in fact, the observed

¹ About this understanding of science as based on the symbolic and holistic unity of creation with the Logos, see Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., *The Lessons of Augustinian Statecraft for the Contemporary Dark Age of Civilization*, in vol *Saint Augustine, Father of European and African Civilization*, International Conference of the Schiller Institute Nov. 1-3, 1985, New Benjamin Franklin House, NY, 1985, pp. 7-8: "... all which deserves the name of «science», must see a continuing process of universal creation as the consubstantiality of two aspects of this creation. On the one side, all science must be a process of lessening those imperfections in human knowledge, which prevent us from understanding the elaboration of the universe as a whole, as the unfolding of but a single creative principle. At the same time, we must understand the relationship of the individual person, the microcosm, to the universal process of continuing creation, the macrocosm. This relationship can be nothing different than the obligation of the individual man becomes a necessary and efficient instrument of the Creator. The Logos lawfully subsumes the existence of the nature as a whole, and subsumes the existence of the human individual within the universe. The individual must find his or her pathway to participation in that universal process of continuing creation, through perfecting our knowledge of the Logos, and subjecting our will to that knowledge. As circular action is both the only self/evident form of material existence in the universe, and the continuing creative principle which orders the elaboration of that universe, so, the self-evident existence of the Creator, is the only axiom in true knowledge of the universe, and knowledge of the lawful relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm."

common features, which are understood as signs and bridges of link and kinship in the symbolic understanding of cosmos, in the scholastic order, became only indicators of categorial classification in an atomized and fragmented world.

The origins and the beginnings of this kind of understanding the creation order in the Western world and in the Roman-Catholic Church are found in the Aristotelic philosophy and in the Augustinian theology. Symbolic order considers the symbol as an element of world unity, contrary to the scholastic one who uses the critical categories as elements for understanding the world's assembly. Further on, Saint Augustin has seen the grace not as the ray of God uniting man and creation with God, but as a *donum superaditum*, as something totally exterior to the human *physis* conceived as natural without grace. In a juridical key, the grace was understood as an "unmerited favor", and in a more spiritual way, by Bonaventura and Tomas d'Aquinas, as "an influence emanating from God and transforming profoundly the people receiving him". Because of this inhabitation in man, the grace is named a "habitual grace", although it remains all the time a created reality, a "habitus" "which makes man capable to answer the divine commands and to live in God".² With a grace considered created and, paradoxically, outside and not in organic link with creation, in the Western Christian world, the mediator factor to preserve the world in a symbolic and hierarchic unity lacked in fact from the beginning. Grace realizes the actual presence of both the Logos' rationalities and Holy Spirit energies as constitutive elements of the symbolic chain of similarities maintaining the world unity and kinship with God. Similarly, a lot of other erroneous doctrines derive from this weak conception about grace, from Saint Augustin the West inheriting the understanding of God's miracles and teophanies as external and created works of God, and not as something through which God is symbolized and is revealing Himself in the world. The sacrifice of Christ has remained understood only as a price for redeeming the humans from the Devil, paid directly to him or to God the Father. However, it was understood as a homage given to God by His Son as a superabundant satisfaction of God for the humans, and thus, as an external atonement without any ontological effects on the human nature. The Liturgy was understood as

² James R. Payton jr., *Lumină din Răsăritul Creștin. O introducere la Tradiția Ortodoxă*, ed. Ecclesiast, Sibiu, 2012, pp. 185-186.

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a simple commemoration of the historical deeds of Jesus Christ and not as a real meeting with the eschatological Christ, and, thus the heavenly world is remaining separated from the earthly one. Augustine conceived the created world as composed of two separated and antagonist kingdoms or Cities – of God and of the Devil, as if the Devil were not subordinated to God. However, this conception would be inherited, as we will see, also, by Luther, continuing the same rationalistic and scholastic understanding of the world. Western Christianity has preserved from the pagan world mainly the statue and the sculpture as artistic means to symbolize God in worship. These two, paradoxically, although seeming to suggest better the idea of God's Incarnation as a Person in the world, can't be representing as well as the icon, through its transparency, the symbols of salvation economy or of the eschatological presence of God in human history.

Initially the Christian Western Church had preserved, in appearance, and because of the intense ecclesial contacts with the Byzantine Church and Empire, the same unitary understanding of the cosmos and creation based on the symbolic order. Nevertheless, she already had the germs for an autonomic and fragmented understanding of the creation and of the Church as separated from God.

In relation to the presence of hierarchical order in Western Christianity as well, James Witte jr gives similar testimony emphasizing how this was used not for a mystically unitary understanding of creation. It was used for the instauration of a rigid, artificial hierarchical order in the Church and in Western civilization: “for centuries, the Christian West had taught that God's creation was hierarchical in structure – a vast chain of beings emanating from God and descending through various levels and layers of reality. In this great chain of beings, each creature found its place and its purpose, and each human society found its natural order and hierarchy. It was, thus, simply, the nature of things that some people and institutions were higher on this chain of being, some lower. It was the nature of things that some were closer and had more ready access to God, and some were further away and in need of greater mediation in their relationship with God. This was one basis for traditional Roman-Catholic arguments of the superiority of the pope to the emperor, of the clergy to the laity, of the spiritual sword to the temporal sword, of the canon law to the civil law, of the Church to the state.”³

³ James Witte jr., *Law and Protestantism. The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reforma-*

The raising of scholasticism determined a better crystallization and consecration of the above Roman-Catholic mentioned doctrines in the Western world. Thus, “the Church was not appearing anymore and anywhere as a spiritual reality, but nearly exclusively as *societas*, her consideration as Body of Christ was interpreted in a corporative sense, as a juridical entity, her foundation in the salvation plan of God being reduced to the institutions of her ministers, and especially to the pope dictatorship.”⁴

This was, in fact, the situation in the Roman-Catholic Church when the Reform arrived. A situation derived from categorical philosophy and juridical language used predominantly in Rome and in the Western Catholic Church and world, transposed thoroughly by the first scholastics as Abelard and others, in all Church life domains. Their effort was to explain rationally and systematically the symbolic religious universe of Christianity. Were there to exist, yet, a conscience of a hierarchical order in the Western Catholic Church and world, in the first millennium, this was because of the Neoplatonic elements engaged in the original synthesis of Saint Augustin and other Latin patristic authors as Tertullian or Cyprian of Cartagena. This synthesis had dominated, also, much of early scholastics, as for example Bonaventure who supposed that reason can only discover truth when philosophy is illuminated by religious faith. However, the prevalence of the specific scholastic methods of rational analysis and intellectual argumentation, prior to Reform, had transformed the Roman-Catholic theology in the great tomistic *Summa*. This was an “artful synthesis of Greek rationalism and Christian doctrine that eventually came to define the Roman-Catholic philosophy”. It used Aristotle’s metaphysical and epistemological writing to demonstrate and explain the Roman-Catholic faith and its practices in a rationalistic, unnatural and artificial way. Many examples of such absurd ways of understanding faith, the justice of God and the justification of man by God, are exposed by Jean Delumeau in his radiography of the medieval Western world, revealing the exaggerations of the scholastic theologians and clerics. Forgetting about the love and goodness of God, they convicted the simple people “to imagine God as an

tion, Emory University, Cambridge University Press, 2004. Introduction: *The two-kingdoms framework*, p. 6.

⁴ Peter Neuner, *Theologie oecumenique. La quete de l’unite des Eglises chretiennes*, Cerf, Paris, 2005, p. 440.

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absolute suzerain that, exerting His power despotically, does not stir one up to love Him, and, in fact He is not worthy to be loved.”⁵

In fact, because of the great gap between the defectuous scholastic doctrines and their illogic applications in the practical, cultural and canonical life, the so called scholastic order was, actually, a hilarious anarchy. All aspects of salvation in Christ and of the penitential life were explained as “a true accountancy of the afterlife”⁶, “the common practice of penance pricing” through popes’ indulgences, through pilgrimages and prayers, etc. Penitences were able to forgive duties up to 800,000 years in purgatory for those in life and the dead ones as well.⁷ We have here, as Jacques Le Goff says, “an infernal accountancy that totally dominates Christian religious life” administrated by the Pope and by his representatives in all the Roman-Catholic countries. To this situation did Luther answer when he started his Reform, his 95 theses from Wittenberg dealing especially with the anarchic and illogic application of the papal indulgences. In fact, it seems that this situation was due, also, to a real pleasure of the Western Middle-Ages society to accommodate its moral and religious conscience to an ideal material and spiritual assurance expressed in its searching for stillness and protection. This was suggested by the above quoted book of Jean Delumeau. Scholastic theologians invented for this purpose all the artificial and philosophical means to understand man’s relationship with God⁸. Similarly, they strived to understand and fabricate for the simple

⁵ Jean Delumeau, *Liniștiți și ocrotiți. Sentimentul de securitate în Occidentul de altădată*, ed. Polirom, Iasi, 2005, vol. II, p. 186, quoting Leibniz, *Theodicee*, Aubier, Paris, 1962, p. 11. Delumeau is rendering a lot of stories about the ways of understanding God by simple Roman-Catholic and Protestant people different than the official scholastic theology of the age that “for century was painstaking to limit the goodness of God by His righteousness”, p. 187, that states the “crude doctrine and dogma” of “many called, but few elected”, cultivating despair between the simple people, p. 186, etc.

⁶ Jean Delumeau, *Liniștiți...*, p. 66.

⁷ Jean Delumeau, *Liniștiți...*, *passim* pp. 63-65.

⁸ Jean Delumeau, *Liniștiți...*, p. 72: “Thus, in the moment of Luther’s entrance on stage, the quantitative character of protection methods that Church initiated to diminish the believers’ fear of purgatory became striking. Pierre Paravy discovered in the Embrun diocese, at the end of the Middle Age period, 570 chantries (dedicated chapels for intercessory services for the departed ones), 116 of them funded between 1490-1510. In England, 2347 such chantries were suppressed by Reform. The catalogue of the holy relics preserved in the Wittenberg Castle’s chapel shows that, in 1518, their veneration was offering 127.799 years and 116 days of indulgence. And worshipping the relics

peoples a more facile, superficial and magical way of understanding man in relation with God, because the original symbolic order of creation and salvation dominating in the first millennium was forgotten. As Jean Delumeau resumes, “surely the official Church has tried to explain that through these digits/numbers (of the penitential years), one must understand the reduction of the earthly penance, which in the past were satisfied through 40 days or 7 years of effective penitence in lifetime... In practice, the fear of purgatory was treated with the accountancy of the afterlife.”⁹ In this allusion to the 40 days or 7 years periods we see the persistence, in that age, of symbolic order imagined by the first Fathers of the Church when they were writing the penitential canons for believers. These periods symbolized really a complete cycle of changing or reformation of the proper self or spiritual life of a believer, and did not so much refer to an exact number of years for penitence. And this spiritual reformation was the real debate and purpose of the Protestant Reform. The Middle Ages society had lost out the Pythagorean and numerological understanding of numbers and the symbolic references to time and cosmos which, even without considering penitence or, generally, historical phenomenon as relative, have more realistically expressed their content and gravity.

In conclusion, we can say that, before the Protestant Reform, the Roman-Catholic Church was in an inner crisis of communication. This happened between, on the one hand, the official scholastic theologians and theology who and which tried to explain the mystery of faith rationally, categorically and by means of a viciate and juridist logic. It tried accentuating more the sacrifice of Christ as God’s satisfaction and as divine honor Restorer. On the other hand, there were the simple believers, yet magic users of the original symbolic and mystagogical language and order, without deeply, rationally and mystagogically understand the hidden significations of the sacramental and cultural practice of the official Church.

from Saint Mauriciu Church from Halle was offering 39.245.120 years and 120 days of indulgence... In Rourgue, pietist liturgical practices for the souls in purgatory have reached an apex in the period 1530-1550. In the Ritual from 1514, the prayers for the departed ones represent 44%. In March 30 and May 19 in the parish, there was the office of «feast of souls».” etc.

⁹ Jean Delumeau, *Linîştiţi...*, p. 66.

III. A Short Description of Symbolic Order in Creation and in Christianity

Let us see, now, what exactly is the symbolic order? Although it is used and described, actually, by the history of religion and art specialists, the symbolic order belongs, generally, to the creation and historical plan in its relationship with the sacred. As some specialists explain it, symbolic order is given by the symbols as „elements with pure differential, distinctive and opposing value. Their possibility of combination attests a law, a pact, or an alliance” with a “god, ancestor, departed one or any authority in whose name the symbolic agreement is established”¹⁰, and can be defined as a “system of relationships. It can be defined by a law, a pact, an alliance, through which the individuals, subject to it, open a space of relationships and experiences involving mutual recognition in their status as law-abiding”.¹¹ We see from this definition that it is also proper to Christianity as religion of God’s Covenant with His saved people, as well as to other religions described by Mircea Eliade as “more or less elaborate ways of conceiving this symbolic order that structures interpersonal relationships by reference to a spiritual principle”.¹²

As symbolic system, Christianity is described largely in the Hebrew Epistle of Saint Paul, in Chapters 7-10. Similarly, in Romans, Chapter 3, “the Law and the Prophets” and “the righteousness of God” are presented as central elements of God’s relationship with His saved people in Judaism and Christianity.¹³

¹⁰ L.M. Chauvet, *Symbole et sacrement*, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988, p. 104.

¹¹ Antoine Delzant, *La communication de Dieu. Par delà utile et inutile. Essai théologique sur l’ordre symbolique*, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1981, p. 29.

¹² Apud Lorena Valeria Stuparu, *Religious Symbol and Artistic Symbol in the Act of Communication*, in vol. “Communication, Context, Interdisciplinarity” –3rd Edition, ”Petru Maior” University Press, Tîrgu Mureş, 2014, p. 390. We will follow Mrs. Lorena Stuparu’s considerations about symbolic order because she synthetizes in her study many aspects of it, not only in religion but also in the artistic domain, not only in the ancient traditional society but also in the modern and postmodern one, not only regarding the enrichment of the human subjectivity but also the unification of the human society and of the cosmos in general.

¹³ Rom 3, 21-26: “But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. *This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.* There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, *and all are justified freely*

Although both these two biblical excerpts end with the same conclusion¹⁴, essential for Luther's edification of Reform, they differ from each other through the details about the symbolic understanding of propitiation found in the Epistle to Hebrews. Probably, if Luther was to focus more on this Epistle, the Churches of Reform would be preserving, more and better, the original symbolic system belonging to early Christianity. Instead of presenting Christ as only "propitiation", as in Rm 3, 25, in Hebrews, Christ is presented as High Priest of a New Testament, and as a priest "according to the order of Melchizedek".¹⁵ This is a very important reference for the original symbolic order proper to God's relationship with His people. In fact, it is a reference to the true and original priesthood and worship to God Most High of the pre-judaic and Christian tradition characterized by "a sacrifice of bread and wine" (Genesis 14:18) as intermediary symbolic elements for His worship and presence in the world, in the same manner as in Christian Eucharist. At the Last Supper, when He broke and shared bread with his disciples, Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Ps 110:4, that he would be a priest "according to the order of Melchizedek". The Apostles received the command "do this in My memory!". There is a superposition

by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as propitiation,¹ through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus".

¹⁴ Rom 3, 28 "For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." and Heb 10, 38: "But my righteous one will live by faith."

¹⁵ Heb 5, 1-10: "Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him: You are my Son; today I have become your Father. And he says in another place: You are a Priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high Priest in the order of Melchizedek." Also in Hebrews 6, 20; Hebrews 7, 1-21: "Thou art a priest forever according the order of Melchizedek"; and Hebrews 8,1.

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and identification of this order of Melchizedek, of the pre-judaic worship and priesthood with the symbolic order specific to the Christian tradition. The Judaic or Levitical worship, priesthood and law are “only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves” (Heb 10,1), the order of Melchizedek being a proper symbolic order. Christian worship is a symbolic order strengthened or enforced by the law of God’s grace and by His Incarnation as Man in the world, making Him present in a very real, ontological and personal mode, the way the liturgical realism affirms in the Christian theological doctrine.

It is not our intent, here, to discuss, in details, the content and the relationships between these three priesthood and symbolic orders¹⁶, but we must say that the traces of the original Judaic-Christian symbolic order “has disappeared”¹⁷. It was incorporated into the great mystagogical synthesis realized in the Orthodox Christian spirituality, mainly by Saint Dyonisius the Areopagite and Saint Maximus the Confessor.¹⁸

¹⁶ It is not our intent to describe the symbolic systems from these religions. We are content to remind here some general considerations about the symbol functions as are mentioned by great scholars, to emphasize their validity and suitability also for religious domain: “Whether as a means for apprehending an infinite divine unity and of realizing the organic unity of the work of art, or as a multilayered sign irreducible to the formal rules of logic and a catalyst for the development of individual consciousness, the symbol can be said to embody and express what is properly human. Precisely for its ubiquity, the symbol has also fostered all-encompassing reflections, like those of Ernst Cassirer on the ability of the human mind to unify and attribute meaning to sensible phenomena through symbolic functions.” Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1923–29); *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. Ralph Manheim, intro. Charles W. Hendel (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953–96). In art. Nicoletta Pireddu, *In the Beginning Was the Symbol*, in “Revue du MAUSS permanente”, 1er mai 2015 [en ligne]. <http://www.journaldu-mauss.net/?In-the-Beginning-Was-the-Symbol>

¹⁷ It is Jean Danielou in his *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs* (Edition du Seuil, 1961), affirming that “the original judeo Christianity has, nearly, disappeared, and that only few sources have survived permitting the restitution of its inheritance.” Romanian edition: *Simbolurile creștine primitive*, Ed. Amarcord, Timisoara, 1998, p. 5. A summary of this original symbolic theology in Judeo-Christianism is in R.P. Testa, *Il simbolismo dei Giudei-Christiani*, Ed. P.P. Franciscani, Jerusalem, 1962.

¹⁸ We have a detailed presentation of this synthesis in Diac. Ioan I. Ica jr, *de la Dionisie Areopagitul la Simeon al Tesalonicului, integrala comentariilor liturgice byzantine*, ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2011. Also we can observe here the original evolution of symbolic or mystagogical order with its peak in Saint Maximus the Confessor, synthesis where the symbols and archetypes are understood as revealing directly God and His unitary

We will emphasize here, only the importance for the Reform context of this “order of Melchizedek” priesthood, a doctrine really very actual in the modern Protestantism¹⁹. It sends discreetly and directly to the problem of accomplishing righteousness through law, deeds and grace, a problem central to the Reform schism. The name of the king and priest Melchizedek echoes kingly and priestly functions, and means exactly “King of Righteousness” - as he is, mysteriously, the first individual to be given the

and eternal Kingdom, and the consecutive apparent involution from this synthetical understanding into a simply symbolic one at the next writers where the symbolism of prefiguration defines all cultic aspects and movements (at Germanos of Constantinople, and Nicolas of Andida). This is very important to mention here because we have also in the Byzantine world something similar to the Western catholic world, a degradation of the original understanding of the symbolic and mystagogical order. Anyway, the subject is very complex and it is not our intention to debate it here. The echoes of this complex evolution of the symbolic order in Eastern and Western Christianity are in John S. Romanides’ remarks about John Meyendorff’s interpretation of the symbolico-biblical language in Dionysius as identic with Varlaam of Calabria’s understanding of God’s revelation through symbols. Thus, we have from the beginning a different understanding of the symbols in the East and West, because: “For the augustinian-varlaamite tradition, symbols, concepts, and rational knowledge become the only means by which man can know God. It is obvious that in such a tradition there can be no over-conceptual and over-rational knowledge of God, since the immediate purpose of the revealed symbol is to communicate / express concepts. ... Meyendorff confuses Dionysius’ symbolic-biblical language with the problem of immediate or mediated revelation by means of symbols, and is thus incapable of understanding the nature of the problem in question. He confuses the understanding of the symbolico-biblical names of God, with Varlaam’s understanding of revelation through symbols of divinity, and concludes that Varlaam is a descendant of the Areopagite, and Palama applies Christological correctives to Dionysius escaping the symbols after the Incarnation.” (J. Romanidis, *Notes II...*, p. 18)..... This is why, finally, we have a complex opposition between the **sacramental realism** belonging both to the palamite-ortodox and Roman-Catholic Christianity, on the one hand, and a **sacramental symbolism** belonging to the varlaamite-nominalistic-platonic tradition, on the other hand. John S. Romanides, *Notes on the Palamite Controversy and Related Topics*, in “The Greek Orthodox Theological Review”, Volume VI, Number 2, Winter, 1960-61, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School Press, Brookline, Massachusetts, p. 18.

http://www.romanity.org/htm/rom.15.en.notes_on_the_palamite_controversy.01.htm.

¹⁹ A more common Protestant theological understanding simply holds that the mysterious Melchizedek priesthood refers to Jesus as the eternal priest. His once-made sacrifice fulfilled the need for atonement of sins and he currently rules within the Church. In this via traditions of the Book of Hebrews, Jesus has ever been, is, and will ever be the only totally perfect priest (Hebrews 9, 7). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priesthood_of_Melchizedek

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title *Kohen* (priest) in the Hebrew Bible. It is, precisely, this name and his functions showing that God was conceiving even from immemorial and eternal times the righteousness as acquired through a symbolic and sacrificial worship. The Roman-Catholics lost the real meaning of the symbolic and mystagogical dimension of this worship and structured an overlegalistic and oversacrificial and painful ascetic system of faith. Righteousness and salvation were nearly impossible due to its dependence only to the human effort (as shown in the case of the Augustinian hieromonk Luther before Reform), and Protestantism lost both the symbolic and sacrificial dimensions, reducing righteousness only to a declarative pronouncement of justification and salvation. Opposite these situations and in continuity with the original “order of Melchizedek” priesthood, Christian religion, in its incipient development, is described as a symbolic and mystagogic order in Saint Dyonisius’ *Ecclesial Hierarchy*. The Saint Liturgy is the central mystery of the eternal Testament and Law established by God with His saved people, the cultic rituals from it (the vine and bread sacrifice) being symbols mediating the communion with the divine *arhe* or *origin*: “whilst the multitude have merely glanced at the Divine symbols alone, he is ever conducted by the Divine Spirit, as becomes a Hierarchy, in the purity of a Godlike condition, to the holy sources of the things performed, in blessed and intelligible visions.”

In Dyonisius, symbols are, also, the readings and the chantings from Scripture, the bread and the wine from the Liturgy, the encensings and movements of the priest in the Liturgy. Overall, the Church Liturgy is an arch-symbol and is in a symbolic relationship with the heavenly one, all the symbols mediating the communion between the earthly world and the divine archetypes and origin as the beginnings of the symbols:

“Here then, too, O excellent son, after the images, I come in due order and reverence to the Godlike reality of the archetypes, saying here to those yet being initiated, for the harmonious guidance of their souls, that the varied and sacred composition of the symbols is not without spiritual contemplation for them, as merely presented superficially. For the most sacred chants and readings of the Oracles teach them a discipline of a virtuous life, and previous to this, the complete purification from destructive evil; and the most Divine, and common, and peaceful distribution of one and the same, both Bread and Cup, enjoins upon them

a godly fellowship in character, as having a fellowship in food. It recalls to their memory the most Divine Supper, and arch-symbol of the rites performed, agreeably with which the Founder of the symbols Himself excludes, most justly, him who had supped with Him on the holy things, not piously and in a manner suitable to his character; teaching at once, clearly and divinely, that the approach to Divine mysteries with a sincere mind confers, on those who draw nigh, the participation in a gift according to their own character.²⁰

Thus, symbols are created by God, being present in the Liturgy but also in creation, the world being created by God as an unfolding manifestation and development of His eternal wisdom, as infinite spiritual principle disseminated in symbols, as His recognition signs. Saint Dyonisius has synthesized in his works this hierarchical and symbolic order expressing God as sharing through grace His own presence, image and resemblance on all levels of created world and hierarchy. The dyonisian mystical system is the summative expression of the great synthesis done in the late Christian antiquity between philosophical and gnostic thinking and beliefs from the heathen world and the new cultic ethos inspired by Christ's salvation work. It was, in fact, as the modern Protestant theology is criticizing the traditional Roman-Catholic and Orthodox Churches, a synthesis between Gospel and other Biblical writings and the ancient philosophical way of understanding the world. Through this, the cultic and gestural language specific to the Christian liturgical ethos was defined, which reached a misunderstood, unknown and unrevealing real metaphysical plan when the mythical, cultural and cultural context of the antiquity has changed and vanished.²¹

The symbolic order defined in the early Christianity is the order the creation has been organized and established by God from the beginning²²,

²⁰ Saint Dyonisius the Areopagite, *The Ecclesial Hierarchy*, cap. III, II, 1,2,3., ed. rom. Staniloae, Paideea, București, 1996, pp. 78-79; Dionysius the Areopagite, *Works* (1899) vol. 2. pp. 67-162. *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_14_ecclesiastical_hierarchy.htm#c3.2, 15.06. 2017.

²¹ Andre Vauchez, *Spiritualitatea Evului Mediu Occidental, sec. VII-XII*, ed. Meridiane, 1994, The author resumes quite well the changings in spiritual mentality of the western Christianity with nearly the progressive and complete abolition of the original symbolic order and the raising of the scholastic one.

²² An eloquent example of this symbolic order in creation is the relationship and similar-

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and not whatever conventional symbolic order. Therefore, speaking about its original conformity represents an implicit logical argument proofing the rectitude of Orthodox Tradition that was defining Christianity in the first millennium and before the Reform.

Central to this symbolic order, as we can see in Dionysius' writings, were the notions of archetype and arch-symbol referring to God, to creation and to the cultic realities which reiterate their mutual relationship.²³ In Christianity, God is the absolute arch-symbol expressing the horizontal relation joining two or more parts to recompose a whole, and is the absolute archetype expressing the vertical relation of superposing and unifying many wholes different in originality. This vertical relation

ity of form between some vegetables and fruits and the organs from the human and animal bodies to which they are good for: tomatoes are good for the heart, having a similar form. Citrus fruits help the breast having a similar form. Carrots are good for our eyesight. Celery builds our bones. Grapes are good for the lungs. Ginger helps the stomach. Mushrooms help our hearing. Kidney beans are good for the kidneys. Avocados nourish the Uterus. Walnuts are good for the brain. Etc.

²³ A concise presentation of the way the knowledge and spiritual edification is acquired in Dyonisius' doctrine is presented in his 9th Epistle to Titus, having this encrossing between archetype and symbol as main engine of spiritual enlightenment: "Besides, we must also consider this, that the teaching, handed down by the Theologians is two-fold---one, secret and mystical---the other, open and better known---one, symbolical and initiative---the other, [171 philosophic and demonstrative;---and the unspoken is intertwined with the spoken. The one persuades, and desiderates the truth of the things expressed, the other acts and implants in Almighty God, by instructions in mysteries not learnt by teaching. And certainly, neither our holy instructors, nor those of the law, abstain from the God-befitting symbols, throughout the celebrations of the most holy mysteries. Yea, we see even the most holy Angels, mystically advancing things Divine through enigmas; and Jesus Himself, speaking the word of God in parables, and transmitting the divinely wrought mysteries, through a typical spreading of a table. For, it was seemly, not only that the Holy of holies should be preserved undefiled by the multitude, but also that the Divine knowledge should illuminate the human life, which is at once indivisible and divisible, in a manner suitable to itself; and to limit the passionless part of the soul to the simple, and most inward visions of the most godlike images; but that its impassioned part should wait upon, and, at the same time, strive after, the most Divine coverings, through the pre-arranged representations of the typical symbols, as such (coverings) are, by nature, congenial to it. And all those who are hearers of a distinct theology without symbols, weave in themselves a sort of type, which conducts them to the conception of the aforesaid theology." |172 LETTER IX. *To Titus, Hierarch, asking by letter what is the house of wisdom, what the bowl, and what are its meats and drinks?*, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_08_letters.htm#letter9, 16.06.2017.

also implies relevance to recompose, recreate a new superpotentive whole through the harmonious conjugation of the particular powers and characteristics of the participative wholes to the new communion, superposition (inhabitation) and composition. The Cross, as symbolic sign (flag) of Christianity, expresses exactly this bi- and multipolarity of God inhabitation and manifestation in His creation as an enchainment of His discrete presence as a particle or symbol in every creature. Similarly, it represents punctual presence in plenitude, archetype which redeems, ennobles, shines and glorifies every creature and the entire creation through His imprinting in them. The intersection between archetype (vertical) and symbol (horizontal) defines the center of the Cross as heart of the entire circular and spherical creation, of Crucified Jesus and of man following Jesus. Through His Crucifixion Jesus is placing Himself in the cosmos center, becoming the absolute arch-symbol and archetype, not only manifesting Himself from here but also sensing and sharing and nurturing the entire creation. The center is the symbol of the circle and sphere containing them in potency, and the circle and sphere (the cosmos and created world) are the manifestation of the center. The circle is the symbol and the archetype of the whole or the complete and total symbol and archetype of the world and cosmos (as harmony, beauty, universe (unique verse)) and Paradise which have had in center the Tree of Life as Axis Mundi, prefiguration of the Cross. The universe is the manifestation of the verse which is a symbol or enchainment part of a poem, and the poem (poemata) is a creation (ποιέω, ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν Gen 1, 1), a metaphysical pronouncement defining the mundane, the world. The Word of God is wording the World. God has created the world (**lumea** in Romanian) saying: “Let there be light,” and there was light (**lumină** in Romanian). And this was the first verse ordering the world. The verses (**stihuri** in Romanian) of a poem are ordering the elements (**stihii** in Romanian) of creation (poemata in Greek). Thus, in Christianity, the creatures and the creation are in communion and sharing because of this symbolic or archetypal order in creation from the beginning, restored by Jesus Christ through His Crucifixion.

In an intended doctrinal and confessional study, we will be using this aesthetic demonstration of symbols from science, about the Cross as center of the Universe, to argue this symbolic order of creation by God, because it is, in our opinion, the best example to resume and

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present Christianity as symbolic order. The pilgrimages, the icons, the relics, the processions, the litanies, and generally the worship with its symbolic forms and movements, express the horizontal of the symbolic enchainment searching for the punctual moments of rising on the vertical of communion from the grace plenitude existing in the divine archetype. Only Christianity has this complete horizontal of symbolic enchainment, because the God of Christian revelation is the real Creator of the Universe, the other religions having only some limited and incomplete symbolic systems. These were artificially created on some myths and local events with partial significance, not offering the possibility of perfect communion and sharing from Archetype. The gods, the demigods and the daemons, in their autonomous movement from God, are not revealing correctly God as Archetype, but are reforming and deforming Him. The saints' cult in Christianity, although apparently similar to that of heroes and gods from antiquity, is different exactly through this access to the absolute Archetype the saints have preserved themselves in communion with. Opposed to symbolic order, scholastic order represents not only the loss of connection with the vertical of the Archetype, but, also, the loss of enchainment specific to the horizontal of symbol. It represents the deconstruction of Cross as standard-flag, archetype and symbol of Christianity.

Behind this understanding of symbolic order there is a specific anthropology and spirituality in the Orthodox Christian tradition. The Archetype is accessed through mind (*nous*) in times of religious and aesthetic contemplation and vision, and the symbol is felt through sense of mind (*aesthesis noera*) in times of spiritual experience. Opposed to these, scholastic order uses only the dry rationality, (*dia-noia*) the rapid passing through *nous*, without affection, without establishing any connection between phenomena, creatures, etc.; a knowledge of a spectator exterior to any affective implication. It uses a knowledge (not a recognition) which is tiring without enjoying, an analytic knowledge, which dissolves from above,²⁴ which breaks the creatures from their connection with the *arche*,

²⁴ Analysis is the process of breaking a complex topic or substance into smaller parts in order to gain a better understanding of it. The technique has been applied in the study of mathematics and logic since before Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), though *analysis* as a formal concept is a relatively recent development. The word comes from the Ancient Greek ἀνάλυσις (*analysis*, “a breaking up”, from *ana-* “up, throughout” and *lysis* “a loosening”). As a formal concept, the method has variously been ascribed to Alhazen, René Descartes (*Discourse on the Method*), and Galileo Galilei. It has also been

with the archetype, which uproots them from heaven, from the Logos, and sees them outwardly, separately, from above. They are unconnected with the Logos Who gives them existence and unity, imprinting them with His integrality as final holistic reality. Symbolic thinking is centered in *nous*. Scholastic thinking is centered in *dianoia*, in the analytic rationality, broken from the sacred, uprooted from *divine light* as the symbol or the smallest particle that grounds the symbolic unity of world on the manifestation of light.

To understand better this involution from symbolic order to the scholastic one, we must remember Saint Symeon the New Theologian's struggle against the Byzantine scholastics in the XI-th century, resumed in his reknown apophtegma: "light is knowledge and not knowledge is light". For symbolic order, the uncreated light is the knowledge, but for scholastic order the rational knowledge is light. The final consequences of this apophtegma will be developed in two opposed doctrines: the palamism and the illuminism. In symbolic order, the believer which manifests light has the symbolic key to experience the world as unity with the Light. In scholastic order, man who uses only rational knowledge (*dianoia*) has only a knife or a bistoury to cut and analyse the world with, mincing and crumbling it, and putting the resulted pieces under the microscope of rationality. Thus, symbolic order is opposed to *dianoic* and, consequently, diabolic order.

The symbol is the instrument to realize the likeness and kinship of all creatures and of the entire creation through the partial reflection of the same reasons of the Logos. The archetype is the instrument to realize the graceful consubstantiality, imprinting the creation and the man, the recapitulation of creation, with the complete image of Man, with the human Archetype as the original plan for world creation. Therefore, the spiritual evolution of man and creation is in a "supernatural natural" mode.²⁵ On the other hand, the simple and autonomous thought is the poor instrument of rationality (*dianoia*) which minces and crumbles the world and the man.

In this work of mind, with symbols and archetypes, man is reforming continuously, assuming totally the form of Christ, this being the true Reform

ascribed to Isaac Newton, in the form of a practical method of physical discovery (which he did not name). <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analysis>, 16.06.2017.

²⁵ Jean-Yves Leloup, *Ecrits sur l'hesychasme, Une tradition contemplative oubliée*, Albin Michel, 1990, Paris, p. 112. Referring to Saint Serafim of Sarov's spiritual experience and vision with Motovilov.

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Luther should have struggled for to implement in his epoque. He could have had a model in his epoque for this. It was in his time that Desiderius Erasmus of Roterdam belonged to the „devotio moderna” movement. This was a different kind of spirituality starting from Jesus’ teaching aiming to transform the moral and spiritual character of man through “imitatio Christi” in resemblance with the image of God. However, formed in the Augustinian monastic tradition, Luther failed to understand and formulate, from this source and perspective, an answer to the medieval scholastic crisis in the Church, and the Reform went on as we know it.

IV. What Luther Has Really Accomplished through His Reform from the Symbolic Order Perspective

To understand this, we must remember the original Augustinian doctrine about the City of God, which stood as his philosophical conception about history and salvation. Augustine sees the history of salvation as a conflict between the Earthly City (often colloquially referred to as the City of Man) and the City of God identified with the Roman-Catholic Church, a conflict that is destined to end in victory for the latter. Augustine stated that this struggle is mainly a spiritual one, and that his message must be regarded as spiritual rather than political. He was concerned with the mystical, heavenly new city of Jerusalem, rather than with earthly politics. Despite this, he failed to reveal, in this great work, the mystical and the metaphysical unity of the world as the unique City of God, the way Saint Dyonisius managed in his *Heavenly and Ecclesial Hierarchy*. Augustine depicts the history of the world as a universal and metaphysical warfare between God and the Devil. By this, we understand a direct and partinic intervention of God in favor of those governments, political/ideological movements and military forces aligned (or aligned the most) with the Catholic Church (the City of God) in order to oppose them by all means – including military – aligned (or aligned the most) with the Devil (the City of Devil).²⁶

We see here a very polarized and politicized conception about the world and about the Christian Church role in history, far away from that spiritual one described in Saint Dyonisius works. Not only the proper

²⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_City_of_God_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_City_of_God_(book)), 16.06.2017.

heavenly and ecclesial hierarchies are conceived here as a unity ruled by the symbolic order of God, but also the devils, and the energumens, the sinners, and the unbaptized catechumens, and the outraged and heretics are compulsory included and governed by the same order.

In LETTER VIII. *To Demophilus, Therapeutes. About Minding One's Own Business, and Kindness*, Saint Dyonisius is criticizing Demophilus' revolted attitude against a priest who was worshiping incorrectly, making sacrilege. He considered Demophilus as one destroying the hierarchical order of the Kingdom of God²⁷, invoking countless biblical cases of demons and sinners rebuked and punished for acting outside of their duty and hierarchic order even if, in apparence, they were fulfilling what was right.²⁸ Over all this hierarchic structure from God, Angels to sinners and

²⁷ "Now, then, hear our view. It is not lawful that a priest should be corrected by the Leitourgoi, who are above thee, or by the Therapeutae, who are of the same rank with thee; even though he should seem to |154 act irreverently towards things Divine, and though he should be convicted of having done some other thing forbidden. For, if want of order, and want of regulation, is a departure from the most Divine institutions and decrees, it is not reasonable that the divinely transmitted order should be changed on God's behalf. For, Almighty God is not divided against Himself, for, "how then shall His kingdom stand ⁴²?" And if the judgment is of God, as the Oracles affirm ⁴³, and the priests are angels and interpreters, after the hierarchs, of the Divine judgments, learn from them through whom thou wast deemed worthy to be a Therapeutes, through the intermediate Leitourgoi, when opportunity serves, the things Divine suitable for thyself ⁴⁴. And do not the Divine Symbols proclaim this...?" http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_08_letters.htm#letter8, 16.06.2017.

²⁸ For what was Ozias ⁴⁵ doing out of place, when offering incense to Almighty God? and what Saul ⁴⁶ in sacrificing? Yea, further, what were those domineering demons ⁴⁷, who were truly proclaiming the Lord Jesus God? But every one who meddles with other people's business, is outlawed by the Word of God; and each one shall be in the rank of his own service, and alone the High Priest ⁴⁸ shall enter into the Holy of Holies, and once only throughout the year ⁴⁹, and this in the full legal hierarchical purification ⁵⁰. And the priests ⁵¹ encompass the holy things, and the Levites must not touch the holy things, lest they die. And Jehovah was angry with wrath at the rashness of Ozias, and Mariam ⁵² becomes leprous, because she had presumed to lay down laws for the lawgiver. And the demons fastened on the sons of Sceva, and He says, "I did not send them, yet they ran, and I spake not to them yet they prophesied ⁵³." "And the profane ⁵⁴ who sacrifices to me a calf, (is) as he who slays a dog," and to speak briefly, the all-perfect justice of Almighty God does not tolerate the dis-regarders of law, but whilst they are saying "in Thy ⁵⁵ Name, we ourselves did many wonderful works," He retorts, "And I know you not; go from Me all ye workers of lawlessness." So that it is not permissible, as the holy Oracles say, even to pursue things that are just, when not according to order ⁵⁶, but each must keep to himself ⁵⁷, and not meditate things too

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demons, Jesus Christ rules. He conquered all wickedness through his infinite goodness and grace to which Saint Dyonisius is referring also in &5 and &6 as emanating from His sublime “according to the order of Melchisedek” High Priesthood (Heb 4,15). The vision of the biblical personage, Carp from Crete, (2Tim 4,13) about the crucified love of Jesus Christ for two disbelievers and sinners (&6), serves as an illustration of the power source of this symbolic ruling order. Thus, in Dyonisius’ view, contrary to the Augustinian conception, there is not a real separation between the two kingdoms, of God, and the Devil. The crucified and crazy love of God (*manikos eros*) is penetrating and uniting them, the evil and the Devil having not an autonomous existence but being only in a partial lack of communion with the Good and under the divine Providence.²⁹

high and too deep for him ⁵⁸, but contemplate alone things prescribed for him according to order.

²⁹ Dionysius the Areopagite, *Works* (1897) pp.1-127. *The Divine Names*. CAPUT IV. *Concerning Good, Light, Beauty, Love, Ecstasy, Jealousy, and that the Evil is neither existent, nor from existent, nor in things being.*

SECTION XXXIII. How, in short, are there evils when there is a Providence? The Evil, *qua* evil, is not, neither as an actual thing nor as in things existing. And no single thing is without a Providence. For neither is the Evil an actual thing existing unmixed with the Good. And, if no single thing is without participation in the Good, but the lack of the Good is an evil, and no existing thing is deprived absolutely of the Good, the Divine Providence is in all existing things, and no single thing is without Providence. But Providence, as befits Its goodness, uses even evils which happen for the benefit, either individual or general, of themselves or others, and suitably provides for each being. Wherefore we will not admit the vain statement of the multitude, who say that Providence ought to lead us to virtue, even against our will. For to destroy nature is not a function of Providence. Hence, as Providence is conservative of the nature of each, it provides for the free, as free; and for the whole, and individuals, according to the wants of all and each, as far as the nature of those provided the admittance of the providential benefits of its universal and manifold Providence, distributed ‘proportionably to each.

SECTION XXXIV. The Evil, then, is not an actual thing, nor is the Evil in things existing. For the Evil, *qua* evil, is nowhere, and the fact that evil comes into being is not in consequence of power, but by reason of weakness. And, as for the demons, what they are is both from the Good, and good. But their evil is from the declension from their own proper goods, and a change----the weakness, as regards their identity and condition, of the angelic perfection befitting them. And they aspire to the Good, in so far as they aspire to be and to live and to think. And in so far as they do not aspire to the Good, they aspire to the non-existent; and this is not aspiration, but a missing of the true aspiration.

SECTION XXXV. Now the Oracles call conscious transgressors those who are

We must recognize that the idea of writing about symbolic and mystical order as opposed to the scholastic one, in the context of Reform, was inspired to us by some observations about the two kingdoms' theory in James Witte, jr's *Law and Protestantism. The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation*, already quoted above. This is why we will use some large quotes from his work to illustrate shortly and exactly the characteristics of Luther's Reform in this regard. James Witte reveals here that Luther has nuanced and integrated his early more radical reformatorial doctrines into a more sophisticated and complete theory of being and order... designed to explain and accommodate in a better way all the aspects of the human and Christian life. Luther sees the two, the earthly and heavenly kingdoms God has ordained, as having a parallel, dependent but distinct and separate in existence, his two-kingdoms theory being a rejection of traditional hierarchical theories of being, society, and authority:

“The earthly kingdom is the realm of creation, of natural and civil life, where a person operates primarily by reason and law. The heavenly kingdom is the realm of redemption, of spiritual and eternal life, where a person operates primarily by faith and love. These two kingdoms embrace **parallel** heavenly and earthly, spiritual and temporal forms of righteousness and justice, government and order, truth and knowledge. *These two kingdoms interact and depend upon each other* in a variety of ways, not least through biblical revelation and through the faithful discharge of Christian vocations in the earthly kingdom. *But these two kingdoms ultimately remain distinct.* The earthly kingdom is distorted by sin and governed by the Law. The hea-

thoroughly weak as regards the ever memorable knowledge or the practise of the Good, and who, knowing the will, do not perform it,----those who are hearers indeed, but are weak concerning the faith, or the energy of the Good. And for some, it is against their will to understand to do good, by reason of the deviation or weakness of the will. And in short, the Evil (as we have often said) is want of strength and want of power, and defect, either of the knowledge, or the never to be forgotten knowledge, or of the faith, or of the aspiration, or of the energy of the Good. Yet, some one may say, the weakness is not punishable, but on the contrary, is pardonable. Now, if the power were not granted, the statement might hold good; but, if power comes from the Good, Who giveth, according to the Oracles, the things suitable to all absolutely, the failure and deviation, and departure and declension of the possession from the Good of our own proper goods is not praiseworthy. http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areop-agite_03_divine_names.htm#c4

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venly kingdom is renewed by grace and guided by the Gospel. A Christian is a citizen of both kingdoms at once and invariably comes under the distinctive government of each. As a heavenly citizen, the Christian remains free in his or her conscience, called to live fully by the light of the Word of God. But as an earthly citizen, the Christian is bound by law, and called to obey the natural orders and offices that God has ordained and maintained for the governance of this earthly kingdom.”³⁰

From this long presentation, we can say that, under the prominent influence of earthly kingdom authority, Luther has theorized what was already prominent in the ecclesial conscience of his epoch. Somewhere in the Western medieval mystical thinking, there were some Dionysian mystics or scholars as Bonaventura or Erasmus who preserved a unitary understanding of all divine creation. However, Luther, as an Augustinian monk, had further promoted and established, through his Reform, a schizoid and fragmented model of understanding the divine creation and order, splitted in two parallel and distinct kingdoms. These kingdoms were ruled, not by the same love and grace of God manifested on all levels of existence as in the Dionysian hierarchical system expressed through symbolic order, but by opposite and independent rules and laws. These are “the natural orders and offices that God has ordained and maintained for the governance of the earthly kingdom” not preserving the symbolic and archetypal order and presence of God:

“By distinguishing the two kingdoms, Luther highlighted the radical separation between the Creator and the creation, and between God and humanity. For Luther, *the fall into sin destroyed the original continuity and communion between the Creator and the creation, the organic tie between the heavenly kingdom and the earthly kingdom*. God is present in the heavenly kingdom, and is revealed in the earthly kingdom mainly through “masks.” People are born into the earthly kingdom, and have access to the heavenly kingdom only through faith. Luther did not deny the traditional view that the earthly kingdom retained its natural order, despite the fall into sin. There remained, in effect, a chain of being, an order in creation, that gave each human being and institution its proper place and purpose in this life. But, for

³⁰ Witte jr., *Law...*, pp. 5-6.

Luther, this chain of being was horizontal, not hierarchical. Before God, all people and all institutions in the earthly kingdom were, by nature, equal. Luther's earthly kingdom was a flat regime, a horizontal realm of being, with no person and no institution obstructed or mediated, by any other, in relationship to and accountability before God."³¹

Thus, Luther has consecrated through his Reform the losing, for Western Christianity, of the archetypes' vertical of the communion with God. In fact, scholasticism had lost this before, being unable to explain mystically and mystagogically the complex cultic system inherited from the early Church. Starting from the scandal of indulgences commerce, the Reform initiated by Luther and widespread in all Western Europe would eliminate all the cultic and canonical excrescences, designed before, to reveal, describe and regulate the vertical of God's archetypes in creation and Church. The Reform left the Church with only a pure horizontal symbolical system, not empowered by grace and not revealing the real presence of Christ in between people. The original cultic expression of sacramental communion with God has been overdeveloped by the Roman-Catholic Church against the "only true sacrament". That is The Gospel or the word of God, with "its thick layers of legalistic and liturgical accretions". This is why Luther has simplified all the worship in Protestant Christianity considering that "the promises of the Gospel are manifested only through the "three sacramental signs" of baptism, eucharist, and penance."³² Luther complained that "whenever the word *sacramentum* occurred in the Holy Scriptures it denoted not the sign of a sacred thing, but the sacred secret thing itself"³³. However, his apparent sacramental realism is, in fact, a materialistic reduction of the symbol, because he is reducing the sacrament to a visible sign of a promise made by God in the Bible. Thus, he is diluting more the ontological and mystical understanding of sacrament existing in his age in the Western Catholic world. And if sacrament is not working symbolically, revealing the divine archetypes, it is not, anymore, a means and a milieu for grace and transcendent world communication with the mundane one. It is only a dramatic/theatral reiteration or commemoration of some redeeming events

³¹ Witte jr., *Law...*, p. 6.

³² Witte jr., *Law ...*, p. 58

³³ Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (eds.), *Luther's Works*, 55 vols. (Philadelphia, PA, 1955–68), *LW* 36:18, 93

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without any effective deifying and saving consequences for man and the world. The man and the world are enclosed in themselves because the archetypes and symbols are altogether immanent and immanentised. For Luther:

“The marital household served as a model of authority, charity, and pedagogy in the earthly kingdom and as a vital instrument for the reform of Church, state, and civil society. Parents served as «bishops» to their children. Siblings served as priests to each other. The household altogether, particularly the Christian household of the married minister, was a source of Evangelical impulses in society. «Lutheran theologians treated marriage not as a sacramental institution of the heavenly kingdom, but as a social estate of the earthly kingdom.» «The three natural estates of family, Church, and the State were created equally, rather than hierarchically. Only the State, in Luther’s view, held legal authority», and, consequently, really, it is not the graceful power of God the source of authority against sin and Devil. Instead, there is the State as a mundane institution having «the authority of the sword to pass and to enforce positive laws for the governance of the earthly kingdom». This is due to the fact that «Luther rejected the medieval two-swords theory that regarded the spiritual authority of the cleric and the canon law to be naturally superior to the temporal authority of the magistrate and the civil law.»³⁴

From this earthly centered human power and authority had all inadvertences and contradictions started in Luther’s system. In fact, he admitted that the human rulers exerting this immanent and civil source of power and authority could accomplish the good human works and deeds. However, the religious believers’ good works “of any sort – even worship, contemplation, meditation, charity, and other supposedly meritorious conduct – cannot make a person just and righteous before God.”³⁵ Luther is deifying the human civil power and authority, and this is why the Reform is, in fact, the humanism before humanism. The man, for Luther, can be “a saint, only by faith, because he remains a sinner by nature”, and this situation expresses exactly the abolition of the archetypal and symbolic

³⁴ Witte jr., *Law... passim* p. 7, 17.

³⁵ Witte jr., *Law....*, p. 58.

order from which the real power of God's grace deifying human nature could come. Even so, man is nearly deified, because Luther considered that a Christian "as a redeemed saint, and "inner man", is utterly free in his conscience, utterly free in his innermost being. He is like the greatest king on earth, who is above and beyond the power of everyone (whether pope, prince, or parent)." "Each Christian is, at once, a lord who is subject to no one, and a priest who is servant to everyone", "every Christian is, by faith, so exalted, above all things, that, by virtue of a spiritual power, he is [a] lord." Every Christian is a priest, who freely performs good works in service of his or her neighbor and in glorification of God. "Christ has made it possible for us, provided we believe in him, to be not only his brethren, co-heirs, and fellow-kings, but also his fellow-priests".³⁶

But, what kind of priest could be the Protestant and Lutheran man if there is not an archetypal and symbolic order anymore in which he can worship? What kind of priest could be a "saint by faith" who cannot practice his faith as adoration of God through His Incarnated image *in humanitas* and in history because of idolatry fear, as Zwingli, the follower of Luther, affirmed?³⁷ He is a priest made by man for the mundane and the earthly kingdom, whose good works are only external and material (for neighbor) and not existential and ontological for him in an organic and inner relationship with God for His glorification.

V. Instead of Conclusion: Some Obvious and Funny Consequences of Losing Symbolic Order through Reform

We do not intend here to repeat and reevaluate all the aspects, revealed above in our demonstration, about the archetypal and symbolic order and the scholastic Roman-Catholic and Protestant ones. We will remember

³⁶ Witte jr., *Law...*, p. 95.

³⁷ "images in church or other devotional situations inevitably become the occasion of idolatry and rob God of the worship due to Him alone. Images of Jesus are especially inappropriate and dangerous (though purely 'historical' representations of Him in depictions of Gospel scenes are acceptable outside churches and for nondevotional use), dealing only at the level of the sensuous and unable to communicate the true Christ to us." Trevor Hart, *Protestantism and the Arts*, in "The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism", edited by Alister E. McGrath and Darren C. Marks, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 274

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only some hystorical facts and we will invoke only some illustrative and explicit and funny direct consequences of misunderstanding and losing the original symbolic order of the Christian faith through Reform.

The populations of the new converted areas and regions to Protestantism were persisting with obstination in what the new Protestant authorities were considering as superstitions³⁸, inherited from Catholicism, even under great persecutions and interdictions. This demonstrates the major importance of this symbolic order for the Ancient and Middle-Ages man; Essential for this man and for his spiritual evolution or involution were the spiritual models or noetic forms he was imitating and imprinting himself with in his mundane or ecclesial existence as *homo adorans*. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, central to the Baptism sacrament is the fact that Christ gives us His image from the baptismal waters. We are called to conform ourselves (morphozoumen) following Him, to accomplish the resemblance with Him living according to the Gospel imperatives and commandments. The foundation of this personal re-formated conformity to Christ is His Incarnation as man. The sacramental theology makes possible the continuation of this process through the subtle and profound action of cultic archetypes and symbols which share and rebuild the inner integrity and unity of man with Christ present in us through baptismal grace. As we have seen, some similar thoughts we may find in Luther's age with Erasmus of Rotterdam in the Western world. But Luther, the main Reformer, was away from this perspective, and we must ask about his destiny and life: How it was possible to torture himself for 15 years with flagelations, fast, vigils and other rigouros deeds, and to get to be only a heretic for the Church christened him and he sacrificed himself so much for her? Is God so deaf, cruel and without mercy? The answer, in our opinion, is given by the loss of the mystagogical and symbolic keys of communion with God by the scholastic theologians. Without these keys, neither the way described by moral and dogmatic canons, nor the doors of ascetic endeavors and of conceptual and rational meditation of mind to the divine thruth, do not open and do not lead to some saving finality. Missing

³⁸ Delumeau, *Linștiți....*, vol. II, ch. XII, *Protestantism and the peace giving superstions*, pp. 106-128, where is shown a plethora of cases of Protestant persecution against their proper converts which were practicing secretly yet the "Catholic filthiness", traditional and folkloric forms of cult and worship, and so named "superstitions" considered as such because of exagerations and of losing their significance and mystagogical understanding both by scholastic Roman-Catholics and reformed Protestants.

these keys and being exhausted from his obsessive preoccupation to satisfy God by way of torture and trying to be right before God, Luther fell into the opposite superficiality of the declarative promulgation of justification and salvation without the need for any good deeds. Then, he confused, just like the messalians from the early Church, the experience of grace during prayer and meditation with the very baptismal rebirth through grace as a righteous man supriming all the proces of spiritual accomplishment. He didn't understand that man must grow up from image to ressemblance his proper vehicle or garment of light the symbolic order is speaking about in all early Christian tradition. And it is not surprising that, later, the institution of the rebaptism by the Anabaptists would express exactly this fact. In the era of Reform, the symbolic and mystagogic language and order were no longer understood. It was not understood that, first of all, through the liturgical language of immersion in baptismal water, the grace was transmitted as a free gift of God to dress up the new baptized with the soul's garment of light. This was done not by reason or conscience, or by the conscious reception of this grace. Not to receive Baptism at an early age signifies, from the perspective of symbolic language and order, a continous abandonment by the heavenly Father of his new born child (from the earthly parents). This is why the child was doomed to walk and grow up to the age of confirmation in adamic guilty nudity specific to the fall, being refused to be given the garment of light specific to the innocent nudity. Symbolic order explains that the new baptised believer must build upon the foundations of the Trinitarian image of God in man, the ressemblance with God, as accomplishment and perfection of this image, manifested as fullness of divine grace and glory in man's garment of light with which he must participate to the heavenly wedding of Christ the Bridegroom. Luther compressed and suppressed this ontological evolution the man was called for. He suppressed also all the symbolic and mystagogical order the Roman-Catholics were misunderstanding. Exemplifying through the above case of the Anabaptists' rebaptism at mature age, the suppression of symbolic order gives us a hilarious and explicit situation. It is as if the biological parents would let the newborn baby grow up naked on the street and in society until the age of adolescence when he will be eventually asked to confirm consciously whether he wants to dress up and not walk anymore in the naked ass. Nevertheless, possibly, he may remain so and show himself now sexy because ... from now on... his body reveals other

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aspects of the symbolic order of procreation. Symbolic order testifies to mysterious realities beyond the appearance of matter and body, and the modern protestant mentality is emptying the matter and the bodies of all their symbolical and mystagogical significant transcendence.

Man has a trinitarian structure - reason, will, and feeling - and Christianity, - formed itself in three environments specific through their language: the Semitic one with a liturgical symbolic language, the Greek one with a conceptual philosophical language, and the Latin one with a legal language. Christianity is authentically and vividly accomplished only by those who know how to spiritually pursue the Christ-Way with all three languages and keys. During the time before Reform, the conceptual philosophical language and the canonical juridical language structured the Roman as well as the Byzantine world in what we can call the scholastic order. This is shown in the dispute of Simeon the New Theologian with the Byzantine scholastic theologians such as Stephen of Nicomedia or other canonics. This dispute was the expression of the same rigid and scholastic understanding and experience of faith, in a Byzantium subjected to increasing crises leading to its fall under the Turks,. Symbolical language was abandoned in favour of a conceptual and juridical one, and, further, the Reform would refine and reduce it making it more biblical, more critical, more rational, and... more conceptual. The Holy Fathers from *Apophthegma Patrum* and from first centuries knew how to read the wisdom of God from creation and to compose a mystagogical and symbolical liturgical language to express the cosmic liturgy of God adoration. However, humanity, as the women from the biblical parable of the Leaven (Lk 13, 20-21; Judges 20, 18-23; 2 Samuel 2, 12-32; 2 Chronicles 13, 4-19; Matthew 13, 33-33) took and hid it in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. That means, till the man will learn to understand and mix all the symbolic, conceptual and juridical languages in order to discover the mystical and rich and beautiful Way to God. The Reform was exactly the expression of this crisis of language.