

TEOLOGIA

anul XVI, nr. 4 (53), 2012

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

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Prețuri/ Prices:

Uniunea Europeană (UE): 1 abonament (4 exemplare/ copies = 24 €; 1 exemplar/ copy = 6 €)

Alte țări/ Other countries: 1 abonament (4 exemplare/ copies = 40 €; 1 exemplar/ copy = 10 €)

UNIVERSITATEA „AUREL VLAICU” ARAD
FACULTATEA DE TEOLOGIE ORTODOXĂ

TEOLOGIA

ANUL XVI,
NR. 4 (53), 2012

Editura Universității „Aurel Vlaicu”
ARAD

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Romania, Arad, Complex universitar M, Etaj I, Sala 82, Tel. 0257/219555,
<http://www.uav.ro/ro/resurse/editura-uav>

Printing House:

SC “TIPO STAMPA” S.R.L. Arad
Tel. 0257.349.004
Email: stampasrl@yahoo.com

TEOLOGIA review is a quarterly scientific publication, recognized by CNCS Institution in B category
TEOLOGIA review is indexed in the database Index Copernicus (cod 6666)

e-mail: revista_tologia@yahoo.com

website: www.revistateologia.ro

ISSN 2247-4382
ISSN-L 1453-4789

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

The Victory of the Church in the World 7

STUDIES AND ARTICLES 10

Darko Djogo

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

(Some Aspects of History, Reception and Currents)..... 10

Nicodim Nicolăescu

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού, οι αρχές του

Χριστιανισμού και μοναχισμού του..... 37

Ioan Moga

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog

aus orthodoxer Sicht. Versuch einer systematischen Bestandaufnahme 61

Achilleas P. Dellopoulos

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“

Die Geschlechterdifferenzierung nach der Theologie

von Cyrill von Alexandrien 90

Ștefan Negreanu

The Art of War under Leon VI the Wise..... 108

Adrian Murg

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox

Approach to the Bible..... 117

Gabriel Roman, Angela Enache, Rodica Gramma, Andrada Pârvu,
Ștefana Moisa, Silvia Dumitraș, Radu Chiriță, Beatrice Ioan
**Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes
towards hospitalization: a qualitative study..... 137**

TRANSLATION

Adina Roșu
St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature..... 160

BOOK REVIEWS

**Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, *Orthodox Theology in the Twenty-First
Century*, Foreword by Pantelis Kalaitzidis, WCC Publications,
Geneva, 2012, 52 p., ISBN: 978-2-8254-1571-9
(Ph.D. Ciprian Iulian Toroczka)..... 198**

**Joseph Ratzinger, *Gesammelte Schriften Band 10: Auferstehung
und ewiges Leben. Beiträge zur Eschatologie und zur Theologie
der Hoffnung*, Herder, Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 2012, 761s.,
ISBN: 978-3-451-34121-2 (Ph.D. Ciprian Iulian Toroczka)..... 201**

**WRITING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDIES
INCLUDED IN THE "TEOLOGIA" REVIEW 203**

AUTHORS LIST..... 208

EDITORIAL

The Victory of the Church in the World

The presence and work of the Church in the world for two millennia is a testimony of the fact that it is an institution and a presence that does not rely on the forces of this world, but on another power and work, which exceed the worldly, relative and transient ones. The church is God's work in history, whose foundation was laid by Jesus Christ, through His Passion, Death and Resurrection and its continuance through history cannot be explained without the presence, power and work of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Who supports and perfects all the good. Before His Passion, Death and Resurrection Saviour assured us: "and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16, 18).

Formed in the world as divine-human institution on Pentecost, the Church sought to include all nations in its womb, to be transformed into the new people of God, called "that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2, 9). This is the foundation of all the works the church conducted into the world throughout the ages with strength, courage and perseverance. Through it the Saviour ascended to heaven continued to preach His gospel truth, to guide people on the path of Christ's truth for everyone's salvation and to sanctify them through the Holy Spirit's work that is the holy sacraments and works of the Church. Thus, the covenant church became forever an oasis of light, peace and truth, from which everyone can refresh, strengthen and light. We should mention the fact that an alternative equivalent to the church for the whole human race cannot exist, therefore the people are called to realize the value, work and need of the Church for each of them. They need to love, to seek and to protect and to serve it when it is blamed, ignored and disregarded by some people, who do not wish to receive its teaching and light, courage and strength, help and blessing. Those who do not love it, do not want and do not search it are those who do not really know it or who in their wickedness and unbelief do not want to know another life and another reality that only the church can offer.

Because it came with another message, another life and another perspective, not only concern the life and world, but consider the material and spiritual, visible and invisible, the temporal and the eternal; it was challenged and persecuted since the beginning of its existence in the world. In New Testament times, there are listed real challenge and persecutions of the Church, coming from both Jews and pagans, so that in the mid first of the first century AD terrible persecutions were triggered against the Church, which lasted until the year 313. This was the year when Emperor Constantine gave Christians freedom to manifest, and the Church were opened then new opportunities for public display. So the Church overcame all that has undergone as tests in the first centuries, because Jesus Christ is the Founder and Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit inspires and keeps it through the good will of the Father. The evil powers of the world could not defeat life-creating power of the Church, who came up from the Father of lights.

The same power guided the Church in the following centuries too, that all the perils, adversaries and enemies against it were overcome. No less, the same was true in the twentieth century, when the Church was confronted with the militant state atheism during the communist regimes, which set as a political target the marginalization and annihilation of the Church, by all means, hitting it inside and out, for it to collapse. On the contrary, following these demonic strategies the Church continued to endure, that after the collapse of these regimes, there to be a greater need human presence and work of the Church. God's Spirit present in the Church was able to transform evil into good, hate into love and lie into truth.

At present time, the Church is facing a pronounced spirit of secularism, which is a threat to the work of the Church and for the salvation of men, not less aggressive and dangerous than past dangers mentioned above. Today's zeitgeist keeps people trapped in an ideology of pleasure, eroticism, and irrational accumulation of material goods and of violence. This secular spirit rose against the values of Jesus Christ's Church, its servants and believers, who are caricatured, ridiculed, slandered and so on, pointing the contemporary man eyes exclusively on temporary things of this world, suggesting that they are the only ones to be taken in view of the man.

The answer to be given to this state of affairs is that the Church and its ministers must come up with a strategy suited to the new context of missionary life of the Church, pastoral-missionary ethos inspired by all of

The Victory of the Church in the World

the Body of Christ, but taking into account the new problems and challenges it faces today. Thus, having its "hidden treasure" in it, the Church will be made accessible to nowadays man, who is more and more disoriented and emptied inside from the profound sense of life. Today Church's mission will overcome this state of affairs by the divine power present in it and the permanent guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Ioan Tulcan

STUDIES AND ARTICLES

Darko Djogo¹

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

(Some Aspects of History, Reception and Currents)

Abstract

The history of the reception of patristic theological heritage in Serbian Orthodox theology did not begin only in the 20th century. The first roots of patristic theology could be found on the very beginnings of Serbian medieval theology, in the works produced by St Sava and his successors. Even after the fall of Serbian medieval state, Serbian theology preserved its patristic character, although cultural and political circumstances were highly unfavorable. Some demographical and political events (migrations to the North, import of the Russian liturgical books and scholastic theology) had some long-reaching consequences on the development of Serbian theology. One completely new era in Serbian theology and culture begins in the first decades of the 20th century with two prominent theologians: St Nikolaj Velimirović and St Justin Popović. Although very critical towards European civilization, mainly for theological and not ideological reasons, they prepared the path for full theological and liturgical renewal of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Their theologies are dominantly Christo-centric and very modern and extremely valuable for present theologians, too.

Keywords

Serbs, theology, Holy Fathers, St Nikolaj Velimirović, St Justin Popović, Christology, Modernity

For the most of the students who study theology in the Serbian Orthodox Church nowadays it is almost obvious and self-evident that the theology they study is “neopatristic”, that it is based on the call “to come back to

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Serbian Neopatristic Theology

Fathers”. Nevertheless, this “obvious character” sometimes covers quite interesting and theologically significant history of reception of neopatristic theology. That history was not just a history of people enthusiastic for the Church and theological renewal, it was also a history of struggling for the reception of “patristic mind” in the conscience of Serbian theologians. It was not only a history of some “inner” ecclesiastic relations, it was a history of Serbian culture growing from its adolescence to the maturity of self-confident model of Christian Orthodox culture. That is why it should be observed not as a separated theological event but as a cultural event of great importance, and that is why a prehistory of Serbian culture is that much important for the prehistory of neopatristic theology.

The history of Serbian people and the Church of Serbian countries is a history of struggling to preserve identity, to prolong spiritual and cultural continuum in historical circumstances which were always unfavorable for the Church and nation. Sometimes it was tried even by some Serbian historians to review the history of Serbian nation and the Church in those frames made by 19th century Historicism and European “Philosophy of history”. Nevertheless, it is not easy to do such a thing and to be consistent to those limitations and schedules made for quite different historical complex. Viewed from this standpoint, Serbian history looks very much like “having no rules at all”. Hence different phenomena appear and reappear in different historical contexts, having sometimes almost caricatured character. Conservatism was not a mere ideological position but also a life-attitude, imposed by severe historical circumstances when it was the most important “to live and survive”. Defending the “old faith” was a matter of historical instinct formed over centuries of Ottoman occupation and it has often been a basic attitude of all participants in the history of the reception of neopatristic theology – although very often different parties gave different and sometimes even opposite sense to the “old faith” concept. However, this also means that in order to understand a complicated process of the reception of neo patristic theology in the Serbian theological thinking we must abandon one-sided concept of history and adopt wider approach to the prehistory and history of modern theological thought among Serbian theologians. It is also extremely important to have some brief insight in the history of the Serbian Church and theology in general.

Serbian Medieval Tradition and the Reception of Patristic Theology²

As it is quite familiar to the most of Orthodox scholars, Serbia had a relative long and definitely productive tradition of theology during its medieval history. It remains an opened issue when exactly we can speak about *specifically Serbian* theological and, generally, literature tradition, since its beginnings lay in the common Slavic roots of Cyrilo-Methodian literary tradition. The process of formation of specific variants of Old Slavic language (so called “redactions”) is sometimes accepted as one of the marking points of the formation of specific “national” literatures. This process began almost immediately after the end of the mission of two Greek brothers and their Disciples among Western and Southern Slaves (9th century) and it is a common place to consider the first period of this inter-Slavic differentiation ended up to the end of 11th century. Nevertheless, it must be noted that, although different Slavic “nations” adjusted their first common literature standard according to their respective linguistic habits and senses, this did not mean that inter-Slavic connections ended. For a long period to come, Slavic languages remained mutually intelligible, Slavic literatures united and Slavic Churches very much “leaning on each other”, which was possible because the common literature standard was very much considered as an ideal to strive for, although it was obvious to everyone from Novgorod to Dubrovnik that it is inevitable to mark your own writing by your own language sense. When, in the 10th and 11th centuries early south Slavic states appeared, with two significant centres – which afterwards became Bulgaria and Serbia – it was obvious that these

² I am aware that the most of the resources quoted in this paper are not available in English or any other foreign language. That is opposed to the scientific manner in the English speaking world but this circumstance could not be easily changed. Since, as far as I know, papers on modern Serbian theology are relatively rare in international periodic, secondary bibliography remains also predominantly based on Serbian publications. I hope that this paper, as well as those written by other colleagues will present more internationally available resources on modern Serbian theology.

One of the best resources on Serbian theological literature available on European languages remains: Gerhard Podskalsky, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien*, p. 865-1459, Ed. C.H. Beck, München, 2000. From Serbian authors we mainly rely on Milorad Lazić, *Srpska estetika asketizma*, Man. Hilanar, 2008.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

two centres will also be centres of Church education, spiritual life and theology³.

Compared to the Bulgarian medieval state, Serbia formed centralized Kingdom quite later, during the second half of 12th century when one of the landlords – Stefan Nemanja (in monasticism Simeon, today known St Simeon the Myrh-streaming, 1114-1200 A.D.⁴) founded the Nemanjić dynasty which ruled Serbia up to the 1374. It was not a mere coincidence that two of his sons – namely, Rastko, which as an Orthodox monk became Sava and Stefan, later remembered as Stefan the First-crowned – became founders of the independent Serbian Church and independent Serbian Kingdom. Generally, from this moment on, whole cultural model of Serbian medieval civilization was marked by this unity of the Church and State, like in the most Orthodox countries who adopted not just Byzantine theology, Church structure and art, but also its ideology of State-Church “symphony”. What is, however, a bit distinctive characteristic of Serbian Middle Ages is the fact that, may it be good or not, the Church and the State did not have any kind of big disagreement between them. Also, it is a fact of primary importance that Serbian medieval culture and, thus, Serbian culture in general, started with the person and activities of already mentioned St. Sava (1175-1234) the First Archbishop of the “Church in Serbian and Lithoral territories” (as it was named in the Middle Ages). His work was not focused only on establishing an “autocephalous” and functional Church, but also on the dissemination of the fruits of ecclesiastic culture among the entire Serbian population. He became Sava the Illuminator, personality present not only in the Church chronicles and hagiographical writings, but also in the popular conscience, legends, stories, folk songs, as a supreme moral and faith authority. He was also one of the first and generally the most important Serbian writer of the early Nemanjich period, writing predominantly hagiographical writings (“The Life of St Simeon”), as well as canon-law scriptures (“Nomocanon” or “Zakonopravilo”, the collection of the most important canonical regulations, “Typicon” for few monastic communities etc). One of his homilies was preserved in the “Life of St Sava” written by his disciples, Theodosius and Domentian. It is today famous “Homily on the Right Faith” which tells us very programmatically what was Sava’s main task and intention – *reception of the patristic*

³ M. Lazić, *op. cit.*

⁴ Vladimir Ćorović, *Istorija Srba*, Beograd, 2005 (ed. Publik Practicum), p. 132-140.

Church doctrine and practice as fundamental for future existence of the new established Church. After he gives a brief summary of Byzantine theology, especially its Trinitarian and Christological teachings, the first Archbishop proclaims that “we receive (or accept) all Seven ecumenical councils...”etc in which this “we accept” is repeated few more times, in order to emphasize importance of the acceptance of entire patristic theological heritage. To which extant unselfish and dedicated personality of St Sava was important for later spiritual life of Serbian Church tells us the fact that the Orthodox Christian faith in its Serbian manifestation was named “Svetosavlje”, a neologism made from “Pravoslavlje” (Orthodoxy) and St. Sava’s name⁵.

This path of the reception of Byzantine patristic theology in the Serbian Middle Ages was followed by spiritual heirs. Orthodox Byzantine theology was a sublime reflective background of entire Serbian medieval hagiographical literature. It was also very much present by constant process of translation from Greek original text to Serbian. Corpus of Serbian medieval translation of Greek Fathers of the Church contents almost every patristic authority. As more important, influential and challenging (at least for translators) here I will mention only translations of much of Chrysostom’s works, also, famous and very accurate translation of Corpus Arepagiticum made by Elder Isaija (1371)⁶ and very interesting translation of Damascene’s *Accurate Exposition of Orthodox Faith* (containing *Dialectica*, which quite large translation enterprise for Serbian theology-philosophy at that time)⁷. All these translations were points of meeting between Greek patristic heritage and, than young, Serbian culture. Serbian language was in process of forming its own theological and philosophical terminology (if this distinction could be applied to the medieval thinking

⁵ The word Svetosavlje was made during 30ies of the 20th century, among prominent Serbian cultural activists of that period (it is still uncertain to *exactly whom* it belongs). It was defined by St Nikolaj of Žiča as “Orthodoxy of Serbian experience and style”. (in his introduction to Fr Justin Popović’s *Svetosavlje kao filozofija života*, München, 1952, p. 3, we use ed. Valjevo, 1993). Although it would take entire one Ph.D. thesis to collect on one place only those prominent writers of that period who were writing about St Sava, we would just mention Miloš Crnjanski’s *Sveti Sava*, Beograd, 1996.

⁶ Cf. Anja Jeftić, *Bilješka o Corpus Arepagiticum-u i njegovom slovenskom prevodu – poduhvat starca Isaije iz 1371*, Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta Pale, IX, 2008, p. 341-353.

⁷ Slobodan Žunjić, *Logika I teologija*, Beograd, 2012, p. 5-41.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

in Orthodox countries). Unlike some other European languages, Serbian language of humanistic sciences and disciplines formed its basis mainly through calquing and translating Greek terminology and not via simple “import” (for instance, “Θεάνδρος” becomes “Богочовек”, “Θεοτόκος” becomes “Богородица”, all Greek terms made from present participle $\omega\nu$, $\acute{o}\upsilon\sigma\alpha$, $\omicron\nu$ were translated by adequate Old Slavonic-Serbian participle “сущій, суцая, суцее”). As final illustration, I must add a fact that works of St Gregory Palamas were translated into Serbian almost immediately after they appeared in Greek.

Serbian Theology after the End of Serbian Medieval States

After famous and decisive Battle on the Kosovo Field (1389) Serbian medieval state lasted for few more decades, pressed by the Ottoman expansion and having quite little or no support by European Christian states. It finally collapsed (Smederevo, its capital was finally conquered 1457, Bosnia fall 1463, Herzegovina 1481). Nevertheless, spiritual and “national” heritage of Serbian Middle Ages continues to live in the new circumstances of Ottoman occupation and, despite political and economical pressure, or, maybe, because of it, Serbian “Golden Age” or “Old King and Patriarchs” becomes spiritual and theological meritum for generations to come. Literature was mainly preserved in monasteries as centres of liturgical, spiritual and cultural life. Despite the fact that one of the first European and the first Slavic printing facilities was established in Cetinje (1494-1496) and afterwards Goražde (1519-1522), it did not last for long and soon Serbian monks came back to hand writing as the only affordable way of continuing their illuminating mission. It was an extraordinary task just to preserve cultural and religious identity, and some cultural progress was not on agenda. One very important event (or series of events) belong to this period: Austro-Turkish wars which were followed by Austrian retreat from Balkan Peninsula and by Great Serbian Migrations (First one led by Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević, from 1689 to 1690, Second Migration led by patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović, 1737-1739). These migrations changed the demographical structure of both, “old” Serbia and, especially, Kosovo and Metohija region (were number of overall population as well as portion of Serbs decreased) as much as it changed demographical

structure of that-time Southern Hungary (where number of Serbs increased)⁸. These events did not have only mere demographical importance. From this moment on, Serbian culture was divided by the state border between Ottoman and Habsburg Empires into two very different cultural environments: in Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia the Church continued its existence in very hard circumstances of constant pressure to preserve religious and national identity in front of the Ottoman state and Greek Church authorities. In Habsburg Empire, Serbs integrated themselves into the life of civil society, and, although they were exposed to certain pressure from predominantly Catholic State, their conditions were incomparably better to those in which Serbs in Ottoman Empire lived.

This dualism of Serbian culture was soon additionally complicated by one process which took place in Habsburg Empire. Namely, feeling the “soft” pressure of central authorities, Serbs were turning more and more to the only “great” Orthodox power – Russian Empire. When Serbs came in the Military Border and Southern Hungary, they brought with them old manuscripts written in Serb variant of Church Slavonic language. Nevertheless, soon after this they predominantly imported books from Russia, which also meant change or shift in the “redaction” in liturgical use, which now became Russian Slavonic, official liturgical language of the Russian Orthodox Church. But this shift did not mean only linguistic change – with these books soon Russian teachers of theology, literature and philosophy came, all of them educated in the Kiev Theological Academy or Kiev-like theological academies. Thus one specific, Orthodox-scholastic model of Orthodox theology was also imported and thus it became accepted as theological model for Serbian theological and catechetical institutions. To this period belong foundation of Karlovci Clerical school (1794), the oldest theological education centre in the SOC⁹. This process had far reaching consequences for the reception of neo patristic theology. Alienated from the spirit and word of Holy Fathers, fully shaped during the period of “Babylonian Slavery of Orthodox theology” (Florovsky), this model of

⁸ Milorad Ekmečić, *Dugo kretanje između klanja I oranja. Istorija Srba u Novom veku (1492-1992)*, Beograd, 2010, p. 50-53.

⁹ See. Dr Nikola Gavrilović, *Karlovačka bogoslovija*, Sremski Karlovci, 1984. “Spirit” of the school could be easily seen in two documents, given in the appendix of this book: German „Kurzer Entwurf” (1792) and Latin “Planum” May 20th 1820), both written by Metropolitan Stefan Stratimirovic, p. 175-179, p. 180-193.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

rather baroque theology (V. Vukašinović) was and still is perceived by many Serbian theologians as fruit and sign of, allegedly, supreme culture of Austro-Hungarian Serbs. Their “Western” (although for Western measures quite obsolete) shape is seen not as a flaw, but as a confirmation of mythical cultural “superiority” of Serbian theology and culture from the left bank of Danube to the one on the right one. Also, living in the Habsburg civil society, Serbs have experienced all good and all problematic sides of European Age of Enlightenment and Rationalism. Maybe the most famous and most indicative figure of Serbian Rationalism, Deism and Enlightenment was Dositej Obradović (1742-1811), Orthodox monk who criticized monasticism from rationalistic positions never, however, abjuring his name given in monasticism, a person with high patriotic sentiments and ethical enthusiasm. Unlike their brothers in Ottoman Empire, whose primary task was “to survive and resist at the furious place on which we exist” (as folk epic poems say), Serbs in Habsburg monarchy created secular civil society, in which the Church had some role, but certainly not decisive one.

Entire 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries were marked by efforts of Serbian people to liberate and unite. The Second Serbian Uprising (1815) marked the beginning of creation of free and independent Serbia. Soon after the first efforts to organize new state, ruling dynasties of Obrenović and Karadjordjević began organizing the Serbian Orthodox Church and its theological education. The first attempt to organize a clerical school in Belgrade (1810-1813) failed together with the First Serbian Uprising, but the second attempt (1836) was successful since from that date on, with some interruption caused by wartimes, the Belgrade Clerical School continued to exist¹⁰. The culture in newly created independent state had to mature for a short time. Starting from the same positions as every other Ottoman province, for a less than a century, Serbia had to create civil society modeled according to European patterns. Sometimes, this process meant that new-established institutions were just “institutions without substance” (“instituiii fără fond”, as Romanian historians use to call them). In this process, a lot of Serbs from Austro-Hungary helped: basically, the majority of teachers in theological and secular education system, even in the state administration, were Serbs who crossed Danube in search for more freedom than in the K&K monarchy. The second important source of

¹⁰ Ignjatije Markovic, *Stosedamdeset pet godina Bogoslovije Svetog Save u Beogradu* (1836-2011), Beograd, 2011, p. 5-34.

theological education remained Kiev and other Russian Theological Academies. All generations of Serbian 19th century theologians got their primary theological education in Serbia and afterwards improved it in Russia or, sometimes, on German-speaking theological institutions (in the German-speaking Orthodox Theological Seminary of Czernowitz whole generation of Serbian theologians was formed, including such names as Jevsevije Popović, Lazar Mirković and others)¹¹.

When, after the First World War, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia) was formed and when, subsequently, Serbian Orthodox Church was united from various jurisdictions (1920), it took over not just complex of Serbian pre-history, but also various pre-histories of other constitutional nations (Croats and Slovenes) as well as identity dilemmas of still unformed nations or, at least, constitutionally not recognized (Muslim population, Albanians, Slavic Macedonians etc). On the theological level, coming of the Russian emigration after the October Revolution (1917) and Civil War (1919) brought new quality to Serbian theological (and not just theological) environment. Belgrade Theological Faculty was formed (1922). But Russian religious thought had its influence on Serbian theology even before – it could be spotted in theology/philosophy of one of the greatest Serbian theologians of all times – St. Nikolaj Velimirović, bishop of Žiča and Ohrid.

Neo-patristics before neo-patristics: St Nikolaj of Žiča and Ohrid (1879-1956)

If we take Fr. Georges Florovsky, Fr. Dumitru Staniloae and Fr. Justin Popović for the most prominent representatives of “neo patristic synthesis”, then it might be understood as some kind of exclusion of those theologians who actively worked at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century on the task of revival of patristic theology, and, especially, “patristic mind” in Orthodox conscience. Although it might be true in Florovsky’s case (having in mind his own differentiation from the tradition of Russian religious philosophy in his *Ways of Russian Theology*), in Popović’s case

¹¹ Radomir Rakić, *Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet u Černovicama*, Beograd, 2009, p. 27 ff. The List of prominent Serbian theologians who have finished this institute is given on p. 87-100.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

it is definitely not so. Personality and work of Fr Justin cannot be properly understood if we do not firstly reconsider personality and work of St. Nikolaj Velimirović.

When young hieromonk Nikolaj Velimirović appeared for the first time on theological, cultural and intellectual sky of Serbian culture, his appearance seemed as a sudden explosion of Christian faith, existential interests and poetic talent. Indeed, no one and nothing in the history of Serbian theology and culture cannot be compared to him from the end of medieval theology¹². In the time when he began preaching and publishing, most of orations pronounced by well-educated clergy were still focused on one-sided moral catechetical narratives and patriotic conscience waking. It would not be true to say that this topics did not remain important for young hieromonk Nikolaj as well. But he gave them one completely different connotation. After him, ethics and even patriotic feeling became aspects of human's eternal quest for sense, for purpose, for cosmic poetry and harmony with the Creator. His famous work *The Njegoš's Religion* is full of patriotic statements, his *Missionary Letters* and *Ohrid Prologue* full of moral advises. Nevertheless, his main concern is, as we would now say "ontological": in Njegoš¹³ he sees more theologian than patriotic symbol; he is more dedicated to discover some inherent, cosmic (and still Christian) religion than patriotic call. "A poet is true priest of the God. His vocation is permanent glorification of God, his inspiration is from above and he is born by the Spirit of God and Maiden the Earth"¹⁴. Such high evaluation

¹² Certainly, one interesting phenomenon in Serbian culture could be seen at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century – waking of new interests in existence, religion, sense of being. This new movement is sometimes called *the New Mysticism* (although it should be noticed that "mysticism" has no religious connotation here – it denotes simply dedication of promoters of this new movement to the *mysterious, intangible aspects of human existence*, opposed to "severe" realism of the end of the 19th century). Nevertheless, this New Mysticism should not be seen as predominantly religious-related cultural and literary movement. It was connected with symbolism and expressionism and some of its representatives ended their quest for the sense of life and art in surrealism etc. cf. Milan Radulović, *Raskršća srpskog modernizma*, Beograd, 2007, p. 141-143. To some extent, young hieromonk Nikolaj Velimirović belongs to this New Mysticism. But, as we will see, his philosophy and theology go much further from their original context.

¹³ Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813-1851), Metropolitan of Cetinje, Prince of Montenegro and one of the most important Serbian poets.

¹⁴ Vladika Nikolaj, *Religija Njegoševa*, Beograd, 2000, p. 22.

of poetry, such insights in which theology, poetry and culture stand side by side are something quite characteristic for Nikolaj's thought and, although his poetics had certain influence on later Popović's style, poetic theology of Velimirović was never repeated and fully accepted in neo patristic thought. Nevertheless, his poetic theology brought, for the first time after decline of Serbian medieval culture, theology and literature into one, in such a measure that Velimirović must be considered one of the best Serbian modern authors. One biographical detail is very important for theological evaluation of St Nikolaj's thought. It is a fact that he was educated and spent much of his lifetime on both, "East" and "West", i.e. in Russia and in Western Europe. This gave him an inner insight in all good and bad sides of both and, since one of his permanent preoccupations in theology-philosophy-poetry was to reflect this bad and good sides of both, he earned mutual misunderstanding of both. Although his work has sometimes been describes as "panslavistic" etc, deeper insight in St. Nikolaj's "Russian" influences are not political-ideological but philosophical and theological. If we take in attention, for instance, Russian influences on Mihailo Jovanović, at that time student in Kiev Theological Academy (1847-1854) and future Metropolitan of Belgrade (1859), we can easily see that his interests are patriotic and panslavistic. Theology, even Russian religious thought did not influent his attitudes very much or none at all. Comparing now St Nikolaj's Russian influence, it could be clearly noted that his primary teacher is Dostoevsky, that St Nikolaj did not "import" political concepts of future Slavic Empire, but ontological concept of Universal Man (Serbian „Свечовек“, Russian „Всечеловек“, lierally „All-man“) as opposed to Nietzsche's figure of moral overcoming Übermensch.

As a good connoisseur of Western philosophy, especially "contemporary" one (his Ph. D. on philosophy was on "*Berkley's Philosophy*") he was severe critic of Western philosophy and, sometimes, of Western culture. Nevertheless, the very fact that he dedicated that much efforts to "Europe", that it was one of his fundamental reflective concerns, also, the fact that he cherished personal relations with so many European ecclesiastic and theological personalities¹⁵ – all that tells us that he could not be seen as "anti-European", especially if we consider free and honest criticism as one of the basis of Western (European) civilization. It should

¹⁵ Cf. Dr Muriel Heppel, *George Bell and Nikolai Velimirovic. The Story of A Friendship*, quoted in Serbian translation, Cetinje, 2000. Cf. also Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh, 2006.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

be noticed that this critique was founded not only on “panslavistic” ideology, but also on very pessimistic view on the present and future of European civilization among Western European scholars themselves, especially Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of West*¹⁶. The conscience that Eastern-Orthodox civilization is “something else” than Western European was not any original idea introduced by Russian Slavophiles or Serbian theologians, but it was present among Western historians and philosophers of history (in the first decades of 20th century A. J. Toynbee’s philosophy of history was very popular among Serbian intelligentsia)¹⁷. We can rightly conclude that “excluding” of other cultural models was two sided process of that time – compared to some other standpoints, those of St Nikolaj’s look quite moderate. Nevertheless, it would be childish and terrible mistake to judge whatever philosophy of civilization or history according to our modern criteria, according to the post modern “the end of history” or “globalised world”.

Also, St. Nikolaj’s critique is not pointed only towards Europe. In one of his most popular and less profound works, *War and the Bible*, St. Nikolaj applies one quite simple. Old Testament theological explanation of war, victory in war and miseries of war not just to various European states, but to the Russian Empire too, blaming it for “taking share into European injustice towards China” and for “Christo-machy of Russian intelligentsia”¹⁸. Basically, St. Nikolaj did not consider the Orthodox theological and cultural position as “East” conflicted to “West”, neither as “West” conflicted to “East” – for him, Orthodoxy, as universal, theological and cosmological truth, remains “above East and West”.

Although it could (and should) not be denied that some aspects of St. Nikolaj’s the criticism towards modern European civilization need to be reconsidered and contextualized, permanent value of this critique is given in its Christological approach. This is, as we will see, one of aspects inherited by Fr. Justin Popović. It is not European civilization by itself taken as central interest of our Saint – His main theological, poetic, philosophical interest is Jesus Christ, Son of God, Emanuel, “The Universal Man”. Namely, the problem lies not in some inner problems of New Era Europe, not in its internal “legitimacy”, but in the reduction of

¹⁶ M. Radulović, *Raskršća...*, p. 142.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Vladika Nikolaj, *Rat i Biblija*, Beograd, 1997, p. 130.

Christ, “The God-Man”, “The Universal Man” into mere Man. Let us now hear his own words regarding his position on this topic:

“The West restlessly arranges the external things, while the inner values disappear, one by one. The East restlessly cultivates the inner values, while those external values fall and decay... In the West, things are cultivated and the things shine but a man becomes more and more wild and covers himself by darkness – In the East certain men cultivate themselves and individuals shine, and the things remain in wildness, and they grow in weed.

And why is it so, you ask, my dear child? Because the West cannot adopt Christ and the East cannot adopt Jesus. Or: because the West recognizes the Man and does not recognize the God (*in the God-Man – D. Dj*), while the East recognizes the God but does not recognize the Man... But Jesus Christ spreads both hands to hug in one embrace both, the East and the West, but He cannot: He cannot embrace the East due to nirvana and the West because of the swords.”¹⁹

One general problem of generalization could be mentioned here, since “the West” and “the East” (namely, the Far East, India and the Far East civilization) are pictured in some general lines, for which we must blame essayistic and not scientific character of Nikolaj’s work. Nevertheless, any sincere reader, whether (s)he belongs to “the East” or to “the West” (or both) would confess that Velimirovic’s critique characterizes both cultural models quite rightly. The West becomes more and more obsessed by “the things”, by material reality and objects (did not one “Western” thinker, Jürgen Habermass, speak about the technique as new ideology, about new position where objects had overtaken place of ideas?) At the same time, the East (with his emphasis on man’s internal life) lacks a sense for organization and social development. But the real centre of argument is not in the cultures or their general features but in their attitude towards Jesus Christ and, hence, in their Christological evaluation. Regardless of how much we appreciate modern West European theology (i.e. European theology after rationalism), it is true that one of basic characteristics of all *quests for historical Jesus* remains one skepticism towards the divine

¹⁹ Nikolaj Velimirovic, *Misli o dobru i zlu*, Novi Sad, 2002 (ed. Petrovgrad), p. 89-90. Our translation from Serbian to English.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

existence of Christ²⁰. We could even speak about rationalistic reduction of Jesus Christ to mere Jesus, which remained actual problem even up to Moltmann's *The Crucified God*. This side of Velimirović's thought, as we will see, had profoundly influenced Justin Popović's view of "Modern European Arianism". In the same time, St. Nikolaj emphasizes the necessity of *full human* nature of Christ, of real, immanent humanity to which Eastern philosophies, with their pantheism and spiritualized interests, remain skeptical and far. Certainly, one modern or post modern philosophy of culture would hardly accept that "one person" or even "phenomenon" could be adopted as cultural measure. But it would be utmost unfair to demand from one sincere Christian theologian to give up this "obsolete" way of thinking, even inside some "theology" or "philosophy of culture".

But St. Nikolaj did not only criticize "Western civilization" (or Eastern one), he proposed one concrete model of holistic Christian philosophy/theology which would overcome some of evident problems and flaws of modern civilization. His poetic personality of "Universal Man" represents detailed portrait of one "Christ for us" i.e. validity of Christ for modern men. "Universal Man" appears for the first time in Nikolaj's texts on Dostoievsky, especially in *Nietsche and Dostoievsky* where Serbian bishop gives credits to both of these great thinkers, insisting, however, on quite opposite character of their ethics. They give two models: Übermensch and Universal Man. Nikolaj chooses the second one. But his Universal Man is far more than philosophical concept. He is an answer on all existential needs: in Nikolaj's *Oration on Universal Man*²¹ whole world, nature, beasts and men gain personality in order to "say", to communicate their pains and troubles. It is interesting that in this work, written in his early period, St. Nikolaj especially emphasizes man's devastation of natural environment as one of the most important problems of modernity. Thus he was one of the first "ecologically aware" theologians of our times²².

In this work we can also trace one relation theology which is, as we know, very important for neo patristic theology. In *Orations on Universal Man*, St. Nikolaj says:

²⁰ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus. A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, 1910, (ed. A. & C. Black Books).

²¹ This work was characterized by Dimitrije Najdanovic as "Nikolaj's answer to *Also sprache Zarathustra*" – Dimitrije Najdanovic, *Bogoljubac covekoljubca*, "Jedini covekoljubac", München, 1952, p. 13.

²² Cf. Darko Djogo, *Holistička filosofija Svečoca u delima Vladike Nikolaja*, „Novi istočnik“ 4 (2004), p. 94-108.

“It has been said: Know thyself! But the Holy Wisdom says: know the others and then thou hast known thyself!

Behold! Thou can see your reflection in a mirror, but how could a mirror see its reflection in itself? Are not all of thy senses directed externally so thou would know the others, so thou would invite them and so thou would let them inside of thee, those, light-bringers for thy darkness?...

By now, oh man, thou hast submerged thyself into thyself, in order to know thyself. Let us say that thou hast succeeded. But knowing thyself, thou hast forgotten the world around thee. By forgetting everything else, thou hast condemned everything on death. By condemning everything to death, thou hast made a sword so thou could defend thee. Oh, in how dangerous position thou art! Oh, mortal one, come near and hear an advice: Know Universal Man and Universal Man will easily know a man!”²³

This relational ontology (although it has never been named as such by St. Nikolaj (is even more explicit in his *One Hundred Chapters on Love*, in which he develops all Trinitarian thought and Christology from the concept of Trinity as a Community of Divine Love. Let us hear him once more:

“In his endless love towards His Father, the Son wanted to please Him and to make more sons and more brothers for Himself, lower to Him, but in love equalized with Him. And in the eternal Council, the Father and the Holy Spirit agreed: they approved creation of the world for the Son’s love sake...

Taking the initiative for the creation, the Son received responsibility for created worlds in the face of the eternal Council and even more: (He gave) an freely approval to give Himself as a Sacrifice if that ever might be required, as pure and immaculate Lamb, Sacrifice “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (I Pt. 1, 20). Thus the greatest epopee of all started, for only one reason, my daughter, for love, because the God is love and there is nothing else inside of Him.”²⁴

²³ Vladika Nikolaj, *Reči o svečoveku*, Valjevo, 2003, (ed. Glas Crkve). The translation is ours.

²⁴ Nikolaj Velimirović, *Kasijana*, Linc, ed. Eparhija srednje-evropska, 1996, p. 33.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

Concluding this short summary of St. Nikolaj's theology as "neo patristic thought before neo patristic thought" we must mention that there is certain progress in his approach to patristic scriptures and theology²⁵. Although from the very beginning very close to Orthodox theology, young theologian – Nikolaj is more literary writer than patristic thinker. Dostoevsky and even Far East philosophy are more present than patristic scriptures. However, when a hieromonk Nikolaj becomes Bishop in Ohrid, his thought becomes more and more patristic, losing nothing of its esthetics and poetics. Here is a birthplace of one of the most popular of Nikolaj's works – *The Prologue of Ohrid*, a collection of short hagiographical remarks for each day in a year accompanied by short meditation theme and homily. Getting older, Bishop Nikolaj becomes more and more "patristic" thinker, which could be easily seen in his later "Christology" – *The Only Philanthropist*.

Unfortunately, later years of his life brought to Bishop Nikolaj much misunderstandings, especially after his imprisonment in Dachau and exile from communist Yugoslavia. There is a whole said history of slanders and offences directed towards St. Nikolaj, coming from various circles. One of the first was constructed by one of Yugoslav communist leaders (and communist "dissidents") Milovan Djilas, in his book *The Legend about Njegoš*²⁶.

²⁵ This progress is noted by the most researchers on St. Nikolaj's theology. D. Najdanović (op.cit, p.13) spotted it very early. Whole Ph.D. thesis written by late Prof. priest Radovan Bigović (*Od Svečoveka do Bogočoveka*, Beograd, 1995) tells this story of internal dynamics of Saint's theology. Generally, St. Nikolaj was at the same time literary writer and theologian, but during the course of time he became more and more theologian and less and less concerned for literary esthetics.

After his first great work *The Njegoš's Religion*, St. Nikolaj's is characterized by Jovan Skerlić, the most prominent Serbian critic of all times, as "extraordinary intelligent person and the man of decent literary capacities... the most unorthodox theologian" (cf. Milan Radulović, *Klasici srpskog modernizma*, Beograd, 1995, p. 163) This Skerlić's judgment was later received by both, theologians and literary critics. As M. Radulović summarizes later history of St. Nikolaj's reception in Serbian culture: "to the majority of critics, St. Nikolaj looked more like theologian than like a writer and to certain theologians it looked like our bishop was more writer than traditional theologian". (M. Radulović, op. cit, p. 165 cf. n. 2 in which a bibliography of this reception is given).

²⁶ Milovan Djilas, *Legenda o Njegošu*, Beograd, 1952. On the true intentions of this au-

The main reason for these attacks were symbolic meaning of Nikolaj's personality (he represented entire Serbian culture before the communist era) and some elements of Nikolaj's though obviously not compatible with communist ideology (for instance, apology of national sentiments given in *Nationalism of St Sava*)²⁷.

The end of communist regime in Yugoslavia, however, did not bring any peace in the reception of St Nikolaj's work in Serbian culture and public audience. Tragic civil war (1991-1995) which was presented in Western European media mainly or even only as a product of Serbian nationalism and not as more complex outcome of various national traumas of Yugoslav ethnicities, made a free space for all those who wanted to "explore roots" of Serbian "guilt".

Thus whole one industry of "politically correct" accusations directed against St. Nikolaj came to existence. At the same time, by various former communist and now neo liberal circles, St. Nikolaj has been accused for being German, English and French spy, Anti-Semite and Freemason, contaminator of Serbian intelligentsia and promoter of rural spirit in Serbian culture...

All of these accusations were based on partial and politically engaged approaches to a very complicated phenomenon called theology of St. Nikolaj Velimirović. Thus one great hermeneutical mistake of judging one, primarily theological thought by political criteria has been done. Surprisingly, the answer was given by some Orthodox "publicists", remaining dominantly on the field of political discourse²⁸, keeping in circulation this first hermeneutical mistake. Hence it remains as one of the greatest tasks of contemporary Orthodox and Christian theology to denote social and "political" connotations of St. Nikolaj's thought starting from his very theology to its social and political relevance and not the opposite way.

thor regarding Bishop Nikolaj cf. Dr Vojislav Maksimović, *Životopis Vlatke Nikolaja Velimirovića*, "Izabrani spisi", Srbinje, 1997, p. 149-150.

²⁷ Vladika Nikolaj, *Izabrani spisi*, p. 63-81.

²⁸ Cf. Vladimir Dimitrijević, *Oklevetani svetac. Vladika Nikolaj i Srbofobija*, Čačak, 2007.

The Conscience of the Church: Fr Justin Popović (1894-1979)²⁹

If, in the personality and works of St. Nikolaj of Žiča and Ohrid Serbian neo patristic theology was present as process or progress, then in the personality and work of St Justin of Čelije (Popović) it was from the very beginning mature and self-confident. Today we can without any doubt say that Fr. Justin is one of the most important and influential theologians of the Orthodox 20th century, that his thought might be compared only to such theological authorities such as Fr. Georges Florovsky, Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, and, to some extent, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. Popović's works remain one of the classics of neo patristic theology: I think that you could not call yourself a decently educated Orthodox theologian unless you have read at least *something* written by Fr. Justin. Unfortunately (but inevitably) he and his opus were often misunderstood and criticized for being far too bitter for the modern Christianity, for being too "narrow" and pointed against the Zeitgeist of Modernity.

Fr. Justin has been often seen according to one special detail from his biography: he was a pupil of St. Nikolaj during his education in the Belgrade Theological Seminary (1905-1914)³⁰. Thus he was predominantly seen as his successor and follower – which he to some extent was. However, it would be utmost unfair to both of them to reduce St Justin's theological meaning only on this aspect. It is true that they remained in contact during all of their lifetimes, although this contact was sometimes disrupted due to wartimes. It seems that it is St. Nikolaj's merit that young Justin entered education program on Divinity on the Oxford University. Also, we find St. Nikolaj writing warm and recommendatory introduction to Fr. Justin's *Svetosavlje as Philosophy of Life* (1952)³¹. Nevertheless, Justin was pretty original thinker and, speaking about certain influences on his thought, it should be mentioned that his reception of Russian philosophy and theology included such authors as Pavel Florensky (1882-1937) and

²⁹ Some biographical data and memories of persons who had personally known Fr. Justin could be found in foreign languages in *Čovek Bogočoveka Hrista*, Beograd, 2004, especially in English, French and modern Greek. Romanian, rather vivid biography is given in *Cuviosul Iustin Popovici – Viața și minunile*, București, 2008, (ed. Sofia).

³⁰ Elisabeth Hill, *Justin Popovic*, in "Čovek Bogočoveka Hrista", p. 180.

³¹ Justin Popović, *Svetosavlje*, p. 5. There is also very touching small collection of Fr. Justin's wittings about various books written by St. Nikolaj – see. *Sveti Nikolaj Ohridski i Žički*, Kraljevo, 2003, p. 168-172.

Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky (1863-1936)³². Also, one of the basic differences between St. Nikolaj and St. Justin's neo patristic theology is that St. Nikolaj rediscovered the ancient Fathers progressively while Fr Justin from his very beginnings to the end of his earthly life was extremely patristic author. His *Life of the saints* in twelve extensive volumes (one for each month) represent entire library of patristic lives and writings: at the time of their appearance these books were almost only existing Serbian translation not just of Christian hagiographies and martyrologies but also of the most important early Christian writings. Fr. Justin was, practically, doing what whole institutes should be doing in some other circumstances and his diligence could be compared only to Fr. Dumitru's diligence of translating *Philocalia* and other patristic works on Romanian. While doing all this, as well as writing some other theological books, Fr. Justin's mind "merged" with what Florovsky called "mind of the Fathers" to such extent that it sometimes hard to define what sentence is his own and which one is paraphrased or quoted from the Fathers. It is almost unnecessary to underline, but I will just mention that Fr. Justin was one of the first modern Serbian theologians who had profound knowledge of patristic Greek language (as well as the knowledge of the Modern Greek).

Fr. Justin is mostly known due to his opus magnum – *Dogmatic theology of the Orthodox Church* (three volumes, 1932, 1935, 1978). He is

³² See Bogdan Lubardić, *Justin Ćeljski i Rusija*, Novi Sad, 2009. One of the most significant debates in modern Serbian theology arose between the author of this ingenious study, Ass. Prof. Dr. Bogdan Lubardić and certainly one of the best experts on Fr. Justin's theology and his personal spiritual child, Bishop Dr. Atanasije Jevtić. Generally, in the middle of the debate was the question of *how* did the reception of the Russian philosophy influent Fr. Justin's works and *what would such reception mean for theological value of Fr. Justin's work?* Debate was generally very fruitful because it showed some new perspectives on Fr. Justin's theology which has not been properly taken in concern until that moment. However, one of the central points of debate was quite obvious misunderstanding between relatively younger theologian (Lubardić) who did not concern that *theological influences in general would question apostolic and patristic character of Fr. Justin's theology*, and relatively older theologian (Jevtić) for whom there should not be even taken in concern possibility that Fr. Justin had some spiritual or academic influence from such authors as, for instance, Pavel Florensky. Nevertheless, since both of the authors involved in polemics promised to continue their research on Fr Justin theology, this debate could be evaluated as very fruitful for Serbian and Orthodox theology in general. Cf. Episkop Atanasije, *Reč preporečna*, Pravoslavlje, 1074; Bogdan Lubardić, *Pod rečju preporečnom*, Pravoslavlje, p. 1075-1076.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

also well known due to his exegetical works – especially interpretations of Corpus Paulinum and Corpus Iohannicum. To broader Orthodox (and not only Orthodox) audience Fr. Justin is mainly familiar because of his very emotional work *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism*. Nevertheless, his *opuscula* are also very interesting and very significant³³.

Although not that much poetic in comparison to St. Nikolaj, Fr. Justin also thought that the truth of the Church should be exposed not only in traditional patristic genres but also in certain literary forms. Also, much like St. Nikolaj, he was a true child of modernity – but not uncritical worshiper of modernity, but profound analyzer and critic.

It is really delightful to see how some aspects of modernity were received in Fr Justin's work gaining some totally opposite meanings when compared to the general Zeitgeist of the era. For example, Fr. Justin is impressed by contemporary cosmology and natural sciences. Or, it would be more truthful to say: he is impressed by the cosmos itself and by the very existence itself. Let us hear his existential enthusiasm:

“It is a surprise to be a man. And – double surprise: to be a man in such grandiose and mysterious Universe. You do not feel that? You do not see that? Imagine: until this moment, you did not exist and someone suddenly takes you out of the not-being into being, this very moment, in this juvenile age of yours, with all your cognition, with all your sentiments and senses. And then he drops you down into this hall. How would you feel? Oh, watch! The Light is everywhere around you. What would you think about it? No doubt – it would be something quite unusual for you, quite fantastic, whole dramatic surprise. And what about colours? So many colours around you, what would you think about them? And they are, each one of them and all together, something very unusual, very dramatic. And then you would see each other. What would you think about you and your friends around you? Strange, unusual, fantastic beings: you would see more and more surprises and – maybe – illusions!³⁴”

³³ Fr Justin's works should be published in 30 volumes (until now 21 volume has been published). Among them, only *Lives of the Saints* include more than 8500 pages. Unfortunately, most of these works are still not much translated in foreign languages. Since, however, his *Dogmatics*, at least in the French translation, are more familiar than his *opuscula*, I will concentrate my account on his less known *opuscula*.

³⁴ O. Justin Popović, *Svetosavlje kao filosofija života*, Valjevo, 1993, p. 5 - our translation.

Here is one more quote on Fr. Justin's anthropology, i.e. on his view on man's position in the universe:

"There is nothing more terrifying than man in all worlds. Because there is nothing more endless. A dizziness overtakes all creatures which are capable of thinking about man. The philosophy about man is tough even for angelic minds, sad even for cherubic hearts. There is no end to human being. If, however, there is an end, then this end would be – infinity. From all sides, man is surrounded by infinities. Limits of human being? Oh, all of them are infinities."³⁵

Certainly, these two quotations show some poetic side of Justin's soul but they are far more significant in their context. The first one could be attributed as profound manifesto of the Orthodox Christian Existentialism. For instance, we could see that some general similarity could be found even between European Existentialism and this Orthodox Christian one: both are aware that the age in which "existence by itself" (*substantia per se*) was a primary interest of philosophy/theology is over and that *event of existence*, even *the world itself* must be seen from the human perspective, as inherently relevant for human existence or as human existence itself. We could give similar evaluation for the second quote. But, there is significant, decisive difference between Heidegger's philosophy, for instance, and St Justin's one: for the first one, existence is a trauma, it is a lightning limited by death and entire program of "authentic existence" is based on inevitable fact that "everyone has to die his own death". It must be left to everyone's judgment to consider this fundamental attitude of German philosopher as realistic or pessimistic. But compared to Fr. Justin's it becomes extremely pessimistic. Heidegger's existence (even authentic one or *particularly* authentic one) is limited within the lifetime of a man, limited within one totally temporal existence. Fr. Justin's authentic existence is characterized by infinity, or, more precisely, it is infinity itself. Heideggerian thought is characterized by cosmic trauma of modernity, by some "modern Gnosticism" (H. Jonas)³⁶. It is not only Heideggerian motive, it could be even attributed to modernity itself (if we trust Jonas on this topic and I think we should). The emergence of endless Universe on the dawn of modernity was, according to Jonas, great trauma for human conscience.

³⁵ Justin Popović, *Zenica tragizma*, Niš, 1998, p. 59 - our translation.

³⁶ Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, Boston, 2001, p. 320-340.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

The first witness of this trauma is Pascal. We could, for instance, take his famous words as some diagnosis of modernity: “Cast into the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant and which know me not, I am frightened”³⁷

Now, if we compare this cosmological fear of man after the discovery of cosmic infinity and his fragility to above quoted words of Fr. Justin, we would easily see that there is basic *difference in attitude* which cannot be explained as difference in the cosmology (since both of them start from modern cosmological standpoints) but as difference in perception. What causes fear and anthropological skepticism for Pascal and, at the end of the (hi)story for Heidegger, that same sense of *cosmic infinity* is fundamental for the sense of *anthropological infinity* for Fr. Justin. For him, entire cosmic infinity testifies existential infinity and final aim of human existence: eternity. This is the first point of difference between Fr. Justin and globalised modernity and he is very aware of it: “Our Zeitgeist has one categorical imperative – carpe diem (seize a day!) – the Spirit of Christ’s eternity has its own categorical imperative – carpe aeternitatem (seize eternity)”³⁸. We should not idealize Fr. Justin’s emphasis on the *infinity of man* – he knew the dark side of it, “a bitter side of man’s infinities” in his own words³⁹. Nevertheless, it remains as very important to notice: Fr. Justin witnesses Christian faith in divine and human transcendence, not as inter-subjectivity, not as man’s capability to “transcend” *inside* of his existential limitation, but *outside of them*. This anthropological and cosmological concept surely is modern if we by “modern” think of “aware of post-Copernican” or contemporary “picture of the Universe”. What, however, is not modern - and should not be – is Fr. Justin’s belief that *man remained to be macro-cosmos in micro-cosmos* and not the opposite. But could we really resent him such “un-modernity”?

I would now like to touch one of the most debated issues of Fr. Justin’s entire thought. It is his view towards Europe and values of European civilization. Most of those who criticized his “anti-European” attitudes found them to be just a simple derivatives from his anti-ecumenical attitudes. This is much easier to show, but it leaves one important aspect on the side: problem of the *origin* of Anti-European and anti-ecumenical sentiment is

³⁷ Jonas, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59-60.

his thought. Some shallow explanations are always the easiest to find and believe in and such quasi-explanations remain very popular and all of them could be narrowed to one basic factor: Serbian national ideology. Still, as the most of simple and obvious solutions, that one is heavily missing the point.

Now we get to the another essential points of St. Justin's theology: that is his Christology. He is very Christological thinker, or better to say *Christocentric*. There is not even one single page of his work which could not be described as Christological hymn. For his mind – every aspect of Christian theology is just an expression of Christ's theandric existence. For him every life of every saint is "life of Christ unrepeatably repeated in those holy men of the Church". For him even the Church itself is "Christ's life and body prolonged into centuries". Christ is only reliable measure by whom everything and everyone could and should be measured. Also, each civilization and theology. So, Christ is the only criterion of European civilization and, in his theandric existence, its supreme critique:

"Arianism has not been yet put to its grave – today it is more modern than it has ever been, more wide-spread than it has ever been. Like a soul it has been poured all over the body of contemporary Europe. Go deeper into its (European) culture, at its very bottom Arianism is hidden: everything was reduced to man, everything – including the God-Man. Whole European philosophy, its science and civilization was contaminated by Arian yeast – to certain extent religion, too. Everywhere Lord Christ is being degraded to common man... Kant's religion in the realm of pure mind is nothing else but the new edition of the old Arianism. Apply Kant's criterion on Christ – what do you think, what you will get? – You will get Christ- a Man, Christ – a Wise Man, but never Christ – The God-Man. Apply Bergson's criterion on Christ and you will get something just a bit more than a common man. Thus apply one criterion, apply another one – thus apply all criteria – all criteria of philosophies according to man will reduce the God-man to man."⁴⁰

Now, these words are definitely politically incorrect and they insult one of the basic fundaments of European civilization – its conscience that it is a criterion according to which everything else should be measured,

⁴⁰ J. Popović, *Zenica tragizma*, p. 184.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

while for Fr. Justin Jesus Christ the God-man is the sole criterion. In such situation, Fr Justin's openness and sincerity is surely not welcome in a culture which mainly demands politeness and refinement. But we must ask ourselves whether *it is true*. Of course, there is some homiletic tone in it, but it nevertheless consistently reflects one basic difference in the state of minds of one Serbian theologian and one (West) European theologian – namely, Serbian theology never passed through the Age of Enlightenment in the sense that the change of world paradigm that took place in the European 18th and 19th century was not accepted as theological criterion. "Arianism" is politically incorrect diagnosis, but, I believe, quite true one. The end of the supernatural, which is one of the basic postulates of Western European theology, has never happened in the Serbian theology and, especially, not in Serbian ecclesiastic mind. The main effort of all Western theologians after H.S. Reimarus was centred on finding the place for faith in Jesus in the limits given by rational methods and natural laws. Still, this reduction of theandric ontology appears to Fr. Justin as betrayal of Christian Faith. Although it is quite generalized, Fr. Justin's remark is true in the sense that skepticism towards the very possibility of the presence of Divine in the event and person of Christ is one of the main tendencies of Western European theology, present even in Bultmann's existential theology. This generalization should also be explained by two very important circumstances: the first one is the fact that, according to research conducted by Fr. Vladan Perišić, a contemporary Serbian theologian, Fr. Justin received his competence on European philosophy via Russian religious thinkers and only afterwards directly⁴¹. It means that his angle of viewing was influenced by this intermediation of Russian philosophers. Secondly, Fr. Justin had an opportunity to meet European Christology of the 18th and 19th century predominantly via its some atheistic, polemical, Marxist works written in Serbian following foreign originals or translated from foreign languages to Serbian. These politically and socially engaged pamphlets could not represent the best, but the worst

⁴¹ Cf. Vladan Perišić, *O bogopoznanju kod Sv. Makarija Egipatskog sa posebnim osvrtom na disertaciju Justina Popovića*, Srpska teologija u XX veku, 5, beograd, 2010, p. 7-16. Also: Vladan Perišić, *O epistemologiji Isaka Sirina u interpretaciji Justina Popovića*, Srpska teologija u XX veku, g. Beograd, 2010, p. 36-48. Some critical remarks on thesis given by Fr. Vladan Perišić could be found in Bogdan Lubardić, *Pavle Florenski i patristički radovi Justina Popovića*, Srpska teologija u XX veku, Beograd, 2011, p. 65-165.

of European theology⁴². However, I must say that I do not believe that Fr. Justin would be more full of understanding even if he would have von Harnack or Bultmann in front of him.

Fr. Justin's witnessing of the Orthodox faith, I believe, remains modern even today. He has shown us that Orthodoxy can be universal not by "borrowing" its universality from ideological matrices which proclaim themselves as "universal", but *from inside*, from the universality of patristic mind. Any good-willing reader of his texts will soon notice that a place of man in his anthropology is far more universal and optimistic than in any other "universal" anthropology. Yes, Fr. Justin's view of the limits of the Church are certainly not ecumenical in the sense of *ecumenical movement*, but his view of the Church as cosmic and Christological event is far more universal than particularistic ideology of the branch-theory. Surely, universalism which he had in his mind is not post modern universalism in epistemological uncertainty ("we share common confusion on the world and our place in it") – it is very "old fashioned" universalism of the All-loving God which appeared among us and gave us his Universal Love in His Church as "His body continuing through centuries".

Neo Patristic theology after St Justin: Some Names and Remarks

Fr. Justin spend much of his life during the Yugoslav communist regime in some kind of house arrest, in the monastery Čelije, near Valjevo. Nevertheless, it was permitted to him to receive visitors (of course, with hidden but strong supervision of Yugoslav intelligence services⁴³). This was very important for future development of Serbian theology. From the circle of Fr. Justin's pupils came the most important Serbian contemporary theologians. Since the most of them are still alive, I will restrain myself of speaking about them, mentioning only two of them for whom we can say with certainty that they will be remembered in the history of Serbian theology.

Former (retired) Bishop of Herzegovina Atanasije (Jevtić, b. January 8th 1938). Remains to be one of the most important Serbian theologians.

⁴² Cf. Vladan Tatalović, *Osvrt na problematiku istorijskog Isusa u srpskoj teološkoj sredini, I*, Srpska teologija u XX veku, Beograd, 2010, p. 18.

⁴³ Cuviosul Iustin Popovici, p. 28 ff.

Serbian Neopatristic Theology

He was educated in Serbia and in the Greek speaking world (Halki Theological Seminary and Athenian Theological Faculty). He has been also working on the St. Serge Theological Academy in Paris. His main interest was patristic thought (he had written the best original manual for Patrology in Serbian, i.e. it was intended to be series of manuals, but until now only one volume, dedicated to the Fathers of the 4th century was published). Nevertheless, his bibliography includes numerous articles and studies (more than 250 to the present moment and he keeps writing) on all theological topics. His editions and comment of *Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church*, of *Liturgical Texts* (in three volumes), as well as his translation and interpretation of *Maccabean* scriptures, the *Book of Genesis* and *Apostolic Fathers of the Church* are fundamentally important for Serbian theology and Serbian culture.

Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović, b. January 7th 1938) is also an Orthodox theologian and prominent ecclesial personality. Likewise his spiritual brother bishop Atanasije, he was educated in Serbia and Greek speaking world, but he had certain experience of Western theology during his post-graduate studies in Bern and Rome. His theology is very (neo) patristic, too. His most famous books are *The History of the Interpretation of the Old Testament among Serbs* and *The Basics of the Orthodox Formation*. He translated *the Book of Wisdom* in Serbian, thus, together with Bishop Atanasije, completing the Serbian Bible⁴⁴.

Together with certain other prominent Church personalities, these two theologians made a whole turn over in the contemporary Serbian theology. Associated with their spiritual father, Fr. Justin, they were often called “Justinovci” (Justin’s followers), which, at the first time, was a product of mocking of both, theological conservatives and communist authorities. Nevertheless, later history of the Church gave right to Fr. Justin and his spiritual children, and later you would be proud to be a “Justinovac”. I must add that, quite contrary to Romania, Fr. Justin has never had a prominent and theologically well enough educated opponent, as Fr. Stăniloae had in P. Remus. However, certain opposition to his theology was present up to

⁴⁴ Since the first modern translation of the Holy Bible in Serbian was sponsored by the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the middle of the 19th century, only the books of the Protestant Canon were translated on that occasion. The first Serbian edition of the Bible which included all books canonical in the Orthodox Church was published in 2010.

the late 80ies, predominantly in the old, “conservative” circles who had no interest in the theological or ecclesiastic renewal. For instance, in most Serbian seminaries a manual called *The Orthodox Dogmatics* (Belgrade, 1968) written by Vojin Rakić was used even in the time when Fr. Justin has already written his *Dogmatics*. These two manuals are incomparable in every manner: Rakić’s book represents the old fashioned semi-scholastic unoriginal manual, while Fr. Justin’s remains one of the eternal expressions of the Orthodox theological conscience. However, one interesting phenomenon could be spotted: those same “conservative” theological and ecclesiastic circles, who were opposing Fr. Justin and his pupils on their victorious way of liturgical and theological renewal, now regret for Fr. Justin’s theology, after one whole new generation of theologians came to the light of the day. Namely, after the neo patristic renewal was initiated by Fr. Justin and his spiritual pupils, the light of patristic and neo patristic theology was enthusiastically taken over by younger theologians. Many of Serbian younger theologians studied in Greece and they brought contemporary Greek theology to Serbia (Metropolitan Zizioulas and Ch. Yannaras remain the most famous names). Also, Russian “emigration” theology (Florovsky, V. Lossky, P. Evdokimov to some extent) has undoubted popularity. Sadly, from Romanian contemporary theology only fundamental names and works of Fr. Stăniloae and Bria are better known. Together with St. Nikolaj, St. Justin and his spiritual children, these names make primary foundation of Serbian modern theology and form a library on which all of us were theologically formed.

The Serbian (neo) patristic theology passed through the same problems and issues like the Serbian Orthodox Church and entire nation in general. Given our unfavorable, even tragic and traumatic circumstances in the 20th century, we must be grateful to the Triune God that we have survived and that we were honoured by such names as St. Nikolaj’s and St. Justin’s. In each case, there is much to be done: modern theology needs to make a critical approach to itself, since it sometimes turns into some patristic ideology and a skill of quotation-without-context. It should also reconsider making stronger ties with Romanian or Georgian Orthodox theology as well as with Western European theologies (I think that these theologies would also profit from contact with Serbian theology). I hope that this article would be the first step in that direction.

Nicodim Nicolăescu¹

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού, οι αρχές του Χριστιανισμού και μοναχισμού του

Abstract

The Romanian people were formed by the merging of two great ancient nations: the Dacians and the Romans. This merging began with Emperor Trajan's victory over the population from north of the Danube, at the beginning of the 2nd century. The Roman rule remained here until the time of Emperor Aurelian in 275. The conquered Dacians worshiped Zamolxis as god and believed in immortality of the soul, which contributed to their easy Christianization. Christianity was brought here by St. Andrew. Before the appearance of Christianity the Dacians had a large number of vegetarian ascetics and the people seeks them for their wisdom. After the penetration of Christianity to the Daco-Romans and great-Romanians, the Geto-Dacians ascetics became the first Christian ascetics. The vocation for monasticism can be observed today to the Romanian people. Among the first monks, we mention St. John Cassian, born in Dobrogea. Until the organization of the Church in the 14th century, in the territories from the north of the Danube there was an apostolic Christianity and a monasticism whose representatives lived either as hermits or in monasteries with daily order.

Keywords

The history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Romanians Christianization, the Geto-Dacians, monasticism, the religion of Geto-Dacians

1. Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού και της Ρουμανικής γλώσσας.

Ο Ρουμανικός λαός γεννήθηκε από την «ένωση» δύο μεγάλων λαών της αρχαιότητας, των Δάκων και των Ρωμαίων, που ήταν

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οι αποικιστές της Δακίας από το 105 μέχρι το 275 π.Χ. Υπό την ονομασία Δάκες εννοούμε τον πληθυσμό που ζούσε στα εδάφη της Ρουμανίας από τα παλαιότερα χρόνια έως σήμερα. Σε κάποια χρονικά διαστήματα οι κάτοικοι της Δακίας, γιατί έτσι ονομαζόταν η Ρουμανία, βρίσκονταν και εκτός των σημερινών συνόρων, και αυτοί οι κάτοικοι ονομάστηκαν Γκέτοι². Στα χρόνια του βασιλιά της Δακίας Μπουρεμπίστα, πραγματοποιήθηκε για πρώτη φορά η ένωση όλων των Δάκων σ' ένα μόνο κράτος που εκτεινόταν από τις όχθες της Μαύρης Θάλασσας (ανάμεσα στην Απολλωνεία στα νότια των βουνών Έμουσ και Ολυμπία) μέχρι τη Βοημία.

Για τους Ρωμαίους όμως, το κράτος του Μπουρεμπίστα αποτελούσε μια πραγματική άμεση απειλή. Ο Στράβωνας,³ ο οποίος σημειώνει το γεγονός ότι ο «βασιλιάς της Δακίας περνάει με μεγάλη τόλμη το Δούναβη, ερημώνει τους Κέλτες αναμειγμένους με Θράκες και Ιλλυριούς και προχωράει μέχρι τη Μακεδονία, που ανήκε στη Ρώμη. Εξ αιτίας αυτού του γεγονότος, ο Γάιος Ιούλιος Καίσαρας, αποφάσισε να ξεκινήσει το 44 π.Χ. μια εκστρατεία εναντίον του Μπουρεμπίστα. Γι' αυτό το λόγο άρχισε να μαζεύει μεγάλες στρατιωτικές δυνάμεις για να νικήσει τον πολυάριθμο στρατό του βασιλιά της Δακίας που είχε πάνω από 200.000 στρατιώτες», (κατά τα λεγόμενα του Στράβωνα). Ο θάνατος όμως, εμπόδισε τον Ρωμαίο βασιλιά να πραγματοποιήσει τα σχέδιά του⁴. Μετά το θάνατο του Μπουρεμπίστα, το κράτος γνωρίζει μια εξασθένηση και αργότερα, στα χρόνια του Ρωμαίου αυτοκράτορα Οκτάβιου Αυγούστου (31 π.Χ. – 14 μ.Χ.) υπήρχανε στην αριστερή πλευρά

² Υπό την ονομασία των Δάκων και των Γκέτων - εννοούμε ένα και μόνο λαό. Αυτές οι δύο ονομασίες δόθηκαν από τους Λατίνους και Έλληνες. Έτσι οι Έλληνες ονόμαζαν Γέτες τους κατοίκους της πεδιάδας της Μουντένιας της Μολδαβίας και της Δοβρουτσάς. Οι Ρωμαίοι ονόμαζαν Δάκους τους κατοίκους της Τρανσυλβανίας και τους Βανάτ. λ Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria ilustrată a romanilor*, ed. Sport - Turism, București, 1981, σ. 28.

³ Strabon, *Geografia*, VII, 3, 11 σ. 303, apud Dinu C. Giurescu, μν.ε., σ. 32.

⁴ Constantin C. Giurescu και Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor*, το. 1, εκδ. științifică și enciclopedică, București, 1975, σ. 44.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

του Δούναβη, πέντε δακικά βασίλεια, όπως λέει ο Στράβωνας⁵ και στη Δοβρουτσά άλλα τρία – υπό την ηγεσία του Ρόλες, Ντάπιξ και Ζιράξες. Οι Ρωμαίοι προχωράνε στη Βαλκανική χερσόνησο μέχρι το Δούναβη και ύστερα από πολλούς αγώνες (29-27 π.Χ.) κατακτάνε τη Δοβρουτσά. Ήταν αναμενόμενη η σύγκρουση ανάμεσα στους Ρωμαίους και τους Δάκες, οι οποίοι εξακολουθούσαν να αποτελούν μεγάλο κίνδυνο στα βόρεια του ποταμού Δούναβη.

Η οριστική μάχη δίνεται στα χρόνια του βασιλιά της Δακίας Δέκεβαλ (87-105 μ.Χ.). Γι' αυτόν τον βασιλιά ο Δίο Κάσιους γράφει ότι, «ήταν πολύ επιδέξιος σε ό,τι αφορούσε τους πολέμους, ήξερε να επιλέξει την κατάλληλη στιγμή να επιτεθεί, αλλά και την κατάλληλη στιγμή να υποχωρήσει. Καλός στο να στήσει παγίδα, καλός πολεμιστής, καλός στο να χρησιμοποιήσει μια νίκη, αλλά και για να δεχτεί μια ήττα. Χάρη σε όλα αυτά, ήταν ένας εχθρός που πολύ τον φοβόντουσαν οι Ρωμαίοι»⁶.

Αυτός ο βασιλιάς στέφεται μετά από μια σημαντική νίκη που σημείωσε το 87 μ.Χ. εναντίον των Ρωμαίων που προσπαθούσαν να κατακτήσουν τη Δακία με πρωτοβουλία του αυτοκράτορα Δομιτιανού⁷.

Ένας άλλος πόλεμος ανάμεσα στους Ρωμαίους και τους Δάκες θα λάβει χώρα τα χρόνια 101-102 μ.Χ., όταν ο ρωμαϊκός στρατός «οδηγείται» από τον ίδιο τον αυτοκράτορα Τραϊανό (98-117 μ.Χ.). Ο πόλεμος τελειώνει με μια ειρήνη που ζητάει ο Δάκης βασιλιάς Δέκεβαλ, ο οποίος υπόσχεται να γίνει σύμμαχος των Ρωμαίων. Σύντομα όμως ο Δέκεβαλ θα αθετήσει την συμφωνία και εξ αιτίας της επιθυμίας του για ελευθερία γίνεται το 105 - 106 μ.Χ. δεύτερος πόλεμος. Οι Ρωμαίοι χτίζουν πάνω από το Δούναβη μια γέφυρα στη Ντρομπέτα, πόλη της Δακίας. Από αυτή τη γέφυρα, χτισμένη υπό τις οδηγίες του αρχιτέκτονα Απολλοδόρου του Δαμασκηνού, μπήκε ο στρατός του Τραϊανού και κατέκτησε τους Δάκες. Ο Δέκεβαλ αυτοκτόνησε και η Δακία μεταμορφώνεται σε Ρωμαϊκό στρατόπεδο τον

⁵ Strabon, *Geografia*, VII, 3,11 κ. 303, apud. Dinu C. Giurescu, μν.ε. σ. 32.

⁶ Dio Casius, *Istoria Romană*, LXVII, 6, 1 apud. Dinu C. Giurescu μν.ε. σ. 32-33.

⁷ Dinu C. Giurescu, - μν.ε. σ. 33.

Αύγουστο του 106 μ.Χ. Τα λάφυρα του πολέμου έλυσαν τα οικονομικά προβλήματα της αυτοκρατορίας. Η κατάκτηση αυτής της πλούσιας περιοχής προκάλεσε στη Ρώμη τεράστια ικανοποίηση. Οι γιορτές που ακολούθησαν διέρκεσαν 123 μέρες. Χτίστηκαν δύο αναμνηστικά αγάλματα: Το «Τρόπαιουμ Τραϊάνι» του 109 ι.Χ., μια επιβλητική κατασκευή στολισμένη με πολεμικές σκηνές και «Η στήλη του Τραϊανού» που υψώθηκε το 113 μ.Χ. και στολίστηκε επίσης με γλυπτικές παραστάσεις που παρουσιάζουν σκηνές των δύο πολέμων⁸. Στο καινούργιο Ρωμαϊκό στρατόπεδο, οι Δάκοι ήταν βέβαια οι πιο πολλοί. Μαζί με τον ιθαγενή πληθυσμό είχαμε και τους αποίκους που ήρθαν απ' όλα τα μέρη της αυτοκρατορίας (“e toto abe romano”) γοητευμένοι από τα πλούτη της Δακίας. Εκτός απ' αυτούς, οι οποίοι μιλάγανε τη λατινική δημώδη γλώσσα, ήρθανε και απόστρατοι, δηλαδή Ρωμαίοι στρατιώτες ελευθερωμένοι που είχανε στη Δακία τη φρουρά τους. Αυτοί παντρεύτηκαν με ντόπιες γυναίκες. Επίσης ήρθανε υπάλληλοι, διαχειριστές, δάσκαλοι, τελωνοφύλακες και πολλοί άλλοι αυτού του είδους. Σύντομα σε ολόκληρη τη Δακία οι άνθρωποι αρχίσανε να μιλούν την λατινική γλώσσα. Η Ρωμαιοκρατία είχε αρχίσει να επιβάλλεται και είχε μια διάρκεια 170 ετών μέχρι το 275 μ.Χ., όταν ο αυτοκράτορας Αυρηλιανός έφερε πίσω όλα τα διοικητικά όργανα και θα ανασχηματίσει τα σύνορα της αυτοκρατορίας στο Δούναβη. Ο αυτοκράτορας αποποιήθηκε τα πλουσιότατα αυτά εδάφη, επειδή δεν μπορούσε πια να τα υπερασπιστεί και να αντιμετωπίσει τους μεταναστευτικούς λαούς. Τα σύνορα στο Δούναβη ήταν πιο εύκολα να επιτηρηθούν και ο ποταμός αποτελούσε αξεπέραστο εμπόδιο για τους μετανάστες.

Εν τω μεταξύ, ο ρωμαϊκός πολιτισμός νίκησε τη Δακία επειδή είχε μια γλώσσα, μια μόρφωση κι έναν πολιτισμό που βρισκόταν σε ανώτερο επίπεδο από εκείνον των Δακών. Μετά την αυρηλιανή έξοδο ο δακο-ρωμαϊκός πληθυσμός έμεινε σ'

⁸ Σχετικά με τον Δέκεβαλ και Τραϊάνι, ιδιαίτερα με τους πολέμους ανάμεσα τους δάκους και ρωμαίους, βλ Constantin C. Giurescu κα Dinu C.Giurescu μν.ε. σ. 48-58, με μια πλούσια βιβλιογραφία, αι *Istoria României, συνταγμένη από μια συντονιστική επιτροπή*, εκδ Academia Republicii Populare Române, București, 1960, τομ. 1, σ. 285-316.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

εκείνα τα μέρη όπως είχαν μείνει και οι γαλλο-ρωμαίοι στην Γαλλία, οι ίβηρο- ρωμαίοι στην Ισπανία.

Από το μείγμα των αποίκων και των απόστρατων με τον ιθαγενή πληθυσμό γεννήθηκε ο Ρουμανικός λαός και η Ρουμανική γλώσσα, η οποία είναι λατινογενή γλώσσα. Η δομή της, η μορφολογία, η σύνταξη και τα βασικά στοιχεία του λεξιλογίου – εκείνα που πάντα χρησιμοποιήθηκαν – όλα αυτά είναι λατινικά. Κατ' επέκταση, η Ρουμανική γλώσσα είναι η δημοτική λατινική γλώσσα. Αυτά που προσθέσανε οι σλάβοι⁹ σε μεγάλο σημείο και οι τούρκοι σε μικρότερο δεν μπόρεσαν ν' αλλάξουν το βασικό και αρχικό χαρακτήρα της Ρουμανικής γλώσσας.

Μετά την αποχώρηση των Ρωμαίων, ο πληθυσμός της Δακίας γνώρισε την επίδραση άλλων κατακτητικών λαών όπως ήταν εκείνη των Γότθων, των Ούνων, των Γέπιζων, των Σλάβων. Αργότερα πέρασαν ακόμα και Βούλγαροι, Ούγγροι με ασιατική προέλευση, μετά οι Πεκενέγκοι, και Τάταροι¹⁰. Στα χρόνια αυτών των εισβολών που διήρκεσαν μια χιλιετία, οι Δακο-ρουμάνοι εξακολουθούσαν να μένουν σ' αυτά τα μέρη – αποτραβήχθηκαν βέβαια προς τα βουνά και τα δάση που υπήρχαν στους λόφους ή στις πεδιάδες. Γιατί, γενικά, οι μετανάστες που έρχονταν από τις τεράστιες στέπες, απέφευγαν τα δάση. Μέσα σ' αυτά οι Ρουμάνοι, που οι Ούγγροι και οι Γερμανοί αποκαλούσαν 'Βλάχους, ασχολούνταν είτε με την εκτροφή των ζώων, είτε με την καλλιέργεια των δημητριακών τα οποία αλέθανε στους μύλους που είχαν κληρονομήσει από τους Ρωμαίους.

Ύστερα από τις εισβολές των Τατάρων από το πρώτο μισό του 13ου αιώνα, άρχισε ο σχηματισμός των Ρουμανικών ηγεμονιών και Βοϊβοδιών. Κατά αυτόν τον τρόπο, στο πρώτο μισό του 11ου αιώνα αυτές οι ηγεμονίες ενώθηκαν μεταξύ

⁹ Οι Σλάβοι είχαν το χάρισμα να δίνουν καινούργιες ονομασίες σ' όλα τα μέρη από τα οποία είχαν περάσει τον 6^ο και τον 7^ο αι. Έτσι εξηγείται το γεγονός ότι έχουμε τοπωνύμια σλαβικής προέλευσης.

¹⁰ Βλ. Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, vol 1, ed științifică și enciclopedică, București, 1975, σ. 126-206.

τους και σχημάτισαν τις τρεις Ρουμανικές χώρες: τη Βλαχία, τη Μολδαβία και την Τρανσυλβανία.

2. Η Θρησκεία των Δάκων

Οι πηγές για τη γνώση της θρησκείας των Δάκων είναι φτωχές. Απ' αυτούς δεν έχουμε γραπτές μαρτυρίες και οι αρχαιολογικές ανακαλύψεις μας δίνουν επίσης λίγες πληροφορίες. Οι συγγραφείς της αρχαιότητας όπως και οι σύγχρονοι ιστορικοί ερευνητές τους παρουσιάζουν και τους περιγράφουν σαν πιστούς. Ο Στράβωνας γράφει: «Στο λαό τους η επιθυμία και η επιμονή για τα άγια πράγματα αποτελούν ουσιαστικό στοιχείο»¹¹. Ο κύριος θεός των Δάκων ήταν ο Ζαμόλξης τον οποίο ο Πλάτωνας ονόμαζε «βασιλεύς θεός»¹², επίσης ο Μνάσεας της Πάτρας τον θεωρούσε πανομοιότυπο με τον Κρόνο των Ελλήνων¹³. Αυτός ο θεός είναι ο γαλάζιος ουρανός. Ο Ηρόδοτος λέει πως οι Δάκες πίστευαν ότι αυτά που πείραζαν την αρμονία και την ομορφιά του, δηλαδή η θύελλα, τα σύννεφα, το χαλάζι, έπρεπε να καταπολεμηθούν. Γι' αυτό το σκοπό έρριχναν τόξα προς τα σύννεφα για να τα διώξουν και να βοηθήσουν κατ' αυτόν τον τρόπο τον μεγάλο θεό¹⁴ «Πιστεύουν» – λέει ο Ηρόδοτος – «ότι δεν υπάρχει άλλος θεός εκτός από τον δικό τους»¹⁵. Τα μέρη στα οποία προσκυνούσαν ήταν πάνω στα βουνά, για να είναι όσο το δυνατόν πιο κοντά στον ουρανό. Η κατοικία του μεγάλου ιερέα βρισκόταν επίσης

¹¹ Strabo, *Geografia*, VII, 3, 4 apud. Diac. Prof. Emilian Vasilescu, *Istoria Religiilor*, București, εκδ IBMBOR, București, 1975, σ. 322.

¹² Platon, *Charmides* 156d-157c apud. Ion Horațiu Crișan, *Spiritualitatea Geto-dacilor*, Albatros, București, 1986, σ. 348.

¹³ Ο Μνάσεας έζησε το 2^ο αι π.Χ., έγραψε ένα «Περίπλου» και μερικά «Περιετσεις» όπου παρουσιάζει θαυμάσιες περιπέτειες από διάφορα μέρη. Διατηρήθηκαν πάντως λίγα. αποσπάσματα του έργου του. Σ' ένα από αυτά, που υπάρχει σ' ένα λεξικό του Φωτίου, πατριάρχης της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως του 9^{ου} αι. γράφει: «οι Γέτες τιμούν τον Κρόνο, αποκαλώντας τον Ζαμόλξιο»." Ion Horațiu Crișan μ.ε. σ. 348.

¹⁴ Herodot, *Istori* IV, 94, apud. Ion Horațiu Crișan μ.ε. σ. 346.

¹⁵ Αυτόθι, σ. 346.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

σε μια σπηλιά πάνω στο βουνό Κωγαϊόν,¹⁶. Οι Δάκες πίστευαν στην αθανασία της ψυχής και θεωρούσαν το θάνατο σαν αρχή και όχι σαν τέλος. Αυτό το μαρτυρεί ο Ηρόδοτος στις «Ιστορίες» του Ν. 94 όπου γράφει: «Κοιτάζετε πως νομίζουν οι Δάκες ότι είναι αθάνατοι, έχουν την πεποίθηση ότι δεν πεθαίνουν και αυτός που εξαφανίζεται από το δικό μας κόσμο πάει στο θεό Ζαμόλξη»¹⁷. Χάρη σ' αυτή την πίστη τους, οι Δάκες πολεμούσαν με μεγάλο θάρρος¹⁸. Γι' αυτόν το λόγο ο συγγραφέας Πομπόνιους Μέλα λέει ότι οι Δάκες είναι «οι πιο προετοιμασμένοι¹⁹ για το θάνατο» (*paratissimi ad mortem Getas*). Εξίσου ο Ιουλιανός ο Παραβάτης μας αναφέρει τα εξής λόγια του Τραϊανού: «Υποδουλώσαμε ακόμα και τους Δάκες, που είναι οι πιο πολεμιστές απ' όλους τους λαούς που υπήρχαν ποτέ, όχι μόνο χάρη τη δύναμη των κορμιών τους, αλλά και στις γνώσεις του Ζαμόλξη, που τόσο τον υμνούν. Έτσι, πίστευαν βαθιά στην καρδιά τους ότι δεν πεθαίνουν, αλλά μόνο αλλάζουν την κατοικία και πηγαίνουν στο θάνατο πιο χαρούμενοι απ' όσο θα πήγαιναν σε κάθε άλλο ταξίδι»²⁰.

Οι Δάκες δεν είχαν μόνο σεβασμό για τα διδάγματα του Ζαμόλξη, αλλά και υπακοή και πραγματοποιούσαν με τιμή τις συμβουλές των ιερέων και των ασκητών. Ένας από τους πιο σημαντικούς και γνωστούς ιερείς τους ήταν ο Δεκενέος – μεγάλος ιερέας στα χρόνια του βασιλιά Μπουρεμπίστα. Γι' αυτόν ο Ιορντάνες γράφει ότι: «παρατηρώντας την τάση των Δάκων να τον υπακούσουν και λαμβάνοντας υπ' όψη ότι ήταν έξυπνοι άνθρωποι, ο Δεκενέος τους δίδασκε απ' όλους τους κλάδους της φιλοσοφίας, που όντως τους ήξερε καλά. Τους δίδασκε και ηθική στην προσπάθειά του να τους απομακρύνει από τις συνήθειες των βαρβάρων, φυσικά – κάνοντάς τους να ζήσουν σύμφωνα με τους νόμους της φύσεως. Τους έμαθε και λογική δίνοντάς τους πρακτικά παραδείγματα και απ' αυτή την

¹⁶ Strabon, *Geografia*, VII, 3, 5 apud. Ion Horațiu Crișan μν.ε. σ. 349.

¹⁷ Herodot - *Istoriî* IV, 94, cf. Ion Horațiu Crișan μν.ε. σ. 345.

¹⁸ Ο Ηρόδοτος λέει ότι οι Γέτο-Δάκοι «είναι οι πιο γενναίοι και οι πιο σωστοί των Θράκων». apud. Ion Horațiu Crișan μ.ε. σ. 345.

¹⁹ Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor*, voll, ed. științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1975, σ. 70.

²⁰ Αυτόθι, σ. 71.

άποψη, όσο αφορούσε το μυαλό τους, βρίσκονταν σε ανώτερο επίπεδο από τους άλλους λαούς. Τους συμβούλευε επίσης να περάσουν τη ζωή τους κάνοντας καλές πράξεις»²¹.

Στη «Γεωγραφία» του, ο Στράβωνας παρουσιάζει επίσης τη μεγάλη υπακοή που έδειχναν οι Δάκες στις συμβουλές και στις διαταγές του Δεκενέου. «Αυτοί», γράφει ο Στράβωνας, «πείστηκαν να ξεριζώσουν τα αμπέλια τους και να ζήσουν χωρίς κρασί»²². (εκκόψαι την άμπελον και ζην οίνου χωρίς).

Όσο για τη λατρεία, αποτελούνταν από λειτουργίες, τελετές και μαγείες που γίνονταν συνήθως πάνω σε ψηλά βουνά από ιερείς, οι οποίοι τις περισσότερες φορές ήταν συγχρόνως και μάντεις και γιατροί. Με τον τρόπο ζωής τους, με τα αυστηρά τους ήθη, με τη διατροφή τους, οι ιερείς αποτελούσαν ένα πραγματικό μοναχικό τάγμα. Δεν παντρεύονταν²³, δεν έτρωγαν κρέας και κανένα είδος ζώου, αλλά μόνο γάλα, τυρί, μέλι και λαχανικά.²⁴ Περνούσαν ζωή ασκητών – λόγο για τον οποίο ο λαός τους έδειχνε μεγάλο σεβασμό και τιμή - και τους αποκαλούσαν «ταξιδιώτες πάνω στα σύννεφα». Οι Έλληνες τους ονομάζουν στη δεξιά πλευρά του Δούναβη «κτίστας» και στην αριστερή «πολιστάς»²⁵. Στο έργο του «Ιουδαϊκές Αρχαιότητες», ο Ιωσήφ Φλάβιος παρομοιάζει αυτούς τους ασκητές με τους Εσσέους, που είχαν μια πολύ αυστηρή οργάνωση²⁶.

Ο Ρουμάνος ιστορικός Βασίλης Παρβάν, σ' ένα από τα γραπτά του λέει ότι οι αρχαίοι συγγραφείς παρατήρησαν στους Δάκες «ξεχωριστό ζήλο για τα θεία πράγματα». (περί το θείον σπουδάζοντες)²⁷. Πολλοί αρχαίοι συγγραφείς αναφέρθηκαν στα

²¹ Iordanes, *Getica* 67-70, 73, βλ. Mihai Manea, Adrian Pascu și Bogdan Teodorescu, *Istoria Românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri până la revoluția de la 1821*, εκδ. didactică și pedagogică, R.A., București, 1993, σ. 106.

²² Strabo, *Geografia* σ. 762, apud. Vasile Pârvan, *Getica o protoistorie a Daciei*, εκδ. Meridiane, București, 1982, σ. 85.

²³ Strabo, *Geografia*, VII, 3, apud. Ion Horațiu Crișan μν.ε. σ. 350.

²⁴ Αυτόθι, σ. 349.

²⁵ Vasile Pârvan, μ.ε. σ. 95.

²⁶ Αυτόθι, σ. 95.

²⁷ Αυτόθι, σ. 95.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

έργα τους στη θρησκεία των Δάκων και ειδικά στο Ζαμόλξη²⁸. Οι Έλληνες συγγραφείς έμαθαν γι' αυτούς από τους Έλληνες που κατοικούσαν στη δυτική όχθη της Μαύρης Θάλασσας όπου ίδρυσαν από τον 7^ο αιώνα πολλές πόλεις όπως τις: Τύρας, Ηστρια, Τόμις (σημερινή Κονσταντσα), Καλάτις (σημερινή Μαγκάλια), Μπιζόνε, Διονυσόπολις (σήμερα Μπάλτσικ)²⁹.

Χάρη στον ζήλο τους για μια δυνατή πίστη στην αθανασία της ψυχής, οι Δάκες ονομάστηκαν χριστιανοί πριν ακόμη εμφανιστεί ο Χριστιανισμός³⁰.

3. Οι αρχές του Χριστιανισμού στη Ρουμανία

Ο Χριστιανισμός εξαπλώθηκε πολύ εύκολα στους Δάκες, ειδικά σ' εκείνους που βρίσκονταν στα νότια του Δούναβη, όσο και στα μέρη ανάμεσα στον ποταμό και τη θάλασσα, χάρη στην ομοιότητα της θρησκείας τους μ' εκείνη που δίδασκαν οι Άγιοι Απόστολοι. Η μεγάλη πίστη στην αθανασία της ψυχής αξιοποιήθηκε από τους διαδόχους των Αποστόλων και από τους Χριστιανούς ιεραποστόλους που δίδασκαν την Ανάσταση (του Χριστού). Επίσης, η ιδέα της θυσίας – όπως την κατάλαβαν και την ένοιωσαν οι Δάκοι – αποτελούσε «ευνοϊκό πεδίο» για τον Χριστιανισμό. Σημαντικό ρόλο έπαιξε και το γεγονός ότι ο Βασιλιάς στους Δάκες δεν ήταν και θεός όπως συνέβαινε στους Ρωμαίους. Ο πνευματικός οδηγός του λαού ήταν ο Μεγάλος Ιερέας που ήταν ταυτόχρονα και σύμβουλος του Βασιλιά. Ο Μουρεμπίστα άκουγε τις συμβουλές του

²⁸ Ion Horațiu Crișan μν.ε. σ. 345-356 Ο Ιωάννης Χοράτσιου Κρισάν παρουσιάζει στα ρουμάνικα κείμενα των αρχαίων συγγραφέων σχετικά με τη θρησκεία των Γέτο-Δάκων. Ανάμεσά τους αναφέρονται διάφοροι συγγραφείς όπως ο Κλήμης ο Αλεξανδρέας, δηλώνει: «οι Γέτες, βάρβαρος λαός, διαλέγουν κάθε χρόνο ένα αγγελιοφόρο στο Ζαμόλξιο. Αυτός μαχαιρώνεται και οι άλλοι που δεν εκλέχτηκαν το μετανιώνουν πικρά - λέγοντας ότι στερήθηκαν τέτοια ευτυχισμένη ευκαιρία.

²⁹ Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria ilustră a românilor*, εκδ. Sport - Turism, București, 1981, σ. 31.

³⁰ S. Mehedinți-Soveja, *Creștinismul Românesc*, εκδ. Cugetarea - Georgescu Delafras, București, 1940, σ. 40.

Δεκενέου. Αυτό το προσόν μεταδόθηκε στον Ρουμανικό λαό μετά το Χριστιανισμό. Ένας καθηγητής Θεολογίας γράφει τα εξής: «δεν ήταν δύσκολο για το λαό των Θρακοδάκων που πίστευαν στην αθανασία της ψυχής και είχαν μια ζωή γεμάτη στερήσεις να περάσουν στον Χριστιανισμό ή ακόμα για κάποιους απ' αυτούς να ξεκινήσουν μια μοναχική ζωή που ήταν συστημένη από τον Ιησού Χριστό και από τον Απόστολο Παύλο». (Ματθαίος, XIX, 12 προς Κορινθίους VII, 7)³¹.

Ο Άγιος Απόστολος Ανδρέας ήταν ο πρώτος ιεραπόστολος σε μέρη κατοικημένα από τους Δάκες. Είναι ο Ευσέβιος από την Καισαρεία που μας αναφέρει αυτό το γεγονός στο έργο του το οποίο φέρει τον μεγάλο τίτλο «Η εκκλησιαστική ιστορία III, 1». Λέει ότι «οι Άγιοι Απόστολοι του Σωτήρα μας όσο και οι μαθητές Του διασκορπίστηκαν σε όλο τον κόσμο που γνώριζαν εκείνη την εποχή. Κατά την παράδοση, η μοίρα του Θωμά ήταν να πάει στην Παρθία, του Ανδρέα στη Σκυθία και του Ιωάννη στην Ασία, όπου και πέρασε πολύ καιρό και πέθανε στην Έφεσο»³².

Οι Σκύθες ήταν ένας λαός ιρανικής καταγωγής που μετανάστευσαν από το Ιράν τον 7^ο και 6^ο αιώνα π.Χ.³³ κι έμειναν στα νότια της σημερινής Ουκρανίας και της Δοβρουτσάς. Ολόκληρη η περιοχή ονομάστηκε Μεγάλη Σκυθία, ενώ η άλλη ήταν η Μικρή Σκυθία. Ο Άγιος Ανδρέας κήρυξε το Ευαγγέλιο στις όχθες της Μαύρης Θάλασσας, ξεκινώντας από τη Μικρά Ασία και τον Καύκασο μέχρι την Μολδαβία, τη Δοβρουτσά

³¹ Pr. Prof. Ioan Rămureanu, *Noi considerații privind pătrunderea creștinismului la traco-geto-daci*, στο „Ortodoxia”, XXVI, 1974, nr. 1, σ. 168.

³² Eusebiu de Cezareea, *Istoria Bisericească, Martirii din Palestina*, Colectia Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești, vol. 13, μεταφραση Pr. Prof. T. Bodogae κδ. I.B.M. B.O.R., București, 1987, σ. 99.

³³ Οι Σκύθες προκαλούσαν ταραχές στις βόρειες περιοχές της Περσικής αυτοκρατορίας του βασιλιά Δαρείου. Όλη η ανατολή βρισκόταν υπό την εξουσία του. Το 514 π.χ. ο Δαρείος ξεκίνησε μ' ένα τεράστιο στρατό εναντίον των Σκυθών. Στο δρόμο του υποτάχθηκαν πολλοί λαοί - χωρίς μάχη. Οι Γέτες όμως δεν το ήθελαν. Ο Ηρόδοτος ομολογεί «αν και οι Γέτες είχαν αποφασίσει να αντισταθούν, νικήθηκαν γρήγορα παρ' ότι ήταν οι πιο γενναίοι και οι πιο σωστοί των Θρακών». βλ. Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu μν.ε. σ. 32-33. (Ο Δαρείος δεν κατάφερε πάντως να νικήσει τους Σκύθες, επειδή είχαν αποσυρθεί προς τις στέπες της Μαύρης θάλασσας).

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

και τη Βουλγαρία. Από τα μέρη όπου τώρα ζουν οι Βούλγαροι πέρασε στην Ελλάδα και ύστερα πήγε στην Πάτρα, όπου τελικά πέθανε.

Βγάζουμε έτσι το συμπέρασμα ότι ένα μέρος της σημερινής Ρουμανίας ευαγγελίστηκε από έναν μαθητή του Ιησού Χριστού, ο οποίος ακριβώς σαν τους άλλους Αποστόλους χειροτόνησε επισκόπους και ιερείς για να συνεχίσουν το ιεραποστολικό του έργο.

Μετά την κατάκτηση της Δακίας από το στρατό του αυτοκράτορα Τραϊανού το 106 μ.Χ. και την μεταμόρφωσή της σε ρωμαϊκή επαρχία, ήρθαν πάρα πολλοί άποικοι από τη χερσόνησο του Σινά, τη Μικρά Ασία και τη Βαλκανική χερσόνησο. Σ' αυτά τα μέρη ήδη είχαν διδάξει οι Άγιοι Απόστολοι και κατ' επέκταση κάποιοι απ' αυτούς ήσαν χριστιανοί³⁴.

Επίσης τον χριστιανισμό τον φέρανε και οι στρατιώτες που ήρθαν για να υπερασπίσουν την περιοχή. Γνωρίζουμε ότι ο πρώτος Ρωμαίος που έγινε χριστιανός ήταν ο εκατόνταρχος Κορνήλιος. Μετά την αποστράτευσή τους, αυτοί οι στρατιώτες γίνονταν απόστρατοι³⁵, παντρεύονταν και έμεναν στην Δακία, κάνοντας χριστιανικές οικογένειες. Τον χριστιανισμό τον μετέδωσαν και οι έμποροι³⁶, οι οποίοι, σε εκείνα τα χρόνια, έρχονταν από ελληνικές πόλεις της Μαύρης Θάλασσας, από τη Μικρά Ασία ή από τα ελληνικά νησιά.

Υπάρχουν μαρτυρίες κάποιων συγγραφέων των πρώτων αιώνων που μας διαβεβαιώνουν για τη μετάδοση του χριστιανισμού στους Δάκες. Ο Άγιος απολογητής Ιουστίνος, ο μάρτυρας και φιλόσοφος,³⁷ στο έργο του: «Διάλογος προς Τρύφωνα Ιουδαίο» γράφει: «δεν υπάρχει κανένας λαός είτε που ζει σε κάρο είτε που ζει σε σκηνή και εκτρέφοντας ζώα, που να μην κάνει προσευχές εις το όνομα του Χριστού».

Ο Τερτυλλιανός από την Καρθαγένη (160-240μ.Χ.) λέει ότι «ο Χριστός βασιλεύει στις περιοχές των Σαρμάτων, των

³⁴ Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* vol I, εκδ. I.B.M.B.O.R. București, 1980, σ. 57.

³⁵ Αυτόθι, σ. 57.

³⁶ Αυτόθι, σ. 58.

³⁷ Αυτόθι, σ. 59.

Δάκων, των Γερμανών και των Σκυθών»³⁸ («Κατά Ιουδαίων» -Adversus Judaeos).

Τα βασικά στοιχεία της πίστεως και της θρησκευτικής ζωής, ολόκληρη η χριστιανική ορολογία στα ρουμανικά είναι λατινικής προέλευσης. Αυτό το γεγονός αποτελεί το δυνατότερο επιχείρημα για τον χριστιανισμό των Αρχαίων Ρουμάνων³⁹. Αυτοί ήταν ήδη χριστιανοί όταν ήρθαν οι Σλάβοι. Οι λέξεις λατινικής προέλευσης στην εκκλησιαστική ορολογία δείχνουν ότι ο εκχριστιανισμός γινόταν συγχρόνως με την ρωμαιοκρατία. Αυτή η θρησκεία μαζί με την κοινή γλώσσα ήταν οι κύριοι παράγοντες που συντέλεσαν στην επικράτηση της ενότητας του κράτους στη μέση των μεταναστευτικών λαών που ήρθαν στη Δακία.

Στα τέλη του 3^{ου} αιώνα και τις αρχές του 4^{ου} είναι γνωστά τα ονόματα ορισμένων επισκόπων των οποίων η μόρφωση και η άγια ζωή, αποδεικνύουν τη δύναμη του χριστιανισμού. Από τις ειδήσεις διάφορων συναξαριών⁴⁰ και μαρτυριών μαθαίνουμε για τον επίσκοπο Εφραίμ του Τόμις – πρωτεύουσα της Διοβρουτσάς – που πέθανε ως μάρτυρας στις 7 Μαρτίου 304 μ.Χ. Επίσης, αναφέρονται οι επίσκοποι Ευαγγελικούς⁴¹ και Τίτ, οι οποίοι επίσης μαρτύρησαν. Ένας απ' αυτούς ήταν παρών και στην πρώτη οικουμενική Σύνοδο στη Νίκαια.

Από το 369 μ.Χ. ήρθε στο Τόμις ο Ρωμαίος αυτοκράτορας Ουάλης της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ο οποίος ήταν αρειανός. Εκεί βρήκε τον επίσκοπο Βετρανιόν⁴² – άνθρωπο με εξαιρετικά άγια ζωή. Ο αυτοκράτορας ανάγκασε τον επίσκοπο να δεχτεί και τους αρειανούς στη λειτουργία, όμως αυτός διαμαρτυρήθηκε και υπερασπίστηκε την Ορθοδοξία σύμφωνα με τις αποφάσεις της πρώτης Οικουμενικής Συνόδου και βρήκε καταφύγιο με τους πιστούς του σε μια άλλη εκκλησία. Ο αυτοκράτορας τον εξόρισε, αλλά σύντομα τον κάλεσε πίσω από το φόβο μιας εξέγερσης των Σκυθών. Η Εκκλησία τον τιμάει σαν άγιο στις

³⁸ Αυτόθι, σ. 59.

³⁹ Αυτόθι, σ. 63-71.

⁴⁰ Αυτόθι, σ.132.

⁴¹ Αυτόθι, σ.132.

⁴² Αυτόθι, σ.133.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

25 Ιανουαρίου. Ύστερα έπεται ο Γερόντης⁴³ που παραβρέθηκε στη Δεύτερη Οικουμενική Σύνοδο στην Κωνσταντινούπολη το 381 μ.Χ. Η σειρά τους συνεχίζεται με τον Θεότιμο Α΄, Σκύθη στην καταγωγή, ο οποίος στις Συνόδους του 400 και 403 μ.Χ. υπερασπίστηκε τον Άγιο Ιωάννη του Χρυσόστομο εναντίον των εχθρών του. Η Εκκλησία τον γιορτάζει στις 20 Απριλίου. Ο διάδοχός του ήταν ο Τιμόθεος που πήρε μέρος στις ερασίες της τρίτης Οικουμενικής Συνόδου το 431 μ.Χ. στην Έφεσο⁴⁴. Είναι γνωστοί κι άλλοι – τους οποίους δεν θα αναφέρουμε τώρα. Σημειώνουμε μόνο ότι και στην τέταρτη Οικουμενική Σύνοδο παρέστη ρουμάνος επίσκοπος.

Η χριστιανική ζωή στην Δοβρουτσά γνώρισε μια εποχή μεγάλης άνθισης τον πέμπτο και τον έκτο αιώνα, όταν ο Τόμις έγινε Αρχιεπισκοπή που περιείχε 14 (επισκοπές)⁴⁵.

Οι αυτοκράτορες της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ενδιαφέρονταν επίσης να γίνουν χριστιανοί οι βάρβαροι, γιατί κατ' αυτόν τον τρόπο γίνονταν ευνοϊκότεροι ως προς την πολιτική της αυτοκρατορίας. Γι' αυτό το λόγο πολλές φορές ο βυζαντινός στρατιώτης συνοδευόταν από έναν χριστιανό ιεραπόστολο.

Τον 6^ο αιώνα ήρθαν στα βόρεια του Δούναβη οι Σλάβοι⁴⁶, οι οποίοι και έμειναν για κάποιο χρονικό διάστημα μαζί με τον ιθαγενή πληθυσμό και μετανάστευσαν στην βαλκανική χερσόνησο μέχρι την Ελλάδα και τις όχθες της Αδριατικής.

Ο ρωμαϊκός πληθυσμός που βρισκόταν στα νότια του Δούναβη διασκορπίστηκε, μερικοί αποτραβήχτηκαν προς τις νότιες όχθες και τη Δαλματία, ενώ άλλοι πήγαν προς τα βόρεια. Απ' αυτή τη «ρωμαϊκή μάζα» έμειναν στη βαλκανική χερσόνησο οι λεγόμενοι «βλάχοι».

Το 679 μ.Χ. εμφανίστηκαν οι Βούλγαροι⁴⁷ οι οποίοι αποτελούσαν ένα δυνατό φεουδαρχικό κράτος. Το 846 μ.Χ. έγιναν χριστιανοί μαζί με τον τσάρο τους Βόρι, ο οποίος και εισήγαγε στη Βουλγαρία τις βυζαντινο-σλαβικές

⁴³ Αυτόθι, σ. 134.

⁴⁴ Αυτόθι, σ. 135.

⁴⁵ Αυτόθι, σ. 139.

⁴⁶ Αυτόθι, σ. 172.

⁴⁷ Αυτόθι, σ. 173-174.

ιεροτελεστίες. Μεταφράστηκαν εκκλησιαστικά βιβλία από την ελληνική γλώσσα και τη σλαβική που μιλιόταν από τους Σλάβους της Θεσσαλονίκης. Τα Σλαβικά καθιερώθηκαν σαν γλώσσα λατρείας στους σλαβικούς λαούς.

Χάρη στις εκκλησιαστικές σχέσεις ανάμεσα στους Ρουμάνους και τους σλαβικούς λαούς από τα νότια του Δούναβη εισχώρησε στη Ρουμανία (Βλαχία) αυτή η βυζαντινο-σλαβική λατρεία⁴⁸ και στη συνέχεια βρέθηκαν υπό την δικαιοδοσία του Πατριαρχείου της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως – το μόνο κράτος με ρωμαϊκή καταγωγή και γλώσσα και με ορθόδοξη λατρεία.

Από τον 10^ο μέχρι τον 13^ο αιώνα υπήρχε πάντα στη Τρανσυλβανία μαζί μ'ένα πολιτικοκρατικό σώμα και ένα επίσης εκκλησιαστικό. Ένας επίσκοπος είχε την κατοικία του κοντά στο βασιλείο του Μενουμορούτ στο φρούριο Μπιχαρέα, ένας άλλος στη Μορισένα κοντά στο δούκα Γκλάντ.

Σ' ένα χρυσόβουλο του αυτοκράτορα Βασιλείου του Βουλγαροκτόνου του 1020, αναφέρεται μια ορθόδοξη επισκοπή του Ντιμπίσκου⁴⁹ που ταυτίστηκε με τη σημερινή Τιμισοάρα. Σε μια επιστολή του Ινοκέντιου Γ' από τις 3 Μαΐου 1205, συζητείται για «μια ορθόδοξη επισκοπή στα εδάφη των υιών του ηγέτη Μπάλεα»⁵⁰. Πιστεύεται ότι βρίσκεται στην περιοχή Χουνεντόαρα. Μετά την κατάκτηση της Τρανσυλβανίας από τους καθολικούς Ούγγρους άρχισε ο κατατρεγμός της Ρουμανικής Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας. Αυτές οι δραστηριότητες υποστηρίχτηκαν από τους Πάπες της Ρώμης και τους βασιλείς της Ουγγαρίας. Ο Πάπας Γρηγόριος Θ' ανησυχούσε άλλωστε πριν το 1234 για τις δράσεις των «Ψευτοεπισκόπων» ελληνικής θρησκείας⁵¹. Αυτά τα πράγματα είναι για μας πολύτιμες αποδείξεις της διάρκειας του Ρουμανικού λαού και της εκκλησίας του στην Τρανσυλβανία.

Πολλές ιστορικές πηγές μας δείχνουν ότι από τον 11^ο αιώνα έως το 13^ο, στη Βλαχία και τη Μολδαβία υπήρξε μια ορθόδοξη εκκλησιαστική οργάνωση με επικεφαλής, ιεράρχες

⁴⁸ Αυτόθι, σ. 177-181.

⁴⁹ Αυτόθι, σ. 209-210.

⁵⁰ Αυτόθι, σ. 211.

⁵¹ Αυτόθι, σ. 229.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

του Ρουμανικού λαού, που κατάφεραν να κρατήσουν τους ενορίτες στην ορθόδοξη πίστη.

Τον 14^ο αιώνα, με μεγαλύτερη ακρίβεια το 1359, η Σύνοδος του Πατριαρχείου της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως αναγνωρίζει τη Μητρόπολη της Ρουμανικής χώρας μετά από μια αίτηση του ηγέτη Νικολάου Αλεξάνδρου Βασαράμπ. Ονομάζεται μητροπολίτης ο Ιωακίμης της Βίτσινα. Ο διάδοχός του είναι ο (Νικόλαος Αλέξανδρος) Βλάικου Βλάντισλαβ, ο οποίος ζητάει την εγκαθίδρυση μιας άλλης μητρόπολης στο άλλο μισό της χώρας – στη Μικρή Βλαχία. Το οικουμενικό πατριαρχείο αναγνωρίζει το 1370 τη Μητρόπολη του Σεβερίν και ως μητροπολίτη τον Αντίμ Κριτόπολος. Επίσης το 1402, ο Πατριάρχης Ματθαίος αναγνωρίζει τον Ιωσήφ Μουσάτ μητροπολίτη της Μολδαβίας.

4. Ο Ρουμανικός Μοναχισμός από τις αρχές έως τον 14^ο αιώνα

Οι δυσμενείς ιστορικές περιστάσεις που είχαν σαν αιτία τη μετανάστευση και τις εισβολές των βαρβαρικών λαών για ένα χρονικό διάστημα χιλίων ετών στη γη της παλιάς Δακίας – εμπόδισαν την κοινωνική και πνευματική ανάπτυξη του Ρουμανικού λαού. Αλλά παρ' όλες τις δυσκολίες, ο λαός επιβίωσε, η κλίση του στα θρησκευτικά όσο και η προδιάθεση για μια ασκητική και μοναχική ζωή μεταδόθηκαν στους απογόνους των Δάκων.

Παρουσιάσαμε ήδη τη θρησκεία τους και τη ζωή των ασκητών που έγιναν χριστιανοί καλόγεροι. Έτσι μπορούμε να μιλήσουμε για μια συνέχεια από τον Δακικό μοναχισμό έως τον Δακορωμαϊκό χριστιανισμό και τέλος στο Ρουμανικό. Βέβαια μαζί με τον χριστιανισμό της Ανατολής έρχονται και οι κανόνες του Αγίου Βασιλείου και σταδιακά χάρη και στις σχέσεις με το Βυζάντιο, την Καππαδοκία, τη Συρία και την Παλαιστίνη, θα έχουμε ένα γνήσιο ορθόδοξο μοναχισμό.

Δεν υπάρχει πάντως μια αρχή, μια ακριβής ημερομηνία για την έναρξη του χριστιανισμού στη Ρουμανία, όπως συμβαίνει στις γειτονικές χώρες. Ο πρώτος συγγραφέας που μιλάει για

τον μοναχισμό σ' αυτά τα μέρη, είναι ο άγιος Επιφάνειος της Κύπρου στο βιβλίο του που φέρει τον τίτλο «Κατά αιρέσεων, ογδοήκοντα το επικληθέν Πανάριος ειτ' ουν Κιβώτιος εις βιβλία τρία». Εκθέτοντας τα διδάγματα του καλόγερου Αούντιο, ο άγιος λέει ότι αυτός εξορίστηκε στα σύνορα της αυτοκρατορίας στη Δακία, από τον αυτοκράτορα Κωνσταντίνο (337-361), εξαιτίας της αυστηρότητάς του. (Γοθία)⁵², όπου δίδαξε σε πολλούς Γότθους, έχτισε ακόμα και μοναστήρια, μέσα στα οποία εξασκούσαν μοναχική ζωή, αγνότητα και άσκηση». Στη συνέχεια, ο άγιος Επιφάνειος προσθέτει ότι «αναμφίβολα ο τρόπος ζωής των Αουντιανών κοινοτήτων είναι πράγματι αξιοθαύμαστος, γιατί όλα αυτά που συμβαίνουν γίνονται με ικανοποιητικό τρόπο»⁵³.

Επίσης τα έγγραφα της εποχής αναφέρουν για παράδειγμα έναν συγκεκριμένο ορθόδοξο καλόγερο που ονομαζόταν Ακτύλας – μάρτυρας μαζί με άλλους είκοσι πέντε χριστιανούς στη διάρκεια του γοθικού διωγμού⁵⁴.

Τον 3^ο και 4^ο αιώνα η εκκλησιαστική ζωή στη Δοβρουτσά και στις εκβολές του Δούναβη, ήταν καλά οργανωμένη με επισκόπους, όπως δείξαμε προηγουμένως. Σίγουρα δίπλα σ' αυτούς υπήρχε κι ένας οργανωμένος μοναχισμός. Ειδικά οι ερευνητές στην ιστορία της Ρουμανικής Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας και στην ιστορία της Ρουμανίας υποστηρίζουν την ύπαρξη ενός μοναστηριού στο Νικουλιτσέλ στη Δοβρουτσά. Εκεί ήρθαν στο φώς το 1971 τέσσερις τάφοι μαρτύρων⁵⁵. Τα ονόματά τους ήταν: Ζώτικος, Άθαλος, Κομάσις και Φίλιππος. Εκείνο το χρόνο, οι ραγδαίες βροχές προκάλεσαν και την αποκάλυψη ενός μεγάλου ναού σε ρυθμό βασιλικής από τον 4^ο αιώνα. Στο «martirium», σ' ένα άθικτο δωμάτιο που βρίσκεται κάτω από

52 Η Δακία λεγόταν Γοθία κατά το όνομα των (εισβολώ) κατοχών που λεγόντουσαν Γότθοι. Υπό την ονομασία εννοούμε και τον πληθυσμό των Αρχαίων Ρουμάνων από τα εδάφη της πρώην Δακίας.

53 Dumitru Berciu, *Daco România*, Geneva, 1976, σ. 13, apud Mitropolitul Serafim, *Isihasmul, tradiție și cultură românească*, εκδ. Anastasia, București, 1994, σ. 34.

54 Vasile Pârvan, *Contribuții epigrafice la Istoria creștinismului daco-român*, București, 1911, σ. 201, apud Mitropolitul Serafim, μν.ε. σ. 34.

55 Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion G. Coman, *Scriitori teologi în Scytia Minor* στο «De la Dunăre la Mare» εκδ. Episcopiei Tomisului și Dunării de Jos, Galați, 1979, σ. 72.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

την Αγία Τράπεζα, ανακα-λύφθηκαν τα λείψανα αυτών των μαρτύρων της εποχής του Διοκλητιανού (304-305). Τα ονόματά τους ήταν γραμμένα στους τοίχους μαζί με μια επιγραφή στα ελληνικά «μάρτυρες του Χριστού». Εκτός απ' αυτούς έχουμε κι άλλους 25 αγίους που είχαν υποφέρει το μαρτύριο στην Ισάκτσα⁵⁶.

Σίγουρα, από τους κατοίκους της Δοβρουτσάς, έγιναν πολλοί μοναχοί με υψηλή πνευματικότητα και θεολογική μόρφωση και με εξαιρετικό πνευματικό βίωμα –γεγονός που οι πηγές της εποχής το υπενθυμίζουν. Στο έργο του «Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία» ο Sozomen μιλάει με μεγάλη τιμή για τον επίσκοπο Τεόθυμο Α΄ (Θεότιμο) του Τόμις, για τον οποίο λέει ότι «ήταν Σκύθης στην καταγωγή του, ήξερε φιλοσοφία⁵⁷ και ζούσε πάντα με μετρημένο τρόπο. Η ασκητική του ζωή και η πνευματική του καθαρότητα τιμήθηκαν πολύ από τους σύγχρονούς του ακόμα και από τους βαρβάρους όπως ήταν οι Ούνοι που τον αποκαλούσαν «θεό των Ρωμαίων»⁵⁸.

Ένα άλλο σημαντικό πρόσωπο των αρχαίων Ρουμάνων στη Δοβρουτσά των πρώτων χριστιανικών αιώνων ήταν ο καλόγερος Ιωάννης Κασσιανός. Γεννήθηκε στη Δοβρουτσά το 360 και πέθανε το 435 μ.Χ. Περιγράφει την πατρίδα του ως εξής: «Βλέπω όλα τα βουνά του Ματσίν όπου βοσκούν κοπάδια προβάτων και κατσικιών κι όπου οι βοσκοί δεν προσκυνάνε πια τα διαβολικά πνεύματα, αλλά το Πνεύμα και την αλήθεια (Ιωάννης IV, 24). Χτίσανε σπίτια εκεί που είχαν τη δυνατότητα να αποφύγουν όλους εκείνους που τους έκλεβαν την περιουσία και τη ζωή. Πάντα νιώθαμε αυτή την νοσταλγία προς την πατρική χώρα για να δούμε τους γονείς μας.. Πολλές εκτάσεις γεμάτες μοναξιά, η οποία είναι τόσο γλυκιά όσο και χρήσιμη. Τι χαρά για έναν μοναχό στα βάθη ενός δάσους, τι αφθονία τρόπων υπάρξεως⁵⁹. Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης Κασσιανός μορφώθηκε ως μοναχός

⁵⁶ J. Zeiler, *Les origines chretiennes dans les provences danubiennes de l'Empire Romain*, Paris, 1918, σ. 28-30, apud. Mitrop Serafim μν.ε. σ. 38.

⁵⁷ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion G. Coman, *Scritori bisericești din epoca străromână*, București, ed. I.B.M.B.O.R. 1979, σ. 185.

⁵⁸ Pr. Prof. I. Rămureanu, *Sfinți și martiri la Tomis – Constanța*, στο «B.O.R.», XCII, 1974, nr. 7-8, σ. 1007.

⁵⁹ Diacon P. I. David, *La Sfântul Ioan Cassian*, στο «G.B.», XXXV, 1967, nr.1-2, σ. 67.

στη Δομπρότσε και στην ηλικία της ωριμότητας έφυγε στην Παλαιστίνη μαζί με τον πνευματικό του, τον αδελφό Γκέρμαν κι εγκαταστάθηκαν σε ένα μοναστήρι κοντά στη Βηθλεέμ. Από εκεί πήγαν στην Αίγυπτο όπου και έμειναν 14 χρόνια. Επισκέφτηκαν τον Ευάγριο τον Ποντικό και τον Άγιο Ιωάννη το Χρυσόστομο⁶⁰ το 399, όταν ήταν Πατριάρχης της Κωνσταντι-νουπόλεως. Έφτασε μέχρι τη Ρώμη και τη Μασσαλία, στα νότια της Γαλλίας, όπου το 415 ίδρυσε δύο μονές, μία ανδρική και μία γυναικεία.

Άλλος εξαιρετικός άνθρωπος του μοναχισμού αυτής της γης ήταν και ο Διονύσιος ο μικρός ή ο ταπεινός, ο οποίος γεννήθηκε γύρω στα 470. Σπούδασε σε μια μονή, όπως μαθαίνουμε από μια επιστολή του προς έναν επίσκοπο Πέτρο, τον οποίο ευχαριστεί «για την πνευματική τροφή που του δόθηκε στα παιδικά του χρόνια»⁶¹. Περιγράφει την πατρίδα του με τον εξής τρόπο: «Η Σκυθία είναι τρομερή εξ αιτίας του κρύου και των βαρβάρων, αλλά από την άλλη πλευρά πάντα γέννησε ανθρώπους γεμάτους από ζεστασιά, ξεχωριστούς ανθρώπους για τους ήπιους τρόπους τους. Το ότι έτσι είναι τα πράγματα το ξέρω όχι μόνο από άμεση γνώση, από την γέννησή μου έως τώρα, αλλά και από προσωπική εμπειρία. Επειδή εκεί, σε μια κοινότητα όπου υπάρχει το Άγιο Πνεύμα του Θεού μέσω του βαπτίσματος, με πατέρες μακαριστούς, των οποίων την πνευματική γονιμότητα η περιοχή σεμνύεται, ανθρώπους που αξιώθηκα να δω να περνάνε μια θεϊκή ζωή σ' έναν τόσο αδύναμο κορμί»⁶². Ο Διονύσιος ο μικρός μας άφησε πολλά έργα και επιβλήθηκε στη θεολογική σκέψη εκείνης της εποχής. Πάντως, έμεινε γνωστός επειδή είναι ο «ιδρυτής» ενός καινούργιου συστήματος μετρήσεως του χρόνου. Μ' αυτόν εγκαινιάστηκε η χριστιανική περίοδος. Ο Κασσιόδωρος τον τοποθετεί στη σειρά των «ενδόξων ανδρών, λαμπερός χάρη στο στόλισμα των ισχυρών του γνώσεων, σοφός, απλός και ταπεινός»⁶³.

⁶⁰ Pr. Prof. I. G. Coman, *Scritori teologi în Scythia Minor*, στο «De la Dunăre la Mare» εκ. Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului și Dunării de Jos, Galați, 1979, σ. 65.

⁶¹ του ατου, *Sciții Ioan Cassian și Dionisie cel Mic și legăturile lor cu lumea mediteraneană*, στο «S.T.», XXVII, 1975 nr. 3-4, σ. 172 și nota 21.

⁶² Αυτόθι, σ. 192.

⁶³ Arhim Prof. Veniamin Micle, *Despre monahismul ortodox român, anterior sec. XIV-lea* στο «G.B.», XXXVII (1978), nr. 3-4, σ. 306.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

Προς την αρχή του 6^{ου} αιώνα (517) τα έγγραφα αναφέρουν μια ομάδα μοναχών της Δοβρουτσάς, δηλαδή τον Ιωάννη τον Μαξέντιο, τον Λεόντιο, τον Μαουρίτσιο, τον Πέτρο τον Διάκονο, τον Ιωάννη και τον Αχιλλέα. Βρίσκονταν στο Νικουλιτσέλ και είναι γνωστοί με το όνομα «οι Σκύθες καλόγεροι»⁶⁴. Τους θυμόμαστε γιατί είναι εκείνοι που σε μια δημόσια διαμάχη υποστήριζαν ότι: «ένας από την Αγία Τριάδα υπέφερε και σωματικά». Με σκοπό να υπερασπιστούν αυτή την πίστη, έκαναν ταξίδι στην Κωνσταντινούπολη και τη Ρώμη όπου ήρθαν σ' επαφή με Αφρικανούς καλόγερους που είχαν εξοριστεί από το βασιλιά Τράσομουντ των Βανδάλων. Αυτή η διδασκαλία ανακηρύχθηκε υποχρεωτική για τους ορθόδοξους πιστούς από τον αυτοκράτορα Ιουστινιανό στις 15 Μαρτίου 533, στη Πέμπτη Οικουμενική Σύνοδο, όπου αυτή η διδασκαλία θριάμβευσε οριστικά.

Οι Σκύθες μοναχοί είναι βέβαια αρχαίοι Ρουμάνοι μοναχοί από τη Δοβρουτσά, η οποία ήταν μέρος της βυζαντινής Αυτοκρατορίας και λεγόταν «Μικρή Σκυθία» ήδη από τους πρώτους αιώνες.

Το 1957 στο λατομείο Μπασαράμπ, στο σημερινό χωριό Μουρφατλάρ της διοικήσεως Κονστάντσα, ανακαλύφθηκε ένα αληθινό μοναστηριακό συγκρότημα⁶⁵ που είχε έξι παρεκκλήσια, που χρονολογούνται από τον 9^ο αιώνα, όπως μας το μαρτυρούν οι πολλές επιγραφές⁶⁶. Οι καλόγεροι που έμεναν εδώ χάραζανε στους τοίχους Σλαβικές και Ελληνικές επιγραφές.

Μια άλλη μοναχική εστία σημειώνεται στο Νικουλιτσέλ, στην πόλη Τσεατατσούκα του νομού Τούλτσεα, όπου βρέθηκαν τα ερείπια από ένα εκκλησάκι και τα ίχνη των κελιών γύρω του. Κοντά όμως, δεν υπήρχαν ανθρώπινες κατοικίες που να δικαιολογούν την ύπαρξη μιας εκκλησίας κάποιου χωριού⁶⁷.

⁶⁴ Pr. prof. I.G. Coman, *Scriptori teologi în Scythia Minor*, μ.ε. σ. 72.

⁶⁵ Prof. Ion Barnea, *Bisericițele rupestre de la Murfatlar* στο «De la Dunăre la Mare», εκδ. Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului și Dunării de Jos, Galați, 1979, σ. 134-141.

⁶⁶ Pr. Drd. Vasile Iorgulescu, *Mărturii privind monahismul pe pământ românesc înaintea Sfântului Nicodim, în Țara Românească și Banat*, στο «B.O.R.», C.T., 1983, nr. 3-4, σ. 257.

⁶⁷ Αυτόθι, σ. 258.

Ένα άλλο κέντρο της Δοβρουτσάς όπου υπήρχε μοναστηριακή κοινότητα είναι το εκκλησάκι Γαρβάρ. Κάποιοι ερευνητές έχουν τη γνώμη ότι οι αρχές του χρονολογούνται από τον 10ο αιώνα⁶⁸.

Η μοναχική ζωή όμως γνώρισε μια εξαιρετική ανάπτυξη όχι μόνο στη Δοβρουτσά, αλλά και στις εκβολές του Δούναβη, ανεβαίνοντας μέχρι τα βόρεια της Μολδαβίας. Μια σειρά πηγών, μιλάει για την αρχαιότητα των μοναστηριών με πέτρινες εκκλησίες από το Συγκρότημα Αλουνίς – Νούκου, μετά από τα χωριά Κόλτσι και Μπαζιόνου (νομός Μπουζάου). Αυτά ήταν στα βουνά του Μπουζάου όπου υπάρχουν τα ασκητήρια: Αλουνίς, Αγκατών, Φουντατούρα, η Τρυπημένη Σπηλιά, η Σπηλιά του Ιωσήφ, η Σπηλιά του Διονυσίου, Τορκατόρουλ, και άλλα⁶⁹.

Αυτά τα ασκητήρια αποτελούν τα παλαιότερα μοναστικά κέντρα γνωστά στα Καρπάθια⁷⁰. Αυτά τα ερημητήρια δεν έγιναν μέχρι στιγμής το αντικείμενο μια βαθιάς σπουδής. Η εμφάνιση της μοναχικής ζωής στην περιοχή του Μπουζάου και στη στροφή των Καρπαθίων οφείλεται στις σχέσεις τις πνευματικές που υπήρχαν ανάμεσα σ' αυτά τα ασκητήρια και τους καλόγερους από την Ανατολία και την Μικρά Ασία. Απ' αυτά τα μέρη ήρθαν ιεραπόστολοι και καλόγεροι στην πρώην Δακία. Μια τέτοια μαρτυρία είναι το μαρτύριο του Αγίου Σάββα, ιεραποστόλου της Καρπαδοκίας που πνίγηκε στο ποτάμι του Μπουζάου κατά τη διάρκεια του γοτθικού διωγμού τον 4^ο αιώνα.

Επίσης, από τις ανασκαφές⁷¹ στις πόλεις Χόργκα και Μο-
υρτζένι, Βακάου, Σουτσεάβα, Φάλτσιου, Ντοντέστι στο νομό Βασλούς, διαβεβαιώνεται η ύπαρξη πρώιμης μοναχικής ζωής στη Μολδαβία. Όταν το 1054 συνέβη το σχίσμα των εκκλησιών

⁶⁸ Virgil Vătășianu, *Istoria artei feudale în Țările Române*, vol. I București, 1959, σ. 128-129.

⁶⁹ Pavel Chihaia, *Date noi despre bisericuțele rupestre din Munții Buzăului*, στο «G.B.», XXXIII, 1974, nr. 5-6, σ. 507.

⁷⁰ Ierom. Ioanichie Bălan, *Vetre de Sihăstrie Românească sec. al IV-lea - XX-lea*, Ed. I.B.M.A.B.O.R., București, 1982, σ. 13.

⁷¹ G. Sibiescu, *Legăturile Sfântului Vasile cel Mare cu Scythia Minor (Dobrogea)* στο «Ort.» XXXI (1979) σ. 146-159, apud. Mitropolitul Serafim, μ.ε. σ. 31.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

(Ανατολικής και Δυτικής), ο αριθμός των μοναχών και των επισκόπων της Μολδαβίας ήταν τόσο μεγάλος ώστε μπόρεσαν να σταματήσουν της επιμονή της Ρωμαιοκαθολικής εκκλησίας, η οποία και ίδρυσε μια επισκοπή στο Μίλκο που όμως δεν είχε καμία επιτυχία και διαλύθηκε γρήγορα. Την ίδια μοίρα έχει και μια άλλη ρωμαιοκαθολική επισκοπή του 14^{ου} αιώνα στο Μπάια. Η ανεπιτυχία των Ρωμαιο-καθολικών στη Μολδαβία οφείλεται στην ύπαρξη (από τον 10ο έως τον 14^ο αιώνα) μιας δυναμικής μοναχικής ζωής με πολλούς καλόγερους και ασκητές που διατήρησαν την ενότητα της ορθοδόξου πίστεως⁷².

Στην Βλαχία βρέθηκαν στα ερείπια μιας βασιλικής στη Σουκιδάβα ένας χριστιανικός αμφορέας του 6^{ου} αιώνα, που φέρει μια ελληνική επιγραφή «του Λουκανόβου, υιού του Λικατίου – του πρεσβυτέρου». Έτσι αναφέρεται το όνομα του παλαιότερου ιερέα απ' τα βόρεια του Δούναβη. Είναι μια αναμφισβήτητη μαρτυρία ότι υπήρχε μια οργανωμένη εκκλησιαστική ζωή με μοναστική ζωή εξίσου καλά οργανωμένη. Το γεγονός ότι τα εκκλησάκια και τα κελιά ήταν χτισμένα βιαστικά από ξύλο ή άλλα λιγότερο ανθεκτικά υλικά, κάνουν αδύνατες τις προσπάθειές μας να τα γνωρίσουμε στην αρχική τους μορφή.

Έχουμε πάντως το έγγραφο αναγνώρισης Μητρόπολης της Βλαχίας το Μάιο του 1359⁷³, το οποίο λέει ότι εκείνη την εποχή, ο αριθμός των μοναχών στη Βλαχία ήταν τόσο μεγάλος που ήταν απαραίτητο να νομιμοποιηθεί επείγοντως η υποταγή τους στον Μητροπολίτη Ιωακέντιο.

Ο Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης γνώριζε καλά τη μοναστηριακή ζωή της Ρουμανικής χώρας τόσο από τις πληροφορίες των ταξιδιωτών, πριν τη μετάθεση του Ιωακέντιου στο Αρτζες, όσο και από τα γράμματα του βασιλιά Νικολάου Αλεξάνδρου (1352 – 1364) στα οποία είχε ζητήσει την αναγνώριση της Μητρόπολης. Είναι δυνατόν ο Πατριάρχης Κάλλιστος (1530-1554) να είχε γνωρίσει προσωπικά αυτή τη ζωή πριν να γίνει πατριάρχης. Το είχε μάθει από τους Ρουμάνους μοναχούς που πήγαιναν σε μεγάλο αριθμός στο Άγιο Όρος όταν ήταν ο

⁷² Ierom. Ioanichie Bălan, μν.ε. σ. 14-15.

⁷³ D.I.R. sec. al XIII-lea, XIV-lea și al XV-lea B. Țara Românească (1242-1500) București, 1953, σ. 27.

ίδιος στο μοναστήρι Ιβύρων. Επίσης και από τους μοναχούς που πήγαιναν στη Παρωρία για να μάθουν τα μυστήρια του ησυχασμού από τον μεγάλο δάσκαλο Γρηγόριο το Σιναΐτη⁷⁴.

Το 1359 όταν ο Ιωακέντιος της Βασίνα εκλέγεται Μητροπολίτης της Ρουμανικής χώρας, μετέφερε τη μητρόπολη στην αυλή του Άρτζες, στο μοναστήρι που υπήρχε εκεί με μοναχούς που τηρούσαν αυστηρούς κανόνες⁷⁵.

Και στα μέρη του Βανάτ υπάρχει έντονη μοναχική ζωή. Τα τελευταία χρόνια έγιναν πολλές ανακαλύψεις. Η πιο σημαντική στο χωριό Πεσκάρι του νομού Κάρας – Σεβερίν, στο μέρος Μικρές Σπηλιές, όπου βρέθηκαν επιγραφές με το όνομα του Προφήτη Ησαΐα, πεντάγραμμα με βυζαντινό σταυρό. Εδώ ζούσε «ένας σκιμνικός μοναχός»⁷⁶.

Ακόμη από την αρχή της δεύτερης χιλιετίας, ο βασιλιάς Άχτουμ, ο διάδοχος του Γλάζ, έχτισε στη Μορισένα ένα μοναστήρι στο όνομα του Αγίου Ιωάννη του Βαπτιστή, όπου ζούσαν Έλληνες (δηλαδή ορθόδοξοι) μοναχοί. Αυτός ο βασιλιάς νικήθηκε το 1028 από τον Στεφάνη τον Άγιο, βασιλιά της Ουγγαρίας, ο οποίος κατέκτησε την Τρανσυλβανία και προσπάθησε να επιβάλει την καθολική πίστη. Έτσι το μοναστήρι του Άχτουμ το πήραν με το ζόρι και το γέμισαν με βενεδικτίνους μοναχούς. Οι Ρουμάνοι μοναχοί ορθοδόξου λατρείας αναγκάστηκαν να χτίσουν άλλο μοναστήρι στο όνομα του Αγίου Γεωργίου (1030-1031) στο Οροσλάνος⁷⁷. Ένα άλλο μοναστήρι που διατηρείται μέχρι σήμερα είναι εκείνο στο Χόντος – Μποντορόγ του νομού Αράντ, το οποίο και αναφέρεται μέσα σε έγγραφο του 1177 υπό την ονομασία «Χοντούστ»⁷⁸. Σίγουρα υπήρξαν κι άλλες μονές στο Βανάτ που εξαφανίστηκαν, αλλά κάποιες πληροφορίες έχουμε ακόμα σε αρχεία, όπως είναι εκείνες για το μοναστήρι του μοναχού

⁷⁴ Tit Simedrea, *Viața Mănăstirească în Țara Românească înainte de 1370* στο «B.O.R.» LXXX, 1962, nr.7-8, σ. 674-675.

⁷⁵ Αυτόθι, σ. 674.

⁷⁶ Maria Comșa, *Inscripția chirilică de la Peștera Gaura Chidiei, Com. Pescari, Jud. Caraș-Severin* στο «Monumente Istorice și de artă» anul XLVII, 1977, nr. 1, σ. 35-36 apud Arhim. Prof. Veniamin Micle μν.ε. σ. 309.

⁷⁷ Arhim Veniamin Micle μ.ε. σ. 310.

⁷⁸ Αυτόθι, σ. 310.

Η διαμόρφωση του Ρουμανικού λαού...

Ιεροθέου. Αυτός παραπονιόταν σε μια επιστολή προς τον Πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Θεοδόσιο (1179-1183) ότι «τον είχαν διώξει από τη μονή»⁷⁹.

Και στην Τρανσυλβανία υπήρχαν ασκητές και μοναχοί ορθόδοξοι οι οποίοι με τον ερχομό των καθολικών Ούγγρων πάλεψαν για τη διατήρηση της Ορθοδοξίας. Η Τρανσυλβανία είναι εκείνο το μέρος της Ρουμανίας που υπέφερε κατά τη διάρκεια πολλών αιώνων υπό την εξουσία των Ούγγρων. Εδώ ήρθαν και οι αιρετικοί της Δύσεως και πάλι εδώ οι Ρουμάνοι ορθόδοξοι αναγκάστηκαν να δεχτούν ένωση με τη Ρώμη το 1700.

Οι αρχαιολογικές έρευνες από την Νταμπάσκα του νομού Κλούζ, πρώην κατοικία του Τρανσυλβανού βασιλιά Τζέλου, έφεραν στο φώς τα θεμέλια έξι εκκλησιών. Διαπιστώθηκε εδώ η ύπαρξη ενός επισκοπικού Ρουμανικού κέντρου από τον 9^ο μέχρι τον 11^ο αιώνα⁸⁰. Γύρω από την επισκοπή πρέπει να υπήρχαν και μοναχοί και παραδόσεις. Στα βουνά Απουσένι της Τρανσυλβανίας συστάθηκε ένα πάντα δυνατό κέντρο ερημιτών, όπως ήταν το Ασκητήριο των Ερημιτών (τον 9^ο – 12^ο αιώνα, που αργότερα ονομάστηκε Ριμέτς)⁸¹.

Η ύπαρξη ορισμένων ορθοδόξων μοναστηριών στην Τρανσυλβανία τον 12^ο αιώνα επιβεβαιώνεται από τη διαταγή του Πάπα Ιννοκέντιου Γ΄ προς τον καθολικό επίσκοπο από την Οραδία. Ο Πάπας ζητούσε επίσημα από τον επίσκοπο να επισκεφθεί τα ελληνικά μοναστήρια για να δει αν μπορούσε ν' αναδιοργανώσει τους ορθοδόξους μοναχούς ή ακόμα αν μπορούσε να τους ενώσει σε μια καθολική επισκοπή. Φαίνεται ότι αυτά τα μοναστήρια ήταν πολύ παλιά, γιατί σ' αυτή τη διαταγή αναφέρεται ότι ήταν χρεοκοπημένα⁸².

Ακόμα και στο μέρος Πέρι του Μαραμούρες υπήρχε μονή από τον 13^ο αιώνα. Το 1391 αναφέρεται σ' να διάταγμα του Πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Αντωνίου, ο οποίος δείχνει

⁷⁹ Αυτόθι, σ. 310.

⁸⁰ Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, *Două milenii de viață bisericească* στο «Telegraful Român», anul 1234 (1 oct. 1976) nr. 37-38, σ. 2.

⁸¹ Ierom Ioanichie Bălan, μν.ε. σ. 33.

⁸² Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor*, București, 1974, vol. II, σ. 63.

ότι αυτό το μοναστήρι προστατευόταν από τους βασιλιάδες Μπαλίτσα και Ντραγ. Το ίδιο πράγμα είχε κάνει και ο πατέρας τους Σας (1354-1358).

Βγάζουμε το συμπέρασμα ότι από τους πρώτους αιώνες και έως την εμφάνιση του ησυχασμού στο έδαφος της Ρουμανίας, υπήρξαν πολλοί μοναχοί και ασκητές που ζούσαν σε σπηλιές και απομονωμένα κελιά ειδικά φτιαγμένα για να γίνουν κατάλληλα για προσευχή. Εκεί είχαν σκάψει ναούς ή είχαν χτίσει εκκλησάκια. Ακόμα κι όταν συγκεντρώθηκαν σε μεγαλύτερα κτίρια, στην κατασκευή τους χρησιμοποίησαν υλικά σαν το ξύλο, τον πηλό ή τα κεραμίδια που δεν αντέξανε στο χρόνο και εξαφανίστηκαν τελείως. Σήμερα δεν ξέρουμε ούτε τον τόπο που βρίσκονταν. Μόνο μετά την ένωση όλων των βασιλείων της Βλαχίας και της Μολδαβίας στις αρχές του 16^{ου} αιώνα και μαζί με την εμφάνιση του ησυχασμού χτίστηκαν γερά μοναστήρια με τεράστιες διαστάσεις που υπάρχουν και σήμερα.

Μια απλή απαρίθμηση μας προσφέρει την εικόνα για το πώς ήταν η μοναχική ζωή στη Ρουμανική γη απ' την αρχή έως τον 14^ο αιώνα, όταν ο ησυχασμός κατακτούσε τη θεολογική του μάχη και ανακηρυσσόταν επίσημο δόγμα της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας.

Ioan Moga¹

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog aus orthodoxer Sicht. Versuch einer systematischen Bestandaufnahme²

Abstract

This study presents a systematic survey of the question of interfaith dialogue, from an Orthodox perspective. The research focuses on three themes: a historical approach, which shows the existential-dialogical “competence”, but also the challenges that result from the common history of the Orthodox Churches with the Islam; an overview on the previous contributions of the Orthodoxy in the interfaith dialogue (documents, but also local cooperation); finally, an investigation of three contemporary Orthodox approaches in the theology of religions (George Khodr, André Scrima and Anastasios Yannoulatos). The Author tries to indicate how the problem of truth is not only part of the problem, but also an essential part of the “solution” we are looking for. A hermeneutic of kenotic truth offers a possible way to see where the theological limits of interfaith dialogue are (and to avoid any kind of relativism), but also to understand the spiritual chance that interfaith meeting opens for the life.

Keywords

Interreligious dialogue, Orthodox Theology, Theology of Religions, the paradigm of inclusivism

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² Der folgende Aufsatz ist die revidierte Version eines am 24. Februar 2012 in Wien (Theologische Kurse: Ökumenischer Studiennachmittag „Die Haltung der Kirchen zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen“) gehaltenen Vortrags mit dem Titel: „Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38). *Der interreligiöse Dialog aus orthodoxer Sicht: von Toleranz zum gemeinsamen Denken und Handeln*. Für das Korrekturlesen bedanke ich mich bei Frau Ida Mottl.

In der westeuropäischen Diskussion über das Engagement der christlichen Kirchen im interreligiösen Dialog wird die Orthodoxie meistens nur am Rande erwähnt. Die Orthodoxe Kirche habe erst gegen Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts die Notwendigkeit eines echten, interreligiösen Dialogs für sich entdeckt, und dies selbst „wohl durch die Wende der katholischen Kirche sowie des ÖRK“³ bedingt – so lautet eine der Thesen zu diesem Thema. Die Ausrichtung solcher Aussagen geht dahin, dass man der Orthodoxie nicht einen eigenen Beitrag im interreligiösen Dialog zuspricht, sondern sie eher in der Rolle des Nachahmers bereits vorhanden Paradigmen situiert. Stimmt das etwa?

Um diese Frage beantworten zu können, bedarf es an erster Stelle eines *historischen Zugangs*, der die interreligiöse Erfahrungskomponente als Bestandteil eines (vor)dialogischen Weges der Orthodoxie vor allem mit dem Islam klarer herausstellt. In einem zweiten Schritt werde ich die *offiziell-kirchliche Dimension* des interreligiösen Dialogs präsentieren: orthodoxe offizielle Stellungnahmen und Stimmen, die uns helfen werden, die Position der Orthodoxen Kirche in dieser Frage besser zu verstehen. Im dritten Schritt werde ich die *religionstheologische Dimension* ansprechen und dabei vor allem die Ansätze von drei orthodoxen Theologen der Gegenwart vor Augen führen. Als vierten und letzten Schritt werde ich versuchen, einige systematische *Perspektiven* für den aktuellen interreligiösen Dialog aufzuzeigen.

1. Historischer Zugang

Während der Westen – mit Ausnahme der spanischen Halbinsel und Süditaliens – von einer Okkupation durch die Araber bzw. durch die Osmanen verschont blieb, ist die Geschichte Südosteuropas, Kleinasien und des Nahen Ostens davon stark geprägt. Das Byzantinische Reich war von Beginn der arabischen Expansion mit dem Islam konfrontiert, sowohl in militärischer als auch in theologischer Hinsicht.

³ Andreas Renz, *Stellungnahme und Dokumente der Orthodoxen und Evangelischen Kirchen sowie des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen zum Islam*, in: A. Renz, S. Leimgruber (Hg.), *Lernprozess Christen Muslime. Gesellschaftliche Kontexte – Theologische Grundlagen – Begegnungsfelder*, Münster – Hamburg – London, 2002, p. 126.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

So entstehen in der Zeit zwischen dem 8. und 14. Jh. eine Reihe von Schriften, die sich der dialogischen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Islam widmen.⁴ Darunter finden sich Werke namhafter orthodoxer Theologen wie Johannes Damaskus (8. Jh.), der den Islam als eine innerchristliche Häresie bekämpfen wollte⁵, oder Gregor Palamas (6 Jh. später). Erwähnenswert wäre auch Kaiser Manuel II. Palaiologos, dessen Dialog mit einem Perser (Ende des 14. Jh.s anzusiedeln) nicht zuletzt durch die Regensburger Vorlesung von Papst Benedikt XVI. neue Aufmerksamkeit erhalten hat. Diese byzantinischen Dialoge – die im westlichen Mittelalter Verwandte gefunden haben, etwa bei dem Islam-Missionar Raimundus Lullus oder Nikolaus Kusanus – sind nicht alle einfach als Zeugen des christlichen, polemischen Exklusivismus abzutun, auch wenn die heutige religionstheologische Forschung in diese Richtung geht. So schlussfolgert etwa der Erfurter Politikwissenschaftler Matthias Hildebrandt: viele dieser Dialoge würden „eine egalitäre Diskursethik“ herausarbeiten, „in der sich die Gesprächspartner gleichberechtigt in Freundschaft und gegenseitigem Respekt begegnen und im Geiste der Verständigungsbereitschaft miteinander kommunizieren“⁶. Aber letztendlich seien diese Religionsdialoge „keine Gespräche zwischen den Religionen, sondern eigentlich christliche Selbstgespräche, die in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Judentum, dem

⁴ Vgl. Adel Theodor Khoury, *Les théologiens byzantins et l'islam. Textes et Auteurs (VIIe-XIIIe s.)*, Louvain, 1969. Ders., *Polemique byzantine contre l'islam*, Leiden, 1972. Ders., *Apologétique byzantine contre l'islam: (VIIIe - XIIIe s.)*, Altenberge, 1982.

⁵ Johannes von Damaskus und Theodor Abū Qurra, *Schriften zum Islam*, Kommentierte griechisch-deutsche Textausgabe von Reinhold Gleiß/Adel Theodor Khoury, Würzburg – Altenberge, 1995. Khoury beschreibt folgendermaßen die Herangehensweise des Damaskeners: „Das Kapitel von *De Haeresibus* will sicherlich nicht eine vollständige Darstellung des Islams anbieten. Und noch weniger ist dabei an eine Grundlage für einen Dialog mit der islamischen Lehre gedacht. Der Islam gehört hier in die lange Liste der Häresien, daher gilt das Augenmerk eher den schwachen Punkten in der Lehre des Islams [...]. Was der Damaskener also hier zeigen will, ist folgendes: Der Islam ist offensichtlich anders als das Christentum, er widerspricht ihm sogar; also kann er nur eine falsche Religion sein.“ (A. T. Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos: Schriften zum Islam*, in: *ebd.*, 45).

⁶ Matthias Hildebrandt, *Mittelalterliche Religionsdialoge: Auf der Suche nach einer interreligiösen Hermeneutik*, in: Manfred Brocker / Mathias Hildebrandt (Hg.), *Friedensstiftende Religionen? Religionen und die Deeskalation politischer Konflikte*, Wiesbaden 2008, 29–70, hier: 65.

Islam und der Philosophie immer der Selbstvergewisserung des eigenen Glaubens dienen“⁷.

Das stimmt nur zum Teil. Über die unbestreitbaren mentalen und kulturellen Engen dieser mittelalterlichen Religionsgespräche hinaus darf nicht verschwiegen werden, dass sie – im Kontext ihrer Zeit – ein Plus an Verständigung, Friedenswillen und Dialogbereitschaft brachten. Natürlich müsste man unbedingt unter den byzantinischen Dialogen unterscheiden zwischen solchen, die polemisch geprägt sind (auch angesichts der wachsenden Gefahr der osmanischen Eroberungen) und zu einer Verteufelung des Islambildes beigetragen haben⁸ und solchen, die apologetisch orientiert sind, wobei in der Apologetik auch erste Schritte zu einem sachlichen theologischen Dialog unternommen werden.⁹ Erstaunlich ist z.B. die Dialogkultur zwischen dem von den Türken inhaftierten Erzbischof von Thessaloniki, Gregor Palamas, und den muslimischen Gelehrten im Jahre 1354. Einer dieser Dialoge fand im Anschluss nach einer muslimischen Beerdigung statt, bei der der inhaftierte Bischof teilgenommen hatte! Sowohl die Offenheit, in der die Divergenzfragen erörtert werden, als auch die theologische Tiefe der Gespräche sind beeindruckend. Dabei hegen die Gesprächspartner sogar die Hoffnung

⁷ Hildebrandt, *Mittelalterliche Religionsdialoge*, 67.

⁸ Das gilt z.B. für Niketas von Byzanz (9. Jh.): vgl. Karl Förstel (Hg.), *Nicetas von Byzanz. Schriften zum Islam. Bd. I*, (Corpus Islamo-Christianum: Series Graeca 5), Würzburg – Altenberge 2000.

⁹ Khoury verfolgt die byzantinischen Streitdialoge mit dem Islam nur bis ins 13. Jh., wobei er zwischen „byzantinischer Polemik“ und „byzantinischer Apologetik gegen den Islam“ unterscheidet. Diese letztere sei „von besserer Art: sie verteidigt die Mysterien des christlichen Glaubens, indem sie Erklärungen, Beweise, Analogien und philosophische und theologische Begriffe anwendet, die in langen Diskussionen innerhalb der Christenheit klargestellt worden waren.“ (A.-Th. Khoury, *Der theologische Streit der Byzantiner mit dem Islam*, Paderborn, 1969, p. 72).

Der serbisch-orthodoxe Bischof Andrej Cilerdzic unterscheidet drei Phasen des byzantinisch-islamischen Dialogs: in der ersten Phase (8.-9. Jh.) sei die „byzantinische Einstellung höhnisch und geringschätzig“; eine zweite, lange Phase (Mitte des 9. bis 14. Jh.s) sei von polemischen bis aggressiven Abhandlungen geprägt; die dritte Phase hingegen (Mitte des 14. Jh.s – Mitte des 15. Jh.s) sei durch „Milde und Objektivität“ gekennzeichnet, wobei Gregor Palamas, Joseph Bryennios und Kaiser Manuel Palaiologos als „Initiatoren eines nüchternen christlich-islamischen Dialogs betrachtet werden“ können. Vgl. Andrej Cilerdzic (Bischof), *Der Dialog mit dem Islam*, Brückenschläge II: Hohenheim 18./19.11.2011. Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart, http://downloads.akademie-rs.de/interreligioeser-dialog/11118_cilerdzic_dialog.pdf.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

– von Palamas eschatologisch gemeint – dass irgendwann eine Einigung möglich wäre.

Ich möchte hier nur unterstreichen, dass die Bemühung um einen mit Vernunftargumenten geführten interreligiösen Dialog, der Verständigung und der friedlichen Koexistenz willen, keine neue Erfindung des 20. Jahrhunderts ist. Damit sei auch die bereits erwähnte Meinung von Andreas Renz in Frage gestellt, der schreibt, dass „trotz der geographischen und gesellschaftlichen Nähe von christlichen Ostkirchen und Islam“ „über eine weite Strecke der Geschichte man nicht von einer wirklichen gegenseitigen Kenntnisnahme, gar Wertschätzung sprechen kann“¹⁰; „ein wirklicher Dialog, ein echtes Ernstnehmen des Islam und der Muslime konnte im orthodoxen Raum erst im letzten Drittel des 20. Jahrhunderts [...] geschehen.“¹¹ Das Problematische an diesen Aussagen besteht darin, dass Renz den zeitgenössischen, institutionalisierten Dialogbegriff (so wie er seit einigen Jahrzehnten für den Bereich des interreligiösen Dialogs verwendet wird) verabsolutiert und damit der Orthodoxie jegliche echte, dialogische Annäherung zum Islam vor dem Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts abspricht. Vielmehr sollte betont werden, dass zur selben Zeit, als eine eher fragwürdige bis gewalttätige Religionspolitik die verschiedenen mittelalterlichen Regionen und Epochen dominierte, es in der christlichen Theologie schon ziemlich früh die Ansicht gab, dass nur *im Dialog* die Divergenzen zwischen den Religionen anzugehen sind. So war etwa der Wahrheitsanspruch des Christentums – wenn wir schon an frühchristliche Apologeten wie Justinus der Märtyrer denken – nicht einfach als Kampfansage gemeint, sondern als Vollendung eines heilsökonomischen Prozesses, der nicht nur den Weg des auserwählten Volkes Israel beinhaltete, sondern auch die anderen Wege der Wahrheitsfindung in der Philosophie und in den Religionen. Schon im 2. Jahrhundert setzte sich die Ansicht durch, dass in den verschiedenen Geistesströmungen der Menschheit vor dem Kommen Christi eine Teilhabe an der Wahrheit vorhanden war, dass also der Logos auch dort gewirkt hatte. Hier wäre allerdings eine längere Diskussion notwendig über das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Wahrheitsanspruch und Toleranz, zwischen Zeugnisablegen von der Wahrheit Jesu Christi (und dies bis zum Martyrium) und dem Bemühen um Verständnis des Anderen im Zeichen des Liebesgebotes.

¹⁰ Renz, *Stellungnahme und Dokumente*, p. 126.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

Zurück zur historischen Dimension der interreligiösen Erfahrung in der Ostkirche: Es gab also schon in Byzanz eine zumindest anfängliche Kultur des Dialogs und diese war – auch wenn nicht immer so theologisch geprägt, sondern oft nur auf der Ebene des sozial-politischen Zusammenlebens – für die Orthodoxe Kirche während der ganzen osmanischen Herrschaft eine Selbstverständlichkeit, nicht einfach nur eine diplomatische, kirchenpolitische Notwendigkeit des Überlebenskampfes. Die vier alten orthodoxen Patriarchate – Konstantinopel, Alexandrien, Antiochien und Jerusalem – leben seit Jahrhunderten in einem religiös-sozialen Umfeld, das entweder vom Islam oder – im Falle von Jerusalem, seit 70 Jahren – vom Judentum geprägt ist. Diese Kirchen, aber auch alle orthodoxen Kirchen Südosteuropas, die ihre Identität jahrhundertlang innerhalb der osmanischen Herrschaft aufrechterhalten mussten – bringen somit eine nicht zu unterschätzende *Dialogs*- und *Erfahrungskompetenz* im interreligiösen Dialog, vor allem mit dem Islam, mit sich. Hinzu kommt auch eine gewisse kulturelle Nähe zu den religiösen Traditionen und Strömungen Kleinasiens und des Nahen Ostens, die Verständigung leichter möglich macht. Das sind – sehr kurz gefasst – die Stärken der Orthodoxie, aufgrund ihrer langen, zum Teil gemeinsamen Geschichte vor allem mit dem Islam.¹² Andrew M. Sharp spricht sogar von einer einzigartigen „Brückenfunktion“ der Orthodoxie zwischen der westlichen Kultur und dem Islam.¹³

In der historischen Dimension des interreligiösen Dialogs zeigt sich aber bis heute auch eine Schattenseite: eine jahrhundertlange Geschichte des Schmerzes und des Martyriums der orthodoxen Völker unter den Arabern oder unter den Osmanen.¹⁴ Im Volk sehr verehrte Heilige bei den

¹² Vgl. die Studie von George C. Papademetriou (Hg.), *Two Traditions, One Space. Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*, Boston, 2011. Dasselbe gilt natürlich auch für die sog. Altorientalischen Kirchen. Eine empfehlenswerte Aufsatzsammlung (eine Dokumentation im Rahmen eines wissenschaftlichen Pro-Oriente-Projektes *Colloquium Syriacum*), die dieses Thema behandelt: Dietmar W. Winkler, *Syriac Churches Encountering Islam. Past Experiences and Future Perspectives*, Piscataway (NY), 2010.

¹³ Andrew M. Sharp, *Orthodox Christians and Islam in the Postmodern Age*, Leiden, 2012, p. 1.

¹⁴ Vgl. etwa: Tessa Hofmann (Hg.), *Verfolgung, Vertreibung und Vernichtung der Christen im Osmanischen Reich 1912-1922*, Münster, 2004. Theodor Nikolaou, *Die Or-*

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

Serben, Rumänen, Griechen usw. sind auch solche, die das Christentum vor den islamischen Machthabern nicht abschwören wollten und als Märtyrer eines nicht-vorhandenen Dialogs bzw. einer aggressiven Islamisierung gestorben sind (so etwa der Hl. Kosmas von Aitolien, 1779 hingerichtet, oder der Hl. Fürst der Walachei, Constantin Brâncoveanu, der mit seinen vier Söhnen und seinem Schwiegersohn im Jahre 1714 ebenfalls von den Osmanen hingerichtet wurde). Die Geschichte bringt somit nicht nur Dialogkompetenz, sondern auch eine enorme Herausforderung mit sich, zumal fehlende Religionsfreiheit oder sogar Verfolgung in manchen islamischen Ländern immer noch ein Thema sind.¹⁵

Fazit: Der christliche Osten greift im interreligiösen Dialog auf andere geschichtliche Erfahrungen zurück als der Westen: Einerseits gibt es eine lange, positiv zu schätzende Koexistenz und Lernerfahrung mit dem Islam – aber auch mit dem Judentum. Andererseits ist diese Geschichte auch eine Geschichte des Leidens unter der islamischen Religionspolitik. Diese zwei Dimensionen sind in der gegenwärtigen Positionierung der Orthodoxen Kirche im interreligiösen Dialog wieder zu finden: einerseits eine große Offenheit im Hinblick auf die gemeinsamen Werte und einen starken Einsatz für eine friedliche Koexistenz. Andererseits, im Falle der Orthodoxen Kirchen in Ländern mit muslimischer Mehrheitsbevölkerung, ein Dialog auch in der Hoffnung auf die Verbesserung der Menschenrechtssituation, wobei bei den Gläubigen – vor allem aufgrund schmerzvoller Erfahrungen – auch Misstrauen und Abstandhalten gegenüber zu großen Annäherungsgesten vorhanden sind.

Natürlich müsste man dies noch einmal kontextualisieren, was im Rahmen dieses Vortrags nicht möglich ist. Die geschichtliche – und dementsprechend – auch die aktuelle Lage bzw. Positionierung der jeweiligen orthodoxen Kirchenvertreter gestaltet sich im Libanon anders als im Kosovo, in Russland anders als in der Türkei, in Rumänien anders als in Israel.

thodoxe Kirche in Südosteuropa, in: *Orthodoxes Forum* 11 (1/1997), p. 21-32, hier vor allem: p. 25-28.

¹⁵ Vgl. dazu: Jürgen Bellers, Markus Porsche-Ludwig (Hg.), *Christenverfolgung in islamischen Ländern*, Münster – Berlin, 2009. Siehe auch das offizielle Statement der Hl. Synode der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche zum Phänomen der „Christianophobia“ (30 mai 2011): <http://www.mospat.ru/en/2011/05/30/news42347/>.

2. Offizielle orthodoxe Stellungnahmen zum interreligiösen Dialog

In der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche bildet die Erklärung des II. Vatikanums „*Nostra Aetate*“ nach wie vor eine tragende Grundlagen für das Angehen des interreligiösen Dialogs aus christlicher Sicht. Gibt es vergleichbare verbindliche Aussagen der Orthodoxen Kirche? Diese Frage könnte mit „jein“ beantwortet werden. Es gibt zwar offizielle, kirchliche Aussagen, die in verschiedenen panorthodoxen Zusammenhängen in den letzten Jahrzehnten immer wieder formuliert wurden. Inhatlich sind sie mit *Nostra Aetate* vergleichbar und in vielerlei Hinsicht von der Ausrichtung her verwandt. Formell gesehen können jedoch die Orthodoxen nicht auf ein zentrales lehramtliches Dokument hinweisen. Wie das „Lehramt“ in der Orthodoxen Kirche zu verstehen ist, dies stellt eine weitere „multiple-choice“ - Frage dar. Die oberste Lehrautorität in der Orthodoxen Kirche ist das „Ökumenische Konzil“ (in unerer Zeit, wohl, ein „panorthodoxes Konzil“), das wiederum im gemeinschaftlichen Kontext des ganzen Kirchenvolkes agiert; man könnte also von einer bischöflich-synodalen und einer kommunional-rezeptiven Komponente sprechen. Deshalb ist der Entscheidungsprozess immer länger und mühsamer, weil er einen gewissen ekklesialen Konsens widerspiegeln muss.¹⁶

Seit den 1960er Jahren wird eine solche Große Synode der Orthodoxie vorbereitet – die Themenagenda steht schon fest – aber aus verschiedenen Gründen wurde das Abhalten dieser Synode immer wieder verschoben. Man sollte diese kritische Tatsache nicht überbewerten. Das orthodoxe Ethos ist in den meisten Bereichen des kirchlichen Lebens nicht fixiert auf eine solche lehramtliche Entscheidung. Es gibt sehr viele Themen der Gegenwart, wo Konsens innerhalb der orthodoxen Kirche herrscht, ohne dass eine panorthodoxe, synodale Aussage diesen Konsens festgelegt hätte. Eine Zurückhaltung in lehramtlichen Aussagen ist vorzuziehen gegenüber einer Diskrepanz zwischen einem Lehrdekret und der gelebten, kirchlichen Realität. Mit anderen Worten: dass wir bisjetzt keine synodal-panorthodoxe Erklärung zum interreligiösen Dialog haben, hindert die Orthodoxen Kirchen nicht darin, sich aktiv an diesem Dialog zu beteiligen und einer gemeinsamen Linie zu folgen.

¹⁶ Zur Lehrautorität aus orthodoxer Sicht siehe: Anastasios Kallis, *Von Adam bis Zölibat. Taschenlexikon Orthodoxe Theologie*, Münster, 2008, p. 182-184.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

Zu unserer Fragestellung: Fest steht, dass schon auf der ersten Panorthodoxen Konferenz auf Rhodos (1961) die orthodoxen Kirchenvertreter den interreligiösen Dialog in den Themenkatalog eines panorthodoxen Konzils aufgenommen haben. Es gab danach mehrere offizielle Erklärungen zum interreligiösen Dialog¹⁷, wie etwa bei der ersten und der dritten Vorkonziliaren Panorthodoxen Konferenz (Chambésy 1976 und 1986), die von allen orthodoxen Kirchen getragen werden. 1976 sprach sich die I. Vorkonziliare Panorthodoxe Konferenz für die

„Zusammenarbeit mit den Gläubigen der anderen (nicht-christlichen) Religionen, um jeglichen Fanatismus auszumerzen und die Ideale der Freiheit, der Völkerversöhnung und des Weltfriedens im Dienst am heutigen Menschen, welcher Rasse oder Religion er auch angehören mag, zu verwirklichen.“¹⁸

1986 wurde dieser Wunsch bekräftigt:

„Die Orthodoxen Lokalkirchen betrachten es als ihre Pflicht, eng mit den Gläubigen aus anderen Weltreligionen, die den Frieden lieben, für den Frieden auf Erden und für die Verwirklichung brüderlicher Beziehungen zwischen den Völkern zusammenzuarbeiten. Die Orthodoxen Kirchen sind aufgerufen, zur interreligiösen Verständigung und Zusammenarbeit und auf diese Weise zur Beseitigung von jeglichem Fanatismus beizutragen [...] Es versteht sich dabei von selbst, dass diese Zusammenarbeit sowohl jeden Synkretismus ausschließt, als auch jeden Versuch, irgendeine Religion anderen aufzuzwingen.“¹⁹

Natürlich sind solche Aussagen sehr allgemein formuliert. Es gibt aber auch orthodoxe Dokumente, die auf Einzelfragen eingehen. So etwa: Welchen Stellenwert hat die Mission im Kontext einer pluralistischen

¹⁷ Einführungen zur Position der Orthodoxie im interreligiösen Dialog siehe bei: G. Martzelos, *Orthodoxy and Inter-Religious Dialogue*, in: G. Martzelos, *Εκκλησία, Οικουμενική, Πολιτική*, Athen 2007, p. 437-444. Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Problems and Perspectives of Inter-religious Dialogue. An Eastern Orthodox Perspective*, in “The Ecumenical Review” 52 (3/2000), p. 351-357.

¹⁸ *Kommunique der I. Vorkonziliaren Panorthodoxen Konferenz*. Themenkatalog für die Große und Heilige Synode der Orthodoxen Kirche, Chambésy, Genf, 1976, in Athanasios Basdekis (Hg.), *Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung. Dokumente – Erklärungen – Berichte 1900-2006*, Frankfurt a. M. – Paderborn, 2006, p. 212.

¹⁹ *Beschlüsse der III. Vorkonziliaren Panorthodoxen Konferenz*, Chambésy/Genf, 1986, in Basdekis (Hg.), *Orthodoxe Kirche*, p. 394.

Gesellschaft und in der Perspektive des interreligiösen Dialogs? Bekanntermaßen hat die Orthodoxe Kirche in der Geschichte nie eine aggressive Missionspolitik betrieben. Dennoch darf die *martyria*, das Zeugnisablegen nicht einfach unter dem Tisch fallen. So heißt es etwa in einer Erklärung Orthodoxer und Orientalisch-orthodoxer Kirchen zur Mission (Thessaloniki 1988), dass das „Zeugnisablegen gegenüber anderen Menschen“ von jedem Christen erwartet wird:

„Die Liebe, die wir denen schulden, die anderen Glaubens sind, gebietet uns umso dringlicher, uns so zu verhalten, wie es die frühen christlichen Apologeten getan haben, indem wir, was für eine Wahrheit auch immer angetroffen werden mag, diese bestätigen, gleichzeitig aber die Fülle und Wahrhaftigkeit der christlichen Heilswahrheit herausstellen, selbst wenn wir uns damit der Gefahr der Verfolgung aussetzen.“²⁰

Andererseits unterscheidet ein anderes orthodoxes Dokument dieser Jahre (1984) zwischen „großen missionarischen Unternehmungen“ und dem persönlichen „Zeugnisablegen“. Das erste sei nicht zu empfehlen, das zweite sei notwendig. Gemeint ist die konkrete Situation der orthodoxen Christen in islamischen Ländern:

„...wir sollten nicht zu neuen größeren missionarischen Unternehmungen in islamischen Ländern ermutigen, sondern die bestehenden örtlichen Kirchen stärken und ihnen helfen, indem wir gegenüber ihrer schwierigen Lage größere Sensibilität zeigen.“²¹

Aktive Missionierung nicht, Zeugnis ablegen ja. Weiter heißt es: „Zeugnis ablegen bedeutet in einem islamischen Kontext oft, in der Form wahrer geistiger Vitalität, mit der Treue zum Evangelium und Bekenntnis im Alltagsleben Widerstand zu zeigen.“²²

Die Bedeutung des interreligiösen Dialogs für die Orthodoxe Kirche wird auch in der Gegenwart immer wieder betont. Bei dem letzten Treffen aller orthodoxer Kirchenoberhäupter, in Fanar im Oktober 2008, wurde

²⁰ „Dein Wille geschehe“. *Die Sendung der Orthodoxie heute. Erklärung Orthodoxer und Orientalisch-Orthodoxer Kirchen zur Mission*, Neapolis/Thessaloniki, 1988, in Basdekis (Hg.), *Orthodoxe Kirche*, p. 432.

²¹ *Die Zukunft des orthodoxen Zeugnisses*, Bericht der orthodoxen Beratergruppe im ÖRK, Himmelsthür/Hannover, 1984, in Basdekis (Hg.), *Orthodoxe Kirche*, p. 357.

²² *Die Zukunft des orthodoxen Zeugnisses*, p. 357.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

die Notwendigkeit der Weiterführung von „interreligiösen Gespräche, vor allem mit dem Judentum und dem Islam“ hervorgehoben. Weiter heißt es: „Der Dialog ist der einzige Weg, Differenzen zwischen Menschen zu lösen, vor allem in einer Zeit wie dieser, in der jede Art von Spaltung, einschließlich jener im Namen der Religion, den Frieden und die Einheit der Völker gefährdet.“²³

Parallel zu diesen Grundaussagen zum interreligiösen Dialog engagierten sich die Orthodoxen Kirchen schon ab den 1960er Jahren stark im interreligiösen Dialog auf zwei Ebenen.

Einerseits in bilateralen, akademischen Dialogen: so gibt es seit 1977 akademische Konferenzen mit dem Judentum, und seit 1986 mit dem Islam. Andererseits im Rahmen des ÖRK, wo bereits 1961 eine Abteilung für den „Dialog mit den Menschen anderer Glauben und Ideologien“ geschaffen wurde. Seit 1969 gab es vielfältige Dialoge zwischen dem ÖRK und Vertretern des Islams, des Judentums, des Buddhismus usw. 1979 wurden ökumenische Richtlinien zum interreligiösen Dialog verabschiedet. An allen diesen und vielen anderen ähnlichen Erklärungen waren auch orthodoxe Vertreter beteiligt, was oft in Vergessenheit gerät.²⁴

Es gab aber auch Probleme. Seit der Generalversammlung des ÖRK in Nairobi 1973 waren Vertreter der nichtchristlichen Weltreligionen als Beobachter anwesend, später wurden sie eingeladen, auch in Plenum zu referieren. Problematisch wurde diese Ausrichtung, als bei der Erstellung von gewissen Dokumenten des ÖRK ab den 1980er Jahren auch Vertreter nichtchristlicher Religionen beteiligt wurden. Auch als in den ökumenischen Feiern nicht-christliche Rituale und Symbole übernommen wurden. Die Orthodoxen Mitgliedskirchenerteilten solchen Tendenzen

²³ *Botschaft der orthodoxen Patriarchen bei der Synaxis im Phanar (12. Oktober 2008)*, in „Orthodoxes Forum“ 22 (2/2008), p. 216.

²⁴ Aktuelle Stellungnahmen des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen zum interreligiösen Dialog: *Das christliche Zeugnis in einer multireligiösen Welt. Empfehlungen für einen Verhaltenskodex* (28.05.2011), <http://www.oikoumene.org/de/dokumentation/documents/oerk-programme/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/das-christliche-zeugnis-in-einer-multireligioesen-welt.html>; *Religiöse Pluralität und Christliches Selbstverständnis* (14.02.2006, Porto Alegre), sowie der *Protokollpunkt zur Gegenseitigen Achtung und Verantwortung und zum Dialog mit Menschen anderen Glaubens* (23.02.2006, Porto Alegre), <http://www.oikoumene.org/de/dokumentation/documents/oerk-vollversammlung/porto-alegre-2006/>.

eine klare Absage, die den ÖRK immer mehr zu einer Plattform des religiösen Pluralismus, ja sogar des Synkretismus machten. Auf der Vollversammlung in Canberra 1991 kam es zum Eklat: Eine Theologin der Presbyterianischen Kirche von Korea (Chung Hyan Kyung) hielt ein Hauptreferat, indem sie sich für einen „befreienden Synkretismus“ innerhalb der christlichen Ökumene aussprach. In anderen Veranstaltungen wurden Ahnengeister als Ausdruck des Heiligen Geistes beschworen. Die Orthodoxen Kirchen reagierten bestürzt. Ihre Vertreter in Canberra richteten an die Vollversammlung einige kritische „Überlegungen“, wobei die „Beziehungen mit anderen Religionen“ auch ein Thema waren.²⁵ Unmittelbar nach Canberra veröffentlichten die Orthodoxen und Orientalisch-Orthodoxen Mitgliedskirchen des ÖRK eine ausführlichere Stellungnahme (Chambésy 1991) in dem es u.a. hieß:

„Die Orthodoxen unterhalten seit langem lebendige Kontakte zu Angehörigen anderer Religionen. Die Achtung der Würde und der inneren Überzeugungen anderer Menschen verlangt von uns, dass wir uns um Verständigung und friedliche Beziehungen bemühen, und dass wir, wo immer es möglich und sinnvoll erscheint, mit ihnen in Bereichen zusammenarbeiten, in denen wir gemeinsame Anliegen haben. Dies darf jedoch nicht dazu führen, dass christliche Kirchen, in deren Namen ÖRK-Abteilungen tätig sind, in wesentlichen Glaubensfragen kompromittiert werden. Die Orthodoxen sind der Auffassung, dass jegliche synkretistische Anpassung in der Arbeit des ÖRK unangemessen ist und den zentralen Aussagen und Zielen der Ökumene widerspricht.“²⁶

Die Orthodoxen Kirchen sprachen sich also nicht gegen den interreligiösen Dialog, sondern für ein sauberes Auseinanderhalten von innerchristlicher Ökumene und interreligiösem Dialog (da die Voraussetzungen und die Zielsetzungen ganz andere sind) und gegen den Synkretismus aus.

Über diese Felder hinaus, wo die Orthodoxen Kirchen gemeinsam im und für den interreligiösen Dialog agieren, gibt es auch namhafte Initiativen

²⁵ Vgl. Athanasios Basdekis, *Canberra und die Orthodoxen. Anfragen und Forderungen an den ÖRK im Anschluß an die 7. Vollversammlung*, in „ÖR“ 40 (1991), p. 356-373.

²⁶ *Die Orthodoxen Kirchen und der Ökumenische Rat der Kirchen*, Chambésy/Genf, 1991, Bericht einer Inter-Orthodoxen Konsultation Östlich-Orthodoxer und Orientalisch-Orthodoxer Mitgliedskirchen des ÖRK, in: Basdekis (Hg.), *Orthodoxe Kirche*, p. 566.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

einzelner Orthodoxer Kirchen, die auf internationaler Ebene ein positives Echo gefunden haben und immer noch finden. Dazu ein paar Beispiele:

1. Das Engagement des ökumenischen Patriarchen Bartholomaios I. zum interreligiösen Dialog ist zu einem Charakteristikum seiner Amtszeit geworden – genauso wie seine bekannten Initiativen für die Bewahrung der Schöpfung. Seit 1994 fanden mehrere internationale, interreligiöse Kongresse statt, die als Ziel den Frieden und die Toleranz zwischen den Weltreligionen hatten. Ich verweise auf die sog. „Erklärung vom Bosporus“ (1994), unterzeichnet von Patriarch Bartholomaios, aber auch von Vertretern des Judentums, des Islams und der Römisch-Katholischen Kirche.²⁷ Interessant ist, dass es sich nicht einfach um eine Erklärung für interreligiösen Frieden handelt, sondern um eine gemeinsame Stellungnahme zu Fragen der Zeit:

„Wir, die Unterzeichneten, weisen jeden Versuch zurück, die Grundsätze unseres Glaubens durch falsche Interpretation und durch ungehemmten Nationalismus zu korrumpieren. Wir stellen uns entschlossen gegen jene, die sich an der Heiligkeit des menschlichen Lebens vergehen und eine Politik verfolgen, die allen moralischen Werten Hohn spricht. Wir weisen die Vorstellung zurück, es sei möglich, solche Taten, in welchem bewaffneten Konflikt auch immer, im Namen Gottes zu rechtfertigen.“²⁸

Die Impulse des Patriarchen Bartholomaios zum interreligiösen Dialog können hier nicht aufgezählt werden. Es sei nur am Rande erwähnt, dass er auch zu denjenigen zählte, die das Projekt Weltethos (von Hans Küng aus Tübingen gestartet) herzlich begrüßt und unterstützt haben.²⁹

2. Ähnliche gemeinsame Stellungnahmen von orthodoxen Kirchenoberhäuptern und Vertretern der Weltreligionen vor Ort sind auch in Russland und Rumänien zu finden. So gibt es unter allen Religionen der GUS-Staaten einen „Interreligiösen Rat“, dessen Vorstand von 22 Mitgliedern geführt wird: 9 Christen, 8 Muslime, 4 jüdische Vertreter und 1 Buddhist. Mitpräsidenten sind der russische-orthodoxe Patriarch und der Vorsteher der Muslime im Kaukasus. Der Rat setzt sich für eine gemeinsame,

²⁷ Vgl. *The Bosphorus Declaration: Joint Declaration of the Conference on Peace and Tolerance 1994*, <http://www.patriarchate.org/documents/joint-declaration>.

²⁸ *Ebd.*

²⁹ Vgl. Ökumenischer Patriarch Bartholomäus I, *Über die Versöhnung der Nationen und den Frieden der Welt*, in: Hans Küng (Hg.), *Ja zum Weltethos. Perspektiven für die Suche nach Orientierung*, München – Zürich, 1995, p. 166-175.

friedliche Lösung im Kaukasus-Konflikt, für das gemeinsame Bewahren des Kulturgutes, gegen den interreligiösen Hass und Fundamentalismus und für die Religionsfreiheit.³⁰

3. In Rumänien, einem Land, das von interreligiösen Konflikten verschont blieb, gibt es seit 2011 einen „Beratenden Rat aller anerkannten Kultusgemeinschaften“. Die Initiative dazu gab der jetzige Patriarch der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche, Daniel. Dazu gehören, neben den anerkannten christlichen Kirchen und Gemeinschaften, die jüdische Kultusgemeinde und auch der Islam. Ziel dieses Rates ist es gemeinsam aufzutreten und sich einzusetzen

„für die Förderung des Glaubens in Gott und für die Bedeutung dieses Glaubens im Leben der Person und der Gesellschaft, für den Schutz und die Förderung des menschlichen Wesens und ihrer Würde, sowie für den Respekt gegenüber der Schöpfung, für das Formulieren gemeinsamer Stellungnahmen in wichtigen Sozialfragen, für die Manifestation von Solidarität und Kooperation im Bereich der Spiritualität, der Kultur, der Erziehung und der Gesellschaft.“³¹

Schon anhand dieser wenigen Beispiele wird es deutlich, dass sich die Orthodoxe Kirche nicht nur prinzipiell für den interreligiösen Dialog ausspricht, sondern vor Ort immer mehr beteiligt ist, damit Strukturen entstehen in Richtung einer praktischen interreligiösen Zusammenarbeit. Das Beispiel Rumänien zeigt, dass nicht immer ein zu lösender interreligiöser oder religionspolitischer Konflikt da sein muss (wie etwa der Kaukasus-Konflikt in der Russischen Föderation), um gemeinsam aufzutreten. Es wächst das Bewusstsein, dass die Religionen *vor Ort* – das ist ja eine Stärke der Orthodoxie, denn es geht um den konkreten sozial-kulturellen Kontext, in dem der Dialog sich gestaltet – gemeinsam auftreten, damit sie (1.) *ethische Grundwerte verteidigen* (wie etwa die Heiligkeit des menschlichen Lebens und Werte wie Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit, Solidarität); (2.) *den Glauben an Gott positiv behaupten* (Stichwort:

³⁰ Vgl. <http://www.mospat.ru/en/2011/11/28/news53475/>. Siehe darüber hinaus auch andere Erklärungen für den interreligiösen Frieden, wie die sog. „*Baku Declaration*“ (2010), unterzeichnet vom Patriarchen von Moskau, Kirill, vom Armenischen Katholikos Karekin II. und vom islamischen Scheich AllahshuqurPasha-zade, dem Vertreter der Muslime in Kaukasus: <http://www.mospat.ru/en/2010/04/26/news17452/>.

³¹ http://www.basilica.ro/stiri/bconstituirea_consiliului_consultativ_al_cultelor_din_romaniab_5403.html.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

Religionsunterricht, Präsenz der Religionen im öffentlichen Raum) was auch eine Befreiung von politisch-nationaler Vereinnahmung der Religionen mit sich bringt - wie dies in der Erklärung von „Amaroussion“ aus dem Jahre 2004, (anlässlich einer interreligiösen Konferenz am Rande der olympischen Spiele in Athen) festgelegt wurde³²; und (3.) *den kulturstiftenden Charakter der Religion gemeinsam betonen.*

Ein konkretes Beispiel: Als vor einigen Jahren in der rumänischen Öffentlichkeit eine heiße Debatte entstanden war, ob die in den Schulklassen hängenden Ikonen Christi oder der Gottesmutter nicht ein Fall von Diskriminierung sind und damit Menschenrechte verletzen, war es mitunter auch der oberste Vertreter der Muslime in Rumänien, der die Präsenz religiöser Symbole, sprich Ikonen, in öffentlichen Räumlichkeiten verteidigte.

In den offiziellen Stellungnahmen der Orthodoxen Kirche zum interreligiösen Dialog hat also vor allem die praktisch-ethische Perspektive eine zentrale Rolle: vom Frieden auf der Welt, brüderlichen Beziehungen, Verständigung, Zusammenarbeit in gemeinsamen Anliegen war und ist die Rede. Der Ökumenische Patriarch Bartholomaios sagte im Jahre 1997 anlässlich einer muslimisch-christlichen Konsultation in Istanbul:

„Es ist einleuchtend, dass der Zweck unserer Zusammenkunft nicht darin liegt, einander von der Wahrheit unseres Glaubens, sondern vielmehr von der Möglichkeit, miteinander zu leben zu überzeugen und praktikable Wege ausfindig zu machen, um gegenseitiges Verständnis, Toleranz und die Zusammenarbeit zu verbessern.“³³

Man sollte diese Aussage jedoch auch als Frage formulieren: gehört zum interreligiösen Dialog nicht auch das Ringen um die Wahrheitsfrage? Ist dieses gemeinsame sozial-öffentliche Auftreten der Religionsgemeinschaften vor Ort der einzig mögliche Weg bzw. das einzige Kriterium, damit man von Fortschritten in diesem Dialog sprechen kann? Welche sind aber die theologischen Rahmen, in dem aus christlicher Perspektive ein

³² Vgl. *Declaration of Amaroussion*, Interreligious Conference of Athens „Religion, Peace and the Olympic Ideal“, Amaroussion, 10-11 August 2004, <http://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=en&id=304&tla=en>.

³³ Gruß seiner Allheiligkeit des Ökumenischen Patriarchen Bartholomaios I. zur Eröffnungssitzung des Akademischen Treffens von Christen und Muslimen (Konstantinopel, 3. Juni 1997), in „Orthodoxes Forum“ 11 (2/1997), p. 277.

solcher Dialog stattfindet? Und wann kann man von einem gelungenen interreligiösen Dialog sprechen? Gibt es so etwas wie ein Ziel, auf das wir hinsteuern, im Gespräch mit dem Judentum, dem Islam usw.? Ist das Zauberwort „Toleranz“ der Ausdruck für ein „zu wenig“ (im Sinne der gegenseitigen Duldung bis hin zur Indifferenz), d.h. eher die Ausgangsbasis des Dialogs, *oder* ist „Toleranz“ schon das Ziel? Ist übrigens Toleranz ein Inbegriff der religiösen Zuwendung zu Gott, oder etwas, was von außen kommt und mit dem Wesen der Religion wenig zu tun hat?³⁴ Oder, wenn wir das ambivalente Wort „Toleranz“ beiseite lassen und uns einigen, das „gegenseitige Verständnis“ und die gute „Zusammenarbeit in Fragen von gemeinsamen Anliegen“ wären Zeichen eines gelungenen Dialogs, stellt sich die Frage: ist das schon genug? *Laufen wir nicht Gefahr, gerade die geistige Dimension der Religion aus diesem Dialog auszuschließen?* Wie könnte aber eine solche geistige Dimension der interreligiösen Begegnung artikuliert werden? Und, nicht zuletzt: kann man die Wahrheitsfrage wirklich abkoppeln von all dem?

3. Religionstheologische Perspektiven

Solche und andere Fragen könnten und müssten wir uns gemeinsam stellen. Die innerchristliche Herausforderung ist dabei wohl, ob wir auch gemeinsame, ökumenische Antworten finden können.³⁵ Ich werde

³⁴ Zu den religionstheologischen Facetten des Toleranzbegriffs siehe Claude Ozankom, *Toleranz und Identität. Christlicher Glaube in den Differenzen religiöser Lebenswelten*, in: M. Delgado, G. M. Hoff, G. Riße (Hg.), *Das Christentum in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Hans Waldenfels SJ*, Fribourg – Stuttgart, 2011, p. 179-192, vor allem: p. 182-187. Ozankoms These lautet: „Der Begriff Toleranz ist falsch verstanden, wenn damit eine Haltung der Indifferenz bezeichnet wird. Denn: Zum Begriff Toleranz gehört gleichursprünglich so etwas wie eine „Differenzkompetenz“, ohne die es keine Toleranz geben kann. Näherin geht es bei der Toleranz um einen schwierigen Balanceakt zwischen Ablehnung, Akzeptanz und begründeter Zurückweisung.“ (*ibd.*, p. 186-187).

³⁵ Vgl. eine vielversprechende Studie in dieser Richtung: Ekkehard Wohlleben, *Die Kirchen und die Religionen. Perspektiven einer ökumenischen Religionstheologie*, Göttingen, 2001. Der Autor sieht in einer „trinitarischen Begründung der Religionstheologie“ den wichtigsten ökumenischen Zugang: „eine bewusst trinitarisch konzipierte ökumenische Theologie kann somit helfen, die in der Religionstheologie wirksamen Spannungen von Standfestigkeit und Dialogfähigkeit, Identität und Of-

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

mich darauf beschränken, hier drei orthodoxe Theologenstimmen³⁶ zu präsentieren, die einige theologische Perspektiven auf den interreligiösen Dialog eröffnen.

Ein markanter orthodoxer Pionier des christlich-islamischen Dialogs ist der 1923 geborene Metropolit der Erzdiözese Byblos und Botris (Libanon-Gebirge), *George Khodr*. Die Situation der orthodoxen Kirche im Libanon ist sicherlich grundlegend für seinen religionstheologischen Ansatz. Metropolit Khodr denkt aber den interreligiösen Dialog nicht aus der Defensive einer ums Überleben kämpfenden Christenminderheit, sondern aus der Sicht der Heilsökonomie Gottes. Er kritisiert eine traditionelle exklusive Ekklesiologie und eine zu enge Sicht auf die Heilsgeschichte, wonach die christliche Welt mit „Frieden und Erkenntnis“ identifiziert war und die nichtchristliche Welt mit „Krieg und Finsternis“. Für ihn ist die Heilsgeschichte – trotz ihrer Erfüllung in Jesus Christus – auch in anderen Religionen präsent, zumal diese Heilsgeschichte mit dem Anfang der Schöpfung ansetzt. Die Kirche hat eine kosmische Dimension, aber diese kosmische Dimension der Kirche bedeutet auch, „dass es die Funktion der Kirche ist, im Lichte des Mysteriums, dessen Zeichen sie ist, all die anderen Zeichen zu lesen, die Gott zu verschiedenen Zeiten auch in den Religionen aufgerichtet hat, um der Welt der Religionen den in ihr verborgenen Gott aufzuzeigen im Blick auf die endgültige und konkrete Entfaltung des Mysteriums.“³⁷ Mit anderen Worten: die in Jesus Christus erfüllte Ökonomie schließt den ganzen Weg der Menschheit im Dialog mit Gott ein: dazu gehören der Noah-Bund (der alle Völker der Erde einschließt) und der Abraham-Bund. So wie der Abraham-Bund mit dem

fenheit, Heilshandeln und Welthandeln, Gnade und Natur, Offenbarung und religiöser Erfahrung, Mission und Dialog miteinander zu vermitteln.“ (*ebd.*, p. 394). Konkret würde das bedeuten, dass, aus diesem trinitarischen Ansatz „exklusive, inklusive und plurale Tendenzen der Beziehung zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen auf verschiedenen Ebenen“ eine Existenzberechtigung haben, wobei der Akzent auf der „Unterscheidung der Ebenen“ liegt (vgl. *ebd.*, p. 415).

³⁶ Im Kapitel IV über „Aspekte der orthodoxen Religionstheologie“ behandelt Wohlleben folgende drei Theologen: George Khodr, Demetrios J. Constantelos und Anastasios Yannoulatos (vgl. *ebd.*, p. 264-289).

³⁷ George Khodr, *Das Christentum in einer pluralistischen Welt – das Werk des Heiligen Geistes*, in: Ulrich Dehn (Hg.), *Handbuch Dialog der Religionen. Christliche Quellen zur Religionstheologie und zum interreligiösen Dialog*, Frankfurt a. M., 2008, p. 168.

Volk Israel den Noah-Bund mit der ganzen Menschheit nicht aufhebt, so kann die Erfüllung der ganzen Heilsökonomie in Jesus Christus nicht die anderen zwei früheren Bunde auflösen – trotz ihrem Hinweisbezug auf Christus:

„Jede Interpretation von Religionen ist eine Interpretation auf Christus hin. Es ist allein Christus, der als Licht empfangen wird, wenn die Gnade bei einem Brahmanen, einem Buddhisten oder einem Muslim über dem Lesen ihrer eigenen Schriften einkehrt. Wer immer als Märtyrer stirbt, verfolgt wegen einer Sache, die er für gerecht hält, stirbt in Gemeinschaft mit Christus. Alle Mystiker des Islam, die als Zeugen einer sich aufopfernden Liebe gelebt haben, lebten die johanneische Agape in ihrer Einzigartigkeit.“³⁸

Solche Formulierungen, genährt aus einer geistigen Perspektive der interreligiösen „Liebesgemeinschaft“, laufen jedoch aus theologischer Sicht Gefahr, wichtige Differenzierungen aufzulösen. Die Aussagen über die Märtyrer verkennen etwa die Tatsache dass ein muslimischer Märtyrer – kein Selbstmordattentäter, sondern wirklich ein Märtyrer – für ein Bekenntnis stirbt, das sich von dem christlichen klar abgrenzt. Ein christologischer oder pneumatologischer Inklusivismus darf nicht zu einer christlichen Vereinnahmung jedes Zugangs zum Geistigen führen.

Dennoch ist das theologische Anliegen des orthodoxen Metropoliten Khodr ernst zu nehmen: er will das bleibende Heilshandeln Gottes in den anderen Religionen betonen. Vor allem aus pneumatologischer Perspektive sei dies zu verstehen, in dem Sinne, dass der Heilige Geist auch in den nichtchristlichen Religionen am Werk ist. Zwar behält die christliche Kirche ihre „umfassende Mittlerrolle“, aber, sagt Khodr, „Gottes Freiheit ist von der Art, dass er sich Propheten erwecken kann außerhalb der soziologischen Grenzen des Neuen Israel, genau wie er sie außerhalb der Grenzen des Alten Israel berufen hat“³⁹. Das darf wiederum nicht in die Richtung eines religionstheologischen Relativismus missverstanden werden. Für Khodr ist entscheidend verstehen zu lassen, dass alle Religionen „in Gottes Plan Schulen göttlicher Gnade sind“, und dass die eschatologische Hoffnung

³⁸ Khodr, *Das Christentum*, p. 169. Vgl. dazu E. Wohlleben, *Die Kirchen und die Religionen*, p. 267-268.

³⁹ Khodr, *Das Christentum*, p. 170.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

nur diejenige sein kann, dass die Menschen „auf die letzte Vollendung, die Sammlung aller Dinge in Christus, zugehen“⁴⁰.

Was bedeutet dies konkret für den interreligiösen Dialog? In der Vision Khodrs: eine Begegnung im Zeichen der gemeinsamen Wahrheit. Er ist sich allerdings bewusst, dass dies nur auf persönlicher Ebene stattfinden kann. Deshalb die Präzisierung: Der Dialog gedeiht vor allem mit solchen Menschen „die innerhalb dieser Religionen... über die Geheimnisse ihres eigenen Glaubens hinaus gelangen“⁴¹, d.h. offen für eine Perspektive über die Gesetzlichkeit hinaus sind.

Einen verwandten Zugang eröffnet der im Jahre 2000 verstorbene rumänische Priestermonch und Religionswissenschaftler *André Scrima*. Dieser war Ende der 40er Jahre im kommunistischen Rumänien Mönch geworden, hatte dann in Indien eine Promotion über den Hinduismus verfasst und hielt sich bis nach der Wende in Westeuropa, aber auch im Libanon auf, wo er die Gründung des orthodoxen Klosters St. George Deirel-Harf geistlich mitbetreute und der islamischen Mystik tiefer begegnete. Die Nähe zum Ansatz George Khodrs ist also nicht nur inhaltlicher, sondern auch biographischer Natur. Scrima war auf dem II. Vatikanum als orthodoxer Beobachter gewesen, als Vertreter des ökumenischen Patriarchen Athenagoras. Aufgrund seiner Biographie bzw. seiner Hochschätzung der indischen Spiritualität und der islamischen Mystik, war Scrima an einem tieferen Dialog mit den Weltreligionen interessiert, wobei sein Zugang zu der Frage des interreligiösen Dialogs stark pneumatologisch und existentiell geprägt war.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172. Weitere Ausführungen Khodrs zu diesem Thema: Georges Khodr, *Gewalt, Toleranz und die Kraft der befreienden Liebe*, in: Andreas Bsteh (Hg.), *Intoleranz und Gewalt. Erscheinungsformen, Gründe, Zugänge*, 2. Vienna International Christian Islamic Round Table (Wien 2002), Mödling, 2004, p. 89-93.

⁴² Zur ökumenischen und interreligiösen Vision von Pater André Scrima siehe: Ioan Moga, *Das orthodoxe Mönchtum und die Ökumene – eine unmögliche Freundschaft? Fallbeispiel Rumänien*, in „Ostkirchliche Studien“ 59 (1/2010), p. 86-94. Anca Manolescu umschreibt den religionstheologischen Ansatz Scrimas mit dem Ausdruck: „der metaphysische Sinn der Gastfreundschaft“, wobei unter „Gastfreundschaft eine hermeneutische Methode“ zu verstehen sei. Vgl. Anca Manolescu, *Europa și întâlnirea religiilor. Despre pluralismul religios contemporan*, Iași, 2005, p. 169-197. Siehe auch Marco Toti, *Morfologia religiosa ed ermeneutica ne „Il padre spirituale” di A. Scrima*, in „Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni” 73 (2/2007), p. 321-341.

So versteht er unter „Dialog“ vor allem eine ereignishaftige Begegnung im Zeichen des Einen Gottes, deren Ausgang oder Perspektive man dem Heiligen Geist überlassen sollte. Seitens der christlichen Theologie gilt es nach Scrima nicht eine plakative Überlegenheit der Wahrheit Christi aufzustellen, sondern in eine Dynamik der spirituellen Begegnung einzusteigen, mit Offenheit und mit der Gewissheit der eschatologischen Erfüllung der ganzen Wahrheit.

„Das Christentum ist eine Religion, die keinen Widerstand leistet. Christus setzt sich absolut niemandem dagegen. [...] Wenn man vom Christentum als von einer Religion der Exklusivität ausgeht, wenn man daraus einen Anlass für «Überlegenheit» macht, dann – fürchte ich – ist man nicht mit dem Geist Christi.“⁴³

Statt von einer Überlegenheit sollte man von einer Zentralität Christi sprechen. Nicht die Superiorität Jesu Christi über alle anderen Religionsgründer oder Religionen macht das Wesen der christlichen Botschaft aus, sondern seine Einzigartigkeit. Christus ist als „Pantokrator“ der Allerschaltender, d.h. derjenige, der „durch seine gekreuzigte und auferstandene Liebe dem Ganzen dient“ und in diesem Sinne „können wir über Ihn wie über ein Zentrum sprechen, zu dem alles frei hingezogen wird...“⁴⁴.

Der religionstheologische Ansatz Scrimas ist eher aus der Perspektive einer mystischen Hermeneutik zu verstehen, die versucht, über die religionstheologischen Verhältnisbestimmungen (Inklusivismus, Exklusivismus, Pluralismus) hinaus, die Zeichen der Präsenz Christi auch „in den Anderen“ zu erkennen. Es geht ihm in erster Linie um die existentielle und zugleich intellektuelle Bereitschaft des Christen „nicht dieselbe Sache, wohl aber Denselben, aber in einer anderen Weise“⁴⁵ in den nicht-christlichen Traditionen zu entdecken.

Die Begegnung mit anderen Religionen sollte im Zeichen einer „zentrierten und sinnerfüllten Offenheit“⁴⁶ stehen. Die Christen sind nicht dazu berufen, ein Wahrheitsurteil über die Anderen auszusprechen, denn dies kann nur in der eschatologischen Offenbarung geschehen. Gerade angesichts der eschatologischen Ausrichtung der Wahrheitsfrage, soll der interreligiöse Dialogtheologische Wege ausfindig machen, um die „Wahrheit

⁴³ André Scrima, *Teme ecumenice*, hg. von Anca Manolescu, Bukarest, 2004, p. 109.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

der sogenannten nicht-christlichen Religionen in dieser neuen Periode vor der Zweiten Wiederkunft Christi zu spüren⁴⁷. Mit anderen Worten: indem man die spirituelle Wahrhaftigkeit und Authentizität der großen religiösen Traditionen anerkennt, gewinnt man eine neue Empfindsamkeit für die eschatologische Kriteriologie der Religionstheologie.

In seinen Ausführungen weist Scrima Ähnlichkeiten mit dem zeitgenössischen Ansatz der „komparativen Theologie“ auf: nicht die „Religionen“ als „inner-historische Phänomene“ sollte man vergleichen (bzw. behaupten, dass sie „vor den Augen Gottes“ gleich wären); eine bestimmte Äquivalenz kann nur im Hinblick auf „den lebendigen Menschen, der die Religion lebt, d.h. den Menschen im Glaubenszustand“⁴⁸ formuliert werden. André Scrima ist übrigens sowohl gegen einen oberflächlichen Pluralismus (wonach alle Religionen gleich wären), als auch gegen den Synkretismus: entscheidend sei eine echte Vertiefung der geistigen Tradition des Anderen, eine Begegnung im Zeichen der geistigen Erfahrung. Und dies, mit einem offenen Blick auf die Änderung der theologischen Denkparadigmen in der Moderne.

Konkreter wird diese interreligiöse Vision Scrimas, wenn er über die Bedeutung der Stadt Jerusalem spricht, nämlich als symbolischer Begegnungspunkt aller drei abrahamitischen Religionen in ihrer geschichtlichen Bedingtheit. Doch Jerusalem geht über die Bedingtheit einer geschichtlich-religiösen Bedeutung hinaus:

„Jerusalem [...] entkommt den Religionen und der «Religion» nicht nur in ihren geschichtlichen Strukturen und Bedingtheiten, sondern in einem großen Maß auch in ihrer gestalteten Bilderwelt. [...] Jerusalem ist frei von religiösen Grenzen [...] sie gehört nicht den Religionen die sich auf sie beziehen.“⁴⁹

In Jerusalem überholt die Religion ihre geschichtliche Bedingtheit und trifft auf die Mitte ihrer Offenbarung. Jerusalem bekommt für Scrima eine überreligiöse Größe: sie ist eine „brennende aber distanzierte Präsenz“⁵⁰, denn in ih lebt immer noch ein göttliches Versprechen der universalen Erneuerung. Dieser Zustand Jerusalems zwischen Irdischem und Himmlischem, zwischen Zeit und Eschaton spiegelt sich in allen

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

jerusalembezogenen Offenbarungsmomenten des Judentums, des Christentums und des Islams wider.

Scrima unterscheidet zwei theologische Konstanten Jerusalems: die *Gastfreundschaft*, welche mit dem Pfingstereignis in Zusammenhang gebracht wird, d.h. die pneumatologische Öffnung zur Welt, im Geist der eucharistischen Koinonia. Sowohl die Begegnung Abrahams mit Melchisedech als auch die Herabkunft des Hl. Geistes (fortgesetzt bei jeder Eucharistie) weisen auf dieses Element der Empfänglichkeit für Gottes Gegenwart hin. Im Christentum wird das eucharistische Bild des geschlachteten Lammes zum Charakteristikum des himmlischen Jerusalems.⁵¹ Und selbst das Jüngste Gericht „ist die Anerkennung an der Schwelle des Reiches, der unendlichen, gott-menschlichen Ausweitung dieser Empfänglichkeit“⁵². Das andere grundlegende Attribut Jerusalems wird von Scrima mit den Begriffen *Trost* und *Erbarmung* umschrieben, wobei auch hierin die Universalität dieser Komponenten betont wird. Der erlösende Trost gegenüber der Welt kommt nicht nur im Christentum (Pfingstereignis) von Jerusalem aus, sondern auch im Judentum und Islam wird dieselbe geistige erbarmende Gerechtigkeit mit Jerusalem in Zusammenhang gebracht. Beide Aspekte – Empfänglichkeit und tröstende Erbarmung – haben mit der Wirksamkeit des Hl. Geistes zu tun.

Bei Scrima ist allerdings schwierig festzustellen, ob diese pneumatologische Perspektive der Begegnung der drei Religionen ein symbolisches Anerkennen des gemeinsamen, himmlischen Zieles ist, oder sogar ein „vor-eschatologisches“ Zusammenkommen in der Kraft des Geistes. Diese Zweideutigkeit begleitet die Ausführungen Scrimas so konsequent, dass man eher von einer bewussten Entscheidung zur Ambivalenz sprechen sollte. Darin liegt zugleich die Grundschwierigkeit, seinen religionstheologischen Ansatz zu evaluieren.⁵³ Scrima skizziert nicht

⁵¹ Vgl. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵³ Einige Aussagen Scrimas würden eine Verwandtschaft mit dem pluralistischen Ansatz Jacques Dupuis' nahelegen, obwohl die spekulative und fragmentarische Diskursart des rumänischen Denkers mit dem systematischen und umfangreichen Werk des belgischen Jesuit nur sehr begrenzt einen solchen Vergleich zulassen. Dupuis betont auch die „konstitutive Einzigartigkeit und Universalität Jesu Christi“ für das Heil der Menschen, will aber zugleich herausstellen, dass „...die belebende Kraft des Geistes es möglich machen, in anderen Heilsfiguren und Traditionen Wahrheit und Gnade zu entdecken, die in Gottes Offenbarung und Selbstmitteilung in Jesus Christus nicht mit der gleichen Kraft und Klarheit zum Ausdruck gebracht werden.“ (Jacques Dupuis,

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

ökumenische Szenarien, sondern eher eine Vision der Begegnung Gottes im Anderen.

Als kleines Zeichen für die Kristallisation dieser jersalemitischen Zentralität gilt für Scrima die Begegnung zwischen Papst Paul VI. und dem Patriarchen Athenagoras (Januar 1964), aber auch die Reise Papst Johannes Pauls II. ins Heilige Land im Jahre 2000. Die Begeisterung Scrima für dieses Ereignis⁵⁴ – das im Jahr seines Todes stattfand – erklärte er selbst durch einen symbolträchtigen Gestus: während der im Freien stattfindenden Pontifikalmesse in Bethlehem hielt der Papst inne und alle Christen hörten andächtig den Gebetsruf des Muezzin. Scrima deutete das als einen Moment des gemeinsamen Empfangens des göttlichen Herabsteigens: „Zwischen den zwei Traditionen gab es in jenem Moment keinen Gegensatz mehr, keine historische Sukzession, sondern eine gemeinsame objektive Anerkennung.“⁵⁵

Interreligiöse Begegnung hat also für André Scrima immer einen ereignishaften Charakter und setzt eine Haltung der geistigen Offenheit voraus, ohne damit seine Identität relativieren zu müssen. Eine *philoxenia*, eine Einstellung der geistigen Gastfreundlichkeit sollte die Begegnung mit den Vertretern anderer Religionen prägen. Das sollte nicht als Nettigkeit oder Freundlichkeit gegenüber dem Anderen verstanden werden, sondern als spirituelle Chance, in der Begegnung mit dem Anderen die Gegenwart Gottes zu erfahren.

Ein dritter orthodoxer Zugang, den ich hier präsentieren möchte, ist der des heutigen Oberhauptes der Orthodoxen Kirchen von Albanien, Erzbischof *Anastasios Yannoulatos*. Er gilt als der bekannteste orthodoxe Missionswissenschaftler des 20. Jh.s, nicht zuletzt wegen seiner langjährigen Missionstätigkeit in Afrika und seiner Forschungstätigkeit an der Universität Athen. Er war und ist außerordentlich aktiv auch in den obersten

Unterwegs zu einer christlichen Theologie des religiösen Pluralismus, hg. von U. Winkler, Innsbruck-Wien, 2010, p. 529-530). Wie im Falle Dupuis, dessen Ansatz durch die berühmte *Notifikation* der Kongregation für die Glaubenslehre kritisiert wurde (2001), wird auch der religionstheologische Ansatz Scrimas in Rumänien eher von Religionswissenschaftlern als von orthodoxen Theologen rezipiert. Zur Rezeption der Religionstheologie Dupuis` in der römisch-katholischen Theologie siehe: Ulrich Winkler, *Jacques Dupuis` Vermächtnis einer katholischen Religionstheologie – Editorial*, in „SaThZ“ 10 (2006), p. 1-8.

⁵⁴ Scrima, *Teme ecumenice*, p. 224-229.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

ökumenischen Gremien des ÖRK. 1991 wurde er zum Metropoliten von Tirana und ganz Albanien ernannt, wo er den Wiederaufbau der albanischen Orthodoxie mit großem Erfolg vorantrieb. Aus seinen vielen Ansätzen zum interreligiösen Dialog möchte ich nur drei Aspekte herausheben, die die bereits erwähnten ergänzen.

Der *anthropologisch-christologische* Aspekt: Alle Menschen sind „Abbild Gottes“ und – weil durch den Sündenfall diese Ebenbildlichkeit nicht verloren gegangen ist – besitzen alle Menschen sowohl eine Sehnsucht nach dem Göttlichen, als auch die Fähigkeit, Gottes Herrlichkeit zu erfahren. Dieser anthropologischen Grundaussage entspricht die christologische Aussage im Johannes-Prolog, dass Christus-der Logos „das wahre Licht ist, das alle Menschen erleuchtet, die in diese Welt kommen.“ Die Auferstehung Jesu als universelles Heilsereignis betrifft alle Menschen, denn das, was in Jesus Christus verherrlicht wird, ist die menschliche Natur als solche, an der alle teilhaben. Jeder Mensch, der nach dem Ereignis der Auferstehung lebt, hat unbewusst und potentiell auch Anteil an einer neuen Wirklichkeit: der Wirklichkeit der vergöttlichten menschlichen Natur Jesu Christi. Verbunden mit anderen Hinweisen im NT (wie etwa die Areopagrede des Paulus), betont Anastasios Yannoulatos darüber hinaus, dass aus christlicher Perspektive die religiöse Erfahrung der Nicht-Christen als eine authentische zu würdigen ist.

Der *hermeneutische* Aspekt: Der Blick auf die anderen Religionen bedarf zugleich einer kritischen Unterscheidungskraft: weder blinder Enthusiasmus, noch skeptische Kritik sind angebracht, weder Relativismus, noch Exklusivismus. Es gilt, zwischen solchen Elementen zu unterscheiden, die die Wirksamkeit des Logos erkennen lassen, und solche, die als dämonische Entstellungen der Religion zu gelten haben. Unterscheiden, aber nicht verurteilen. Denn zugleich darf nicht vergessen werden, dass die Religionen „organische Einheiten sind“, und dass es im Dialog nicht darum gehen kann, nur diejenigen Elemente herauszufiltern, die aus christlicher Perspektive geeignet und gut erscheinen. Die größte Herausforderung des interreligiösen Dialogs ist, dass wir einander verstehen sollen, wie wir in unserer jeweiligen religiösen Identität sind, nicht wie wir den Anderen haben wollen. In diesem Sinn darf der interreligiöse Dialog nicht zu einer wirklichkeitsfremden Beschäftigung einzelner Experten werden. Das Gelingen eines solchen Dialogs ist dann gewährleistet, wenn jeder am schönsten und am tiefsten das entfaltet, was dem Herz seiner Religion authentisch entspricht.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

Wie schon bei den zwei anderen, gerade vorgestellten Theologen, kann der „interreligiöse Dialog“ auch für Anastasios Yannoulatos „nicht eine Auseinandersetzung zwischen zwei Religionssystemen in abstrakter Art und Weise sein, sondern eine Begegnung zwischen Personen, die dieselbe menschliche Natur teilen“⁵⁶. Das bedeutet auch, dass der interreligiöse Dialog – vor allem im Kontext der Globalisierung – ein „Dialog des Lebens“ sein soll, ein Sich-Zusammenfinden zum Lösen von gemeinsamen, ethischen Herausforderungen: „Unsere Pflicht ist es, mit anderen Menschen die Gewissheiten und die tiefsten geistigen Erfahrungen zu teilen, die uns Gott schenkt.“⁵⁷

4. Ausblick: die Begegnung des Anderen im Zeichen der Liebe und der Wahrheit

Diese drei hier in aller Kürze präsentierten Stimmen der orthodoxen Theologie der Gegenwart zeigen gewiss unterschiedliche Akzentuierungen. Sie weisen jedoch einige Konstanten auf. Ich würde diese im Bereich des *Inklusivismus* verorten⁵⁸: es herrscht bei der Mehrheit orthodoxer Autoren die Ansicht, dass die nicht-christlichen Religionen einen Platz im Heilshandeln Gottes haben, auch wenn diese Heilsökonomie ihre einzige und nicht überholbare Erfüllung in Jesus Christus gefunden hat, der von sich sagt „Ich bin der Weg, die Wahrheit und das Leben“ (Joh. 14, 6). Vor allem die positive Auffassung der Schöpfungstheologie, die dynamische Anthropologie, die Pneumatologie und die kosmische Dimension des Christusgeschehens lassen eine solche Sicht auf die nicht-christlichen Religionen zu. Wie wir gesehen haben, ist der pneumatologische Zugang bei einigen Autoren zentral. Nicht zuletzt eins der wichtigsten Gebete der

⁵⁶ Yannoulatos, *Problems and Prospects*, p. 352.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

⁵⁸ Vgl. auch die Aussage von George C. Papademetriou: „The claim of exclusivism has been rejected by many Orthodox scholars as untenable. This is not done in the interests of facilitating missionary endeavours or to foster world peace. Exclusiveness is rejected as a matter of Truth. The majority of Orthodox scholars would accept inclusivism. Some Orthodox scholars espouse the view characterized as cultural pluralism but with qualifications. Relativism and syncretism are denied.“ (George C. Papademetriou, *An Orthodox Christian View of Non-Christian Religions*, <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8089>).

Orthodoxie unterstützt diese Ausrichtung. Dort heißt es mit Bezug auf den Hl. Geist: „Du Geist der Wahrheit, der Du *überall bist und alles erfüllst!*“

Allerdings fehlt orthodoxerseits nach wie vor eine vertiefte Auseinandersetzung mit den unterschiedlichen religionstheologischen Ansätzen der Gegenwart, die die klassische Alternative „Exklusivismus – Inklusivismus – Pluralismus“ zu überwinden versuchen.⁵⁹ Es bleibt eine offene Aufgabe, sich aus orthodoxer Sicht – gerade aufgrund der hier angesprochenen Schwerpunkte (Pneumatologie und Schöpfungstheologie) – sich mit solchen Ausrichtungen der neueren Religionstheologie zu beschäftigen, wie etwa der „Komparativen Theologie“⁶⁰ (die auf eine Modelbestimmung des Verhältnisses zwischen Religionen verzichtet und einzelne religiöse Problemfelder, Praxisformen und Aspekte vergleicht), des „aufgeklärten“⁶¹ oder „reziproken Inklusivismus“⁶², bis hin zu dem von Gerhard Gäde ins Gespräch gebrachte „Interiorismus“⁶³. Über diese noch zu klärende religionstheologische Verortung hinaus, bleiben in den drei

⁵⁹ Zu den religionstheologischen Modellen der Gegenwart siehe: Christian Danz, *Erkundung des Eigenen im Lichte des Fremden. Paul Tillichs Beitrag zur religionstheologischen Debatte der Gegenwart*, in: C. Danz, W. Schübler, E. Sturm (Hg.), *Religionstheologie und interreligiöser Dialog*, Wien – Berlin, 2010, p. 75-92, hier: p. 78-83. Klaus von Stosch, *Komparative Theologie als Wegweiser in der Welt der Religionen*, Paderborn, 2012, p. 17-131.

⁶⁰ Die unterschiedlichen Ansätze, die in der letzten Zeit unter dem Stichwort „komparative Theologie“ eine neue Epoche im interreligiösen Dialog einläuten, können schwer auf einige Namen oder Beiträge reduziert werden. Hier nur ein Paar zusammenfassende Beiträge: Reinhold Bernhardt, Klaus von Stosch (Hg.), *Komparative Theologie. Interreligiöse Vergleiche als Weg der Religionstheologie*, Zürich, 2009. Marianne Moyaert, *Comparative Theology in Search of a Hermeneutical Framework*, in D. Cheetham u.a. (Hg.), *Interreligious Hermeneutics in Pluralistic Europe. Between Texts and People*, Amsterdam – New York, 2011, p. 161-185. Stosch, *Komparative Theologie als Wegweiser*, p. 133-254.

⁶¹ Mariano Delgado, *Das Christentum in der Religionsgeschichte. Unterwegs zu einem aufgeklärtem Inklusivismus*, in M. Delgado, G. M. Hoff, G. Riße (Hg.), *Das Christentum in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Hans Waldenfels SJ*, Fribourg – Stuttgart, 2011, p. 15-31.

⁶² Vgl. etwa Michael von Brück, *Heil und Heilswege im Hinduismus und Buddhismus – eine Herausforderung für christliches Erlösungsverständnis*, in R. Bernhardt, M. von Brück, J. Werbick, H. Zirker, *Der einzige Weg zum Heil? Die Herausforderung des christlichen Absolutheitsanspruchs durch pluralistische Religionstheologien*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien, 1993, p. 62-106, hier: p. 88-89.

⁶³ Gerhard Gäde, *Christus in den Religionen. Der christliche Glaube und die Wahrheit der Religionen*, Paderborn u.a., 2010, p. 80-84, p. 134-193.

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

oben erwähnten orthodoxen Positionen wichtige Differenzierungen fällig: so etwa die wichtige Unterscheidung zwischen Wahrheitsanspruch und Durchsetzungsanspruch einer Religion⁶⁴, bzw. wiederum zwischen Wahrheitsgewissheit und Wahrheitsanspruch⁶⁵.

Erst wenn diese Verortung und begriffliche Differenzierung stattgefunden hat, kann man wieder die systematische Theologie bemühen. Dabei wäre wichtig, das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nicht vom Wirken Christi abzukoppeln: es ist der Geist Christi, der weht, und es ist der Ratschluss der Hl. Trinität, die im Wirken Christi und des Hl. Geistes sich verwirklicht. Man sollte also eine pneumatologische Sicht auf den interreligiösen Dialog nicht auf Kosten der Christologie ausspielen. Von Christus her auf den Anderen zugehen bedeutet wiederum auf keinen Fall, ihm anhand der christlichen Lehre von oben herab zu be- oder sogar zu verurteilen, sondern ihm im Zeichen der Liebe zu begegnen. Gott entleert sich seiner Herrlichkeit um Mensch zu werden. Das nennen wir im theologischen Sprachgebrauch „kenosis“, Selbst-Entäußerung. *Kenosis* soll aber auch ein Charakteristikum der Kirche und jeder christlichen Seele gegenüber der Welt sein. Die Wahrheitsgewissheit gegenüber der Offenbarung Gottes in Einziggeborenen Sohn ist da, sie lebt aber vor allem im Verhältnis zum Andersgläubigen, in kenotischer, in demütiger Form. Als Christen „besitzen“ wir die Wahrheit nicht, sondern wir bekennen einen Offenbarungsglauben, in dessen Mitte das Gebot der Liebe steht. Diese ist nicht eine rein menschliche Liebe ist, sondern ein Stück Abbild der Liebe Gottes zu den Menschen. Und sie ist ja das, was uns als Geschöpfe Gottes, als Gläubige, als religiöse Menschen verbindet.

Also ein „Dialog der Liebe“ ist gefragt, auch im interreligiösen Dialog, nach wie vor. Dazu gehört Verzeihung der gegenseitigen Fehler der Vergangenheit, dazu gehören ehrliche Begegnung, Achtsamkeit, Interesse für einander. Dazu gehört auch das ganze Spektrum von praktischer Zusammenarbeit in ethischen und sozial-politischen Fragen, auf lokaler und

⁶⁴ Vgl. dazu Andreas Feldtkeller, *Theoretische Perspektiven auf das Ausbreitungsverhalten von Religionsgemeinschaften, ihren Wahrheitsanspruch und ihre Konfliktbereitschaft*, in W. Dietrich, W. Lienemann, *Religionen – Wahrheitsansprüche – Konflikte. Theologische Perspektiven*, Zürich, 2010, p. 43-69, hier p. 57-62.

⁶⁵ Reinhold Bernhardt, *Extra Christum nullasalus – Blockiert der Christusglaube die Anerkennung anderer Religionen?*, in W. Dietrich, W. Lienemann (Hg.), *Religionen – Wahrheitsansprüche – Konflikte. Theologische Perspektiven*, Zürich, 2010, p. 117-145, hier p. 126.

globaler Ebene, wobei wiederum die Religionen nicht auf Gewährleistung von Ethik und Frieden reduziert und in dieser Richtung instrumentalisiert werden dürfen. Frieden und Verständigung kann zwischen religiösen Menschen, zwischen religiösen Gemeinschaften nicht auf bloßen Vereinbarungen beruhen, sondern auf einem Zusammenfinden in der Liebe. Gerade in der heutigen Zeit – vor allem in der westeuropäischen Gesellschaft, wo, Gott sei Dank, interreligiöser Friede da ist – geht es darum, mit dem Wort Frieden auch den „inneren Frieden“ des gottzugewandten Menschen als großen Beitrag der Religionen zu unterstreichen.

Doch was machen wir mit der „Wahrheitsfrage“? Zu einem gelungenen interreligiösen Dialog gehört auch die ehrliche Einsicht der Grenzen und der grundlegenden Unterschiede. Ein Verschweigen oder Relativieren dieser Unterschiede kann dem Dialog und der Konfliktlösung nicht dienlich sein. Vielmehr gehört zum Stichwort „Verständigung“ auch die Notwendigkeit, über Gemeinsames und Nicht-Gemeinsames in der Gotteslehre zu sprechen. *Wahrheit schafft Identität, kann und will aber andere vorhandene Identitäten nicht abschaffen.* Jeder relativistische Versuch, eine panreligiöse „Wahrheit“ zu schaffen, bleibt ein Konstrukt, das sowohl den eigenen Offenbarungsglauben, als auch die authentische Identität des Anderen in Frage stellt. Die Wahrheit, zumindest aus christlicher Sicht, ist vielmehr kenotisch, sie raubt nicht die Freiheit des Anderen. Ich finde es zum Beispiel fair und den Dialog erleichternd, wie Rabbiner Homolka über Jesus schreibt: „War Jesus aus jüdischer Sicht Pharisäer und Schriftgelehrter? Vielleicht. War er bedeutend? Ohne Zweifel. War er der Messias oder gar der Sohn Gottes? Aus jüdischem Verständnis nein.“⁶⁶ Dass gerade dieser Jesus aus christlicher Sicht der menschengewordene, gekreuzigte und auferstandene Sohn Gottes und unser Heiland ist, soll wiederum mit aller Offenheit aus christlicher Sicht gesagt werden. Die zwei Aussagen zeigen zwar die unüberbrückbaren Differenzen in der Gotteslehre, aber auch, dass wir solche Differenzen im Geist der Liebe aushalten können und dem Anderen die Authentizität seines religiösen Zugangs nicht abzusprechen haben.⁶⁷ Zu den Grenzen des

⁶⁶ Walter Homolka, *Jesus von Nazareth im Spiegel jüdischer Forschung*, Berlin, 2009, p. 74.

⁶⁷ Religionstheologische Versuche, gerade im Bereich der Christologie altkirchliche Dogmen in Frage zu stellen, damit man dem interreligiösen Partner entgegenkommt,

„Was ist Wahrheit?“ (Joh. 18, 38) - Der interreligiöse Dialog...

interreligiösen Dialogs gehört nach orthodoxer Sicht auch die Tatsache, dass man – gerade aufgrund unterschiedlicher Gottesbilder – nicht gemeinsam beten kann. Wohl aber kann man für den anderen beten.

Zu einem Dialog in der Wahrheit gehört aber nicht nur das theologische Gespräch, sondern auch die Ehrlichkeit, auf die bleibenden interreligiösen Konflikte hinzuweisen: auf das Wachstum der „Christophobie“ in den islamischen Ländern, auf die eingeschränkte Religionsfreiheit, aber natürlich auch auf fundamentalistische Mentalitäten in den eigenen Reihen.⁶⁸

Somit wird der interreligiöse Dialog – wie der rumänische orthodoxe Patriarch Daniel 2011 in Strasbourg es formuliert hat– nicht nur eine Herausforderung an unsere Liebesfähigkeit, sondern vor allem eine „Herausforderung für unser geistiges Erwachen“. Sind wir imstande, trotz dieser Unterschiede,

„von den Anderen Werte zu erlernen, die wir vergessen oder viel zu stark vernachlässigt haben, wie etwa das inbrünstige Gebet, die Praxis des Fastens, die Freude der Gastfreundlichkeit, die Bedeutung der Familie im menschlichen Leben oder die tiefe Dimension des gemeinschaftlichen Lebens“?⁶⁹

können aus orthodoxer Sicht nicht akzeptiert werden. Vgl. etwa den relativistisch anmutenden Vorschlag Reinhold Bernhards für die „Konzeptualisierung einer Christologie, die den im Christusbekenntnis inhärenten Wahrheitsanspruch zur Geltung bringt, dabei aber nicht notwendigerweise zur Ablehnung andersreligiöser Wahrheitsansprüche führt“. Damit wird die ganze altkirchliche Christologie über Bord geworfen: „Es gibt offensichtlich Ausprägungen der Christologie, die dem entgegenstehen, wie etwa die substanztheologisch entfaltete Inkarnationslehre, die eine hypostatische Union der göttlichen und der menschlichen *physis* in Jesus Christus lehrt. Diese Vorstellung führt in einen religionstheologischen Exklusivismus.“ (Bernhardt, *Extra Christum nullasalus*, p. 144.

⁶⁸ Für einen realistischeren Ansatz im interreligiösen Dialog plädiert auch der evangelische Systematiker Ulrich H. J. Körtner, *Integration und die Rolle der Religion*, p. 31. Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag (Köln, 2007): „In der Tat muss der interreligiöse Dialog auf eine neue, realistischerere Grundlage gestellt werden, bei der bestehende Unterschiede und offenkundige Gegensätze nicht verbrämt, sondern offen benannt und diskutiert werden.“ www.kirchentag2007.de/presse/dokumente/dateien/EUR_2_1307.pdf.

⁶⁹ Patriarch Daniel, *Orient, Occident, les défis du dialogue interreligieux*, Vortrag in der Kathedrale „Notre Dame“, Strasbourg, 11.04.2011, http://www.basilica.ro/stiri/bprovarile_dialogului_interreligiosb_9396.html.

Achilleas P. Dellopoulos¹

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“ Die Geschlechterdifferenzierung nach der Theologie von Cyrill von Alexandrien

Zusammenfassung

Im Rahmen dieser Veröffentlichung versuchen wir die Stellung der Frau nach Cyrill von Alexandrien zu erläutern. Auffallend ist von Anfang an, dass Cyrill die Frau im Vergleich zum Mann als minderwertiger herausstellt. Ihre Minderwertigkeit hat, Cyrill gemäß, mit ihrer Unfähigkeit zu tun, klar zu denken und den Weg der Tugend zu finden, weil ihr Wesen schwach und unbeständig ist. Im Gegensatz dazu ist der Mann klug, weise, hochbegabt, insbesondere im Bereich des Gottesverständnisses. Es ist ihm leicht, sich Christus zu nähern, weil Christus nicht nur Mensch, sondern auch Mann war. Die Tatsache, dass Christus Mann war, bedeutet, dass der Mann besser als die Frau Gott verstehen kann und dass er aus diesem Grund ihr Kopf sein muss. Er ist der einzige, der ihr die Gotteswirklichkeit vermitteln kann.

Nur der Mann kann, laut Cyrill, die heilige Schrift begreifen, weil er über ihren tieferen Gehalt Bescheid weiß. Die Frau ist darüber uninformiert. Deswegen musste Christus sich ihr nach seiner Auferstehung zeigen. Denn, wenn die Frau Christus nicht gesehen hätte, wäre sie auf keinen Fall im Stande gewesen, an Christus zu glauben. Der Mann brauchte auf der anderen Seite Christus nicht zu sehen, weil er über seine Auferstehung informiert war. - Innerhalb des weiblichen Wesens kann man, wie Cyrill sagt, eine Unfähigkeit, die nicht nur seelisch, sondern auch geistig ist, bemerken, die es der Frau nicht ermöglicht, die Gotteswunder zu begreifen. Das heißt, dass das, was die menschliche Vernunft übersteigt, nur dem Mann zugänglich ist.

Der Hauptgrund für diese weibliche geistige Unfähigkeit ist, wie Cyrill betont, auf den Sündenfall zurückzuführen. Im Sündenfall war es die Frau, Eva, die aufgrund ihrer Naivität die Beziehung mit Gott völlig zerstört hat. Sie ist auf alle Fälle verantwortlich und schuldig dafür und muss aus diesem Grund dem Mann unter-

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„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

geordnet sein. Der Mann muss ihr Kopf und ihr Herr sein und das heißt auch, dass sie schweigen muss. Die Frau ist schuldig, weil sie sich vom Teufel täuschen ließ. Deswegen ist immer der Mann ihr Führer und nur durch seine Vermittlung kann sie geheiligt werden. Nur der Mann hat eine unmittelbare Beziehung mit Gott, weil nur er Gottesbild ist und sich in seinem Wesen Gottesruhm spiegelt. Die Frau hat durch den Mann eine mittelbare Beziehung mit Gott, was sich aus der Tatsache ergibt, dass sie des Mannes Bild ist.

Es muss an dieser Stelle unterstrichen werden, dass diese Theologie von Cyrill, die über die Minderwertigkeit und die Unterordnung der Frau spricht, wesentlich auf der Theologie des Apostels Paulus basiert. Paulus hat in seinen Schriften eindeutig ausgesagt, dass die Frau sich dem Mann unterordnet, aufgrund der Tatsache, dass auf der einen Seite die Frau als Zweite erschaffen wurde und der Mann als Erster, und auf der anderen Seite, dass die Frau als Erste irreführt wurde. So die Theologie von Paulus, was die Frau betrifft, und der Leser kann verstehen, dass Cyrill sehr beeinflusst von dieser Theologie ist. Es ist aber auch zu beobachten, dass die Grundlage für diese Theologie unsere heiligen Schriften sind, das Alte und das Neue Testament. Insbesondere ist im Alten Testament, im zweiten Bericht von der Erschaffung von Mann und Frau, klar betont, dass die Frau aufgrund ihrer Stelle im Vergleich zum Mann als minderwertiger betrachtet wird.

Darüber hinaus müssen wir das historische Umfeld von Cyrill, das heißt, die Geschichte des vierten und fünften Jahrhunderts zur Kenntnis nehmen. Es handelt sich um die späte Antike, in der die Würde einer Frau sowohl in der Gesellschaft und in der Familie als auch im Rechtsbereich sowie in rhetorischen Aussagen ohne Zweifel als minderwertig gesehen wurde. Wir haben viele Texte aus der Rhetorik dieser Zeit, in denen das Wort „Mann“ alle guten Begriffe zu sammeln scheint: die Weisheit, die Tugend, den Ernst, die Stabilität, die Tapferkeit.

Im Gegensatz zu diesem Bild des Mannes wird die Frau, nicht nur in der Rhetorik der späten Antike, sondern auch in derjenigen der klassischen Philosophie und zwar der Philosophie von Aristoteles mit Begriffen wie Naivität, Sünde, Dummheit, Feigheit und Verweichlichung symbolisiert. Wenn eine Frau ihre Unfähigkeit überwinden könnte, so war die Meinung, dann würde sie sich „männlich“ verhalten. In dieser „männlichen“ Welt war der Höhepunkt zur Bezeichnung der Tugend einer Frau ihre Bezeichnung als Mann. Von diesen Traditionssträngen ist nicht nur Cyrill, sondern auch die Mehrheit der Kirchenväter stark geprägt.

Wir verfolgen aber darüber hinausführend den Ansatz, dass - insgesamt besehen - Cyrill letztlich diese Worte, die mit der männlichen Weisheit und der weiblichen Naivität zu tun haben, benutzt, nicht um das männliche Wesen zu loben und das weibliche zu verurteilen, sondern dass durch diese Charakteristika die ganze Natur des Menschen gelobt bzw. verurteilt werden soll, wenn der Mensch sich (Mann und Frau) richtig oder falsch Gott gegenüber verhält. Cyrills Ziel ist die ganze Natur des Menschen, jene Natur, die aufgrund des Sündenfalles erkrankt ist. Der Mensch (Mann und Frau) ist durch Gottesverweigerung ungehorsam, sündig, unverschämt und sinnentleert geworden. Das heißt aber, dass die ganze Natur geheiligt werden muss. Und diese Heilung des menschlichen Wesens ist, wie Cyrill geschrieben hat,

in der Gottesmutter verwirklicht, deren besonderen Eigenschaften er - auch für uns - hervorhebt.

Stichwörter

Cyrrill von Alexandrien, Theologie von Cyrill, Bild des Mannes, Gottesverweigerung, Natur des Menschen, Heilung des menschlichen Wesens, Gottesmutter

Der heilige Cyrill von Alexandrien war einer der größten Kirchenväter, und seine Theologie hat im vierten und fünften ökumenischen Konzil der Kirche eine wichtige Rolle gespielt. Um genauer zu sein, muss hervorgehoben werden, dass Cyrill der Theologe der Gottesmutter war. Er war im Stande, sich mit der Ketzerei von Nestorius auseinanderzusetzen und zu erläutern, dass die Gottesmutter nicht den Menschen Jesus Christus geboren hat, sondern dass in ihm das Wort Gottes zu uns gekommen ist. Und obschon seine Theologie, die mit dem christologischen Dogma und mit dem einen Mensch gewordenen Gott zu tun hat, schon eindeutig und vielfältig analysiert worden ist und eine Reihe von Beiträgen dazu geschrieben worden ist, gibt es trotzdem ein Vakuum in seiner Anthropologie und zwar bezogen auf seine Aussagen die Frau betreffend.

Cyrrills Aussagen zur Frau sind ein Thema, das schwierig zu analysieren ist, weil innerhalb der Formulierungen von Cyrill keine Stabilität gefunden werden kann. Beschäftigt man sich genauer mit den Texten, die die Stellung der Frau betreffen, so stellt man fest, dass das Wesen der Frau von dem Wesen des Mannes unterschieden wird. Die weibliche Natur scheint nicht gleichrangig mit der männlichen zu sein und als minderwertiger im Bereich des vernünftigen Handelns und des Vermögens tieferen Sinn zu erkennen zu sein. So schreibt Cyrill, die Frau sei „unfähig etwas schnell zu begreifen“², „habe auf keinen Fall das Vermögen bzw. das Charisma etwas Tieferes zu verstehen“³. Die Vernunft der Frauen sei schwach⁴. Ihre Vernunft sei, wie Cyrill formuliert, unbeständig, weil sie weiblich sei, während männliche Vernunft perfekt sei, weil sie männlich sei⁵.

² Siehe Cyrill von Alexandrien, *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 73, 296D.

³ Siehe a.a.O., PG 73, 301A.

⁴ Siehe a.a.O., PG 73, 301A.

⁵ Siehe a.a.O., PG 73, 301A.

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

Cyrrill zufolge ist „die männliche Vernunft absolut von bösen Beeinträchtigungen befreit“⁶, während weibliche Denkfähigkeit demgegenüber schwach, feige, weich und untätig sei⁷. Im Gedankengang von Cyrrill ist die Sünde weiblich und die Tugend männlich. Das spiegelt sich in seinem Vokabular wider, in dem das Wort Tugend die gleiche Bedeutung mit dem Wort Tapferkeit hat. Zwischen den beiden Wörtern besteht, laut Cyrrill, eine totale Identifizierung⁸. Die Weise der Tugend muss auf alle Fälle stabil sein, kämpfend⁹, nicht matt, nicht schwach, anders formuliert nicht weiblich¹⁰, sondern ehrlich, glänzend, tapfer eben männlich¹¹. Der Mensch, der sich männlich verhält, wie Cyrrill erwähnt, kann sich mit Christus identifizieren¹². Und ein solcher Mensch, sagt weiter Cyrrill, kann auf keinen Fall eine weibliche Vernunft haben, die schwach und unbeständig ist¹³.

Und das ergebe sich aus der Aussage, dass das weibliche Geschlecht feige und zaghaft sei¹⁴. Somit symbolisiert das männliche Geschlecht nach Cyrrill die Tapferkeit, im Gegensatz zum weiblichen Geschlecht, das mit der Schwäche und der Sünde zusammenhängt¹⁵. Daraus wird gefolgert, dass das schwache Geschlecht, die Frau, aufgrund ihrer Natur erkrankt¹⁶ sei und immer bereit zu sündigen¹⁷, während der Mann nur sündigt, wenn er

⁶ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales PG 77, 520A*.

⁷ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77, 621C*.

⁸ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77, 453D*: «τό δέ παντός έξω γενέσθαι πράγματος, περιέσται τοίς ανδριζομένοις».

⁹ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77, 621A*.

¹⁰ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77, 621D*.

¹¹ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium PG 73, 453A*.

¹² Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales PG 77, 621B*.

¹³ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77, 621BC*.

¹⁴ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77, 621C*.

¹⁵ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77, 624D*: «Ονπερ γάρ τρόπον εις τύπον ανδρείας ελήφθη τό άρσεν, ανδρείας δέ φημί τής νοουμένης κατά Θεόν, ή και συμμόρφους αποτελεί τό Χριστώ, κατά τόν αυτόν δη τουτονί λόγον, εις τύπον μαλακισμού και φρονήματος ασθενοϋς, διαπίπτοντος τε και λιαν ευκόλως εις ηδονάς, τό τής θηλείας εισφέρεται πρόσωπον».

¹⁶ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium PG 73, 516A*: «Ωσπερ γάρ εκείνη (ή γυνή) διά τήν φύσιν εμαλακίζετο...». Πρβλ, *Ομιλίαι εορταστικαί PG 77, 624D*: «...εις τύπον μαλακισμού και φρονήματος ασθενοϋς, διαπίπτοντος τε και λιαν ευκόλως εις ηδονάς, τό τής θηλείας εισφέρεται πρόσωπον»· *Εις Γέννησιν, PG 69, 437D*: «Μαλακισμού δέ τύπος τό θήλυ».

¹⁷ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales PG 77, 624D*.

sich nicht wie ein Mann, sondern wie eine Frau verhält. Und das sei darauf zurückzuführen, dass sein Wesen nur unter dem Einfluss des weiblichen erkranken könne¹⁸.

Daraus folgt, laut Cyrill, dass die Natur der Frau durch Unfähigkeit, Dummheit, Irrtum, Sünde, fleischliche Lüste, Verderbtheit geprägt ist, eben durch das, was nicht vollständig, lobenswert, nicht männlich ist. Im Unterschied dazu sei der Mann stark¹⁹, klug, entschlossen, vernünftig²⁰, reif²¹, fähig die Täuschung des Teufels zu erkennen²². Es könne nur dem Mann gelingen, betont Cyrill, über den Teufel zu siegen und dämonische Akte zu vermeiden²³. Die Frau des Mannes sei dagegen Beute des Teufels, weil sie sich vom Teufel täuschen ließ²⁴. Die Unfähigkeit der Frau, die Anfechtungen des Teufels zu überwinden, habe der Teufel ausgenutzt, indem er Eva - im Vergleich zum Mann naiver²⁵ und dümmer²⁶ - irreführt habe, und durch sie habe der Teufel es geschafft, den Mann zu besiegen²⁷.

Die erste also und älteste²⁸ Frau, Eva, habe dem Teufel geholfen, und aufgrund ihres Verhaltens wurde, sagt Cyrill, „das ganze weibliche Geschlecht verurteilt“²⁹. Sie habe Adam zur Täuschung dadurch geführt, dass sie auf die Stimme des Teufels gehört habe, und auf diese Weise sei sie die Ursache des Todes geworden³⁰. In Folge ihrer vorherrschenden Stellung im Sündenfall wird das weibliche als das schwer krank gewordene

¹⁸ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 73, 516A.

¹⁹ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales* PG 77, 621D.

²⁰ Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 624B.

²¹ Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 624B: «Γνωριμώτατον δέ και εν βίβλω ζωής καταγεγραμμένον τό ανδρώδες άμα και συνετόν».

²² Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 624B.

²³ Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 621D: «Πολεμιώτατον δέ και πρός τό νικάσθαι σκληρόνου ηγείται (ο διάβολος) τόν άρσενα».

²⁴ Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 621D: «Ηδέα γάρ τώ διαβόλω τά μαλθακά τε και άνανδρα και εκτεηλυμένα φρονήματα».

²⁵ Siehe a.a.O., *De Incarnatione Domini* PG 75, 1424C: «Επειδή δέ φθόνω διαβόλου, και γυναικός ευκολία τήν απάτην εδέξατο (ταύτην γάρ ως απαλωτέρα φενακίσας, πρότερον δι' αυτής, ως πιθανώτερας, τόν Αδάμ ό τής ημετέρας φύσεως αλάστωρ επολιόρκησεν), εξεβλήθη μέν ευθύς τού παραδείσου...».

²⁶ Siehe a.a.O., PG 75, 1424C.

²⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 75, 1424C.

²⁸ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 697B.

²⁹ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 697B.

³⁰ Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius in Isaiam Prophetam* PG 70, 608AB.

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

Geschlecht angesehen³¹, das somit zu allererst geheiligt werden sollte³². Diesem Geschlecht wende sich freundlich der Teufel zu, da er es für dumm, untätig, schwach, unerfahren in Krieg und Kämpfen hält, nie in der Lage, richtig die Waffen der Gerechtigkeit zu verwenden³³.

Dieses Geschlecht sei immer sowohl körperlich als auch geistig schwach³⁴, während das männliche in beiden Bereichen überlegen sei³⁵. Deshalb folge die Frau immer dem Mann, und nach dem Prinzip der Gleichwertigkeit sei sie nicht gleichrangig dem Mann gegenüber, der immer ihr Anführer sei³⁶. Die Natur selbst, sagt mit Nachdruck Cyrill, zeige die Tatsache der Überlegenheit des Mannes mit Ehre und dem ihm von Gott gegebenen Ruhm. Dem Mann gegenüber sei die Frau immer im Nachteil und - was die Kraft und den Ruhm betreffe - könne sie auf keinen Fall mit dem Mann verglichen werden³⁷. Unter Bezugnahme auf die Intelligenz sei sie im Kontrast zum Mann minderwertiger³⁸, darum müsse der Mann über

³¹ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium PG 74*, 701C.

³² Siehe a.a.O., *PG 74*, 701C.

³³ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales PG 77*, 948D: «Τό δέ γε θήλυ, μαλθακόν, ως έφην, έστιν, άσοφον τε καί αδρανές, καί απειροπόλεμον, καί παρειμένως έχον τάς χείρας, καί τοξεύειν ουκ ειδός, καί τοίς όπλοις τής δικαιοσύνης εναρμόσασθαι μη δυνάμενον. Τούτο φιλεί καί προσίεται (ο διάβολος), καί αυτό προσένευκεν όλως: τιμά γαρ, ως έφην, τό άνανδρον καί αφιλόμαχον γένος».

³⁴ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77*, 948A: «Τό μέν γάρ θήλυ γένος, ασθενές αεί πώς εστί καί διανοία και σώματα». Πρβλ. *Εις τό κατά Ιωάννην PG 73*, 296D: «Ην άρα καλώς τε καί ουκ επνευσμένως ειπείν, ότι θήλειαι πώς εισί θηλειών αι φρένες, καί μαλακός ενώκισται νους γυναιξίν, ουδαμόθεν έχων τό δύνασθαι τι συνέναι γοργώς». Πρβλ. *Εις τό κατά Ιωάννην PG 74*, 689B: «Βραδεία μέν πως εις σύνεσιν η γυνή, μάλλον δέ σύμπαν τό θηλειών γένος». *Περί τής εν Πνεύματι καί αληθεία προσκυνήσεως καί λατρείας, PG 68*, 181B: «Ο δέ ασθενής τε καί άνανδρος (νους), ού σημείον ή γυνή, ταίς εις φαυλότητα μετατροπαίς, αχρειούται παντελώς. Τουτί γάρ οίμαι δηλούν τό γενέσθαι στήλη αλόξ: όπερ αν ειη σύμβολον απομαρνανθείσης φρενός, καί νού πρός ηλιθιότητα μεταφοιτάν κειμένου, καί εις εσχάτην ήδη πως αναισθησίαν εληλακότος».

³⁵ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 77*, 948AB: «τό γε μην άρσεν, καθ' εκάτερον τών ειρημένων ευδοκιμεί, καί εν μοίρα νοείται κρείττον».

³⁶ Siehe a.a.O., *Glaphyrorum in Genesim PG 69*, 128B: «Κατόπιν γάρ πως αεί και εν μείοσι τό θήλυ τού άρρενος ως ηγουμένου και προύχοντος».

³⁷ Siehe a.a.O., *De adoratione in spiritu et veritate PG 68*, 712D: «Ηγεμονικώτατον γάρ αεί πως τό άρσεν εστί, και εν τιμή και δόξη τή παναρίστω παρά Θεώ, και μάρτυς ή φύσις, ομολογούσα τό χρήμα. Μείον δέ και υπεστρωμένον τό θήλυ, και οιονεί κατόπιν ιόν τής αρσένων αλκής τε και δόξης».

³⁸ Siehe a.a.O., *PG 68*, 1037C: «Κατόπιν δέ πανταχού το θήλυ του άρσενος, και εν ημίσει πολλάκις... Λείπεται δέ τής ανδρών ευφυΐας, και σιωπά μέν εν Εκκλησίαις».

sie herrschen³⁹. Gemäß dieser Analyse wird deutlich, dass die Frau nach der Anthropologie von Cyrill alle negativen Begriffe sammelt: Schwäche, sowohl geistige als auch körperliche, Naivität, Neigung zur Täuschung, Unbeständigkeit, Unbedachtheit, Neigung zum Hedonismus im Kontrast zum Männlichen, das gemäß dieser Analyse die Ideale der Weisheit, der Besonnenheit, der Macht, des Ruhmes verkörpert.

Wenn auch diese Anthropologie vom heiligen Cyrill von Alexandrien abgeleitet ist, so stimmt mit dieser Anthropologie die Mehrheit der Kirchenväter des vierten bzw. fünften Jahrhunderts überein. Berücksichtigt werden müssen in diesem Zusammenhang allerdings auch die Auswirkungen der Geschichte dieser Zeit auf die Kirchenväter, d.h. des frühen Byzanz, das sich hinsichtlich der Stellung der Frau in der Tat von den Urteilen des Römischen Rechtes über *Infirmitas Sexus* und *Levitas Animi* nicht distanziert hatte, ferner die Einflüsse der klassischen Philosophie, unter anderem die aus der Philosophie von Aristoteles.

Je mehrere Hintergründe für diese anthropologischen Aussagen von Cyrill wir zur Kenntnis nehmen, desto tieferreichender wird unsere Untersuchung sein. Das heißt, dass es notwendig sein wird, sich im Rahmen dieser Untersuchung mit all den Gründen zu befassen, die eine große Auswirkung auf die Theologie von Cyrill ausgeübt haben. Und es besteht kein Zweifel daran, dass diese Gründe mit der Philosophie des alten Griechenlands, der Rhetorikliebe und der römischen Gesetzessammlung zusammenhängen. Denn sowohl im alten Griechenland als auch in Rom wurde die Frau als ein zweites Wesen betrachtet. Es gab Philosophen in dieser Zeit, die die Meinung vertreten haben, dass die Frau nicht als Mensch angesehen werden sollte.

Darüber hinaus ist es, unseres Erachtens, unbedingt notwendig, die Auswirkung des Alten Testaments auf die Kirchenväter und so auch auf Cyrill zu sehen. Insbesondere bestehen die Kirchenväter mit Nachdruck auf dem zweiten Bericht der Genesis, und auf dieser Basis bauen sie ihre Theologie über die nachgeordnete Stellung der Frau auf. Dieser Bericht, in dem die Frau aufgrund ihrer Naivität den Sündenfall verursacht und den Mann durch die Lust⁴⁰ betrogen hat, bestimmt dynamisch die Theologie des

³⁹ Siehe a.a.O., *PG* 68, 1068C: «Ἡγεμονικώτατον δέ τό ἄρσεν αεί, καί εν δευτέρα τάξει τό θήλυ πανταχί».

⁴⁰ Siehe Gregor von Nazianz, *PG* 35, 975B: «Καί τώ μέν Αδάμ ἡ δοθείσα κατ' αὐτόν βοηθός ἀντί συνεργός πολεμία κατέστη καί οὐχ ὁμόζυγος ἀλλ' ἀντίθετος· κλέψασα

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

Apostels Paulus bis zu seiner grundlegenden Forderung zum Schweigen⁴¹ der Frau in der Kirche und zu ihrer vollkommenen Unterordnung unter den Mann⁴².

Es muss in diesem Punkt betont werden, dass die Kirchenväter diese biblischen Texte *a priori* und *a posteriori* für göttlich halten, als Texte, deren göttliche Eingebung auf keinen Fall in Frage zu stellen ist. Auf der Basis dieser Texte bauen sie ihre Theologie über die Priorität und über die Überlegenheit des Mannes in allen Bereichen des Lebens und die damit verbundene Unterordnung der Frau⁴³ auf.

Es handelt sich - unsere Untersuchung betreffend - um einen Forschungsweg, der schwer zu gehen⁴⁴ ist, dem wir aber trotzdem folgen möchten, damit wir alle Gründe finden, die einen der größten Kirchenväter des vierten bzw. fünften Jahrhunderts, Cyrill von Alexandrien, repräsentativ für eine ganze Reihe von Kirchenvätern - Zeitgenossen, wie auch frühere - die auf die gleiche Weise über die Frau gesprochen haben, dazu führte, an die vollkommene Überlegenheit des Mannes, eine Überlegenheit, die bis zum Gottesverständnis hinreicht, zu glauben.

Denn der Mann, schreibt Cyrill, sei das überlegene Geschlecht nicht nur hinsichtlich der Kraft des Körpers, sondern auch bezüglich des Wissens um das Gesetzshafte des Alten Testaments⁴⁵. Wenn Cyrill sich mit dem Alten Testament beschäftigt, gibt er nur dem Mann die Aufgabe, das Alte Testament zu erläutern, da der Mann Cyrill gemäß imstande ist, es zu begreifen. Um dieses Begreifenkönnen geht es auch im Neuen Testament und zwar im Johannesevangelium, denn, wenn Cyrill die Szene der Auferstehung des Herrn bezogen auf die Frauen erklärt, vertritt er die

τόν άνδρα δι' ηδονής και τώ ξύλω τής γνώσεως τού ξύλου τής ζωής αλλοτριώσασα».

⁴¹ Siehe 1 *Kor.* 14, 34: «Ὡς εν πάσαις ταίς Εκκλησίαις τών αγίων αί γυναίκες εν ταίς Εκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν· ου γάρ επιτρέπεται αυταις λαλείν αλλ' υποτασέσθωσαν καθώς και ό νόμος λέγει· ει δέ τί μαθύν εθέλουσιν, εν οίκω τούς ιδίους άνδρας επερωτάτωσαν· αισχροόν γάρ εστίν γυναικί λαλείν εν Εκκλησία».

⁴² Siehe 1 *Tim.* 2, 12 – 15: «Γυνή εν ησυχία μανθανέτω εν πάση υποταγή· διδάσκειν δέ γυναικί ουκ επιτρέπω ουδέ αυθεντείν ανδρός αλλ' είναι εν ησυχία. Αδάμ γάρ πρώτος επλάσθη, είτα Εύα και Αδάμ ουκ ηπατήθη, ή δέ γυνή εξαπατηθείσα εν παραβάσει γέγονεν· σωθήσεται δέ διά τής τεκνογονίας...».

⁴³ Siehe a.a.O., *De adoratione in spiritu et veritate* PG 68, 1037C: «Κατόπιν δέ πανταχού το θήλω του άρσενος, και εν ημίσει πολλάκις... Λείπεται δέ τής ανδρών ευφυΐας, και σιωπά μέν εν Εκκλησίαις».

⁴⁴ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales* PG 77, 736B.

⁴⁵ Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius in Isaiam Prophetam* PG 70, 581AB.

Auffassung, dass der Engel von der Frau - wegen ihrer vollkommenen Unwissenheit der Tiefe der heiligen Schrift - gesehen werden musste und nicht von den Männern. Denn die 12 Apostel wussten durch die heiligen Schriften über die Auferstehung Bescheid und brauchten den Auferstandenen nicht zu sehen, um an ihn zu glauben, während für die Frauen das Sehen von Christus die absolute Voraussetzung ihres Glaubens war⁴⁶.

Die Priorität des Mannes auf dem Sektor der Erkenntnis der Glaubensinhalte ist bei Cyrill Tatsache: Die Männer wissen um das Mysterium der heiligen Schrift und ihr Glaube basiert darauf, während die Frauen nicht fähig sind, das tiefste Mysterium der Auferstehung des Christus zu verstehen⁴⁷, und im Großen und Ganzen können sie nicht die Gotteswunder erfassen⁴⁸. Darum ist der Mann eng mit Gott verbunden. Er ist in der Lage, nicht nur die heilige Schrift und die Gotteswunder zu begreifen, sondern er ist auch dazu berechtigt, Priester zu werden, Tatsache, die ihm Ehre, Ruhm und Überlegenheit gibt⁴⁹. Da er das höchste Amt angetreten hat, das Priesteramt, tut er sich hervor⁵⁰ und kann sich einfach Christus nähern, weil Christus Mann und wirklich heilig war.

In der heiligen und unbegreiflichen Gottheit, betont Cyrill, könne die männliche Gestalt erkannt werden⁵¹. In diesem Sinne passe sich der

⁴⁶ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 689A: «Εροῦμεν οὖν, ὅτι σκοπός ἦν τῷ Σωτήρι Χριστῷ τοῦ καθ' εαυτὸν μυστηρίου τὴν πληροφορίαν ταῖς τῶν ἀγαπῶντων αὐτὸν ἐγκατασπείρειν ψυχαῖς· ετελείτο δὲ διάφορος τῆς πληροφορίας ὁ τρόπος, τῆ τῶν πληροφορουμένων ἔξει προσεοικῶς τε καὶ πρέπων. Τοῖς μὲν οὖν ἀγίοις μαθηταῖς αὐτῆ τῶν πραγμάτων ἢ ἐκβασίς τῆ παρά ταῖς θείαις Γραφαῖς ἐλπίδι συμβαίνουσα πρὸς πληροφορίαν ἐξήρκεσε, καὶ πίστιν ἐνετίθει τὴν οὐδαμόθεν ἀμφίβολου. Πεπιστευκότες γάρ ἀνεχώρουν ταῖς ἀγίαις Γραφαῖς, καὶ ἦν πως ἐπι περιττόν τοῖς οὕτω βεβαίαν ἐχοῦσι τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὸ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀγίων ἀγγέλων ἐκδιδάσκεσθαι φωνῆς· ἀναγκαῖοτατον δὲ τὸ χρῆμα τῆ γυναικί, τὴν ἱεράν τε καὶ θείαν οὐκ ἐπισταμένη Γραφήν, οὔτε μὴν καθ' ἕτερον τινα τρόπον τὸ βαθύ τῆς ἀναστάσεως εἰδῦια μυστήριον».

⁴⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 689A.

⁴⁸ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 692C: «Δυσμαθέστεραι γάρ πως αἱ γυναικῶν εἰσι φρένες, καὶ ἀμελετήτως ἐχοῦσι πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ραδίως καὶ τοῖς οὐ σφόδρα δυσκόλοις προσβαλεῖν, καὶ πολλῶ γε πλείον τοῖς ὑπὲρ λόγον θαύμασιν».

⁴⁹ Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius in Isaiam Prophetam* PG 70, 581B.

⁵⁰ Siehe a.a.O., PG 70, 613A.

⁵¹ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales* PG 77, 621B: «Μόριον ὡσπερ τι τῆς νοουμένης μορφῆς ἐν τῇ θείᾳ καὶ ἀκαταλήπτῳ φύσει τὸ ἀνδρώδες ἐφ' ἅπασι καὶ νεανικὸν θεωρήσομεν».

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

Mensch, der sich männlich verhält, an Christus an, und ein solcher Mensch habe auf keinen Fall weibliche Vernunft, weil das weibliche Geschlecht feige und untätig sei⁵². Wie der Mann der absolute Typ der Tapferkeit sei, im Sinne von Tapferkeit, die sich auf Gott bezieht bzw. sich an Christus anpasst, auf die gleiche Weise sei die Frau der Typ der Schwäche, der einfach zur Lust neige⁵³. Der Mann identifiziere sich mit Christus, weil Christus gleichzeitig Gott und Mensch ist, d.h. Gott und Mann⁵⁴.

Wir müssen aber in diesem Punkt unterstreichen, dass Cyrills Thesen nicht zufällig sind, sondern auf weiteren Texten des Alten Testaments basieren. Wenn Cyrill z.B. die Rechtstexte aus Levitikus und Deuteronomium erklärt, in denen übermäßig und aufdringlich die Priorität des Männlichen geschrieben wird – Erzählungen über die Opfer der Tiere, die auf jeden Fall männlich sein sollen oder die Heiligung der erstgeborenen Kinder, die Jungen sein sollen – kann er die Aussagen nicht ignorieren, sondern er ist gezwungen, auf dieser Basis seine Theologie zu bilden. Folglich ist seine Theologie, würden wir sagen, eine Erweiterung der Theologie des Alten Testaments. Und das gilt nicht nur bei Cyrills Auslegungen, sondern es ist eine gemeinsame Sichtweise der Auslegung bei den orthodoxen Kirchenvätern.

Um zu Cyrill zurückzukehren: Was passiert aber mit dem weiblichen Geschlecht? Kann es gerettet werden? Um auf diese Frage antworten zu können, muss Cyrills Genesisauslegung untersucht werden. Cyrill benutzt den zweiten Bericht der Genesis und dessen Auslegung durch den Apostel Paulus. Diesem Bericht zufolge wurde der Mann Christus zuliebe erschafft und die Frau dem Mann zuliebe. Christus wurde nicht dem Mann zuliebe erschafft und der Mann nicht der Frau zuliebe. Wenn der Mann der Frau zuliebe erschafft worden wäre, wäre die Frau perfekter. Die Frau aber ist dem Mann zuliebe erschaffen worden und das bedeutet, dass der Mann

⁵² Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 621BC: «Σύμμορφος οὖν ἄρα Χριστῷ νοοίτο ἂν εἰκότως ὁ ἐφ' ἅπασιν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς οἰονεῖ τις ἀρσενόφρων καὶ νεανικός· οὐ τοιοῦτος γε μὴν, ὁ θήλειαν ἔχων, ἢ οὕτως εἶπω, τὴν φρένα, μαλθακὴν τε καὶ ευκαταγώνιστον. Δειλὸν γὰρ καὶ ἀδρανές, καὶ πρὸς μάχην καὶ ευτολομίαν ἀπειρηκὸς τὸ θηλειῶν ἐστὶ γένος».

⁵³ Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 624CD: «Ὅνπερ γὰρ τρόπον εἰς τύπον ἀνδρείας ἐλήφθη τὸ ἄρσεν, ἀνδρείας δὲ φημί τῆς νοούμενης κατὰ Θεόν, ἢ καὶ συμμόρφους ἀποτελεῖ τῷ Χριστῷ, κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τουτονὶ λόγον, εἰς τύπον μαλακισμοῦ καὶ φρονήματος ἀσθενούς, διαπίπτοντος τε καὶ λιαν ευκόλως εἰς ἡδονάς, τὸ τῆς θηλείας εἰσφέρεται πρόσωπον».

⁵⁴ Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 1157B: «ἀλλ' εἰς ἀμερίστως ὑπάρχων, Θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος ὁ αὐτός, ταυτὸν δ' εἰπεῖν, Θεὸς καὶ ἀνὴρ».

perfekter ist⁵⁵. Der Mann ist darum, was die Erschaffung des Menschen betrifft, das Gottesbild par excellence⁵⁶, im Gegensatz zu der Frau, die nicht selbst Gottesbild, sondern durch den Mann ist, und so aufgrund dieser Tatsache in Bezug auf ihr Natur nicht gleichrangig ist⁵⁷. Sie ist Bild des Bildes und Ruhm des Ruhmes⁵⁸. Die Frau wird durch den Mann gerettet.

Zu diesem Schlussfolgern kommt Cyrill eben durch seine Interpretation der biblischen Texte, hier durch die Interpretation der Genesis und deren Wiederaufnahme durch den Apostel Paulus. Die Paulinischen Aussagen wirken sich so auf die Kirchenväter aus, dass wir feststellen müssen, dass es in diesem Punkt einen Consensus Patrum gibt. Die klassischen Paulinischen Aussagen über das Schweigen der Frau in der Kirche und deren Unterordnung unter den Mann - und das unabhängig von der Frage, ob sie in der Tat von Paulus sind oder ob sie später geschrieben wurden und als deuteropaulinisch angesehen werden oder ob sie auch im Zusammenhang mit bestimmten geschichtlichen und gesellschaftlichen Gründen dieser Zeit stehen - nehmen bei den Kirchenvätern einen axiomatischen, unbedingten Charakter an.

⁵⁵ Siehe a.a.O., *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* PG 75, 257C: « ‘‘Οὐ γάρ εκτίσθη ανήρ διά τήν γυναίκα, αλλά γυνή διά τόν άνδρα’’. Ει τοίνυν δι’ ημάς γέγονεν ό Υιός, και οχ ημείς δι’ αυτόν, εσόμεθα πάντως αυτού τελειότεροι, ώσπερ ούν και Αδάμ τής γυναικός τής δι’ αυτόν γενομένης. Αλλά τούτο άποπον».

⁵⁶ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 881C: «Ει γάρ εστίν ανήρ εικών και δόξα Θεού, πεποιήται γάρ, κατά τās Γραφάς, ούτως». Πρβλ. *Βίβλος τών θησαυρών περι τής αγίας και ομοουσίου Τριάδος* PG 75, 585C: «Προκεισθω δή ούν εν πρώτοις τό περι άνδρός ειρημένον, και ζητώμεν όπως εικών υπάρχει και δόξα Θεού. Αλλ’ οίμαι πρόδηλον είναι πάσι ούτω προαγορεύεσθαι τον άνδρα, διά τό μετεσχηκέναι θείου Πνεύματος, και δι’ αυτού της θείας γενέσθαι φύσεως κοινωνόν, ως εντεύθεν και τής παρά Θεού πληρωθήναι δόξης. Ως έχον τοιγαρούν εν εαυτώ τό Πνεύμα τό εκ τής ουσίας του Θεού, και διά τής προς αυτό κοινωνίας μεμορφωμένος εις ομοιότητα του πεποικότητος, εικών εκλήθη και δόξα του Θεού. Μάθοιμεν δ’ αν ουδέν ήττον, διά του και τήν γυναίκα κεκλήσθαι τοίωσδε, του λεγομένου τήν δύναμιν. Δόξαν αυτήν είναι του άνδρός ό Παύλος φησί, διά τό εκ τής ουσίας αυτού γενέσθαι ταύτην... Ωσπερ ούν ή γυνή δόξα κέκληται του άνδρός διά τό μέρος ειληφέναι τών αυτού μελών εις τήν οικείαν κατασκευήν· ούτω και ό ανήρ δόξα κέκληται Θεού, διά τό γενέσθαι μετέχων τής ουσίας αυτού, διά του ενοικίσαντος εν αυτώ Πνεύματος αγίου».

⁵⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 881D: «Κατ’ εικόνα μέν γάρ και αυτή και ομοίωσιν Θεού, πλήν ως διά μέσου του άνδρός, ώστε κατά τι παραλλάττοι βραχύ τήν φύσιν».

⁵⁸ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 881D.

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

Cyrrill betont, dass die Paulinischen Aussagen ewig gelten, weil Paulus im Auftrag des Heiligen Geistes die entsprechenden Regeln über die Frau und ihre Rolle in der Kirche bestimmt hat, und aus diesem Grund sind sie völlig verbindlich⁵⁹.

Wie aber beschreibt Cyrrill die Rettung der Frau? Was soll sie tun, um gerettet zu werden? Knapp fassen wir seine Antwort dazu so zusammen: Sie muss sich wie ein Mann verhalten⁶⁰. Da die männliche Natur überlegener ist, ist es absolut notwendig für die Frau, den Mann nachzuahmen und zwar seine männlichen Merkmale und das dadurch, dass sie gleichzeitig die hemmenden Merkmale ihrer Natur aufgibt. So besteht ihre Pflicht darin, ihrer weibliche, naiven Vernunft⁶¹ nicht nachzugeben, auf ihre weibliche, begrenzende Denkfähigkeit⁶² zu verzichten und männlicher Vernunft nachzueifern⁶³. Einer Vernunft, die total von Bösem befreit ist, ohne Verfall, eben männlich und perfekt⁶⁴.

Durch diese Annahme der Merkmale des männlichen Wesens von seiten der Frau, wird sie reif und vernünftig im Verhältnis zu Gott sein, in

⁵⁹ Siehe a.a.O., *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* PG75, 585B: «Ὅρους επωφελεστάτους ταῖς Εκκλησίαις ὁ Παῦλος τιθεῖς, καί ὅπως ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐταῖς εἶναι χρή διατάσσειν, καί τῷ ἐπὶ πάντων φαίνεσθαι Θεῷ». Πρβλ. *Περὶ τῆς ἐν Πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ προσκυνήσεως καὶ λατρείας*, PG 68, 1037C: «Κατόπιν δὲ πανταχοῦ το θήλυ τού ἀρσενος, καὶ ἐν ἡμίσει πολλάκις. Ὅτι γάρ τό σκεῦος ἀσθενές, μεμαρτύρηκε σαφῶς ὁ θεσπέσιος Παῦλος. Λείπεται δὲ τῆς ἀνδρῶν ευφυΐας, καὶ σιωπᾶ μὲν ἐν Εκκλησίαις».

⁶⁰ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales* PG 77, 736AB: «Ἀνδριζόμεθα δὴ οὖν, εἰς γε τό χρήναι, φημί, παθῶν οράσθαι βελτίους» *Αὐτόθι*, 753A: «...Ὅι τήν ἔξιν ἀδρότεροι, οἱ νηπιάζοντες ἐπὶ πρός ἔφεσιν ἀρετῆς καὶ πνευματικῆς ευρωστίας, τόν οικεῖον ἀποτρέφοντες νοῦν, πειράσθωσαν ἀναφοιτᾶν “εἰς ἀνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τού πληρώματος τού Χριστοῦ”». Πρβλ. *Περὶ τῆς ἐν Πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ προσκυνήσεως καὶ λατρείας*, PG 68, 1013D – 1016A: «Ἄλλως τε χρήναι γάρ δεῖν κακεῖνο εἰπεῖν, καὶ οἰήσομαι δεῖν ἀρσενας τε καὶ ἀμώμους πρέπει ἀν εἶναι τούς Θεῷ καθηρωμένους, οὐδέν ἔχοντας τό θηλυπρεπές, οὐ παρεμμένους εἰς ραθυμίαν· ἀλλά πολύ λίαν διανενευκότας εἰς τό ἀνδρίζεσθαι δεῖν...».

⁶¹ Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 625C: «φύγωμεν φρένα τήν μαλακήν, καὶ ταῖς τού διαβόλου δυστροπίαις ευκαταγώνιστον».

⁶² Siehe a.a.O., PG 77, 624B: «Ἀλογεῖ δὲ τού θήλεος παντελῶς καὶ μειρακιώδους ἡλικίας. Ἀπόβλητον γάρ παρά Θεῷ φρόνημα τό ἀσθενές καὶ ἀτελές εἰς σύνεσιν».

⁶³ Siehe a.a.O., *De adoratione in spiritu et veritate* PG 68, 1016A: «Ἄλλως τε χρήναι γάρ δεῖν κακεῖνο εἰπεῖν, καὶ οἰήσομαι δεῖν ἀρσενας τε καὶ ἀμώμους πρέπει ἀν εἶναι τούς Θεῷ καθηρωμένους, οὐδέν ἔχοντας τό θηλυπρεπές, οὐ παρεμμένους εἰς ραθυμίαν· ἀλλά πολύ λίαν διανενευκότας εἰς τό ἀνδρίζεσθαι δεῖν, ἀρσενας τε καὶ οἰονεῖ διεγερμένον τόν ἐν γε δὴ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς διασώζοντας νοῦν».

⁶⁴ Siehe a.a.O., *Homiliae Paschales* PG 77, 520A.

Wirklichkeit manngemäß. Wenn diese Rettung innerhalb der Grenzen der weiblichen Natur oder durch das Verlassen ihres Wesens stattfindet, wird eine Tatsache von entscheidender Bedeutung, die weiter unten erläutert wird. In Cyrills Gedanken jedenfalls identifiziert sich die Männlichkeit mit der Perfektionierung bzw. Vollkommenheit. In diesem Sinne lässt sich auch seine starke Polemik gegen die Männer erklären, die sich von ihrem Geschlecht⁶⁵ entfernen und sich benehmen wie die Frauen, die Tunten⁶⁶.

Ungeachtet der Priorität⁶⁷ des Mannes scheint das weibliche Geschlecht, das sonst immer als zweites kommt⁶⁸, in Bezug auf die Lust den Mann zu besiegen. Wir befinden uns in Cyrills Anthropologie gemäß im absoluten Herrschaftsbereich der Frau, im Bereich der sexuellen Begierde. Dort werde der Mann haushoch geschlagen, weil die Frau immer fähig sei, den Mann zu bezaubern, da sie als ihre Waffe die Lust benutzt, die die Vernunft besiegt⁶⁹. Eine solche Frau sei Eva gewesen, die dem Teufel gehorcht hat und den Mann dazu geführt hat, sich Gottes Willen entgegenzustellen, indem sie ihn durch ihre sexuelle Provokation besiegt hat⁷⁰. Anders formuliert, es konnte der Mann nicht reagieren, weil er aufgrund ihrer sexuellen Kraft seine Orientierung total verloren hatte⁷¹.

Nach Cyrill verwenden die Frauen immer diese Kraft, wenn sie die Männer reizen wollen, und in diesem Bereich ließen sie sich nicht besiegen. Und es müsse betont werden, dass die Auswirkung dieser sexuellen Kraft auf die männliche Vernunft so stark sei, dass der Mann darauf auf keinen Fall verzichten will⁷². Wir behaupten, so Cyrill, dass die Männer von dieser Provokation der Frauen unbeabsichtigt beeinflusst werden⁷³. Diese sexuelle Provokation sei unvermeidlich und deswegen sei es die Verpflichtung des Mannes gegen die fleischliche Lust zu kämpfen und überlegener der

⁶⁵ Siehe a.a.O., *De adoratione in spiritu et veritate* PG 68, 445BCD .

⁶⁶ Siehe a.a.O., PG 68, 928C.

⁶⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 68, 968B: «Ἡγεμονεῦον μὲν γὰρ αἰὶ πῶς ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τιμῇ πρώτη τὸ ἄρσεν».

⁶⁸ Siehe a.a.O., PG 68, 968B.

⁶⁹ Siehe a.a.O., *Contra Julianum* PG 76, 845D: «Ψίθυρον γὰρ χρήμα γυνή, καὶ τοὺς ἀπαξ τοῖς αὐτῆς ἀλόντας βρόχος καταγοητεῖν ἰκανή, σύνοπολον ἔχουσα τὴν τῆς διανοίας κρατήσασαν ἠδονήν».

⁷⁰ Siehe a.a.O., PG 76, 845D.

⁷¹ Siehe Gregor von Nazianz, PG 35, 975B.

⁷² Siehe a.a.O., *Contra Julianum* PG 76, 845D.

⁷³ Siehe a.a.O., PG 76, 845D.

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

weiblichen Lust gegenüber zu werden⁷⁴. Die Frau ist hier nach Cyrill der absolute Typ der fleischlichen Lust und Sünde. Sie symbolisiert die wollüstige Versuchung, die die Vernunft des Menschen zuerst reizt und dann besiegt. So ist von Cyrill verbatim geschrieben: „Die Frau ist Typ der Lust und der Schwäche“⁷⁵.

Aus diesem Grund ist die Frau schuldig wegen ihrer Provokation zur Sünde⁷⁶. Hinter diesen Aussagen von Cyrill aber steht latent die ganze Tradition der Bibel, die Tradition des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Diesbezüglich interpretiert Cyrill auch Zacharias Prophezeiung, in der die Sünde als weiblich betrachtet wird⁷⁷. Wenn es innerhalb der Grundlagen der patristischen Theologie, d.h. innerhalb der Texte der Bibel und zwar des Alten Testaments solche Aussagen über die Frau gibt, die sie als Ursache der Sünde, der Gesetzlosigkeit und der Ungerechtigkeit betrachten, dann werden sie im Kirchenväterdenken theologische Voraussetzung, die nicht einfach zu übergehen ist. Darum kommt Cyrill gezwungenermaßen bei seiner Auslegung des Alten Testaments und in diesem Fall der Prophezeiung von Zacharias zu diesen Aussagen bzw. Thesen.

Es ist bei Cyrill ohne Zweifel klar, dass dieses Geschlecht, d.h. das weibliche, das kränkste⁷⁸ und ehrenloseste⁷⁹ ist. Dieses Geschlecht ist verantwortlich für den Tod der ganzen Menschheit⁸⁰, weil es ihn hervorgerufen hat. Aber darum wird es auch als Erstes geheiligt⁸¹, dadurch, dass es als Erstes den Gruß von Engeln hört⁸². Die Auferstehung wird in erster Linie der Frau angekündigt, damit ihr Fluch gelöst und das ehemals ehrenlose Geschlecht wieder zu Ehre, im Hoffen auf Vergebung, zurückgeführt wird⁸³. Die Ankündigung der Auferstehung der Frau gegenüber bedeutet im

⁷⁴ Siehe a.a.O., *De Adoratione in spiritu et veritate* PG 68, 486D.

⁷⁵ Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius in Zachariam Prophetam* PG 72, 84C.

⁷⁶ Siehe a.a.O., PG 72, 84C.

⁷⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 72, 84C.

⁷⁸ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 701C.

⁷⁹ Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius im Mattheum* PG 72, 469D.

⁸⁰ Siehe a.a.O., *De incarnatione Domini* PG 75, 1468B.

⁸¹ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 701C.

⁸² Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius im Mattheum* PG 72, 469CD.

⁸³ Siehe a.a.O., PG 72, 469CD. Siehe auch., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 697B: «ν' ὡσπερ ἡ πρώτη καὶ πασῶν ἀρχαιοτάτη γυνὴ ταῖς τοῦ διαβόλου φωναῖς ὑπουργήσασα κατεκρίθη, καὶ δι' ἐκείνης σύμπαν τὸ θηλειῶν γένος, οὕτω καὶ αὐτὴ τοῖς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν υπηρετήσασα λόγοις, καὶ τὰ εἰς ζωὴν ἀναφέροντα τὴν αἰώνιον ἀπαγγέιλασα, σύμπαν τῆς αἰτίας τὸ θηλειῶν ἀπαλλάξῃ γένος».

Wesentlichen Vergebung. Die Frau bringt nun nicht mehr der Menschheit Kummer und Leid, sondern wird Prediger der Auferstehung⁸⁴. Sie, als Frau, informiert die Apostel darüber, dass sie den Herrn gesehen hat und dass er von den Toten auferweckt worden ist⁸⁵.

Und auf diesem Gebiet, d.h. dem Gebiet der Annahme des Glaubens – und hier überrascht uns Cyrill mit einer gegensätzlichen Stelle – scheinen die Frauen bereiteter zu sein als die Männer⁸⁶. Sie lehnen das Mysterium der Auferstehung überhaupt nicht ab, im Gegenteil nehmen sie es natürlich an und gehen schnell zu den Aposteln, um ihnen die Neuigkeit zu künden⁸⁷. In dem Augenblick aber glauben die Apostel ihnen nicht, halten den Glaube an die Auferstehung für Unsinn und sagten, dass die Frauen total verrückt geworden seien⁸⁸. Die Frauen aber werden von Cyrill als weise⁸⁹ charakterisiert bzw. dargestellt.

Es ist auffallend, dass Cyrill sehr selten das Adjektiv weise für die Frau benutzt, wegen ihrer inneren Unfähigkeit, sich in die tiefsten Botschaften der Theologie hinein zu vertiefen. Dieses aber kann ins Gleichgewicht gebracht werden mittels ihrer Fähigkeit, den Glauben vollkommen und ohne Zweifel anzunehmen⁹⁰. Das heißt, dass sie zum Glauben einfach

⁸⁴ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 701C.

⁸⁵ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 701C.

⁸⁶ Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius in Lucam* PG 72, 941A: «τῆς εἰς Χριστόν ἀγάπης ἕνεκα, καὶ τῆς εἰς τοῦτο γενομένης σπουδῆς ἠξιώθησαν ἰδεῖν ἀγίους ἀγγέλους· καὶ δὴ καὶ γεγόνασιν αὐταῖς εὐαγγελισταί, καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως κήρυκες»· 941BC: «Ἐδει γάρ γυναιξί τὴν οὕτω λαμπρὰν δοθῆναι χάριν...καὶ τὸ σεπτὸν τῆς ἀναστάσεως μυστήριον πρώτη (ἡ γυνὴ) μαθοῦσα καὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσα...Πλὴν τοῖς ἀγίοις ἀποστόλοις ὁ περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως λόγος ἔδοξεν εἶναι λήρος τις ἀπλῶς καὶ πρᾶγμα κατενευσμένον... Ἠπίστησαν γοῦν, καὶ τὸ ἀπαγγελθὲν ἔσκωψαν καὶ διέπτυσαν»· 944AB: «Ἐπειτα τὴν φήμην τῆς ἀναστάσεως τὴν διὰ τῶν γυναικῶν, καὶ τὴν διὰ Πέτρου λέγουσι μὲν, οὐ πιστεύουσι δέ. Λέγοντες γάρ· “Καὶ γυναῖκες ἐξέστησαν ἡμᾶς τὸ σῶμα μὴ ευροῦσαι”, οὐχ ἠγούντο πρὸς τὸ λεγόμενον ἀληθεύειν, οὐδὲ εὐαγγελισμὸν ἀληθείας, ἀλλ’ ὡς ταραχῆς τινός καὶ ἐκστάσεως αἴτιον ὑπέλαβον εἶναι».

⁸⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 72, 941B.

⁸⁸ Siehe a.a.O., PG 72, 941BC: 944AB.

⁸⁹ Siehe a.a.O., PG 72, 940C: «Ἠκολούθουν σοφαὶ γυναῖκες τῷ πάντων Σωτῆρι Χριστῷ, τὰ εἰς πίστιν τὴν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ χρήσιμα τε καὶ ἀναγκαῖα συλλέγουσαι».

⁹⁰ Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 73, 314D: «“Ἄγει αὐτὴ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ λαλῶν σοι”. Οὐ ταῖς ἀπαιδεύτοις ψυχαῖς, ἢ καὶ ἀμαθέσι παντελῶς εαυτὸν ἀνακαλύπτει Χριστός, ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖναις μάλλον ἐπιλάμπει καὶ φαίνεται, αἴπερ ἀν εἶεν ἤδη πρὸς τὸ βουλεσθαι τι μαθεῖν ετοιμότεραι, καὶ τῆς πίστεως τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐν ἀπλοῖς ὠδίνουσαι λόγοις, πρὸς τὴν τῶν τελειοτέρων ἐπειγόνται γνῶσιν. Τοιαύ-

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

geführt werden kann⁹¹, wenn sie sowohl gottesfürchtig als auch fromm ist⁹². Ein Beispiel dafür ist eben, Maria von Magdala, die als Erste das leere Grab sieht und von Cyrill als bedeutende Person und als Philosoph⁹³ bezeichnet wird, als eine wichtige Frau mit standhaftem⁹⁴ Glauben und gotteifrigem⁹⁵ Verhalten.

Unter Berücksichtigung dieses Verhaltens dieser Frau hört Cyrill in seinen Aussagen zwar mit den einschränkenden Adjektiven nicht auf, aber er geht aussagemäßig dadurch weiter, dass er diese Frau als Christusfreundin⁹⁶ bezeichnet, und dies ist die andere Seite der Theologie über die Frau bei Cyrill. Dieser Theologie zufolge wird die Frau als Vorbild des Glaubens und der Gottesliebe dargestellt⁹⁷. Manchmal wird von ihm auch die Kirche selbst durch die Frau symbolisiert. Cyrill bezieht sich dabei auf verschiedene Frauen, die gottesfürchtig und fromm waren, damit er durch sie die Kirche symbolisiert. So sei Rachel wegen ihrer Kraft und ihrer körperlichen Schönheit, die ihre geistige Schönheit zeige, die Kirche der Nationen, deren Schönheit der König⁹⁸ begehrt habe.

Im Gegenteil sei aber Lia körperlich und geistig schwach, und sie wird von Cyrill mit der Synagoge verglichen⁹⁹. Die Annäherung an die Kirche der Nationen, hinausgehend über Israel, lasse sich klar zeigen durch viele Frauen aus dem Alten Testament¹⁰⁰, die sich durch ihre außerordentliche geistige Reife abheben. Sie befanden sich auf dem Höhepunkt ihrer Reife und haben es geschafft, trotz der Zeit des Alten Testaments dem

τη τις ἡμῖν καὶ ἡ Σαμαρεῖτις ἀνεδείχθη γυνή».

⁹¹ Siehe a.a.O., PG 73, 316B: «Ὁράς ὅπως ἤδη το γόναιον (ἡ Σαμαρεῖτις) εὐτρεπές εἰς τό πιστεύειν ἐγένετο, καὶ ὡσπερ τινά βαθμῶν ἀναβαίνουσα θέσιν, ἐκ μικρῶν ἐρωτημάτων εἰς ὑψηλοτέραν ἕξιν ἀναπηδά».

⁹² Siehe a.a.O., *Expositio sive Commentarius in Joannisevangelium* PG 74, 52B.

⁹³ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 684B.

⁹⁴ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 684C.

⁹⁵ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 684C.

⁹⁶ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 688A.

⁹⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 74, 697A.

⁹⁸ Siehe a.a.O., *De Adoratione in spiritu et veritate* PG 68, 237BC.

⁹⁹ Siehe a.a.O., PG 68, 237B.

¹⁰⁰ Siehe a.a.O., *Glaphyrorum in Numeros* PG 69, 593CD – 596C: «Γυναίκα μὲν τοίνυν ἡγάγετο καὶ πάλαι Μωσῆς, καὶ σύνοικον τὴν Μαδιανίτιδι ἐποιήσατο, τὴν Ἰοθὺρ θυγατέρα φημί· χρόνου δὲ παρῆλθοντος οὐ μικροῦ τὴν Αἰθιοπίσσαν ἐπεγάμει, καὶ ἀλλογενὴ καὶ μέλαιναν... ἐτι δὲ πῶς αὐτὴ δοκῶν συνοικεῖν, ἐπεμνηστεύετο τρόπον τινά, καὶ ἐπεγάμει τὴν μέλαιναν τὴν ἀλλογενή, τουτέστι, τὴν ἐξ' ἐθνῶν Ἐκκλησίαν».

Evangelium gemäß zu leben, indem sie das alttestamentliche Gesetz durch ihre Glaubenskraft überwunden haben. Diese Frauen werden gelobt und als heilig¹⁰¹ bezeichnet. Neben diesen Frauen aber gibt es andere, die nicht für ihre Reife und ihren Glaube an Gott berühmt sind, unter anderem die so genannten Beelphegors¹⁰² Priesterinnen¹⁰³, denen sich Israel zuwendet, und auf diese Art und Weise den Herrn verrät¹⁰⁴.

Cyrrill vergleicht dies mit dem Ehebruch eines Mannes von seiner Frau und er bezeichnet diesen Ehebruch als die Sünde, die Israel gegen Gott begangen hat¹⁰⁵. In Cyrills Gedanke ist dieser Begriff geistig gemeint und er wird verwendet, um den Aufstand Israels gegen Gott eindeutig darzustellen. Also, die Frau ist auf der einen Seite Typ der Kirche¹⁰⁶ und auf der anderen Seite Typ der Synagoge¹⁰⁷. Unterscheidend zwischen den beiden Typen sind nach Cyrill die Charakteristika, die sich auf eine gotteseifrige oder auf eine zur Prostitution mit „anderen Göttern“ bereite Frau beziehen. Die gotteseifrige Frau ist vernünftig und ehrbar. Sie ist stolz auf die Tugend ihres Schweigens und auf die Männlichkeit ihres Glaubens.

Wenn sie sich richtig Gott gegenüber verhält, dann verhält sie sich männlich tugendhaft, dann wird sie sich durch ihr außerordentliches, männliches Verhalten Gott nähern. Zugleich verzichtet durch die Annahme dieser männlichen Merkmale die Frau aus freien Stücken auf ihr schwaches Wesen und zwar auf untätiges Sein und auf ihre fleischliche Begierde. Mit diesen männlichen Merkmalen, bemerkt Cyrill, gehört die Frau dem Gottesvolk¹⁰⁸ und zeichnet sich durch ihren Glaube aus¹⁰⁹.

Durch die obige Analyse, glauben wir, ist eindeutig geworden, dass Cyrill stark von dem Alten und Neuen Testament beeinflusst wird, wo die

¹⁰¹ Siehe a.a.O., *De Adoratione in spiritu et veritate* PG 68, 632BCD.

¹⁰² Ein Götzenbild, das in der Zeit des Alten Testaments von Götzendienerinnen Priesterinnen als Gott verehrt wurde.

¹⁰³ Siehe a.a.O., *Commentarius in Oseam Prophetam* PG 71, 133B.

¹⁰⁴ Siehe a.a.O., PG 71, 113D.

¹⁰⁵ Siehe a.a.O., PG 71, 133CD: «Και ὁ λαὸς ὁ συνιών συνεπλέκετο μετὰ πόρνῃς... Οὐκοῦν οὐ μόνος, φησὶν, ὁ Ἰσραὴλ, καίτοι πλείστην ὄσην ἀβουλίαν νενοσηκῶς, συνανεφύρετο πόρναις, καὶ μετὰ τῶν τετελεσμένων ἔθυσεν· ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ λαὸς ὁ συνιών, τουτέστιν, ὁ τὴν ἐκ νόμου σύνεσιν ἐτι σώζειν ὑποκρινόμενος, συνανεπλέκετο πόρνῃ».

¹⁰⁶ Siehe a.a.O., PG 71, 341B.

¹⁰⁷ Siehe a.a.O., PG 71, 341: 104C.

¹⁰⁸ Siehe a.a.O., PG 71, 381A.

¹⁰⁹ Siehe a.a.O., PG 71, 381B.

„Weibliche und männliche Vernunft“...

Sünde einerseits als weibliche und die Tugend andererseits als männliche Eigenschaft vermittelt wird.

Auch muss das historische Umfeld nicht nur der Zeit des Cyrill, sondern auch der Epoche der klassischen und der späten Antike, die eine starke Auswirkung auf Cyrill ausgeübt hat, herangezogen werden, jene Zeit der *Patria Potestas* des Mannes und der *Infirmetas Sexus* der Frau. In diesem Sinne muss auch unbedingt die Beziehung zwischen Cyrill und den Aussagen des Aristoteles untersucht werden und zwar im Bereich des Vokabulars. Cyrill benutzt die Rhetorik der alten Zeiten, als die Frau noch ein Synonym mit einem Gegenstand war.

Von den Traditionen, der jüdischen, der hellenischen oder der klassischen, ist Cyrill mehr oder weniger beeinflusst, in denen es als Tatsache galt, dass der Mann der Erste sein musste und die Frau ihm untergeordnet. Das Wort Mann ist bei diesen Traditionen Synonym mit Weisheit und Tugend, während die Frau mehr oder weniger mit einer kranken Natur zusammenhängend gesehen wird.

Alles in allem sind wir aber trotz der vielen negativen Aussagen über die Frau zu dem Schluss gekommen, dass die Schwäche bei Cyrill nicht nur auf das weibliche, sondern auch auf das männliche Geschlecht bezogen wird. Die ganze Natur ist wegen des Sündenfalles total erkrankt und aus diesem Grund ist sie durch Naivität, Lust und Sünde nicht stabil. Cyrill verwendet mit Nachdruck die Worte „Mann, männlich, männliche Vernunft, männliche Eigenschaften“, aber nicht um damit nur die männliche Natur zu loben, sondern jene Natur, die sich männlich verhält und Gott nähert.

In Cyrills Theologie gehört letztlich diese Natur dem Mann und der Frau. In ähnlicher Weise benutzt Cyrill die Worte „weiblich, weibliche Vernunft, weibliche Taten“ nicht, um damit das weibliche Wesen zu verurteilen, sondern die Natur, die sich nicht richtig Gott gegenüber verhält und diese Natur gehört auf jeden Fall sowohl dem Mann als auch der Frau. Wir bemerken also, dass sich in Cyrills Denken der Akzent von der Natur zur Bereitwilligkeit des Menschen verschiebt. Und am Ende scheint, dass Cyrill die vollkommene Beziehung zu Gott als wesentlich ansieht, die in ihrer Form zwar als männlich dargestellt wird, in Bezug auf den Inhalt, aber die ganze Natur, männliche und weibliche, umfasst.

Ștefan Negreanu¹

The Art of War under Leon VI the Wise

Abstract

Writing about Byzantium, even approaching a period as short as the reign of Leo VI the Wise (886-912) presents many challenges, especially when the historians have different opinions about what was, or was not Byzantium and its heritage left to Europe. The death of Leo VI the Wise in 912, at only 45 years old, was undoubtedly premature, leaving the Empire in a struggle both politically and socially. However, historians' views on his time are not uniform. On one side he is compared to his father, who was a man of arms, and on the other hand, Leon VI is remembered as being the father of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, who turned sacred palace into a real Alma Mater.

It must however be mentioned several issues before making a comparison between Leo VI and other emperors of the Byzantine Empire. During his reign there were two major military forces that exercised constant pressure on the borders of the Empire. On one side were the Bulgarians, who exerted pressure on the Danube frontier, on the other hand, were the Arabs who had more frequent armed raids in the Mediterranean and the eastern border of the Empire.

Keywords

Leon VI, Taktika, Bulgarians, Tsar Simeon, Arabs

Many Byzantinologists accused Leo VI that he was not concerned at all by the armed forces of the empire; therefore his reign is considered to be a continuous string of military defeats. It is true that, unlike Basil I, who was always at the forefront of his soldiers on the battlefield, bringing new territory to the empire between 867 and 886, which had been lost in previous centuries, his son preferred the reading rooms of the sacred palace. There, in the peace and comfort of his residence, Leo wrote one of the most important works in this field of the Byzantine history, entitled

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The Art of War under Leon VI the Wise

Tactics (Τακτικά) or as originally called “Short Instructions on the Art of War”. The emperor was a great lover of books from various fields, exploring with interest the military field too. Perhaps the most important source of inspiration was the manual called *Strategikon* written during Emperor Mauricius. Leo’s collection consists of 20 constitutions and an epilogue, being dedicated to his generals². It carefully deals with every detail of a battle, the qualities of the head of the army, the need to draw up a battle plan, weaponry, battle camp, punishment for indiscipline, effective struggle with surprise attacks and the description of the fighting way of the various peoples and of the Byzantines (Romans).

As the emperor himself says in the prologue to his treaty of military tactics, “those who want to lead the army must have access to the rich experience of struggle and military campaigns requirements”³. In part this experience was left to the descendants in writing. But he specifies from the outset that he himself is a peace-loving and happier to see the differences between nations settled in this way than by the sword⁴.

Who was part of the Byzantine army and how many types was it? The army was structured classically consisting of the central army led by the emperor and the theme army led by the strategists. In the time of which we speak there is a desire for changing the origin of soldiers respectively to make the imperial army a professional one, with fewer simple and uneducated people. More and more mercenaries are brought from the nations Byzantium had ties with and, for a substantial wage they put themselves under the obedience of the Greek generals. Thus, in the Byzantine army from the 9th and 10th centuries there were mercenaries as following: Khazars, Pechenegs, Russians, Arabs, Hungarians, Armenians and even Normans⁵. There were many cases where these mercenaries refused to fight because those who ruled were not quite able⁶. An author said that “the army is for the state what the head for the body is”⁷. Certainly, for an empire permanently beset by closer or more distant enemies the army

² Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912). Politics and People*, Brill, Leiden – New York – Köln, 1997, p. 15.

³ *The Taktika of Leo VI*, text, translation and commentary by George Dennis, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, 2010, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵ Charles Diehl, *Figuri bizantine*, vol. I, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1969, p. 69.

⁶ Michael O’Rourke, *The Land Forces of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire in the 10th Century: The Old Army of Leo VI and the New Army of John Kourkouas and Nikephoros Phokas*, Canberra, 2010, p. 6.

⁷ Charles Diehl, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

was essential and Leo, as other emperors before him, gave his soldiers all the privileges and attentions they required to be able to count on their support in case of need⁸. But the mercenaries did not hesitate to ask the emperor more and more privileges under threat of rebellion and leaving the fight⁹. Cavalry, the most important component of the army, received land from the imperial reserve¹⁰. Infantry and other armed bodies would be granted with certain lands reserved for them in the various provinces of the Empire.

Order and discipline, but especially fulfilling orders exactly are the basic rules any soldier of the empire needed to know, and their failure led to serious penalties, as we read in the Constitution 8 of *Tactics*¹¹.

Unlike his predecessors, Leo VI studied in detail the Arabs' method of fight, noting that Islam broke the old military tradition, justifying war with religion. So they end up integrating fighting to social life and make it normality¹². Leo gets to see the Arabs a model that should inspire reform in military conception of the empire. What are the premises of the Arab military success? Leo thinks to be a mobilizing ideology and a freely consented social solidarity¹³.

Although Leo wrote in his treatise on Islamic volunteering and mass recruitments aiming jihad, thus calling for Byzantine solidarity¹⁴ the reality provinces was not favorable. The army consisted of poorer and poorer peasants, with no training and no weapons that could hardly fight the opponents. Leo tried to gather an army of wealthy peasants, able to secure their own military equipment. They were to be recruited in each theme, by its strategist and encouraged to fight for the empire through tax exemptions that would be granted¹⁵. Also, soldiers were trained to fight for God and country, on behalf of relatives and friends¹⁶, the armies

⁸ Averil Cameron, *The Byzantines*, Blackwell Publishing, Maldon – Oxford – Carlton, 2006, p. 97.

⁹ Marcus Louis Rautman, *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 2006, p. 205.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹¹ *The Taktika of Leo VI*, text, translation and commentary by George Dennis, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, 2010, p. 148-149.

¹² Gilbert Dagron, *Byzance et le modèle islamique au X^e siècle. A propos des Constitutions tactiques de l'empereur Léon VI*, în *Comptes – rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belle – Lettres*, 127^e année, n. 2, 1983, p. 221.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

¹⁶ *The Taktika of Leo VI*, p. 445.

The Art of War under Leon VI the Wise

leading real crusades with a strong patriotic feeling. Although he was a supporter of silence during the battle for maximum concentration of the soldiers and good hearing of their commanders orders, Leo ordered that from time to time during the march, certain people especially trained to shout down “stavros nika” (“cross is victorious”), and other Christians specific exhortations (“God with us”). Upon reaching the enemy they had to shout fighting slogans with joy, to annoy the opponent and encourage their soldiers¹⁷.

A separate chapter of the military treaty from the end the ninth century is that of studying the opponent, his psychology and the tactics of warfare employed. Thus, Saracens go to battle for money and faith, but when defeated, they easily become discouraged¹⁸. Hungarians, whom Leo will serve as allies in the fight against the Bulgarians are an inordinate power that can be easily defeated by an army not too large but well organized¹⁹. Franks and Lombards are bold in battle and lovers of freedom, disobeying their masters, but being able to escape any imprisonment²⁰. As for the Slavs, Leo calls them “independent and categorically refusing to be mastered or governed”²¹.

Taktika does not leave aside the imperial fleet training, a key point in the battles taking place throughout the last half of the ninth century and the first half of the next. The Arabs were in a constant internal struggle that will affect their military power of the land, but they managed to regroup, whether in the official fleet of the caliph or as scattered groups of pirates, making raids in the Mediterranean and disturbing the thriving trade in this area²². Therefore, Leo advises his fleet strategists to prepare a sufficient number of ships to deal with enemy attacks. Among the required facilities of a dromon the solid and liquid pitch was absolutely necessary. It was used as fuel for “the Greek fire” – the much feared weapon of the Byzantine navy that brought numerous victories²³. Also, during Leo’s reign mobile fire – *cheirosiphōn* - began to be used, as effectively at sea, and on land.

Most authors considered the Byzantine ideal was the peace between as inviolable as possible borders and not endless battles over territories.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

²² Mark Whitton, *The Making of Byzantium, 600-1025*, University of California, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1996, p. 185.

²³ Marcus Louis Rautman, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

The concept of *pax byzantinica* fully fit Leo's way of being. He primarily focused on diplomacy and when diplomacy no longer reached its goal, he resorted to fighting. But the conquest of territories was actually a regain from the hands of his opponents²⁴. The Byzantine diplomacy became famous through the centuries, for the fruits it brought almost every time, using the following tactics:

The empire had a large network of espionage both within it, and in various places in the world where, under the apparent innocence of a business or cultural exchange, certain people educated at the Magnaura University observed the enemy and came loaded with precious information. Studying the barbarian world was one of the concerns of the court of Constantinople. There was even an "office of the barbarians", responsible for collecting data about them²⁵.

Another tactic used was the demoralization of the enemy through a psychological warfare. We mentioned it above and it has been carefully discussed (debated) by Leon in his *Taktika*.

A third method used by the Byzantine diplomacy could be entitled "the enemy of your enemy is your friend". These means required significant financial resources, for many leaders, who were rivals of the Greek opponents, were bought with money and luxurious gifts.²⁶

In spite of the military advice mentioned in *Taktika*, not few were the difficult times for both the land army and the imperial navy during the 26 years of the reign of Leon.

In the years 889-897 a trade mistake was made by the emperor, probably under the influence of his father-in-law, Stilianos Zautzes. Two influential merchants managed to move the Bulgarian trade from Constantinople to the market in Thessalonica.²⁷ The Tsar Simeon of Bulgaria, dissatisfied of this decision, starts a war against the Empire. Unprepared for this fight, with an enemy so near the border and, until recently, a loyal customer of Constantinople, Leon sends the army led by General Nikephoros Phocas

²⁴ John V. A. Fine Jr., *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, the University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1991, p. 205.

²⁵ Charles Diehl, *Bizanț – mărire și decădere*, Editura Națională – Ciornei, Chișinău, p. 68.

²⁶ Alain Ducellier, *Bizanțul - Istorie și cultură*, Teora Press, București, 1997 p. 109.

²⁷ S. Tougher, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

The Art of War under Leon VI the Wise

and, in addition, starts the initiation of negotiations with the Hungarian tribes located in the area between the Dnieper and the Pruth.²⁸ The major gifts brought to the Hungarian Khan bring him into conflict with the Bulgarians, even within the territory of the latter, after the Byzantine fleet had passed the river. Being surrounded, the Bulgarians asked for peace, but instead of taking advantage of this and to ensure the control of the army on the enemy's territory, the Byzantines withdraw. The Bulgarians took this opportunity to return and, together with the Pechenegs, which they called in aid, they defeated the Hungarians pushing them to the Pannonian plain, then, at Bulgarophygon they crushed the Byzantine army.²⁹ The result will be a costly peace treaty, the Byzantines being forced to pay an annual tribute to the Bulgarians and the obligation of moving the Bulgarian market into the imperial capital in exchange for the release of tens of thousands of Greek prisoners.³⁰ What began as a commercial dispute has become a war of conquest. The tsar Simeon for Constantinople had a goal of a dream – his enthronement on the throne of an expanded Byzantine – Bulgarian empire. For the errors that the army has committed in the fight, Leon will dismiss the head of the army, the General Nikephoros Phocas.³¹ The peace treaty in 896 was the beginning of a period in which the expensive annual tribute made Leon carefree of the neighbors in the northern border of the empire. Now his foreign policy will focus on the naval battles with the Arabs. The only exception was the surprise attack of 904 to which the Tsar Simeon appealed after the disaster that the Arabs made in Thessalonica³² and the result was the ceasing of a large territory by Byzantium to the Bulgarians, from Macedonia to the city of Saint Demetrius.³³

A success of the Byzantine armies will bring back under the direct administration of the empire the Duchy of Benevento, Italy. By creating the Theme of Longobardia will not actually bring the Greek domination,

²⁸ Alexandru Madgearu, *Originea medievală a focarelor de conflict din Peninsula Balcanică*, Corint Press, București, 2001, p. 76.

²⁹ Warren Treadgold, *O istorie a statului și societății bizantine*, Institutul European Press, Iași, 2004, p. 472.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ S. Tougher, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

³² Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900 – 1204*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 21.

³³ Stelian Brezeanu, *O istorie a Bizanțului*, Meronia Press, București, 2004, p. 163.

but the control provided by the numerous tax exemptions and concessions made for the Lombards.³⁴

In 888, the Arabs defeated the Byzantine fleet in northern Sicily. They exerted constant pressure on the Mediterranean area, in order to conquer the south of Europe. The *Life of St. Theodora of Thessalonica* tells us about the Muslim devastation of the island of Aegina and the withdrawal of the entire population in the north of the continent.³⁵ In 902 the Arab fleet was victorious again, and the capture will be of great value – the loss of Taormina, the Byzantine defense base in Sicily. It's a defeat that will leave Leon with a bitter taste. The Patriarch Nicholas I Mysticos was the only one who managed to make the Emperor change his mind and not punish with death the generals that were guilty of the defeating.³⁶ The next few years were in favor of the Greeks, with victories over the Arab fleets from Maras (in 904), followed by the disastrous siege of Thessalonica, but also a great victory over the Arab fleet in the Mediterranean, in the year 906.³⁷ What happened in 904? For several years, in addition to the Caliph's fleet, the area was raging by a fleet of pirates led by Leo of Tripoli, a Greek made prisoner by the Arabs and forced to become Muslim. He will collect a few ships, starting to capture everything in his way, people and goods. At that time the Byzantines concentrated all their naval force in the fight of Maras, so cities like Thessalonica remained unguarded from the sea. For Leo of Tripoli was an easy thing to besiege the city from the Aegean Sea. The disaster was terrible, the city was put to fire and sword, the population was either killed or taken prisoner and their property looted. "The depredation of Thessalonica has not shown a weakness of Byzantium, but simply its delayed response to a surprise attack."³⁸ This explanation can be largely plausible, given the Bulgarophygon disaster in 896.

But the worst defeat of the Byzantines on sea will mark the end of the reign of Leon. He sent his strategies to carefully prepare an assault on Crete that was meant to recapture it from the rule of the Arabs. For this he asked help from the Christians in southern Italy, the Armenians and

³⁴ M. Whittow, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

³⁵ A. Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

³⁶ *A Chronology of the Byzantine Empire*, edited by Timothy Venning, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2006, p. 286.

³⁷ S.B. Dașkov, *Împărați bizantini*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1999, p. 219.

³⁸ W. Treadgold, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

The Art of War under Leon VI the Wise

the Russian mercenaries. It was said that the naval expedition to Crete was meant to fade the delicate moments in the last 8 years of the reign of Leon, including: the attacks on him in the years 903 and 905, the siege of Thessalonica (904) and the tetragamic crisis (beginning in 906).³⁹ The uncle of the fourth wife of the Emperor, Hymerios – who, meanwhile, became the minister of the foreign affairs – was sent, leading a fleet of 177 ships. The siege of the Cretan city lasted for six months, but it was over at the news that Leon is dying. Hymerios decided to return to Constantinople with the entire fleet, but on the way back, off the island of Chios, they fell into the ambush prepared by the Corsair Leo of Tripoli.⁴⁰ The defeat was particularly severe, but the Admiral eventually managed to escape.

The Arabs were not the only concern of Leon. A new developing people were the Russians. They were known to the Greeks since 860, when a fleet of 200 Russian ships attacked Constantinople by surprise. The Capital was defenseless, as the king and his army fought against the Arabs somewhere in Asia Minor. St. Photios is the one that will encourage the desperate people of the city, pulling in procession the Omophorion of the Theotokos. Following this procession, the Russians will withdraw quickly.⁴¹ But the precedent is created and henceforth, the Byzantium will always attract the northern Slavs. Leon's reign was not exempt from the presence of the Russian army. Under the reserve formulated by some authors, in the reality told in *The First Russian Chronicle*, in 907 Prince Oleg initially converted to Christianity, but then returned to his pagan religion leaves for the Capital with a huge fleet. He is stopped by an iron chain, but Oleg uses a subterfuge – he put wheels on his ships so that the horses could easily draw them on land.⁴² The siege is inevitable and it seems that, in order to prevent a disaster, the Byzantines saw themselves forced to seek peace, concluded by a treaty that set a large sum of money paid annually by the Byzantines as a tribute to the Russians.⁴³

In concluding, it should be noted the injustice that was done to Leon regarding his non-involvement in the military affairs and, as such, the

³⁹ M. Whittow, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁴⁰ W. Treadgold, *op.cit.*, p. 478.

⁴¹ Dimitri Obolensky, *Un Commonwealth medieval: Bizanțul*, Corint Press, București, 2002 p. 202.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 445. The same tactics of the ships on wheels will be used by the Turks on the siege of the Constantinople in 1453.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

endless series of defeats suffered by the Byzantine army during his reign. It is true that he was a leader who had stayed at the Palace, while the wars were fought by his generals.⁴⁴ He gave advices and provided them with the theory of battle that was so much required under the condition of the various forms of wars of that period. Beyond defeats and diplomatic concessions, the real achievements of the period between 871 and 912, are in the Eastern part of the empire, namely turning the border area into a fortified line and able to resist to the raids of the Arabs, alongside with the Armenian allies, pushing the Muslims beyond the Taurus.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ S. Tougher, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁴⁵ M. Whittow, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

Adrian Murg¹

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

Abstract

The following paper intends to present some of the distinctive features of Bible interpretation in the patristic age that have been preserved in the Orthodox tradition. We shall speak first about the goal of exegesis which has, for the Fathers, a wider range than in modern biblical science, so as to include besides the search for the historical meaning the actualisation of the Scripture message as well. Then we describe the patristic principle of *theoria* as a means for discerning the spiritual meaning of the biblical text. The Christological focus of the Fathers' interpretation is presented next. One of the main starting points in their exegesis is the Church dogma about the double nature of Christ which is seen to pervade the whole biblical text. Finally, we outline St. Maximus the Confessor's view on Scripture as a synthesis and a deepening of the Early Church conception on the matter.

Keywords

Patristic exegesis, theoria, typology, allegory, christological interpretation, St. Maximus the Confessor

I. Introduction

In a work dedicated to the biblical interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church, Alexander Negrov makes the following description which also goes for the general Orthodox approach to the Bible:

“Without doubt, the nature and characteristic of Russian Orthodox biblical interpretation and exegesis is deeply influenced by patristic exegesis. The patristic concept of interpretation is assigned to be the first and the most important principle of the Russian Orthodox biblical interpretation”².

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² Alexander I. Negrov, *Biblical Interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church*, Be-

This patristic feature gives the Orthodox exegesis a peculiar mark.

Nowadays a lot of misunderstandings occurred, more or less intentionally, on the relationship between the Scripture and the Fathers. Patristic exegesis was often dismissed in the West as “pre-modern”. What pre-modern exegesis aimed at doing principally would, according to modernity, not be considered as exegesis but as theology and preaching. In fact, in modernity interpretation of Scripture became a predominantly ‘historical science’ and its aim has been described as establishing ‘objectively’ what the text originally *meant*, while the task of establishing what the text *means now* was removed from the concerns of exegesis and entrusted to a completely different discipline, *viz* systematic theology. The Orthodox theologians did not generally involve in such Western hermeneutical debates, but stayed firm in regarding the Fathers as “our masters in the interpretation of Scripture”³.

Along with the rise of Post-modernism, the idea of a purely objective historical reconstruction free from interpretative tradition came to be seen more clearly as an illusion. The relativization of the modern paradigm enables us now to come to a more sympathetic understanding of the patristic ways of dealing with Scripture. However, this sympathy should not be seen as the condescending politeness of a superior culture showing an ‘interest’ in strange and irrational, indigenous practices, neither should it be a kind of romantic return to the good old days. However, if we recognize the mode of rationality in patristic interpretation this may be a challenge to expand the rationality of our contemporary approaches to Scripture⁴.

In what follows we try to outline the main aspects of the patristic approach to the Scripture, as preserved in the Orthodox Church.

II. The Goal of Exegesis

A good part of present biblical exegesis contributes to a hermeneutical principle that limits *a priori* its possibilities. It is the principle according to which the goal of exegesis is none other than to discern the “literal” meaning that the human author intended to give to the text.

iträge zur historischen Theologie 130, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008, p. 279.

³ André Benoît, *L'actualité des Pères de l'Église*, CthAP 47, Neuchâtel, 1961, p. 54.

⁴ Cf. Paul B. Decock, *On the Value of Pre-Modern Interpretation of Scripture for Contemporary Biblical Studies*, in “Neotestamentica” 39.1 (2005), p. 57-74.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

The Fathers of the Church invite us to go beyond this limitation. When interpreting a text, they firstly strive to clarify and explain the sense meant by the human author, in its own historical context⁵. But they never forget that they have to interpret God's Word, not a simple human word. Inspired writings constitute the way of transmitting the divine revelation itself. "The human word of apostolic preaching is set in the Scripture for the Church of all times and, by the fact of inspiration, it stays closely bound to the Word of divine revelation. Then, we must say of Scripture and of it alone, that it contains not only God's Word, but it is this Word himself. In a unique meaning, Scripture is therefore for the Church the means of rendering the revelation present"⁶. Confining the sense of the biblical text to the understanding the human author had about it would mean limiting the revelation itself to the possibilities of comprehension and communication in writing of the human author. "Although the literal meaning is at the foundation of any rightful interpretation, its quasi-exclusive role in Protestant exegesis tends to reduce the very concept of the *Word of God* to this sense only. Such a tendency can only lead the exegete to a kind of 'hermeneutical impasse', for the literal meaning cannot speak to the modern man in an actual and penetrating manner. In order to cross over the centuries that separate the contemporary world from the world of the apostles, we must discover the hermeneutical bridge, the key of interpretation that would open and render accessible the divine Word in every moment and historical situation"⁷.

In the conception of the Church Fathers, this "hermeneutical bridge" that reactualises the biblical event over the centuries is none other than the Person of the Holy Spirit⁸. For "the Holy Spirit's work is not limited to the inspiration of the sacred author. Its influence also encompasses

⁵ See, for example, the important work of Eduard Schweizer, *Diodore von Tarsus als Exeget*, ZNW 40(41), p. 33-75. For Diodore himself, the principal goal of exegesis is to clarify the intention of the biblical author. He seeks to achieve this task by adapting a scientific method that had already been used in the study of profane literature for a long time. But E. Schweizer makes no mention of the most valuable hermeneutic contribution of Diodore, namely his principle of *theoria*.

⁶ Johannes Feiner, *L'actualisation de la révélation du Christ*, in "Misterium Salutis III. L'Église et la transmission de la révélation", Paris, 1969, p. 63.

⁷ John Breck, *Exégèse et interprétation: Reflections orthodoxes sur le problème herméneutique*, in "Contacts" 34 (1982), nr. 118, p. 134.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135ss, Idem, *The Power of the Word in the Worshipping Church*, New York, 1996, p. 33ss.

the development of the historical events as well as the actualisation and interpretation of these events in the Church”⁹. It is therefore only by a collaboration with the Holy Spirit that the exegete could discern what the Spirit Himself wrote in the Scripture text.

Despite the differences between the exegetical schools of Alexandria and Antioch, the representatives of both were concerned with finding the revealed truth by *theoria*, that is by an interpretive vision that aims to discern the *spiritual meaning* of the Word of God. For, according to the thought of the Fathers, the Bible possesses a spiritual meaning beyond the literal one understood and intended by the sacred author. It is this spiritual sense that secures the permanent validity of the biblical texts.

“When one enters in contact with the great works of patristic exegesis, one notes (...) that they have already aimed at this essential actualisation of Scripture. The dialectics of allegory or, in Antioch, that of *theoria*, were nothing more than convenient procedures to the service of a higher operation”¹⁰.

The Holy Fathers teach us therefore that Scripture actualisation, by discovering its spiritual sense, is totally included in the goal of exegesis. But it is necessary to specify – and the Fathers realized it very well – that “each of Scripture’s meanings is actually a ‘spiritual sense’ since it is finally related to the work of the Holy Spirit”¹¹. It is necessary, of course, to distinguish the literal sense from the spiritual one. “However, the two meanings are ‘spiritual’, for both the testimony of the sacred author and the redeeming events that he testifies of are influenced directly by the Holy Spirit”¹².

By striving to establish clearly the historical or the literal sense of biblical texts, the firm basis for all other significances – let us remember that Origen had already defended the reality of biblical history against the mockery of Celsus -, the patristic exegetes aimed to discern with utmost accuracy what the Holy Spirit would reveal to the Church through the

⁹ Idem, *Exégèse*, p. 136.

¹⁰ Pierre Grelot, *Sens chrétien de l’Ancien Testament. Esquisse d’un traité dogmatique*, B.T.D, Paris / Tournai / New York / Rome², 1962, p. 423.

¹¹ Breck, *Exégèse*, p. 136.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 136-137. When St. Paul opposes “the Spirit” to “the letter” (Rom 2, 29; 7, 6; 2 Cor 3), he does not speak of two distinct senses that would exist together in the Scripture. It is in fact an opposition between the two Testaments (Covenants), between the two religious worlds: that of the Law and that of the Gospel.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

sacred text. And they saw this discernment itself as a gift of the Holy Spirit¹³.

III. The Patristic Principle of *Theoria*

For the patristic writers, *theoria* means an interpretive vision that attempts to discern the spiritual sense of a biblical text¹⁴.

As a hermeneutical method, *theoria* was based upon two fundamental presuppositions: that Scripture is uniformly inspired by God, and that typology offers the key to its right interpretation¹⁵. For Alexandrians, *theoria* means the spiritual meaning of a text as discovered through allegorical interpretation. Clement of Alexandria claims that faith is only the foundation or the first step towards knowledge¹⁶; the true gnostic reaches perfection by means of an “initiated contemplation” (*epoptike theoria*)¹⁷. According to him, therefore, *theoria* would be reserved only to the initiates.

The Antiochians brought an important corrective to this gnosticizing tendency of the Alexandrians by developing the concept of *theoria* on the basis of typology, not allegory¹⁸. Diodore of Tarsus had even written a treaty, now lost, on “the difference between *theoria* and allegory”¹⁹. *Theoria* is therefore the contemplation of the text, mediated by the typology.

The theme of types or prefigurations in the Old Testament, which have corresponding antitypes in the New Testament, holds an important position in the patristic sources, beginning with the Epistle of Barnabas and the works of St. Justin the Martyr. Allegory discovers two distinct meanings

¹³ Vasile Mihoc, *Actualitatea exegezei biblice a Sfinților Părinți*, in James D. G. Dunn, Hans Klein, Ulrich Luz, Vasile Mihoc (ed.), “Interpetarea Sfintei Scripturi din perspectivă ortodoxă și apuseană. Documente ale simpozionului Est-Vest al specialiștilor în Noul Testament, de la Neamț (4-11 septembrie 1998)”, Teofania, Sibiu, 2003, p. 36.

¹⁴ The Latin correspondent for *theoria* is *spectaculum*. In the New Testament this word appears in Lc 23, 48: “and all the people that came together to that sight (*theoria*) ...”. Gustave Bardy (*Exégèse patristique*, DB.S IV, Paris 1949, p. 580-581) gives as the French correspondent the word “considération”.

¹⁵ Breck, *Power*, p. 95.

¹⁶ *Strom* VII, 10, 1ss.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 327; cf. 6, 10.

¹⁸ Breck, *Power*, p. 60-61.

¹⁹ The work is noticed by Suidas. Yet, it is not clear if it was an independent treaty or just a sort of dissertation added to a commentary. Cf. Bardy, *Exégèse*, p. 580.

in the sacred text: the historical or the literal sense and the spiritual sense, but for the allegorists only the latter is important for the life in faith. Allegory looks for the symbols and discovers profound mysteries even in the simplest expressions, without taking into account the literal meaning. Based on typology, *theoria* affirms, to the contrary, that the spiritual sense cannot be separated from the literal one, that the antitype is ontologically present in the type. Typology does not apply to the words of Scripture (of the Old Testament) but to the realities described by these words, that is to events, institutions and biblical characters.

In the prologue to Psalm 118, Diodore of Tarsus writes that *theoria* (or contemplation) overlaps history, it does not destroy it. Scripture keeps faithfully the double “theoretical” sense: literal and spiritual. It would be dangerous to look for a “foreign sense” outside the literal sense of the text, for the results of such a quest would lead the exegete to allegory beyond typology.

“Explaining the double sense of Scripture discerned *kata theorian*, Diodore holds that the prophets, in predicting future events, adapted their oracles both to their contemporaries and to future epochs. To the former, their words were hyperbolic (*hyperbolikoi*) or exaggerated in that they contained a meaning which was not yet fully disclosed. But to the age in which the prophecies were realized the oracles were seen to be in complete harmony with the events that marked their fulfilment”²⁰.

Persons and events of the Old Testament possess each their own significance in the context of Israelite history if interpreted from a historical point of view (*historikos*). Yet, interpreted from the perspective of *theoria* (*theorematikos*), the same persons and events reveal their higher, eschatological significance. Thus, for instance, a psalm can be applied historically to the era of the Babylonian exile or that of the Maccabees, while in the view of *theoria* it refers to the time of the Messiah²¹. “*Theoria* thus provided Diodore with a middle road between the excesses of allegory and of he called ‘Judaism’, meaning a concern for the literal sense of Scripture alone”²².

²⁰ Breck, *Power*, p. 77-78.

²¹ Bardy, *Exégèse*, p. 580.

²² Breck, *Power*, p. 78.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

For Theodore of Mopsuestia also, history does not exclude *theoria* and some of the psalms that are not literally messianic are really so according to the contemplative vision (*theoria*)²³. Theodore establishes three criteria in order to discern the authentic type in the Old Testament: 1) a resemblance (*mimesis*) must exist between type and antitype; 2) the relation between the two images (persons or events) must be in order of promise and fulfilment, so that the type finds its realization or actualisation in the antitype; 3) the transcendent reality of the antitype must participate really in the type, so that the historical event becomes bearer of the revelation. Applying these criteria rigorously, Theodore keeps only few authentic types in the Old Testament. He even refuses the messianic character of the great majority of Psalms and prophecies regarded before as messianic²⁴. The heretical conclusions of this exegesis led to his condemnation by the Church.

St. John Chrysostom does not follow Theodore's rigid historicism. He distinguishes three sorts of biblical assertions: those which are prefigurations or symbolic images revealing a "theoretical" or spiritual sense, those which possess only a literal meaning, and those which are authentically typological, a historical event being the bearer of a divine significance (the proper sense of *theoria*). For St. John Chrysostom and for Diodore and Theodore as well, *theoria* is not simply a method of exegesis, but "an inspired perception or contemplation of revealed heavenly realities"²⁵.

This way of thinking was also adopted by Theodoret of Cyr. In the preface to his commentary on the Psalms, he outlines his exegetical program:

"I have regarded it as my duty to avoid the one extreme as well as the other [allegory and literalism]. Whatever refers to history, I shall explain historically, but the prophecies about Christ the Lord, about the Church from the Gentiles, about the Gospel and the preaching of the Apostles shall not be explained as referring to certain other things, as it is customary with the Jews"²⁶.

The patristic use of the word *theoria* lets us understand that it is not really a method but a spiritual perception inspired by the Holy Spirit. We

²³ Bardy, *Exégèse*, p. 581.

²⁴ See Robert Devréese, *La méthode exégetique de Théodore de Mopsueste*, RB 53 (1946), p. 207-241.

²⁵ Breck, *Power*, p. 88.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

could say that it includes three stages: 1) the vision of the Old Testament prophet; 2) the New Testament inspired author's perception of a spiritual sense written down in the prophetic message by means of typology; and 3) the interpretation of the post-apostolic exegete on the basis of his own *theoria* by which, on the one hand, he sees the typological relation between the Old and the New Testament, and, on the other hand, he discerns the existential sense of this typological relation. He reveals its significance "for us", as members of the Body of Christ. Diodore of Tarsus and his disciples speak, indeed, of a *theoria* indispensable for the post-apostolic interpretation²⁷. *Theoria* or the contemplative vision is therefore as essential for the exegete as for the biblical authors themselves.

All these aspects of the concept of *theoria* imply an inspiring activity of the Holy Spirit. For instance, St. Gregory the Thaumaturgist writes:

"To be gifted is necessary both for him who tells the prophecy and for him who hears it. And no one could hear the prophecies unless the prophetic Spirit gave him the ability to listen to His words. It is written indeed in the Scripture that only the One who closes discloses; it is the divine Logos who opens the closed things, rendering the mysteries intelligible"²⁸.

And Origen says: "Let us pay attention, for we are by the springs of living water, that is by the divine Scriptures, but in error about them. (...) That is why tears and unceasing prayers are needed so that the Lord opens our eyes"²⁹.

It is a truth affirmed by Christ Himself, in John 16, 12-14, that the Holy Spirit will also guide the interpretive activity of the Church:

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak of His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you".

This text of John tells us that the truth in and towards which we are guided by the Holy Spirit is the truth of Christ. The object of *theoria* is

²⁷ Breck, *Power*, p. 105.

²⁸ PG 10, 1093A. See André Benoît, *L'actualité des Pères de l'Église*, CthAP 47, Neuchâtel, 1961, p. 67-68.

²⁹ *Hom in Gen VII*. 6, cf. Benoît, *L'actualité*, p. 66.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

therefore no other than Christ Himself. For He is the very object of the Scripture and, at the same time, the only one who gives access to the truth of the Scripture through His Spirit. The spiritual sense is therefore a christological sense³⁰. And, indeed, it is the sense that the exegesis of the Fathers always searches for.

IV. Christological Exegesis

“The exegesis of the Fathers, writes André Benoît, allows us to understand how and why are we right to make a christological exegesis of the Old Testament”³¹.

The Old Testament, the Scriptures of the first Christians, is read by the Holy Fathers, following the method of the Apostles, in the light of Christian revelation. For them Christ was the key to the Old Testament. He is secretly present everywhere in the Old Testament. St. Irenaeus writes:

“If someone reads the Scriptures (i.e. the Old Testament³²) he will find there the word concerning Christ (*de Christo sermone*) and the prefiguration of the new calling. He is in fact the treasure hidden in the field – the field indeed is the world – and Christ is really hidden in the Scripture, for He is there designated by some types and some words which cannot be humanly understood before the final fulfillment of all things, that is the coming of Christ”³³.

Reacting against heretical positions, like that of Marcion, the Church Fathers were able to valorize the whole Old Testament as Christian Sacred Scripture, by means of christological interpretation.

In regard to christological exegesis, we must add that the Fathers are valuable not only for their interpretation of the Old Testament but of the New Testament as well. So the christological significance “unfolds in so many aspects as are revealed in Christ Himself. He could be considered

³⁰ V. Mihoc, *Actualitatea*, p. 40

³¹ Benoît, *L'actualité*, p. 66.

³² In his work *The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, St. Irenaeus, though he is very well acquainted with the New Testament, quotes only the Old Testament, which he invokes to justify the kerygma of the Apostles. Cf. Benoît, *L'actualité*, p. 66.

³³ *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 26, 1.

either in His historical person and in the Gospel events, or in His life hidden in the sacraments of the Church, which is His body, or in His eschatological coming and His glorious reign”³⁴.

The Western exegesis of our time is deeply marked by the fundamental changes that occurred in Christology. Starting from philosophical presuppositions that leave no room for the very idea of supernatural and biblical inspiration, the so-called “independent” exegesis aims at finding a “Jesus of history”, professing something that might be called an anthropological Christology or a “Christology from below” which is in fact only a Jesusology³⁵. This is totally different from the traditional Christology of incarnation. Jesus is not the God-Man anymore. He is only a man of God. And redemption is no more considered as the divinization of man; it is seen only in the interior identity of the human being (divided and alienated from himself), an interior identity of the human being that will give him the possibility of attaining a moral humanity. In this perspective, the incarnation and resurrection of Christ seem incomprehensible and impossible³⁶. And so we get a Christology that has nothing to do with the doctrine of the Church and that secures the chasm between God and man.

The biblical fundamental perspective is that of the divine humanity of Christ. The apostolic Church and the New Testament writers confess that Jesus is true God and true Man. Therefore one could not rightly understand New Testament without adopting the theological perspective of its authors.

The Christ *theanthropos* is the foundation and norm of patristic exegesis. The patristic exegetes of the Bible had some difficulties in keeping a right balance in the expressions they gave to the relation between the two natures – divine and human – of Jesus Christ. The Alexandrian and Antiochian

³⁴ Jean Daniélou, *Origène*, Paris, 1948, p. 163-164.

³⁵ See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ. Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, London, 1990, p. 55ss.

³⁶ Cf. Moltmann, *The Way*, p. 57-58. Thomas Oden (*The Word of Life. Systematic Theology II*, San Francisco, 1992, p. 205) sums up the situation of liberal Christology thus: “The attempt to devise an adequate Christology ‘from below’ runs up against three persistent limitations: 1) Such a procedure has great difficulty from the outset even locating Jesus in history utilizing recent critical methods. 2) Heated speculative-critical questions abound as to how attributions of deity ever came to be applied to Jesus during the period of oral tradition preceding our written documents. Hence 3) it typically ends with feeble and uncertain affirmations of the divinity of Christ, the keystone of traditional Christology”.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

exegetical methods are consistent with their christological positions: if the allegorical interpretation had a tendency towards docetism by exalting the divine nature and playing down the human nature, the literal interpretation was attracted to hypostatic dualism³⁷ for a while, by stressing more the concrete reality of Jesus. But the balance was established promptly and the heretics could be condemned in the name of the traditional doctrine.

When interpreting the Scripture christologically, the Fathers referred either to one or both of the two natures of Christ or to their union in His unique person.

Thus, for instance, St. Athanasius of Alexandria says that the skilled exegete, like an honest moneychanger, should consider attentively any biblical text referring to Christ, in order to discern whether it speaks about His humanity, or His divinity, or the relation between the two natures.

“Expressions used about His Godhead and His becoming man are to be interpreted with discrimination and suitable to the particular context. (...) He who expounds concerning His Godhead is not ignorant of what belongs to His coming in the flesh; but discerning each as a skilled and approved moneychanger’, he will walk in the straight way of piety; when therefore he speaks of His weeping, he knows that the Lord, having become man, exhibits His human character in weeping, while as God raises Lazarus”³⁸.

St. Gregory the Theologian shows himself to be such a skilled “money-changer” when he explains the apparent contradictions of the biblical assertions about Christ by the interpretation of the two natures:

“He hungered, but He fed thousands...

He was wearied, but He is the Rest of those that are weary...

He was heavy with sleep, but walked lightly over the sea...

He prays, but He hears prayer.

He weeps, but He causes tears to cease.

He asks where Lazarus was laid, for He was a Man, but He raises Lazarus, for He was God.

He is sold, and very cheap, for it is only thirty pieces of silver; but He redeems the world...

³⁷ See Breck, *Power*, p. 65ss, 93.

³⁸ St. Athanasius, *On the Opinion of Dionysius* 9 = NPNF 2/IV, 179. Cf. Oden, *Word*, p. 178.

As a sheep He is led to the slaughter, but He is the Shepherd of Israel, and now of the whole world also.

As a lamb He is silent, yet He is the Word...

He is wounded, but He healeth every disease...

He dies, but He gives life..."³⁹

In his treaty *On the Orthodox Faith* (or *Dogmatics*)⁴⁰, St. John of Damascus, the most systematic of the Eastern Fathers, offers a very clear summary of the manner in which the patristic writers interpreted the biblical texts concerning Christ. In Scripture, he says, there are four types of references regarding Christ, depending on how He is considered:

I. *Before* the incarnate theandric union, so as to show

1. Consubstantiality with the Father (e.g. John 10, 30; 15, 9; Phil 2, 6 etc.)
2. The perfection of the Person (e.g. Heb 1,3; Is 9, 6)
3. The mutual indwelling of the Persons in one another (e.g. John 14, 10)
4. The provenance of the Son from the Father (e.g. John 14, 28; 16, 28; 6, 58; 5, 19)
5. The fulfillment of the Father's will by the Son (John 1, 3; 11, 42)
6. The fulfillment of prophecy (Ps 49, 3; Zech 9, 9; etc.).

II. *During* the time of incarnate union, so as to indicate

1. The deification (the *logosis* or the exaltation) of the flesh
 - a) by assuming the human
 - b) by uplifting the human
2. The humbling of the Word
 - a) by abasement
 - b) by assumption of the flesh
 - c) by kenosis
3. Permeation of both deity and humanity in the union
 - a) by uniting
 - b) by anointing

³⁹ Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.* XXIX, 20, in Philip Schaff (ed.), "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers" (abr. NPNF) series 2, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994, vol. VII, p. 309. Cf. Oden, *Word*, p. 185.

⁴⁰ St. John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith* IV, 18, NPNF 2/IX, p. 90-92; cf. V. Mihoc, *Actualitatea*, p. 45-46.

- c) by intimate conjoining
- d) by permeating
- e) by mutual indwelling.

III. *After* the union, so as to show

1. Divine nature (John 14, 10; 10, 30; etc.)
2. Human nature (John 8, 19; 3, 14; etc.) in six ways

- a) Spoken of Him naturally
 - of His birth
 - growth
 - progress with age
 - hunger, thirst, weariness, fear, sleep
 - death

b) Ascribed to Him fictionally “as if” human only
(John 11, 34; Matt 21, 19; Luke 24, 28)

c) Things spoken in the matter of association and said relatively (Matt 27, 46; 2Cor 5, 21; Gal 3, 13; 1 Cor 15, 28)

d) Things spoken by reason of distinction in thought

e) Things spoken to strengthen faith (John 17, 5)

f) Things spoken with reference to His ethnic identity
(John 4, 22)

3. One Person (*hypostasis*) displaying both divinity and humanity
(John 6, 57; 16, 10; 1Cor 2, 8; John 3, 13).

IV. *After* the Resurrection

1. As pertaining to divinity (Matt 28, 19.20; etc.)

2. As pertaining to humanity (Matt 28, 9.10; etc.)

a) as actual but not according to nature (as eating after the resurrection)

b) as actual and according to nature (as passing through closed doors)

c) as simulated or intentionally fictional (as when He “acted as if He were going farther; Luke 24, 28)

3. As pertaining to both natures (John 20, 17; Ps 20, 7; Heb 1, 3; etc.).

What we have here is a true manual of christological exegesis, in which the Christology of the Church is turned into rules of biblical interpretation. These distinctions of St. John of Damascus help the exegete out of some difficult impasses and prevent him from reaching heretical conclusions.

V. St. Maximus the Confessor's view on Scripture

The rich and important work of St. Maximus the Confessor offers a synthesis and, at the same time, a deepening of the *theoria* and of the christological exegesis of the preceding Fathers. That's why he deserves a special attention⁴¹.

1. *Scripture, incarnation of the Logos*. Following Origen⁴², St. Maximus speaks about a triple incarnation of the Logos: in the natural *logoi* of man and of all creation, in the *logoi* of the Scripture, and, finally, by His birth from the Virgin Mary. The idea of divine *logoi* was present before to Origen. St. Maximus does not reject it, but gives it a new meaning and a different role. If, for Origen, these *logoi* were the preexistent souls, united in some way to the nature of Logos, at St. Maximus they are the thoughts of God according to which all things were created⁴³. Through the *logoi*, God is present in His creation and the created beings are joined to God and are present in Him⁴⁴. But, Maximus specifies, though they are in God and close to Him, these *logoi* are not God⁴⁵.

One of St. Maximus' texts summarizes this triple incarnation of the Word and understanding of Scripture as one of these incarnations. In *Ambiguum* 33 (98), after having spoken about the "thickening" of the Word by His coming in the flesh and His "hiding" ineffably in the *logoi* of created things, he adds that, because of the "thickening" of our intelligence, the Word "accepted to become incarnate and print Himself in the letters, the syllables and the words" of Scripture⁴⁶. It is true that the *logoi* of the creatures and that of Scripture are not of divine nature, but simple icons, gracious presences of the Logos at the ontological level of things, so that the first two incarnations express only an iconic presence of the Logos,

⁴¹ Cf. V. Mihoc, *Actualitatea*, p. 47-53; Pr. Conf. Dr. Constantin Coman, *Erminia Duhului. Texte fundamentale pentru o ermineutică duhovnicească*, Editura Bizantină, București, 2002, p. 152-200.

⁴² *In Joh.* XIII, 42, PG 14, 472D-476.

⁴³ Dumitru Stăniloae, who translates *logoi* by "reasons", says in his introduction to *Ambigua*: "The reasons are not existences but thoughts of God, according to which the beings are created. (...) Creation is passing from the level of thinking to the ontological level, from the level of being thought by God to level of existence by the will of God" (PSB 80, București, 1983, p. 28).

⁴⁴ *Amb Joh*, PG 1080AB

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ PG 91, 1285D-1288A; Romanian translation: PSB 80, p. 247-248.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

while the third means His ontological and personal presence in man, i.e. in Jesus Christ as the God-Man. But Scripture is no less an incarnation of the Logos, so true exegesis is to contemplate the *logoi* of the “written law” (the Scripture) and to discover the Word (Logos) in Scripture’s words. Such an exegesis can be achieved only by divine illumination⁴⁷.

2. *The dichotomy of Scripture.* There is, according to St. Maximus, a very big distance between the surface of Scripture, its letter, and its spiritual sense, which is Christ. Like man, a dichotomous being, Scripture is dichotomous as well. The body and the soul of man form a unity. Though inferior, the body is not bad in itself. The body becomes bad if it abandons the natural restraint of the mind and begins to be autonomous. This is also true for “the body” and “the spirit” of Scripture. In such a dichotomy, the material part is not contrary to the rational, spiritual one. Sensitive perception is not totally opposed the intelligible, but the two components make an ontological unity. Having the divine Logos in itself, Scripture is an encoded book, but a book rich in meanings, opened to a unique profoundness and value. The Logos embodied Himself in the Scripture not as an alternative to its letter but as the unique divine sense of this very letter, as the unique *logos* (mind) of Scripture. Therefore St. Maximus does not deny the fundamental value of the literal meaning. The historical foundation is the firm basis of all spiritual exegesis.

3. *The “letter” and the “spirit” of Scripture.* “The spirit” of Scripture is not another “letter”, but the “spirit” of the letter. One can speak about a letter-spirit opposition in the situation when “the letter” eclipses “the spirit” (it “kills” it, St. Maximus says⁴⁸), that is its more profound value and its meaning “for us” (cf. 1Cor 10, 6.11). Becoming autonomous from “the spirit”, “the letter” presents itself to the reader as an alternative to “the spirit”. Emptied of its meaning, “the letter” becomes just an appearance, even if it pretends to be the sense. This “letter” is not the Scripture anymore; it is reduced to the level of an ordinary letter and it does not have a theandric value anymore. This imaginary, apparent meaning of “the letter”, false and opposed to the true sense of the Scripture, is called “history” (*historia*) by St. Maximus.

⁴⁷ See Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Chicago-La Salle, 1995, p. 371.

⁴⁸ *Amb 27*, PSB 80, p. 129: “Actually, if the letter is loved for itself, it has the habit for those who love it to kill the spirit which is in it”.

The letter/logos opposition is treated by St. Maximus by using the three pairs of terms: on the one hand, “the letter”, “the history” and “the symbol” for the body of Scripture and, on the other hand, “the spiritual sense”, “the logos” and “the spirit” for what we could call “the soul” of Scripture. The reversal of the hierarchy in the dichotomy of Scripture is analogous to the destruction of human dichotomy or the dichotomy of creation: it is to put the bodily element, inferior by nature, above the spiritual element, superior by nature⁴⁹. According to the letter, the Scripture is created, whereas, according to its *logos*, it is uncreated⁵⁰. From here derive all the distinctive features of Scripture’s two components and the two ways of approaching it. “The history” is transient, the *logos* subsists for ever⁵¹. According to the letter, the word of the Scripture is circumscribed (*perigraphos*)⁵², while according to the *logos* it always remains uncircumscribed (*aperigraphos*)⁵³. In this limitation, “the history” is often in disagreement with the truth⁵⁴. This disagreement is due to God’s intention that the reader should not limit to seeking only the history in Scripture, but to contemplate it according to the *logos*, in its spirit⁵⁵. It is its spiritual significance, not the history, that harmonizes with the Scripture word and corresponds to its intention. The truth of the Scripture is above “history”⁵⁶ and consists in its *logos*; it is its *logos*.

4. *The superiority of the spiritual meaning.* If the “history” is different from the “spirit”, the means for approaching them are different as well.

⁴⁹ On the hierarchical structure of Scripture (logos-history), see St. Maximus, *Questiones ad Thalassium* 17, PG 90, 305B; Romanian translation: Filocalia III (trans., introd., and notes by Pr. Prof. D. Stăniloae), Ed. Harisma, București 1994, p. 74.

⁵⁰ *Mystagogia* 6, PG 91, 684B; Romanian translation by Dumitru Stăniloae, în “Revista Teologică”, 1944, nr. 6-8, p. 355.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² It is circumscribed to the time and place where the things recorded in the Bible took place (*Quest. ad Thal.* 50, PG 90, 465B; 304B; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 206, 72). That’s why the “history” alone becomes arid and worthless if it is not made fruitful in multiple (infinite) spiritual significances by the logos of the Scripture. By those significances, The Scripture’s word “realizes itself unceasingly, and the more it realizes itself the more it is continuously alive” (*Quest. ad Thal.* 17, PG 90, 304B; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 73).

⁵³ *Quest. ad Thal.* 50, PG 90, 465B; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 206.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 52.53.65, PG 90, 492 B-C. 521A. 753A. 756A; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 227, 251, 435, 436.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 52.65, PG 90, 492 B-C. 753A; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 227, 435.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 65, PG 90, 753A; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 435.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

The knowledge of “history” is a purely human, intellectual and discursive endeavour, whereas the knowledge according to the spirit is a divine-human act, the *logoi* of the Scripture being discerned by a contemplative contact⁵⁷, that is by *theoria*. According to St. Maximus, there are two types of exegesis: the false, which perceives Scripture only in its transient history, and the authentic or spiritual one (*pneumatike hermeneia*) which perceives it in its spirit. The first one is false because it does not uncover anything; instead of being a revelation (*apokalypsis*) it is a covering up, for it hides Christ under the dark surface of the letter, of the history. If the authentic exegesis is a Pentecost, a revelation of the Holy Spirit, who is its source, the “bodily” exegesis reveals the exegete’s impotence to gain access through history to the Exegete. For in *theoria* Christ Himself is the exegete and He gives the human exegete, which is His mouth (*stoma*), “the true foundations of knowledge”⁵⁸. Without Christ “we stay completely impotent and dumb in the explanation, not having anything certain to support our intelligence with”⁵⁹. And the attention oriented exclusively towards the letter of the Scripture gives birth to all kinds of different and plausible opinions which are only “the scales on the seeing strength of the soul that prevent him from having access to the One Word of the truth”⁶⁰. Those who hold tight only to the letter reject from the Scripture the *logos* itself (that is Christ) and deny the law of grace⁶¹.

5. *The true historical exegesis is also spiritual.* If such is the case with purely historical exegesis, could it be that someone like St. John Chrysostom, for instance, does not perform a Christian exegesis? St. Maximus prevented such an objection and said that the Fathers who did “literal” exegesis did not limit it to “the letter” of Scripture, but they presented such *logoi*

“in a body-like manner to those who, because of immaturity of intelligence, were not able to rise above sense perception, but had firstly to exercise themselves with sensible images, until they would desire thereafter to have access to the archtypal reasons (*logoi*) which are to be found above the senses”⁶².

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 4, PG 90, 276C; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 49.

⁵⁸ St. Maximus, *Capita theologica et oeconomica* II, 75, PG 90, 1160.

⁵⁹ *Ambigua* 17, PG 91, 1229B; Romanian translation: PSB 80, p. 205.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Quest. ad Thal.* 65, PG 90, 745D; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 430.

⁶² *Ibid.* 55, PG 90, 556C-D; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 263-264.

Like “true gnostics”, these Fathers used the types of history for breeding those whom they taught towards the spiritual sense; “they harmonize the spiritual meaning with the letter of the history in order, to save, at the same time, the type for the senses and the meaning for man’s spirit”⁶³. In fact, their exegesis is an authentic and spiritual one, an exegesis according to the *theoria*.

6. *A Christological exegesis*. To serve the law spiritually means to know the law of grace, to recognize Christ in the Scripture *logoi*. On the contrary, serving the law bodily means to stick to the letter that hides Christ, to ignore Christ⁶⁴ and the mystery of Incarnation⁶⁵. The bodily exegesis does not generate the good fruit of virtue but the sin worthy of condemnation⁶⁶; for out of the bodily law of Scripture is born the bodily self-love, the *philautia*⁶⁷. St. Maximus dedicates long passages to this subject and goes as far as to assert that a bodily exegesis of Scripture is no different from the Antichrist, for it fights against the spirit and opposes the divine law⁶⁸.

7. *An exegesis “for us”*. The spiritual sense does not only mean the perception of a typological relation between two economies, that of the old covenant and that of Christ. In a more explicit manner than his predecessors St. Maximus discerns in *theoria* the existential utility of typology: its significance “for us” as members of the Body of Christ. For the goal of Scripture and the ultimate intention of exegesis is soteriological rather than scientific. And we are directly and personally engaged in the history of salvation.

“Let us apply to ourselves the sense of the written things, St. Maximus says, for even if these things, according to history, had passed away, like types had, they are written for us, as a spiritual exhortation. What is written then is spiritually applicable to us anytime”⁶⁹.

The Christian participates genuinely and concretely – and in communion with the entire Church – in the saving events, passing with the Lord from death to life. This existential dimension of Scripture is revealed

⁶³ The 2nd scholium to *Quaest. ad Thal.* 55, PG 90, 560A; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 281.

⁶⁴ *Quaest. ad Thal.* 18, PG 90, 372B; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 129.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 50, PG 90, 468B; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 207.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 65, PG 90, 740A; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 424.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 63, PG 90, 669B-C Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 370.

⁶⁸ *Amb.* 10-18, PG 91, 1129C-1132A; Romanian translation: PSB 80, p. 129-130.

⁶⁹ *Quaest. ad Thal.* 52, PG 90, 497A-B; Romanian translation: Filocalia III, p. 231.

The Patristic Dimension of the Eastern Orthodox Approach to the Bible

to us by the Holy Spirit, who works in us and makes us assimilate the Scripture's words (*logoi*) as uncreated divine energies. Such an assimilation supposes our ascetic effort, for the true knowledge of the words inspired by the Spirit is given only to the worthy. Exegesis as *theoria* therefore becomes an experience of the deifying grace, a fervor for the divine things.

VI. Conclusions

We can now systematize the factors that dictate the patristic orientation of the Orthodox interpretation of the Bible:

1. Scripture as God's life giving Word for the His People

Looking at the interpretation of the Church Fathers, it is clear that they looked at the text of Scripture as a text in which the divine Word was powerfully present, but in a hidden way. The words of Scripture could be looked at as human words, but this human aspect of the Scripture was not the ultimate concern of the Fathers because their aim was theological and spiritual: to hear God's Word. A crucial issue for us is to understand how they imagined the relationship between this human text and God's Word. St. Maximus saw the Scripture as an incarnation of the Word in human language. The human words of Scripture are pointers to the Word just as symbols point to meanings beyond the literal and just as the humanity of Jesus reveals his divinity. The divine Word to which the human words point can never be fully grasped by humans and the search is therefore infinite. Furthermore, the move from the human words to the Word involves the whole existence of the reader as a journey of faith and not as a process of merely conceptual articulation

2. The mysterious depth of Scripture

While modernity held the view that a text can have only one meaning, the historical meaning, the Fathers presupposed basically two levels of meaning, the literal and the spiritual meaning. The transition from a literal meaning to another meaning in metaphorical speech and in the understanding of symbols was used to understand how human words about human realities could be understood as expressions of divine realities. The literal story becomes an image of the story of God with the reader. Similarly, the literal laws become instructions for the life of the reader. Moving from the literal to the spiritual, true meaning of the text makes special demands

on the reader and requires divine gifts, of which the Spirit was the origin and giver. The Fathers called this inspired approach to Scripture *theoria*, a contemplation of the text by which the reader discerns Christ throughout the Bible.

3. *The importance of the historical meaning is relativized in various degrees.* While modernity was decisively focused on the historical sense of the text and valued this sense exclusively, the Fathers saw the exclusive focus on the literal meaning as a gross misunderstanding. This becomes more intelligible if we bear in mind that the focus of the Fathers is on the meaning of the text in the present as God's Word for the readers. The literal meaning was de-absolutized and was brought into a dialogue with contemporary Christian experience by means of typological exegesis.

4. *Scripture as God's Word here and now*

The aim of interpreting Scripture for the Fathers and the NT writers was very different from that of modernity. "Scientific" exegesis limits itself to providing an informed proposal about what the human author of the text intended to say to his original audience. The Fathers did not stop at this point; they saw it the task of the exegete to make the actualisation of the text, in order his contemporary fellow Christians may hear, in their own circumstances, the Word of God. Thus biblical exegesis is put into the service of the Church and it is closely related to all aspects of the Church life.

5. *The spiritual quality of the readers affects the level of their understanding.* While modernity does not take the moral and religious quality of the interpreters into account but only their objectivity and their conceptual ability, the former were of decisive importance for the Fathers. As "only like understands like", a reader who is becoming God-like will understand the things of God. Becoming attuned to God required first of all development of spiritual quality which made union with God possible. Spiritual quality and union with God are not just the pre-requisites for understanding, they are part and parcel of understanding itself.

So, how does this patristic dimension of exegesis bear upon the work of the Orthodox exegete? If correctly understood, this feature represents a creative continuation of the Father's Spirit. It is not about an uncritical reproduction of the patristic exegeses in our own context, which is historically, socially and academically different, but about fidelity to the living way in which the Holy Fathers have theologically transformed the significance of the Gospel history into a sermon of life, into a existential call.

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Influence of spiritual values on some **Roma attitudes towards hospitalization: a qualitative study**

Abstract

Background: The interaction of spiritual values with health-care has significant implications for some Roma people. Although they have absorbed different aspects of the Christian Romanian host culture they settled among, Roma kept specific norms, values and community concepts that revolve around identity model of their traditional culture – a dualistic one, based on pre-Christian and Christian values. The religious and socio-cultural differences also influence their attitudes towards hospitalization. Clarifying these issue will be the main purpose of the paper.

Methodology: The findings focus on data analysed from semi-structured interviews with 48 Roma patients and caregivers from north-eastern and north-western part of Romania (county of Iasi and Cluj).

Results: Some Roma people have negative attitudes toward hospitalization and report significantly anxieties, derived from defensiveness toward uncleanliness and fear of contamination by impure elements. That develops from a dualistic conception – the opposition between pure and impure, that is, undoubtedly, an Indian heritage. Results show that Roma are often suspicious of non-Roma people and institutions and therefore the hospital is an ethnically-mismatched place. There are a lot of pollutants in the hospital area: bodily fluids, food cooked in the hospital kitchen, objects used before by sick individuals and corpses. Touching the dirt entails a kind of contamination and a bodily impurity. All these things affect everyday life during inpatient hospitalization, including the way Roma deal with eating and washing, physicians and treatments, or coping with illness and death. Roma's assembly in

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the vicinity of a hospitalized patient becomes a social command, in order to reduce the patient's anxiety and improve his health-care. But family's crowding around the sickbed comes into conflict with hospital rules and arguments with medical staff may arise.

Conclusion: Roma patients find their traditional spiritual values significant and fulfilling in their own lives. Therefore, Romanian physicians need to respectfully acknowledge religious issues and address the spiritual needs of Roma patients and have more enriched understanding and collaborative interaction with them, making the practice of medicine more holistic, ethical and compassionate.

Keywords

Roma, hospitalization, medical setting, illness, purity, customary law.

1. Introduction

We live in a culturally pluralistic society, therefore it is essential to understand the cultural heritage of other communities. Moreover, we should recognize that some minorities who are on the border between two cultures may have fears about the risks involved in adapting to the value and institutional system of the majority.

Patients belonging to groups with sundry ethnic backgrounds have been shown to vary in regard to pain response, perception and interpretation of symptoms, access to care and compliance². Roma is one of these minorities³, distinctive by way of dress or by crowding around the hospital when a relative is sick. They may be reluctant to the dominant culture and values or may choose to remain distinct in their ethnic identity rather than assimilating to "mainstream" norms. Because of the complex range of beliefs, values and attitudes shared and perpetuated by members of this ethnic group, Roma cultural heritage provides an interpretative framework for perceptions of illness and hospitalization and the organization of health-care modalities.

This paper contends that a focus on the distinct culture which characterizes Roma people can enhance our understanding of their hospital-related behaviour. It argues that the Roma culture and religious issues are

² E. Pellegrino, P. Mazzarella, P. Corsi, *Transcultural Dimensions in Medical Ethics*, Frederick, Md: University Publishing Group Inc., 1992.

³ A. Bancroft, *Roma and Gypsy-Travellers in Europe: Modernity, Race, Space and Exclusion*, Ashgate Press, Avebury, 2005.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

crucial in understanding their behaviour linked to hospitalization. Using a qualitative research, the paper also explores the ways in which the religious beliefs of this ethnic group shape the professional relations between the medical care team and their Roma patients or next of kin.

1.1 Theoretical framework

Some of the different theoretical frameworks that have been used in explaining the specificities of the Roma groups have focused attention on issues of race and ethnicity⁴ that determine cultural constructs. This has traditionally been one of the key analytical dilemmas in the anthropology⁵. Although anthropologists have tended to emphasize the transformative power of culture, the idea that cultural particularities can create barriers in health-care and generate ethical conflicts has remained a basic premise in the literature⁶.

The theoretical concept of purification was put forward by the social anthropologist Mary Douglas, whose work *Purity and Danger*⁷ argues that people need to classify other people and objects in order to make sense of the world. Consequently, that which cannot be classified is viewed adversely. “The unclassified is a residual category”, so anything or anyone that falls outwith these frames of classification “is dirt, polluted, a threat to the integrity of the collectivity”⁸. This notion has been further developed by Sibley in his work on the purification of space which involves the rejection of difference and the securing of boundaries to maintain homogeneity and

⁴ D. Phillips & T. Rathwell, Ethnicity and health: introduction and definitions. In T. Rathwell, & D. Phillips (eds.), *Health, race and ethnicity* (p. 1–20), London: Croom Helm, 1986.

⁵ M. Herzfeld, *Anthropology: theoretical practice in culture and society*, Blackwell Publisher, Oxford, 2001, p. 7.

⁶ P. Goward, J. Repper, L. Appleton & T. Hagan, *Crossing boundaries. Identifying and meeting the mental health needs of Gypsies and Travellers* in “Journal of Mental Health”, 2006, 15(3), p. 315–327; A. Sutherland). Gypsies and health care. In Cross-cultural Medicine. *The Western Journal of Medicine*, 1992a, 157 (3), p. 276-280, here p. 278. Available online at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1011276/pdf/westjmed00085-0066.pdf>.

⁷ M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: A Cultural Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966.

⁸ D. Sibley, Survey 13: Purification of space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1988, 6(4), p. 409 - 421, here p. 410.

to purify social space. Interestingly, citing the example of Gypsies, he also outlines how purification can work as a two-way process with the weaker group using purification for their own ends: “We might see purification rules as survival mechanisms which maintain an economically and politically weak group within a larger society”⁹. This dynamic could also be seen as a direct response to exclusion and the lack of access to power on the part of Roma population.

1.2. Literature review on religious issues of Roma people

A brief discussion on the literature which draws attention to the topic of Roma religion is necessary. Historians consider that their starting point of their journey is India, from where they migrated for about three centuries, from the ninth century and by the end of the eleventh century. Comparative studies on Roma language and Indian dialects strengthen the hypothesis of the Indian origins of these nomadic communities¹⁰. Their vocabulary was enriched by linguistic borrowings from the languages they crossed on their way to Europe: Afghanistan, where they took words from the neoarian Sindhi, Persia and the Byzantine Empire, from where they borrowed Greek words. From Persia and Minor Asia they arrived in Europe by two ways, one through the Caucasus and Northern Black Sea, brought by the Tartars in the thirteenth century, and other through Hellespont since the eleventh century¹¹.

Persia was not only a medium for acquired language, but offered also a religious stimulant. Roma have been influenced by Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of Persia, known for its “cosmic” (the fight between the two camps of the Universe, each ruled by the Good God or the Evil Spirit) and ethical dualism (the struggle between good and evil in human beings).

Such dualist ideas have influences not onl the Roma people, but also have been spread from Asia back into the Middle East and Hellenic Europe. Although Asia Minor became Christian, there were Christian dualist sects such as the Manichaeian heresy (in the 4th century), the Paulicians and Messalianians, in Armenia. Around the sixth century, Armenian Dualists have been rounded up by the Byzantine Emperor, and removed *en mass*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁰ I.H. Schwicker, *Die Zigeuner in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen*, Viena, 1883, p. 18.

¹¹ Al. I. Gonța, *Robii țigani și tătari în satul moldovenesc din Evul Mediu*, in *Rromathan. Studii despre rromi*, 1997, vol. 1, nr. 1, p. 69-86, here p. 71.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

to the Balkans. A couple centuries later, the Bogomilism, a dualist heresy, was noted in Bulgaria. During the Middle Ages, the dualist belief has spread westward through northern Italy and southern France, taking root in Languedoc, where the heretics were known as Cathars or Albigensians.

The dualism is reflected upon today in the religious thought of traditional Roma groups, in their general attitudes towards cleanliness and uncleanliness or health and illness. Summing up, such key concepts may be pointed out as follows:

Key Concepts in Roma Thought¹²

Positive Concepts	Negative Concepts
God (Bel).....	Devil (Beng)
Rom (Gypsy).....	Gaje (non-Gypsy)
Sastimos (good health).....	Naswalemos (illness)
Baxt (good fortune).....	Prikazo (bad luck)
Wuzho (purity).....	Marime (impurity; exclusion)

In the Christian world, they were perceived as a distinct ethnic and religious group even from the first contacts. Gypsies [Roma] were present in the Eastern Roman Empire, from the eleventh century, when Byzantines brought thousands of slaves from Syria¹³. The first historical attestation is the term *atsincani*, a Georgian version of the Greek word *athinganoi*¹⁴. In an hagiographic manuscript, dated 1068 AD, written by a Georgian monk at the monastery Iviron of Mount Athos, it was mentioned that in 1054 AD, during the reign of Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos, many *athinganoi* that were part of a “heretical sect” and were famous in fortune telling, riddles and witchcraft, arrived in Constantinople¹⁵.

¹² According to A. Sutherland, *Gypsies and health care*, p. 278.

¹³ G. Potra, *Contribuțiuni la istoricul țiganilor din România*, Bucharest: Mihai Dascălu Publishing, 2002, p. 17. H. Von Wlislöcki, *Vom Wandern den Zigeuner Volks*, Hamburg, 1890, p. 98, apud Al. Gonța, *op. cit.*, p. 73. See Paul Bataillard, *Les debuts de l'immigration des Tsiganes*, Paris, 1890, p. 4, sq.

¹⁴ A. Fraser, *Țigani*, Humanitas Publishing, Bucharest, 1998, p. 52; L. Cherata, *Etimologia cuvintelor țigan și (r)rom*, *Cercetări filosofico-psihologice*, 2011, III, 1, p. 145-155, here p. 145.

¹⁵ J.P. Liegeois, *Tsiganes et Voyageurs. Données socio-culturelles. Données sociopolitiques*, Strasbourg: Conseil de l'Europe, 1985, p. 13-14; G. Potra, *op. cit.*, p. 5. H. Von Wlislöcki, *Vom Wandern den Zigeuner Volks*, Hamburg, 1890, p. 98, apud Al. Gonța,

Some scholars have accepted the translation of the term *athinganos* by “unclean”, “foul” or “untouchable”, based on the Byzantines’ specific mentality of religious rejection of unknown populations. In addition, the social situation in India wasn’t unknown to Byzantines. “The untouchables” from India may refer to individuals outside any caste or from the *shudra* lower caste, who were “impure” due to the practiced trades (grave-diggers, tanners, sweepers, hunters, fishermen, executioners and generally, nomadic groups practicing such jobs¹⁶.

Other scholars consider that *athinganos* comes from the Sanskrit words *aṭigani(in) / tyāgan(in)*, meaning “nomad, migratory, seeker, traveller”¹⁷. The phonetic similarity, the lack of information, but also the historical hazard favoured the identification, in the religious and behavioural manner, of the *athinganos* with the “foul”, “impure”, “untouchable”.

From the Byzantine Empire, the Roma travelled to the Balkans, then in the Romanian regions, where they were certified in the fourteenth century. Many Romanians named them “Moors” and “Pharaons”¹⁸ due to their darker skin colour and presumed Egyptian origin. In Western Europe also it was thought that Roma were Christians from Egypt, which led to the ethnonyms *gypsy*, *gitano* or *gitain*.

From a confessional point of view, in general, Roma have joined the dominant denominations or religions in areas where they settled or have chosen to simply ignore the rules and practices of worship. This explains, in the case of the Roma, the entire religious mosaic. Religion has always been regarded as a form of adaptation, adopting beliefs or rituals of the majority in order to avoid coercive measures. In this case, there is a relationship between the adopted religion and the dominant religion in the area of residence¹⁹.

In Romania, the vast majority of the Roma people, living with the Orthodox, have joined the Orthodox Church, some are Catholics (in

op. cit., p. 73; P. Bataillard, *Les debuts de l’immigration des Tsiganes*, Paris, 1890, p. 4, sq.

¹⁶ Vahé Zartarian, *Marile civilizații*, Lider Publishing, Bucharest, 2004, p. 263.

¹⁷ N. Stchoupak, L. Nitti & L. Renou, *Dictionnaire sanskrit-français*, Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, Paris, 1986, p. 10-11, 290, apud L. Cherata, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

¹⁸ Al. Gonța, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁹ J.P. Liégeois. *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*, Council of Europe Press, Strassbourg, 1994, p. 90.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

some regions of Moldova, Transylvania and Banat), others are Muslims (Dobroudja), and some of them neo-protestant²⁰.

The Roma do not have a religion with specific and identity contours, their situation being atypical in this regard²¹. Adherence to a denomination or religion does not enter into competition with Roma values and rituals. They have not applied all the precepts of religion that have embraced, but they have enriched them with specific rites and practices. They have added to the principles of the majority elements of their cultural inheritance, preserved and transmitted in conditions of great diversity²².

A negative and accusing image of the Roma was built in Romania because of some habits (e.g. the practice of fortune foretelling) which contravened the Christian religious morality. Misconception that the Roma are ignorant and profiteers in matters of religion is a generally accepted idea²³. Iuliu A. Zanne collected an evidence from Romanian folklore about the Roma religiosity:

“The Gypsy cannot be ordained priests, because he ate the church. The Gypsies’ church was made of stone and Romanians’ of cheese, the doors of pork bacon, the lock is a pig roast. Gypsies wanted the Romanians’ church and asked to make a change of churches. The Romanians accepted the change if only the Gypsies became their slaves forever. Gypsies accepted and that is the reason they were slaves of the Romanians. Gypsies, very greedy, rushed to the church and in three days ate it all”²⁴.

²⁰ V. Burtea, *Rromii în sincronia și diacronia populațiilor de contact*, Lumina Rex Publishing, Bucharest, 2002, p. 149; El. Zamfir & C. Zamfir (eds.), *Țigani în ignorare și îngrijorare*, Alternative, Bucharest, 1993, p. 22.

²¹ V. Burtea, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

²² Annie Kovacs-Bosch & Jacqueline Charlemagne, *Étude exploratoire des représentations de la maladie et de la guérison chez les Manush [Exploratory study of the representations of illness and healing among the Manush]*, *Études tsiganes* (Paris), 1999, vol. 14, n°2, p. 87-91.

²³ Marian Zăloagă, *Reflectarea vieții religioase a țiganilor transilvăneni din secolul XVIII în surse germane*, “Buletinul cercurilor științifice studențești, Arheologie-Istorie-Muzeologie”, Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918”, Alba-Iulia, 2002, 8, p. 138. Available on <http://istorie.uab.ro/publicatii/colectia_bcsc/bcss_8/18_zaloaga.pdf>

²⁴ Iuliu A. Zanne, *Proverbele românilor din România, Basarabia, Bucovina, Ungaria, Istria și Macedonia* (ed. Mugur Vasiliu), 5th vol., 2004, Bucharest: Scara Publishing, p. 378.

Nevertheless, some of them, namely those who permanently settled somewhere, sincerely adhered to some christian beliefs and rituals. Devotion to some saints (like St. Paraskevi in the case of the Roma from Iasi county) shows that we cannot categorize the Roma as unbelievers or pagans²⁵, as most observers had in previous centuries. Things should be further detailed, because as Roma have been forced to adapt to the linguistic or economic conditions in areas where they lived, so they adapted to religious aspects.

Roma have not developed any own religious life for several reasons. First, practicing their religion requires not only to receive the consent of indigenous peoples in times characterized by religious intolerance, but also elements of worship and buildings too costly and difficult to achieve. The necessary funds meant enormous efforts, impossible to raise by a scattered population, who is always on the road, not living in the same area. Moreover, the lack of centers of civilization has prevented the development of spiritual and religious life, which reflects in the lifestyle, their set of values, dominant norms and traditions²⁶. The Roma preferred the absence of religious institutions and practices of worship than the deviation from the tradition, that is the leading principle of their existence²⁷. Being refused the chance of founding religious and cultural establishments, the only institution in which the roles and functions could initiate and carry on was the family, and on the whole, the community.

Roma secular religion was the *Romany-pen*, the Romany law, a system of norms, values and community concepts that revolve around identity model of traditional culture: an enlarged family called “community-family”²⁸. The community, an extended family, is based on three types of relationship: kinship, marriage and affinity.

Thus, Romany-pen is a religion within the community. Sacred embodiments of the Roma religion are the children, clerical meeting – the “kris” of the elders, the law – “phralipe” (brotherhood), the mystical practice - “ujipen ai pakiv” (purity and honor) and the revelation – the family.

²⁵ J.-P. Liégeois. *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*, p. 90.

²⁶ V. Burtea. *op. cit.*, p. 153.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147-148.

²⁸ D. Grigore. *Rromanipen-ul (rromani dharma) și mistica familiei. Familia tradițională în comunitățile de rromi din arealul românesc [Rromani Law and the mysticism of the family. The traditional family within Roma communities in Romanian area]*, Miniprint Publishing, Bucharest, 2001.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

Moral is experiential, intuitive, based on the education of the feeling of shame (“lajavo”) and preserving the tradition. This tradition, by its sacred and inalienable character, has the value of a dogma, in the center of which there are four key concepts: “phralipe” - community brotherhood, mutual aid, collective responsibility and shared destiny, “pakiv” - faith, respect, honor and mutual trust, “ujipe” – preserving the state of spiritual and bodily purity, “baxt” – the cult of luck, the opportunity in life for those who follow the rules of “phralipe” and “pakiv”, as opposed to bad luck (“bibaxt”) and misfortune²⁹.

Conservation of the purity laws is one of the most important factors of customary control and protection of community cohesion in the traditional Roma society. The compliance with these rules is an individual and collective responsibility and has as counterpart the shame feeling, which should not be violated, combined with the obstinacy of purity, creating and delivering of moral authority. Taboos and ritual prescriptions (bodily purity and moral law, prohibition to marry outsiders, non-interference of blood, customary conduct, responsibility to the community, law of honor and brotherhood – “pakiv” and “phralipe”) form a relatively immutable legal code, in which mutations are rare and occur only with the community consent³⁰. Breaching the customary law, a person is guilty of outrage against the community of ancestors and declared as impure or unclean (“maxrime”) by the traditional court meeting (“kriss”), which leads to exclusion from the community, a punishment worse than death. The exclusion amounts to the dissolution of identity, the spiritual death, because the individual exists only insofar as he or she is accepted by the community. If such recognition is gone, man is considered dead.

All these features of Roma religiosity may reflect on their attitude towards the body, the illness or health-care. Recently, attention has been given to religious and cultural diversity as an ethical issue surrounding health-care. In general, the ethical issues were related to the conflict between the needs of the Roma patients and the ethical standards of the medical profession. We have identified an interest in exploring the reasons

²⁹ Idem, *Curs de antropologie și folclor rrom. Introducere în studiul elementelor de cultură tradițională ale identității rrome contemporane* [*Anthropology and Roma folklore course: an introduction to the study of traditional culture elements of the contemporary identity*], Credis Publishing, Bucharest, 2001, p. 128.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

for and patterns of attendance among Roma patients and families in health-care and shedding light on compelling linkages between Roma culture and healthcare – related behaviours³¹.

According to the literature reviewed, the most frequently reported ethical challenges of this ethnic group have centred on:

- Various health-related behaviours, because of a dualistic Roma thinking: life/death, health/illness, purity/impurity, and inclusion/exclusion from the group;
- Suspicion toward non-Roma people and institutions;
- Health professionals' prejudice and stereotypes about Roma groups and lack of knowledge;
- Conflicts with health care staff, even use of force, partly due to the Roma expectations and perceptions about health-care.

Nevertheless, studies that examine the influence of religion on problems in health-care are meager and insufficient in addressing the complexity of this issue.

In Romania, very little empirical or qualitative information about Roma exists, from any period, to allow us to have more data about Roma's attitudes toward hospitalization. Due to their marginal position in Romanian society and the fact that some of them are illiterate, we lack information about attitudes and practices from a Roma perspective. The ethical issues among Roma are not fully understood due to a lack of studies on this topic. Our study reports some findings about cultural and religious specificities of some Roma communities related to hospitals providing inpatient care, trying to improve health-care workers' knowledge, in order to master situations in which ethical ideals of the medical profession oppose to the Roma culture and beliefs.

³¹ D. Honer & P. Hoppie, *The enigma of the Gypsy patient*, in "RN Magazine", 2004, 67 (8), p. 33-36. Available online at <http://rn.modernmedicine.com/rnweb/article/article-Detail.jsp?id=114152>; A. Lehti & B. Mattsona, Health, *Attitude to care and pattern of attendance among gypsy women – a general practice perspective*, in "Family Practice", 2001, 18 (4), p. 445-448. Available at <http://fampra.oxfordjournals.org/content/18/4/445.full>; A. Sutherland, *Gypsies and health care...*, p. 278; P. Van Cleemput, G. Parry, K. Thomas, J. Peters & C. Cooper, Health-related beliefs and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers: a qualitative study. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 2007, 61 (3), p. 205–210; J. Thomas, *Gypsies and American medical care*, "Annals of Internal Medicine", 1985, 102, p. 842-845.

2. Methodology of the research

2.1. Data source

As part of a larger study that investigates the factors determining the dignity of seriously ill Roma patients in Romania, the data for this qualitative study was collected from 48 semi-structured interviews conducted within some Roma communities in the county of Iasi (north-eastern part of Romania) and Cluj (north-western part), in the period July – November 2011. The socio-demographic data was collected by means of a questionnaire asking about the age, gender, marital status and education level of the interviewees. During our study, we had investigated several Roma groups, identified according to the traditional crafts that they practise: Kalderash/bucket makers (*căldărari*, Ciurea, county of Iași; Dancu, county of Iași), bear handlers (*ursari*, Iași), boyash/mine workers (*rudari*, Iași), spoon makers (*lingurari*, Pietriș-Dolhești), fiddlers (*lăutari*, Pietriș-Dolhești, county of Iași) and Romaninised Roma (Cluj-Napoca, Mera and Bonțida, county of Cluj, Iași). Some of these groups are well-known by their segregated type of habitation, by specific way of dressing, by the use of the Romani language and by their awareness of their clan membership. The large majority share the same feelings about the traditional beliefs and practices, therefore there are specific issues within the traditional Roma communities related to cultural practices in health care, to traditions and customs, to the different attitudes of the patient or his/her relatives at the end of life. The draft protocol for the study was approved by the Ethics Research Committee of the “Gr T. Popa” University of Medicine in Iași, Romania.

2.2. Participants

The study participants were 24 chronically ill patients (suffering from diabetes, renal failure and liver cirrhosis) and 24 family caregivers in the Roma communities. The selection criteria for this study were the experience related to chronic illness or care for such patients.

Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to all the participants. They were explained the purpose of this research both orally and in writing and the informed consent of the participants was obtained before enrolling them in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary and no financial incentives were offered.

As the Roma are considered a hard-to-reach population³², we collaborated with facilitators in the recruiting stage, i.e. the President of the Roma Party in the county of Iasi, the family doctors and the leaders of the Roma communities (“bulibaşa”).

2.3 Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure consistency across participants. The guide included open-ended questions grouped in the following topics:

1. Background (experiences with illness prior to this study; patients' or caregivers' illness perception);
2. The end-of-life care practices (relation with the medical staff and the family);
3. Communication of diagnosis and decision-making;
4. Religious coping strategies;
5. Attitudes towards terminal illness and death.

2.4 Interviewing procedure

The interviews were conducted in two contexts (individual interviews and interviews with both members of the couple) and lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were reviewed for accuracy.

The interviewers used the written notes to include information about the non-verbal language of the respondents. At the end of the interviews, the transcripts of the interviews were compiled and then the phenomenological analysis was applied, aiming to identify the common views of the respondents, but also the specific features.

2.5 Encoding and analysis of the interviews

An hermeneutic phenomenological approach³³ was used to analyse the data. After the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were care-

³² S. Hajioff & M. McKee, *The health of the Roma people: a review of the published literature*. “Journal of Epidemiology Community Health”, 2000, 54, p. 864–869. Available online at <http://jech.bmj.com/content/54/11/864.long>

³³ A. Baban, *Metodologia cercetării calitative [Qualitative Research Methodology]*, Preasa Universtitară Clujeană Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2002; H., Wolcott, *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, Sage, 1994; A. Giorgi, *Phenomenological Psychology*, in J. Smith, R. Harre & L. Van Langenhove (eds.), *Rethinking Psychology* (p. 24-42), Sage, London, 1995.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

fully read and analysed, words, phrases and statements that described the experiences facing hospitalization and religious issues towards illness, death and dying were identified, forming themes reflecting Roma perceptions.

First, a preliminary codebook was developed based on the interviews guides, and used to facilitate the encoding process. Next, each investigator used the preliminary codebook to encode the same selected interview transcript independently, and then the encoders met to review their codes and reach consensus where there were discrepancies. In case of differing opinions, mutual consensus was sought. The preliminary codebook was subsequently revised based on this initial encoding.

After all interviews had been encoded, the senior researcher ran reports on all nodes corresponding to patterns within the data and reviewed the findings. We classified a node as a theme if it was reported in at least 5 in all 48 interviews. Further analyses of the data by theme involving additional review and discussions among investigators enabled us to identify emergent sub-themes within the major themes that we explored.

In this paper we report the results on the attitudes of some Roma people towards hospitalization, terminal illness and death, due to their specific religious thinking. The results are partly presented as condensed descriptions of data, partly by quotations that are considered illustrative.

3. Results

3.1 Religious coping strategies

In Roma communities, institutionalized forms of religion don't have an important social significance. Religious compliance and active participation in religious life are incidental acts, but this doesn't mean that religion itself has lost its relevance, rather, according to interviews, a decrease in institutionalized religion seems to be in conflict with a strong religious identification of the respondents.

In response to an overwhelming event of life, they develop a sum of behaviors and cognitive activities, with the aim of overcoming that event³⁴ and of minimizing the disturbance in the life of patients or relatives

³⁴ J.J. Mytko & S.J. Knight, *Body, mind and spirit: Towards the integration of religio-*

produced by the disclosure of the diagnosis and the beginning of treatment. A person's coping ability develops from his/her psychological resources. Religion is one of the resources that the Roma most frequently turn to. This aspect is more intense and frequent at close relatives or patients who find themselves in existential extreme situations, like a severe disease³⁵:

“Yes, God is first and afterwards doctors. I believe that God helps my father more than doctors” (# 45).

When asked if the faith helped her in keeping his husband alive for 28 years, the wife of a Roma patient suffering from a chronic disease said:

“He wouldn't eat on Fridays, sometimes I would not even tell him it's Friday in order to determine him to eat, he would pray, I would splash him with holy water, the priest would come” (# 26).

Data from interviews suggests an improving in the quality of life of Roma who would appeal to religion and religious practices to cope with disease. Religious coping provides a framework for understanding the experiencing illness that threatens life or causes death³⁶.

Most often religious coping was conceived as being centered on emotion (being a method of dealing with negative emotion), but it also has cognitive components (reevaluation of the meaning of a disease in light of spirituality) and also behavioral components (prayer). This turns out to be an active coping pattern, useful in dealing with adversity and especially disease:

“We went out and we prayed to God: “Lord, my God, hear my prayer, do not leave me alone and give good thoughts to the doctor and reattached the girl's hand”. We cried, we prayed to God, he reattached her hand. As you or I feel good in this moment, the same felt the girl” (# 38).

ity and spirituality in cancer quality of life research, in *Psycho-Oncology*, 1999, 8, p. 439-450; N. Tarakeshwar, L.C. Vanderwerker, E. Paulk, M.J. Pearce, S.V. Kasl & H.G. Prigerson, *Religious coping is associated with the quality of life of patients with advanced cancer*, in “*Journal of Palliative Medicine*”, 2006, 9, p. 646–657.

³⁵ A. Pârvu, G. Roman, S. Dumitraş et al., *Arguments in favor of a religious coping pattern. in terminally ill patients*, in “*Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*”, 2012, 11 (31), p. 88-112, here p. 91. I. C. Thune-Boyle, J.A. Stygall, M.R. Keshtgar & S.P. Newman, *Do religious/spiritual coping strategies affect illness adjustment in patients with cancer? A systematic review of the literature*, in “*Social Science and Medicine*”, 2006, 63, p. 151–164.

³⁶ T. Daaleman & L. Vandecreek, *Placing religion and spirituality at end of life care*, in “*Journal of the American Medical Association*”, 2000, 284, p. 2514–2517.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

Other researches have shown that people who perceive God as a sustaining and guiding force in their lives tend to experience less psychological distress³⁷. In depression or high stress situations, the support of religion is undeniable³⁸.

We said in the review of literature on religious aspects of the Roma that they don't follow the patterns of Christian faith, mixing it with many traditions and rituals. In extreme life situations, the psychologists say that, despite the distinction between what is thought and how it is thought, the knowledge of faith doesn't exercise an action of coping effect, but only an update of internalized faith, ie the ability to believe in some moments in the success of life³⁹. Religious coping doesn't appear through verbal or technical acts, but occurs existentially in a religious experience, which vitalizes the patient's vital force. Without an initial trust in life, it would collapse into itself.

Faith in God is essential in order to confront the physical and psychological vicissitudes of disease⁴⁰. The belief that religion has (also) the function to provide a meaning, particularly useful in times of stress, is widespread among the Roma. Therefore, when faced with a serious illness, the patient and close relatives, call the comforting rituals of their faith: "When some of us is sick, we go to St. Paraskevi, to the Metropolitan Church, take holy water, basil, holy icons and we bring them to the ill and put them on the bed and sheets."

One can find different forms to express piety. Religiosity has observable empirical implications on the attitude and behaviour of Roma in hospital. The ritualistic dimension of religion, which refers to public and private religious practices is fully assumed. The manifestations of religiosity increase in quantity and intensity directly proportional to the incapacity of the person to control their own health or of their loved ones. This mixture

³⁷ K. I. Maton, *The stress-buffering role of spiritual support: cross-sectional and prospective investigation*, in "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion", 1989, 28 (3), p. 310.

³⁸ J. Miller, *Hope-inspiring strategies of the chronically ill*, in "Applied Nursing Research", 1989, 2, p. 23-29.

³⁹ M.O. Harrison, H.G. Koenig, J.C. Hays, A. Eme-Akwari & K.I. Pargament, *The epidemiology of religious coping: A review recent literature*, in "International Review of Psychiatry", 2001, 13, p. 86-93.

⁴⁰ K. Ashling-Giwa & P.A. Ganz, *Understanding the breast cancer experience of African-American women*, in "Journal of Psychosocial Oncology", 1997, 15 (2), p. 19-35.

of religious practices that involve the realization of desires, is an important factor in the thinking of many Roma, who often arouses the admiration of the healthcare staff: “We went back to the doctor, and he said to the girl: “How can God hear you so fast? Romanians have to stay 4 months in plaster. How did God hear you? Go home, your daughter is fine. Therefore, for the Roma, religion proves to have a relief potential and to be a healing power, supporting people in this ethnic group in dealing with disease and pain. The above results are relevant to those who provide care services for Roma. Religious models of psychological inspiration prove their viability as an integrated component of their health-care.

3.2 The hospital – an ethnically-mismatched place

The traditional Roma participants in this study claim family and cultural roots in their own village, where they preserve a segregated type of habitation. As a result, they feel at ease and at home, culturally and linguistically guarded in their village environs which increase their quality of life and contribute to positive health perceptions. For these Roma people, living in the community is synonymous with well-being. Or, to use an expression of Stoichiță⁴¹, “The Paradise and the City are symmetrical images” that interfere. For some of them, the village where they live is the heavenly space, a desirable environment, a perfectly safe one, determinant of quality of life.

Although interacting with non-Roma, called *gadje*, is commonplace, Roma would prefer to avoid the contact with them. In fact, separation from the *gadje* is one of the most enduring Romani cultural values⁴², a fact which we have deduced from the interview with a Kalderash community leader: “For all my brethren I’ll make a kindergarten, a church, a hospital for maternity, a children’s hospital, more like these” (# 1).

Non-Roma are considered polluted because they are ignorant of the Romani rule of cleanliness, that states to keep separate the upper and lower halves of the body⁴³. This concept of impurity (lower-upper body) serve

⁴¹ V.I. Stoichiță, *Efectul Don Quijote. Repere pentru o hermeneutică a imaginarului european [Don Quixote effect. Highlights for a hermeneutics of the European imagination]*, Humanitas Publishing, Bucharest, 1995, p. 15.

⁴² C. Miller, *American Rom and the Ideology of Defilement*. In Rehfisch F (ed.), *Gypsies, tinkers and other travellers* (p. 41-54). Harcourt, New York, 1975, p. 48.

⁴³ Walter O. Weyrauch, *Gypsy law: Romani legal traditions and culture*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2001, p. 240.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

to separate them from the *Gadje* and to sustain ethnic border⁴⁴. Everything associated with non-Roma is potentially defiling. This particular view of the world has profound implications for Roma people's lives, including the perceptions about the hospital, where it is difficult to keep the cleanliness. Prolonged occupation of a place in the hospital means certain impurity. In this case, the Roma patient is helped by his family to minimize the pollution risk by using disposable plastic cups, plates, and towels that was not used before by non-Roma: "We bring bed sheets from us, there's no problem, a pillow or a bathrobe... We bring from home a bowl, a spoon, a cup, a towel ..." (# 21)

The delineation clean/ unclean and taboos related to impurity have also been identified during our research in Zanea community, but slightly blurred, perhaps due to constant contact with Romanians (*Gadje*). The rule regarding separate clothes washing⁴⁵ – wife's clothes must be washed separately from man's and from children's – was definitely affirmed:

"Never mix them. Is this possible? It's not right. Well, I give her my shirt, to wash it, is she mixing mine with her worn-out ones she's wearing? How could I indulge this? She's first washing hers and after that she's taking it out and she's going on with my shirt. I throw the clothes into her face so that she couldn't even take a breathe after. [He is getting nervous] I said: «You aren't gonna wash your stale clothes, the children's separately, they shouldn't mix with your dirt, it's not good»" (# 12).

Within the community of Zanea, self-identification with Roma ethnicity involves an increased awareness of belonging to this group. In this context, the social perception on the hospitalization will be influenced by ethnic consciousness.

3.3 Pollutants in the hospital area

For some Roma patients, the hospital elicited considerable anxiety and acculturative stress, also poor perceptions of well-being. The hospitalization

⁴⁴ J. Okely, Gypsy identity. In B. Adams, J. Okely et al (eds.). *Gypsies and Government Policy in England: a study of the travellers' way of life in relation to the policies and practices of central and local government* (p. 27-45), Heinemann Educational, London, 1975, p. 42.

⁴⁵ A. Sutherland. *The body as a social symbol among the Rom*, in J. Blacking (ed.), *The Anthropology of the Body* (p. 375-390), Academic Press, New York, 1977, p. 386.

gives rise to fears of pollution and to *moral panic* in connection with illness, that is perceived as a deviance from the normal status. In the interviews, we have also identified some of the most serious pollution beliefs:

“I: Many who come to the hospital will not be hospitalized. Some leaves at night... Patient: That’s right, they can not stay here in the hospital. I tell you something: Do not eat from the hospitals, mainly.

I: Why? P: You have not seen a Gypsy eating from the hospital. Not all Roma groups have the same notions. A part of Gypsies do not eat from the hospital, for there’s dying a corpse, there’s blood, there are nails, do you understand me?... When just thinking food is not prepared on clean premises... To us, the food, the dishes... this is not possible” (# 5).

The above quote shows that the fear of hospitalization is often accompanied by the view that bodily fluids are polluting. These bodily fluids – feces, urine, pus, vomit, mucus, blood – are defined as unclean in Roma culture.

Food is often seen as polluting, too. Not all food, of course, but food that is not taken from a certain source. To avoid impurity, some Roma may refuse the food cooked in the kitchen of the hospital. It is not unusual for family members to prepare meals at home and bring them to the hospital. For many Roma, bringing food to hospitalized relatives is a sign of love and support. To eat together acquires special significance. Sharing a meal shows respect, friendship and loyalty.

Death is an especially prominent source of pollution beliefs. Corpses are often regarded as polluting those who touch them or even those who are too close to them. The taboos against touching seem to play a major role⁴⁶. If the doctor has treated a patient that (just) died, some Roma will avoid that doctor for a few days, because he has touched the dead, and visiting the doctor could “bring bad luck”. The pollution beliefs concerning death have been mentioned by a Kalderash participant in the study: “He touched the dead that’s why s/he shouldn’t touch the living ones, especially that Gypsy” (# 21).

⁴⁶ Prakash N. Desai, *Medical Ethics in India*, in “The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy” 1988, 13, p. 231-255, here p. 244, available online at <http://j.mp.oxfordjournals.org/content/13/3/231.full.pdf>

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

The broad range of pollutants identified by us shows how easy it is for Roma people to move to descriptions of hospital environment as polluted, a place that is generally unwanted. The hospital is considered a hostile area, unclean, where they cannot observe certain rules of cleanliness. Nevertheless, despite their anxiety, Roma are in general knowledgeable of hospital procedure. But the pollution claims more often suggest that a lot of ethical dilemmas may arise within the hospital.

3.4 Family`s crowding around the patient

Roma`s assembly in the vicinity of a hospitalized patient is a social command, but also an expression of concern for his closest relatives. Illness is not only a medical crisis, but a social one as well. This mobilization may include the Roma community leaders or other ethnic group members.

The psychology of traditional Roma people is very particular because they are characterized by the feeling of belonging and solidarity. When something happens between them, they are all united against the aggressor (in this case, the disease), information goes around the community very fast and there is an immediate reaction. Disease is perceived as a common perpetrator. Participating in a large number, the community members guarantee protection against evil, so one person`s illness engages the entire group:

“Us, if you want to know, we are very united. Even those not directly related to us should help. If a stranger comes not, means that man hates our guts. But we are together, there, lots, side by side, so! ... We join each other, you know?... It`s a belief: you should be close to that man” (#12).

Fulfilling family role obligations is very important. The strong identification with, attachment to, and dependence on the family, is part of Roma customary law. Our participants emphasised that the first and foremost Roma patients` wish is to have their close relatives nearby. In general, families of the patients who have participated in our research successfully maintained filial piety and respect for elders, which was manifested in instrumental (financial support, transportation assistance, help with identifying health-care services) and emotional (showing care, concern, offering reassurance) family support. This reduced patients` stress and improved health-care:

“If we communicate with each other, know that all this public coming, for example, they come very many, so they cool him and he stay very calm. They have nothing to do with doctors. We are tied together, you know why? Look, for example, if I am not going now for a problem with a relative of my sister... Oh, she did not come, you saw that she hadn’t come! So... so, at their time, they do not come. And when we are in trouble, then they say: “When we were at the hospital or when we were in the court or I don’t know where, you did not come. Us, why should we...?” So some stuff like this is taken into account” (# 7)

Gathering together of families when someone is hospitalized is one of the strongest values in Roma culture. By transgressing the customary law, a person is blameworthy from the point of view of the whole community and the fact is considered as a serious offense. But mostly because of their throng in the hospital perimeter, conflicts arise with the medical staff.

4. Discussion

Approximately one thousand years ago, Roma, left their native India and spread in countries throughout the world. Along time, they represented one of the communities less accepted by history. Despite the fact they have been traveling communities, Roma preserved their own customs and traditions. Their distinct culture is still intact in spite of the intense persecution they have endured.

Some scholars as Sutherland⁴⁷, Okely⁴⁸ and Grigore⁴⁹ claim that Roma thinking is a fundamentally dualistic one. According to this philosophy, the society is divided into Roma and non-Roma (Gadji). This idea deal mostly with the often cited concept of purity, which distinguish the Roma cultural system. The division “pure” vs. “polluted” determines the classification of persons within human society. In a chapter entitled “Pollution, boundaries,

⁴⁷ A. Sutherland, *The body as a social symbol ...*; Idem, *Gypsies, the Hidden Americans*. Prospect Heights, Waveland Press, 1986.

⁴⁸ J. Okely, *Own or Other Culture*. Routledge, London, 1996.

⁴⁹ D. Grigore, *Curs de antropologie și folclor rrom* [*Anthropology and Roma folklore course*], p. 125; Idem, *Rromanipen-ul (rromani dharma) și mistica familiei* [*Rromani Law and the mysticism of the family*], p. 13.

Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...

and beliefs” from her research on Roma of California, Sutherland⁵⁰ sees this division as a widespread metaphor that traces separations between Roma and non-Roma to maintain the border with *Gadji*.

The same features have been found in some Roma communities from the north-eastern part of Romania. As our study have been proved, the unfavorable attitude towards hospitalization is derived from Roma attitudes in general toward illness and uncleanliness.

The findings of this paper, deduced from the traditional Roma point of view, underline major ethical challenges that can arise when the particularities of this ethnic group are not understood and observed. Results indicate that Roma behaviour in medical setting is strictly regulated by purity laws. For some Roma, the hospital is a harmful and a polluted environment.

The Roma style of seeking care is often frustrating and confusing to medical staff. A serious illness always elicits deep concern from a wide circle of his family members. Moreover, they have a large support network of relatives who come to the hospital in alarmingly large numbers, sometimes camp on hospital grounds, disregard visiting rules, and generally create disorder in the hospital. Hospital restrictions are cumbersome for them.

The Roma patient becomes very anxious when he is hospitalized and has a strong desire to have relatives nearby, that can reduce the disruption for being in an unclean place. Moreover, he is aware of his outsider status and is accustomed to discrimination and stereotyping by those who often care him.

These hospital-related beliefs are reflected in the day-to-day social relations between Roma patients or families and the medical care professionals. Certainly, the ethnic and cultural differences and a lack of understanding and knowledge of the medical care team play a key role in perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing and maintaining stigma, but there is a need to link Roma beliefs and their characteristics to the process of healthcare.

A knowledge of certain basic Roma beliefs and behaviours is essential to effectively interact with this ethnic group. For a successful resolution of the above ethical dilemmas, the medical staff should have an understanding of the patient’s cultural background, and the ability to identify the culturally

⁵⁰ A. Sutherland, *Health and illness among the Rom of California*, in “Journal of Gypsy Lore Society”, 1992, 2 (1), p. 19-59.

relevant value conflict. Interculturalism requires an inherent openness and willingness to discuss on ethical dilemma until a compromise is reached or an otherwise satisfactory resolution of the problem is achieved. Once a person seeks to understand a different culture and embraces it willingly, a dialogue should ensue⁵¹.

5. Conclusions

The main conclusions of this analysis on the behavior of traditional Roma during hospitalization can be summarized by the following statements:

1. The level of religiosity among Roma reaches a pretty high intensity, being visible when dealing with the disease. The religious dimension is deeply involved in the strata of personality, developing effective patterns of religious coping.

2. Culture, ethnicity and hospital health-care are intertwined in a complex way. The analysis and discussion of data obtained in this study allow us to point out that there are some conflicts concerning the adaptation to the hospital environment.

3. The traditional Roma people live in a charmed circle of unchanging taboos, laws and customs, strictly governing and dominating all aspects of life. Their community is a static one, resistant to change, attached to magical beliefs and forms, closed to influences of an open society. Any person born and raised in such a society will take and pass the customs, taboos and beliefs of his community. For Roma, observing the tradition has a sacred and inalienable character, equal to the value of a dogma. In their closed society, nothing can (and should) change, since everything is carefully developed by an intrinsic reason. Therefore, any outside influence is disturbing and would break the *status quo*.

Sometimes, these features of Roma cultural background create problems in accomodating to hospital rules. They also seem more difficult to make building up a good relationship between doctors and ethnic minority patients or next of kin. In spite of encounters, it is important for the medical staff to consider the validity of their belief, because a respectful approach to Roma oriented patient care and paying attention to ethnic diversity matter.

⁵¹ M. Bennett. *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*. Intercultural Press, Boston, MA., 1998, p. 48-49.

*Influence of spiritual values on some Roma attitudes...**Practice implications*

Our findings highlight important factors associated with culturally-appropriate care for Roma patients. Their cultural norms influencing the behaviour in the hospital perimeter deserve special consideration. Health-care services should be culturally-tailored to the Roma population, in order to meet their medical needs while recognising and respecting their cultural identity.

When doctors provide medical assistance for Roma patients, whose culture they are not familiar with, they could feel justified to force them to do things in a certain way, under the guise of knowing what's best for their well-being. But the imposition of the dominant culture might turn against medical staff. Doctors' claims of moral superiority on the basis of membership in the dominant culture are inadequate for an ethical response to a medical dilemma. Therefore initiatives to maintain and promote their health should consider the way in which lack of respect of Roma cultural specificities accentuates their stress. By knowing these patients' beliefs and accommodating to their practices as much as possible, the doctors will make progress towards promoting a relationship of trust that can lead to a better healthcare.

***** Acknowledgement**

This paper is a part of POSDRU/89/1.5/61879 Project ("Postdoctoral Studies in Health Policy Ethics") cofinanced from European Social Fund through Human Resources Development Sectorial Operational Program 2007-2013.

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St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

Abstract

St. Cyprian is a Father of the Church from North Africa, who lived in the third century, and his works are part of the first writings of Christian Latin language. After previously in the year 251, St. Cyprian writes the paper about the fallen - *De lapsis*, a guide for those who had fallen from the Christian faith because of Decius' persecution, in the work *De mortalitate*, the same Holy Father exhorts Christians to endure in the anguish caused by a severe plague that befell those places. Many Christians were outraged just like for an injustice, seeing that the strikes are both pagans and Christians. Saint Cyprian tries to instil the hope to the discouraged Christians, asking them not to get overwhelmed by so much the death of their loved ones because it does not mean anything other than putting their faith to the test. Only the idolater falls into despair, but the Christians must accept divine will and rather aspire to the kingdom of heaven, where the loved ones calls us longing to share their happiness.

Keywords

St. Cyprian, patristic theology, De mortalitate, human mortal condition, patience in suffering.

Combining ancient and Christian spiritual heritage that is the foundation of the Western culture was done by the Church Fathers, Christian writers of the first centuries. Their spiritual longing in the world and the era in which they lived was to be representatives of divine truth, enlightened teachers of the Church, Bible competent commentators and even Christian philosophers.

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St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

The works of the Church Fathers show their deep knowledge of rhetoric, logic, oratory, that was compulsory skills for ancient culture people. Their writings are one of the key chapters of our old literature.

The “saints” or “blessed”, named so due to the age of orthodoxy, sanctity of life or recognition by the Church, the Fathers remained in history of Patristic literature as “Christian and Church writer” who “kept and taught orthodoxy in doctrine, who practiced holy and moral life and were recognized by the Church”².

SOE. Nicolae Corneanu recalls the so-called “*Gelasian Decree*” with the original title “*De libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*” that catalogs Christian writers and their works published at that time (early sixth century) on the extent of their value and holiness. The following people are called Orthodox saints and their works good to read: Cyprian of Carthage, Gregory of Nazianz, Basil of Caesarea, Athanasius of Alexandria, John of Constantinople, Theophilus of Alexandria, Ambrose of Mediolan, Augustine of Hiponya, “priest” Jerome, Prosper “the reverend man” of Actitanya, Pope Leo, etc.³.

Patristic writers found a cult for the written word and modelled their own literary style. The Patristic style represents the translations of the Christian conception on the world and life in artistic and at the same time accessible forms to all. The ancient Christian writers addressed their spiritual sons, who were to be instructed or encouraged. They cultivated clarity and sobriety, reviving the elegance of the Ciceronian language.

“The importance of Latin patristic writers begins from the moment of their appearance. An obvious takeover of pagan classical values was beneficial in two ways. They ensured the continuity of those values, on the one hand, and on the other hand, paradoxically, they started a cultural foundation of faith that in the future would hardly would be imposed irrespective of what was thought and created until it”⁴.

St. Cyprian's works are part of the first writings of Christian Latin language.

Christian Latin literature has its origins in proconsular Africa. In the Acts of the Martyrs from Scilium (sentenced to death on July 17, 180) a Latin translation of the New Testament is attested for the first time.

² Nicolae Corneanu, *Studii patristice. Aspecte din vechea literatură creștină*, Mitropolia Banatului Press, Timișoara, 1984, p. 40.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴ Dan Negrescu, *Patristica Perennia. Părinți de limbă latină*, Universitatea de Vest Press, Timișoara, 2004, p. 17.

Compared with the Western writers, the African authors from that time - Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius or Lactantius made a visible difference between Greek and Latin Christianity through their works, if we think of just a few titles: *Apologeticum*, *Ad nationes*, *Ad Scapulam* written by Tertullian, or *De lapsis*, *De mortalitate* written by Cyprian, *Adversus nationes* written by Arnobius or *De mortibus persecutorum* written by Lactantius.

Northwest Africa, which today is divided into three countries - Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia was conquered and colonized by the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago. Since the Second Century AD, there has developed a strong Latin-speaking Orthodox center. Testimony about the Christian life in North Africa remained until today.

In the third century BC Carthage city founded by Phoenician traders, became the capital of an empire that had the largest fleet in the Mediterranean. After the conflict with Rome and the three Punic Wars (264-241 BC. Hr, 218-201 BC. Hr, 149-146 BC. Hr) it becomes a Roman province. The Church of Carthage was one of the main Christian bishoprics at the beginning of the millennium. Christianity penetrated all cities in North Africa.

Perpetua and Felicitas holy martyrdom acts shows freshness and form of Christian community in Carthage. St. Cyprian writings help us to know in detail the Carthaginian Christian community. Here, the persecution of Decius (250) and Valerian (258) made many martyrs. Towards the end of persecution, Christianity spread so much that could no longer be destroyed. Christianity was embraced especially by the Romanized population. Punic and Berber populations remained pagan until the conquest of the Arabs, when they were Islamized.

Holy Perpetua and Felicitas originated from a neighbouring city to Carthage. The pagans caught them and brought them before the military leader. A wild cow was set on them and they were torn by the animal. Along with them four young men were killed with the sword: Saturus, Revocatus, Saturninus and Secundulus.

Christians hid in the catacombs, because there, in small congregation, at the light a lamp of clay, they could commit their service of God, hear God's Word and partake of the Holy Mysteries. Those who gathered there did not know whether they will have the same fate as those whose names were read at the Liturgy as martyrs and confessors or whose simple graves surrounded them. (Nicodim, the metropolitan of Moldavia, *Primele zile ale creștinismului*). Catacombs span on 5 km and contain about 15,000 graves. During the persecutions they were used as shelter by Christians. Christian mosaics in the catacombs can be seen in the museum of Sousse.

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

Except expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Emperor Claudius in the year 49, Roman persecutions against Christianity were inaugurated by Emperor Nero in 64 and lasted, with some interruptions, until the issuance of the Edict of Mediolanum in 313. Of the nearly three centuries, persecution itself lasted more than half the time in this period.

If until the time of emperor Decius (249-251) the persecutions were occasional and local, from Decius' time they became general and systematic, regulated by state laws and edicts with general validity. Decius (249-251) - Caius Messius Quintus Decius, Roman senator appointed by the emperor Philip the Arab to lead the Danubian provinces of Moesia and Pannonia was chosen emperor by the army in the autumn of 249. For reasons of state, Decius initiated a strong persecution against Christianity. In the autumn of 249 he issued an edict of persecution, his purpose being the abolition of Christianity as a religion. Christians were obliged to appear in person before a committee and prove adherence to paganism: sacrifice, libation, participation in sacred feasts. Those who did this got a certificate (Libellus) and those who fled lost their wealth and by returning home they were killed⁵. Those who refused were brought by force.

Church was going through a great trial, because many Christians committed apostasy. It was painful for the Church when Evdemon a bishop of Smyrna with a large number of Christians apostatised.

After passing persecution, apostates (lapsi) were a big problem for the Church. Depending on the gravity the act of apostasy there were four categories of apostates:

1. Sacrificati (those who brought sacrifices to gods)
2. Thurificati (those who brought only incense burning for sacrifices)
3. Libellatici (those who obtained the certificate Libellus that they sacrificed gods most often by money)
4. Acta facientes (those who declared that they were not Christians).

Life and intellectual formation of St. Cyprian

One of the famous Church Fathers was St. Cyprian (Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus) ~ 200, professor of rhetoric, converted to Christianity in 246 AD and bishop of the most important city in Africa, Carthage. Life of St. Cyprian before his conversion is almost unknown. In his work *On Illustrious Men* - chapters 67 and 68, St. Jerome states several important aspects of his life:

⁵ Nicolae Chifăr, *Istoria creștinismului*, vol I, Trinitas Press, Iași, 1999, p. 51.

“At first Cyprian the African taught rhetoric to others, gaining considerable fame; then being advised by the priest Caecilius - from which he got the nickname – he became Christian and gave all his wealth to the poor. Soon after being elected priest he even came to be appointed bishop of Carthage. Needless to snap out evidence of his talent, since his works are more famous than sunshine.

He suffered at the time of Valerianus and Gallienus during the eighth persecution, the same day Cornelius suffered in Rome, but not in the same year.” “Pontius, deacon of Cyprian, having shared exile with his superior to his passion left a selected book on Cyprian’s life and martyrdom.”⁶

So deacon Pontius, who accompanied the bishop into exile wrote the biography *Life of Cyprian* after his martyrdom.

Cyprian came from wealthy pagan parents and early and was accustomed to a seniorial lifestyle⁷. He had no doubt a thorough and chosen education. His style shows his familiarity with all requirements of “the school” at that time.

Cyprian was the first “Christian epistolary, of utmost importance to reconstruct the events of the time and to know consolidation within the Church hierarchy and defining certain values (such as the martyrdom) inside and outside it.”⁸

Cyprian’s style is different from that of his “teacher” Tertullian bearing the seal Cicero’s influence. Jerome appreciates the language, style and ideas of Cyprian, to be clearer than the sun (*De viris ill.*, 67). It is a “decorated style and at the same time, clear and cadenced, the style of an official of the Christian Church, and of a bishop; since Cyprian we already meet the harmony clear, classic tone that characterizes the Latin liturgy.”⁹

St. Cyprian writings are divided into apologetic writings: (*An Address to Donatus – Ad Donatum, An Address to Demetrianus – Ad Demetrianum, On the Vanity of Idols – Quod idola a dii non sint, Proves to Quirinus – Testimonia ad Virinium, An Address to Fortunat – Ad Fortunatum de exhortatione martyrii*); disciplinary and moral writings (*On the Unity of the Church – De catholicae ecclesiae unitate, On the Lapsed – De lapsis,*

⁶ Sf. Ieronim, *Despre bărbați iluștri și alte scrieri*, introductions, translations and notes by Dan Negrescu, Paideia Press, București 1997, p. 56.

⁷ Ioan G. Coman, *Patrologie*, Dervent Holy Monastery, 2000, p. 62.

⁸ Claudio Moreschini, Enrico Norelli, *Istoria literaturii creștine. De la Apostolul Pavel la Constantin cel Mare vol I*, Polirom Press, Iași, 2001, p. 396.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

On the Mortality – De mortalitate, On Works and Alms – De opere et eleemosynis, On Jealousy and Envy – De zelo et livore, On the Dress of Virgins – De habitu virginum, On the Lord's Prayer – De dominica oratione) and letters.

St. Cyprian letters were appreciated by Jerome and Augustine. They are of particular importance for the history of time, for various and interesting issues discussed therein.

Cyprian wrote letters to various personalities of his time in which he exposed his view on matters of interest for the church.

Cyprian sold his assets, following the teaching of the Saviour, and divided the money to the poor, being satisfied with the wealth of faith in God. He was ordained priest in early 249 by Donatus, bishop of Carthage. His episcopate was not long, but gave him the opportunity to perform deeds worthy of a bishop and to write useful works not only to contemporaries, but also to Christian posterity.

St. Cyprian role in the new realities of the Christian life

Decius initiated the first great and we can call official persecution. In 250 he moved all the Empire regions, putting many problems to Christian communities that previously did not exist. These problems were diverse: some believed in the divinity of the emperor, others obtained their certificate attesting homage to paganism. Some accompanied their children to these rituals. Therefore, Cyprian wrote in 251 work on the lapsed - *De lapsis*. Saint Cyprian imposed to the lapsed - libellatici, sacrifice, thurificati, acta facientes - certain periods of penance, which some thought were too severe and formed a rival party led by Deacon Felicissimus. Of the party were also five priests, former rivals of St. Cyprian to the bishopric. One of them, Novatus, went to Rome where he supported Novatian's schism.

Soon a terrible epidemic broke out and lasted for a long time. This prompted Saint Cyprian to write a work entitled *De mortalitate – On the Mortality*. Plague reached a widespread, lasting from the year 251 until 254. The world was panicked. There were fanatics who blamed the Christians. St. Cyprian wrote a letter to Demetrianus (*An Address to Demetrianus – Ad Demetrianum*) addressed to a passionate and daring pagan, who made the Christians responsible for all the misfortunes that befell the empire. Saint Cyprian tried to prove that his accusations are groundless.

Medical facilities were not sufficient and corpses were thrown on the street. Solidarity was necessary to be shown to all and Saint Cyprian had several initiatives aiming to make Christians to see Christ in the poor,

marginalized, suffering. We must believe that Christ is the one who receives our works of charity. In the Church charity cannot be accomplished since others are not our brothers. The faithful should be united among themselves.

The disasters of almost unprecedented calamity, this terrible plague which ravaged the Roman Empire brought an incredible collapse of souls. Many Christians were outraged just because of an injustice, seeing that the victims were both pagans and Christians. Saint Cyprian tries to instil hope to the discouraged, asking them not to get overwhelmed by the death of their loved ones because it means nothing but little vitality of their faith. Only idolater falls into despair, but Christians stand up in trials. Christians must accept the divine will and rather aspire to heavenly realm where the close ones call us to share with them their happiness.

These events that troubled the church in Carthage and Rome forced St. Cyprian to write works like *De Unitate Ecclesiae* (*On the Unity of the Church*), *De opere et elemosynis* (*On Works and Alms*). St. Cyprian gave the example of Christian sacrifice, organizing a care service to help sick and needy.

Everywhere the authorities tried to seize especially the bishops and make them deny their faith. Thus communities would have no leaders. By his escape from Carthage, Cyprian did not want to save his own life, but to create the opportunity to fulfil the duties of his office. He kept in touch through the messengers sent to Carthage, giving disposition for the deacons to regularly visit the brothers in prison, the release to be given clothes, food and work, and the bodies of the martyrs to be put safe and then held services to their memory.

Cyprian promised the readmission into the Church of the penitent repenting on his deathbed and tried to spare the holy confessors as far as possible in this regard.

Saint Cyprian considered a true shepherd of souls “cries with those who weep.” Gentleness, humility and modesty are highly valued virtues. It is therefore necessary that through fasting and prayer, the man do “good works” which save him from the punishments of hell. Saint Cyprian organized a collection to serve the redemption of prisoners¹⁰. In Cyprian’s Church “practical Christianity” is not just a way of speaking.

Cyprian’s position in the Church continued to strengthen. He became an authority well beyond African Church. Throughout the Latin West, his letters and writings were read. People asked his advice and information which they followed with confidence.

¹⁰ Hans von Campenhausen, *Părinți latini ai Bisericii*, Humanitas Press, București, 2005, p. 77.

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

When a very important discrepancy arose - the validity of baptism outside the Church, St. Cyprian had a firm position, stating that such action is simply null and believed the Holy Tradition should be followed. The books of Scripture are the special fruits of traditional life and in no way can be isolated from it because "the tradition of the Church, like any living historical organism, can be found only in the alive bearers and not in the bulk of its monuments. The Holy Scripture is one of the first and most distinguished sources of this traditional life."¹¹ St. Paul considered his teaching as the fruit of tradition. Bible books were written to record the events that took place.

Professor Nikolas Matsoukas, one brand name of the current Greek theology states that "proper acceptance of Tradition as living history, with charismatic agents and artefacts, as shown in the double methodology of the Orthodox Church Fathers is fully in line with modern historical-critical and philological research on sacred texts."¹²

St. Cyprian considered wrong how some people used "tradition" to justify any situation. For example, Stephen I of Rome, the newly elected Pope and Cyprian's opponent supported the validity of baptism outside the true Church. Being the first pope, Stephen was on a different position in the hierarchy of the church and St. Cyprian's advice seemed a burden imposed to him.

Saint Cyprian wanted a strong but free alliance of love among the bishops, with equal rights. In reality this was impossible, as such conflicts initiated even by the Church leaders led to serious disorders. For Cyprian Church unity is a spiritual vocation but also a moral duty to its leaders. On September 1 256, St. Cyprian gathered a council of eighty-seven bishops in Carthage to give a proclamation against the baptism of heretics. After arguing their vote all the bishops supported Cyprian. The delegation that had to communicate the results of the council was not received by Stephen thereby breaking communion with the Churches of Africa. Testimonies of these events are found in Cyprian's letters to Stephen, but also to other Christian brethren. The dispute ended only in the summer of 257 when Stephen was martyred during the restarted imperial persecution. Stefan's successor, Sixtus II suffered the same fate.

The living reality of the Church made this argument in a minor element. Thus communion between Rome and Carthage automatically restored.

¹¹ Nikos Matsoukas, *Introducere în Gnoseologia Teologică*, Bizantine Press, București, 1997, p. 152.

¹² *Ibid.*

Cyprian exercised the bishop office for ten years, during which he faced many internal and external difficulties, led many battles and bore the brunt of many cares. He was the spiritual guide of the whole African Church, a man trusted by very distant colleagues, respected and celebrated both in the West and in the East.

During Emperor Valerian the persecution against Christians began, and Cyprian was arrested on 30 august 257 and exiled to Curubis, a small town in North Africa. There he stayed for one year, during which he continued to shepherd his diocese. In the year 258 he was tried. Galerius Maximus ordered Cyprian on behalf *sacratissimi imperatores* to make sacrifices in honour of the gods; he refused and was sentenced to death. He was killed on the 14th September of the same year.

Moral and Christian issues and polemics in *De mortalitate*

De mortalitate is an admirable doctrine of suffering and death seen from a Christian viewpoint. Translation of *De mortalitate* reflects the radical Christianity of St. Cyprian.

The book is written in a clear style, structured in 26 chapters, beginning with an introduction to the theme of pain for eternal hope, while the final chapter presents the vision of joy sharing in the kingdom of heaven. The right who lives in faith cannot but be happy for being released from the world in order to unite with Christ's to share peace and be glad just like the old Simeon when he died. On earth, man fight against avarice, anger, pride. Soul is beset on all sides by temptations, if one is defeated, another appears. Soul is daily under pressure because so many dangers besiege it. Choosing vanity and worldly pleasure is a real blindness. God speaks to us and we cannot remain in uncertainty. He promises immortality as soon as we leave this world and we should not doubt it. Christ teaches us that we must rejoice and not grieve when loved ones leave this life.

St. Paul considered a big win to not be subject to the flesh temptations. Some Christians were uneasy because they plague touched them like the heathen, as they should be relieved of catching the evil and be predestined to the future glory without bearing attempts. But until we live in this world, everything is common for ourselves and for others.

The Christian, conscious of being temporary in the world must be strong in suffering. He has to bear many during his lifetime to master the onslaught of evil. In this respect, Cyprian gives some examples: Job, who after the death of children being hurt and food for by worms did

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

not consider himself defeated, but tried. Tobias, who had to endure the blindness, remained unshakable in fear of God, and bowed to pressure of his wife, who did not resist pain. The apostles did not complain of hostilities and accepted with strength and patience everything they received in life. Fear of God and faith should make us willing to everything: wealth loss, continuous and purulent infection of the limbs, abandoning of wife, friends, etc. Even Paul, after shipwrecks, and body suffering, said that he was not defeated, but purified. The more he was troubled and tormented, the more he was tried. We must resist pain with the force of the spirit, which must be greater because we should be not knocked down by the confusion of those who have no faith in God, are not reborn in the baptismal water and are not clothed in Christ's cross and suffering.

That the righteous die with sinners in this world should not lead us to think that death is the same for the good and the bad. The right gets eternal salvation and the sinner - eternal punishment. Plague is useful if healthy people help the sick, if relatives are in love with each other, if the masters care for their sick servants, if physicians help those seeking their help, if thieves restrain their unhealthy desire to steal. When the Lord calls us, He judges our faith. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob won their honoured place among the patriarchs through their faith.

In prayer we ask to do God Father's will, but if He calls us to depart from this world, we do not want to obey His wishes. Saint Cyprian recalls a priest who was sick to death and begged for escape. A young man appeared and said "Are you afraid of suffering and do not want to go? But what can I do for you?" We should not lament our brothers who precede us in death. This is because otherwise we give an excuse to the pagans to rightly blame us, saying that while we say they live in God, in reality we cry for them as if being lost forever.

St. Paul says that he who lives without hope can be sad when his loved ones leave, but not he who believes in God and knows that Christ suffered and rose again for us. We must go to death with happiness because we will live in eternity with Christ. Who wants to sit next to Christ, must not be discouraged, but enjoy the promises of God, while preparing to leave the earth. Through Solomon, the Holy Spirit teaches that those who are accepted by God the more will be taken out of this world. The Apostle John asks us not to love the world and look for material and perennial things, but to do the will of God which lasts forever.

God's servants should behave responsibly especially when the world is beset by plague. Only idolater falls into despair, but Christians stand up in trials. Whoever believes in eternal life must dry the tears. Let us regret

the ones we have lost, but not weep them. Let us rather aspire to heavenly realm, where we rejoin the close ones and certain on our destiny, who reach out and call us long to come to share their happiness.

Through this paper, Saint Cyprian tries to instil the hope of eternal life to the discouraged ones. What is life and what is death? One is a fight that the other puts an end to, bringing eternal reward if we won the battle. To let us overwhelmed so much of our relatives death means to reveal little vitality of our faith.

This scourge that haunted mankind and occasionally brought countless victims, decimating the population of cities and countries, had many echoes in the literature. We cannot state with certainty when it came to Europe, because all epidemic diseases were called “pestilence” or “plague”. For the first time it was recorded in a fragment of physician Rufus of Ephesus, who lived in the time of Emperor Trajan. Under Emperor Justinian between 531-589 it reaped thousands of lives in Europe. In the Middle Ages Plague was called “black death.” In Romania the last major epidemic was the famous “Caragea’s plague” in 1813 (I.A. Condrea, Folklore medical, 132)¹³. In the church there are numerous icons that depict St. Haralambos taking up Plague and put it in irons or hair rig. People addressed prayers to Christian saints like St. Haralambos, St. Anthony the Great and Holy Archangel Gabriel, to help them get rid of this disease.

In *De mortalitate* we meet the exhortation to human solidarity required in limit events because in this life everything is common for pagans and Christians. Death is the same for the good and the bad. Man is tried in the suffering. Cyprian’s thought passes stoic resignation, because it leads to immortality and eternal bliss.

Plague and its consequences made many poor and needy, providing the opportunity for Christian charity, a wonderful opportunity to help the unhappy, sick and mortals. Cyprian recalls all his brothers the forgiveness they received from God. They were redeemed from sin through the blood of Christ. Moreover, the divine forgiveness brings them means of guaranteeing their salvation, while weakness and human frailty made them sin after being baptised.

For St. Cyprian, the principle of freedom unites with another principle, that of merit. The desire of martyrdom will be rewarded as martyrdom itself. Persecutions, injustices, horrors, heresies and any inconvenience are an attempt for us to prove our virtues. This is why sinners and righteous

¹³ Ivan Evseev, *Enciclopedia simbolurilor religioase și arhetipurilor culturale*, „Învierea” Press, Timișoara, 2007, p. 125.

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

live the same situations. In this struggle the man is tried. Without struggle there is no victory and without victory there is no merit crown.

The writings of St. Cyprian increase readers' faith, convert the disbelievers and speak about the wisdom of an authoritarian bishop. In *De mortalitate* he uses the tone of persuasion which teaches and of exhortation which moves. Cyprian's speech is solemn and constant in intensity. He repeats several times the same ideas, images or phrases that argument to weigh more. Saint Cyprian forms a new, vigorous and rhythmical style of Latin ecclesiastical discourse. He remains a model bishop, teacher and preacher. The topics and ideas of his writings are often inspired from the writings of his "teacher" Tertullian.

Through his works, St. Cyprian tried to help others, to convey the word of God in order to be heard, learned and constantly knew: "for Cyprian theology is in fact explaining Scripture"¹⁴.

At the beginning of the chapters, Saint Cyprian addresses all with the words "beloved brothers", ensuring them of his paternal love. Considering the orator qualities of St. Cyprian, Lactantius said of him that "his intelligence was smooth, rich, pleasant and clear: this latter quality is the essence of his style, so you could not tell if it was more decorated in expression, more fluent in exposure or more effective in persuasion"¹⁵.

SANCTUS CYPRIANUS: *De mortalitate*
Sfântul Ciprian: *Despre condiția muritoare a omului*

ARGUMENTUM:

Paucis argumentum explicat D. Pontius in Vita Cypriani: "A quo, inquit, Christiani mollioris affectus circa amissionem suorum aut, quod maius est, fidei parvioris, consolarentur spe futurorum."

In primis enim, ubi praedictas docuit eiuscemodi afflictiones a Christo, non timendam docet mortalitatem seu pestem, eo quod ad immortalitatem ducat, atque adeo fidem illi deesse qui non ad meliorem festinat.

Neque mirum quod Christiano cum gentilibus sint mala huius vitae communia, cum plus caeteris illis in saeculo sit laborandum: atque proinde exemplo sanctorum Iob et Tobiae, patientia opus esse, neque murmurandum.

¹⁴ Hans von Campenhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁵ Lactanțiu, *Instituțiile divine*, traducere și note Petre Pistol, introduction by Claudiu T. Arieșan, „Învierea” Press, Timișoara, 2004, p. 24-25.

Nisi enim praecesserit pugna, non posse victoriam contingere, et quantumvis morbi communes sint virtutibus vitiisque, mortem tamen communem non esse; ad refrigerium enim iustos, ad supplicium rapi iniustos. Deinde obiectioni tacitae quod per hanc mortalitatem privarentur martyrio, respondet, non esse in nostra potestate martyrium, et vel animum ad martyrium promptum Deo iudice coronari.

Prostremo non ita lugendos docet mortuos ut gentilibus scandalo simus, tanquam spe resurrectionis careamus. Quin si et nostrae accersitionis dies venerit, lubente animo ad Dominum hinc emigrandum, praesertim cum ad patriam transmigramus: ubi nos magnus charorum numerus exspectat, frequens et copiosa turba desiderat, iam de sua immortalitate securi, et adhuc de nostra salute sollicita.

Facit autem occasionem qua librum hunc scripsit mentionem Eusebius in Chronico: "Pestilens morbus, inquit, totius orbis multas provincias occupavit, maximeque Alexandriam et Aegyptum, ut scribit Dionysius, et Cypriani De Mortalitate testis est liber."

ARGUMENT:

Diaconul Pontius explică în câteva cuvinte tema [acestui tratat] în *Viața lui Ciprian*: „Prin acesta, a spus, creștinii, cu un sentiment de copleșire în fața pierderii celor dragi, și ceea ce este mai important, cu o credință mai slabă, erau consolati cu speranța celor viitoare”.

Căci, înainte de toate, când a arătat că suferințele de acest fel au fost prezise de Hristos, el ne învață că nu trebuie să ne temem de moarte sau de boală, căci prin ea ajungem la viața veșnică și cel care nu se grăbește către locuri mai bune e lipsit de credință.

Și nici nu e de mirare că nenorocirile acestei vieți ne sunt asemenea cu ale păgânilor, din moment ce ei trebuie să sufere mai mult decât ceilalți în această lume și de aceea, după exemplul sfinților Iov și Tobias, trebuie să răbdăm și să nu ridicăm glasul.

Căci, dacă nu ar fi mai înainte lupta, victoria nu ar putea fi dobândită și, oricât de multe boli le sunt comune celor virtuoși și celor vicioși, totuși moartea nu le este comună; căci cei dreți merg către mângâiere, iar cei nedreți către pedeapsă.

Apoi, reproșului tăcut, că prin această moarte sunt lipsiți de martiriu, i se răspunde [prin faptul] că martiriul nu stă în puterea noastră și că sufletul va fi încununat de Dumnezeu judecătorul către martiriul sigur.

În cele din urmă ne învață astfel: că nu trebuie să-i jelim pe cei morți, ca să fim în păcat împreună cu păgânii, ca și cum am fi lipsiți de speranța învierii.

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

Ba mai mult, dacă ziua chemării noastre va veni, cu sufletul împăcat trebuie să plecăm de aici către Domnul, mai ales fiindcă ne vom îndrepta către patria unde un număr mare al celor dragi ne așteaptă, o mulțime numeroasă ne dorește, sigură de-acum de veșnicia ei și neliniștită deocamdată în privința mântuirii noastre.

El însă arată prilejul cu care Eusebius a scris în *Cronică* despre această carte: „Boala aducătoare de nenorociri, zice, a ocupat multe provincii ale lumii și mai cu seamă Alexandria și Egiptul, după cum scrie Dionisius [despre aceasta], și cartea lui Cyprian *De Mortalitate* stă mărturie.”

Capitolul I

Etsi apud plurimos uestrum, fratres dilectissimi, mens solida est et fides firma et anima deuota, quae ad praesentis mortalitatis copiam non mouetur; sed tamquam petra fortis et stabilis turbidos impetus mundi et uiolentos saeculi fluctus frangit potius ipsa nec frangitur; et tentationibus non uincitur, sed probatur; tamen quia animaduerto in plebe quosdam uel imbecillitate animi, uel fidei paruitate, uel dulcedine saecularis uitae, uel sexus mollitie, uel, quod maius est, ueritatis errore minus stare fortiter nec pectoris sui diuinum atque inuictum robur exercere, dissimulanda res non fuit nec tacenda quo minus quantum nostra mediocritas sufficit, uigore pleno et sermone de dominica lectione concepto delicatae mentis ignauia comprimatur; et qui homo Dei et Christi esse iam coepit, Deo et Christo dignus habeatur.

Deși, în mulți dintre voi, preaiubiților frați, sălășluiește o minte sănătoasă și o credință nezdruncinată și un suflet devotat, care nu este tulburat de povara morții prezente, ba dimpotrivă, precum o stâncă tare și de neclintit, mai degrabă frânge atacurile involburate ale lumii și puternicile valuri ale veacului, iar ea însăși [credința] nu este nici doborâtă și nici biruită de ispite, ci este încercată, totuși, fiindcă observ în popor că sunt unii care, fie din cauza slăbiciunii sufletului, fie din puținătatea credinței, fie din pricina plăcerii vieții lumești, fie din cauza slăbiciunii în fața plăcerii trupești și, ceea ce este mai grav, din cauza rătăcirii adevărului, nu reușesc să stăruie cu tărie și nici să-și facă scut divin și de neclintit inimii lor; această situație n-ar trebui să fie ascunsă, nici ținută sub tăcere, în ciuda modestei noastre vrednicii, ci cu deplină vigoare și cu un cuvânt curajos, luat din învățătura Domnului, trebuie să fie reprimată lașitatea sufletului slab și cel care a început să fie deja om al lui Dumnezeu și al lui Hristos să poată fi considerat demn de Dumnezeu și de Hristos.

Capitolul II

Agnoscere enim se debet, fratres dilectissimi, qui Deo militat, qui positus in coelestibus castris diuinam iam sperat, ut ad procellas et turbines mundi trepidatio nulla sit in nobis, nulla turbatio, quando haec uentura praedixerit Dominus prouidae uocis hortatu instruens et docens et praeparans atque corroborans Ecclesiae suae populum ad omnem tolerantiam futurorum, bella et fumes et terrae motus et pestilentias per loca singula exsurgere praenuntiauit et cecinit. Et ne inopinatus nos et nouus rerum infestantium metus quateret, magis ac magis in nouissimis temporibus aduersa crebrescere ante praemonuit. Fiunt ecce quae dicta sunt; et quando fiunt quae ante praedicta sunt, sequentur et quaecumque promissa sunt, Domino ipso pollicente et dicente: Cum autem uideritis haec omnia fieri, scitote quoniam in proximo est regnum Dei. Regnum Dei, fratres dilectissimi, esse coepit in proximo. Praemium uitae et gaudium salutis aeternae, et perpetua securitas, et possessio paradisi nuper amissa, mundo transeunte iam ueniunt; iam terrenis coelestia et magna paruus et caducis aeterna succedunt. Quis hic anxietatis et sollicitudinis locus est? Quis inter haec trepidus et moestus est, nisi cui spes et fides deest? Eius est enim mortem timere qui ad Christum nolit ire. Eius est ad Christum nolle ire qui se non credat cum Christo incipere regnare.

Căci, preaiubiților frați, cel care slujește lui Dumnezeu, care speră deja să fie așezat în taberele cerești, trebuie să se cunoască pe sine, ca să nu aibă nici o frică în fața vijeliilor și a furtunilor din lume și nici o neliniște, din moment ce Domnul a prezis că toate acestea vor veni, povățuind prin cuvântul său prevăzător, îndrumând și învățând și pregătind și întărind poporul Bisericii Lui pentru toată suferința lucrurilor ce vor veni.

El a prorocit și a prezis că războaiele și foametea și cutremurele și molimele vor apărea în fiecare loc. Și a prezis că nenorocirile vor spori tot mai mult în ultimele timpuri și să ne temem de necazurile noi neașteptate.

Iată că lucrurile care au fost prezise s-au adevărat și când se întâmplă lucrurile prezise urmează și cele promise, după cum însuși Domnul promite și spune: „Așadar, când veți vedea că se întâmplă aceste lucruri să știți că împărăția lui Dumnezeu este aproape” (Luca 16, 31).

Fraților preaiubiți, împărăția lui Dumnezeu este aproape. Răsplata vieții și bucuria mântuirii eterne, liniștea veșnică și stăpânirea paradiselui nu demult pierdut se apropie, odată cu trecerea din această lume; iată, cele cerești urmează celor pământești și lucrurile veșnice urmează celor trecătoare.

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

Care este locul nostru între aceste temeri și preocupări? Cine este temător și trist între acestea, dacă nu cel căruia îi lipsește credința și speranța? Căci aceluia care nu dorește să meargă către Hristos îi va fi frică de moarte. Nu dorește să meargă către Hristos, acela care nu crede că urmează să domnească împreună cu Hristos.

Capitolul III

Scriptum est enim iustum fide uiuere. Si iustus es, et fide uiuis, si uere in Christum credis, cur non cum Christo futurus et de Domini pollicitatione securus quod ad Christum uoceris amplecteris, et quod diabolo careas gratularis. Simeon denique ille iustus, qui uere iustus fuit, qui fide plena Dei praecepta seruauit, dum ei diuinitus responsum fuisset quod non ante moreretur quam Christum uidisset, et Christus infans in templum cum matre uenisset, agnouit in Spiritu natum esse iam Christum, de quo sibi fuerat ante praedictum; quo uiso, sciuit se cito esse moriturum. Laetus itaque de morte iam proxima, et de uicina accersitione securus, accepit in manus puerum, et benedicens Dominum exclamauit et dixit: Nunc dimittis seruum tuum, Domine, secuudum uerbum tuum in pace, quoniam uiderunt oculi mei salutare tuum; probans scilicet atque contestans tunc esse seruis Dei pacem, tunc liberam, tunc tranquillam quietem, quando, de istis mundi turbibus extracti, sedis et securitatis aeternae portum petimus, quando expuncta hac morte ad immortalitatem uenimus. Illa est enim uera pax, illa fida tranquillitas, illa stabilis et firma et perpetua securitas.

Căci este scris: „dreptul trăiește în credință” (Romani 1, 17). Dacă ești drept și trăiești în credință, dacă crezi cu adevărat în Hristos, de ce tu, care vei fi cu Hristos și ești sigur de promisiunea Domnului, renunți să te alături lui Hristos și nu ești bucuros să fi eliberat de Diavol?

Simeon cel drept, care a fost drept de-adevăratarea și care a respectat poruncile lui Dumnezeu cu credință deplină, atunci când prin inspirație divină îi fusese dat un răspuns că nu va muri înainte de a-l vedea pe Hristos și, după ce Hristos, copil fiind, a venit în templu cu mama [sa], a cunoscut în Duh că s-a născut deja Hristos, despre care i se spusese și a știut că va muri curând odată ce îl văzuse.

Așadar, bucuros pentru moartea sa apropiată și sigur de chemarea inevitabilă, a primit în brațele sale copilul și, binecuvântând pe Dumnezeu, a exclamat și a zis: „Acum slobozește-l pe robul Tău, Doamne, după cuvântul Tău în pace, deoarece ochii mei au văzut mântuirea Ta” (Luca 2, 29-30), desigur, arătând și dovedind că noi, robi ai lui Dumnezeu, atunci

avem pacea, atunci avem libertatea, atunci avem odihna, când, scoși afară din furtunile lumii, căutăm portul sălășluirii și al siguranței veșnice, când, această moarte fiind înfrântă, mergem către nemurire.

Căci aceea este adevărata pace, aceea este liniștea credinței, aceea este siguranța nezdruncinată și neîntreruptă.

Capitolul IV

Caeterum, quid aliud in mundo, quam pugna aduersus diabolum, quotidie geritur, quam aduersus iacula eius et tela conflictationibus assiduis dimicatur? Cum auaritia nobis, cum impudicitia, cum ira, cum ambitione congressio est, cum carnalibus uitiis, cum illecebris saecularibus assidua et molesta luctatio est. Obsessa mens hominis et undique diaboli infestatione uallata uix occurrit singulis, uix resistit. Si auaritia prostrata est, exurgit libido: si libido compressa est, succedit ambitio: si ambitio contempta est, ira exasperat, inflat superbia, uinolentia inuitat, inuidia concordiam rumpit, amicitiam zelus abscindit. Cogaris maledicere quod diuina lex prohibet, compelleris iurare quod non licet.

Pe de altă parte, ce altceva se petrece în lume decât [faptul că] se duce un război zilnic împotriva diavolului, că se dau lupte stăruitoare împotriva săgeților și armelor lui? Pentru noi este o înfruntare continuă și grea cu lăcomia, cu desfrânarea, cu mânia, cu ambiția, cu plăcerile trupești, cu încercările lumești. Înconjurată din toate părțile de atacul diavolesc, mintea omului se opune cu greu singură, cu greu rezistă.

Dacă este înfrântă lăcomia, apare dorința; dacă este domolită dorința, urmează ambiția; dacă este nesocotită ambiția își face apariția mânia, se mărește trufia, te atrage beția, invidia destramă înțelegerea, gelozia rupe prietenia. Ești constrâns să blestemi ceea ce legea divină îți interzice; ești constrâns să critici ceea ce nu-ți convine.

Capitolul V

Tot persecutiones animus quotidie patitur tot periculum pectus urgetur; et delectat hic inter diaboli gladios diu stare, cum magis concupiscendum sit et optandum ad Christum, subueniente uelocius morte, properare, ipso instruente nos et dicente : Amen amen dico uobis quoniam uos plorabitis et plangetis, saeculum autem gaudebit; uos tristes eritis, sed tristitia uestra in laetitiam ueniet. Quis non tristitia carere optet? quis non ad laetitiam uenire festinet? Quando autem in laetitiam ueniat nostra tristitia Dominus

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

denuo ipse declarat dicens: Iterum uidebo uos, et gaudebit cor uestrum, et gaudium uestrum nemo auferet a uobis. Cum ergo Christum uidere gaudere sit, nec possit esse gaudium nostrum nisi cum uiderimus Christum, quae caecitas animi quaeue dementia est amare pressuras et poenas et lacrymas mundi, et non festinare potius ad gaudium quod numquam possit auferri?

Sufletul suferă zilnic din cauza atâtor persecuții, inima este înconjurată de atâtea pericole și totuși se bucură să rămână mult timp între armele diavolului, când ar trebui să râvnească și să aleagă calea către Hristos, cu ajutorul unei morți grabnice; pentru a ne pregăti, el însuși ne învață, zicând:

„Amin, amin, vă spun vouă, pentru că voi veți plânge și vă veți tângui, însă lumea se va bucura, voi vă veți întrista, dar tristețea voastră se va preface în bucurie” (Ioan 16, 20). Cine nu dorește să ocolescă tristețea? Cine nu se grăbește să găsească bucuria? Dar când tristețea noastră se schimbă în bucurie, însuși Domnul mărturisește din nou, zicând: „Iarăși vă voi vedea și inima voastră se va bucura; și bucuria voastră nimeni nu o va lua de la voi” (Ioan 16, 22).

Așadar, fiindcă a-l vedea pe Hristos înseamnă a te bucura și bucuria noastră nu poate să existe decât dacă îl vedem pe Hristos, ce orbire a minții sau ce nebunie este să iubești chinurile și pedepsele și lacrimile lumii și să nu te grăbești mai curând către bucuria care nu-ți va putea fi luată niciodată?

Capitolul VI

Hoc autem fit, fratres dilectissimi, quia fides deest, quia nemo credit uera esse quae promittit Deus, qui uerax est, cuius sermo credentibus aeternus et firmus est. Si tibi uir grauis et laudabilis aliquid polliceretur, haberes utique pollicenti fidem, nec te falli aut decipi ab eo crederes quem stare in sermonibus atque in actibus suis scires. Nunc Deus tecum loquitur; et tu mente incredula perfidus fluctuas! Deus tibi de hoc mundo recedenti immortalitatem atque aeternitatem pollicetur; et tu dubitas! Hoc est Deum omnino non nosse; hoc est Christum, credentium dominum et magistrum, peccato incredulitatis offendere; hoc est in Ecclesia constitutum, fidem in domo fidei non habere.

Se întâmplă însă acest lucru, frați preaiubiți, fiindcă lipsește credința, fiindcă nimeni nu crede că sunt adevărate cele pe care le promite Dumnezeu, care este adevărat, al cărui cuvânt, pentru cei care cred, este veșnic și statornic.

Dacă un om serios și respectat ți-ar promite ceva, de bună seamă ai avea încredere în cel care a promis și nu ai crede că poți fi înșelat sau furat de cel care ai ști că rămâne credincios cuvintelor și faptelor sale.

Acum Dumnezeu vorbește cu tine; și tu șovăi cu mintea ta neîncrezătoare! Dumnezeu îți promite ție, celui care te îndepărtezi de această lume, fericirea veșnică și nemurirea și tu te mai îndoiești!

Acest lucru înseamnă că nu-L cunoști pe Dumnezeu întru totul. Acest lucru înseamnă a-L nemulțumi, prin păcatul necredinței, pe Hristos, domnul și învățătorul celor credincioși. Acest lucru, înseamnă a nu avea loc de adunare în Biserică [Adunare], credință în casa credinței.

Capitolul VII

Quantum prosit exire de saeculo Christus ipse salutis atque utilitatis nostrae magister ostendit; qui, cum discipuli eius contristarentur quod se iam diceret recessurum, locutus est ad eos dicens: Si me dilexissetis, gauderetis utique, quoniam uado ad Patrem, docens scilicet et ostendens, cum chari quos diligimus de saeculo exeunt, gaudendum potius quam dolendum. Cuius rei memor beatus apostolus Paulus in Epistola sua ponit et dicit: Mihi uiuere Christus est, et mori lucrum; lucrum maximum computans iam saeculi laqueis non teneri, iam nullis peccatis et uitiiis carnis obnoxium fieri, exemptum pressuris angentibus, et uenenatis diabolifaucibus liberatum, ad laetitiam salutis aeternae Christo uocante proficisci.

Cât folosește să părești această lume arată însuși Hristos, învățătorul mântuirii și smereniei noastre; pentru că ucenicii săi erau triști, deoarece spunea că în curând va pleca, Acesta a vorbit cu ei zicând: „Dacă M-ați iubi, v-ați bucura că Eu merg la Tatăl” (Ioan, 4, 23), desigur învățând și arătând cu har că trebuie mai mult să ne bucurăm decât să ne întristăm pentru cei care pleacă din această lume și pe care-i iubim.

Pentru acest lucru, Fericitul Apostol Pavel afirmă și întărește în Epistola sa: „Pentru mine a trăi înseamnă Hristos, iar a muri un câștig” (Filipeni 1, 21), socotind un câștig maxim a nu fi prins în capcanele acestei lumi, a nu fi supus nici unui păcat și viciilor trupești, a fi eliberat de greutățile constrângătoare și a fi liber în fața persecuțiilor diavolești și scăpat din gura înveninată a diavolului, a merge la chemarea lui Hristos spre bucuria mântuirii eterne.

Capitolul VIII

Atenim quosdam mouet quod aequaliter cum gentilibus nostros morbi istius ualitudo corripiat; quasi ad hoc crediderit Christianus, ut, immunis a contactu malorum, mundo et saeculo feliciter perfruatur, et non omnia hic aduersa perpessus, ad futuram laetitiam reseruetur. Mouet quosdam quod sit nobis cum caeteris mortalitas ista communis. Quid enim nobis in hoc mundo non commune cum caeteris quamdiu adhuc, secundum legem primae natiuitatis, manet caro ista communis? Quoadusque istic in mundo sumus, cum genere humano carnis aequalitate coniungimur, spiritu separamur. Itaque, donec corruptiuum istud induat incorruptionem, et mortale hoc accipiat immortalitatem, et Christus nos perducatur ad Deum Patrem, quaecumque sunt carnis incommoda sunt nobis cum humano genere communia. Sic, cum foetu sterili terra ieiuna est, neminem fames separat. Sic, cum irruptione hostili ciuitas aliqua possessa est, omnes simul captiuitas uastat. Et quando imbrem nubila serena suspendunt, omnibus siccitas una est. Et cum nauem scopulosa saxa constringunt, nauigantibus naufragium sine exceptione commune est. Et oculorum dolor, et impetus febrium, et omnium ualitudo membrorum cum caeteris communis est nobis quamdiu portatur in saeculo caro ista communis.

Dar, cu toate acestea, pe unii îi tulbură faptul că această stare de boală îi cuprinde deopotrivă pe ai noștri și pe păgâni; ca și cum Creștinul s-ar încrede în faptul că, nevătămat în atingerea cu răul, poate să se bucure fericit de lume și, neîndurând aici toate adversitățile, poate să se păstreze pentru bucuria viitoare. Pe unii îi tulbură faptul că această moarte ne este comună nouă și celorlalți. Căci ce în această lume nu ne este comun nouă și celorlalți? Cât timp de-acum înainte acest trup după legea celei dintâi creații, rămâne comun? Atât timp cât suntem în această lume, suntem uniți în mod egal cu rasa umană, însă suntem separați în Duh. Așadar, până când acest trup supus stricăciunii nu îmbracă nesticăciunea și acest trup muritor nu primește nemurirea (I Corinteni 15, 52) și Hristos nu ajunge la Dumnezeu Tatăl, oricare sunt [neajunsurile] corpului ne sunt comune cu rasa umană.

La fel, când pământul este lipsit de rod, foamea nu separă pe nimeni. La fel, atunci când vreun oraș a fost asediat de vreun atac dușmănos, prizonieratul îi lovește pe toți deopotrivă. Și când cerul senin alungă ploaia, seceta este una pentru toți. Și atunci când stânci colțuroase fac să naufragieze o navă, naufragiul este comun tuturor, fără excepție. Și durerea de ochi și accesul de febră, slăbiciunea tuturor membrilor ne este comună cu a celorlalți, atâta timp cât același trup ne ține în viață.

Capitolul IX

Quinimmo, si qua conditione, qua lege crediderit Christianus noscat et teneat, sciet plus sibi quam caeteris in saeculo laborandum, cui magis sit cum diaboli impugnatione luctandum. Docet et praemonet Scriptura diuina dicens: Fili, accedens ad seruitutem Dei, sta in iustitia et timore, et praepara animam tuam ad tentationem. Et iterum: In dolore sustine, et in humilitate tua patientiam habe, quoniam in igne probatur aurum et argentum, homines uero receptibiles in camino humiliationis.

Și mai mult de atât, dacă creștinul ar cunoaște și ar prețui în ce rost și în ce lege să creadă, va ști cu cât va trebui să îndure mai mult decât ceilalți în lume, de vreme ce trebuie să lupte mai mult cu atacurile diavolului. Sfânta Scriptură ne învață și ne avertizează, zicând: „Fiule, căutând slujirea lui Dumnezeu, rămâi în dreptate și cu teamă și pregătește-ți sufletul pentru încercări”. Și mai departe: „Să ai curaj în durere și să ai răbdare când ești umilit, fiindcă aurul și argintul se verifică în foc, câtă vreme oamenii sunt recâștigați în focul umilinței”(Ecclesiast 2, 1,4,5).

Capitolul X

Sic Iob post rerum damna, post pignorum funera, uulneribus quoque et uermibus grauius afflictus, non uictus est, sed probatus; qui in ipsis conflictationibus et doloribus suis patientiam religiosae mentis ostendens ait: Nudus exiui de utero matris, nudus etiam ibo sub terram. Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit. Sicut Domino uisum est, ita factum est. Sit nomen Domini benedictum. Et cum eum uxor quoque compelleret ut, ui doloris impatiens, aliquid aduersus Deum querula et inuidiosa uoce loqueretur, respondit et dixit: Tamquam una ex ineptis mulieribus locuta es. Si bona excepimus de manu Domini, mala cur non tolerabimus? In his omnibus quae contigerunt ei, nihil peccauit Iob labiis suis in conspectu Domini (Iob II, 10). Itaque illi Dominus Deus perhibet testimonium dicens: Animaduertisti puerum meum Iob? Non enim est similis illi quisquam in terris, homo sine querela, uerus Dei cultor. Et Tobias, post opera magnifica, post misericordiae suae multa et gloriosa praeconia, caecitatem luminum passus, timens et benedicens in aduersis Deum, per ipsam corporis sui cladem creuit ad laudem; quem et ipsum uxor sua deprauare tentauit dicens: Ubi sunt iustitiae tuae? Ecce quae pateris. At ille, circa timorem Dei stabilis et firmus, et ad omnem tolerantiam passionis fide religionis armatus, tentationi uxoris inualidae in dolore non cessit, sed magis Deum

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

patientia maiore promeruit. Quem postmodum Raphael angelus collaudat et dicit: Opera Dei reuelare et confiteri honorificum est. Nam, quando orabas tu et Sara nurus tua, ego obtuli memoriam orationis uestrae in conspectu claritatis Dei. Et cum sepelires tu mortuos simpliciter, et quia non es cunctatus exurgere et derelinquere prandium tuum, et abisti et condidisti mortuum, missus sum tentare te, et iterum me misit Deus curare te et Saram nurum tuam. Ego enim sum Raphael unus ex septem Angelis sanctis qui assistimus et conuersamur ante claritatem Dei.

Astfel, după întâmplări nenorocite, după moartea fiilor, lovit grav și de răni și de viermi Iov nu a fost învins, ci încercat. Acesta în încercări și suferințe probând înțelegerea unui spirit religios, a spus: „Gol am ieșit din pântecele maicii mele și gol voi coborî în mormânt. Domnul a dat și Domnul a luat: Precum I-a plăcut Domnului, așa s-a făcut. Fie numele Domnului binecuvântat” (Iov 1, 21). Și în vreme ce până și soția l-a provocat să spună ceva împotriva lui Dumnezeu, cu glas plângător și revoltată, din cauza durerii insuportabile, el a răspuns și a zis: „Ai vorbit ca una dintre femeile fără minte (Iov 1, 22). Dacă am primit cele bune din mâna Domnului, de ce nu le vom răbda și pe cele rele?”

În toate câte le-a trăit, Iov nu a păcătuit niciodată în fața Domnului cu cuvintele sale (Iov 2, 10). Astfel, Domnul Dumnezeu îi oferă o mărturie, zicând: „L-ai văzut pe fiul meu, Iov? Căci nu e nici unul ca El pe pământ, este un om care nu se plânge niciodată, un adevărat cinstitor al lui Dumnezeu” (Iov 1, 8).

Și Tobie, după lucrări mărețe, după multe și glorioase laude aduse bunătății sale, după ce a îndurat lipsa vederii, temându-se și binecuvântând pe Dumnezeu în încercările sale, a crescut în laudă prin suferință. Pe acesta chiar și soția sa încerca să-l provoace zicând: „Unde este dreptatea ta? Iată ce pătimești!” (Tobit 2, 14).

Însă el, neclintit și tare în frica de Dumnezeu și înarmat cu credința religiei sale spre a îndura întreaga suferință, nu a cedat în durere tentației soției necugetate, ci mai mult l-a primit pe Dumnezeu printr-o mai mare îndurare.

Mai târziu, arhanghelul Rafael l-a lăudat și a zis: „Este un lucru demn de cinste a descoperi și să crezi în lucrarea lui Dumnezeu. Deoarece atunci când tu și Sara, nora ta, vă rugați, eu am înfățișat pomenirea rugăciunilor voastre în fața slavei lui Dumnezeu.

Și deoarece tu cu simplitate îngropi morții și fiindcă nu ai șovăit să te ridici și să lași prânzul tău și te-ai dus și ai îngropat mortul, am fost trimis să te încerc și din nou Dumnezeu m-a trimis ca să te îngrijesc pe tine și pe

Sara, nora ta. Căci eu sunt Rafael, unul dintre cei șapte îngeri sfinți, care sunt de față și ne aflăm în fața slavei lui Dumnezeu” (Tobit 12, 11-15).

Capitolul XI

Hanc tolerantiam iusti semper habuerunt, hanc Apostoli disciplinam de Domini lege tenuerunt, non mussitare in aduersis, sed quaecumque in saeculo accidunt fortiter et patienter accipere, cum Iudaeorum populus hinc semper offenderit quod aduersus Deum frequentius murmuraret, sicut testatur in Numeris Dominus Deus dicens: Desinat murmuratio eorum a me, et non morientur. Murmurandum non est in aduersis, fratres dilectissimi, sed patienter et fortiter quidquid acciderit sustinendum, cum scriptum sit: Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus, cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despicit ; in Deuteronomio quoque moneat per Moysen Spiritus sanctus et dicat: Dominus Deus tuus uexabit te, et famem iniiciet tibi, et cognoscetur in corde tuo si bene custodieris praecepta eius, siue non. Et iterum: Tentat uos Dominus Deus uester, ut sciat si diligitis Dominum Deum uestrum ex toto corde uestro et ex tota anima uestra.

Cei drepti au avut din totdeauna această rezistență la rău. Apostolii au păstrat, după legea Domnului, această rânduială, de a nu se plânge în fața greutăților, ci de a accepta cu putere și răbdare ceea ce primim în lume; fiindcă poporul iudeilor s-a arătat nemulțumit din această cauză până într-atât că a vorbit deseori împotriva lui Dumnezeu, după cum afirmă Domnul Dumnezeu în Cartea Numerilor zicând: „Să înceteze murmurul lor împotriva mea și nu vor muri” (Numeri 18, 25).

Nu trebuie să ne plângem în încercări, preaiubiților frați, ci trebuie să îndurăm cu răbdare și curaj orice se întâmplă, deoarece este scris: „Sacrificiul [plăcut] lui Dumnezeu este spiritul înfrânt; Dumnezeu nu disprețuiește inima înfrântă și umilită”. (Psalmi 2, 19); chiar și în Deuteronom Duhul Sfânt sfătuiește prin Moise și spune: „Domnul Dumnezeu Tău te va înțelepți și te va face să guști foamea și îți se va arăta în inima ta dacă vei respecta bine poruncile lui sau nu” (Deuteronom 8, 2).

Și din nou: „Domnul Dumnezeu vostru vă ispitește ca să știe dacă îl iubiți pe Domnul Dumnezeu vostru cu toată inima voastră și cu tot sufletul vostru” (Deuteronom 13, 4).

Capitolul XII

Sic Abraham Deo placuit, qui, ut placeret Deo, nec amittere filium timuit, nec gerere parricidium recusauit. Qui filium non potes lege et sorte

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

mortalitatis amittere, quid faceres si filium iubereris occidere? Ad omnia paratum facere timor Dei et fides debet. Sit licet rei familiaris amissio, sit de infestantibus morbis assidua membrorum et cruenta uexatio, sit de uxore, de liberis, de excedentibus charis funebris et tristis auulsio; non sint tibi scandala ista, sed praelia; nec debilitent aut frangant Christiani fidem, sed potius ostendant in colluctatione uirtutem, cum contemnenda sit omnis iniuria malorum praesentium fiducia futurorum bonorum. Nisi praecesserit pugna, non potest esse uictoria: cum fuerit in pugnae congressione uictoria, tunc datur uincentibus et corona. Nauis gubernator in tempestate dinoscitur, in acie miles probatur. Delicata iactatio est cum periculum non est. Conflictatio in aduersis probatio est ueritatis. Arbor quae alta radice fundata est, uentis incumbentibus non mouetur; et nauis quae forti compage solida est, pulsatur fluctibus, nec foratur; et quando area fruges terit, uentos grana fortia et robusta contemnunt, inanes paleae flatu portante rapiuntur.

Astfel, lui Dumnezeu i-a plăcut Avraam, cel care, ca să-i fie lui Dumnezeu pe plac, nu s-a temut nici să renunțe la fiul său, nici nu a refuzat să săvârșească un paricid (Geneză 20).

Tu, care nu poți nici în numele legii și nici din cauza condiției de muritor să-ți pierzi fiul, ce ai face dacă ți s-ar porunci să-ți sacrifici fiul? Frica de Dumnezeu și credința trebuie să te pregătească pentru orice.

Chiar dacă ar însemna pierderea avuțiilor tale, chiar dacă ar însemna continua și sângerânda durere a membrelor tale, datorată unor boli stricătoare, separarea tristă și dureroasă de soție, de copii și de prietenii care te părăsesc, acestea să nu fie pentru tine căderi în păcat, ci lupte; nici să te slăbească sau să-ți frângă credința creștină, ci mai degrabă să scoată la iveală curajul în luptă, deoarece fiecare nedreptate a relelor prezente trebuie să fie nesocotită în vederea fericirii veșnice.

Dacă n-ar fi fost lupta mai întâi, n-ar fi putut exista victorie: când în înfruntarea în luptă este victorie, atunci le este dată și coroana învingătorilor.

Cârmaciul unei corăbii se cunoaște în furtună, soldatul se încearcă în asalt. Provocarea este ridicolă când nu există pericol. Înfruntarea în încercări este proba adevărului.

Un copac care este plantat cu rădăcină adâncă nu este mișcat de vânturile năvalnice și o navă care este construită cu îmbinări solide este lovită de valuri, dar nu este distrusă și când aria treieră grânele, grăunțele puternice și rezistente înfruntă vânturile, paiele goale sunt smulse, fiind purtate de suflarea [lor].

Capitolul XIII

Sic et apostolus Paulus, post naufragia, post flagella, post carnis et corporis multa et grauius tormenta, non uexari sed emendari se dicit aduersis, ut, dum grauius affligitur, uerius probaretur: Datus est mihi, inquit, stimulus carnis meae, angelus Satanae qui me colaphizet, ut non extollar. Propter quod ter Dominum rogavi ut discederet a me, et dixit mihi: Sufficit tibi gratia mea. Nam uirtus in infirmitate perficitur. Quando ergo infirmitas et imbecillitas et uastitas aliqua grassatur, tunc uirtus nostra perficitur, tunc fides, si tentata perstiterit, coronatur, sicut scriptum est: Vasa figuli probat fornax, et homines iustos tentatio tribulationis. Hoc denique inter nos et caeteros interest, qui Deum nesciunt, quod illi in aduersis queruntur et murmurant, nos aduersa non auocant a uirtutis et fidei ueritate, sed corroborant in dolore.

Astfel și Apostolul Pavel, după naufragii, după bătăi, după multe și grele suferințe trupești, afirmă că nu a fost chinuit, ci a fost curățat de încercări, încât în timp ce, când era chinuit mai grav, era încercat mai puternic: „Mi-a fost dat, zice, un ghimpe în trupul meu, un înger al Satanei, care să mă palmuiască, ca eu să nu mă mândresc. Din această cauză de trei ori l-am rugat pe Domnul să-l alunge de la mine și el mi-a zis: „Harul meu îți ajunge, căci puterea mea triumfă în slăbiciune” (II Corinteni 12, 7-9).

Așadar când începe boala și slăbiciunea trupească și vreo neputință, atunci virtutea noastră se desăvârșește, atunci credința, dacă stăruie în timpul încercării, este încoronată, după cum este scris: „Cuptorul probează vasele de lut ars, și încercarea îi călește pe oamenii dreți” (Ecclesiast 27, 5).

Astfel, [deosebirea] dintre noi și ceilalți, care nu-l cunosc pe Dumnezeu, este aceasta: aceia se plâng în încercări și se împotrivesc, [iar] pe noi încercările nu ne îndepărtează de adevărul virtuții și al credinței, ci ne întăresc în durere.

Capitolul XIV

Hoc quod nunc corporis uires solutus in fluxum uenter euiscerat, quod in faucium uulnera conceptus medullitus ignis exaestuat, quod assiduo uomitu intestina quatiuntur, quod oculi ui sanguinis inardescunt, quod quorundam uel pedes uel aliquae membrorum partes contagio morbidae putredinis amputantur, quod per iacturas et damna corporum prorumpente languore uel debilitatur incessus, uel auditus, obstruitur, uel caecatur

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

aspectus, ad documentum proficit fidei. Contra tot impetus uastitatis et mortis inconcussi animi uirtutibus congregari, quanta pectoris magnitudo est! quanta sublimitas inter ruinas generis humani stare erectum, nec cum eis quibus spes in Deum nulla est iacere prostratum! Gratulari magis oportet et temporis munus amplecti quod, dum nostram fidem fortiter promimus, et labore tolerato ad Christum per angustam Christi uiam pergimus, praemium uitae eius et fidei ipso iudicante capiamus. Mori plane timeat, sed qui, ex aqua et Spiritu non renatus, gehennae ignibus mancipatur. Mori timeat qui non Christi cruce et passione censetur: mori timeat qui ad secundam mortem de hac morte transibit: mori timeat quem, de saeculo recedentem, perennibus poenis aeterna flamma torquebit: mori timeat cui hoc mora longiore confertur, ut cruciatus eius et gemitus interim differatur.

Faptul că acum pânțelecele deslănțuit printr-o scurgere [continuă] stoarce puterile corpului, că focul iscat în rănilor din gâtlee se revarsă clocotind până-n măduva oaselor, că sunt răscolite printr-o vomare continuă, măruntaiele, că ochii sunt aprinși de apăsarea sânelui, că din cauza vreunei contaminări cu o boală infecțioasă sunt amputate fie picioarele, fie alte părți ale trupului, că prin stricăciunile și vătămările trupurilor provocate de lăncezeală se încetinește pasul sau se pierde auzul sau se întunecă vederea, totul slujește drept învățătură a credinței, cât este de mare este forța spiritului în a lupta împotriva atâtor atacuri ale suferinței și morții pustiitoare prin virtuțile unui suflet nezdruncinat. Câtă forță spirituală drept printre ruinele neamului omenesc și să nu zaci prăbușit alături de aceia care nu au credință în Dumnezeu!

Trebuie mai de grabă să ne felicităm și să ne bucurăm de darurile prezente, fiindcă, atâta vreme cât noi ne afirmăm cu tărie credința și, suferind pentru Hristos, mergem pe calea îngustă a lui Hristos, vom primi răsplata acestei vieți întru credință, El însuși fiind judecător.

Desigur, să se teamă să moară acela care, nefiind renăscut din apă și Duh, este dus către focurile Gheenei. Să se teamă să moară acela care nu este socotit demn de crucea și patima lui Hristos. Să se teamă să moară cel care va trece de la această moarte la cea de-a doua. Să se teamă să moară acela care, plecând din lume, va fi chinuit de focul veșnic prin pedepse veșnice. Să se teamă să moară cel căruia îi este dată această amânare mai mult timp, încât să-i fie prelungite în acest răstimp munci chinuitoare și tânguiri.

Capitolul XV

Multi ex nostris in hac mortalitate moriuntur, hoc est, multi ex nostris de saeculo liberantur. Mortalitas ista, ut Iudaeis et gentilibus et Christi hostibus pestis est, ita Dei seruis salutaris excessus est. Hoc quod, sine ullo discrimine generis humani, cum iniustis moriuntur et iusti, non est quod putetis bonis et malis interitum esse communem: ad refrigerium iusti uocantur, ad supplicium rapiuntur iniusti; datur uelocius tutela fidentibus, perfidis poena. Improuidi et ingrati sumus, fratres dilectissimi, ad diuina beneficia, nec quid nobis conferatur agnoscimus. Excedunt ecce in pace tutae cum gloria sua uirgines, uenientis antichristi minas et corruptelas et lupanaria non timentes, pueri periculum lubricae aetatis euadunt, ad continentiae atque innocentiae praemium feliciter perueniunt, tormenta iam non timet delicata matrona, metum persecutionis et manus cruciatusque carnificis moriendi celeritate lucrata. Pauore mortalitatis et temporis accenduntur tepidi, constringuntur remissi, excitantur ignaui, desertores compelluntur ut redeant, gentiles coguntur ut credant, uetus fidelium populus ad quietem uocatur, ad aciem recens et copiosus exercitus robore fortiore colligitur, pugnaturus sine metu mortis cum praelium uenerit, qui ad militiam tempore mortalitatis accedit.

Mulți dintre ai noștri mor printr-o astfel de moarte, adică mulți dintre ai noștri sunt eliberați de această lume. Această moarte, după cum pentru evrei și pentru păgâni și pentru dușmanii lui Hristos este o nenorocire, tot astfel pentru robii lui Dumnezeu înseamnă calea de mântuire.

Faptul că cei dreپți mor împreună cu cei nedreپți, fără nicio deosebire între tipuri umane, nu înseamnă că moartea este la fel pentru cei buni și pentru cei răi: dreپții sunt chemați la loc de odihnă, nedreپții sunt trimiși către pedeapsă; celor credincioși le este dată iute mântuirea veșnică, iar celor necredincioși pedeapsa veșnică. Suntem indiferenți și ingrați, prea-iubiților frați, în fața darurilor divine și nu prețuim ceea ce ni se oferă.

Iată ies fecioarele sigure în pace, cu slava lor, netemându-se de amenințările Antichristului și de stricăciuni și de lupanare; tinerii ocolesc pri-mejdia vârstei instabile și ajung în chip fericit la răsplata dată de înfrânare și neprihănire; femeile nobile nu se mai tem de torturi, de frica persecuției, de violență, și uneltele călăului, câștigând rapiditatea morții.

Fricoșii sunt mistuiți de teama momentului morții, cei slabi sunt întăriți, lașii sunt încurajați, fugarii sunt siliți să se întoarcă, păgânii sunt constrânși să creadă, generația veche a credincioșilor este chemată la odihnă, marea armată nouă este adunată în front cu o și mai mare vigoare, ca să lupte fără

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

teama de moarte atunci când începe bătălia, [teamă] care apare în luptă în clipa morții.

Capitolul XVI

Quid deinde illud, fratres dilectissimi, quale est, quam pertinens, quam necessarium, quod pestis ista et lues, quae horribilis et feralis uideatur, explorat iustitiam singulorum, et mentes humani generis examinat, an infirmis seruiant sani, an propinqui cognatos pie diligant, an misereantur seruorum languentium domini, an deprecantes aegros non deserant medici, an feroces uiolentiam suam comprimant, an rapaces auaritiae furentis insatiabilem semper ardorem uel metu mortis extinguant, an ceruicem flectant superbi, an audaciam leniant improbi, an pereuntibus charis, uel sic aliquid diuites indigentibus largiantur et donent sine haerede morituri! Ut nihil aliud mortalitas ista contulerit, hoc Christianis et Dei seruis plurimum praestitit, quod martyrium coepimus libenter appetere, dum mortem discimus non timere. Exercitia sunt nobis ista, non funera. Dant animo fortitudinis gloriam, contemptu mortis praeparant ad coronam.

În plus, preaiubiților frați, ce este această moarte, cât de însemnată este, cât de importantă, cât de necesară este această boală și molimă care pare înspăimântătoare și funestă examinează simțul de dreptate al fiecăruia și cercetează mințile neamului uman, pentru a vedea dacă cei sănătoși îi îngrijesc pe cei bolnavi, dacă rudeniile îi iubesc cu evlavie pe cei apropiați, dacă stăpânii au milă pentru servitorii lor bolnavi, dacă medicii nu-i abandonează pe bolnavii rugători, dacă cei cruzi își stăpânesc violența, dacă avarii își înfrânează dorința veșnic mistuitoare a lăcomiei lor nemărginite chiar prin teama de moarte, dacă cei trufași își pleacă capul, dacă cei infami își domolesc nerușinarea, dacă bogații, murindu-le cineva drag, chiar și atunci își adună totul și dau celor săraci doar atunci când sunt pe moarte, fără moștenitori!

Deși această molimă nu a adus nici un alt bine, a adus un câștig creștinilor și slujitorilor lui Dumnezeu, pentru că, în timp ce am învățat să nu ne temem de moarte, am început să dorim bucuroși martiriul. Acestea sunt pentru noi pregătiri și nu funeralii. Dau sufletului slava tăriei, ne pregătesc pentru coroană prin sfidarea morții.

Capitolul XVII

Sed fortasse aliquis opponat et dicat: Hoc me ergo in praesenti mortalitate contristat quod qui paratus ad confessionem fueram, et ad

tolerantiam passionis toto me corde et plena uirtute deuoueram, martyrio meo priuor, dum morte praeuenior. Primo in loco non est in tua potestate, sed in Dei dignatione martyrium, nec potes te dicere perdidisse quod nescis an merearis accipere. Tunc deinde Deus scrutator renis et cordis et occultorum contemplator et cognitor uidet te et laudat et comprobat, et qui perspicit apud te paratam fuisse uirtutem, reddet pro uirtute mercedem. Numquid Cain cum Deo munus offerret iam peremerat fratrem? Et tamen parricidium mente conceptum Deo prouidus ante damnauit. Ut illic cogitatio mala et pernicioosa conceptio Deo prouidente prospecta est, ita et in Dei seruis, apud quos confessio cogitatur et martyrium mente concipitur, animus ad bonum deditus Deo iudice coronatur. Aliud est martyrio animum deesse, aliud animo defuisse martyrium. Qualem te inuenit Dominus cum uocat, talem pariter et iudicat, quando ipse testetur et dicat: Et scient omnes Ecclesiae quia ego sum scrutator renis et cordis. Nec enim Deus sanguinem nostrum desiderat, sed fidem quaerit. Nam nec Abraham, nec Isaac, nec Iacob occisi sunt, et tamen fidei ac iustitiae meritis honorati inter Patriarchas primi esse meruerunt; ad quorum conuiuium congregatur quisquis fidelis et iustus et laudabilis inuenitur.

Dar cineva poate să se opună și să spună: atunci, mă întristează la moartea prezentă faptul că eu, care fusesem pregătit pentru spovedanie și care m-am dăruit pentru îndurarea patimii cu tot sufletul și cu întreaga mea putere, sunt lipsit de martiriul meu, în timp ce sunt prevenit în privința morții.

În primul rând, martiriul nu stă în puterea ta, ci în bunăvoința lui Dumnezeu, și nici nu poți spune că ai pierdut ceea ce nu știi dacă ai meritat să primești sau nu. Apoi, pe lângă asta, Dumnezeu căutătorul și cunoscătorul sufletului și al inimii și al celor ascunse, te vede și te laudă și te aprobă și El, care vede că virtutea ta este pregătită, îți va da o răsplată pentru ea.

Oare Cain îl ucisese deja pe fratele său când i-a dat darul lui Dumnezeu? Și totuși Dumnezeu, preștiind fratricidul zămislit în mintea sa, a prevăzut condamnarea lui. Precum în acel caz au fost prevestite gândul necurat și răul gândit de un Dumnezeu preștiutor, așa și în robii lui Dumnezeu, printre care mărturisirea este fermă și martiriul este zămislit în minte, gândul merit binelui este răsplătit de Dumnezeu judecătorul.

Una este pentru suflet să-i lipsească martiriul și alta pentru martiriu să fi fost lipsit de suflet. Așa cum Domnul te găsește atunci când te cheamă, la fel te și judecă, de vreme ce El însuși confirmă și zice: „Toate Bisericile să știe că eu sunt acela care cunoaște gândurile și sentimentele oamenilor” (Apocalipsa 2, 23).

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

Căci Dumnezeu nu cere sângele nostru, ci cere credința noastră. Căci nici Avram, nici Isaac, nici Iacob nu au fost uciși și totuși au meritat să fie cinstiți ca primii între patriarhi pentru meritele credinței și ale dreptății, la sărbătoarea acestora este chemat oricine este găsit credincios, drept și demn de laudă.

Capitolul XVIII

Meminisse debemus uoluntatem nos, non nostram, sed Dei facere debere, secundum quod nos Dominus quotidie iussit orare. Quam praeposterum est, quamque peruersum, ut, cum ei uoluntatem fieri postulemus, quando euocat nos et accersit de hoc mundo Deus, non statim uoluntatis eius imperio pareamus. Obnitimur et reluctamur, et, peruicacium more seruorum, ad conspectum Domini cum tristitia et moerore perducimur, exeuntes istinc necessitatis uinculo, non obsequio uoluntatis; et uolumus ab eo praemiis coelestibus honorari ad quem uenimus inuiti! Quid ergo oramus et petimus ut adueniat regnum coelorum, si captiuitas terrena delectat? Quid precibus frequenter iteratis rogamus et poscimus ut acceleret dies regni, si maiora desideria et uota potiora sunt seruire istic diabolo quam regnare cum Christo?

Trebuie să ne amintim că noi nu trebuie să facem voința noastră, ci pe a lui Dumnezeu, după cum Domnul ne-a poruncit să cerem în fiecare zi. Cât este de fals și neadevărat faptul că, atunci când ne rugăm să se facă voia Lui, atunci când Dumnezeu ne cheamă și ne îndepărtează de această lume, nu ne supunem imediat la porunca voinței sale.

Ne luptăm și ne împotrivim și ca slujitori îndârjiți suntem târâți în fața Domnului cu tristețe și durere, plecăm smulși din lumea aceasta cu forța, nu din supunere față de voința sa; și vrem să fim onorați de către El cu răsplăți cerești mergând la El fără voie.

Așadar, de ce ne rugăm și cerem să sosească împărăția cerurilor dacă ne încântă robia pământească? De ce neîncetat, cu rugăciuni continue, cerem și implorăm să grăbească ziua împărăției, dacă mai mari dorințe și mai puternice rugăminți sunt cele de a sluji mai degrabă diavolului aici [pe pământ] decât de a domni cu Hristos?

Capitolul XIX

Denique, ut manifestius diuinae prouidentiae indicia clarescerent quod Dominus praescius futurorum suis consulat ad ueram salutem, cum

quidam de collegis et consacerdotibus nostris, infirmitate defessus et de appropinquante iam morte sollicitus, commeatum sibi precaretur, adstitit deprecanti et iam pene morienti iuuenis honore et maiestate uenerabilis, statu celsus et clarus aspectu, et quem assistentem sibi uix posset humanus aspectus oculis carnalibus intueri, nisi quod talem uidere iam poterat de saeculo recessurus. Atque ille non sine quadam animi et uocis indignatione infremuit et dixit: «Pati timetis, exire non uultis, quid faciam uobis?» Increpantis uox est et monentis, qui de persecutione sollicitis, de accersitione securis non consentit ad praesens desiderium, sed consulit in futurum. Audiuit frater noster et collega moriturus quod caeteris diceret. Nam qui moriturus audiuit, ad hoc audiuit ut diceret. Audiuit non sibi ille, sed nobis. Nam quid sibi disceret iam recessurus? Didicit immo nobis remanentibus, ut, dum sacerdotem qui commeatum petebat increpitum esse comperimus, quid cunctis expediat agnosceremus.

În sfârșit, pentru ca mai limpede să se deslușească semnele providenței divine, [faptul] că Domnul preștiutor al celor viitoare se îngrijește de ade-vărata mântuire [a poporului] Lui, când unul dintre colegii și frații noștri preoți, vlăguit de infirmitate și îngrijorat de apropierea morții, se ruga pentru o păsuire pentru sine, s-a așezat lângă cel ce se ruga și un tânăr aflat aproape în clipa morții, vrednic de cinstire prin demnitate și măreție, înalt de statură și luminos la chip și pe care, deși stătea în apropierea lui, privirea umană abia reușea să-l privească cu ochi pământești. Doar cel care urma să plece din lume putea să observe o astfel de ființă. Și acela, nu fără o anumită revoltă a minții și a vocii l-a dojenit și a zis: „Vă temeți să suferiți, nu vreți să plecați, ce să fac cu voi?”

Este glasul celui care mustră și al celui care previne, care, [atunci] când oamenii îngrijorați de persecuție și indiferenți față de chemare, nu acceptă dorința prezentă ci sfătuiește pentru viitor. Fratele și colegul nostru pe moarte, a înțeles ce să spună celorlalți. Căci, ce a auzit cel pe moarte, pentru aceasta a auzit, ca să spună. Acela a auzit nu pentru sine, ci pentru noi. Căci ce ar putea el să învețe pentru el însuși, când era deja în pragul morții? Fără îndoială a învățat acest lucru pentru noi cei care rămânem, astfel încât, atunci când găsim un preot care acuză amânarea osânditoare, să recunoaștem ceea ce este de folos pentru noi toți.

Capitolul XX

Nobis quoque ipsis minimis et extremis quoties reuelatum est, quam frequenter atque manifeste de Dei dignatione praeceptum est ut

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

contestarar assidue et publice praedicarem fratres nostros non esse lugendos accersitione Dominica de saeculo liberatos, cum sciamus non eos amitti sed praemitti, recedentes praecedere, ut proficiscentes, ut nauigantes solent, desiderari eos debere, non plangi, nec accipiendas esse hic atras uestes, quando illi ibi indumenta alba iam sumpserint, occasionem dandam non esse gentilibus ut nos merito ac iure reprehendant quod quos uiuere apud Deum dicimus, ut extinctos et perditos lugeamus, et fidem quam sermone et uoce depromimus cordis et pectoris testimonio non probemus. Spei nostrae ac fidei praeuaricatores sumus; simulata, ficta, fucata uidentur esse quae dicimus. Nihil prodest uerbis praeferre uirtutem et factis destruere ueritatem.

Nouă și mie însumi chiar, cel din urmă și cel neînsemnat, cât de des mi-a fost revelat, cât de des și de deslușit mi-a fost înfățișat de către grația divină ca eu cu sârguință să dau mărturie și să destăinui public că frații noștri, care sunt eliberați din această lume la chemarea Domnului nu trebuie jeliți, căci știm că ei nu sunt pierduți, ci doar trimiși înainte; că, plecând de lângă noi, ei stau înaintea noastră drept călători, după cum obișnuiesc navigatorii; căci ei ar trebui doriți și nu jeliți; căci hainele negre n-ar trebui să le purtăm aici, când ei și-au luat deja veșminte albe acolo; că acest prilej n-ar trebui dat păgânilor, fiindcă pe bună dreptate ne învinuiesc că noi îi jelim pe aceia care, spunem noi, trăiesc întru Domnul, ca și cum ar fi morți și pierduți; și că nu dovedim prin mărturia inimii credința pe care o mărturisim prin cuvânt.

Suntem înșelători ai speranței și ai credinței noastre; ceea ce spunem pare să fie prefăcut, născocit, neadevărat. Nu avem nici un câștig să lăudăm virtutea prin cuvintele noastre și să distrugem adevărul prin faptele noastre.

Capitolul XXI

Increpat denique apostolus Paulus et obiurgabat et culpat si qui contristentur in excessu suorum: Nolumus, inquit, ignorare uos, fratres, de dormientibus, ut non contristemini sicut et caeteri qui spem non habent. Si enim credimus quia Iesus mortuus est et resurrexit, sic et Deus eos qui dormierunt in Iesu adducet cum illo. Eos contristari dicit in excessu suorum qui spem non habent. Qui autem spe uiuimus et in Deum credimus et Christum passum esse pro nobis et resurrexisse confidimus, in Christo manentes, et per ipsum atque in ipso resurgentes, quid aut ipsi recedere istinc de saeculo nolumus, aut nostros recedentes quasi perditos plangimus ac dolemus, ipso Christo Domino et Deo nostro monente ac dicente: Ego

sum resurrectio et uita. Qui credit in me, licet moriatur, uiuet; et omnis qui uiuit et credit in me, non morietur in aeternum. Si in Christum credimus, si fidem uerbis et promissis eius habemus, et non morimur in aeternum, ad Christum, cum quo et uicturi et regnaturi semper sumus, laeta securitate ueniamus.

Astfel, Apostolul Pavel îi rușinează și dojenește și învinovățește pe toți cei care se întristează la plecarea celor dragi: „Nu-mi doresc, zice, să fiți neștiutori, fraților, în privința celor adormiți, ca să nu vă îndurerați precum cei lipsiți de speranță. Căci, dacă credem că Iisus a murit și a înviat, tot astfel și cei care sunt adormiți întru Domnul vor fi duși de Dumnezeu cu El” (Tesaloniceni 4, 13-14). El spune că aceia care nu au speranță sunt îndurerați la plecarea celor dragi. În schimb, noi care trăim în speranță și credem în Dumnezeu și suntem încredințați că Hristos a suferit pentru noi și că a înviat, rămânând în Hristos, și înviind prin El și în El, de ce suntem noi înșine nedoritori să plecăm din această viață sau jelim și ne măhnim pentru prietenii noștri care pleacă ca și cum ar fi morți, căci însuși Hristos Domnul și Dumnezeul nostru ne mângâie și spune: „Eu sunt Învierea și Viața. Cel care crede în mine, deși moare, va trăi; și oricine trăiește și crede în mine nu va muri în veci” (Ioan 10, 25-26).

Dacă credem în Hristos, dacă avem încredere în cuvintele și promisiunile Lui și dacă nu murim pe veci, să venim cu liniște sufletească către Hristos, cu care vom birui și vom stăpâni de-a pururi.

Capitolul XXII

Quod interim morimur, ad immortalitatem morte transgredimur; nec potest uita aeterna succedere, nisi hinc contigerit exire. Non est exitus iste, sed transitus et temporali itinere decurso ad aeterna transgressus. Quis non ad meliora uenire festinet? quis non mutari et transformari ad Christi speciem et ad coelestis gloriae dignitatem uenire citius exoptet, Paulo apostolo praedicante et dicente: Nostra autem conuersatio, inquit, in coelis est, unde et Dominum exspectamus Iesum Christum, qui transformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae conformatum corpori claritatis suae. Tales nos futuros et Christus Dominus pollicetur, quando, ut cum illo simus, et cum illo in aeternis sedibus uiuamus, atque in regnis coelestibus gaudeamus, Patrem pro nobis precatur dicens: Pater, quos mihi dedisti uolo ut ubi ego fuero et ipsi sint mecum, et uideant claritatem quam mihi dedisti priusquam mundus fieret. Venturus ad Christi sedem, ad regnorum coelestium claritatem, lugere non debet nec plangere, sed potius, secundum

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

pollicitationem Domini, secundum fidem ueri, in profectioe hac sua et translatione gaudere.

Fiindcă, atunci când murim, trecem spre veșnicie prin moarte; nici viața eternă nu poate fi dobândită dacă nu ne e dat să plecăm din aceasta. Acesta nu este un sfârșit, ci o trecere și o pășire spre veșnicie, după ce drumul s-a încheiat.

Cine nu dorește să se grăbească către locuri mai bune? Cine nu râvnește să fie prefăcut și reînnoit întru asemănarea lui Hristos și să ajungă mai repede la demnitatea gloriei cerești, de vreme ce Apostolul Pavel povățuiește și spune: „Însă conviețuirea noastră este în cer, acolo unde îl așteptăm pe Domnul Iisus Hristos, cel care va prefăce corpul umilirii noastre făcându-l asemenea corpului slavei sale” (Filipeni 3, 20-21).

Și Domnul Hristos făgăduiește că vom fi astfel, atunci când vom fi cu El și când vom trăi cu El în sălașurile veșnice și ne vom bucura în împărățiile cerești. El se roagă Tatălui pentru noi spunând: „Tată, vreau ca cei pe care mi i-ai încredințat mie să fie și ei cu mine unde voi fi eu și să vadă slava pe care mi-ai dat-o înainte de facerea lumii” (Ioan 17, 24). Cel care urmează să ajungă la tronul lui Hristos, la gloria împărățiilor cerești, nu trebuie nici să plângă, nici să jelească, ci mai degrabă, potrivit cu promisiunea Domnului, potrivit cu credința lui în adevăr, se se bucore prin aceasta de plecarea și de trecerea lui.

Capitolul XXIII

Sic denique inuenimus et Enoch translatum esse, qui Deo placuit, sicut in Genesi testatur et loquitur Scriptura diuina: Et placuit Enoch Deo, et non est inuentus postmodum, quia Deus illum transtulit. Hoc fuit placuisse in conspectu Dei, de hoc contagio saeculi meruisse transferi. Sed et per Salomonem docet Spiritus sanctus eos qui Deo placeant maturius istinc eximi et citius liberari, ne, dum in isto mundo diutius immorantur, mundi contactibus pollutantur. Raptus est, inquit, ne malitia mutaret intellectum illius. Placita enim erat Deo anima eius. Propter hoc properauit ebducere eum de media iniquitate. Sic et in Psalmis ad Dominum properat spiritali fide Deo suo anima deuota dicens: Quam dilectissimae habitationes tuae, Deus uirtutum! Desiderat et properat anima mea ad atria Dei.

Astfel, mai mult chiar, aflăm că Enoh, cel care i-a plăcut lui Dumnezeu, a fost înălțat și el, precum se mărturisește în Geneză și spune Sfânta Scriptură: „Și Enoh i-a plăcut lui Dumnezeu și după aceea el n-a fost de

găsit, căci Dumnezeu l-a mutat la El” (Geneză 5, 24). S-a întâmplat acest lucru pentru a-I fi pe plac lui Dumnezeu, de a fi meritat să fi fost mutat din această stricăciune a lumii. Ba mai mult, Sfântul Duh ne învață prin Solomon că aceia care îl mulțumesc pe Dumnezeu sunt luați de aici mai devreme și mai curând, ca nu cumva, în timp ce zăbovesc mai mult în această lume, să fie atinși de molimele lumii.

„A fost luat, zice, pentru ca răutatea să nu schimbe mintea sa” (Înțelepciunea lui Solomon 4, 11, 14). Căci sufletul lui îi era pe plac lui Dumnezeu; de aceea s-a grăbit El să-l scoată din mijlocul păcătoșilor”. Astfel și în Psalmi, sufletul devotat Dumnezeului lui, prin credință spirituală se grăbește la Domnul spunând: „Cât de plăcute sunt sălașele Tale, Dumnezeu al virtuților! Sufletul meu râvnește și se grăbește către grădina lui Dumnezeu”. (Psalmul 83, 2, 3).

Capitolul XXIV

Eius est in mundo diu uelle remanere quem mundus oblectat, quem saeculum blandiens atque decipiens illecebris terrenae uoluptatis inuitat. Porro, cum mundus oderit Christianum, quid amas eum qui te odit, et non magis sequeris Christum, qui te et redemit et diligit? Ioannes in Epistola sua clamat et loquitur, et ne, carnalia desideria sectantes, mundum diligamus hortatur: Nolite, inquit, diligere mundum neque ea quae in mundo sunt. Si quis dilexerit mundum, non est charitas Patris in illo; quia omne quod in mundo est concupiscentia carnis est et concupiscentia oculorum et ambitio saeculi, quae non est a Patre, sed ex concupiscentia mundi. Et mundus transibit et concupiscentia eius: qui autem fecerit uoluntatem Dei manet in aeternum, quomodo et Deus manet in aeternum. Potius, fratres dilectissimi, mente integra, fide firma, uirtute robusta, parati ad omnem uoluntatem Dei simus, pauore mortis excluso, immortalitatem quae sequitur cogitemus. Hoc nos ostendamus esse quod credimus, ut neque charorum lugeamus excessum, et cum accersitionis propriae dies uenerit, incunctanter et libenter ad Dominum ipso uocante ueniamus.

Își dorește să rămână multă vreme în această lume, acela pe care lumea îl ocrotește, pe care viața măgulindu-l și amăgindu-l îl cheamă prin ispite la plăcerea lumească. Mai departe, când lumea îl urăște pe creștin, de ce iubești pe cel care te urăște și de ce nu îl urmezi mai curând pe Hristos, cel care te-a și mântuit, te și iubește?

În Epistola sa, Ioan strigă și spune și ne sfătuiește să nu urmăm dorințele trupești și să nu iubim lumea: „Nu iubiți lumea și nici lucrurile care

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

sunt în lume. Dacă cineva iubește lumea, dragostea Tatălui nu este în El, căci tot ce este în lume este dorința cărnii și dorința ochilor și vanitatea vieții, care nu este de la Tatăl, ci din dorința lumii. Și lumea va pieri, la fel și dorința, însă cel care va face voia lui Dumnezeu, dănuie de-a pururi, precum și Dumnezeu rămâne de-a pururi” (Ioan 3, 15-17).

Mai degrabă, preaiubiților frați, cu o minte curată, cu o credință nezdruncinată, cu o virtute puternică, să fim pregătiți pentru orice voință a lui Dumnezeu, să ne gândim la veșnicia care urmează, lăsând la o parte frica de moarte.

Prin aceasta să ne dovedim nouă înșine că suntem ceea ce credem, încât nu jelim la plecarea celor dragi nouă și că atunci când va sosi ziua propriei chemări la judecată, venim fără întârziere și fără împotrivire la Dumnezeu, când El însuși ne va chema.

Capitolul XXV

Quod cum semper faciendum fuerit Dei seruis, nunc fieri multo magis debet, corruente iam mundo et malorum infestantium turbidinitibus obsesso; ut qui cernimus coepisse iam grauiam et scimus imminere grauiora, lucrum maximum computemus si istinc uelocius recedamus. Si in habitaculo tuo parietes uetustate nutarent, tecta desuper tremarent, domus iam fatigata, iam lassa, aedificiis senectute labentibus, ruinam proximam minaretur, nonne omni celeritate migrares? Si nauigante te turbida et procellosa tempestas fluctibus uiolentius excitatis praenuntiaret futura naufragia, nonne portum uelociter peteres? Mundus ecce nutat et labitur, et ruinam sui non iam senectute rerum, sed fine testatur; et tu non Deo gratias agis, non tibi gratularis quod, exitu maturiore subtractus, ruinis et naufragiis et plagis imminentibus exuaris?

Și aceasta, precum ar trebui mereu să fie făcut de către robii lui Dumnezeu, și mai mult ar trebui să se facă acum, acum că lumea se năruie și este prigonită de furtuni ale relelor nelegiuite; pentru ca noi, cei care vedem că au început lucruri grave și știm că și mai multe lucruri mai grave sunt aproape, putem să socotim acest lucru drept cel mai mare folos dacă plecăm de aici cât mai repede.

Dacă în locuința ta pereții se clatină de vechime, acoperișurile se clatină deasupra, casa, acum îmbătrânită și ponosită, ar fi amenințată de o distrugere iminentă, prăbușindu-se din cauza vechimii zidurilor, oare n-ai pleca de acolo cu toată repeziciunea? Dacă, în timp ce navighezi, o

furtună crâncenă și tumultuoasă, cu valuri care se ridică nemilos, prezice un naufragiu iminent, nu te-ai grăbi să te îndrepti către port?

Iată, lumea se schimbă și dispare și dovedește năruirea ei nu acum, prin vechimea lucrurilor, ci prin sfârșitul lor. Și tu nu-i mulțumești lui Dumnezeu? Nu te felițiți pe tine însuși fiindcă, retras printr-o plecare mai timpurie, te salvezi de la dezastru și naufragiile și loviturile inevitabile?

Capitolul XXVI

Considerandum est, fratres dilectissimi, et identidem cogitandum renuntiassent nos mundo, et tamquam hospites et peregrinos istuc interim degere. Amplectamur diem qui assignat singulos domicilio suo, qui nos istinc ereptos et laqueis saecularibus exsolutos paradiso restituit et regno. Quis non peregre constitutus properaret in patriam regredi? quis non, ad suos nauigare festinans, uentum prosperum cupidius optaret, ut uelociter charos liceret amplecti? Patriam nostram paradysum computamus: parentes Patriarchas habere iam coepimus. Quid non properamus et currimus ut patriam nostram uidere, ut parentes salutare possimus? Magnus illic nos charorum numerus exspectat, parentum, fratrum, filiorum frequens nos et copiosa turba desiderat, iam de sua incolumitate secunda, et adhuc de nostra salute sollicita. Ad horum conspectum et complexum uenire quanta et illis et nobis in commune laetitia est? Qualis illic coelestium regnorum uoluptas sine timore moriendi, et cum aeterni uite uiuendi quam summa et perpetua felicitas! Illic Apostolorum gloriosus chorus, illic Prophetarum exultantium numerus, illic Martyrum innumerabilis populus ob certaminis et passionis uictoriam coronatus, triumphantes illic; Virgines, quae concupiscentiam carnis et corporis continentiae robore subegerunt; remunerati misericordes, qui alimentis et largitionibus pauperum iustitiae opera fecerunt, qui Dominica praecepta seruantes ad coelestes thesauros terrena patrimonia transtulerunt. Ad hos, fratres dilectissimi, auida cupiditate properemus, ut cum his cito esse, ut cito ad Christum uenire contingat optemus. Hanc cogitationem nostram Deus uideat, hoc propositum mentis et fidei Dominus Christus aspiciat, daturus eis gloriae suae ampliora praemia quorum circa se fuerint desideria maiora.

Trebuie să chibzuim, preaiubiților frați, și să ne reamintim de îndată că noi am renunțat la lume și că ne găsim deocamdată aici ca oaspeți și trecători. Să salutăm ziua care ne trimite pe fiecare din noi la casa lui, care, răpindu-ne de aici și eliberându-ne de încercările lumii, ne redă raiului și împărăției. Cine nu s-ar grăbi să se întoarcă în patrie, aflându-se în exil?

St. Cyprian's Place in Christian Literature

Cine nu și-ar dori cu ardoare un vânt prielnic grăbindu-se să navigheze spre ai săi, ca să-i poată îmbrățișa mai repede pe cei dragi?

Socotim raiul patria noastră – am început deja să-i vedem pe patriarhi ca pe părinții noștri. De ce nu ne grăbim și alergăm să ne putem vedea patria noastră, să-i putem saluta pe părinți? Ne așteaptă acolo mulți dintre cei dragi, un număr mare de părinți, de frați, de copii, și o mulțime numeroasă ne dorește, sigură deja de propria salvare și încă îngrijorată de mântuirea noastră.

Pentru a ajunge în apropierea și îmbrățișarea lor, câtă bucurie, atât pentru ei, cât și pentru noi! Ce plăcere se află acolo în împărăția cerurilor, fără teama de moarte, și cât de infinită fericirea în comuniunea veșnică a vieții!

Acolo sus e gloriosul cor al apostolilor, acolo numărul profeților care se bucură, acolo ceata nenumărată a martirilor, încoronată pentru victoria luptei și a patimii lor, triumfătoare acolo; fecioarele, care înving dorința cărnii și a trupului prin puterea înfrânării lor; acolo sunt oameni milostivi răsplătiți, care, prin hrănirea și sprijinirea săracilor, au făcut un act de dreptate, care, păstrând preceptele Domnului, și-au trecut avuțiile pământești la comorile cerești. Către aceștia, frați preaiubiți, să ne grăbim cu o dorință înfocată, ca să așteptăm cu nerăbdare să fim curând cu ei și să venim repede la Hristos.

[Fie ca] Dumnezeu să binecuvânteze această dorință a noastră, fie ca Domnul Hristos să cerceteze acest gând al minții și credinței noastre, el care va da răsplăți mai mari ale slavei Lui acelor ale căror dorințe în ce-L privește erau mai mari.

Pentru realizarea traducerii în limba română a lucrării *De mortalitate* s-a utilizat textul latin din ediția *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera*, apărută în *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CC2), pars II, III A, cura et studio M. Simonetti (Typographi Brepolos Editores Pontificii, 1976) consultându-se și *Patrologia Latina*, J-P. Migne, tom XXIII, III.

BOOK REVIEWS

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, *Orthodox Theology in the Twenty-First Century*, Foreword by Pantelis Kalaitzidis, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2012, 52 p., ISBN: 978-2-8254-1571-9

This book opens a new series inaugurated by Volos Academy and WCC Publications: *Doxa & Praxis: Exploring Orthodox Theology*. It is the result of a public lecture – in Greek – at Volos, in the framework of the program on *Orthodoxy and Multiculturalism*, on April 28, 2004, by Metropolitan of Diokleia Kallistos Ware, former Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies at Oxford University and presently Emeritus Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford.

The thesis of this book is that while, during the twentieth century, the dominant theological issue was ecclesiological, in the twenty-first century, in light of rapid developments in science and information, technology, environmental biotechnology, environmental ethics and bioethics, the quintessential problem of Orthodox theology will be the anthropological issue. The first chapter of the book (p. 15-22) is an overview of the main directions in Orthodox ecclesiology, focusing on “eucharistic ecclesiology”, which emphasized the indissoluble link between Church - Eucharist - Bishop.

The second chapter of the book (p. 23-28) links ecclesiological theme of the anthropological – „it is only in the Church that human persons become authentically themselves” (p. 25). The task of nowadays theology is to reaffirm the uniqueness and infinite value of each specific human being. The technologization of the modern world, the genetic manipulation and the environmental crisis require this imperative. (Ecological damage, shows K. Ware, is not due „simply to some technical error of judgement, but is morally and spiritually evil”. See p. 28)

The third chapter (p. 29-34) enters deeply into the topic of Christian anthropology. It is not by chance that this chapter is entitled „Apophatic

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, *Orthodox Theology in the Twenty-First Century*

Anthropology”: human person is a mystery even to herself. She is irreducible and creative (see Psalm 63, 6: „The heart is deep”). Mystery occurs because man is created “in the image” of God, and this is treated more fully in the next chapter.

„Living icon of the living God” is the title and essence of the fourth chapter (p. 35-40). Biblical text from Genesis 1, 26-28 tells us something essential about the human being: that he is created in the image and likeness of God. „Because it is in this way iconic, human nature is inescapably relational... To be human signifies a sense of direction, a goal, an orientation – an orientation to God... The human being without God is no longer authentically human, but becomes subhuman” (p. 37). The holy Fathers did not define exactly what constitutes “the image” of God in man: some associated the image with soul (St. Gregory of Nazianzus or St. Gregory of Nyssa), while others considered that the image is reflected in the total human being, soul and body together. But all were unanimous in emphasizing that „in the image of God” means the image of Christ, the Creator Logos. This is why, like G. Florovsky who affirmed ecclesiology to be a chapter of Christology, metropolitan Kallistos Ware stands that anthropology is a chapter or subdivision of Christology (p. 39).

The last chapter emphasizes the relevance of Orthodox anthropology principles in the present social, historical and cultural context (p. 41-49). One of the tasks of Orthodox theology in the twenty-first century is to reactivate the Patristic idea of the human person as mediator between heaven and earth, as „cosmic liturgist” or „priest of the creation”. It is an idea that has been promoted especially by saints Gregory of Nazianzus and Maximus the Confessor. They show that man is not only *microcosmos* or *megalocosmos*, but especially *microtheos*. More important than the human quality to be „image of the world” (*imago mundi*), reconciling and harmonizing the entire created order, is her quality of being „the image of God” (*imago Dei*). Attending both the material world and the spiritual man is „an animal that is being deified” (*zoontheoumenon*), i.e. a living creature that has received the call to become god (*theosis*).

The human deification by grace can take place only in and through Jesus Christ, God-man (*Theanthropos*); He is the one true mediator (see Col. 1, 17 and Eph. 1, 10). Thus deification means Christification (p. 45-46). Environment to achieve the salvation process is the Body of Christ, the Church and the maximum union with Head of the Church, Christ is

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, *Orthodox Theology in the Twenty-First Century*

the Holy Eucharist. What does this mean? That „the human animal is not primarily a logical animal, nor yet a political animal, but much more fundamentally a eucharistic animal” (p. 46). And in order to be a „eucharistic animal”, the human person has also to be an „ascetical animal” – to have a „kenotic simplicity” in her total life-style. This sacrificial lifestyle should not be restricted only in the church but should be extended worldwide as „the Liturgy after the Liturgy”. Love is the characteristic of the Christian as fully human; for self-emptying brings self-fulfilment (*kenosis* leads to *plerosis*). Descartes’ principle, *cogito, ergo sum* („I think, therefore I am”), is incomplete; it must be completed with the principle *amo, ergo sum* („I love, therefore I am”) or more precisely *amor, ergo sum* („I am loved, therefore I am”). The conclusion is: „If we can make love the starting-point and the end-point in our doctrine of personhood, our Christian witness in the twenty-first century will prove altogether creative and life-giving” (p. 49).

In the appendix at the end of the book we find the names of the most important religious philosophers and Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century: N. Afanasiev, S. Bulgakov, P. Evdokimov, G. Florovsky, Vl. Lossky, J. Meyendorff, P. Nellas, J. Romanides, A. Schmemmann, Siluanthe Athonite, archimandrite Sofronyi (Sakharov), D. Stăniloae, Chr. Yannaras, J. Zizioulas and, last but not least, metr. K. Ware (p. 51-52). It is further proof that the author of this book has managed to gather the most important contributions to contemporary Orthodox theology to develop a theological anthropology. Therefore we agree with the characterization made by P. Kalaitzidis in the preface: despite its small size, this book is a “brilliant text” (p. 11), a genuine orthodox anthropological synthesis.

Ph.D. Ciprian Iulian Toroczka

**Joseph Ratzinger, *Gesammelte Schriften* Band 10:
*Auferstehung und ewiges Leben. Beiträge zur Eschatologie
und zur Theologie der Hoffnung*, Herder, Freiburg-
Basel-Wien, 2012, 761s., ISBN: 978-3-451-34121-2**

Der Herausgeber der Gesammelten Schriften Joseph Ratzingers (Papst Benedikt XVI.), Gerhard L. Müller, schreibt, dass die 16 Bände sich als „Ausgabe letzter Hand“ des Theologen J. Ratzinger in Deutscher Sprache verstehen (vgl. unsere Rezension in *Revista Teologică* 21 (4/2011), S. 324-326). Der nun vorliegende Band 10 hat als Hauptthema die Eschatologie: Tod und ewiges Leben. Neben der Ekklesiologie, war die Eschatologie der Bereich, den Joseph Ratzinger am häufigsten seinen Studenten in der Vorlesung vermittelte.

Das Buch besteht aus vier großen Teilen: Teil A, mit der redaktionellen Überschrift „Auferstehung und ewiges Leben“ (s. 31-276), Teil B, „Die Entfaltung des dialogischen Verständnisses von Unsterblichkeit und Auferstehung“ (s. 279-485), Teil C, „Reich-Gottes-Erwartung und Theologie der Befreiung“ (s. 489-641), und Teil D, Predigten (s. 645-691). Im Anhang (s. 694-761) befinden sich: Literaturverzeichnis, Editorische Hinweise, Bibliographische Nachweise, Schriftstellenregister und Namenregister.

Das Buch, mit dem Band eröffnet wird, erschien erstmal 1977 in Regensburg in der Reihe „Kleine Katholische Dogmatik“ mit dem Titel *Eschatologie. Tod und ewiges Leben*. Hier geht es um die wichtigsten Aspekte des eschatologischen Problems, das die Frage nach dem Wesen des Christlichen überhaupt ist: Tod und Unsterblichkeit – Unsterblichkeit der Seele und Auferstehung der Toten, das kommende Leben – Hölle, Fegfeuer und Himmel usw. Ratzinger zeigt immer deutlich die christologische Dimension der Eschatologie: die Lebensgemeinschaft mit Christus ist Hilfe bei der Bewältigung von Not, Leid und Tod. Eschatologie ist die Lehre von der Vollendung des Menschen in unserem Herrn Jesus Christus, *Verbum incarnatum*.

Joseph Ratzinger, *Gesammelte Schriften*

Teil B umfasst acht Artikel, die für die zweite Auflage des *Lexikons für Theologie und Kirche* verfasst wurden: Auferstehung des Fleisches, Auferstehungsleib, Benedictus Deus, Ewigkeit, Himmel, Hölle, Leichnam und Sterben/Sich-Sterben. Danach folgen weitere Aufsätze, wie z. B. der mit dem Titel „Eschatologie und Utopie“ (s. 394-411).

In Teil C wird die sogenannte „Theologie der Befreiung“ diskutiert. Joseph Ratzinger, in seiner Zeit als Präfekt der Kongregation für die Glaubenslehre, machte eine Korrektur dieser politischen und oftmals marxistischen Konzeption, in der die „Erlösung“ nicht Vollendung in der *Communio* des dreifaltigen Gottes ist, sondern ein innerweltliches Paradies. Die Aussagen zur Anthropologie, Christologie und Soteriologie können jedoch nicht politisch-revolutionär interpretiert werden. Die Thematik der Theologie der Befreiung – betont der Autor – wird im Rahmen der Eschatologie behandelt: die Facetten der individuellen und gesellschaftlichen Erlösung, der Befreiung und der Vollendung können nur innerhalb der Gesamthermeneutik des universalen geoffenbarten Heilswillens Gottes in Jesus Christus stehen. Sonst würde der Charakter als Theologie verloren gehen.

Der letzte Teil des Buches enthält zehn Predigten (seit 1968 bis 2005). Diese bringen die theologische Diskussion in den Alltag des Menschen, der immer eingebunden ist in die Erkenntnis seiner eigenen Geschöpflichkeit in der Erwartung der endgültigen Vollendung in Gottes Dreifaltigkeit. Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Bischof von Regensburg – wo sich das Institut Papst Benedikt XVI. befindet – meinte, dass die vorgelegten Texte aus fast sechs Jahrhunderten „nicht nur zur rein wissenschaftlichen Durchdringung des Glaubens, sondern auch der Erfahrung wahren Menschseins im Angesicht Gottes“ dienen (s. 9). Hier befindet sich die Bedeutung und Aktualität dieses Buches.

Ph.D. Ciprian Iulian Toroczkai

Writing requirements for the studies included in the “Teologia” review

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The description of the theoretical framework of the theme

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

The aim of the study

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

The objectives of the study

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

The advanced hypothesis and the considered variables

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

The description of the research methodology

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

The presentation of the resultus of the investigation

- relevance of the results according to the theme, aim and objectives;

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

Interpretation of the results obtained

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

Suggestions

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

Remarks:

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

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

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

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF A FULL ARTICLE

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

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

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

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

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Footnotes are numbered continuously, starting with 1.

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

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

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