ICOANA CREDINȚEI

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

ICOANA CREDINŢEI
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
EDITORIAL BOARD AND STAFF

TABLE OF CONTENTS

* THEOLOGY STUDIES

Preface

The 11ᵗʰ issue of *Icoana Credintei* (*Icon of Faith*), *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research* (IFIJISR) encompasses a group of articles on various themes, dedicated to the areas of Theology, Philosophy, and Religion.

In this context the committee of corresponding authors for the issue 11, (January, 2019) of "Icoana Credintei", invite readers to visit our website to review articles and items of interest. The issue starts with a *vademecum* lecture: "NATION-BUILDING VERSUS *NATIONALISM:* DIFFICULT DILEMMAS FOR THE CHURCH", delivered by Fr. Archim. Prof. Cyril HOVORUN. The article provides a critical approach to the Orthodox editions of nationalism (Greek and Russian), which seemingly coheres with the traditional structure of local churches. In the Orthodox world, national particularity combined with ecclesial locality, can be either ethnic or civilizational. Their incompatibility often leads to conflicts and even wars.

The next paper belonging to PhD Nicolae PREDA is "THE SO-CALLED *PRAYERS OF THE KATHISMATA.* BRIEF HISTORICAL-LITURGICAL PRESENTATION". The prayers of the Kathismata had different structures depending on the two deterministic liturgical traditions, i.e. from Jerusalem and from Constantinople, trying to render some of their characteristic features.

Researcher PhD Paulo Nuno MARTINS signs the paper: "FATIMA AND THE VALUES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: AN ESSAY". In this study, the author presents the role of Fatima in the context of the values in contemporary society, trying to make the comparison of the content of the «Message of Fatima» with some contemporary «Marian Messages» received by the "seers" of the like of Marija Pavlovic and Patrícia Talbot.

The subsequent paper, signed by Eugen SPIERER, bears the title: "QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENTS AND THE LUTHERAN DISPERSAL OF SALVATION". It is an audacious paper tackling the classical dialogue between science and religion. Spierer describes how quantum time entanglements can facilitate a timeless dispersal of salvific grace, and hypothesize that it is God who creates, maintains and manipulates space-time using such entanglements, in a way analogous to a spider, controlling its web.

The next article, belonging to Comparative Religion field, unfolded by Fr. Prof. PhD Alexandru-Corneliu ARION is entitled: "THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF NIRVĀṆA AND THE VISION OF DEIFICATION OR PERFECTION IN CHRISTIANITY". Nirvāṇa is the goal for which Buddhists strive, but attaining to it is not like 'going to heaven' as Christians often understand it. The state of mokṣa or nirvāṇa is incompatible with the perfection of the human person, in the context of Christian deification, which means becoming ever-more Christ-like.

The next author, Rocco A. ASTORE presents beyond doubt an interesting paper, called: "THE PHILOSOPHER-KING AND THE GREAT SAGE: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MARCUS AURELIUS' STOICISM AND CONFUCIUS' ETHICAL THEORY". He tries to convince the reader how Aurelius' Stoic conception of arête (virtue) matches, or is the moral equivalent of the ethical conduct Confucius expounds in *The Analects*, specifically, the behaviors associated with those who are of the so-called junzi, i.e. people who are of a superior brand.

Lastly, Rev. Lecturer Assist. Georgian PĂUNOIU signs the paper "FROM ASCESIS TO CONTEMPLATION: SCRIPTURE READING, MEDITATION AND PRAYER IN THE WRITINGS OF SAINT ISAAC THE SYRIAN". According to St Isaac, prayer, spiritual meditation and Scripture reading are not mere obedience in the spiritual life, but an absolutely necessary experience in acquiring holiness, a safe guide for the one who obtains the key to the ineffable divine gifts.

January 2020   **Fr. Prof. PhD Alexandru-Corneliu ARION**

NATION-BUILDING VERSUS NATIONALISM: DIFFICULT DILEMMAS FOR THE CHURCH

Fr. Archim. Prof. Cyril HOVORUN,
Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles
USA,
E-mail: serhiy.hovorun@yale.edu

ABSTRACT

The article explores the phenomenon of nationalism in general and its Eastern Christian nuances in particular. It describes two major theories of nationalism: modernist and primordial. It also distinguishes between two stages of nationalism: emancipatory and oppressive. The former is healthier than the latter. The article focuses on the Orthodox editions of nationalism, which seemingly coheres with the traditional structure of local churches. In the Orthodox world, national particularity combined with ecclesial locality, can be either ethnic or civilizational. In the former case, it enhances a homogeneous national identity of the Balkan style. The latter case is an Orthodox neo-imperialism, which is incompatible with nation-building on the basis of one ethnicity. Their incompatibility often leads to conflicts and even wars.

Keywords: nation; civilization; identity; nationalism;

INTRODUCTION

Virtually all Orthodox churches are affected by nationalism to different degrees and in different forms. There are various types of nationalism in the modern Orthodox world. Some of them are quite civil, and some can be violent. Some nationalisms are particularist: they worship a nation in the narrow sense of the word. Others are more universalist: they profess supra-ethnic "civilizations." Many Orthodox Christians perceive their ethnic identity as sacred. In fact, however, it is quite profane and can be explained by the modern theories of nationalism.

There are two main theories of nationalism. According to one, nationalism is an exclusive product of the era of modernity. One of the earliest students of nationalism, Elie Kedourie, credited Kant and the Enlightenment for its emergence.[1] Eric Hobsbawm connected the idea of nationalism with the emergence of capitalism.[2] In his book *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, he has traced the roots of nationalism back to the French revolution.[3] Benedict Anderson pushed the origins of nationalism a bit earlier, to the print

---

* Presentation at the conference "Theology and Tradition, Spirituality and Modernity" at the "Valahia" University in Târgoviște, May 29-31, 2019.

[1] See Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.

[2] See ibid.

[3] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

revolution and the process of substitution of Latin with vernacular languages in Europe.[4] Ernest Gellner suggested that modern nations never really existed, but were invented in the modern era.[5]

From the perspective of this theory, nationalism is coherent with ideology—another product of the modern era. Moreover, nationalism is probably the most powerful and long-lasting version of ideology.[6] Indeed, national identity has the same ideocratic nature as any ideology—the differentiation of ethnic groups is defined, in Benedict Anderson's words, only "by the style in which they are imagined."[7]

The concept of nation was introduced to the modern political discourse by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In the *Projet de constitution pour la Corse* (1765), he stated: "Every people has, or ought to have, a national character, and if it is lacking, one must begin by providing it to them."[8] Although the idea of nation was articulated by a secular thinker, it soon became appropriated by Christian churches. The Frenchman abbé Sieyès (1748-1836) rendered the concept of nation in almost metaphysical terms: "The nation exists before everything, it is the object of everything. Its will is always legal, it is the law itself."[9]

Rousseau connected the concept of nation with his other idea, that of social contract. The social contract, as he envisaged it, shifted political authority from monarchs to people. This process disturbed the cohesion of a people. The concept of nation was supposed to reinforce the shaken cohesion. Peoples now had to be united not as subjects of a king, but as a "nation." By consolidating around their elected representatives, who exercised political authority not by God's will, but by the will of citizens, citizens were supposed to act as a "nation." The nation was understood as a common political space, to which all people belonged regardless of their birth, wealth, and religion.[10] Nation became a source of political legitimacy for national governments, who functioned on behalf of a people.

The alternative theory of nationalism holds that its roots go deep to primordiality.[11] Hugh Seton-Watson[12], Doron Mendels[13], and Susan Reynolds[14] found the roots of some modern nations as early as in Antiquity. Indeed, one can see as paradigmatic for most modern national identities the following definition of Greeks by Herodotus: "There is the Greek nation (τὸ Ἑλληνικόν)—the community of blood and language, temples and ritual, and our common customs."[15]

---

[4] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 39.

[5] Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 168.

[6] John Breuilly has called it "the most important political ideology of the modern era." John Breuilly, "Reflections on Nationalism", in Stuart Woolf, ed., *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present: a Reader*, (London: Routledge, 1996), 137.

[7] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 6.

[8] http://www.constitution.org/jjr/corsica.htm [accessed April 9, 2019].

[9] Murray Greensmith Forsyth, *Reason and Revolution: the Political Thought of the Abbé Sieyes*, (Leicester; New York: Leicester University Press; Holmes & Meier, 1987), 76.

[10] See Erica Benner, "Nationalism: Intellectual Origins," in John Breuilly, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.

[11] See Peter Burke, "Nationalism and Vernaculars, 1500-1800," in ibid., 21.

[12] Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: an Enquiry Into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977).

[13] *Memory in Jewish, Pagan, and Christian Societies of the Graeco-Roman World*, (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

[14] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

[15] Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.144.1-3, transl. by Aubrey de Sélincourt, (London: Penguin, 2003).

There is apparently no much contradiction between the modern and premodern theories of nationalism, as premodern "nationalisms" can be seen as early forms of modern nationalisms. Probably it would be correct to call the former not "nationalisms," but "proto-nationalisms." They had a religious nature, in contrast to the modern nationalisms, which are secular in their nature.

A common feature of many proto-nationalisms was the idea of choosiness by God. Thus, long before the modernity Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) enchanted the Florentines with the idea that they are an "elect nation." The Reformation developed this idea further bestowing upon some "chosen nations" a mission to reform Christianity. As a result, German Lutheran, American Puritan, Scottish Presbyterian, and Dutch Reformed exceptionisms contributed to formation of corresponding nations.

Eastern proto-nationalisms also featured the idea of religious choosiness. However, in contrast to the Western mission to reform Christianity, they considered as their mission to preserve Christianity in its traditional forms. This is particularly the idea behind Greek, Romanian, Russian, and some other nationalisms. Orthodox nationalisms were also greatly inspired by the idea of preserving Byzantium. They can be called "meta-Byzantine" nationalisms.

Probably the earliest form of Eastern Christian proto-nationalism was doctrinal, when a theological movement turned to people's identity. Such was Arianism. It was a theological doctrine, which contributed to shaping a proto-national identity of a people – the Goths. Translation of the Bible to Gothic by the Arianising bishop Wulfila, contributed to the transformation of the doctrinal affiliation of the Goths to their cultural identity, which can be interpreted as proto-national. Arianism as a Gothic proto-national identity outlived Arianism as a theological doctrine.

Even more lasting proto-national identities were shaped by the theological controversies regarding the person and natures of Jesus Christ. In the beginning of the fifth century, a group of eastern Syrians adopted a teaching articulated by Theodore of Mopsuestia and promoted by the patriarch of Constantinople Nestorios. After this teaching was condemned by the Third ecumenical council of Ephesos (431) as "Nestorianism," many "Nestorians" moved to Persia. There, they mixed up with other religious dissidents from the Roman Empire. In the Sassanid Empire, the "Nestorian" confession gradually turned to a proto-ethnic identity of what is now known as the "Assyrian" people.

Soon after the council of Ephesos, the council of Chalcedon (451) decided that all Christians in the Roman Empire should recognize in Christ two natures and not one. However, many Egyptians and western Syrians disagreed with this decision. They formed confessional groups, which adopted the names of the leaders of dissent: "Theodosians" after the name of the Alexandrian Patriarch Theodosios (died 567), "Severans" after the Patriarch of Antioch Severos (465-538), and "Jacobites" after the bishop of Edessa Jacob Baradaeus (died 578). These groups built their identities upon the rejection of the council of Chalcedon. These identities gradually developed to ethnic ones: Copts, Syrians, Armenians,[16] etc. Their common denominator became the rejection of 1) the Greek language, 2) Roman rule, and 3) Chalcedonian Orthodoxy.

---

[16] Armenian national identity has become particularly strong. In the Pew research, it is on the top of the list of national identities connected with religion—82% (Pew Research Center, "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe," *Pew Reserach Center*, May 10, 2017, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/05/10104119/CEUP-FULL-REPORT.pdf, 12).

These three features, in their turn, transformed to the "Byzantine" proto-national identity.[17] The Byzantines did not call themselves "Byzantines," but "Romans." This identity, which became known as Ρωμιοσύνη, comprised political, religious, and cultural components.[18] It by far survived Byzantium.

The Roman identity thrived in the Ottoman period. The non-Muslim religious minorities were organised to politically semi-autonomous groups called *millets*. The principle of organisation of these groups was religious: *Yahud milleti* included all Jews, *millet-i Ermeniyan*—all non-Chalcedonians; *millet-i Rûm*—all Chalcedonians, and the latest, *Katolik millet*, provided autonomy for all Roman Catholics. Each *millet* had its own taxation, education, and courts. Their top hierarchs were also political leaders for their flocks. For instance, the political leader of the "Roman" *millet* was the patriarch of Constantinople.

The "Roman" *millet* included all Chalcedonian Christians regardless of their ethnic background: Greeks, Serbs, Bulgars, Albanians, Montenegrins, etc. The same is with the "Armenian" *millet*, which included not only Armenians, but also Copts, Syrians, and other non-Chalcedonian groups. It was also managed by a patriarch. The Armenian patriarchate of Constantinople, different from the two Armenian Catholicosates, still exists as a rudiment of the *millet* system.

The Ottoman *millet* system was finalized in the nineteenth century, during the *Tanzimât* reforms. In the same period, the *millets* began a gradual transformation from the system based on religious identity to the ethnic system. Some ethnic groups from these *millets* emancipated from the Ottoman Empire through revolutions and wars, and established their national states. Among them were Greeks, Romanians, Bulgars, Serbs, and Montenegrins. Other peoples were less lucky and did not gain statehood for themselves, such as Copts, Syrians or Armenians. For the Armenians, their national rise ended tragically with the genocide in 1915-1917. The Habsburg Empire faced the same problem of emancipation of its ethnic minorities. Serbs, Romanians, Ukrainians, and Ruthenians looked for their own states independent from Austro-Hungary. All these emancipatory movements in the empires, where Eastern Christians constituted religious minorities, were driven by national ideology, which we will explore below as "ethnic nationalism" or the "Balkan" style of nationalism.

This style of nationalism was "derivative," in the words of Peter van der Veer.[19] It had been born in the context of the Western Enlightenment and then transmitted to the Eastern context. The Western ideas about nation were disseminated through the philhellenes like Lord Byron (1788-1824), who projected to Greece his English nationalism,[20] or through the Orthodox intellectuals in the diaspora, such as Adamantios Korais (1748-1833). In this regard, Christos Yannaras is right when he criticizes as a Western construct the modern Greek national identity, which he calls "neo-Hellenism."[21]

The *Société des observateurs de l'homme*, where the idea of nation was discussed by French intellectuals, became also a place, where Korais, the only foreign member of the

---

[17] See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 27.

[18] See Claudia Rapp, "Hellenic Identity, *Romanitas*, and Christianity in Byzantium," in Katerina Zacharia, ed., *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*, (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 127-147.

[19] Peter van der Veer, "Nationalism and Religion," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 655.

[20] See Maria Koundoura, *The Greek Idea: the Formation of National and Transnational Identities*, (London: Tauris, 2007), 64.

[21] Χρήστου Γιανναρᾶ, *Κεφάλαια πολιτικῆς θεολογίας*, (Ἀθήνα: Γρηγόρη, 1983), 30.

Society, evoked the Greek antiquity to be laid to the fundament of the new Greek nation.[22] Korais explained his plan for the renewal of the Greek nation using the language of commerce – his first profession was a merchant. According to him, when Europe was emerging from barbarianism, it borrowed intellectual treasures from the ancient Greeks. Now it was time for Europe to pay the debt back, with some commission.[23] Korais coined a word for this business: μετακένωσις. He dreamed of *metakenosis* as a transplantation of the European education and intellectual culture to the Greek soil.

If measured by the theories of nationalism, Korais definitely belongs to the pre-modern school. He traced the Greek nation to the antique primordiality. Since then, in his opinion, the Greek national culture has only downgraded: first by Romans, then in the Byzantine period, and eventually fell to lethargy under the Ottomans. Only coming back to the "golden age" of the Athenian democracy can raise the Greek nation from ashes.

In addition to the French ideas, there was a significant German input to the formation of the Orthodox nationalism. Germany's advanced classical studies were among the key factors that ignited European philhellenism in the beginning of the nineteenth century.[24] German idealism inspired intellectuals in the Orthodox countries to idealize nationalism. Particularly important in the East became the German concept of language as an instrument of national formation.

Germany was politically divided during the most of the nineteenth century. As a result, it could not offer to all Germans a common social contract. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) suggested instead consolidating the German people on the basis of common language, which exceeded political boundaries. Johann Gottlieb Fichte interpreted language as culture in a broad sense. He suggested that cultural sovereignty is even stronger than the political one and must be developed by any group of people who seek to be called a nation.[25]

In line with the German ideas, the Orthodox minorities in both Ottoman and Habsburg empires began their national struggle by defining themselves culturally. Local literati standardized people's vernacular and began producing literature in spoken Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Romanian, and other languages. They launched campaigns to establish networks of national schools, which were to become nurseries for language and culture. They also argued against each other whose culture is higher.

Although the initial momentum that instigated the Orthodox nationalism was French, the Orthodox peoples eventually embarked on the German kind of nationalism. Rogers Brubaker from UCLA identified the difference between them as German *jus sangunis* – the right of blood, versus the French *jus soli* – the right of land.[26] This difference means that to be French required to live on the French land, while to be German meant to be born German by blood regardless of where this has happened. The difference was conditioned by the fact that France in the period of the formation of national ideas was a strong unitarian state, while Germany was an agglomerate of independent polities. The Orthodox minorities in the

---

[22] See Olga Augustinos, "Philhellenic Promises and Hellenic Visions: Korais and the Discourses of the Enlightenment," in Zacharia, *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*, 169.
[23] See ibid., 191.
[24] See Glenn Most, "Philhellenism, Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism," in Zacharia, *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*, 151.
[25] See Erica Benner, "Nationalism: Intellectual Origins," in Breuilly, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, 45-46.
[26] Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Ottoman and Habsburg empires were in a situation similar to the Germans. In addition, they often shared their land with the Muslim majority, whom they did not want to include to their nations. As a result, they wanted to define their nationality by blood, not by soil.

John Breuilly has defined nationalism as "a politics that seeks autonomy for the nation."[27] This definition fully applies to the Eastern Christian nationalisms. The efforts of the minorities that emerged from the two empires, to define themselves through religion, culture, and education, eventually led to their struggle for political independence. Independence turned to a categorical imperative for all Orthodox nationalist movements. The German idealism was inspirational for them once again. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, while dealing with the national issue in his own context, envisaged its destination in a unified German *Nationalstaat*, with a strong political authority and powerful army. For him, any accomplished nation meant a nation protected by the independent state. Only the people (*Völker*) with their national states had meaningful and dignified existence, deserving to be active *subjects* of the historical process, and not just its passive *objects*.

While national awakening in the West was rather secular, in the East it featured a strong religious dimension. It is noteworthy that the Orthodox Church played more important role in the national awakening on the territories of the Ottoman Empire, and was less active in the Habsburg domains. The Serbian national idea, for instance, consisted of two components: the ecclesial one generated in Belgrade (on the Ottoman territories), and the cultural, which originated from Vojvodina, a part of the Habsburg state. Similar situation was with the Romanian national idea: its cultural component came from the Habsburg's Transylvania, while its ecclesial platform was in Wallachia and Moldavia—two autonomous principalities under the Ottoman control.

The influence of the churches on the formation of the national statehood was not unilateral. National statehood affected the churches in return. It became a common understanding in the period of national struggles that the Orthodox nations should have their own autocephalous churches. The autocephaly in the nineteenth century became a form of what Peter van der Veer called "nationalization of religion."[28] It turned to a synonym for national sovereignty and a necessary attribute of an accomplished nation, together with language, culture, and educational system. The first instance of this type of autocephaly was the Greek Church, which unilaterally proclaimed its independence from the church of Constantinople in 1833. Independence of the Greek Church was recognized by the church of Constantinople only in 1850. It took even longer to recognize the Bulgarian church, which proclaimed its independence in 1872. This independence was eventually accepted by Constantinople in 1945.

The procedure of declaration of autocephaly based on national identity became different from the Late Antiquity and Middle Ages. Then it was *negotiated*, often by political figures, and proclaimed as a result of agreements between imperial and ecclesial authorities. In the nineteenth century, the procedure became similar to the *unilateral proclamation* of independent states. These states initially were not recognized by the empires, from which they separated, and existed for long time without such recognition. The same applied to autocephalies, which were first proclaimed unilaterally, and only a posteriori came to be recognized by their "mother" church.

---

[27] John Breuilly, "Nationalism and National Unification in Nineteenth-Century Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 150.
[28] Van der Veer, "Nationalism and Religion," 657.

The process, through which independent Orthodox nations obtained autocephaly for their churches, had a tremendous impact on these churches. On the one hand, they confirmed themselves as popular institutions standing by their people. On the other hand, many local Orthodox churches turned to "parcels of national identity."[29] Orthodoxy submerged to the ethnic identity, and itself became an identity. As a result, even now people, who identify themselves as Orthodox, confuse being an Orthodox with being a Serb, a Bulgarian or a Russian.

Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Romanian, and other Balkan nationalisms are particularist and aiming at building a single nation. There is another sort of nationalism that goes beyond only one nation. It can be called "civilizational." The subject of this nationalism is not a nation, but a civilization, which is larger and less particularist than nation. It is based on the concept of civilization as it was developed in the twentieth century by Arnold Toynbee, Quincy Wright, F.N. Parkinson and others, and had earlier precedents in the works of Oswald Spengler, who used the word "cultures" for "civilizations," as well as Lev Gumilyov with his concept of "super-ethnos." According to this concept, civilizations are "fixed organisms"[30] driven by their own values and logic. They are more social and cultural, and less geographical and linguistic entities.[31] Each of them acts according to its own understanding of its place in history.

In the modern scholarship, the concept of civilization is seen with skepticism. Nevertheless, it became extremely popular in the Orthodox milieu. There are two major Orthodox editions of "civilizational nationalism": Greek and Russian ones. Both of them echo the ideas of Victor de Riqueti, marquis de Mirabeau (1715–1789), who in his treatise *L'Ami des hommes* (1756) defined religion as "le premier ressort de la civilization."[32] Mirabeau (by the way, a father of the famous activist of the French revolution Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau (1749–1791)) implied that civilization is both civility opposite to barbarianism and a geopolitical organism, whose energy and identity stem from religion.

The prototype of the Orthodox civilizational nationalism was produced in Greece and is known as Ἑλληνισμός. The concept of Hellenism is based on the idea of civilization as contrasting to barbarianism. It is built on dichotomization between "us" and "them." This dichotomization goes back to the fifth century BC, when Greeks were at war with Persians. The Greeks identified the Persians – "them" – as "barbarians."[33]

Modern Greek nationalism claims that the historic Hellenic civilization was superior to any other civilization. According to the 2017 Pew research, Greeks are on the top of the list of the Orthodox nations who consider themselves culturally higher than other nations— 89 percent.[34] Christos Yannaras expresses this overwhelming majority of Greeks, when he claims that Hellenism is the most perfect "hypostasis" of Christianity. He draws a parallel between the cultural incarnation of Christianity in Hellenism and the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ.[35]

---

[29] Ibid., 658.

[30] Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and Its Contents*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), xii.

[31] See Arnold Toynbee, *Hellenism: the History of a Civilization*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 8.

[32] In Mazlish, *Civilization and Its Contents*, 5.

[33] See Katerina Zacharia, "Herodotus' Four Markers of Greek Identity," in Zacharia, *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*, 25-27.

[34] Pew Research Center, "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe," 13.

[35] Χρήστου Γιανναρά, *Ἀλήθεια καὶ ἑνότητα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας* (Ἀθήνα: Γρηγόρη, 1997), 273-275.

Hellenism is still capable of wrestling with new barbarianism, according to Yannaras, who has identified the latter with the modern West.[36] For him, the Greek civilization is built on the genuine Orthodoxy of faith, while the Western civilization, on the heretical interpretation of Christianity.[37] The West alienated the personal faith of the East and transformed it to an impersonal religion.[38] Even in its secularized form, the Western civilization continues to be heretical. Thus, it developed globalization as a distorted form of the Orthodox universality—οἰκουμενικότητα.[39]

The proponents of the "Russian world"—another version of the civilizational nationalism – also criticize the modern Western "civilization." In contrast to the followers of Hellenism, however, they relativize civility and do not make references to "barbarianism." For them, there are no superior or inferior civilizations, but there are multiple civilizations that have equal rights and sovereignty. Civilizations constitute centers of gravity in the world, which thus should be multipolar. Such a world is promoted as an alternative to what is described as a uni-polar world of the American dominance.[40]

The "Russian world" came to identify itself with the "Russian civilization." The main forum of the "Russian world," the World Russian People's Council, at its 2001 meeting, which was also attended by President Vladimir Putin, chose as its theme "Russia: Faith and Civilization." The council concluded in its final document that Russia "is one of the pillars of the Eastern Christian world and a center of a self-sufficient civilization." This implies that the world order "should be reshaped on the principles of multipolarity… The modern world cannot be built on one civilizational model only."[41] The rhetoric of the council repeats the ideas of Samuel Huntington (1927-2008)[42] and Aleksandr Panarin (1940-2003), who elaborated on the concept of the "Orthodox civilization."[43]

On the one hand, "civilizational nationalism" is still nationalism. It claims superiority for one "civilization" over others, which inevitably leads to the same conflicts and tensions that are pertinent to the classical nationalism. On the other hand, it is different and sometimes even contrary to the "ethnic nationalism," which is based on the concept of ethnos. From the perspective of the civilizational nationalism, ethnic nationalism reduces the grandeur of civilizations, which have broader horizons than nations. A zealous proponent of the Greek "civilizational nationalism" and polemicist against the ethnic nationalism, Christos Yannaras,[44] despises the small size and small interests of the Modern Greek state. His ideal is Byzantium. Unlike Korais, who considered Hellenism being in the process of permanent

---

[36] See Χρήστου Γιανναρά, "Βαρβαρικός αμοραλισμός," in his book *Ελληνότροπος Πολιτική. Εξ αντιθέτου κριτήρια και προτάσεις*, (Αθήνα: Ίκαρος, 1996), 64.

[37] Χρήστου Γιανναρά, *Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη Νεώτερη Ελλάδα* (Αθήνα: Δόμος, 2006), 56. The ideas of Yannaras in this point coincide with the positions of other Greek theologians, such as Nikos Matsoukas (*Ελληνορθόδοξη παράδοση και δυτικός πολιτισμός*, (Θεσσαλονίκη: Μήνυμα, 1985) and Marios Begzos (*Η μεταφυσική της ουσιοκρατίας στο Μεσαίωνα και η εκκοσμίκευση. Φιλοσοφική κριτική στη θρησκεία της Ευρώπης*, (Αθήνα, 1989).

[38] Χρήστου Γιανναρά, *Τα καθ' εαυτόν*, (Αθήνα: Ίκαρος, 2005), 43.

[39] See his lecture "Greek catholicity and Western globalism" delivered at the Foundation Anieli, Turin, Italy; published in Χρήστου Γιανναρά, *Η Αριστερά ως Δεξιά, η Δεξιά ως παντομίμα. Στοιχεία κριτικής ανάλυσης του νεοελληνικού Μηδενισμού* (Αθήνα: Πατάκης, 2001), 211-230.

[40] See А.Г. Дугин, *Теория многополярного мира*, (Москва: Евразийское движение, 2012).

[41] https://goo.gl/vh0PWF [accessed April 9, 2019].

[42] See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (August 1993): 22-49.

[43] А.С. Панарин, *Православная цивилизация в глобальном мире* (Москва: Эксмо, 2003), 210.

[44] See Παντελή Καλαϊτζίδη, "Ελληνικότητα και αντιδυτικισμός στη «Θεολογία του '60»" (PhD thesis at the Aristotle's University of Thessaloniki, 2008).

degradation from the antique civilization, through Byzantium, to the misery of the Ottoman rule, Yannaras sees Byzantium as an apogee of Hellenism. For him, even the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey are in some sense more heirs to Byzantium than the Greek state is.[45] For Yannaras, the Byzantine Hellenism is the "civilization" (πολιτισμός) par excellence.

The Byzantine narrative in the Modern Greek political discourse sounds great in theory. In practice, it often led to catastrophic consequences. One of them was the so-called "Micrasian catastrophe" (Μικρασιατική καταστροφή), when Hellenism was expelled from Asia Minor, after the Greek state had tried to capture territories in Anatolia in 1918-1922. The Greek military assault then was inspired by the "Great idea" – Μεγάλη ἰδεά, the term coined by the Greek nationalist Ioannis Kolettis.[46] Kolettis and his fellow nationalists had envisaged a Greek state, which would include every territory with significant Greek population, primarily in Asia Minor. They thought of Greece as a continuation of the Byzantine civilization. Their main goal was to recapture Constantinople. As Ion Dragoumis put it in 1909,

"The great idea is a memory which remained, burrowed deeply and nested in the soul of the Romios, from the time that the Turks, in 1453, took the City. It is the remembrance that the Romios, with the City as capital, possessed the East in bygone years, the Eastern state with many peoples, which he inherited little by little from the ancient Romans."[47]

Rooted in the Romanticism of the nineteenth century,[48] the "Great idea" became also a fundament for Greek dictatorships during the twentieth century. In particular, Ioannis Metaxas (ruled from 1936 to 1941) presented his regime as a "Third Hellenic civilization." The first Hellenic civilization was for him embedded in the militarist societies of Macedonia and Sparta. Byzantium was a "second civilization." In contrast to the Romantic nationalists of the nineteenth century, Metaxas in his national program made references to Byzantium. These references enhanced his idea of a strong state—in the spirit of Mussolini's "lo stato totale." The Hellenism of Metaxas was anti-democratic. That is why he chose as its prototype not the Athenian democracy, but Macedonian and Spartan autocracy.

Even to a greater extent than the "Greek world," the "Russian world" as an instance of the "civilizational nationalism," became violent and war-mongering. Not surprisingly, it is also not lacking references to Byzantium. One of its proponents, Metropolitan Tikhon Shevkunov, has produced a movie, "The fall of an empire: the Lesson of Byzantium"[49] where he metaphorically articulated a political program for Putin's Russia. Putin, however, while pretending to deliver a neo-Byzantine empire, in fact has produced a neo-Soviet state. It is also neo-colonial, because it tries to re-establish its control over the independent states that emancipated from the Soviet Union. The wars against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine since 2014, conflicts in Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh, provocations on the borders with the Baltic states—all these are the results of the Russian dreams about Byzantium.

The policies of the Russian Orthodox Church cohere, and enhance, the policies of the Russian state. Sometimes the former antecede the latter. An official speaker of the Moscow Patriarchate at that time, Fr. Vsevolod Chaplin, was among the earliest voices that urged the

---

[45] Yannaras told this to the author of this article during our trip to Cappadocia together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in 2007.

[46] See Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48.

[47] "Στρατὸς καὶ ἄλλα," *Ὁ Νουμάς* (December 27, 1909), translated by Gerasimos Augustinos in Peter F. Sugar, ed., *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (Lanham, MD: American University Press, 1995), 164.

[48] See Παναγιώτη Καγιά, *Χωρὶς φόβο καὶ πάθος. Μεγάλη ἰδέα*, (Ἀθήνα: Ἰ. Σιδέρης, 1980), 21.

[49] https://goo.gl/bn1dX9 [accessed April 9, 2019].

Russian intervention to Ukraine in the wake of the Revolution of dignity in Kyiv. He stated in his comment to the news agency *Interfax* on March 1, 2014:

"Back in 1995, the World Russian People's Council declared that the Russian people is a divided nation on its historical territory, which has the right to be reunited in a single state body, which is a generally accepted rule of international politics… We hope that the mission of Russian soldiers to protect freedom and identity of these people and their very life will not meet fierce resistance…"[50]

He added that military intervention would secure the "civilizational choice" for the Russian language and prevent the Ukrainians from aligning with the West. This statement was made before the Russian military occupied Crimea and invaded Donbas, when only a few believed that the Russian aggression against Ukraine would be possible. Fr. Chaplin's statement referred to the idea of civilization, which, in his opinion, had right to be consolidated on the basis of common values, and with the use of military force. This exactly happened with the annexation of Crimea and the following war in the Donbas, as a result of the Russian "civilizational nationalism."

CONCLUSION

Nationalism can be "ethnic" and "civilizational"—in other words, "republican" and "imperial." Both forms can be irenic or violent. Irenic ethnic nationalism can help build nations and liberate them from the yoke of empires. Its violent versions can ignite conflicts and wars even between the peoples who share the same religion. An eloquent example of this are the Balkan wars in 1912-13. Four Orthodox states that had secured for themselves independence from the Ottoman empire: Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia—formed a Balkan league and began a military campaign against Turkey to grab some more territories. When they captured most of the European part of Turkey, they began quarrelling among themselves. Bulgaria attacked Serbia and Greece over the disputed territories in Macedonia, was repelled and additionally invaded by Romania. Thus, the Orthodox nations, who had fought for the same cause of national liberation from the Ottoman empire, ended in fighting their brethren Orthodox for national causes. Civilizational nationalism can be also violent. It is quite hostile to ethnic identity, which it considers inferior to what it calls civilization. Effectively this sort of nationalism supports empires and quasi-empires, such as Putin's Russia. It is imperial and colonial by its nature.

---

[50] https://goo.gl/crocPA [accessed April 9, 2019].

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1][1] See Peter Burke, "Nationalism and Vernaculars, 1500-1800," in ibid., 21.

[2]"Στρατὸς καὶ ἄλλα," Ὁ Νουμάς (December 27, 1909), translated by Gerasimos Augustinos in Peter F. Sugar, ed., *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (Lanham, MD: American University Press, 1995), 164.

[3]Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997),

[4]Arnold Toynbee, *Hellenism: the History of a Civilization*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 8.

[5]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London; New York: Verso, 2006)

[6]Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and Its Contents*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), xii.

[7]Claudia Rapp, "Hellenic Identity, *Romanitas*, and Christianity in Byzantium," in Katerina Zacharia, ed., *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*, (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 127-147.

[8]Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[9]Erica Benner, "Nationalism: Intellectual Origins," in Breuilly, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, 45-46.

[10] Erica Benner, "Nationalism: Intellectual Origins," in John Breuilly, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.

[11] Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965),

[12] George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 27.

[13] Glenn Most, "Philhellenism, Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism," in Zacharia, *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*, 151.

[14] Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.144.1-3, transl. by Aubrey de Sélincourt, (London: Penguin, 2003).

[15] http://www.constitution.org/jjr/corsica.htm [accessed April 9, 2019].

[16] https://goo.gl/bn1dX9 [accessed April 9, 2019].

[17] https://goo.gl/vh0PWF [accessed April 9, 2019].

[18] Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: an Enquiry Into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977).

[19] John Breuilly has called it "the most important political ideology of the modern era." John Breuilly, "Reflections on Nationalism", in Stuart Woolf, ed., *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present: a Reader*, (London: Routledge, 1996),

[20] John Breuilly, "Nationalism and National Unification in Nineteenth-Century Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013),

[21] Katerina Zacharia, "Herodotus' Four Markers of Greek Identity," in Zacharia, *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*, 25-27.

[22] Maria Koundoura, *The Greek Idea: the Formation of National and Transnational Identities*, (London: Tauris, 2007), 64.

[23] *Memory in Jewish, Pagan, and Christian Societies of the Graeco-Roman World*, (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

[24] Murray Greensmith Forsyth, *Reason and Revolution: the Political Thought of the Abbé Sieyes*, (Leicester; New York: Leicester University Press; Holmes & Meier, 1987), 76.

[25] Olga Augustinos, "Philhellenic Promises and Hellenic Visions: Korais and the Discourses of the Enlightenment," in Zacharia, *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity From Antiquity to Modernity*,

[26] Peter van der Veer, "Nationalism and Religion," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 655.

[27] Pew Research Center, "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe," 13.

[28] Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48.

[29] Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[30] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (August 1993): 22-49.

[31] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

[32] Yannaras told this to the author of this article during our trip to Cappadocia together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in 2007.

[33] Παναγιώτη Καγιά, *Χωρὶς φόβο καὶ πάθος. Μεγάλη ἰδέα*, (Ἀθήνα: Ἰ. Σιδέρης, 1980),

[34] Παντελή Καλαϊτζίδη, "Ἑλληνικότητα και αντιδυτικισμός στη «Θεολογία του '60»" (PhD thesis at the Aristotle's University of Thessaloniki, 2008).

[35] Χρήστου Γιανναρά, "Βαρβαρικός αμοραλισμός," in his book *Ἑλληνότροπος Πολιτική. Εξ αντιθέτου κριτήρια και προτάσεις*, (Αθήνα: Ἴκαρος, 1996), 64.

[36] Χρήστου Γιανναρά, *Ἀλήθεια και ενότητα της Εκκλησίας* (Αθήνα: Γρηγόρη, 1997), 273-275.

[37] Χρήστου Γιανναρᾶ, *Κεφάλαια πολιτικῆς θεολογίας*, (Ἀθήνα: Γρηγόρη, 1983), 30.

[38] Χρήστου Γιανναρά, *Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη Νεώτερη Ελλάδα* (Αθήνα: Δόμος, 2006), 56. The ideas of Yannaras in this point coincide with the positions of other Greek theologians, such as Nikos Matsoukas (*Ελληνορθόδοξη παράδοση και δυτικός πολιτισμός*, (Θεσσαλονίκη: Μήνυμα, 1985) and Marios Begzos (*Η μεταφυσική της ουσιοκρατίας στο Μεσαίωνα και η εκκοσμίκευση. Φιλοσοφική κριτική στη θρησκεία της Ευρώπης*, (Αθήνα, 1989).

[39] Χρήστου Γιανναρά, *Τα καθ' εαυτόν*, (Αθήνα: Ἴκαρος, 2005), 43.

[40] А.Г. Дугин, *Теория многополярного мира*, (Москва: Евразийское движение, 2012).

[41] А.С. Панарин, *Православная цивилизация в глобальном мире* (Москва: Эксмо, 2003), 210.

THE SO-CALLED *PRAYERS OF THE KATHISMATA*. BRIEF HISTORICAL-LITURGICAL PRESENTATION

PhD Nicolae PREDA,
Faculty of Orthodox Theology „Justinian the Patriarch", University of Bucharest,
ROMANIA,
E-mail: preda_nicolae@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT
The habit of reading the so-called "prayers of the Kathismata" is, according to Cyril Korolevsky, one of the most ancient and monastic tradition (which was first encountered at the anchorites) of our Church. Named prayers of the Kathismata (or "prayers of the antiphons", as in the Constantinopolitan tradition), these prayers had different structures depending on the two deterministic liturgical traditions, from Jerusalem and from Constantinople, which is why we will try to render some of their characteristic features.

1. THE LITURGICAL PSALTER - GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

Regarding the moment of introduction into the cult and the usage of the so-called *"Liturgical Psalter*[1]*",* unfortunately, the specialized studies do not speak very much; the reason is obvious: the first "prayers" (hymns[2])[3] used in worship were, without a doubt, *The Psalms* of David[4]. Mentions, on the one hand, on the existence of the *"Psalms of David"*

---

[1] "Psalter (ψαλμός, ὁ - *psalmos, o* = song, ode and ψαλτήτιον, τό – *psaltirion* = accompanying musical instrument; βίβλος ψάλμων! – *biblos psalmon* = The Book of Psalms; lat. *Psalmorum liber* or *Psalterium*) - is one of the Old Testament books that constituted the first form of singing in Christian cult. Singing of psalms alternated with Bible readings...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Braniște and Prof. Ecaterina Braniște, *Dicționar enciclopedic de cunoştinţe religioase (Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Religious Knowledge)*, Caransebeș, Diocesan Publishing, 2001, p. 399.

[2] "The first testimony showing us a hymn of the Great Entrance of Constantinople, Eutyches homily, speaks of a «Psalmian hymn» and it seems to refer to *Psalm 23*", cf. R. F. Taft, *O Istorie a Liturghiei Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur.* Volumul II. *Transferul darurilor şi celelalte rituri preanaforale*. Partea 1. *Intrarea cea Mare (A History of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.* Volume II. *Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-anaphoral Rites,* Part 1. *The Great Entrance).* 2nd Edition Revised. Translation and preface by Cezar Login, Cluj-Napoca, Renașterea Publishing, 2014, p. 190.

[3] "Qualche tipo di salmodia era un elemento del culto cristiano fin dal suo inizio, come è chiaro da molti testi del Nuovo Testamento: 1 Cor 14:26, Ef 5:18-20, Col 3:16-17, Gc 5:13, Ap 5:8-9. Ciò che questi testi intendono esattamente con «salmi, salmodia, cantici» resta comunque dubbio, nonostante l'esegesi a cui questi testi sono tradizionalmente soggetti. Si riferiscono a salmi biblici? Forse, ma non sicuramente", R. F. Taft, *A partire dalla liturgia. Perché è la liturgia che fa la Chiesa*, Roma, Edizioni Lipa, 2004, pp. 164-165.

[4] "Il termine greco ψαλμός non era il solo che i cristiani usavano per i salmi di Davide, né questo termine *per se* si limitava ai salmi biblici. E sebbene l'uso dei primi cristiani sembri favorire l'interpretazione del termine in riferimento ai salmi biblici, dove non ci sono ragioni di sospettare

within worship, and on the other, of the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*, we find recorded in Canon 17 of the Synod[5] of Laodicea (364)[6], where it is remembered (commanded) *"the psalms of David should not be read all at once, in the congregations and the ministry of the church, lest the crowd be bored for their length, and that they should come out of the church. But among the psalms should be read prayers, so that the people may rest a little..."*[7]. An interesting phrase, which seems to render another dimension of the perception of David's *Psalms* in worship, and which combines two relatively identical concepts (*hymn and psalm*), namely, "the psalmian hymn", belongs to the Patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople (552-565, 577-582), and we find it in a word spoken at Easter (*Sermo de Paschate et de sacrosancta Eucharistia*): "Those who have taught the people to sing a certain psaltic hymn behave foolishly(!) (ὕμνον τινὰ ψαλμικόν)[8] when the ministers..."[9]; this "psaltic hymn", otherwise a hymn of ("antiphon") the Great Entrance, "is, apparently, referring to *Psalm 23*"[10].

2. THE BYZANTINE LITURGICAL PSALTER - SPECIFIC FEATURES

The Byzantine Liturgical Psalter, whether it is the one in use at Jerusalem[11], or in Constantinople[12] (called, due to its mobility, also "The Distributed Psalter"[13]), different, actually, from *the Biblical Psalter* (less accurate name, according to Fr. R. Taft[14]), was divided into 60 *"stops"* (στάσεις)[15] and 20 *"kathismata"* (καθίσματα)[16], according to the

---

un altro significato, fino al III-IV secolo vediamo autori latini e greci che usano ancora ψαλμός/*psalmus* in riferimento a composizioni chiaramente non bibliche. Ma poiché numerosi testi del Nuovo Testamento si riferiscono al canto di un tipo o di un altro, e poiché in questo tempo ψαλμοί era diventato per gli ebrei ellenofoni il nome proprio greco di ciò che conosciamo come i salmi di Davide (sebbene non esclusivamente), non contesterò, né tenterò di provare il giudizio comune secondo il quale i primi cristiani usavano probabilmente i salmi biblici nei loro raduni. È perfettamente chiaro che alla fine i cristiani giunsero a fare cosí, ed è ugualmente ovvio che essi presero questi salmi dal giudaismo", R. F. Taft, *A partire dalla liturgia...,* p. 165; see also R. F. Taft, *A partire dalla liturgia...,* p. 165, notes 7, 8 and 9.

[5] "Synod (lat. *concilium, sinodus*; gr. σύνοδος, ἡ – *sinodos* = gathering) – within the Church, is the gathering of the bishops (hierarchs) in order to discuss its specific problems...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic... (Encyclopaedic Dictionary...),* p. 456.

[6] "Canon 17: It is not appropriate to huddle together the psalms in gatherings, but among psalms let them read", *Pidalion* (reprinted), Neamţ Monastery, 1844, p. 318.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 318.

[8] *PG* 86², 2401A.

[9] R. F. Taft, *O Istorie a Liturghiei Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur... (A History of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom...)*, p. 146.

[10] *Ibidem*, pp. 189-190.

[11] J. Mateos, "Office de minuit et office du matin chez S. Athanase", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 28 (1962), p. 175; R. Taft, "Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the 'Byzantine Rite'", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988), p. 181.

[12] M. Arranz, "Les grandes étapes de la Liturgie Byzantine: Palestine-Byzance-Russie: Essai d'aperçu historique", in *Liturgie de l'église particulière et liturgie de l'église universelle*, Bibliotheca *Ephemerides Liturgicae* Subsidia 7, Roma, Centro Liturgico Vincenziano-Ed. liturgiche, 1976, p. 50.

[13] O. Strunk, "The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9-10 (1956), pp. 200-202.

[14] R. Taft, "Mount Athos...", p. 181.

[15] "On a partagé par exemple en trois στάσεις le chant funèbre des ἐγκώμια, ainsi que chaque κάθισμα du Psautier, ψαλτήριον", L. Clugnet, *Dictionnaire grec-français des noms liturgiques en usage dans l'Église grecque*, Paris, A. Picard et fils, 1895, p. 139; R. Taft, "Mount Athos...", p. 182; M. Arranz, "Les grandes étapes...", pp. 57-58.

tradition of Jerusalem, and in 74 or 76 "antiphons"[17] (ἀντίφωνα)[18], according to the Constantinopolitan usage. Also, the odes[19] (*Biblical songs*)[20] but also the so-called *"prayers of the kathismata"* (usually placed after the 20 *"kathismata"*[21] of the *Psalter*[22])[23] had different structures, according to the two liturgical traditions mentioned above, in the sense that in Jerusalem were used nine *biblical songs* and in Constantinople, fifteen[24].

3. THE SO-CALLED "PRAYERS OF THE KATHISMATA" - OVERVIEW

Among the prayers through which the Church has always been used to pray, there are the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*[25], some of them remained in use until today, within the Vespers' service united with *Liturgy*[26] of the Presanctified Gifts[27], but also the *"sacerdotal"* or *"priestly"* prayers (that is, those intended to be read only by the priest),

---

[16] "Kathismata – are called the 20 groups in which the 150 Psalms of David are divided into in the divine Orthodox cult. *The kathismata* are composed of verses of thematically related psalms (morning or night psalms, etc.)...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic... (Encyclopaedic Dictionary...)*, p. 92; "Une des vingt grandes divisions du Psautier, Ψαλτήριον, partagée elle-même en trois stations, στάσεις", L. Clugnet, *Dictionnaire...*, p. 71.

[17] The connotation of the word "antiphon" (in Greek, ἀντίφωνον) in this context is a specific one, and designates a group of two or more Psalms; unfortunately, this connotation does not compare in dictionaries [see for example, Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic (Encyclopaedic Dictionary...)*, pp. 37-38]; "In Constantinople the Psalter itself was divided into antiphons, each comprising, in principle, three psalms having the same antiphon-chorus...", J. Mateos, *Celebrarea cuvântului în Liturghia bizantină. Studiu istoric (Celebrating the Word in Byzantine Liturgy. Historical Study)*. Translation and notes by Cezar Login, Cluj-Napoca, Renaşterea Publishing, 2007, pp. 8-9, note 23.

[18] R. Taft, "Mount Athos...", p. 181.

[19] "(da *odái* = canti): nel rito bizantino sono: 1. i canti scritturali dell'Orthrós; 2. il complesso dei tropari poetici del canone", D. Sartore, A. M. Triacca and C. Cibien, *Liturgia*, Milano, Edizioni San Paolo, 2001, p. 2116.

[20] R. Taft, "Mount Athos...", p. 181; M. Arranz, "L'office de l'Asmatikos Orthros («matines chantées») de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47 (1981), pp. 140-141.

[21] *The Byzantine Liturgical Psalter,* that is, the one that is today in use [cf. *Psalter of the Prophet and Emperor David*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2016)], records 20 prayers (one prayer after each kathisma); in regard to the prayers of the so-called *Constantinopolitan Psalter*, we know, as indicated in the colophon of the famous codex *Coislin 213* ["*Euchologium Strategii presbyteri.* (a. 1027)", cf. H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale,* Troisième partie: *Ancien fonds grec*, codd. 2542-3117. *Coislin. Supplément grec. Autres bibliothèques de Paris. Départements*, Paris, Librarie Alphonse Picard, 1888, p. 150], that in Constantinople there was also a specific book that contained "prayers of the antiphons" of the *Psalter* (74 prayers of the *antiphons*; 8 ofthe *Odes* and 54 other *different* prayers), which a certain "prezbiter Strategios" had in possession (unfortunately, this collection of prayers has not yet been discovered).

[22] "And this is the cause, for which the Divine Fathers divided the Psaltery into 20 kathismata, and among the kathismata they put troparions and prayers. Which are in many Psalters, both in manuscripts, and printed", *Pidalion*, p. 318.

[23] M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytérales des matines byzantines – 2de partie: Les manuscrits", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 38 (1972), pp. 66, 86-87.

[24] R. Taft, "Mount Athos...", p. 181, note 19.

[25] M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytérales des matines...", pp. 86-87.

[26] "Messa dei presantificati: nel rito bizantino si dice m. d. p. la liturgia dei giorni quaresimali; in essi infatti si consuma il pane eucaristico consacrato in una precedente celebrazione", D. Sartore, A. M. Triacca and C. Cibien, *Liturgia...*, p. 2115.

[27] M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytérales des matines...", p. 87, note 1; Ἱερατικὸν, Ἀθῆναι, Ἔκδοσις τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Διακονίας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, 2000, pp. 3-5, 203-207; *Liturghier (Hieratikon)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2000, pp. 265-272.

specific, exclusively to the well-known *"sung service"* (*asmatike akolouthia*[28])[29], at the Great Church (Hagia Sophia) in Constantinople.

Pr. M. Arranz says, among other things, that many of the *"sacerdotal prayers"* would have remained in the cult to this day; he speaks about, of course, the prayers of Vespers[30] and Matins[31], which the priest reads secretly, while the church singer utters the beginning psalms, within these services[32].

It is worth mentioning that these *"sacerdotal prayers*[33]*"*[34], also known as *"priestly prayers"* or *"presidential prayers"*[35], once read throughout the service, represent, in the opinion of the specialists, a "general feature of the Studite ordinances"[36]: "the priestly prayers[37] from Vespers[38] and Matins[39], taken from the "singing ordinance - *asmatikon(!)*

---

[28] "asmaticòs, ufficio è l'antica ufficiatura propria delle cattedrali contrapposta a quella monastica che ha finito con il prevalere", *Piccolo glossario dei termini liturgici bizantini*, cf. http://www.webalice.it/giovanni.fabriani/glossario/glossarioa.htm (web page accessed on January 18, 2015); "Ἀσματικός, ή, όν (eccl. *musical, qui est chanté*). Τὸ ἀσματικόν, le mélodique. On désigne ainsi quelquefois le τρισάγιον, lorsqu'il est chanté", L. Clugnet, *Dictionnaire...*, p. 22.

[29] M. Arranz, "Les grandes étapes...", p. 51.

[30] "*The prayers the priest reads secretly*, in front of the royal doors, are called *prayers of Vespers*, or *of the evening lights* (εὐχαὶ τοῦ λυχνικοῦ) because they were once read when the lights of candlesticks and candles were lit up in the churches to dispel the darkness of the night...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte, *Liturgica Specială pentru institutele teologice (Special Liturgy for Theological Institutes)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1985², p. 66.

[31] "*The 12 prayers* read secretly by the priest during the six psalms, *Morning prayers* or *of Matins*, have varied content...", *Ibidem,* p. 139.

[32] "Les grandes étapes...", p. 51.

[33] "3.2.7. Preghiere. Costituiscono un elemento importante dell'ufficiatura bizantina, specialmente quelle presbiterali dell'orthros e del vespro; parecchie sono anonime e quelle che hanno nome di autore sono di difficile attribuzione", M. Nin, *Ufficiatura bizantina. La Liturgia delle ore nella tradizione bizantina*, Roma, Dispense Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2002-2003, p. 20.

[34] "Ἴδωμεν δὲ ἐμφαντικώτερον τὰ τῆς οἰκονομίας Χριστοῦ τυπούμενα μᾶλλον καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀσματικῇ καλῶς λεγομένῃ ἀκολουθίᾳ, ἥτις παρὰ τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν ἄνωθεν δέδοται, καθάπερ εἰρήκαμεν. Καὶ αἱ καθολικαὶ δὲ ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀπαρχῆς ταύτην ἐτέλουν μελῳδικῶς, μηδὲν χωρὶς λέγουσαι μέλους, εἰ μὴ τὰς τῶν ἱερέων μόνον εὐχὰς, καὶ τὰς τῶν διακόνων αἰτήσεις..." [Let us look closer at the incarnations of Christ, imagined especially in the service called of the songs. This service was given, as we have said before, by our Fathers. All the churches in the world commemorate these in verses, they say nothing without verses, except the prayers of the priests and the deacons' readings…], *PG* 155, p. 624C; see also N. Borgia, *Horologion. Diurno delle chiese di rito bizantino*, in Orientalia Christiana 56 = 16/I, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1929, p. 171.

[35] "Nelle preghiere presidenziali dell'*asmatikòs* il culto della gloria divina è anzitutto un'azione di grazie a Dio che prende egli stesso l'iniziativa di chiamare l'uomo alla preghiera", *Il Signore della gloria. Preghiere della "Grande Chiesa" bizantina*. Traduzione e note di Stefano L. Parenti, Milano, Edizioni Paoline, 1988, p. 134.

[36] Hierom. PhD Petru Pruteanu, "Evoluția Rânduielilor tipiconale în Răsăritul ortodox. Studiu istorico liturgic" (The Evolution of the Typikon in the Orthodox East. Liturgical Historical Study), in *Studii Teologice*, Third Series, Year II, No. 1 (2006), p. 90; see also page 90, note 95.

[37] "Le sette preghiere recitate dal sacerdote davanti all'iconostasi sono di origine costantinopolitano e risalgono almeno al VIII secolo", M. Nin, *Ufficiatura bizantina...*, p. 38; see also M. Arranz, "Les prières sacerdotales des vêpres byzantines", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 37 (1971), pp. 85-124; "Durante i tre ultimi salmi, il sacerdote recita le 12 preghiere sacerdotali mattutine, che sono di tradizione costantinopolitana e le troviamo in uno degli eucologi più antichi, quello Barberini 336 (8th-9th centuries)", M. Nin, *Ufficiatura bizantina...*, p. 24.

[38] "p. es. una preghiera *vespertina* dell'asmatikòs si trova ora nella "Grande Compieta" (!). (Cfr. *Hôrologion*, Roma 1937, 256)", *Il Signore della gloria...*, p. 137, note 102; one of the old prayers of Vespers is today in the order of the Great Compline; it's the prayer "Lord, Lord, Who has delivered us from the whole arrow..." (Κύριε Κύριε ὁ ῥυσάμενος ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς βέλους...), attributed to St. Basil the Great († 379), cf. *Ceaslov*

akolouthia", were not read all at once as they were now, but they were distributed throughout the service[40],[41]. We also note that some of these old *"sacerdotal prayers"* have "become", if we can express in this way, also *"prayers of the Kathismata"*, and can be read by faithful[42]; as to the manner in which this change had taken place and the meaning in which it had taken place, it's hard to say; it would be interesting for those passionate about this type of evolution of the structures of worship to deepen one day these aspects.

As for the number of the *"sacerdotal prayers"* of the well-known *"sung service"* (*asmatike akolouthia*), called also *"prayers of the Antiphons*[43] *of the Psalter"*[44], this is known thanks to the colophon[45] of the famous codex *Coisl. 213* [*Euchologion*, a. 1027][46];

(*Horologion*), Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2001, p. 179, which will "survive" in the order of the "Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost", cf. *Molitfelnic cuprinzând Slujbe, Rânduieli şi Rugăciuni săvârşite de preot la diferite trebuinţe din viaţa creştinilor (Euchologion including Services, Ordinances and Prayer spoken by the Priests on Various Necessities from the Life of Christians)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2006, p. 708; see also M. Arranz, *L'Eucologio Costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI. Hagiasmatarion & Archieraticon (Rituale & Pontificale) con l'aggiunta del Leiturgikon (Messale)*, Roma, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1996, pp. 71-72, 119-120.

[39] "En premier lieu, il s'agit des synapties et des prières presbytérales qui trouvaient place ici et là dans les vêpres et les matines", Thomas Pott, *Réforme monastique et évolution liturgique. La réforme stoudite*, in *Crossroad of cultures. Studies in Liturgy and Patristics in Honor of Gabriele Winkler*, edited by Hans-Jürgen Feulner, Elena Velkovska and Robert F. Taft, in Orientalia Christiana Analecta 260, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2000, p. 574 and Thomas Pott, *La réforme liturgique byzantine. Étude du phénomène de l'évolution non-spontanée de la liturgie byzantine*, in Bibliotheca *Ephemerides Liturgicae* Subsidia 104, Roma, Centro Liturgico Vincenziano - Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000, p. 115.

[40] "In questo tipo di preghiera oraria, grazie alla sintesi operata dai monaci studiti, sono sopravvisuti alcuni elementi dell' antico *asmatikòs* e con essi circa venti delle sue preghiere presidenziali che però vengono recitate a voce bassa (!) una dietro l'altra (!), parte durante la declamazione del salmo introduttorio del vespro e parte durante la salmodia notturna del mattutino se non confinate in altri uffici, così che queste preghiere, composte per essere ascoltate da tutti, vengono ora clericalmente liquidate in una recita spesso frettolosa", *Il Signore della gloria...*, pp. 136-137.

[41] M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel dans les prières secrètes des Vêpres et des Matines byzantines", in *Euntes docete* XXIV (1971), p. 192.

[42] See the so-called prayer of the "Bending of heads" at the end of the Matins: *Holy God, Who in those of the above...* and "The Prayer before the Gospel", at the Divine Liturgy: *Shine in our hearts...* (sacerdotal prayers par excellence), cf. *Liturghier cuprinzând Vecernia, Utrenia, Dumnezeieştile Liturghii ale Sfinţilor: Ioan Gură de Aur, Vasile cel Mare, Grigorie Dialogul (a Darurilor mai înainte Sfinţite), Rânduiala Sfintei Împărtăşiri şi alte rugăciuni de trebuinţă (Hieratikon including Vespers, Matins, Divine Liturgies of Saints: John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory the Dialogue (of the Presanctified Gifts), the Order of Holy Communion and other necessary prayers)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2012, pp. 102 and 147-148; these prayers are also found among the so-called "prayers of the Kathismata" from the current *Psalter* (which can also be read by believers), cf. *Psaltirea Prorocului şi Împăratului David (Psalter of the Prophet and Emperor David)*, Bucharest, 2016, pp. 184 and 160.

[43] See the connotation of the word *"antiphon"* in this context, in the notes above.

[44] "... εὐχὰς τῶν ἀντιφώνων τοῦ Ψαλτῆρος ὡς στιχολογεῖ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν 74", cf. M. Arranz, *L'Eucologio Costantinopolitano...*, p. 13.

[45] "Colophon *s.n.* Note at the end of a book in the age of manuscripts and incunabula, including data on the printer, the place where he worked, the author and the title of the work", cf. https://dexonline.ro/definitie/colofon (web page accessed on January 27, 2017).

[46] "*Euchologium Strategii presbyteri* (a. 1027)", H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale,* Troisième partie: *Ancien fonds grec*, codd. 2542-3117. *Coislin. Supplément grec. Autres bibliothèques de Paris. Départements*, Paris, Librairie Alphonse Picard, 1888, p. 150.

these prayers would disappear, little by little, from the *Prayer Books*[47] recently drafted, in so far as the so-called *"sung service"* would give their place to the monastic services of *Horologion*[48] (*Book of Hours*)[49]. Moreover, even the Psalter of Palestinian type itself would become the *Byzantine Monastic Psalter*, and it would be imposed in practice, which is confirmed by the current liturgical use[50].

We also want to emphasize the original number of the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*, that we do not have a clear answer yet, in the sense that it is not known if their original (exact) number would have been 20[51] (one after each *"Kathisma"*)[52], as in the current practice, 60 (three after each *"Kathisma"*)[53] or 74, like those *"of the antiphons of the Psalter in the use*[54] *of the Great Church"*.

Moreover, some *"Liturgical Psalters"* render, after certain *Kathisma*, not only three prayers, but two[55] or four[56], as it can be seen in the manuscripts *Ateniense 2478*[57] and *Vindobonensis Theol. gr. 177*[58]. According to an "*Appendix*" ("Appendix D5: Prayers Found

---

[47] "Euchologion or Book of Prayers (εὐχολόγιον, τό, εὐχή λόγος – *Evhologhion, evhi logos* = prayer, word; from εὐλογῶ - *evlogo* = to bless) - is the liturgical book which includes all the services required by the Christian's spiritual needs from birth to death...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic... (Encyclopaedic Dictionary...),* p. 309.

[48] "L'*Horologhion*, il libro liturgico dell'Ufficio bizantino, ha queste ore: mezzanotte (*mesonìcticon*), mattino (*òrthros*), prima, terza, sesta, nona vespro (*esperìnon* o *lychnicon*), compieta (*apòdeipnon*)", D. Sartore, A. M. Triacca and C. Cibien, *Liturgia...*, p. 1061.

[49] M. Arranz, "Les grandes étapes...", p. 51.

[50] R. Taft, "Mount Athos...", p. 182; M. Nin, *Ufficiatura bizantina...,* p. 17.

[51] See *Vatican gr. 778* ["4 <Psalterium continuatum>, nempe psalmi et cantica, saec. XIV", cf. R. Devreesse, *Codices Vaticani Graeci* (*604-866*), t. III, Roma, In Bibliotheca Vaticana, 1950, p. 293].

[52] M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytérales des matines...", p. 86; Georgi R. Parpulov mentions, among other things, the first Psalters that noted prayers "to every Kathisma", cf. *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters, ca. 850-1350 AD*, Plovdiv, 2014, p. 103.

[53] "...en raison d'une prière par *kathisma* en règle générale, ou trois si on sépare les trois *doxai* de chaque *kathisma*", M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytérales des matines...", pp. 86-87; in reality, the three prayers are rendered together at the end of the Kathisma [see *Ateniense 2478*: 12r-15v etc., cf. N. Preda, *Aşa-numitele "rugăciuni ale catismelor" potrivit Codicelui Ateniense 2478: studiu de liturgică (The So-called "Prayers of the Kathismata" according to Codex Ateniense 2478: Liturgical Study)*. Degree Paper, Bucharest, Granada Publishing, 2016, pp. 37-41 and *Vindobonensis Theol. gr. 177*: 27r-29v etc.].

[54] "degli antifoni del Salterio <u>come le usa</u> la Grande Chiesa", cf. J. Duncan, *Coislin 213. Euchologe de la Grande Église*, Roma, Dissertatio ad Lauream Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1983, p. VII; the underlined phrase has been translated in this manner by J. Duncan (see the previous reference), although the original Greek uses the verb "στιχολογεῖ" = recite.

[55] *Ateniense 2478*: 51r-53r: *Κύριε Σωτήρ μου, ἵνα τί με ἐγκατέλιπες...* and *Δέσποτα Παντοκράτορ, ὁ Πατὴρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου...* (after Kathisma 4), cf. N. Preda, *Aşa-numitele "rugăciuni ale catismelor"... (The So-called "Prayers of the Kathismata"...),* pp. 53-55; *Vindobonensis Theol. gr. 177*: 11r-13r: *Εὐλογῶ σε, Κύριε, τὸν μόνον μακρόθυμον καὶ ἀνεξίκακον...* and *Οἱ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἡμέρας τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῆς ἐν τῇ κτίσει μεγαλουργίας...* (after Kathisma 1).

[56] *Ateniense 2478*: 126v-129v: *Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ τοῦ Πατρὸς μονογενὴς Υἱὸς καὶ Λόγος...; Κύριε ὁ Θεός μου, ὅσα σοι ἥμαρτον...; Παναγία Θεοτόκε, Κυρία τοῦ κόσμου, κυριευθέντα με...* and *Δέσποινα πάντων, Δέσποινα ἁγνὴ Θεοτόκε...* (after Kathisma 10), cf. N. Preda, *Aşa-numitele "rugăciuni ale catismelor"... (The So-called "Prayers of the Kathismata"),* pp. 76-80; *Vindobonensis Theol. gr. 177*: 18r-20r: *Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, Υἱὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ, Λόγε ἀθάνατε, ὁ μὴ καταισχύνων...; Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ κατὰ πᾶσαν ὥραν θελήσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθαι...; Σοί, Κύριε, τῷ δεδωκότι ἡμῖν ἡμέραν εἰς ἐργασίαν...* şi *Κύριε, ὁ Θεός μου, ἐπὶ σοὶ ἤλπισα, σῶσόν με...* (after Kathisma 2).

[57] "Ψαλτήριον, μετὰ τῶν ᾠδῶν, ἔτ. 1340", cf. Λ. Πολίτης, *Κατάλογος χειρογράφων τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ἀρ. 1857-2500*, Ἀθῆναι, 1991, pp. 480-481.

[58] "PSALMEN UND ODEN, a. 1150", cf. Herbert Hunger, Otto Kresten und Christian Hannick, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Teil 3/2. *Codices Theologici* 101-200

in Psalters and *Horologia*")[59] of G. Parpulov's study, it would be no less than 30 pages of incipits[60] (cca 412 prayers, with the ones mentioned, it is true, also in *Horologion*[61]) of the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*[62].

 G. Parpulov also provides one of the important information on *"prayers of the Kathismata"* şi anume, că nu vor fi consemnate în codice mai devreme de sec. al XII-lea (namely 1105, when is dated the manuscript *Harvard gr. 3*[63])[64], although in practice we already have clues in the 9th century, at St. Athanasia of Aegina[65]:

> "These are the oldest Psalters with short hymns (*troparia*)[66] and prayers introduced to every *kathism*a, for example after the Psalms 8, 16, 23, etc. Harv. 3[67] is dated, according to the contents of a paschal list, in the year 1104; Iber. 22[68] and Pantokr. 43[69] are written in a very similar style and must have been copied about the same time"[70].

 G. Parpulov's information seems to be fair, since we find *"prayers of the Kathismata"* also in a codex from the National Library in Vienna dated in the 12th century, which I have already mentioned (*Vindobonensis Theol. gr. 177*, a. 1150).

 a) after *Psalm 8* (two prayers):

[*Museion. Veröffentlichungen der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Neue Folge herausgegeben von der Generaldirektion.* Vierte Reihe: *Veröffentlichungen der Handschriftensammlung.* Erster Band, Teil 3/2], Wien, Hollinek, 1984, p. 316.

[59] *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...*, p. 182.

[60] The word "incipit" also means, among other things, the first words with which a text actually begins (in this case a prayer).

[61] "Horologion or Book of Hours (slv. *ceaslovă*, gr. ὡρολόγιον, τό – *orologhion*; lat. *horarium*, corresponds to the book *Breviarium*, to Catholics) - is one of the liturgical books of the Orthodox Church. Numele de *Horologion* or *Book of Hours* (schedule) comes from explaining the time when the services of the seven Church Prayers that form the contents of this book take place...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic... (Encyclopaedic Dictionary...),* p. 97.

[62] *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...*, pp. 182-211.

[63] Cf. J. Anderson & S. Parenti, *A Byzantine Liturgical Psalter of AD 1105* (Washington [forthcoming]), see Georgi R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...*, p. 103, note 2.

[64] "MS Gr 3. Psalter, XIVth c.", cf. Seymour de Ricci and W. J. Wilson, *Census of medieval and renaissance manuscripts in the United States and Canada*. Vol. I, New York, The H. W. Wilson Company, 1935, p. 971.

[65] Georgi R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* p. 103; see also p. 103, note 5.

[66] "Troparion (gr. τὸ τροπάριον – *to troparion*, from gr. ὁ τρόπος – *o tropos* = mode, style, shape...) or *sticheron* – is the oldest and most fundamental form of the liturgical hymnographic poetry. In the Greek language, the troparion respects, as form, the laws of poetic composition (rhythm, rhyme, number of syllables); by translating into Romanian, is rendered in prose, respecting the substance, to the detriment of the form...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic... (Encyclopaedic Dictionary...),* pp. 522-523.

[67] "Cambridge MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, Greek MS 3", cf. Georgi R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* p. 103.

[68] "Mount Athos, Iberon Monastery, MS 22", cf. *Ibidem,* p. 103; "4142. 22. *Περγ*. 4. XII. (*φ*. 313) *Ψαλτήριον*", Spyr. P. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos.* Volume II, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1900, p. 3.

[69] "Mount Athos, Pantokrator Monastery, MS 43", cf. Georgi R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* p. 103; "1077. 43. *Περγ*. 4. XIII. 1. *Ψαλτήριον (ἀκέφαλον), ἀρχ. ἀπὸ τοῦ κβ´ καθίσματος*", Spyr. P. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos.* Volume I, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1895, p. 97.

[70] "These are the oldest known Psalters with short hymns (*troparia*) and prayers inserted at each *Kathisma*, i.e. after Psalms 8, 16, 23, etc. Harv. 3 is datable, through a paschal table it contains, to AD 1104; Iber. 22 and Pantokr. 43 are written in very similar hands and must have been copied around the same time", Georgi R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* p. 103.

Εὐλογῶ σε, Κύριε, τὸν μόνον μακρόθυμον... [11r-12r];
Οἱ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἡμέρας τῇ θεωρίᾳ... [12v-13r].
b) after *Psalm 16* (four prayers):
Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, Ὑὶε τοῦ Θεοῦ, Λόγε ἀθάνατε... [18r-18v];
Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ κατὰ πᾶσαν ὥραν θελήσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον... [18v];
Σοί, Κύριε, τῷ δεδωκότι ἡμῖν ἡμέραν εἰς ἐργασίαν... [19r-19v];
Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς μου, ἐπὶ σοι ἤλπισα, σῶσόν με... [19v-20r][71].

It should be noted, however, that G. Parpulov indicates another codex, "Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Greek MS 40"[72] [Sinait. gr. 40[73], s. XI, f. 1r: Ψαλτήριον σὺν Θ(ε)ῷ μετὰ [τροπα]ρίων καὶ εὐχῶν τῆς ἡμέ(ρας) κ(αὶ) τ(ῆς) νυκτ(ός)][74], dated in the 11th century[75], whose title refers directly to the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*, which confirms their existence already a century earlier.

4. "PRAYERS OF THE ANTIPHONS"–
THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN TRADITION

"Complete" information on the so-called *"prayers of the antiphons"* (similar to the *"prayers of the Kathismata"* of the Palestinian tradition) we do not have unfortunately, although the existence of such prayers, their number (74), was signaled early (11th century), being mentioned for the first time in the colophon of the famous manuscript *Coisl. 213* (a. 1027), which, according to the specialists, records Constantinopolitan liturgical practices[76].

We will present in what follows the text of the colophon of this codex (*Coisl. 213*, a. 1027), manuscript presented at the Oriental Pontifical Institute in Rome (PIO), as "*Eucologio della Grande Chiesa*" (that is from Hagia Sophia)[77], by J. Duncan[78] and J. Maj[79]:

"COI[80]:211 (cf. J. Duncan:VII, J. Maj:147):
1 Ἐγράφη ἡ παροῦσα τοῦ Εὐχολογίου βίβλος καὶ ἐτελειώθη
2 μηνὸς αὐγούστου ἰνδικτιῶνος 10 ἔτους 6535 (α. D. 1027),
3 κτηθεῖσα Στρατηγίῳ πρεσβυτέρῳ τῆς Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας
4 καὶ τῶν πατριαρχικῶν εὐκτηρίων,
5 περιέχουσα πᾶσαν ἀκολουθίαν καὶ τάξιν ἀκριβῶς,
6 καθὼς ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ ὁ πίναξ δηλοῖ,
7 ἐκτὸς τῶν λειτουργιῶν τοῦ ἁγίου Βασιλείου καὶ τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου
8 καὶ τῆς τριτοέκτης καὶ τῆς τῶν προηγιασμένων,
9 θελείσει τοῦ γράψαντος καὶ κτησαμένου
10 διὰ τὸ ἔχειν ταῦτα εἰς κοντάκια μεθ᾽ ὧν καὶ ἐνεργοῦσιν.

---

[71] See also the prayers in Georgi R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* pp. 190, 195, 199, 205, 207 and 210.

[72] *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* p. 103.

[73] "*Psalms*, saec. XİV", V. Gardthausen, *Catalogus codicum Graecorum Sinaiticorum*, Oxonii, E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1886, p. 11.

[74] Cf. *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* pp. 103 and 103, note 4.

[75] Unfortunately, G. Parpulov does not indicate the sources on which he relies when he dates this codex back to the 11th century (cf. *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...,* p. 103, note 4).

[76] M. Arranz, *L'Eucologio Costantinopolitano...*, pp. 13-14.

[77] *Ibidem,* p. 14.

[78] *Coislin 213. EucFFFFFFF* — *Coislin 213. Euchologe de la Grande Église*, Roma, Dissertatio ad Lauream Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1983.

[79] *Coislin 213. Eucologio della Grande Chiesa.* Manoscritto della Biblioteca Nazionale di Parigi (ff. 101-211), Roma, Tesi di Laurea Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1990.

[80] This logo designates the fund "*Coislin*", to which belongs codex 213 (a. 1027).

11 Ἔχειν δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ βιβλιδαρίῳ

12 εὐχὰς τῶν ἀντιφώνων τοῦ Ψαλτῆρος

13 ὡς στιχολογεῖ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν **74**,

14 καὶ τῶν ᾠδῶν εὐχὰς **8**,

15 καὶ ἑτέρας εὐχὰς διαφόρους λεγομένας κατὰ διαφόρους καιρούς·

16 ἐπὶ κοίτην, μετὰ κοίτην,

17 ἐπὶ κοινωνία, ἐπὶ ἐξομολογήσει,

18 εἰς ὠφέλειαν ψυχῆς καὶ κατάνυξιν,

19 καὶ λοιπά· ἀμφότερα **54**,

20 καὶ τὴν ἐκλογὴν τῶν διαφόρων ῥητῶν περὶ τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος·

21 ταῦτα γὰρ ὧδε οὐκ ἐγράφη[81],,[82].

The "fundamental" problem raised by the Constantinopolitan (but also the Jerusalem-type) prayers is, according to Father M. Arranz, the type of these prayers, namely, their probable writing (construction) as a paraphrase, in the sense that some of the so-called "sacerdotal prayers" in the ordinance of Vespers and Matins, real reminiscences of the old "prayers of the antiphons", could be true paraphrases to "David's Psalms":

"La prière qui, à Jérusalem au IVᵉ s., suivait chaque psaume tandis qu'à Constantinople, selon l'Euchologe ancien, elle le précédait, et qui était dite par le prêtre, était-elle une prière de médiation sacerdotale, ou était-ce plutôt une paraphrase destinée à introduire le psaume (à Constantinople) ou à le compléter (à Jérusalem) en lui donnant un sens chrétien? Etaient-ce des prières vraiment sacerdotales ou simplement explicatives?"[83].

Note that prayers as paraphrases to Psalms are also found in codex *Vat. gr. 783* [*Hymnologia, graece*[84], 14th century[85]], but not only; but more on this topic we wrote in a small subchapter of the Doctoral Thesis[86].

Father M. Arranz describes the type of prayers in the manuscript *Vat. gr. 783* as follows:

"In genere si può affermare che queste preghiere non erano essenzialmente sacerdotali, ma riservate ad uso privato anche se probabilmente comunitario.
In esse oltre che la lunghezza non abituale nelle preghiere pubbliche e ufficiali, si osserva l'uso della prima persona al singolare, fatto escluso delle preghiere sacerdotali, tutte alla prima persona del plurale"[87].

Returning to the type of prayers called "Constantinopolitan", we would like to point out that the information provided by Saint Simeon of Thessalonica († 1429) clearly shows us that certain "liturgical" prayers of his time represented a "paraphrase" of some of David's Psalms:

---

[81] It is a drafting of the text called "diplomatic" by specialists.

[82] Cf. M. Arranz, *L'Eucologio Costantinopolitano...*, pp. 13-14.

[83] "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 193.

[84] T. De Marinis, *La legatura artistica in Italia nei secoli XV e XVI. Notizie ed elenchi. Volume III*, Firenze, Fratelli Alinari-Istituto di Edizioni Artistiche, 1960, p. 44, nº 2776.

[85] As for the dating of the codex see N. Preda, *Preghiere salmiche di autori vari secondo il codice "Vaticano Greco 783" (ff. 1-96r)*. Doctoral thesis, Bucharest, Granada Publishing, 2016, pp. 35-36.

[86] "9. *Le preghiere del codice Vat. gr. 783: preghiere sacerdotali come parafrasi di certi salmi oppure preghiere di uso monastico privato*", N. Preda, *Preghiere salmiche...*, pp. 459-463.

[87] *Judicium de Thesi Doctorali N. Preda*, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2005, p. 4; see also N. Preda, *Preghiere salmiche...*, pp. 10-11.

"...for the first of the Vespers' prayers encompasses the meaning of the psalm, with words taken from it: "Merciful and gracious God". The other prayers can be seen as having the same meaning with psalms, antiphons, and words from them (...), the prayer and the words of the Psalms are spoken. Their meaning is to bring all to God through the priest..."[88, 89].

On the "type" of Constantinopolitan sacerdotal prayers[90] we will write more widely elsewhere.

However, we would like to point out here yet another aspect related to these prayers, even if, in the opinion of the specialists, it seems to be a marginal (peripheral) issue[91] namely, their meaning and origin:

"Arranz, nel suo articolo sopra citato[92] si chiede qual'è l'origine ed il senso di queste preghiere, dette al plurale e quindi anche a nome dei fedeli..."[93].

5. THE SO-CALLED "PRAYERS OF THE KATHISMATA" –
THE PALESTINIAN TRADITION

The comments of Father Arranz on the Palestinian "prayers" (perhaps including the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*) seem to be very "clear":

"Nous ne connaissons pas les prières originales de l'office palestinien; personnellement nous pensons que, comme office monastique, il n'en avait pas. Lorsqu'on a voulu lui adapter les prières de l'Euchologe de Constantinople, il a fallu forcer les choses en essayant de mettre le nouvel office en accord avec les prières de l'ancien"[94].

On the other hand, Father Boris Hološnjaj seems to "contradict" to some extent the hypothesis of Father M. Arranz when he remembers the so-called Palestinian ordinance, also called "kanon tês psalmodías"[95] of Sabbait monks, which contained besides "psalmody",

---

[88] *Sfântul Simeon Arhiepiscopul Tesalonicului, Tratat asupra tuturor dogmelor credinței noastre ortodoxe, după principii puse de Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos și urmașii Săi (Saint Simeon Archbishop of Thessalonica, Treaty on all the Dogmas of our Orthodox Faith, according to the Principles of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Followers).* Volume II, in the *Colection "From the Beauties of Christian Living"* 2, Suceava, Publishing House of Suceava and Rădăuți Archbishopric, 2003, p. 91; see also N. Preda, *Preghiere salmiche...*, p. 459.

[89] "Ἡ τῶν λυχνικῶν γὰρ λεγομένων εὐχῶν πρώτη ἐν ἑαυτῇ περιέχει τὴν τοῦ Ψαλμοῦ παντὸς ἔννοιαν, καὶ ῥήματα ἐξ αὐτοῦ· "Κύριε οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμων"· καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς δὲ ὁμοίως πρὸς τοὺς ψαλμοὺς τῶν ἀντιφώνων καὶ τὰς ἐννοίας ἐχούσας καὶ ῥήματα εὑρήσεις ἐξ αὐτῶν· (...) καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ λέγεται, καὶ ῥήματα ψαλμικὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀδομένων καὶ ἐννοίας περιέχει, ὡς ἂν ἀναφέρωνται πάντα διὰ τοῦ ἱερέως πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν...", *PG* 155, p. 628B; "La première prière des lucernaires qui contient la signification du psaume (...) Les autres (prières) contiennent la signification des psaumes des *antiphôna*...", M. Arranz, "L'office de l'Asmatikos Hesperinos («vêpres chantées») de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin, IIe partie: La psalmodie", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 44 (1978), p. 411.

[90] See also Boris Hološnjaj, *Tipikon della Chiesa bizantina – storia della sua formazione*, Roma, Dispense Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2004-2005, p. 7.

[91] "Mais cette question de la place et de la destination des prières presbytérales des vêpres et des matines, tout en restant dans le thème de notre présent travail, est une question périphérique", M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 189.

[92] "…quel sens et quel rôle peuvent avoir ces sept prières sacerdotales, rédigées au pluriel et donc au nom des fidèles, dites d'affilée et de plus en secret", M. Arranz, "Les prières sacerdotales des vêpres byzantines", p. 85.

[93] M. Nin, *Ufficiatura bizantina…*, p. 47, note 217.

[94] M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 189.

[95] "Questo secondo modo della preghiera dei monaci sabaiti è conosciuto sotto la denominazione "kanon tês psalmodías" e comprendeva i salmi e le preghiere. Sembra che il "kanon tês psalmodías" i monaci recitavano nelle loro lingue materne", *Tipikon della Chiesa bizantina...*, pp. 3-4.

also "prayers" (very likely also the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*); unfortunately, about the type of these prayers, which seem to be, without a doubt, of private use (ie, the personal order of the monks)[96], he does not give us any other clue.

Moreover, referring in the same context to the liturgical tradition of Sinai and of Blessed Nilus, who "observed" the Palestinian ordinances, he states:

> "A questo punto seguiva la prima stasis di cinquanta salmi. Finiti questi Nilo recitava 50 volte Kyrie eleêson e Padre nostro dopodiché uno dei suoi discepoli leggeva la Lattera di Giacomo mentre gli altri ascoltavano seduti. Dopo la seconda stasis di cinquanta salmi e le preghiere come dopo la prima..."[97].

This mention also means that the so-called "prayers" that followed the continuous reading of the Psalms (the 150, divided into three states) of the community ordinance, were in fact "*Kyrie eleison*, 50 times and *Lord's Prayer*"[98].

So, according to Father Boris Hološnjaj, we distinguish two types of prayer in the Palestinian tradition (sabbait), depending, of course, on the two types of ordinances (private and common or communal):

a) "prayers" which follow the "psalmody" and which are of private use[99], but on which we know nothing;

b) "prayers" that follow "the continuous reading" of the Psalter and which are part of the community ordinance (common) and which are "*Kyrie eleison*, 50 times and *Lord's Prayer*"[100].

However, Father Arranz advances the assumption regarding the Palestinian "prayers", stating that:

> "Nous pouvons donc avancer l'affirmation que l'office byzantin actuel, d'origine monastique palestinienne, ne prévoyait pas de prière psalmique; ni privée comme c'était le cas en Egypte[101, 102] et peut-être en Cappadoce[103] et Antioche, ni officielle

---

[96] M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 192.

[97] Boris Hološnjaj, *Tipikon della Chiesa bizantina...*, p. 4.

[98] "L'office monacal dure toute la nuit et se fait dans un cadre fort proche de l'office byzantin actuel; il comprend la récitation de tout le psautier et la lecture de trois épîtres catholiques et n'a comme prière que le *Notre Père* répété à différents moments de l'office et de longues séries de *Kyrie eleison*. Aucune autre prière", M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 192.

[99] See also M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 192.

[100] "The Apostles (…) asked the Savior to teach them how to pray (Matthew 6) and, since then, the prayer of the Savior has not ceased to remain the most important prayer of the Church", Hierom. PhD Petru Pruteanu, "Evoluția Rânduielilor tipiconale..." (The Evolution of the Typikon...), p. 63.

[101] "...Uno si alzava in mezzo e cantava i salmi al Signore. Intanto tutti stavano seduti (come è ancora uso in Egitto), con la mente intensamente fissa alle parole del cantore, e quando aveva cantato undici salmi, separati dalle preghiere inserite tra di loro…", Robert F. Taft, *La liturgia delle ore in oriente e occidente. Le origini dell'ufficio divino e il suo significato per oggi*, Roma, Edizioni Lipa, 2001, pp. 85-86; this is a passage from the work *Despre așezămintele cenobiților (About the Cenobitical Establishments)* of Saint John Cassian († 435).

[102] "In the *monastic environment*, starting with the 4th-5th centuries, some *psalmodic* ordinances developed, which, besides private prayers that did not have a fixed order, generated the evening-night and morning-day vigils. The basics of such a vigil were as follows: a) the protopsaltes read/ spoke 12 Psalms, after the last saying *Alleluia*; b) after each Psalm there was prayer in secret; c) at the abbot's sign there were made bows (together); d) the abbot was praying loudly…", Hierom. PhD Petru Pruteanu, "Evoluția Rânduielilor tipiconale..." (The Evolution of the Typikon...), p. 66.

[103] "E cosí dopo aver trascorso la notte in una serie di salmodie interrotte da preghiere…", Robert F. Taft, *La liturgia delle ore...*, p. 63 (see also the chart on page 64); it's a text from a *Scrisoare (Letter)* (207:3) which St. Basil the Great († 379) sends to the clergy of New Caesarea (Cappadocia).

comme c'était le cas à Jérusalem[104] au IVᵉ siècle[105], ou à Constantinople[106] tant que l'office *asmaticos*[107] y a été en vigueur[108]. Répétons que au moyen âge on a tenté, plusieurs solutions pour incorporer à l'office monastique les prières de l'Euchologe constantinopolitain. Une des solutions possibles est celle pratiquée aujourd'hui: l'office est célébré sans prières, mais celles-ci sont dites tout de même, en bloc et à voix basse. Il est vrai que le fait de dire les prières à voix basse est un phénomène très ancien et assez généralisé. Comment juger le fait que les moines palestiniens qui avaient élaboré un office d'une grande perfection technique et d'une surprenante richesse hymnologique, n'aient jamais songé à créer eux-mêmes ou à emprunter à d'autres traditions des prières pour les psaumes? Faut-il voir en cela une conséquence du simple fait qu'il n'y avait pas de prêtres parmi les moines, car, selon l'abbé Nil, c'étaient là deux «vocations» différentes et même contradictoires"[109].

Another "liturgical province" that could be added to those mentioned by Father M. Arranz is the island of Cyprus:

"Anche Epifanio (ca. 315-403), monaco in Giudea per trent'anni prima di diventare nel 367 vescovo di Salamina, al cap. 23 del suo trattato *Sulla fede*, scritto circa nel 374-377, parla di «inni e preghiere mattutini» e di «salmi e preghiere vespertini» (*lychnikos*). Da notare che egli parla di inni e preghiere mattutini e salmi e preghiere vespertini, cioè al plurale"[110].

Finally, we want to point out that "deleted" recordings of the existence of the so-called "Palestinian" prayers are found, on the one hand, in manuscripts written later (*Byzantine Liturgical Psalters*), which contain such prayers (see for example ms. *Ateniense*

---

[104] "A partire da quest'ora fino all'alba si recitano inni, si risponde ai salmi cosí come alle antifone: a ogni inno si fa una preghiera. Infatti due o tre sacerdoti e cosí alcuni diaconi ogni giorno si avvicendano con i *monazontes* per dire le preghiere a ogni inno e a ogni antifona", Robert F. Taft, *La liturgia delle ore...*, p. 74; it's a text from *Descrierea Egeriei (Description of Egeria)* (chap. 24).

[105] "Another important testimony worth mentioning about the liturgical ordinances of the fourth century in the cathedral environment is *Descrierea pelerinei Silvia Egeria (Description of the Pilgrim Silvia Egeria) (Peregrinatio ad Loca Sancta,* year 384) which presents the daily routine of the ministry in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. In ordinary days, there were 5 moments of prayer that consisted of the following elements: 1) monastic vigil at the singing of cocks made up of psalms and the prayers of priests and deacons; 2) in the morning - the psalms singed by the protopsaltes, and the prayer of the bishop with the bending of the heads; 3) Hour VI: the psalms singed by the protopsaltes, and the prayer of the bishop with the bending of the heads…", Hierom. PhD Petru Pruteanu, "Evoluția Rânduielilor tipiconale..." (The Evolution of the Typikon...), p. 67.

[106] "A partire del X secolo abbiamo già le prime testimonianze sulle preghiere presbiterali provenienti dalla tradizione dell'Asmatikê Akolouthia inserite nell'ufficio delle Ore (Vespro e Mattutino) della tradizione monastica palestinese. Si tratta delle prime sette preghiere del Vespro dell'Asmatikê Akolouthia e delle dodici preghiere del Mattutino nei corrispondenti uffici monastici", Boris Hološnjaj, *Tipikon della Chiesa bizantina...*, p. 13.

[107] "2) Le cinque preghiere fra i quali le prime tre corrispondevano ai salmi delle tre antifone mentre le ultime due erano le preghiere dell'inclinazione del capo (euchê thês kefaloklisias) e di congedo (euchê thês apolyseos)...", Boris Hološnjaj, *Tipikon della Chiesa bizantina...*, p. 8.

[108] "This is where the service *asmatikon akolouthia* – "the ordinance of singing" develops, which implied antiphonal singing. Actually, *asmatikon akolouthia* was not a service in the direct sense of the word, but a kind of job model, a schema for Vespers and Matins. It implied: a) *three prayers of the priest with litanies;* b) *three antiphons (in fact Psalms antiphonically sung), one after each prayer;* c) *the Dismissal prayer with a litany for demands;* and d) *the final prayer with bending of the heads",* Hierom. PhD Petru Pruteanu, "Evoluția Rânduielilor tipiconale..." (The Evolution of the Typikon...), p. 87.

[109] M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 192.

[110] Robert F. Taft, *La liturgia delle ore...,* p. 65.

2478, 14th century and others[111]), as well as in the printed *Liturgical Psalters* (which we will recall in another subchapter). Codex *Ateniense 2478*, which we have personally dealt with[112], contains besides the Psalms, also prayers (65), which we have called, in general terms, *"prayers of the Kathismata"*, some of which being unknown and unpublished.

6. "SACERDOTAL" PRAYERS - OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

There are some unclear explanations regarding the so-called sacerdotal prayers and we think it is welcome to present them in this context.

A general exposition of the prayers known as "sacerdotal" is found at Father M. Arranz:

"En regardant notre tableau[113] nous voyons que les prières avaient trois fonctions différentes: les unes, les plus nombreuses, précédaient les psaumes (soit groupés en antiphones, soit isolés); d'autres accompagnaient la synaptie de demandes à la fin des offices: la prière [7] aux vêpres et la prière [12] aux matines; de ces prières accompagnant les synapties nous avons déjà un précédent dans les vêpres et matines du VIIIe livre des Constitutions Apostoliques; une troisième catégorie comprenait les prières d'inclination de la tête ou de bénédiction: celles-ci aussi nous les trouvons déjà dans les mêmes Constitutions"[114].

Here are some of the peculiarities of these prayers:

"Les prières [**I**] à [**8**][115] seront séparées en deux groupes de nombre variable. Celles du premier groupe, les premières, accompagneront la psalmodie des *kathismata* (d'un à trois, selon les traditions et selon les époques de l'année): en raison d'une prière par *kathisma* en règle générale, ou trois si on sépare les trois *doxai* de chaque *kathisma*. Les dernières prières du groupe [**I**]-[**8**] c.à.d., celles qui ne trouveront pas de place dans la psalmodie, seront dites entre les odes du *kanôn*: après la 3e et la 6e. Quelque prière pourra même disparaître"[116].

What is special is, in our opinion, the mention of the existence in ancient times of so-called "sacerdotal prayers" spoken after each Song of Canons[117] from the Holy Thursday (on the Holy Week only on Thursday and on Saturday we have the whole Canon)[118] and beginning with Easter Sunday, given that during this period we do not have kathismata of the Psalter at Matins; this particularity is also signaled by Father M. Arranz:

---

[111] According to an "*Appendix*" ("Appendix D5: Prayers Found in Psalters and *Horologia*") from the study of G. Parpulov, there would be no less than 30 pages of incipient, about 412 prayers, recorded in manuscripts (*Psalters*), with those mentioned, it is true, also in the *Horologion of the so-called "prayers of the Kathismata"*, cf. *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters...*, pp. 182-211.

[112] N. Preda, *Aşa-numitele "rugăciuni ale catismelor"... (The so-called "Prayers of the Kathismata"...).*

[113] Cf. M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", pp. 188-189.

[114] "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", p. 190.

[115] These are the first eight prayers of those called "of the Matins".

[116] M. Arranz, "Les prières presbytérales des matines...", pp. 86-87.

[117] "*The canon* is the most developed of Christian religious poetry as it brings together in a new unit hymns (odes) formed, as we have seen, each of three or more stanzas or stichera...", Fr. Prof. PhD E. Branişte and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic... (Encyclopaedic Dictionary...),* p. 85.

[118] *Triodion which includes church services from the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee until the Holy Saturday*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2010, pp. 584-590, 665-670.

"A l'orthros du Jeudi Saint et du Dimanche de Pâques, où il n'y a pas de psalmodie, le *Typicon d' Ibîrôn* (KEKELIDZE, 283, 292) prévoit une prière et sa correspondante synaptie après chaque ode du *kanôn*. Dans la praxis actuelle, seules les *synaptai* suivent les odes aux matines de Pâques. A Messine, chaque ode était suivie de synaptie et de lecture patristique ce même jour. Nous avons déjà vu que le lendemain des fêtes du Seigneur, les odes I à 6 remplaçaient la psalmodie du psautier (cf. p. 70, note I); même praxis à Ibîrôn (cf. KEKELIDZE, 247)"[119].

7. THE TYPE OF SO-CALLED "PSALMIAN PRAYERS": "SACERDOTAL MEDITATIONS" OR "SIMPLE PARAPHRASE"?

In an article from the '70s[120], Father Arranz wondered how the so-called "psalmian prayers" could be understood: "sacerdotal meditations" or "simple paraphrase"?

To this question, we will try to answer further, specifying only a few of the characteristics of the "psalmian prayers", because, as we shall see, an exact determination of them is still difficult to achieve.

Thus, we will first record some essential passages from the study of Father M. Arranz, where he tries to "solve" as much as possible this dilemma:

"La prière qui, à Jérusalem au IV⁰ s., suivait chaque psaume tandis qu'à Constantinople, selon l'Euchologe ancien, elle le précédait, et qui était dite par le prêtre, était-elle une prière de médiation sacerdotale, ou était-ce plutôt une paraphrase destinée à introduire le psaume (à Constantinople) ou à le compléter (à Jérusalem) en lui donnant un sens chrétien? Etaient-ce des prières vraiment sacerdotales ou simplement explicatives? Dans le premier cas les moines, en constituant des communautés sans prêtres, ne pouvaient pas adopter des prières vraiment sacerdotales. Dans le second cas, vivant une haute vie spirituelle, ils ne sentaient pas le besoin d'interpréter les psaumes, qui étaient eux-mêmes leur prière essentielle. Les *Alleluia, Gloria Patri, Pater noster* et *Kyrie eleison*, qui parsemaient la récitation du psautier, leur suffisaient. Ils avaient d'ailleurs conservé les prostrations entre les psaumes[121]. (...) Pour ce qui est des prières de l'Euchologe qui accompagnent les psaumes et qui sont sept sur neuf à vêpres et onze sur treize à matines (voir tableau)[122], nous pouvons donc avancer une première conclusion: deux prières psalmiques à vêpres ([1] et [8]) et deux à matines ([10] et [11]) sont vraiment psalmiques; les autres cinq à vêpres, et neuf à matines, accompagnent les psaumes sans s'y référer, même d'une façon générale, vu que les citations de l'Ecriture et spécialement du Psautier, sont assez rares et imprécises. D'où viennent ces prières? Ont-elles étaient créées pour accompagner les antiphones ou existaient-elles déjà avant d'être réunies dans l'Euchologe? Une réponse précise évidemment n'est pas possible; nous allons essayer un peu plus loin de présenter une hypothèse, après avoir considéré les prières des synapties"[123].

---

[119] "Les prières presbytérales des matines...", p. 87, note 2.
[120] "Le sacerdoce ministériel...".
[121] Robert F. Taft, *La liturgia delle ore...,* pp. 218, 227, etc.
[122] Cf. M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", pp. 188-189.
[123] M. Arranz, "Le sacerdoce ministériel...", pp. 193-194.

Note that important insights on the type of the so-called "*sacerdotal prayers*" are also found in Father M. Nin:

"*Preghiera I*. Si tratta di una serie di parafrasi del salmo 85 che nel vespro di Costantinopoli si trovava pure all'inizio di quest'ora; attualmente non ha allusione alcuna a qualche ufficiatura. Si tratta di un buon esempio di preghiera salmica, in cui il singolare del salmo passa al plurale del testo. Forse la presente preghiera apparteneva a un insieme di preghiere salmiche che la Chiesa costantinopolitana[124] aveva e che è andata persa, cf., ARRANZ, M., *Les prières sacerdotales*, pp. 88-89"[125];

"*Preghiera II-III*. Due preghiere tipicamente vespertine, fatta da un'insieme di citazioni salmiche. Hanno una tematica simile, con una prima parte penitenziale: *Signore nel tuo sdegno non ci accusare, e nella tua ira non ci castigare, ma agisci con noi secondo la tua clemenza...* (preghiera II); *Signore Dio nostro, ricòrdati di noi pecatori e inutili servi* (preghiera III). Non sembra ispirata ad un unico salmo, ma a diversi testi. Si può trattare di una preghiera che accompagnava una litania di preghiere; infatti le espressioni *e concedi che quanto resta del giorno presente sia pieno di pace e senza peccato, come pure tutto il tempo della nostra vita* (preghiera II), *...tutto ciò che chiediamo di utile per la nostra salvezza* (preghiera III), si trova nella litania dell'angelo di pace dopo il grande ingresso del vespro"[126].

We would like to state in the conclusion of this subchapter that at the time when we were preparing the Doctoral Thesis [*Preghiere salmiche di autori vari secondo il codice "Vaticano Greco 783" (ff. 1-96r)*], we were not aware of the content of this article; we say this because, in a way, the prayers we have mentioned in this paper could be a "response" to the dilemma of the type of so-called "psalmian prayers".

We'll just give some of the coordinates of the type of prayers written in codex *Vat. gr. 783*, characteristics on which the type of these prayers could easily be determined.

A first clue is the titles of the two collections of prayers:

"*Εὐχαὶ διάφοροι πρὸς τὸν Κύριον καὶ Θεὸν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν (...) **διασκευασθεῖσαι κατὰ παράφρασιν** ἐν ὁμοιότητι τῶν ψαλμῶν τοῦ Δαυὶδ*"[127] and "*Ἑτέρα συνθήκη ψαλμῶν (...) **κατὰ παράφρασιν**...*"[128].

A second clue is also the titles of some of the prayers themselves:

κθ´ [29][129] (*Ἐξομολόγησις σὺν ἱκεσίᾳ καὶ ὕμνῳ, κατὰ τὸν **ἄμωμον**[130] διασκευασθεῖσα· καὶ κατηγορία ψυχῆς ῥαθύμου καὶ κακῶς βιοῦντος*) și με´ [45][131] (*Κατὰ **παράφρασιν ἄμωμος** ἐν ἐξομολογήσει ἐν δεήσει καὶ κατακρίσει ἐμαυτοῦ*), seem to be a paraphrase of Psalm 118[132];

---

[124] See also Boris Hološnjaj, *Tipikon della Chiesa bizantina...*, p. 8.

[125] *Ufficiatura bizantina...*, p. 46, note 209.

[126] *Ufficiatura bizantina...*, p. 46, note 211.

[127] *Vat. gr. 783*, 2v.

[128] *Vat. gr. 783*, 97r.

[129] *Vat. gr. 783*, 49v-65v.

[130] Psalm 118 is also called "*ἄμωμος*", cf. L. Clugnet, *Dictionnaire...*, p. 7.

[131] *Vat. gr. 783*, 173r-182r.

[132] Note that the "arbitrary" division of the prayers [κθ´ (49v-65v) and με´ (173r-182r)] from codex *Vat. gr. 783* in "states" ["Les prières trop longues pour être dites sans interruption ont été divisées de différentes manières. C'est à certaines des parties qui sont le résultat de cette division qu'on a donné le nom de *στάσεις*, nom qui indiquait à l'origine qu'on devait les réciter ou les chanter debout", L. Clugnet, *Dictionnaire...*, p. 139], fortunately coincides with the natural division of Psalm 118 into three "states" [see *Vat. gr. 783*, 56v, 62r, 173r, 177r, 179v)].

ρλϛ΄ [136][133] (***Παράφρασις εἰς τὸν α΄ καὶ β΄ ψαλμὸν. Ὕμνος εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν κατηγορία τε(!) τῶν χριστοκτόνων Ἑβραίων καὶ εὐχαριστία τῶν εἰσδεχθέντων ἐθνῶν. Εὐχὴ ἑτέρα***) și ρλζ΄ [137][134] (***Καὶ ἄλλως τοῦ β΄ ψαλμοῦ παράφρασις. Ἔλεγχος Ἑβραίων καὶ θεολογία ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας τῶν πιστῶν***), seem to be a paraphrase of Psalms 1 and 2.

Even if we do not have a clear answer to the "type" of the so-called "psalmian prayers", we can still state, with the limits of rigor and in accordance with what we have mentioned above, that much of the prayers in the cult were written in the form of a paraphrase to certain Psalms.

8. BYZANTINE LITURGICAL PSALTER –
PECULIARITIES OF THE PRINTED EDITIONS

Particular attention is paid by C. Korolevskij to the printed *Psalters* (he mentions, among other things, Vienna edition from 1793, which he found in Rome), which record a practice that he says is not reproduced in all the printed editions of the Psalter in Greek:

> "Cette manière de lire le Psautier pourrait être très antique, parce que le Psautier était le seul livre de prières des anciens anachorètes: probablement en trouverait-on des vestiges dans les manuscrits. En tous cas, je ne l'ai jamais vu reproduit dans les éditions grecques, sinon dans celle de Vienne 1793, dont se trouve un exemlpaire à l'Institut Pontifical Oriental"[135].

The hypothesis of C. Korolevskij is and is not a fair one, because there are others *Psalters* in Greek, which render together with "prayers of the Kathismata"[136], the so-called *"Titles of the Psalms"*[137], both those attributed to Eusebius of Caesarea[138, 139] († 339), as well as others[140]; but about these particularities we will speak in what follows.

On the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen the supposition of C. Korolevskij regarding the existence in the manuscript of the so-called *"prayers of the Kathismata"*, because much of this topic has been dealt with lately; personally we have already written two studies on this subject, works already quoted [*The so-called "Prayers of the Kathismata" according to Codex Ateniense 2478: (Liturgics Study)* and *Preghiere salmiche di autori vari secondo il codice "Vaticano Greco 783" (ff. 1-96r)*].

C. Korolevskij adds, among other things, that "prayers of the Kathismata" is in all the editions of the *Psalter* in Slavonic, being originally important elements of an anachoretic ordinance:

---

[133] *Vat. gr. 783*, 242r-243v.

[134] *Vat. gr. 783*, 243v-245v.

[135] "La Codification de l'Office byzantin. Les essais dans le passé", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 19 (1953), p. 58.

[136] "*...καὶ ἡ εὐχή. Δέσποτα παντοκράτωρ, ὁ Πατὴρ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν...*", *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφητάνακτος Δαβίδ. ἐν τῷ προσετέθησαν καὶ αἱ ἐν ἑκάστῳ ψαλμῷ ὑποθέσεις. καὶ εἰς τὸ τέλος αὐτοῦ ἓν ἀνώνυμον θεολογικὸν βιβλιάριον εἰς ἁπλῆν διάλεκτον, πάνυ ὠφέλιμον, Ἐν Λειψίᾳ τῆς Σαξονίας, ἐν τῇ Τυπογραφίᾳ τοῦ Βρέϊτκοπφ*, 1781, p. 45.

[137] On the so-called *"Titluri ale Psalmilor" (Titles of the Psalms)* see also N. Preda, *Preghiere salmiche...*, pp. 472-487.

[138] "*ΥΠΟΘΕΣΕΙΣ ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΜΦΥΛΟΥ*", *Codex Alexandrinus* (5th century) 531r.

[139] *Codex Alexandrinus* (sec. V) 531v-532v, cf. *Facsimile of the Codex Alexandrinus. Old Testament, Vol. III. [Psalm. Ecclesiast]*, Inghilterra, London (S. d.) and *The Codex Alexandrinus (Royal MS. 1 D. V-VIII), in reduced photographic facsimile. Old Testament, part IV. I Esdras-Ecclesiasticus*, London, 1957.

[140] "*Βίβλος ψαλμῶν. Ὑπόθεσις. Οτι οἱ μὲν εὐσεβεῖς καὶ χρηστοὶ, μακάριοι...*", *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφητάνακτος Δαβίδ...*, 1.

"Il existe même un office à l'usage des ermites, ne comportant que le Psautier. Il se trouve dans toutes les éditions du Psautier slave. Avant chaque cathisme, après les prières habituelles du début de tout office, viennent trois tropaires, quarante *Gòspodi pomilui*, une prière à la Sainte Trinité, et on lit le cathisme. A la fin, quelques tropaires, quarante *Gòspodi pomilui* et une prière"[141].

To us, unfortunately, there is no study to cover this issue, but from what we have researched, the great majority of the *Psalters* in Romanian also have these prayers to us, probably because they have been translated from the Slavonic language.

Here are two of the old editions of the Psalter in Greek, printed in our country, containing both the "prayers of the Kathismata"[142], and also *"Titles of the Psalms"*:

a) *"Βίβλος ψαλμῶν. Ὑπόθεσις. Περὶ τῆς ἐναρέτου Διαγωγῆς μετὰ μακαρισμοῦ. Ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαβὶδ ἀνεπίγραφος παρ' Ἑβραίοις. Ψαλμὸς. α΄. Μακάριος ἀνήρ..."*[143];

b) *"Ὑπόθεσις. Περὶ τῆς ἐναρέτου διαγωγῆς μετὰ μακαρισμοῦ. Ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαβὶδ ἀνεπίγραφος παρ' Ἑβραίοις. Ψ. α΄. Μακάριος ἀνήρ..."*[144];

We must also add that according to the study of P. Salmon, *Les "Tituli Psalmorum" des manuscrits latins* (Études Liturgiques 3, Paris, Cerf, 1959), only six series had been discovered until that time [145] ale *"Titles of the Psalms"*[146], being attributed to several authors and belonging to different epochs. The earliest of these (written in Greek) is the fourth series (dated to the 4th century)[147], and is attributed to Eusebius of Caesarea.

CONCLUSION

Coming to the end, we can say that only a detailed study of these "prayers of the Kathismata" could confirm many of the "dilemmas" that these liturgical structures (prayers) still raise, such as the type, origin, author, and the age in which they were written, etc.

About the habit of reading the so-called "prayers of the Kathismata", as Ciril Korolevskij says, we know that it seems to be a very old and monastic custom in our Church, which was first encountered in the anchoret.

Called prayers "of the Kathismata" (or "prayers of antiphons", as in the Constantinopolitan tradition), because they were usually placed after each of the 20 kathisma of the Psalter (or after the constantinopolitan "antiphons"), these prayers had different

---

[141] "La Codification de l'Office byzantin...", p. 58.

[142] *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφήτου καὶ βασιλέως Δαβίδ*, Ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ τῶν εἰσοδίων τῆς Θεοτόκου μονῇ τοῦ Συναγώβου, 1700, γ΄ʳ⁻ᵛ, ϛ΄ᵛ, ι΄ʳ⁻ᵛ etc. and *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφήτου καὶ βασιλέως Δα(βί)δ. Νεωστὶ γραφὲν δι' ἐπιταγῆς καὶ δαπάνης τοῦ ὑψηλοτάτου καὶ φιλοχρίστου Αὐθέντου καὶ Ἡγεμόνος πάσης Οὐγκροβλαχίας Κυρίου Κ(υρί)ου Ἰωάννου Κωνσταντίνου Βασαράβα Βοεβόνδα τοῦ Βρανκοβάνου*, 1701 [Manuscript from Iași Metropolitan Library, Fond HH Teoctist, No. 12] 9r-9v, 17r etc.

[143] *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφήτου καὶ βασιλέως Δαβίδ*, Ἐν τῇ ἱερᾳ τῶν εἰσοδίων τῆς Θεοτόκου μονῇ τοῦ Συναγώβου, 1700, α΄.

[144] *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφήτου καὶ βασιλέως Δα(βί)δ. Νεωστὶ γραφὲν δι' ἐπιταγῆς καὶ δαπάνης τοῦ ὑψηλοτάτου καὶ φιλοχρίστου Αὐθέντου καὶ Ἡγεμόνος πάσης Οὐγκροβλαχίας Κυρίου Κ(υρί)ου Ἰωάννου Κωνσταντίνου Βασαράβα Βοεβόνδα τοῦ Βρανκοβάνου*, 1701 [Manuscript from Iași Metropolitan Library, Fond HH Teoctist, No. 12] 3r.

[145] "Les six séries de titres publiées dans ce volume sont les seules qui existent encore, à notre connaissance", *Les "Tituli Psalmorum"*..., p. 30.

[146] "... la série I est la plus répandue, tandis que les III, IV et VI y sont assez rares; la Vᵉ est tout à fait inconnue", *Ibidem*, p. 34.

[147] "En tout cas, dès le IVᵉ siècle, existent certainement celle d' Eusèbe (IV)...", *Ibidem*, p. 28.

structures according to the two deterministic liturgical traditions, the Jerusalem and Constantinopolitan ones.

As far as current practice is concerned (also seen as a true continuation of ancient anachoretic-type usage), we would like to recall a former "custom" of some monasteries in Moldova (for example Sihastria Monastery)[148], which made the order of reading the Psalter and the so-called "prayers of the Kathismata" truly a daily liturgical rule, a real "continual prayer".

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

[**1**] Arranz, M., *Judicium de Thesi Doctorali N. Preda*, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2005

[**2**] Arranz, M., "Le sacerdoce ministériel dans les prières secrètes des Vêpres et des Matines byzantines", în *Euntes docete* XXIV (1971), pp. 186-219

[**3**] Arranz, M., "Les grandes étapes de la Liturgie Byzantine: Palestine-Byzance-Russie: Essai d'aperçu historique", in *Liturgie de l'église particulière et liturgie de l'église universelle*, Bibliotheca *Ephemerides Liturgicae* Subsidia 7, Roma, Centro Liturgico Vincenziano-Ed. liturgiche, 1976, pp. 43-72

[**4**] Arranz, M., "Les prières presbytérales des matines byzantines – 2de partie: Les manuscrits", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 38 (1972), pp. 64-115

[**5**] Arranz, M., "Les prières sacerdotales des vêpres byzantines", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 37 (1971), pp. 85-124

[**6**] Arranz, M., *L'Eucologio Costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI. Hagiasmatarion & Archieraticon (Rituale & Pontificale) con l'aggiunta del Leiturgikon (Messale)*, Roma, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1996

[**7**] Arranz, M., "L'office de l'Asmatikos Hesperinos («vêpres chantées») de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin, IIe partie: La psalmodie", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 44 (1978), pp. 391-412

[**8**] Arranz, M., "L'office de l'Asmatikos Orthros («matines chantées») de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47 (1981), pp. 122-157

[**9**] Borgia, N., *Horologion. Diurno delle chiese di rito bizantino*, in Orientalia Christiana 56 = 16/I, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1929, pp. 152-254

[**10**] Branişte, E., Fr. Prof. PhD and Prof. Ecaterina Branişte, *Dicţionar enciclopedic de cunoştinţe religioase (Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Religious Terms)*, Caransebeş, Diocesan Publishing, 2001

[**11**] Branişte, E., Fr. Prof. PhD *Liturgica Specială pentru institutele teologice (Special Liturgy for Theological Institutes)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1985^2

[**12**] *Ceaslov (Horologion)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2001

[**13**] Clugnet, L., *Dictionnaire grec-français des noms liturgiques en usage dans l'Église grecque*, Paris, A. Picard et fils, 1895

[**14**] De Marinis, T., *La legatura artistica in Italia nei secoli XV e XVI. Notizie ed elenchi. Volume III*, Firenze, Fratelli Alinari-Istituto di Edizioni Artistiche, 1960

[**15**] de Ricci, Seymour and W. J. Wilson, *Census of medieval and renaissance manuscripts in the United States and Canada*. Vol. I, New York, The H. W. Wilson Company, 1935

[**16**] Devreesse, R., *Codices Vaticani Graeci* (*604-866*), t. III, Roma, In Bibliotheca Vaticana, 1950

[**17**] Duncan, J., *Coislin 213. Euchologe de la Grande Église*, Roma, Dissertatio ad Lauream Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1983

[**18**] *Facsimile of the Codex Alexandrinus. Old Testament, Vol. III. [Psalm. Ecclesiast]*, Inghilterra, London (S. d.)

[**19**] Gardthausen, V., *Catalogus codicum Graecorum Sinaiticorum*, Oxonii, E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1886

---

[148] See also Hieromonk Makarios of Simonopetra, *Triodul explicat. Mistagogia timpului liturgic (Lenten Triodion Explained. The Mistagogy of the Liturgical Time)*. Translation: deac. Ioan I. Ică jr, Sibiu, Deisis Publishing, 2003^2, p. 151.

[**20**] Hieromonk Makarios of Simonopetra, *Triodul explicat. Mistagogia timpului liturgic (Lenten Triodion Explained. The Mistagogy of the Liturgical Time)*. Translation: deac. Ioan I. Icǎ jr, Sibiu, Deisis Publishing, 2003[2]

[**21**] Hološnjaj, Boris, *Tipikon della Chiesa bizantina – storia della sua formazione*, Roma, Dispense Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2004-2005

[**22**] Hunger, Herbert, Otto Kresten und Christian Hannick, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Teil 3/2. *Codices Theologici* 101-200 [*Museion. Veröffentlichungen der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Neue Folge herausgegeben von der Generaldirektion.* Vierte Reihe: *Veröffentlichungen der Handschriftensammlung.* Erster Band, Teil 3/2], Wien, Hollinek, 1984

[**23**] *Ἱερατικὸν*, Ἀθῆναι, Ἔκδοσις τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς Διακονίας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, 2000

[**24**] *Il Signore della gloria. Preghiere della "Grande Chiesa" bizantina*. Traduzione e note di Stefano L. Parenti, Milano, Edizioni Paoline, 1988

[**25**] Korolevskij, C., "La Codification de l'Office byzantin. Les essais dans le passé", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 19 (1953), pp. 25-58

[**26**] Lambros, Spyr. P., *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos.* Volume I, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1895

[**27**] Lambros, Spyr. P., *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos.* Volume II, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1900

[**28**] *Liturghier (Hieratikon)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2000

[**29**] *Liturghier cuprinzând Vecernia, Utrenia, Dumnezeieştile Litughii ale Sfinţilor: Ioan Gură de Aur, Vasile cel Mare, Grigorie Dialogul (a Darurilor mai înainte Sfinţite), Rânduiala Sfintei Împărtăşiri şi alte rugăciuni de trebuinţă (Hieratikon including Vespers, Matins, Divine Liturgies of Saints: John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory the Dialogue (of the Presanctified Gifts), the Order of Holy Communion and other necessary prayers)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2012

[**30**] Maj, J., *Coislin 213. Eucologio della Grande Chiesa.* Manoscritto della Biblioteca Nazionale di Parigi (ff. 101-211), Roma, Tesi di Laurea Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1990

[**31**] Mateos, J., *Celebrarea cuvântului în Liturghia bizantină. Studiu istoric (Celebrating the Word in Byzantine Liturgy. Historical Study)*. Translation and notes by Cezar Login, Cluj-Napoca, Renaşterea Publishing, 2007

[**32**] Mateos, J., "Office de minuit et office du matin chez S. Athanase", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 28 (1962), pp. 173-180

[**33**] *Molitfelnic cuprinzând Slujbe, Rânduieli şi Rugăciuni săvârşite de preot la diferite trebuinţe din viaţa creştinilor (Euchologion including Services, Ordinances and Prayer spoken by the Priests on Various Necessities from the Life of Christians)*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2006

[**34**] Nin, M., *Ufficiatura bizantina. La Liturgia delle ore nella tradizione bizantina*, Roma, Dispense Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2002-2003

[**35**] Omont, H., *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale,* Troisième partie: *Ancien fonds grec*, codd. 2542-3117. *Coislin. Supplément grec. Autres bibliothèques de Paris. Départements*, Paris, Libraire Alphonse Picard, 1888

[**36**] Parpulov, Georgi R., *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters, ca. 850-1350 AD*, Plovdiv, 2014

[**37**] *Pidalion* (reprinted), Neamţ Monastery, 1844

[**38**] Πολίτης, Λ., *Κατάλογος χειρογράφων τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ἀρ. 1857-2500*, Ἀθῆναι, 1991

[**39**] Pott, Thomas, *La réforme liturgique byzantine. Étude du phénomène de l'évolution non-spontanée de la liturgie byzantine*, in Bibliotheca *Ephemerides Liturgicae* Subsidia 104, Roma, Centro Liturgico Vincenziano - Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000

[**40**] Pott, Thomas, *Réforme monastique et évolution liturgique. La réforme stoudite*, in *Crossroad of cultures. Studies in Liturgy and Patristics in Honor of Gabriele Winkler*, edited by Hans-Jürgen Feulner, Elena Velkovska and Robert F. Taft, in Orientalia Christiana Analecta 260, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2000, pp. 557-589

[**41**] Preda, N., *Aşa-numitele "rugăciuni ale catismelor" potrivit Codicelui Ateniense 2478: studiu de liturgică (The So-called "Prayers of the Kathismata" according to Codex Ateniense 2478: Liturgical Study)*. Degree Paper, Bucharest, Granada Publishing, 2016

[**42**] Preda, N., *Preghiere salmiche di autori vari secondo il codice "Vaticano Greco 783" (ff. 1-96r)*. Doctoral thesis, Bucharest, Granada Publishing, 2016

[**43**] Pruteanu, Hierom. PhD Petru, "Evoluţia Rânduielilor tipiconale în Răsăritul ortodox. Studiu istorico liturgic" (The Evolution of the Typikon in the Orthodox East. Liturgical Historical Study), in *Studii Teologice*, Third Series, Year II, No. 1 (2006), pp. 63-99

[**44**] *Psaltirea Prorocului şi Împăratului David (Psalter of the Prophet and Emperor David)*, Bucharest, 2016

[**45**] Salmon, P., *Les "Tituli Psalmorum" des manuscrits latins*, Études Liturgiques 3, Paris, Cerf, 1959

[**46**] Sartore, D., A. M. Triacca and C. Cibien, *Liturgia*, Milano, Edizioni San Paolo, 2001

[**47**] *Sfântul Simeon Arhiepiscopul Tesalonicului, Tratat asupra tuturor dogmelor credinţei noastre ortodoxe, după principii puse de Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos şi urmaşii Săi (Saint Simeon Archbishop of Thessalonica, Treaty on all the Dogmas of our Orthodox Faith, according to the Principles of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Followers)*. Volume II, in the *Colection "From the Beauties of Christian Living"* 2, Suceava, Publishing House of Suceava and Rădăuţi Archbishopric, 2003

[**48**] Strunk, O., "The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9-10 (1956), pp. 175-202

[**49**] Taft, R. F., *A partire dalla liturgia. Perché è la liturgia che fa la Chiesa*, Roma, Edizioni Lipa, 2004

[**50**] Taft, Robert F., *La liturgia delle ore in oriente e occidente. Le origini dell'ufficio divino e il suo significato per oggi*, Roma, Edizioni Lipa, 2001

[**51**] Taft, R., "Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the 'Byzantine Rite'", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988), pp. 179-194

[**52**] Taft, R. F., *O Istorie a Liturghiei Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur*. Volumul II. *Transferul darurilor şi celelalte rituri preanaforale*. Partea 1. *Intrarea cea Mare (A History of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.* Volume II. *Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-anaphoral Rites,* Part 1. *The Great Entrance)*. 2nd Edition Revised. Translation and preface by Cezar Login, Cluj-Napoca, Renașterea Publishing, 2014

[**53**] *The Codex Alexandrinus (Royal MS. 1 D. V-VIII), in reduced photographic facsimile. Old Testament, part IV. I Esdras-Ecclesiasticus*, London, 1957

[**54**] *Triodion which includes church services from the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee until the Holy Saturday*, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2010

[**55**] *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφητάνακτος Δαβίδ. ἐν τῷ προσετέθησαν καὶ αἱ ἐν ἑκάστῳ ψαλμῷ ὑποθέσεις. καὶ εἰς τὸ τέλος αὐτοῦ ἓν ἀνώνυμον θεολογικὸν βιβλιάριον εἰς ἁπλῆν διάλεκτον, πάνυ ὠφέλιμον*, Ἐν Λειψίᾳ τῆς Σαξονίας, ἐν τῇ Τυπογραφίᾳ τοῦ Βρέϊτκοπφ, 1781

[**56**] *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφήτου καὶ βασιλέως Δαβίδ*, Ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ τῶν εἰσοδίων τῆς Θεοτόκου μονῇ τοῦ Συναγώβου, 1700

[**57**] *Ψαλτήριον τοῦ προφήτου καὶ βασιλέως Δα(βί)δ. Νεωστὶ γραφὲν δι' ἐπιταγῆς καὶ δαπάνης τοῦ ὑψηλοτάτου καὶ φιλοχρίστου Αὐθέντου καὶ Ἡγεμόνος πάσης Οὐγκροβλαχίας Κυρίου Κ(υρί)ου Ἰωάννου Κωνσταντίνου Βασαράβα Βοεβόνδα τοῦ Βρανκοβάνου*, 1701 [Manuscript from Iaşi Metropolitan Library, Fond HH Teoctist, No. 12]

FATIMA AND THE VALUES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: AN ESSAY

Paulo Nuno MARTINS,

Researcher, PhD History and Philosophy of Science (FCT-UNL),Centre Internationale de Recherche et d´Études Transdisciplinaire, CIRET, Paris; Transdisciplinary Center for Consciousness Studies, CTEC, University Fernando Pessoa of Oporto, Portugal; Interuniversity Center for History of Science and Technology, CIUHCT, New University of Lisbon, PORTUGAL;
E-mail: paulonunom@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to address the theme of the role of Fatima in the context of the values in contemporary society, trying to make the comparison of the content of the «Message of Fatima» with some contemporary «Marian Messages» received by the "seers" Marija Pavlovic and Patrícia Talbot.
Keywords: role of Fátima in the changing values; most relevant aspects of Fatima; religious geography.

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to address the «Message of Fatima» as a source of changing values in contemporary societies. Recently, our contemporary has gone through a financial "crisis" and another is foreseen in the near future (according to some analysts), which from my point of view is the result of a deeper "crisis": ethics or personal values. Throughout history [1], particularly in 20th century, such an event occurred in some fundamental milestones where politicians have sought to solve the problems of society by extolling a "radical nationalism" defended by nazism, which led to World War II, as well as an "utopian idealism" advocated by communism in the Soviet Union, which promoted the prohibition of the sacred after the end of World War II, giving rise to the separation of Eastern and Western cultures by the construction of a wall in Berlin (Europe) that has already fallen.

For its part, in the history of mankind there have been several Marian Apparitions[2], namely in wartime, such as in the first half of the 20th century, in 1917, in Portugal (Fatima), at the time of World War I and whose "Message" has spoken of a probable World War II, during the second half of the 20th century. In the same way, in the 1980s, in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Medjugorje), at the time of the war in the Balkans, and in Ecuador (El Cajas), there were also some Marian Apparitions (both of them awaiting validation by the Vatican) that have called for a changing values in contemporary society. It is true that throughout history several "crises" have occurred on Earth and mankind has always found the way to get out of them. However, nowadays humanity has the possibility of destroy itself without possibility of reversing the process. This "potential" destruction has several dimensions: physical/biological, psychological and spiritual. Most positively, every human being is free to choose to evolve in terms of self-awareness that might lead to a better future and destiny to humanity [3]. In this regard, this article on Fatima seeks to address the theme of values through some examples given by the little shepherds of Fatima who have shown love, light and grace, during their life on Earth [4].

1. FATIMA AND THE VALUES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: AN ESSAY

The role of the "Message of Fatima" to the values of contemporary society is something that has brought together different cultures over time.

In this regard, Daniel Reju [5] argues that «*the fact that the Fatima Apparitions have taken place in 1917 is by no means a matter of chance…. To the dead and wounded of the World War I of 1914-1917, we have to add several unbelievers because of this genocide. The fact that the Virgin referred to Russia, reinforces the connection of the "Message of Fatima" and the destiny of this nation through the rediscovery of the Kazan Icon in the 16th century by a child (called "Matrona") who placed the image in a convent in Moscow, until its disappearance during the Bolshevik Revolution of 13th October in 1917 (coinciding with the last Fatima Apparition). This Icon remained in Fatima between 1973-1993, and at the Vatican between 1994-2004, and returned to Russia through Pope John Paul II, after the change of political regime*»[1] .

In historical terms, José Franco [6] states that the religious, public and spontaneous gathering in Fatima that occurred in 1917, it had a great impact on Portuguese society at that time, namely, between the peaceful and conservative attitude of the Catholic Church and the radical Republican perspective of the Portuguese state that defended the Portuguese military presence in War World I. However, in 1926, the change of political regime in Portugal facilitated the recognition of the "Message of Fatima", and since 1930 it has gained increasing prominence in national Catholicism. At the same time, a growing spread of the "Fatima Message" throughout the world was made by Pope Pius XII.

Meanwhile, Sister Lucy was unable to become a nun in a convent in Portugal, and so she went to Pontevedra and Tuy until 1948, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) that took place between the Republicans (who were supported by the communism of the Soviet Union) and Franco (defender of fascism). In this regard, Sister Lucy referred to the need for the «*consecration of Russia in order to minimize the "errors of communism" throughout the world*»[2]. For its part, Nazism also saw the peaceful "Message of Fatima" as a threat to its destructive goals. It is within this context that we could see that the "Message of Fatima" did not appeal to both sides of the war conflict. So, Sister Lucy stated that «*Salazar was chosen to govern Portugal through a peacekeeping attitude; during wartime …although the large amount of Portuguese gold reserves should be distributed by the Portuguese population in order to meet their basic needs*»[3]. *For his part, Salazar saw in Fatima a political and spiritual usefulness, namely in promoting the Portuguese nationalism of his regime, as stated by the Portuguese daily newspaper "Novidades": «Fatima is the place where all regions and social classes of Portugal might be united in a "unique vibration"*»[4].

Historically, after the end of World War II, the "Cold War" between the Soviet Union (communism) and the United States of America (capitalism) occurred in the world. In this regard, Pope Pius XII asked to the Portuguese people «*to pray in Fatima to the "Queen of Peace" in order to help all humanity to find peace and rise from the ruins*»[5]. It is within this context that the "Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima" has arisen near the Basilica of Fatima with the purpose of keeping safe the symbolic Kazan Icon, before returning to Russia. Meanwhile, during the John Paul II pontificate the "Message of Fatima" became a "Global Phenomena" because many events referred to in this Divine Message began to occur in the world. In fact, it was during the John Paul II pontificate that Mikhail Gorbachev began the process of "perestroika" ("change", "revolution"), leading to the end of the "Cold War".

[1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12,13] English translation is my responsibility

Furthermore, some other events described in the "Message of Fatima" began to "come to fruition", namely the failed attempt on Pope John Paul II, on 13th May 1981 (commemoration of Fatima Apparitions), in 1989, the "coincident" fall of the "Berlin Wall" together with the fall of communist regimes throughout Europe, in accordance with the Virgin´s expression: «*At last, My Immaculate Heart will triumph*»[6]. Meanwhile, the Pope John Paul II decided to consecrate the whole world (including the Russia) to the Divine Mother, as requested by Sister Lucy. All these events were announced by the mass media (newspapers, radio, and television) that contributed to Fatima becoming a Sacred global place, in the context of the contemporary Catholicism.

Nowadays, there are some examples of similarities between the "Message of Fatima" and some Marian Apparitions that have occurred both with Marija Pavlovic [7] (along with other "seers"), in the 1980s, in Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina), and Patricia Talbot [8], in the 1990s, in El Cajas (Ecuador), and so reinforcing the role of the "Message of Fatima" in the context of values in contemporary society[7]. For example, Sister Emmanuel describes: «*With regard to the Marian Apparitions of Medjugorje, Our Lady speaks of the end of the war, namely with Marija Pavlovic, to whom the Virgin introduces herself as "Queen of Peace" and that the war in the Balkans would end soon*»[8], while Sister Bettwy has written that «Patricia Talbot points out to «*"a conditional World War III, involving the United States and China, which might lead to a loss of faith by people"*»[9]. Furthermore, Patricia Talbot said that the Virgin told her «*some Secrets (consisting of three parts), where part of them should be kept secret, and the other part should be revealed to the Pope John Paul II*»[10]. Marija Pavlovic has also received nine Secrets by Divine Mother.

Likewise, António Borelli Machado [9] describes some of these same events that occurred in Fatima:«*On the sixth apparition, on 13th October 1917, the Virgin said to shepherds: "I would like to ask you to build in this place a chapel in my honor. I am the Lady of the Rosary... The war will soon be over, and the military will return to their homes...". At this moment Lucia exclaimed:"Look at the Sun! .. and at that moment the Sun... began to swirl like a wheel of fire, throwing beams of light... at last, the Sun returned to his place just as it had come down*"»[11] .

Moreover, Sister Lucy said that she has also received some Secrets from the Virgin [10]: «*On 13th July 1917, the Secrets were revealed by the Virgin to me, Jacinta and Francisco. They consist of three closely related things.... Then Our Lady said to them*: "*You have seen Hell, where souls go because of sin .... The war will end (1914-1918), but if mankind do not cease to offend God, another worse war will begin .... To prevent it, I will ask you for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and communion on the first Saturdays ... At last my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Pope will consecrate Russia to Me, and there will be some time of peace in the world*»[12] .

Finally, the phenomenon of "spontaneous healing" that some pilgrims have experienced both in Medjugorje and El Cajas, they have also occurred in Fatima, in the last century, as described by Luciano Cristino [11] : «*On 13th June 1917, Lucia asked about the cure of a patient, to which the Virgin of Fatima replied: "If she convertes, then she will be healed during the year"*»[13].

----

[7] When the "seers" received their "Divine Messages", they later found that the "Message of Fatima" had very similar contente to what they had received from the Divine Mother, but associated with contemporary society.

CONCLUSION

The relevance of the «Message of Fatima» to the change values of society over time is unquestionable, and so there have been several studies on this subject [12]. Nevertheless, there is still a great deal of research on the theme of the "Sacred in contemporary society" [13] to be performed by researchers, notably on some phenomena that has occurred both in Medjugorje and El Cajas. These two Marian Apparitions have given a "new look" to the "Message of Fatima", namely the sacred content (timeless) of Marian Apparitions, [14] since it coincides in many aspects with the content of the «Message of Fatima».

References

[1] Fazio, Mariano. Fundamentos da Cultura Contemporânea. Editora Moinho Velho.2015.
[2] Connell, Janice. Meetings with Mary. Visions of the Blessed Mother. Penguin Random House. 1996.
[3] Martins, Paulo. O fim do Romantismo Lunar 50 anos depois da chegada do homem à Lua. Religião e Vida: Labirintos da Existência, Em: Brissos-Lino, J. e Pinto, P., Edições Lusófonas. 2020.
[4] Cristino, Luciano and Duarte, Marco. Francisco e Jacinta Marto – Candeias que Deus acendeu. Santuário de Fátima. 2012.
[5] Reju, Daniel. Le Troisième secret de Fátima. Éditions du Rocher. 1981.
[6] Franco, José and Reis, Bruno. Fátima: Lugar Sagrado Global. Círculo de Leitores. 2017.
[7] Maillard, Sister Emmanuel. Medjugorje, Trionfe du Coeur. Éditions des Béatitudes. 2009.
[8] Bettwy, Sister Isabel. I am The Guardian of The Faith. Franciscan University Press. 1991.
[9] Machado, António. As Aparições e a Mensagem de Fátima nos manuscritos da Irmã Lúcia. Companhia Editora do Minho. 1998.
[10] Authors (several). Memórias da Irmã Lúcia. A Pastorinha de Fátima. Edições Loyola. 2016.
[11] Cristino, Luciano. As Aparições de Fátima a partir de Documentos. Santuário de Fátima. 2017.
[12] Fernandes, Joaquim and Fernandes, Fernando and Berenguel, Raul et al. Fátima. Mais Além da Fé. Book Cover Editora. 2019.
[13] Martins, Paulo. Ciência e a Teoria da "Vida após a Morte": Algumas considerações sobre a filosofia da ética. Consciências 6:67-80. Download de http://ctec.ufp.pt/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ConsCi%C3%AAncias_6-1.pdf. 2019.
[14] Olati, Adilakshmi. The Mother. Mother Meera Foundation. 2008.

QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENTS AND THE LUTHERAN DISPERSAL OF SALVATION

Eugen Spierer
Independent researcher from Haifa, Israel,
E-mail: eugenspierer@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Martin Luther suggested that God disperses the salvation gained by the sacrifice of Christ both before and after the crucifixion itself. In this essay I describe how quantum time entanglements can facilitate a timeless dispersal of salvific grace, and hypothesize that it is God who creates, maintains and manipulates space-time using such entanglements, in a way analogous to a spider controlling its web.

Keywords: Martin Luther; salvation; crucifixion;

INTRODUCTION

Ernest L. Simmons claims that "the Trinitarian doctrine of perichoresis could be metaphorically interpreted as a form of Divine phase entanglement with the world."[1] Following Sally McFague, Simmons also says that "*Thought is internalized speech and in order for us to think about anything at all we must verbalize it, which means it becomes abstractly derived from our experience.*"[2] While I strongly agree with the latter declaration, I believe religious dogmas are not merely *metaphorically* interpreted using scientific theories. Despite approaching reality from two different viewpoints, science and religion both try to arrive at conclusions about God's created reality. The reality which we experience and which we believe was created by God is the same one, and any scientific theory describing it may offer clues as to how God created this reality and His reasons for doing so. Science and religion do not exist in such different and separate planes as to make them merely metaphorically compatible. Science can be used to understand religious dogmas in a *literal* way for the two complement each other when studying the world around us, even if they diverge when studying the world beyond our existence. In this essay, I intend to do just that.

My intention is not to add another instance of the God-of-the-gaps argument, which I have shown to be null elsewhere.[3] Instead, I wish to offer a possible way in which God controls the fabric of space-time by manipulating the existence and nature of quantum entanglements. Contrary to Simmon's opinion, this is a use of findings from the field of quantum physics in order to shed light on a Christian dogma put forth by Martin Luther. Such use of a scientific theory maintains God's revelation as the primary guiding worldview and uses quantum physics as a valid field enlightening God's work in creation. It upholds a hierarchy between science and religion which corresponds to Luther's conviction that God is revealed only at the cross of Christ.[4]

---

[1] Simmons, *Quantum perichoresis*.
[2] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*.
[3] Spierer, God-of-The-gaps Argument in light of Luther's Theology of the Cross.
[4] *Ibid.*

In this essay, I wish to use the scientific theory of space-time entanglements in order to understand Martin Luther's notion of the timelessness of the distribution of the salvation gained on our behalf by Christ's suffering on the cross. This essay is an attempt at constructive theology. It is highly speculative in nature, and corresponds to the guidelines put forward by Philip Clayton in his essay "Constraint and Freedom in the Movement from Quantum Physics to Theology."[5] I do not intend to convey stated facts or established truths but to open the door to further discussion concerning the fields of quantum entanglement and Lutheran soteriology. Furthermore, I am not a physicist and will rely on popular sources in order to describe the field of quantum entanglements. However, I do believe such a description is sufficient for the speculated relationship between this field and Luther's notion of the dispersal of salvific grace, as the latter does not need nor employ the mathematics used in scientific research.

I will first elaborate upon Luther's conception of the dispersal of salvation and will hypothesize as to the characteristics of such distribution concerning time and space. The following section will then introduce the concept of quantum entanglements as studied by physicists today. It will prepare the ground for a presentation of the mode in which entanglements may facilitate the dispersal of salvation. I will then present the mechanism I propose for the distribution of salvific grace using quantum entanglements in the final section.[6]

1. THE DISPERSAL OF SALVIFIC GRACE

I start with a mesmerizing snippet from Luther's writing which has captured my imagination and spawned the ideas henceforth described:

"So that our readers may the better perceive our teaching I shall clearly and broadly describe it. We treat the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross; it is true. However, he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. However, its distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world. For since he had determined once to achieve it, it made no difference to him whether he distributed it before or after, through his Word, as can easily be proved from scripture."[7]

Luther tried to explain why the creature himself never conditions salvation. He was vehemently opposed to any dogma claiming the human individual has an ability solely reserved for God. The creature cannot know God where the latter does not reveal Himself, and it cannot save itself from the punishment imposed upon it following the Original Sin. Salvation cannot be brought about by the creature himself by performing good works, by praying or by any other creaturely means; it is reserved for God alone to choose individuals for salvation. This salvation is granted to select individuals thanks to Christ's sacrifice on the cross; the central locus generating salvation is the cross of Christ, and that arguably is the place from which God distributes it. Christ's crucifixion is the most critical event in human history overcoming sin - no other event can produce this effect. In the above quoted passage, Luther makes an essential distinction between the crucifixion generating salvation, and the

---

[7] Luther, *Luther's Works*, 40: 213-214.

mode of dispersal of salvation. These two actions are separate in Luther's view and do not take place simultaneously, but in different forms and at different times.

The process of dispersal of salvation is an ongoing one. Although it originates at the crucifixion (which we can regard as a singular occurrence), salvation is given to humanity in a continuous process, an ongoing event. The term 'dispersal' denotes a process of giving to the masses, but when it comes to salvation that may not be the case. When we speak of a person being saved, we imply that the person is undergoing a qualitative change whereby they no longer exist in a mode affected by sin – the person's existence changes in a fundamental way. What, then, is being dispersed? I will assume that some information emanates from the event of Christ's crucifixion and reaches multiple individuals whose underlying condition of existence is changed. This information designates whose life is to be changed and in what way. For the purpose of this essay, this transmission of information will constitute the dispersal of salvation. Other than these definitions, this essay will not try to define what constitutes salvation and its dispersal.

Luther sees salvation as being dispersed from its primary locus - the cross of Christ - to humanity over time. He sees salvation as being dispersed throughout the creature's historical existence, both before and after the crucifixion itself. Such information relating to salvation would have to travel between different points in space instantaneously and between different points in time, as to allow for salvation to be granted timelessly, throughout the universe. This transfer of salvific information constitutes a superluminary transfer of information which corresponds to the one we see in quantum entanglements, and which violates what Einstein's theory of relativity allows. In Luther's view, time is not a factor in the dispersal of salvific grace: it happens because of the crucifixion but is not limited by it when it comes to the initiation and scope of its dispersal. The distribution of salvation is a constant state happening since creation and which will continue to happen into the future, until an unspecified event will happen or maybe even forever. This fact severs the temporal and spatial causal relation between the crucifixion and the dispersal of salvation, despite Christianity's insistence that it exists: Christ's sacrifice brings about salvation, regardless of which event precedes which. The timelessness of the distribution of salvation raises some interesting questions about the relation of salvation to space-time. As we shall see, this also undermines our classical perception of space-time and relates directly to conclusions drawn from modern quantum mechanics.

If God disperses salvation since before the occurrence that initiated it, how is the information of the crucifixion transmitted through time? I contend that some connection must exist between different points in time, which facilitates the transfer of this information. To speak of the duration of travel would make no sense as it travels without any relation to time itself; it is reasonable to assume that the transmission of such information occurs through pathways that operate independently of the flow of time. An agent affected by the passage of time can experience the effects of salvation and therefore sees the messages as traveling from one point in time to any other without anything inhibiting their communication or application. These connections between various points in time and space correspond to space-time entanglements, which I will describe in the next section.

Such simultaneity of communication makes time a contingent phenomenon. If some communication operates outside the boundaries of it, time may be just a construct of our own minds, either originating with us or imposed upon us by God. Within our mind, time manifests as a succession of events. However, if time is contingent, then this succession may be nothing but an illusion, and it may be nullified altogether to produce all events

simultaneously. We should then ask ourselves why do all events present themselves to us gradually rather than simultaneously and who is producing this effect for us. Is this just the way God created us, or is God continually buffering reality for us and dispensing it little by little as to not overwhelm us?

Answers to these questions have implications for a wide range of subjects, including free will or the absence thereof, which I will not discuss here. In the following section, I will present quantum entanglements – a phenomenon studied by physicists which may shed some light on the way God is dispensing salvation the way Luther described it.

2. QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENTS AND THE FABRIC OF SPACE-TIME

In an attempt to shed light on the feasibility of Luther's assertion about the timelessness of the dispersal of salvation, we turn to the field of quantum physics, specifically quantum space and time entanglements. My intention is not to glorify biblical record by claiming recent advancement in physics support scripture, which has allegedly reached the same conclusions thousands of years ago. As I have explained in another essay, I view science as further elaborating upon God's creation. Hence, the field of quantum entanglements allows us to describe and understand God's work while remembering that God only reveals His true nature at the cross of Christ.[8]

I believe the field of quantum entanglements to explain Luther's idea of the timelessness of the dispersal of salvation because of its ability to show that time and space do not strictly adhere to our perception of locality. By showing that a phenomenon transcending locality can exist, the theory of time entanglements renders itself a plausible mechanism for implementing the dispersal of salvation, described by Luther as transcending locality of space and time. I will now describe the field of quantum entanglements to the best of my non-scientific ability, and the discerning reader is invited to seek further information in the plethora of popular or scientific sources published about this subject.

Quantum entanglements are a phenomenon in which subatomic particles or points in a field (for instance, an electromagnetic field) share their core states; the definition of a quantum state is "the ordered collection of possible measurements of a physical quantity, along with the probability of each one."[9] Any change in the state of one particle or point entails a concurrent change its entangled partner, no matter the distance between them and more importantly - no matter when those entities exist in time. They could be set light-years apart, or exist years apart. Such change in a quantum state is termed a quantum event, and occurs concurrently between two entangled quantum particles or points in a field, in such a way that it becomes impossible to tell which is the cause of which.

Juan Maldacena, a physicist at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., uses a handy analogy to illustrate quantum entanglements: He speaks of a pair of gloves. If you find one glove, say the right one, you can immediately be sure that the other glove, the one you have not found, is the left glove. If we transpose this scenario to the quantum world, then both gloves could be both the right glove AND the left glove, until you observe one and check which one it is, by which time it will stop being both kinds of gloves and suddenly fall into one category alone. It will "harden" into one type of glove only after you look and check which one it is. In essence, its definition of any one kind of glove depends on the observer checking which one it is, and it does not "decide" which one it "wants" to be until an observer checks upon it. The spooky thing is that once you find out which kind one glove is,

---

[8] Spierer, *God-of-the-gaps Arguments in Light of Luther's Theology of the Cross*.
[9] David Reid, personal communication.

the other glove instantaneously becomes the corresponding complementary glove, no matter where (or when) it exists! This effect happens immediately when the entanglement occurs in space, and as much as it is possible to say that it happens "simultaneously" when we speak of time entanglements. The second glove's complementary "decision" as to which kind of glove it needs to be depends on the first glove (the one it is sharing the entanglement with) assuming an identity when an observer inspects it.[10]

This phenomenon entails the collapse of classical causality as well as classic locality. In the space-time we know, causal order is very well defined: we know precisely which event causes which other events according to their order in time and their location in space. Once these causal relations become amorphous, the coherence of space-time is lost, for there are no causal relations to define spatial proportions or temporal precedence. Space-Time manifests out of these correlations between events within it. This approach is termed by George Musser "Quantum Relationalism." Quantum entanglements in space and time violate the principle of locality, which states that chains of cause and effect must remain unbroken for space-time to remain intact. Any event happening in space-time can only be influenced by other events happening in its immediate surroundings and cannot be affected by events happening at a distance. This applies to both events happening in the immediate physical surrounding and also to events happening in the immediate time preceding any influenced event. Without this locality, space-time starts to take on an entirely new meaning. Physicists have also found that entanglement can also occur between different points in a quantum field, which are more fundamental than subatomic particles. A quantum field is a highly entangled system with entanglements happening between different points within it. These fields are always vibrating, but we do not see the vibrations because the different vibrating parts cancel each other out. For this to be possible they must be entangled. Multiple correlations exist between different parts of it, and any fluctuation within it is matched by another fluctuation in another part of it. We cannot explain those entangled fluctuations; we do not know how they appear, and we do not know how they are related to space-time itself.[11]

We can think of space-time as a fabric made up of threads being woven together to form a continuous cloth. If we now think of the threads as quantum entanglements that happen from one particle to another (or one field point to another), we can imagine space-time as being made up of many such entanglements forming a coherent whole. [12,13]

3. THE MECHANISM UNDERLYING THE DISPERSAL OF SALVATION

Delving into speculative thinking, we may now try to construct our conception of the distribution of salvation in such a way as to take advantage of our understanding of quantum entanglement and the way space-time relies upon it for its structure.

I base my analysis on an intuitive assumption regarding the generation of the entanglement itself: Whenever two events are so closely correlated as those happening to entangled particles, it bears to think of them as controlled by some third element. Such an invisible third element, which exists beyond our measurements, coordinates the events happening on both sides of the entanglement. In such a case, when we see or cause a

---

[10] K.C. Cole, Wormholes Untangle a Black Hole Paradox, Quanta Magazine.
[11] Musser, Quantum Weirdness Now a Matter of Time, Quanta Magazine.
[12] Brian Swingle from Stanford University supports this notion: "Entanglement is the fabric of space-time. This fabric arises out of a series of interlinked nodes in a complex network."
[13] Jennifer Ouellette, How Quantum Pairs Stitch Space-Time, Quanta Magazine.

quantum event on one particle or point in a quantum field, we immediately see the complementary event happening to the other entangled particle or point but see no information transferred between them. When we understand the two events as caused by a third element, Einstein's light-speed limit is still maintained, as no information passes between the ends of the entanglement at superluminal speeds. Such information would be supplied differently from the third partner to the entanglement, controlling both its visible members simultaneously.

My aim in this essay is to suggest that this third mysterious element is God. God is the One upholding what we see as quantum entanglement by upholding instantaneous concurrent events to both the participating particles or field points, which are entangled with each other. Either He causes such events to happen to both members of the entanglement, or He completes the corresponding event following a man-made event to one participating particle or point. This suggestion is a tentative one as I am aware (and, indeed, hope) that it will lead to further discussion, which may even alter my suggestion somewhat. I do this because I realize that the nature of constructive theology is a tentative one, with its main aim being fostering discussion as to (in this case) the relationship between science and religion and not the setting of a concrete monolithic dogma.

By controlling the two concurrent events happening in each entangled instance, God could be exercising control over created reality by deciding where and when two particles or points would become entangled. God materializes the entanglement itself by forcing quantum events on one particle as those imposed on the other. God decides where and when such an entanglement happens and where and when it should stop happening as well. This is an interventionist control of reality since quantum events are forced upon the particles or field points. However, I cannot describe the mechanism by which God dictates these events forced upon each member of the entanglement.

Such divine intervention using quantum entanglements can facilitate the timeless dispersal of salvation, among other things; by deciding which entanglements to form and maintain, God also decides whom to save at any point in time. Since entanglements are not bound by space and time, they can be created at any moment and at any time and control any other moment and any other point in space. Their implementation for the dispersal of salvation can take place outside of the flow of time, and we would still experience salvation as taking place within our conception of time. The dimensions of space and time would not be a factor determining the spatial and temporal coordinates of salvation since the entanglements' apparent (but false, no doubt) arbitrariness renders these coordinates irrelevant. This mechanism is analogous to that of a spider pulling the strings of its web to set the fate of prey caught in it. The spider can be even distanced from the caught creature but is still able to control the latter using the strings he has created beforehand. The prey may have just a faint conception of the spider or even none at all, but it is at the mercy of the spider via the force exerted by the spider web itself. The spider web functions as the fabric of space-time in which we exist, while the web's strings are equivalent to quantum entanglements forming the fabric of space-time. Our fate is set by the same means as the fate of the prey, by God deciding which entanglements to uphold and influencing reality in a way that leads to specific individuals being saved. By manipulating entanglements as strings making up space-time in a non-local and a-temporal fashion, God can manipulate reality.

This control leads to us experiencing salvation, as well as a reality set in an attenuated fashion, forming the sequence of spatial events we know as the flow of time. George Musser goes as far as to abolish space altogether: "influences can leap across space

as though it were not really there, the natural conclusion is: space is not really there."[14] If we extend this to time as well, we may say that time AND space might not exist. This possibility was hinted to by the author of the second Petrine epistle: "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day,"[15] and also by the author of Psalm 90: "A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by."[16]

Salvation may be just a momentary event, as is all creation, and may appear to us as a phenomenon spanning time in its entirety due to our gradual perception of time as an elongated process. Why do we experience time this way? If I were to venture a guess, I would assume that our mind is too feeble to experience such a vast mass of events, and we were therefore created to experience time gradually so that we are not overwhelmed by it. It would then be interesting to understand the mechanism by which time is made gradual on our behalf. Perhaps future advancements in quantum physics can be used to shed light on this matter.

To conclude, I hereby submit for your consideration yet another speculative suggestion as to how God could be influencing and upholding creation. I have elaborated upon the way entanglements can be formed and used by God in order to disperse salvation the way Luther described it, as a timeless phenomenon taking place both before and after the event which caused it - Christ's passion on the cross.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

[1] **McFague**, Sallie. *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. SCM Press, 1982.
[2] **Luther**, Martin. *Luther's Works*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958-1986.
[3] **Musser**, George. *Spooky Action at a Distance: the Phenomenon That Reimagines Space and Time and What It Means for Black Holes, the Big Bang, and Theories of Everything.* Scientific American/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.
[4] **Simmons**, Ernest L. "Quantum Perichoresis: Quantum Field Theory and the Trinity." *Theology and Science*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2006.
[5] **Spierer**, Eugen. God-of-the-Gaps Arguments in Light of Luther's Theology of the Cross. July 2019, https://www.academia.edu/39919933/God-of-the-Gaps_Arguments_in_Light_of_Luthers_Theology_of_the_Cross
[6] **Ouellette**, Jennifer. "Tensor Networks and Entanglement." *Quanta Magazine*, 28 Apr. 2015, https://www.quantamagazine.org/tensor-networks-and-entanglement-20150428
[7] **Cole**, K.C. "Wormhole Entanglement and the Firewall Paradox." Quanta Magazine, 24 Apr. 2015, https://www.quantamagazine.org/wormhole-entanglement-and-the-firewall-paradox-20150424?fbclid=IwAR15RaFwM2NXmAvojoAMlbe7WXbjGlD0KdIubuyFK4DnECS3fffs_FDOFIE
[8] **Musser**, George. "Time Entanglement Raises Quantum Mysteries." *Quanta Magazine*, 19 Jan. 2016, https://www.quantamagazine.org/time-entanglement-raises-quantum-mysteries-20160119/

---

[14] Musser, Spooky Action at a Distance, Digital Edition, Introduction.
[15] 2 Peter 3:8-9, NIV.
[16] Psalms 90:4, NIV.

THE BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF NIRVĀṆA AND THE VISION OF DEIFICATION OR PERFECTION IN CHRISTIANITY

Fr. PhD Alexandru-Corneliu ARION
Lecturer, Faculty of Theology and Sciences of Education,
"Valahia" University of Târgovişte, ROMANIA
Email: alexcoarion@yahoo.co.uk

Motto: «Nirvāṇa is not the blowing out of the candle. It is the extinguishing of the flame because day is come.»
(Rabindranath Tagore)

ABSTRACT.

The present paper tackles two concepts, peculiar to Buddhism and Christianity, which seem to be so close, but are, in reality, so different: nirvāṇa and deification. Buddha considers suffering as a characteristic reality of life as a whole and proposes the state of boddhi, as a way to escape from it, realizing or entering the state of nirvāṇa. Even though there are many interpretations of that, broadly, nirvāṇa represents merely the Absolute; it is the "Nothing" of everything that has appeared; it is what transcends everything that man can experience, it is then, the Transcendent itself. Undoubtedly, nirvāṇa is the goal for which Buddhists strive. Attaining nirvāṇa is not like 'going to heaven' as Christians often understand it. In its turn, deification consists in acquiring not the divine nature, which is impossible, but the divine way of being, as persons in communion. Because God's way of being has been introduced into humanity by Jesus Christ, deification is found by sacramental union with Him. The idea of salvation as union is nowhere more thoroughly or more dazzlingly fulfilled than in the doctrine of the theosis ('deification') of the human person. Deification can be understood as 'Christification', or becoming ever-more Christ-like. The nirvāṇic eternity is always at odds with the eternity of the Christian communion, because it is empty of content, and therefore monotonous. The being anonymity realized in the state of mokṣa or nirvāṇa is incompatible with the perfection of the human person, in the context of deification.

Keywords: *Buddhism; nirvāṇa; deification; heaven; Jesus Christ; Buddha, saṃsāra; suffering; boddhi; perfection;*

INTRODUCTION

The problems that always tormented human mind have been that of evil and suffering, seen as a pair or independent of one another. And perhaps in the larger field of the manifestation of the sacred, no other great religion has given such overwhelming importance to this problem, as did Buddhism. The Buddha affirms the universal existence of suffering and, at the same time, considers suffering as a characteristic reality of life as a whole. All that exists is suffering, which is why the whole Buddhist doctrine is concentrated on the suppressing the suffering, in any case it would be encountered. This is the first Noble Truth

described by the Buddha, wherein results the other three, that specify the causes and at the same time the methods by which suffering can be eradicated.

First, by the ideal it proposes, that is to suppress the suffering of all creatures, Buddhism is a religion that fascinates. The "project" itself is as tempting as possible, especially for the contemporary man, engaged on all coordinates in search of an altogether imminent and immanent happiness, *hic et nunc*. Happiness, this word so often invoked in the modern world (almost to the point of trivialization), has a pretty clear meaning in Buddhism. The entire "scaffolding" of Buddhist thought is built on an axiomatic intuition that is claimed to be a "corollary" of human aspirations ever: this idea is essentially a finding that "every man instinctively wants to achieve happiness, fullness, perfection and avoid suffering in his life. This feeling is not the fruit of education, culture or habit; it is rather intrinsic to the human being ".[1]

Today, when West and East are no longer so far apart and no longer form two so distinct worlds, it is natural to have as close a mutual knowledge as possible. In addition, it is a reality of nowadays that we live in a world that is characterized mainly by pluralism and syncretism, from the religious point of view.[2] The duty of a Christian remains today, as always, to know first and foremost his own faith, his own religious values, to cultivate them, and especially to share them with others. But in the context of contemporary religious pluralism, he has to delve more deeply into the multicolored landscape created by the religions and religious beliefs of the world. That is why we consider that the comparative study of religions must firstly highlight what is distinctive, and secondly, look for possible clues for a fertile interreligious dialogue, devoid of proselytizing intentions.[3]

In the depths of his being, each man possesses the desire for the Absolute. He cannot be otherwise. For on the basis of his own nature and due to his quality as 'image of God', he is bound to tend to the Absolute and to seek union with Him. In this regard, the Buddhist is like the Christian.

If all that is known – especially – about Buddhism is related to the conceptions of the state of enlightenment (*boddhi*) and of *Nirvāṇa*, it is then natural to try to understand where the fascination towards the message of this religion for the Western man comes from, who has, in his turn, a set of Christian values, out of which the state of deification (*theosis*) and that of *heaven* are not missing. Therefore, the present paper will debate these two fundamental beliefs of these emblematic religions: Nirvāṇa, the highest state that someone can attain *versus* heaven and the ontological state of the one who enters it.

1. BUDDHIST METAPHYSICAL TENETS AND THE SILENCE OF BUDDHA

About twenty-five centuries ago in northern India, Siddhārtha Gautama achieved nirvāṇa. That event ultimately changed the spiritual character of much of Asia and, more recently, some of the West. That something indeed happened is an indisputable fact. Exactly what happened has been an object of speculation, analysis, and debate up to the present day.

---

[1] Geshe Tashi Tsering, *Foundation of Buddhist Thought*, vol. I, *The Four Noble Truths*, Wisdom Publications, Somerville, 2005, p. 9.
[2] Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Achimescu, *Religii în dialog* (*Religions in dialogue*), Trinitas Publishing House, Iaşi, 2006, pp. 13 sq.
[3] Constantin Creţu, *Problema suferinţei în budism. O evaluare creştină* (*The problem of suffering in Buddhism. A Christian evaluation*), PhD thesis in Theology, (abstract), Universitatea din Bucureşti, 2013, p. 5.

It has been said that the Buddha himself did not think, perhaps, of denying an ultimate and unconditioned reality, reached beyond the course of the cosmic process and spiritual phenomena[4], but merely avoided talking about it. In addition, Nirvāṇa represents merely the Absolute; it is the "Nothing" of everything that has appeared, that was constituted or that it is reconstituting; it is what transcends everything that man can experience, it is then, the Transcendent itself.[5]

The Buddha never consented to give his teaching the structure of a system. Not only did he refuse to discuss philosophical problems, he did not even issue pronouncements on several essential points of his doctrine – for example, on the state of the holy man in nirvāṇa. This silence early made possible differing opinions and finally gave rise to various schools and sects. The oral transmission of the Buddha's teaching and the composition of the canon raise numerous problems, and it would be useless to suppose that they will one day be satisfactorily solved.

Buddha's famous refusal to let himself be drawn into speculations of any kind is categorical. It is admirably illustrated in the famous dialogue with Māluṇkyaputta. This monk complained that the *Blessed One* gave no answers to such questions as: Is the universe eternal or noneternal? Finite or infinite? Is the soul the same thing as the body, or is it different? And so forth.

> "There are," said Mālukyāputta, "questions that Buddha has left unsettled, has set aside and rejected. … whether the soul and the body are identical; whether the soul is one thing and the body another; whether a saint exists after death; whether a saint does not exist after death; whether a saint both exists and does not exist after death; whether a saint neither exists nor does not exist after death. … The fact that Buddha does not settle these questions does not please me. I will inquire. If he does not answer, in that case I abandon the religious life under the rule of Buddha."[6]

The Buddha then tells him the story of the man struck by a poisoned arrow. His friends and relatives fetch a surgeon, but the man exclaims:

> "I will not let this arrow be drawn out until I know who struck me; also, whether he is a kṣatriya or a Brahman …, to what family he belongs; whether he is tall, short, or of medium height; from what village or city he comes. I will not let this arrow be drawn out before I know what kind of bow was drawn against me, … what string was used on the bow, … what feather was used on the arrow …, how the point of the arrow was made."[7]

The man died without knowing these things, the Blessed One continued, just like one who would refuse to follow the way of holiness before solving one or another philosophical problem. Why did the Buddha refuse to discuss these things?

---

[4] Cf. G. SIEGMUND, *Buddhismus und Christentum. Vorbereitung eines Dialogs*, 2.Aufl., Steyler Verlag – Sankt Augustin, 1983, pp. 215 sq.

[5] Nicolae ACHIMESCU, *Budism şi creştinism. Consideraţii privind desăvârşirea omului* (*Buddhism and Christianity. Considerations regarding human perfection*), Junimea, Tehnopress Publisher, Iaşi, 1999, p. 230.

[6] *Buddhist Scriptures*, in Louis de la Vallée POUSSIN, *The Way to Nirvāṇa. Six lectures on ancient Buddhism as a discipline of salvation*, Cambridge: at the University Press, 1917, pp. 128-129. V. https://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/w2n/w2n07.htm#fn_71

[7] *Majjhima Nikāya*, 1, in: *Dialogues of the Buddha* (*The Dîgha-Nikâya*), Translated from the Pâli by T.W. Rhys Davids, London, H. Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1899. V. https://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/dob/index.htm

> "Because it is not useful, because it is not connected with the holy and spiritual life and does not contribute to disgust with the world, to detachment, to cessation of desire, to tranquility, to profound penetration, to illumination, to Nirvāṇa!"[8]

And the Buddha reminded Māluṅkyaputta that he had taught only one thing, namely: the four Noble Truths[9].

In Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths (Sanskrit: *catvāri āryasatyāni*) are "the truths of the Noble Ones", the truths or realities for the "spiritually worthy ones". The truths are:

- ❖ *dukkha* (suffering, incapable of satisfying, painful) is an innate characteristic of existence with each rebirth;
- ❖ *samudaya* (origin, cause) of this dukkha is the "craving, desire or attachment";
- ❖ *nirodha* (cessation, ending) of this dukkha can be attained by eliminating all "craving, desire, and attachment";
- ❖ *magga* (path, Noble Eightfold Path) is the means to end this dukkha.[10]

The third Noble Truth proclaims that deliverance from pain (dukkha) consists in abolishing the appetites (taṇhā). It is equivalent to nirvāṇa. Interestingly, one of the names of nirvāṇa is "extinction of thirst" (taṇhākkaya).

The last two Truths are to be meditated on together. First, one affirms that the halting of pain is obtained by total cessation of thirst (taṇhā), that is, "the act of turning away from it (from this thirst), renouncing it, rejecting it, freeing oneself from it, not attaching oneself to it" (Majjhima N. 1. 141). One then affirms that the ways that lead to the stopping of pain are those set forth in the Eightfold Path. The last two Truths explicitly state: (1) that nirvāṇa exists but (2) that it can be obtained only by special techniques of concentration and meditation. By implication, this also means that all discussion concerning the nature of nirvāṇa and the existential modality of the one who has achieved it has no meaning for him who has not reached even the threshold of that inexpressible state.[11]

2. BUDDHIST CONCEPT OF NIRVĀṆA/ NIBĀNNA

The study of Nirvāṇa has occupied the attention of scholars since the Buddhist literature first became known in the West; but it is probably true that at the present moment the general and popular notion of the meaning of the word is still vague and inaccurate. The easiest way to approach our subject is through etymology. Nirvāṇa is derived from Sanscrit roots, which mean "outblown" or "extinguished" in relation to a flame. We must therefore inquire how it came about that this particular fire symbology was adopted by the Buddha to express a spiritual state. But, we may ask, What is Nirvāṇa? What is it that is extinguished? The answer to this question is given in the Buddha's famous "Fire Sermon," delivered at Gaya to a large company of disciples. In a word, the whole of sentient existence is explained as "a burning." If the then current *Idealism* had said that there was a permanent indestructible Spiritual Reality behind the show of things; or if, on the contrary, *Materialism* of that day

---

[8] Majjhima Nikāya 1. 426.

[9] Mircea ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas*, Volume 2: *From Gautama Buddha to the Triumph of Christianity*, Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1984, p. 132.

[10] Carol ANDERSON (2004), Robert E BUSWELL Jr. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, MacMillan Reference, Thomson Gale. pp. 295–297. "This, bhikkhus, is the noble truth that is the way leading to the ending of suffering. This is the eightfold path of the noble ones: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.[..] The Buddha taught the fourth truth, mārga (Pali, *magga*), the path that has eight parts, as the means to end suffering."

[11] Mircea ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas*, Volume 2, p. 141.

had declared that all phenomena have material causes, the Buddhist formula replied in these terms: Everything burns; everything is a flamelike in-force, a form of energy, clamant, affirmatory, in a state of perpetual change and combustion; it is a fire kept alight by fuel being continually added to it.[12]

In some important texts, like *Mahavagga*[13], it is not stated that life is a burning, and death is its extinction; rather life and death are a fire; out of fire comes misery and suffering. Nirvāṇa is the dying down of the flames, the assuagement of the misery. Already there is a close analysis of the consciousness into various forms the eye, the touch, the mind, etc. and a tentative analysis of the passions.

A passage from the *Jātakas*[14] takes us a step further.

> "'Wherein does Nirvāṇa consist?' To him whose mind was already averse to passion, the answer came: 'When the fire of lust is extinct, that is Nirvāṇa; when the fires of hatred and infatuation are extinct, that is Nirvāṇa; when pride, false belief and all other passions and torments are extinct, that is Nirvāṇa. She has taught me a good lesson. Certainly Nirvāṇa is what I am looking for.'"[15]

It must be noted that the passage from the Jātakas refers specifically to at least five fires, and leads us to believe that there are many others; but as the doctrine became more definite and formal, we find that the fires were reduced to three in number, namely (1) that which refers to all degrees of craving or attachment lust, infatuation and greed; (2) that which refers to all degrees of antipathy – hatred, anger, vexation or repugnance; and (3) that which refers to all degrees of ignorance – delusion, dullness and stupidity.[16]

From the *epistemological theory* point of view, a cessation (*nirvāṇa*) of *dukkha* (suffering) is possible through awakening (*bodhi*) to the nature of reality, involving a direct apprehension and engagement with reality – including both our objects and ourselves as subjects– as impermanent, interdependent and lacking any intrinsic reality. The term nibbāna (Pāli)/nirvāṇa is chosen carefully, and is often misunderstood by Western consumers of Buddhist literature. It is essentially a negative term, and figures in an elaborate fire-based metaphor[17].

The idea of "*Awakening*" is an essential aspect of Buddhism. Awakening is the goal of Buddhism and it marks the end of the karma-rebirth cycle. As one reads how various Buddhists define this term, one may associate it with beliefs from other religious traditions, and appropriately so, as one could argue that the Hindu idea of *mokṣa*, the Taoist idea of realizing the *Tao*, or even the descriptions of *Christian*, *Muslim*, or *Jewish* mystics seem

---

[12] While the Buddha was preaching his "Fire Sermon" in India, Herakleitos at Ephesus was uttering his famous formula 'panta rei', "all flows"; nothing is permanent. He, too, reduced all things to primal fire. Cf. William Loftus HARE, *Mysticism of East and West Studies in Mystical and Moral Philosophy*, With an Introduction by J. Estlin Carpenter, D. Litt., Jonathan Cape Eleven Gower Street, London, 1923, pp. 175-176.

[13] The *Mahavagga* includes several sutta-like texts, including an account of the period immediately following the Buddha's Awakening, his first sermons to the group of five monks, and stories of how some of his great disciples joined the Samgha and themselves attained Awakening. See *The Book of the Discipline, Part I,* by I.B. Horner, London: Pali Text Society, 1982, pp. 36-37.

[14] The Jātaka tales are a voluminous body of literature native to India concerning the previous births of Gautama Buddha in both human and animal form. The future Buddha may appear as a king, an outcast, a god, an elephant – but, in whatever form, he exhibits some virtue that the tale thereby inculcates. V. "Jataka", in: Encyclopædia Britannica, Retrieved 2011-12-04.

[15] *Introduction to the Jātakas*, i. 58, in: *Buddhism in Translations*, transl. by Henry Clarke Warren, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Private Limited, Delhi, 2002.

[16] William Loftus HARE, Mysticism of East and West Studies in Mystical and Moral Philosophy, p. 178.

[17] R. GOMBRICH, R., *What the Buddha Thought*, London: Equinox, 2009.

similar. So, while arguably the Buddhist endpoint or solution to life's dilemmas may not be unique to Buddhism, it is an essential part of Buddhist belief.

The Buddhist Awakening is often referred to by different terms, including nirvāṇa, enlightenment, and *satori*. As with the term karma, nirvāṇa has come to be widely used in American popular culture. There was, of course, a famous rock band of that name, but there is also to be found the term used in newspapers and popular magazines to connote something that is mystical or a *peak experience* (a "nirvāṇa like experience").[18] Nirvāṇa is defined in a dictionary as follows:

> 1) Hinduism a blowing out, or extinction, of the flame of life through reunion with the Brahma 2) Buddhism the state of perfect blessedness achieved by the extinction of individual existence and by the absorption of the soul into the supreme spirit, or by the extinction of all desires and passions 3) any place or condition of great peace or bliss.[19]

The third definition is the one that likely applies to the popular usage of the term nirvāṇa. The definition ascribed to Buddhism (#2) is actually a conflation of Hindu and Buddhist ideas. Two of the terms, namely the "soul" and the "supreme spirit," find no place in Buddhism, although they would be acceptable translations for the Hindu concepts of the Atman and the Brahman, respectively. So, the first thing we can learn from this definition is the importance of seeking expert advice and double-checking the accuracy of anything you read about Buddhism! However, the remainder of the definition[20] does provide an adequate provisional idea of what nirvāṇa actually means for a Buddhist.[21]

All Buddhists strive to reach nirvāṇa, if not in this life, then in their next life. Buddhism differs from those religions that place the resolution of life's drama postmortem; it insists that nirvāṇa can be attained prior to death. However, nirvāṇa can only be attained by a human being. It cannot be attained from either a subhuman or a superhuman realm of existence. Buddhism strongly encourages believers to strive for nirvāṇa in this very lifetime. After all, due to the effects of karma-rebirth, one may not be born human in the next life or, even if born human, one may not come to encounter Buddhist thought at all.[22]

In the *Fire Sutta*, Siddhartha Gautama is represented as saying that our life is led as though we are on fire. We are burned by *dukkha*, consumed by forces out of our control, and we are being depleted all the time by those forces. Nibānna is also a term with a very specific core meaning – the extinction of a flame, as in blowing out a candle or a lamp. Nibānna, or nirvāṇa, then, is not a positive attainment or state of being. Nor is it a state of complete non-being, of annihilation. Instead it is the state of no longer being driven, consumed and tormented (however unconsciously) by dukkha.[23]

---

[18] The Japanese Buddhist term «Zen» is used in almost the same fashion and with a similar meaning in popular publications.

[19] *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, Fourth Edition, USA, Macmillan, 1999, p. 976.

[20] "the state of perfect blessedness achieved by the extinction of individual existence . . . or by the extinction of all desires and passions".

[21] S. COLLINS, Nirvāṇa and other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire, New York, 1998.

[22] Though all Buddhists strive to reach nirvāṇa, they do so in different ways. Some forms of Buddhism teach that only monks can hope to attain nirvāṇa. Laypersons try to accumulate as much positive karma as possible in this life in anticipation of a next life where they may be better placed to pursue monastic practice. Other Buddhists believe that it is through devotion to a Buddha that one can be delivered at death into a "pure land" of Awakening. Still other forms of Buddhism teach that even laypersons who work diligently at it may experience Awakening prior to death. See, inter alia, Leslie D. ALLDRITT, *Religions of the World. Buddhism*, Chelsea House Publishers, Philadelphia, 2005, p. 16.

[23] Dukkha is caused by a perceptual process. It is not that we engage with the world, or contemplate ourselves, and infer or decide that we or the things around us are permanent, independent and have

One difficulty with the early Buddhist sacred texts is that they were not always clear or unequivocal about what was **extinguished** and from what one was emancipated. One prominent tendency was to understand nirvāṇa as a release from *saṃsāra*, the painful world of birth and death powered by passion, hatred, and ignorance. According to the early texts, the Eightfold Path leading to nirvāṇa is the only way to break free of this cycle and to eliminate the insatiable craving at its root. The Path is not merely a set of moral exhortations, but rather, a program of spiritual reconditioning that liberates one from the pain of saṃsāra[24].

The *Pali texts* distinguished "nirvāṇa with remainder" from "nirvāṇa without remainder", or even more simply, enlightenment (nibbāna) from complete enlightenment (parinibbāna; Skt., parinirvāṇa). The Abhidharma[25] traditions interpreted the distinction in the following way. After many lifetimes of effort and an overall improvement in the circumstances of rebirth, the person undertaking the Path finally reaches the stage at which craving and its attendant negative effects are no longer generated. This is the state of "nirvāṇa with remainder" because the residue of negative karmic effects from previous actions continues. The enlightened person still experiences physical pain, for example, as a consequence of the mere fact of corporeality, itself a karmic "fruit." Once these residues are burned off, as it were, the person will die and achieve the perfect "nirvāṇa without remainder." [26]

One thing is undoubtedly: nirvāṇa is the goal for which Buddhists strive. Paradoxically, it too can become an object of craving. In that case the craving for nirvāṇa is an obstacle to be overcome *Theravada*[27] *Buddhism* distinguishes two forms of nirvāṇa. These are called nirvāṇa with and nirvāṇa without a "substrate" (roughly a base made up of mental and physical elements). «Nirvāṇa with a substrate» is the nirvāṇa of the person whose passions have been blown out but who remains in the body until the consequences of earlier, craving motivated action (karma) work themselves out. It is described as a calm, cool bliss,

identifiable intrinsic natures. Rather, we take the world and ourselves to be like that in our immediate perceptual engagement – we see the world as constituted by entities with that nature. V. Jay L. GARFIELD, *Engaging Buddhism. Why It Matters to Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2015, pp. 12-13.

[24] Thomas P. KASULIS (1987), Revised Bibliography, "Nirvāṇa", in: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition, Lindsay JONES, editor in chief, vol. 10: Necromancy-Pindar, Thomson Gale, Macmillan Reference USA, p. 6628.

[25] Abhidharma (or Abhidhamma, in Pali) are ancient (3rd century BCE and later) Buddhist texts which contain detailed scholastic reworkings of doctrinal material appearing in the Buddhist sutras, according to schematic classifications. The Abhidharma works do not contain systematic philosophical treatises, but summaries or abstract and systematic lists. Cf. "Abhidhamma Pitaka", in: *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Ultimate Reference Suite, Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008.

[26] Thomas P. KASULIS, "Nirvāṇa", in: *Buddhism and Asian History,* edited by Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings, New York, 1989, pp. 395–408. A good introduction to the modern view of nirvāṇa from the standpoint of the only living tradition of Abhidharma, the Theravāda, is: Walpola RAHULA, *What the Buddha Taught*, rev. ed., Bedford, U.K., 1967, chap. 4. This small work is highly regarded for its ability to explain the gist of centuries of Abhidharmic analysis in a straightforward, accurate, and yet nontechnical manner.

[27] Along with Mahayana Buddhism one of the two main forms of Buddhism. *Theravada Buddhism* is practiced mostly in southeast Asia: Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. *Theravada* is a Pali term meaning "way of the elders," and devotees consider the school to be much closer than Mahayana to the Buddhism taught and practiced by the original Buddha and his first followers, although historically the Theravada was just one school among many. Followers prefer that name to Hinayana, which means "lesser vehicle" and is used in a derogatory fashion by Mahayana ("greater vehicle") Buddhists in reference to the Theravada school. Cf. Jeff HAY, *Greenhaven Encyclopedia of World Religions*, Gale, Cengage Learning, Detroit • New York • San Francisco • London, 2007, pp. 316 sq.

beyond happiness and sadness. When the final flickers of karma go out, one enters parinirvāṇa, that is, the ultimate nirvāṇa, «nirvāṇa without a substrate». Theravada Buddhism teaches that there is no permanent self, and this leads to a very pointed question: Does a person continue to exist after entering parinirvāṇa?[28]

Centuries later, when Buddhism faced the split into Mahāyāna and Hināyāna currents, the former minimized the opposition between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra,* renouncing the suggestion that *nirvāṇa* was an escape from the world of suffering. Instead, they thought of enlightenment as a wise and compassionate way of living in that world, generally maintaining that all distinctions are ultimately empty, including the distinction between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra. That is to say that nirvāṇa is not a separate state of existence that one enters; it is simply perceiving the world as it is, apart from our grasping and attachment.[29]

The adherents of the two major Indian branches of Mahāyāna philosophy, i.e. Mādhyamika and Yogācāra, each developed their own way of rejecting the escapism to which, it was thought, the Abhidharma interpretation led. One Mahāyāna strategy was to undercut the epistemological and logical bases for the sharp distinction between the concepts of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra. Without nirvāṇa there is no saṃsāra, and vice versa. How then could one be absolute and the other relative?[30]

In effect, Mādhyamika thought radicalized the Buddha's original silence on this critical issue by trying to demonstrate that any philosophical attempt to characterize reality is limited by the logical interdependence of words or concepts. Assuming an isomorphic relationship between words and nonlinguistic referents, Nāgārjuna reasoned that the interdependent character of words precludes their referring to any absolute, nondependent realities. To the very extent one can talk or reason about *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*, therefore, they must depend on each other. Neither can be absolute in itself.[31]

The discussion may go much further, because there is no single Buddhist view of *Nirvāṇa*. Apart from those seen above are also the views of the Chinese Tiantai and Huayan schools, of Chan (Zen) school, of Pure Land traditions or of the Esoteric traditions. Still, one does find in the Buddhist notions of *nirvāṇa* what Ludwig Wittgenstein would have called a 'family resemblance', that is, a group of characteristics that no single family member entirely possesses but that all members share to such an extent that the members of one family are distinguishable from the members of another.[32] In this case, the Buddhist conceptions of *Nirvāṇa* share a set of qualities that can be summarized as follows.

---

[28] As we already pointed out the Buddha refused to answer this question. He said it did "not lead to edification." It simply distracted the questioner from seeking nirvāṇa.

[29] In addition, *Mahayana* Buddhists generally reject the idea that nirvāṇa is a goal that individuals pursue for themselves. Rather, motivated by compassion, they stress nirvāṇa's communal aspect. In the words of a Bodhisattva vow: "I cannot be happy unless all sentient beings are happy." V. "Nirvāṇa", in: *The Encyclopedia of World Religions*, Revised Edition, Robert S. Ellwood, gen. edit., Gregory D. Alles. assoc. edit., Facts On File, Inc., New York, 2007, p. 325.

[30] This question was most clearly raised by the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā) literature and philosophically analyzed in the Mādhyamika school founded by Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250 CE). See: David J. KALUPAHANA, *Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, Albany, N.Y., 1985. A good discussion of Nāgārjuna's basic position with respect to nirvāṇa also appears in Frederick J. STRENG, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning*, New York, 1967, pp. 69–81.

[31] Thomas P. KASULIS (1987), Revised Bibliography, "Nirvāṇa", p. 6629.

[32] See Guy R. WELBON, *The Buddhist Nirvāṇa and Its Western Interpreters*, Chicago, 1968; K. SUKLA, *Nagarjuna Bauddha Pratisthanam, Nature of Bondage and Liberation in Buddhist Systems*: Proceedings of Seminar Held in 1984, Gorakhpur, India, 1988.

1. *Nirvāṇa* is the release from ignorance about the way the world is. Because one does not understand the nature of human existence and the laws affecting human life, one lives in either a state of outright suffering or in a state of disharmony. *Nirvāṇa* is ultimately acknowledging and living by the truths of the world. In that respect, its orientation is this worldly.

2. The knowledge achieved by *Nirvāṇa* is not merely intellectual or spiritual. *Nirvāṇa* is achieved through a process of psychological and physical conditioning aimed at reorienting and reversing ego-centered forms of thinking and behaving. *Nirvāṇa* is achieved through and with the body, not despite the body.

3. Nirvāṇa has an intrinsically moral aspect. By eliminating all egocentric ideas, emotions, and actions, the enlightened person approaches others with either complete *equanimity* (wherein self and others are treated exactly the same) or with a compassionate involvement in alleviating the suffering of others (wherein self is subordinated to the needs of those less fortunate). Morality can be considered the alpha and omega of nirvāṇa.[33]

4. Although in any given context, one viewpoint is emphasized over the other, generally speaking, nirvāṇa can be understood from either a *psychological* or *ontological* perspective. Psychologically viewed, nirvāṇa is a radical change in attitude such that one no longer experiences the negative influence of egocentric thinking. If this perspective is misunderstood and overemphasized, however, it leads to a psychologism that holds that truth is simply in the mind without any connection to an external reality. The remedy for this distortion is to assert the ontological aspect of nirvāṇa.[34]

Ontologically speaking, nirvāṇa is the affirmation of the inherent goodness of the world and even of human nature. In this sense, it is not merely a kind of experience (as depicted by the psychological view), but is also the content or even ground of an experience. If this ontological viewpoint is overemphasized, on the other hand, it can lead to the distorted idea that diligence and practice are arbitrary or even unnecessary.[35] The remedy is, conversely, to neutralize that distortion with more emphasis on the psychological side of nirvāṇa. What, after all, is nirvāṇa? It is a cooling off, a quenching of the fire of *tanhā:* but above all it is liberation. It is the *jīvanmukti* and *mokṣa* of Buddhist tradition. But with regard to liberation we must ask: From what and to what? On the latter point, the 'to what', the Theravada school can be said to be embarrassingly silent, till we grasp the point: to that I shall come a little later. But as to the 'from what' thereis an embarrassment of riches of description. Consider the whole notion of *dukkha,* the theory of impermanence, the grand panorama of rebirth, the psychology of Buddhism, and so on. Still all that can be from one angle reduced to a single thought: *impermanence*. So we have the polarity or dialectic – impermanent existence and, on the other hand, liberation. We believe – along with Ninian

---

[33] That is, the Path begins with accepting various rules and precepts of behavior, whereas nirvāṇa culminates in the open, moral treatment of other people and things.

[34] Both the psychological and ontological views contain truths about the nature of nirvāṇa, but if either position is developed in such a way as to exclude the other, the result is a distortion of the Buddhist Path. For this reason, the two views coexist throughout Buddhist history, one view always complementing the other and checking any distortions that might arise out of a one-sided perspective. V. Thomas P. KASULIS (1987), Revised Bibliography, "Nirvāṇa", p. 6633.

[35] See David J. KALUPAHANA, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, foreword by G. P. Malalasekera, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976, chap. 7. D. Kalupahana argues that early Buddhism consistently maintained that the achievement of nirvāṇa does not require, or entail, any transempirical form of perception. In this regard, Kalupahana is expanding on the theory that early Buddhism was primarily empirical in outlook, an interpretation first fully developed by K. N. JAYATILLEKE, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1963.

Smart – that the analysis of impermanence is the essentially brilliant contribution of the message of the Buddha.[36]

3. NIRVĀṆA AND THE CHRISTIAN WAY TO PERFECTION (DEIFICATION)

The place of Buddhism among the religions has often been debated and definitions of religion have been enlarged to include those systems which appear to have no deity yet clearly have a long and powerful religious culture. Early Buddhism at least seemed not only to be agnostic about God, like the Jains, but also about the soul, and some have therefore maintained that Buddhism began as a philosophy or ethic and degenerated into a religion. Others, however maintain that Buddhism was religious from the outset and much richer than critical study might assume.[37]

But, attaining nirvāṇa is not like 'going to heaven' as Christians often understand it. We could not define nirvāṇa because our words and concepts are tied to the world of sense and flux. Experience was the only reliable proof. His disciples would know that nirvāṇa existed simply because their practice of the good life would enable them to glimpse it.

> "There is, monks, an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, uncompounded. If, monks, there were not there this unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded, there would not here be an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded. But because there is an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an uncompounded, therefore, there is an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded."[38]

All that the Buddha could do was providing them with a raft to take them across to 'the farther shore'. When asked if a Buddha who had attained nirvāṇa lived after death, he dismissed the question as 'improper'. It was like asking what direction a flame went when it 'went out'. It was equally wrong to say that a Buddha existed in nirvāṇa as that he did not exist: the word 'exist' bore no relation to any state that we can understand. We shall find that over the centuries, Jews, Christians and Muslims have made the same reply to the question of the 'existence' of God.[39]

But when we talk about heaven or paradise, as a locus defining the attainment of Christian goal – in comparison with Buddhist nirvāṇa – we have to say that one cannot discuss about paradise alone, but along with the doctrine of man's perfection.

Firstly, heaven can denote the space above the earth; the dwelling place of angelic beings, the gods, or the highest God; and the dwelling place of those who will reside in eternity with the divine. This remains true for the biblical understanding of heaven, albeit with some modifications. The Israelites did not assign God a definite locale. Heaven was

---

[36] Ninian SMART, *Concept and Empathy. Essays in the Study of Religion*, edited by Donald Wiebe, Library of Philosophy and Religion, General Editor: John Hick, Macmillan Press LTD, chp. 11: *Nirvāṇa and Timelessness*, 1986, p. 119.

[37] First, because some of the notions held about Buddhism are not characteristic of it, and secondly, because other doctrines are rejected or ignored by the faithful. So that 'Studies of living Buddhism have shown that Buddhists differ very little from people in general." V. M. SPIRO, *Buddhism and Society*, 1971, pp. 10 sq.; People believe in Buddhas and gods, worship them and pray to them, speak of their souls and hope for personal rebirth, meditate little and regard Nirvāṇa as a far distant goal. Cf. Geoffrey PARRINDER, *Mysticism in the World's Religions*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 1995, pp 54-55.

[38] *Udana* 8.13, quoted and trans, in Paul STEINTHA, Udanan, London 1885, p.81. P. 26

[39] The Buddha was trying to show that language was not equipped to deal with a reality that lay beyond concepts and reason. The only thing that counted was the good life; if it were attempted, Buddhists would find that the *Dharma* was true, even if they could not express this truth in logical terms. Cf. Karen ARMSTRONG, *The History of God; from Abraham to the Present : The 4000-year Quest for God*, Published by Vintage Books, London, 1999, p. 58.

simply a part of Creation, distinguished from the earth by being stretched out above it. Some passages identify heaven as the domain from which God descends and to which he subsequently returns (Deut. 26:15), and others describe God as transcending both heaven and earth.[40]

The identification of heaven with God becomes conspicuous in the NT with the 'kingdom of heaven': Jesus teaches his disciples to pray to 'our Father in heaven' (Matt. 6:9); the Resurrected One is lifted up towards heaven (Acts 1:10); Christ 'is at the right hand of God' (Rom. 8:34); Paul assures that we have 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (2 Cor. 5:1).

Early Christians commonly held that Jesus reopened the earthly paradise that had been shut since the fall. Christ's promise to the criminal on the cross seems to imply such a restoration (cf. Luke 23:43). St. John Chrysostom and St. John of Damascus supported this conception. Yet Theophylact (1050–1108), archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria, was wary of such conflation:

> 'Let no one say to me that paradise and the kingdom are one and the same. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have ascended into the heart of man, the good things of the kingdom' (Luc. 23.43).[41]

Rather than a return to the beginning, a cyclical view of time, the kingdom of heaven is fulfillment and completion. What existence in this new creation will be like, even Paul can only express by negating present experience (1 Cor. 15:42 4). There will be unrestrained, continuous existence in the presence of God. There will be unrestrained, continuous existence in the presence of God. To discard this image as a utopian dream is to forget that Jesus Christ attained this fulfillment through his death and resurrection. Our immanent and perpetual yearning for self-transcendence, deification, perfection, and the elimination of death will be complete in life everlasting.[42]

In Christianity man's finitude is realized over against divine justice and divine love.

> "No human being will be justified in his [God's] sight by works of the law. They are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Rom. 3:20, 24-25).

Man's finitude is realized in the light of God's righteousness as death, which is "the wages of sin" (Rom. 6:23). Accordingly, faith implies the death of the "old man" as well as the birth of the "new man" in Christ. Insofar as the death of the human ego is essential to salvation, no distinction can be made between Christian conversion and *Buddhist awakening*. In *Christianity*, however, because death is "the wages of sin" it is grasped within the context of man's personalistic and responsible relationship to God; due to his own injustice and sin, man can never be saved by his own efforts but only through faith in Christ as the redeemer, i.e., the incarnation of God. The divine-human relationship in Christianity is thus essentially vertical, with Christ, the mediator, originating in God as the transcendent or supernatural

---

[40] 'Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!' (1 Kgs 8:27).

[41] Hans SCHWARZ, "Heaven", in *The Cambridge dictionary of Christian Theology*, Edited by Ian A. MCFARLAND, David A. S. FERGUSSON, Karen KILBY, Iain R. TORRANCE, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 206.

[42] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* declares: 'Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness' (§1,024). Apud H. SCHWARZ, *Eschatology*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company/Cambridge, UK, 2000.

reality. Thus, in the last analysis it is an irreversibly vertical relationship with God as the superior.[43]

It is clear that *Buddhism*, especially its original form, did not admit the supernatural in the form of God as creator, judge, or ruler, of the universe. This is so precisely because Buddhism is convinced that man's finitude is so deep that it cannot be overcome even by the supernatural. Now, this conviction is a pivotal point for Buddhism. And in this connection Buddhists would put this question to Christianity: Is man's finitude a kind of finitude which can be overcome by faith in God? What is the ground for such a faith? Dependent origination, a basic idea in Buddhism, indicates that there is no irreversible relationship even between man and "God," nature and the supernatural, the secular and the holy.[44]

Christianity transcends man and nature in "God," who, being the God of love and justice, is understood to be supernatural. The Christian loves his neighbor as himself in harmony with the first commandment to love God, who is his savior from sin, with his whole heart. Buddhism, on the other hand, transcends man and nature in the direction of "naturalness" or *jinen*, which is identical with Buddha nature or suchness. Thus, the "direction" or "location" of transcendence is not the same in Christianity and Buddhism, although the death of the human ego and the realization of the new man are in each case essential to transcendence[45].

Deification. In understanding the difference concerning human nature and the eschatology between Buddhism and Christianity, one has to turn to the Eastern Christian teaching on man's perfection or deification. And to understand the departing point of this poignantly bold concept one has to refer to another main concept, namely that of *contemplation*.

We should distinguish two different kinds of elements constituting the concept of *contemplatio:* on the one hand, Platonic and Aristotelian definitions, on the other, a biblical element from the Old Testament (essentially in the figures of Moses and Elijah), as well as from the New Testament – Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38–42) and Paul's ecstasy (Acts 9:3–9, 22:6–11. The Platonic and Aristotelian definitions of contemplation – *theoria* – do not coincide. For Plato, *theoria* was the high point of knowledge delivering the best of the human being (*Rep.* VII 532 *c.*) It is exercised by the *nous* (*Phaedrus* 247c) and relates to love (*Symposium* 192 *c*) by being part of the Good, a good that is beyond being (*The Republic* 509 *b*). This definition opens for the Greek Fathers the possibility of deification through *theoria.*[46]

---

[43] Even the *unio mystica*, in which the soul of man joins to God in an indescribable experience, is not altogether an exception. And this irreversible relationship between man and God is inseparably bound to man's deep realization of his own finitude. Cf. *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, revised edition, Spiritual Classics Series, Frederick FRANCK, ed., World Wisdom, Inc., 2004, p. 154.

[44] This is especially clear in Mahāyāna Buddhism, which stresses the relationship of soku as seen in its familiar formula "saṃsāra-soku-nirvāṇa" (saṃsāra as it is, is nirvāṇa). Accordingly, "naturalness" or jinen is not something merely immanent, nor a counterconcept of the supernatural, but implies the total negation of the supernatural or transcendent. Cf. A. MASAO, "Dōgen on Buddha-nature," *The Eastern Buddhist*, IV/1, 1971, pp. 28-71.

[45] Frederick FRANCK, ed., *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, p. 155.

[46] For details: Frédéric NEF, "Contemplation", in Jean-Yves LACOSTE, editor, *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, vol. 2: G-M, Routledge, Madison Avenue, New York • London, 2005, pp. 353-360; Guigues du PONT, *Traité sur la contemplation,* Analecta Cartusiana 72, 2 vols., Salzburg, 1985; R. ARNOU, *Le thème néoplatonicien de la contemplation créatrice chez Origène et chez saint Augustin*, Rome, 1932; H. U. von

In *Aristotle*, on the other hand, *theoria* is defined as the high point of virtuous life, "life by the intellect" (*Nicomachean Ethics* X, 7), which opens the way for "divinization of the intellect". For Plato, theoria is something mysterious (*Symposium* 209 e), a revelation of the Beautiful that is inaccessible to any conception (*Symposium* 211 a), an ecstatic science of the Beautiful itself (Symposium 211 c) – in a word, an intuitive knowledge of the absolute.[47]

If the West is concerned with sin and the fall from grace, the anthropological "simplicity" of the East focuses upon its stark consequence, death. St. *Athanasius* the Great, for example, teaches that "man is mortal by nature, since he has issued from nothingness" (PG 25, 104 C). Sin cuts us off from God and renews the menace of death. The soul is not intrinsically immortal, but equally threatened by the return to nothingness, for it too is created. The Western tendency to distinguish mortal body and immortal soul is thus overcome: it is body and soul, "both together," that have been created in the image of God.[48]

The image tends toward likeness, which is deification: "the image predestines man to theosis"[49]. Gregory of Nazianzus echoes St. Basil's words, that man is a creature who has "received the order to become a god" (PG 36, 560 A), although the distinction of essence and energies is found more clearly in Basil (PG 32, 869 A–B) than in Gregory (PG 36, 317 B–C). The Eucharist particularly accomplishes this deification (PG 35, 1200 B). Gregory of Nyssa corrects the impression that the journey into God has an end in a static "vision" when he teaches that, even in the world to come, we shall ascend "from beginning to beginning, through a series of beginnings that never ends" (PG 44, 941 C). He adds that "Christianity is the imitation of the divine nature" (PG 46, 244 C)[50], thereby clarifying that growth in likeness to God (for which free cooperation, synergy, with his grace is needed) is growth toward being a person who embodies the fullness of human nature, just as, in God, each person bears the totality of the divine nature.

Thus, deification consists in acquiring, not the divine nature, which is impossible, but the divine way of being, as persons in communion. Because God's way of being has been introduced into humanity by Jesus Christ, deification is found by sacramental union with Him, reinforced by the Jesus Prayer in *hesychasm*. John Zizioulas (1975) thinks that, because of the priority it traditionally gives to nature over person in its Trinitarian theology, the West has never really accepted theosis, because man can never acquire God's nature[51]. However, restoring priority to the person enables the concept to be embraced fully.

The idea of salvation as *union* is nowhere more thoroughly or more dazzlingly fulfilled than in the doctrine of the *theosis* ('deification') of the human person. The Fathers taught that the divine likeness is something towards which we strive; it is the realisation of the gift and vocation implanted in us with the divine image. St Athanasius's oft-repeated

---

BALTHASAR, *Schwestern im Geist: Therese von Lisieux und Elizabeth von Dijon,* Einsiedeln, 1970; F. NEF, "*Caritas dat caritatem:* la métaphysique de la charité dans les sermons sur le Cantique des Cantiques et l'ontologie de la contemplation," in R. BRAGUE (Ed.), *Saint Bernard et la philosophie,* Paris, 1993, pp. 87–109.

[47] *Ibid*, p. 353. The Aristotelian and Platonic ideas of *theoria* underwent an attempt at unification on the one hand within pagan and possibly anti-Christian Neoplatonism (Plotinus and Proclus) and on the other within the Christian Platonism of the Greek Fathers (Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor), including and above all in its most radical attempts at negative theology (Pseudo-Dionysius).

[48] St. ATHANASIUS, PG 150, 1361 C, apud Paul MCPARTLAN, "Holiness", in: Jean-Yves LACOSTE, ed., *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, p. 715.

[49] Paul EVDOKIMOV, *L'Orthodoxie,* Desclée deBrouwer, Paris, 1979.

[50] Paul MCPARTLAN, "Holiness", in: Jean-Yves LACOSTE, *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, p. 715.

[51] J. D. ZIZIOULAS, "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," in: *Scottish Journal of Theology*, (SJTh) 28, Edinburgh, 1975, pp. 401–48.

dictum, 'He [the Word of God] became human so that we could become divine', is but one iteration of a teaching that resonates throughout the Fathers.[52] Although neither deification, nor life itself, is ours by right – it is a gift of God's grace – the Fathers saw it as the natural fulfillment of the human being: 'The life that bears a likeness to the divine is completely in accord with human nature.'[53] But however stunning and unimaginably mysterious this doctrine may (and should) sound, it also has a concrete moral dimension. St Gregory Palamas equated the divine energies with the divine will: participating in the energies is participating in God's will, doing his commandments. We naturally become more and more 'God-like' the more we harmonise our own will with His. As with everything else holy, good and saving, our supreme example for deification is Christ himself, who unites the human and the divine in his person, on every level, including that of the will. Deification can be understood therefore as 'Christification', or becoming ever-more Christ-like.[54]

Human vocation is to become by grace everything that Christ is by nature. In other words, our work is to participate in God's work and in His will, and in His light and His glory, to the point where, while remaining created human persons, we become also partakers of the characteristics of divinity itself[55]. In that ascent – and through all the 'crosses' that it entails – we join the One who descended for our sake, who, while remaining uncreated and divine, became also a partaker of the characteristics of humanity.

Deification goes beyond natural perfection, for if it simply perfected the rational creature *qua* rational creature, the deified would not be 'born of God', as stressed out Gregory Palamas, in his famous Triads.[56] All men, together with the angels, would have been gods by virtue of their rationality. Deification is more than the achievement of moral excellence. It is a supernatural gift that transforms both mind and body, making divinity visible (Triad 3.1.33). For what Christ is by nature the Christian can become by grace:

> So, when the saints contemplate this divine light within themselves, seeing it by the divinising communion of the Spirit, through the mysterious visitation of perfecting illuminations – then they behold the garment of their deification, their mind being glorified and filled by the grace of the Word, beautiful beyond measure in his splendor; just as the divinity of the Word on the mountain glorified with divine light the body conjoined to it. For 'the glory which the Father gave him', He himself has given to those obedient to him, as the Gospel says, and 'he willed that they should be with him and contemplate his glory' (John 17: 22, 24) (Triad 1. 3. 5).[57]

---

[52] Peter BOUTENEFF, "Christ and salvation", in *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian* Theology, Edited by Mary B. CUNNINGHAM and Elizabeth THEOKRITOFF, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 104.

[53] St GREGORY of Nyssa, *Homily I on Ecclesiastes*, in: PSB, vol. 29: Gregory of Nyssa, *Writings*, Part I, transl. by Rev. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae and Rev. Ioan Buga, Institutul Biblic si de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1982.

[54] See Panayotis NELLAS, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person*, Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1987, esp. pp. 115–159.

[55] According to II Peter (1:4): "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be *partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

[56] St GREGORY Palamas, *Triad* 3.1.30, in: *The Triads*, ET selected texts Nicholas Gendle, CWS. London, SPCK, 1983.

[57] Apud Norman RUSSELL, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies, General Editors: Gillian Clark & Andrew Louth, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2004, p. 306. See also, the Romanian translation of this masterpiece by Dragoș Dâscă: *Învăţătura despre îndumnezeire în tradiţia patristică greacă*, „Patristica" Collection, Doxologia Publisher, Iaşi, 2015.

Maximus the Confessor, Symeon the New Theologian, Gregory of Sinai, and Gregory Palamas are figure prominently in the famous Eastern collection of *Philokalia*. Their teaching on deification through participation in the divine light became familiar to a wide monastic readership. St Seraphim of Sarov, the best-known of the Russian nineteenth-century mystics, was seen by more than one of his disciples transfigured by an intense light. 'Remember the transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor', the *staretz* is reported to have said.

> 'When Moses and Elijah came to him then, in order to hide the shining light of divine grace which blinded the disciples, a cloud, it is said, overshadowed them. In this manner the grace of the All-Holy Spirit of God manifests itself in an indescribable light to all those in whom God manifests its action'.[58]

In more recent times a remarkable testimony to the continuity of the same teaching and experience of transfiguration has been borne by St Silouan of Mount Athos and his disciple, Archimandrite Sophrony.[59] If the repentant sinner perseveres and 'consciously abides in the Holy Spirit', says Sophrony, 'the vision of immortal glory and undying light is vouchsafed to him' and he becomes a participant in the life of Christ, having become "without beginning" (not in essence but by grace)'.[60] Such perseverance is directed not towards the pursuit of mystical experience but to making Christ fully effective in the Christian's life.[61]

CONCLUSION

Christianity and Buddhism can both be termed 'religions of salvation,' even if the expression sounds more Christian than Buddhist. In both, there is a supreme goal to be attained, which in Christian terms is sometimes called 'the peace of God which passeth understanding.' Buddhists would omit the words 'of God,' but the rest is perhaps as good a phrase as we can find to describe, or rather designate, Nirvāṇa. Both religions would agree that the mysterious, indeed incomprehensible 'Unborn' (to use the Buddhist term) is the guarantee of deliverance. How this deliverance can come about is another matter concerning which, indeed, Christians differ among themselves. But in considering the differences between Buddhism and Christianity, we should never lose sight of the fundamental agreement at a very deep level – so deep indeed that it can all too easily be overlooked or denied. We can express this agreement schematically thus:

<div align="center">

Unborn

Buddhist Nirvāṇa   Christian God

(impersonal)   (personal)

</div>

---

[58] Sergius BOLSHAKOFF, *Russian Mystics*, CSS 26. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977, p. 135.

[59] Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov – canonized at the end of 2019 by the Ecumenical Patriarchy – came to England in 1959 and founded an Orthodox monastery at Tolleshunt Knights in Essex. His books on St Silouan have circulated widely. Less well known is his spiritual testimony (Sophrony 1988) in which he vividly describes his own experience of uncreated light. Interestingly, this is balanced by the equally powerful experience of the mind's descent into hell.

[60] Archimandrite SOPHRONY (Sakharov), *We Shall See Him as He Is*, Trans. Rosemary Edmonds, Tolleshunt Knights: Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, 1988, p. 45.

[61] A curious early twentieth-century aberration in the development of the hesychastic tradition may be mentioned here, the heresy of the name-worshippers, which arose from treating the name itself of God as a separate hypostasis. That the Orthodox Church pronounced it a heresy underlines its opposition to the multiplication of hypostases in the Godhead. Norman RUSSELL, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, p. 311.

Thus, without arguing about who is right, we can say that the terms 'Nirvāṇa' and 'God' both refer to the Unborn which, being incomprehensible to the ordinary mind, is differently interpreted. It may be objected that the two terms 'Nirvāṇa' and 'God' are not strictly parallel, since Nirvāṇa corresponds not so much to God as such, but to the 'peace of God.' However, consideration of at least some types of Christian mysticism may suggest that this is possibly 'a distinction without a difference.'[62]

The Unborn cannot be defined, or imagined, or reached by any *ratiocinative* (i.e. subtle, pedantic reasoning) process. It can, however, be *realized.* But long before this full realization is attained, it can be more or less dimly intuited. To such an intuition it is 'felt' to be an ultimate refuge in a world of flux. Christians call it 'God' and give it the attributes of a loving Father. For Buddhists this is illegitimate: the Ultimate is 'signless.' This has absurdly led some learned Buddhist book-scholars, finding nothing 'graspable' about it, to equate Nirvāṇa with total extinction indistinguishable from that postulated by the materialists, only postponed, improbably, to the death of the *Arahant*. They should know better. But Christians too know that they should not try to imagine God.[63] The early Buddhist texts primarily approached *Nirvāṇa* as a practical solution to the existential problem of human anguish. Specifically, they maintained that by undertaking a disciplined praxis the Buddhist practitioner can achieve a nondiscursive awakening *(bodhi)* to the interdependent nonsubstantiality of reality, especially of the self. With that insight, it was believed, one could be released from the grips of insatiable craving and its resultant suffering.[64]

The Buddhist conception of Nirvāṇa presents the most radical contrast to Christian eschatology. The Christian hopes for infinite continuation of his entire personality, not only of his soul but also of his body resurrected from dust to a new life. The Buddhist, however, wishes to be extinguished completely, so that all mental and corporeal factors which form the individual will disappear without a remainder. Nirvāṇa is the direct opposite of all that constitutes earthly existence. It is a relative Naught in so far as it contains neither the consciousness nor any other factor that occurs in this world of change or could possibly contribute to its formation. Not wrongly, therefore, has Nirvāṇa been compared to empty space in which there are no differentiations left, and which does not cling to anything. In strongest contrast to the world which is impermanent, without an abiding self-nature and subject to suffering, Nirvāṇa is highest bliss, but a bliss that is not felt, i.e., beyond the happiness of sensation[65].

In the conception of the final goal of deliverance there is expressed the ultimate and most decisive contrast between the Christian and the Buddhist abnegation of the world. The Christian renounces the world because it is imperfect through sin, and he hopes for a personal, active and eternal life beyond in a world which, through God's power, has been freed from sin and purified to perfection. But the Buddhist thinks that an individual existence

---

[62] M. O' C. WALSHE, "*Buddhism and Christianity: A Positive Approach*" (With Some Notes on Judaism), *Buddhist Publication Society*, Kandy • Sri Lanka, 1986, p. 5.

[63] As a Romanian priest (Elder Cleopa from Sihastria o.n.), speaking of the Orthodox 'Jesus Prayer,' told to someone, 'The first law, when we begin to pray, is not to "fancy" anything or imagine anything, because God Himself does not come under the sway of the imagination. Fantasy is a stumbling block to our union with God'. Ronald Eyre on *The Long Search*, Collins 1979, p. 162.

[64] For details: Dr. Remus RUS, „Concepția despre om în marile religii" ("The conception of man in the great religions"), in: *Glasul Bisericii*, Bucharest: Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al B.O.R. Publisher, 1978, no. 7-8, pp. 832-835.

[65] Helmuth Von GLASENAPP, "Buddhism and Christianity and Buddhism and the Vital Problems of our Time". Two Essays, *Buddhist Publication Society*, Kandy • Sri Lanka, 1963, p. 12.

without becoming and cessation, and hence without suffering, is unthinkable. He believes though, that in future, during the ever-recurring cyclical changes of good and bad epochs, also a happy age will dawn upon mankind again. But that happy epoch will be no less transient than earlier ones have been. Never will the cosmic process find its crowning consummation in a blessed finality. Hence there is no collective salvation, but only an individual deliverance. While the cosmic process following unalterable laws continues its course, only a saint who has become mature for Nirvāṇa will extinguish like a flame without fuel, in the midst of an environment that, with fuel unexhausted, is still burning.[66]

In most cases *Nirvāṇa* is described in negative terms such as "cessation" (*nirodha*), "the absence of craving", "detachment", "the absence of delusion," and "the unconditioned". Although in the *nikayas* and subsequent Abhidharma School commentaries there are scattered positive references to, for instance, "happiness" (*sukha*), "peace", and "bliss", and to such metaphors of transcendence as "the farther shore", the negative images predominate. Indeed, the word *Nirvāṇa* itself means "extinction", and other words used synonymously with it, such as *mokṣa* and *mukti*, refer to emancipation. One difficulty with the early texts, however, is that they were not always clear or unequivocal about *what* was extinguished and *from what* one was emancipated. One prominent tendency was to understand *Nirvāṇa* as a release from *samsara,* the painful world of birth and death powered by passion, hatred, and ignorance.[67]

The union with God does not, in any case, transcend the natural limit of creation; it does not mean "dissolution" of man in God, respectively "Nothing", as the representatives of Kyoto[68] argue, but it is a work of the grace of God, anchored in the moral plane and corresponding with human nature. The union of God with man is not realized in the divine being, but in the uncreated divine energies, which flow out from the divine being and reveal themselves outside. It is obvious that both the Fathers of the Church and Buddhists state that, on this last step of the path to perfection, the deified and the nirvāṇized respectively, became "without beginning" and "without end". However, it must be borne in mind that the affirmation of the Church fathers does not refer to a loss, to a dissolution of man, to his "cosmicization", as in Buddhism, but to the fact that man commune from the divine grace and thereby "pours out" from His being, in the sense that he becomes immortal from mortal, clean from unclean, from a transient an eternal, and of a man, absolute God."[69]

In the Christian sense, the sanctity of man is achieved only through the encounter with the absolute Person. In the face of an impersonal "Absolute", such as the Buddhist "Absolute Nothing", one cannot feel the urge for absolute purity, sincerity and transparency,

---

[66] *Ibid*, p. 12. The different attitude towards the world and its history tallies also with the dissimilar evaluation given to other religions by Christians and Buddhists respectively. Christianity, being convinced of the absolute superiority of its own faith, has always questioned the justification of other forms of faith. Buddhism, however, does not believe that man has to decide about it within a single life on earth. The Buddhist, therefore, regards all other religions as first steps to his own. Consequently, in the countries to which Buddhism spread, it did not fight against the original religions found there, but tried to suffuse them with its own spirit. Therefore, Buddhism has never claimed exclusive, absolute or totalitarian authority.

[67] Alexandru-Corneliu ARION, "The metaphysical frameworks of Buddhism. Premises of the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity", in *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* (IJOT), Daniel Munteanu (edit.), 6:2 (2015), p. 170.

[68] The Kyoto School (*Kyōto-gakuha*) is a group of 20th century Japanese thinkers who developed original philosophies by creatively drawing on the intellectual and spiritual traditions of East Asia, those of Mahāyāna Buddhism in particular, as well as on the methods and content of Western philosophy.

[69] St. Gregory of Nyssa, "Cuvântul 7 la Fericiri", P.G. 44, col. 1280C; St. Basil the Great, *On Holy Spirit*, 15, P.G., 32, col. 132B.

and that is because only an absolute Person can greet you with absolute purity and power.[70] From the Christian perspective, to an impersonal "Absolute", such as that of Nāgārjuna's śūnyatā, cannot be attributed purity in its own sense, because purity in its true sense is a matter of intention, of thoughts, of subjective interiority, within conscious acts. Only the Absolute as a Person can be wholly clean by itself, by His being, but not in the limited sense.[71] The nirvāṇic eternity is always at odds with the eternity of the Christian communion, because it is empty of content, and therefore monotonous. It is, in fact, an emptied time of substance, since nothing is expected anymore, nothing is done out of it. As Father Staniloae argues, such a time – which we identify with the nirvāṇic one – is "a unique state without end ... the impossibility or black eternity, the darkest outside of existence, the absence of life"[72]. Mokṣa or Nirvāṇa, Christian or Islamic paradises are not one and the same. The being anonymity realized in the state of mokṣa or nirvāṇa is incompatible with the perfection of the human person, in the context of deification.[73] And yet, the fruitful results of the encounter between the religions of today's world, on the social field, and beyond, are more than encouraging, for they show us that God has been working until now (cf. John 5: 17) and that ultimately we will all be one in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

[1] ***Buddhism in Translations*, transl. by Henry Clarke Warren, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Private Limited, Delhi, 2002.
[2] ***Dialogues of the Buddha* (*The Dîgha-Nikâya*), Translated from the Pāli by T.W. Rhys Davids, London, H. Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1899.
[3] ** *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Ultimate Reference Suite, Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008.
[4] ***The Book of the Discipline,* Part I, by I.B. Horner, London: Pali Text Society, 1982.
[5] ***Webster's New World College Dictionary*, Fourth Edition, USA, Macmillan, 1999.
[6] **ACHIMESCU**, Nicolae, *Religii în dialog* (*Religions in dialogue*), Trinitas Publishing House, Iaşi, 2006.
[7] ——. *Budism şi creştinism. Consideraţii privind desăvârşirea omului* (*Buddhism and Christianity. Considerations regarding human perfection*), Junimea, Tehnopress Publisher, Iaşi, 1999.
[8] **ALLDRITT**, Leslie D., *Religions of the World. Buddhism*, Chelsea House Publishers, Philadelphia.
[9] **ANDERSON**, Carol; **BUSWELL** Jr., Robert E., ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, MacMillan Reference, Thomson Gale, 2004.
[10] **ARION**, Alexandru-Corneliu, "The metaphysical frameworks of Buddhism. Premises of the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity", in *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* (IJOT), Daniel Munteanu (edit.), 6:2 (2015).
[11] **ARMSTRONG**, Karen, *The History of God; from Abraham to the Present : The 4000-year Quest for God*, Published by Vintage Books, London, 1999.
[12] **BOLSHAKOFF**, Sergius, *Russian Mystics*, CSS 26. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977.
[13] **BOUTENEFF**, Peter, "Christ and salvation", in *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, Edited by Mary B. Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
[14] **COLLINS**, S., Nirvāṇa and other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire, New York, 1998.
[15] **CREȚU**, Constantin, *Problema suferinţei în budism. O evaluare creştină* (*The problem of suffering in Buddhism. A Christian evaluation*), PhD thesis in Theology, (abstract), Universitatea din București, 2013.
[16] **ELIADE**, Mircea, *A History of Religious Ideas*, Volume 2: *From Gautama Buddha to the Triumph of Christianity*, Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1984.
[17] **ELLWOOD**, Robert S., gen. edit., *The Encyclopedia of World Religions*, Revised Edition, Gregory D. Alles. assoc. edit., Facts On File, Inc., New York, 2007.

---

[70] Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*), vol. I, Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al B.O.R. Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978, p. 267.
[71] Nicolae ACHIMESCU, *Buddhism and Christianity. Considerations regarding human perfection*, p. 250.
[72] Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*), vol. I, pp. 194-195.
[73] Remus RUS, "The conception of man in the great religions", pp. 902-903.

[18] **EVDOKIMOV**, Paul, *L'Orthodoxie,* Desclée deBrouwer, Paris, 1979.

[19] **FRANCK**, Frederick, ed., *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries*, revised edition, Spiritual Classics Series, World Wisdom, Inc., 2004.

[20] **GARFIELD**, Jay L., *Engaging Buddhism. Why It Matters to Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2015.

[21] **GLASENAPP**, Helmuth Von, "Buddhism and Christianity and Buddhism and the Vital Problems of our Time". Two Essays, *Buddhist Publication Society*, Kandy • Sri Lanka, 1963.

[22] **GOMBRICH**, R., What the Buddha Thought, London: Equinox, 2009.

[23] **GREGORY**, of Nyssa, *Writings*, Part I, in: *PSB*, vol. 29, transl. by Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae and Rev. Ioan Buga, Institutul Biblic si de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1982.

[24] **GREGORY** Palamas, *The Triads*, ET selected texts Nicholas Gendle, CWS. London, SPCK, 1983.

[25] **HARE**, William Loftus, *Mysticism of East and West Studies in Mystical and Moral Philosophy*, With an Introduction by J. Estlin Carpenter, D. Litt., Jonathan Cape Eleven Gower Street, London, 1923.

[26] **HAY**, Jeff, *Greenhaven Encyclopedia of World Religions*, Gale, Cengage Learning, Detroit • New York • San Francisco • London, 2007.

[27] **JAYATILLEKE**, K. N., *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1963.

[28] **KALUPAHANA**, David J., *Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, Albany, N.Y., 1985.

[29] ——. *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, foreword by G. P. Malalasekera, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976.

[30] **KASULIS**, Thomas P., (1987), Revised Bibliography, "Nirvāṇa", in: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition, Lindsay JONES, editor in chief, vol. 10: Necromancy-Pindar, Thomson Gale, Macmillan Reference USA.

[31] ——. "Nirvāṇa", in: *Buddhism and Asian History,* edited by Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings, New York, 1989.

[32] **LACOSTE**, Jean-Yves, editor, *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, vol. 2: G-M, Routledge, Madison Avenue, New York • London, 2005.

[33] **MASAO**, A., "Dōgen on Buddha-nature," *The Eastern Buddhist*, IV/1, 1971.

[34] **NELLAS**, Panayotis, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person*, Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1987.

[35] **PARRINDER**, Geoffrey, *Mysticism in the World's Religions*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 1995.

[36] **RUS**, Dr. Remus, „Concepția despre om în marile religii" ("The conception of man in the great religions"), in: *Glasul Bisericii*, Bucharest: Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al B.O.R. Publisher, 1978, no. 7-8.

[37] **RUSSELL**, Norman, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies, General Editors: Gillian Clark & Andrew Louth, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2004.

[38] **SCHWARZ**, Hans, "Heaven", in *The Cambridge dictionary of Christian Theology*, Edited by Ian A. Mcfarland, David A. S. Fergusson, Karen Kilby, Iain R. Torrance, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

[39] ——. *Eschatology*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company/Cambridge, UK, 2000.

[40] **SIEGMUND**, G., Buddhismus und Christentum. Vorbereitung eines Dialogs, 2.Aufl., Steyler Verlag – Sankt Augustin, 1983.

[41] **SMART**, Ninian, *Concept and Empathy. Essays in the Study of Religion*, edited by Donald Wiebe, Library of Philosophy and Religion, General Editor: John Hick, Macmillan Press LTD, 1986.

[42] **SOPHRONY**, (Sakharov), Archimandrite, *We Shall See Him as He Is*, Trans. Rosemary Edmonds, Tolleshunt Knights: Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, 1988.
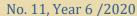
[43] **Stăniloae**, Dumitru, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*), vol. I, Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al B.O.R. Publishing House, Bucharest, 1978.

[44] **STRENG**, Frederick J., *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning*, New York, 1967.

[45] **TSERING**, Geshe Tashi, *Foundation of Buddhist Thought*, vol. I, *The Four Noble Truths*, Wisdom Publications, Somerville, 2005.

[46] **VALLÉE POUSSIN**, Louis de la, *The Way to Nirvāṇa. Six lectures on ancient Buddhism as a discipline of salvation*, Cambridge: at the University Press, 1917.

[47] **WALSHE**, M. O' C., "*Buddhism and Christianity: A Positive Approach*" (With Some Notes on Judaism), *Buddhist Publication Society*, Kandy • Sri Lanka, 1986.

[48] **WELBON**, Guy R., *The Buddhist Nirvāṇa and Its Western Interpreters*, Chicago, 1968.

[49] **ZIZIOULAS**, J. D., "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," in: *Scottish Journal of Theology*, (SJTh) 28, Edinburgh, 1975.

THE PHILOSOPHER-KING AND THE GREAT SAGE: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MARCUS AURELIUS' STOICISM AND CONFUCIUS' ETHICAL THEORY

Rocco A. ASTORE,
Adjunct Lecturer of Philosophy
CUNY: Borough of Manhattan Community College,
USA,
E-mail: rastore@bmcc.cuny.edu

ABSTRACT

Within the history of world philosophies, there exist overlaps between individual thinkers, albeit removed by periods, and variance in location. As understood by this present writer, one of these intersections finds itself between the Stoic ideals of Marcus Aurelius as well as the ethical doctrines of Confucius. Although rarely explored, it is of interest to this essayist, to draw readers to consider how Aurelius' Stoic conception of arête or virtue, matches, or is the moral equivalent of the ethical conduct Confucius expounds in The Analects, specifically, the behaviors associated with those who are of the junzi. Afterward, this piece will then compare the idea of humaneness, or Confucius' concept of ren with Aurelius' cosmopolitan and humanist sayings, as found in The Meditations. Lastly, this piece will conclude by comparing Aurelius' and Confucius' shared fundamental outlook on morals and ethics, thus allowing us to assert that what they expounded possesses a similar appeal, helping to remove the barriers, dividing so-called "Western" and "Eastern" philosophical canons.
Keywords: Comparative Studies; Marcus Aurelius; Confucius; Stoicism; Confucianism; Ancient Philosophy;

1. UNDERSTANDING AURELIUS' ARÊTE

Aurelius' *arête*, as well as his cosmopolitan bent, provides readers with a glimpse into the mind of who this present author regards as perhaps being the closest embodiment of Plato's fabled philosopher-king; Marcus. Now, Aurelius, like many other Hellenistic and Greco-Roman thinkers, believed that virtue or *arête* defines as excellency, however to Aurelius, it is an excellency of character, and the purity to follow through with those pious intentions.[1] In other words, *arête*, in the eyes of Aurelius, is not just about knowing what it is to be a right person; instead, it is also about being one.[2]

This Aurelian current of thought, that the importance of enacting an ethical, goodwill, is paramount in understanding his conception of *arête*. That is because when we refine ourselves, to focus in on how to execute our good intentions, through conducting ourselves ethically, we find that the goodness of our plans will translate into the benevolence of our acts. As such, we can never claim that we are failing to contribute to Aurelius' view of

---

[1] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983., 133.
[2] *Ibid*., 103.

the common good.[3] In other words, like Aurelius' Stoic belief, in testing our judgments via hypothetical syllogisms, we can align our motives and behavior so that if we work toward community or the achievement of a familial reality between all, then such a bond can become real.[4]

Next, although we may give credence to the idea that Aurelius believed Nature to be impersonal, it still works toward an end or a *telos*, and we, as means to Nature's dissemination throughout Earth, are to be virtuous, or full of *arête*.[5] That is because people, as social, rational, and communicative, possess the ability to work or progress toward a community. In other words, as Aurelius would believe, we all play a role in life assigned to us by Nature.[6] As such, we must embrace our destiny and trust that no matter what Providence may have in store for us, we can still lean on each other, or bear each other's burdens.[7]

Thus, through endurance, we find tolerance. Through tolerance, we come to be compassionate and willing to assists those who are not as fortunate as we are, in temperament, or attitude toward life. Lastly, to make another allusion to Plato's *Republic*, we may claim that as people, it is not only our task to display our moral *arête*. It is also our task to emerge from the cave, alongside all those stuck in the cave, for humanity's.[8] That is because we must do what is right for righteousness, which sets the cornerstone for the formation of the common good, to arise, as understood through Aurelius' Stoic vantage.

Now, this vision of the common good is achievable; ultimately, if all people embrace Aurelius' Stoic path of *arête*, which involves mastering the self, by accepting all that Nature, or Fate may throw at us.[9] In other words, an element of being one who embraces Aurelian Stoicism is to remain calmly, or serenely indifferent, or unvexed by the ebb and flow of life. That is because, as Aurelius asserts, it matters not whether a governing Providence or Atoms or random particles acting in concert, rules the universe, it still we who have the power over our reactions.[10] Consequently, we may assert that a degree of self-sufficiency, or the ability to quell or tame our inner thoughts and feelings, is in our possession, and we can use this artfully, or with *arête*, to perfect ourselves and inspire others to do the same.[11]

2. AN EXPLICATION OF AURELIUS' COSMOPOLITANISM AND HUMANIST IDEALS

From this conception of *arête*, we may now explore Aurelius' cosmopolitanism and humanist sentiments. First, by Aurelius' cosmopolitanism, we may enter one of the most famous quotes of *The Meditations*, in which Marcus states that as far as he is an emperor, he is a citizen of Rome; however, as a person, he is a citizen of the universe. Accordingly, we may claim that Aurelius is embracing two ideas at the same time. One notion conveyed by this aphorism is that Aurelius recognizes the importance of us all as people, or beings

---

[3] *Ibid*., 125.

[4] *Ibid*., 131.

[5] Russell, Bertrand. *The History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972, 254.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983, 85.

[8] Plato. "The Allegory of the Cave". Los Angeles: Enhanced Media Publishing, 2010, 9-10.

[9] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983, 131-133.

[10] *Ibid*., 26, 31, 131.

[11] Russell, Bertrand. *The History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972, 264-266.

capable of reason and communication, and it is indeed our planet to protect, by accepting each other as elements needed for the continuity of our species.[12]

Simultaneously, we may understand Aurelius' maxim, as claiming that we are genuinely a fragment, or a small piece of what constitutes the natural order, the cosmos, or the universe in its fullness.[13] As such, we must embrace our tininess in comparison to the awesomeness of Nature, and hence, recognize that we not only equally share in our responsibility and duty to our social or political communities. Instead, we also share in the notion that we are all members of the same cosmic system, without exception.[14] For, we, by being of this planet, are also of this galaxy, which is part of the one natural order, in which we all reside.[15] Accordingly, it is the opinion of this present essayist that Aurelius would at least implicitly assert that no one person is better than another and that we all play a part in the overall scheme of existence.

One way to view or envision Aurelius' humanist leanings is by analyzing what living in accordance with Nature, and its impersonality means. Now, to live in agreement with Nature we must first withhold assent to any judgment until we find that what we are appraising is certainly good or bad, and not indifferent.[16] In other words, to Aurelius, although a benevolent Providence guides, or governs the natural order, it is still for us to discover its purpose for us in life, and since we always fail to match its magnitude, bars us from being in direct communication with Nature.

That is because much like how it is that aquatic life relies on water to subsist. While, in contrast, water does not rely on what it shelters for its continuation, we may claim that the benevolence or care of Nature is in the fact that it is eternal. At the same time, Nature is ceaselessly fleeting, while still providing a chance to be, to all that inhabits it. Thus, Nature, to Aurelius, by giving us all a home to develop and perfect ourselves, via Stoic theory and practice, equally grants us all the potential to achieve such perfection, rendering it to be compassionate enough. Lastly, since we all inhabit Nature, and because Nature's disinterested goodness is adequate for us all to master ourselves, it is indeed we who have each other to cope with in life. Hence, it is we who must live with goodwill toward one another.[17]

Next, for us to achieve such humanism, equality, and goodwill toward each other, it is paramount to address Stoic assent and how the refraining from judging too quickly whether a thing or being is good or bad, helps to practice indifference, acceptance, and decency toward all.[18] That is because through practicing withholding our decisions, until we are sure of them, we assist ourselves in strengthening our directing-minds, or that facet of our minds which ultimately is responsible for whether we assent to a thing as being excellent, bad, or indifferent.[19] From this, we may claim that it is when we refrain from judging too hurriedly, that we cultivate humaneness, in the form of practicing patience. Lastly, this power of perseverance not only helps us to bear the shortcomings of others, it also helps to condition us in such a way that we welcome dealing with others' flaws. For, we know by doing so we will make our power of patience more formidable.

---

[12] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983, 25-26.
[13] *Ibid*., 30-31.
[14] *Ibid*., 25-26.
[15] *Ibid*.
[16] *Ibid*., 116-117.
[17] *Ibid*., 85.
[18] *Ibid*., 131-133.
[19] *Ibid*., 131-135.

3. CONFUCIUS' CONCEPTS OF JUNZI AND REN: HUMANIST IMPLICATIONS

Upon entering the philosophy of Confucius, we come to find two key concepts that are central to comprehending the Confucian project in its entirety. That is, we come to see the notions of the *junzi*, and the humaneness practiced by those who are of the *junzi*; the goodness of *ren*. Now, by *junzi*, Confucius understands those who are of a superior brand of people.[20] In other words, the *junzi* are those who practice the ethical code of selfless service, compassion, kindness, and the acceptance of all people, which derives from their self-chosen moral code.[21] This self-chosen ethic, to Confucius, is benevolent when it helps one who adheres to traditional devotion, ritual, and filial piety, or the maintenance of respect between the older and younger members of our families, to actively pursue the spreading of adoration to all they encounter.[22] Thus, we find that in Confucianism, those who embrace their humanity, are those who are on the path of the *junzi*, and it is this way of living that is most in line with Confucius' version of *Tao*.[23] Lastly, this *Tao* is not so much the force that we are to submit to and embrace as a means to living most fluidly, or least obtusely. Instead, in Confucian theory, the *Tao* is the active maintenance of the way of social harmony, which prevails when the *junzi* uphold the standard of *ren*.[24]

That is because the term *ren*, we can understand as the maxim or principle, or that voluntary choice of allowing ourselves to acknowledge that we can be better people, through strictly following, in our day-to-day lives, a mode of righteousness that suits us.[25] In other words, it is not that Confucius believes that every different path aside from his, fails to attain the status of *ren*. Instead, all ways constituting goodness include acceptance on our part, to adhere to standards of conduct that never fail to bare benevolence toward all others.[26]

Therefore, let us confidently assert that the *junzi*, who practice the virtue of *ren*, are indeed practicing a humanistic moral outlook via their ceaseless ethical decorum.[27] That is because, much like Kant, who outdates Confucius by over two-thousand years, Confucian philosophy expounds acceptance on the part of autonomous individuals, like the *junzi*, to practice *ren*, or a kind-heartedness that maintains the respect of all individuals they meet.[28]

Thus, this virtue, to be able to embrace a freely chosen moral maxim, or *ren*, which maintains the dignity of every person, due to our shared humanity, assists us in recognizing that this aspect of the *junzi*, rings oddly modern. For, *ren*, as the moral principle behind the ethical behavior of the *junzi*, allows us to claim that the genuinely morally superior person, is one who embraces the value of all humanity.[29]

Finally, this high regard for all human life, as harbored by the *junzi*, maintains social harmony for the benefit of governments, which we shall now explore. Now, upon turning to Confucius' *The Analects*, we come to find an underlying current of thought, namely, the idea that we must work toward a common good, or social harmony through social reform.[30] This idea of social harmony via social change starts with the reformation of the self, of which we

---

[20] Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, xviii-xix.

[21] *Ibid*., 3.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] *Ibid*., xxiv-xxv.

[24] Koller, John M. *Oriental Philosophies*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970, 246, 263-264.

[25] Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008., xxi-xxii.

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] Koller, John M. *Oriental Philosophies*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 264-266.

[28] Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 44.

[29] *Ibid*.

[30] Koller, John M. *Oriental Philosophies*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 250-252.

are all capable.[31] That is, Confucian philosophy does not rest on a source outside of ourselves, to validate Confucius' sayings; instead, it is solely we who are responsible for concretizing the reality we wish to share with others.[32] One way in which we can achieve social harmony, via social reform, is by practicing the Confucian maxim that we should not do unto others what we would not want to experience ourselves.[33]

Again, here we find Confucian philosophy strikingly foreshadowing later religious philosophies associated with the "West." In other words, much like the famous Golden Rule expounded in the Gospels of Christianity, some five-hundred years later, Confucius, too, believes that upright moral principles, or real *ren*, is necessary for accord between people.[34] Lastly, as a reminder to readers, it is this accord which is the bedrock of righteousness that is mandatory for the solidarity of the masses, needed to conduct human government, which, again, starts with a reformation of the self for the highest good in social milieus.

Furthermore, this social coherency, produced by our resolve to be better people, or to properly constitute our membership to the *junzi*, centers on the idea that together we can all contribute to the continuation of human society, and as such, truly preserve our world for ourselves, while future generations that will come to inhabit our communities.[35] In other words, Confucian philosophy focuses us on maintaining ourselves for the benefit of others, both now, and for those to come, and it is this current of ideas that permeates *The Analects*. As such, we find that this potential power to preserve existence depends on us, for we possess the means to treat all people we encounter as worthy or entailing the dignity and recognition of those deserving of the title of *junzi*.

Thus, we may assert that by preserving the present, which we all share as conscious beings, assists us in realizing that if we continue to maintain ourselves and our societies, then it is sure that we can progress into a harmonious future. Lastly, let us now enter a comparison between Aurelius' Stoicism and Confucian morality, and by doing so, assists in showing that the boundaries between so-called "Western" and "Eastern" philosophical thought, is not as stark as we may believe it to be, initially.

4. COMPARING AURELIUS AND CONFUCIUS:
SMASHING A BARRIER BETWEEN THE "EAST" AND "WEST":

Now, one striking similarity between the philosophies of Aurelius and Confucius is that they regard the individual as paramount in achieving the common good of all. First, let us note that we should not so much understand Aurelius and Confucius as believing that one person can change the entirety of society. Instead, Aurelius and Confucius are expounding theories which claim that it is in the potential of all people to achieve the common good by starting with who they are and making themselves benevolent by pushing themselves always to be and do better. Hence, we may claim that one similarity between the philosophies of Aurelius and Confucius is that both ascribe to the view that people can perfect themselves. From this pursuit of perfection, or the idea that people can work towards manifesting the world that we all would like to live in, to be a genuine reality, shows that the most significant human good, peace, and prosperity, is central to the thinking of Aurelius and Confucius.

Confucius' notion of *ren* and Aurelius' understanding of *arête*, are similar concepts to say that least. One reason why this present writer makes this claim is that *arête* or moral

---

[31] *Ibid*.
[32] *Ibid*.
[33] Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 44.
[34] Ibid., xiii, xxi-xxii.
[35] Ibid., xviii-xix.

excellency through the practice and application of such virtue, links to *ren* which is the ethical principle of uprightness that we are to practice, perpetually, as found in Confucianism.[36] That is, both *ren* and *arête*, are modes, or ways of goodness that we are to embrace, so that we may come to call ourselves real Stoics, as Aurelius would assert, as well as sincere *junzi*, or the superior individuals that Confucius has in mind.[37] Thus, we may claim that the virtues associated with *arête,* such as, love for our fellow people, and the decorum and compassion umbrellaed by the concept of *ren*, shows that Aurelius' understanding of a Stoic, and Confucius' vision of the *junzi* are not disparate.[38] Moreover, although we encounter the idea of the *Tao* in Confucian Thought, and the reality of Nature in Aurelius' Stoic reflections, we find that both philosophers support the understanding that it is we, who, in part, objectify such metaphysical notions.[39] In other words, both Aurelius' Stoic comprehension of Nature and Confucius' envisioning of the *Tao* consists in the fact that it is we who grant life to these ideas, by making them real through our ethical conduct.[40]

That is because Nature, or the *Tao*, are conceptions that guide us or imply what we are to perform for ourselves, to be exemplary servants of humankind, and it is in our hands to make those implications real.[41] Finally, it is from these moral hints, or the tacit understanding of how we are to treat others and behave in life, that we are to follow, ceaselessly. For, in Confucianism and Aurelius' Stoicism, the more that we hone who are, the better we can provide for others, and the better we can provide for others, the more we strengthen our political communities.[42] Furthermore, another parallel that exists between Aurelius' and Confucius' moral and ethical image of humanity is that both philosophers believe that respecting others is paramount for the progress of our co-existence. In other words, much like how it is that Aurelius believes that our shared humanity should assist us in realizing that we are all of a single "government," fated by one providential universe. Confucius also understands that we must continually refrain from infringing on others, so that we may preserve the one true *Tao* of the state, of which we all partake.[43] That is because Aurelius, and especially Confucius, would understand that it is when we overstep the boundaries of proper everyday societal conduct, or traditions, that we foster the decay, or disintegration of the fabric which holds our social milieus together, i.e., the state.[44] Thus, we may assert that if we fail to remain respectful, then we fail to express genuine compassion, and if we cannot convey compassion, then we cannot co-exist. Now, without co-existence, the reality of community would cease, and if a community were to cease, the state would be impossible to manifest or achieve. However, the reality of political states implies that Nature, as Aurelius would call it, or the *Tao*, as Confucius would declare it, intends for us to live in harmony. Therefore, we may safely assume that Aurelius and Confucius aim for the

---

[36] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983, 131-133 & Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, xxi-xxii.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] *Ibid*.
[39] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983, 131-133 & Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, xxiv-xxv.
[40] *Ibid*.
[41] *Ibid*.
[42] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983., 121 & Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 50.
[43] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983., 26-27 & Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, xxiv-xxv.
[44] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983., 26-27 & Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 44.

individual to be righteous, so that that person may carry the weight of others when required, and that that selflessness paves the way for such community, or social bonds, which, in turn, composes a unit of co-existence. i.e. a political state.[45] From these considerations, we may find that Aurelius and Confucius were not so unalike as we may assume them to be, due to their separation in time and location. That is because of this essayist casting light on the fact that Confucius' understanding of *ren,* and the *junzi*, matches well with Aurelius' Stoic sentiments, including the concept of *arête*.[46] Lastly, it is the hope of this present writer that by this comparison between Aurelian and Confucian philosophy, we may more readily understand that the divisions between "Western" and "Eastern" thought is not as discordant as we may believe, especially on first glance.

CONCLUSION

Despite being apart by both time and place, we nevertheless find that Aurelius and Confucius shared an affinity for channeling humanity to secure the common good for all. That is, throughout *The Meditations* and *The Analects,* we encounter a strong current of thought which fortifies and purports that the unity of humanity outweighs the deterioration of society. As such, it is the role of us all to extend the safety of life, as long as possible. Thus, we claim that the purpose of this piece was not only to show how Aurelius and Confucius shared in a similar outlook on the purpose and meaning of humanity. Instead, this article also aimed to display how what we may take to be a division in space and time is not so disparate at all. First, to secure such an outlook, this present writer drew from Aurelius' understanding of *arête* and juxtaposed it with Confucius' notions of the *junzi* and *ren*, to show how these concepts are genuinely alike in their importance to both thinkers, regarding humankind. Next, this essay guided readers to consider the similarities between Aurelius' cosmopolitanism and humanism, as well as the humanism of Confucius. Lastly, through a direct comparison between Aurelius and Confucius, it was the intention of this piece and its present writer to assists in breaking the barrier we usually assume that exists between so-called "Western" and "Eastern" philosophical styles of thinking.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983.
[2] Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
[3] Koller, John M. *Oriental Philosophies*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.
[4] Plato. "The Allegory of the Cave". Los Angeles: Enhanced Media Publishing, 2010.
[5] Russell, Bertrand. *The History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972

---

[45] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983., 83 & Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008., xxi-xxii.

[46] Aurelius, Marcus. *The Meditations*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983., 131-133 & Confucius. *The Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008., xxi-xxii, xxiv-xxv.

FROM ASCESIS TO CONTEMPLATION: SCRIPTURE READING, MEDITATION AND PRAYER IN THE WRITINGS OF SAINT ISAAC THE SYRIAN

Rev. Lecturer Assistant Georgian PĂUNOIU,
Faculty of Orthodox Theology "Justinian the Patriarch", University of Bucharest,
ROMANIA,
E-mail: georgepaunoiu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Saint Isaac the Syrian is one of the most beloved Philokalic Fathers and the study of his texts represents a fascinating journey into the spiritual reality of life, revealing the wisdom, discernment and enthusiasm which only the Holy Spirit can grant. Abba Isaac does not look for skill and method in interpreting the texts of the Scriptures and does not cultivate a certain kind of wisdom which may lead to pride, but longs for that understanding which feeds his faith, enlightens his mind and offers him an occasion to marvel. According to Saint Isaac, prayer, spiritual meditation and Scripture reading are not mere obedience in the spiritual life, but an absolutely necessary experience in acquiring holiness. This unique experience becomes a safe guide for the one who, while keeping the forms of ascesis to the end of his life, obtains the key to the ineffable divine gifts.
Keywords: Saint Isaac the Syrian; Scriptures; meditation; prayer;

INTRODUCTION

The Venerable Isaac envisages a permanent reciprocal reinforcement of Scriptural reading and meditation, the lecture of the spiritual books written by the Fathers of the desert, prayer and daily liturgy[47]. The lecture of the books where the Fathers speak of the acquisition of divine grace and the fruits of pure prayer kindles the wish of following this path like a "flame" in one's soul: "Lord, make us worthy of the truth that is within Scripture!"[48] On the other hand, living the prayer begets the love of God in man and gives him power to overcome temptations.

According to Saint Isaac, spiritual reading depicts something like a protected space in which the soul comes to know and marvels in contemplation of the "purpose of God's creation"[49].

---

[47] Prayer and reading are „victuals" on the way of eternal life (Part I, 26, 4, p. 426 – ed. Deisis). For reading the Scriptures, see G.G. BLUM, *Die Geschichte der Begegnung christlich-orientalischer Mystik mit der Mystik des Islams*, Wiesbaden, 2009, pp. 222-233, Sabino CHIALÀ' synthesis, *La perla dei molti riflessi. La lettura della Scrittura nei Padri Siriaci*, Ed. Qiqajon, Bose, 2014, and also Hieromonk Agapie CORBU' synthesis in Avva Iosif Hazzaya Văzătorul de Dumnezeu, *Scrieri duhovniceşti*, Editura Sf. Nectarie, Arad, 2019

[48] III, 7, 42, p. 101. In the Venerable Isaac's age (the 7th century), the following books were lacking in the biblical cannon of the Syro-Oriental Churches: *II Peter*, *II and III John*, *Judas* and *The Revelation*, cf. Sabino Chialà, *Isaac Sirianul – asceză singuratică şi milă fără sfârşit*, trad. de Maria-Cornelia şi Diac. Ioan I. Ică jr, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2012, p. 158

[49] II, 3, C1, 67, p. 145

1. THREE LANDMARKS ON THE WAY TO HEAVENS

Abba Isaac insists upon a thought that he values so much: the entwining of reading and prayer, "the remembrance of the fortifying words that speak of God", placed in mind by the lecture that edifies and animates "the flame which fells in the heart at the time of prayer"[50]. The lecture stirs the mind to meditating on the meanings that engender joy and hope for the work of the Holy Ghost in our mind. "Que ce soit en méditant les psaumes, ou en étant assidu à la lecture et à la prière, ou que l'entendement médite, tout cela n'a qu'un seul et même but: les faire devenir dignes de l'activité (de l'Esprit) dans l'Intellect."[51].

In twining prayer and meditation, there shall not be mere meditation, as relaxation; rather, a deepening into the fathomless meanings of creation and God's providence[52]. This meditation represents a dialogue between man and the Scriptures: the man asks and wonders, at the same time; he is amazed at the beauty of God's creation and terrified by the fall of man, by his disobedience, and, more than anything, he discovers "the abundance of God's mercy" manifested in his call "dans le Christ Jésus, notre Seigneur, et qui t'a fait retourner vers la beauté de ta première origine en Dieu […] mais il t'a spontanément nourri de ces biens et il est venu pour te rendre la vie."[53]

Both reading and meditation on the Scriptures, as well as prayer, fill the soul with light. It is a reciprocal support. "La prière te sera ainsi douce à cause de la lecture, et tu seras à nouveau éclairé dans ta lecture par les clés de la prière."[54] Abba Isaac mentions very often, in his *Ascetical Homilies*, the fruitful intertwining of prayer, reading and meditating upon the texts of the Scriptures. "The great wonders hidden in the lines [of the Scriptures]" make the man speak to God in "wise words" which "attract all the parts of the soul to God and His love, and keep her awake in order to keep her eyes ardently fixed on God". Love of God cannot spring in our soul only by reading and meditating upon the Scriptures, as it cannot be reached at either by command or endeavor.

"Knowledge of the Scriptures" awakes the soul's awareness of God's greatness and counsels man towards virtue; yet, love of God is still far away[55]. The absolute condition remains the revelation of the Holy Spirit, Who makes possible an understanding "from beyond this world"[56], and a certain feeling of the work of God "inside him". Only now "it is possible for him to come close to this glorious savour (of love)."[57]

By a founding role, the Scriptures reveal God's love for man and the sense of their communion. For Saint Isaac, "pure prayer" is a "wise prayer". Why "wise words" when we speak of prayer? There are two sources of this spiritual foundation of prayer full of wisdom:

---

[50] II, 3, C2, 13, p. 160. On this topic, see S. CHIALÀ, *Isaac Sirianul*, pp. 157-168

[51] II, 3, C2, 14, p. 160

[52] „Organise-toi afin qu'il y ait à tout prix, et tous les jours, un laps de temps entre l'office de la nuit et celui du matin, pour une méditation qui te fasse croître dans la connaissance divine. Elle aussi est une partie importante de l'ouvrage de la veille." (II, 3, C2, 85, p. 194)

[53] II, 3, C2, 84, p. 194

[54] II, 1, 31, pp. 102-103; „Car c'est à l'aide de la prière que la porte des intuitions s'ouvre à la Pensée, et qu'en retour des intuitions merveilleuses réveillent à nouveau l'envie de prier conformément à la contemplation reçue (dans la lecture)." (II, 1, 31, p. 103)

[55] „Anyone who wishes to attain to a taste of our Lord`s love should ask Him that this door be opened to Him." (II, 35, 5, p. 153)

[56] „divine mysteries which (exist) in a luminous state above the world" (II, 19, 6, p. 104)

[57] „Someone who has not actually drunk wine will not become inebriated as a result of being told about wine; and someone who has not been himself held worthy of a knowledge of the lofty things of God cannot become inebriated with love for him." (II, 18, 2, p. 96)

one is "God's wisdom"[58], which pervades all evidence of the Scriptures, and the other is the "luminosity of the soul" itself, suffused by the work of God. Is it the acquisition of the wisdom of this world that guides the soul to pure prayer? Saint Isaac answers: "Lorsque je fais mention d'une prière sage, je ne pense pas à celle qui viendrait de la sagesse du monde, ou d'une érudition loquace et stupide, et qui devrait faire rougir l'âme en prière devant Dieu, à cause de la vaine gloire qu'elle excite en elle et qui éloigne le secours que Dieu lui donnerait. Mais je pense à ces paroles sages qui jaillissent dans la prière à partir de la sagesse de Dieu et de la lumière de l'âme. Des motions ardentes les ont fait monter dans le coeur à cause de l'amour de la vraie vie qui a précédé la prière et qui, rechauffant le coeur, fait sortir des paroles qui ne sont pas voulues, mais que le souvenir (de Dieu) force à jaillir. Combien de fois, sur ce même chemin, des larmes n'ont-elles pas jailli à partir de l'ardeur du coeur et du secours de Dieu! C'est cela que (les Pères) appellent la prière pure."[59]

Meditation passes from the revealed text of the Scriptures to the divine economy[60], to everything that God has done for men in His ineffable wisdom. Saint Isaac prays for the opening of the path of understanding God's will and mysteries: "Écarte de moi une Pensée stupide qui médite sur des enfantillages, et excite en moi celles qui sont belles et qui font penser à ta gloire, afin que je reçoive de réfléchir à tes divins jugements non pas selon l'ordre d'une Pensée humaine et malade de ses passions, ni en pensant à toutes sortes de passions humaines, lorsqu'il s'agit des chemins empruntés par ta conscience pour sauver nos âmes. Aplanis en moi les chemins de ta sagesse, et ouvre-moi la porte pour méditer sur ton désir glorieux, car j'ignore, Seigneur, par quel chemin entrer chez toi."[61] Thus, meditation leads to the act of knowing God in Trinity, in which Christ makes Himself "the Door", "the Key", and "end of all mystery"[62]. "Ô Christ, porte des mystères, fais-moi communier à la sensation de tes mystères: c'est par toi que j'entrerai auprès du Père, et que j'accueillerai dans mes motions la grâce de ton Esprit Saint. […] c'est par toi, mon Seigneur, que s'ouvre pour nous la porte des mystères cachés depuis des siècles dans ton Père."[63]

Abba Isaac says that meditation "est une réflexion sur Dieu seul, qui s'émerveille seulement de ce qui le concerne, la Pensée scrutant et fréquentant uniquement lui et sa majesté, sans réfléchir au choses d'ici-bas ni se souvenir de la beauté et de la noblesse du corps […] En effet, (la Pensée) méprise désormais tout se qui appartient à la nature, son excellence ou la peur qu'elle lui inspire, grâce au souvenier de Dieu qui est seul à être célébré dans l'entendement."[64].

For Saint Isaac, there is almost no boundary between spiritual meditation and the thought of prayer. One inspires the other; one strengthens the other and is inflamed by it. Remembrance of God makes man "un temple pur pour Dieu, car grâce au souvenir continuel de Dieu, Dieu habitera sans cesse en nous. De pareils souvenirs sont d'un grand secours pour nous, qui vivons de cette philosophie divine."[65]

Saint Isaac recommends to divide the hours of the day in different parts: one for reading, one for the liturgy, and another for meditation, and "lorsque ceux-ci céderont la

---

[58] He further calls it „the wisdom of the Spirit" (II, 3, C3, 20, p. 175)
[59] II, 3, C3, 13, p. 202
[60] Isaac defines it as "the ocean of all mystery" (III, 7, 31, p. 95)
[61] III, 7, 30, p. 95
[62] III, 7, 31, p. 95
[63] III, 7, 31, p. 98
[64] III, 9, 6, p. 112
[65] III, 6, 45, p. 85

place à la sublime beauté des motions, nous arriverons aussi à accomplir le reste."[66] In order to emphasize once more the value of reading, meditation and prayer, Saint Isaac offers an allegorical interpretation of the text from *Matthew* 18: 29: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". "Les troi sont l'âme, le corps et l'esprit; ou bien: l'entendement, la méditation et la prière."[67] Man cannot "marvel in front of God" "as long as the power of the Spirit is not yet united with his noetic meditation". It is "the Power of the Spirit" that fills the intellect.

Paradoxically, this work of meditation on God is "strenuous". It is "difficile, oui, mais étonnante; facile aussi et douce"[68]. Sometimes, Saint Isaac does not distinguish between meditation, the thought of God and prayer itself any more: "There are times when a person is transported from prayer to a wondrous meditation on God. And there are times when prayer is born out of meditating on God"[69].

"The various and wonderful understanding"[70] issued by prayer grants strength unto the mind and protects it from "becoming a vessel of passions, as Evagrios says"[71]. Along with the acquisition of a higher comprehension by the experience of prayer, there come the trials, "the hard warfare"[72], "the storms"[73], which cannot yet overcome "the one who loves walking on this path"[74]. This is not at hand for anyone, for it supposes a life of prayer, of divine meditation; "c'est là l'ouvrage parfait. Celui qui désire, grâce à l'Intellect, dresser l'échelle divine, a besoin de s'asseoir en solitaire, d'abandonner toute préoccupation du monde, (attitude) qui engendre la tranquillité et la quiétude du coeur. De la sorte, grâce au repos continuel en Dieu et à la quiétude loin des projets (de toutes sortes), la Pensée pourra scruter toutes sortes de prières, pour en recevoir la connaissance sur Dieu."[75]

Prayer and meditation reveals in man the courage to feel that he is a son of God, for "c'est donc la prière qui, grâce à la méditation, rend à tout moment la Pensée proche de Dieu."[76]; this helps the one who perseveres in prayer to climb "l'échelle divine au-delà du monde"[77]. Prayer and meditation are inseparable; Abba Isaac deems prayer "done with discernment"[78] as "a very good word"[79], while meditation rendered in a spirit of prayer brings about that deep understanding "by perceiving the mysteries contained in its words"[80], and, by "la variété de ses (formes), fortifie et purifie l'entendement, et lui donne la sainteté

---

[66] II, 3, C2, 87, p. 167; „Si l'entendement venait à s'obscurcir par la suite, ajoutes-y quelque lecture appropriée au temps. Là se trouve, en effet, la source abondante dont jaillissent sur lui des eaux pures, en toute beauté." (II, 3, C2, 87, p. 167)

[67] II, 3, C2, 88, p. 195

[68] III, 3, 1, p. 47

[69] II, 10, 39, p. 51

[70] III, 3, 24, p. 47

[71] III, 3, 24, p. 47. Here, Saint Isaac makes reference to the Evagrian texts in *Praktikos* 49, *Gnostikos* 49.

[72] III, 3, 26, p. 48

[73] III, 3, 27, p. 48

[74] III, 3, 27, p. 48

[75] III, 3, 29, p. 54. „And love is through prayer; and prayer through dwelling alone." (I, 63, p. 295)

[76] III, 3, 30, p. 54

[77] III, 3, 32, p. 55

[78] Saint Isaac quotes a short apophtegmata of Saint Mark the Hermit: "He who prays with discernment suffers in truth what it happens to him"(*On the Spiritual Law* 115)

[79] III, 3, 24, pp. 53

[80] III, 3, 29, p. 54

grâce à la rumination. […] elle lie nécessairement l'entedement à Dieu. Elle éclaire celui-ci sur les réalités cachées en son sein."[81]

In all this communication, from reading and meditation to prayer and vice versa, the aim stays the same: "knowledge of the mysteries of the Holy Spirit"[82]. It is not a linear movement, but an unceasing growth, "from comprehension to comprehension, and whence, to contemplation"[83]. "Meditation is brought forth by prayer"[84], "l'Intellect pénètre dans une hauteur indicible, alors que l'esprit, durant la prière, est secouru par la grâce"[85]. "Cette prière, qui vient de (Dieu) et s'adresse à lui, lorsqu'elle n'est pas accompagnée de méditation et de lectio, est trop faible et obscure pour faire monter l'Intellect et lui faire rejoindre les réalités du ciel."[86] At the same time, Saint Isaac urges us "not to leave aside prayer even though it may be weak and obscure"[87].

2. SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE – THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ASCETICAL ITINERARY

As "not any reading is useful to growing in the Holy Spirit, but only that which persists in godly things"[88], reading feeds meditation, granting it the opportunity to "apprehend the hidden mystery of divine wisdom"[89]. Interestingly, Saint Isaac does not speak of a strictly intellectual reflection, an effort of the mind to grasp reality. He actually reveals man's longing for "the way of life of immortality"[90], guiding thinking towards its "progress in spiritual mysteries"[91].

As meditation, it does not stagnates at the level of a fruitless understanding, but "leads the intellect to discernment"[92]. As prayer, it mediates the remembrance of God and elevates the man, according him with the spiritual realities he discovers: "such a prayer elevates man to heaven; its work lasts up to the order of revelation and stands for a ladder. This is its work: it makes man elevate up to the height he prayed for."[93] Saint Isaac sees

---

[81] III, 3, 30, pp. 54-55

[82] III, 9, 18, p. 116

[83] III, 9, 18, p. 114. „Lorsqu'il est secouru à partir de la méditation et de la lectio, personne n'est capable de raconter jusqu'à quelles motions merveilleuses il est élevé pendant son intercession, vers quel désir il s'est étendu, et en quelles délices est établie la Pensée. C'est un tel ouvrage et une telle méditation qu'une lectio de qualité donne de pratiquer, et dont elle assiste les merveilles, de sorte que se prolonge ainsi l'ordre de la lectio, nécessaire à ce labeur." (III, 9, 7, pp. 112-113)

[84] III, 9, 9, p. 113

[85] III, 9, 7, p. 112

[86] III, 9, 15, p. 115

[87] III, 9, 16, p. 115

[88] III, 9, 8, p. 113; „Fais usage de la lecture, non pas de celle qui ferait de toi un érudit, mais de celle qui mortifie tes passions et qui te montre le sentier familier et bien précis, conduisant vers Dieu [...] Celle qui t'élève rapidement vers l'ouvrage lumineux que vise ta conduite solitaire."; and in the same *Chapter*: „Quelle connaissance est meilleure que la pureté? C'est elle, en effet, qui révèle toute chose à ton entendement, si tu mets tout ton zèle pour qu'elle t'appartienne, et qui te rend proche du don qui te fera voir Dieu." (II, 1, 45; 49, pp. 108-109)

[89] III, 9, 9, p. 113

[90] III, 9, 8, p. 113

[91] III, 9, 8, p. 113

[92] III, 9, 11, p. 114

[93] III, 9, 12, p. 114

prayer as a ladder "leaning upon the Heavens"[94], "so that by it we may be worthy of the heavenly light."[95]

Far from seeing in lecture the pleasure of reading something, Abba Isaac discovers its fruits, pouring "the old wine" of experience and grace which enlightens him in "the wineskins" of his words: reading "stirs up the senses of the reader's soul so that he may apprehend the hidden mystery of divine wisdom; it draws him closer to the knowledge of its boundlessness and the truth of its essence; it makes him contemplate in wonder the hidden Being; it makes his thoughts deem the mysteries of future hope, it shows him the abundance of Christ's love revealed to all and ready to be fulfilled."[96] Meditation founded on spiritual lecture receives divine revelation as an answer, making man[97] and angel[98] rejoice "dans les beautés divines qui transcendent tout."[99]

Is it necessary to assume the lecture all along the spiritual itinerary? Saint Isaac specifies that "lorsque cet ouvrage (de la méditation) se sera raffermi et rendu vigoureux dans l'âme, celle-ci n'aura plus besoin de la lectio, non pas qu'elle puisse devenir parfaite sans elle, mais parce qu'elle ne doit plus la prolonger."[100]

The secret work of the monastic in "reading the Holy Scriptures", his seeking and meditating on its spiritual meanings, seems to be void of sense and realism in the eyes of those who think like this: "„«However much you read or toil away, (your) labor is useless. What is the point of your searching out, and what advantage do you get by making yourselves idle as you hunt for spiritual meaning and the like? (Active) work is what is required.[101] If we do what we know about, we do not need any immense labor over the Sriptures or things of that sort.»"[102] The call of the monastic remains his advance towards God "by means of the reading (of Scripture), prayer, the search to this end involving the stirrings of the mind, consolation and hope of what lies hidden: who, by means of these, harnesses his intellect, preventing it from wandering among the passions; by means, too, of the delight that comes from converse with God."[103]

"The reading (of Sripture) manifestly is the fountainhead that gives birth to prayer – and by these (two things) we are transported in the direction of the love of God whose sweetness is poured out continually in our hearts like honey or a honeycomb, and our souls exult at the taste which the hidden ministry (of prayer) and the reading (of Scripture) pour into our hearts."[104] Reading the Scriptures "for the sake of truth" feeds the mind and enlightens it in searching out their mysteries and symbols", making up together "the excellent converse which leads to God"[105].

---

[94] III, 9, 13, p. 115

[95] III, 9, 13, p. 115

[96] III, 9, 9, p. 113

[97] „le monde des hommes mortels" (III, 9, 9, p. 113)

[98] „le monde des créatures spirituelles" (III, 9, 9, p. 113)

[99] III, 9, 9, p. 113

[100] III, 9, 10, p. 113. „Les écrits du Nouveau (Testament) et ceux qui traitent de la conduite des solitaires en vue de la connaissance parfaite et d'une Pensée limpide devraient te suffire." (II, 3, C4, 72, p. 270)

[101] „For someone to fulfil works which are performed just with the body is the way and norm of secular people." (II, 29, 3, p. 130)

[102] II, 29, 1, p. 339. The gift of spiritual living „cannot be acquired without the continual reading (of Scripture) in stillness and the reflective search for things hidden, and prayer." (II, 29, 4, p. 131)

[103] II, 29, 3, p. 131

[104] II, 29, 5, p. 131

[105] II, 29, 7, p. 132; „Blessed is that intellect which has been held worthy to be enfolded in continual meditating on God, and is reflective wandering on his mysteries." (II, 29, 9, p. 132)

The spiritual meaning of the Scriptures cannot be grasped but "by grace", thus being able to "perceive the very holy of holies of their mysteries"[106]. The Gospels are reflected in Saint Isaac's thinking and therefore we can find biblical images and patterns in all his homilies: "Tu as caché ton trésor dans notre corps, par le moyen de la grâce qui habite dans la table élevée de tes mystères. Fais-nous voir, Seigneur, notre renouveau, parce que nous t'avons enseveli en nous-mêmes."[107] Christ's treasure hidden in man is nothing else but a deep inner noblesse of "the hidden man of the heart" (*1 Peter* 3: 4), "la beauté spirituelle (déposée) au coeur de notre condition mortelle. Ébranle (en nous) les signes de l'immortalité."[108]

Reading the Scriptures represents a real therapy for the soul: "reading alleviates depression and darkness from a brother during the time spent in his cell, and he (begins) to rejoice and exult in God; the weight of his labors becomes lighter for him, and he finds consolation and receives a conviction of hope and of awareness in his mind."[109]; By "the soul's concern with God" manifested in prayer, lecture, ascesis and many prostrations[110], the monk is a person for whom "the world is crucified, and he unto the world." (*Galatians* 6: 14) having suspended himself on the cross through abandonment of everything" [111].

When the mind searches out the Scriptures "in watchful, well-guarded peace", thanking God for everything and keeping its eyes open to the grace of God, the state of acedia is followed, little by little, by an inexplicable joy, a detachment of thinking from all things in the world; all that we need is patience full of hope in God's help, like the seed fallen under the furrow, which only by shriveling and waiting for the bad time to pass, can expect its fruition: "How blessed is the person who, out of hope for God's grace, has endured the dejectedness which is a hidden trial of the mind's virtue and growth"[112].

Prayer, an authentic "daily liturgy"[113], shall receive form and brightness only accompanied by the reading of Scriptures. Reading and meditating on the meaning of Scriptures illumine our mind and sweetens our heart. "The mysterious words" one can find in "the orchard of Scriptures"[114] become words of prayer, ceaseless remembrance of God. The theme of unceasing prayer recurs insistently in Abba Isaac's *Homilies*. The unceasing remembrance of God purifies our mind and guides our soul towards spiritual vision.

Self-knowledge issues in man "the reconciliation of earth and heaven"[115]. As the Ladder of the Kingdom is hidden in man's soul, it is only the inner meditation that makes man open to communion with God. In this state of inner examination, the soul shall find climbing steps towards "the things of the world-to-be"[116], as they have also been depicted by Saint Apostle Paul (cf. *1 Corinthians* 2: 9).

---

[106] II, 30, 9, p. 132. „For every event, natural being and utterance in this creation there is a Sanctuary and a Holy of Holies." (II, 30, 10, p. 137)

[107] III, 10, 9, p. 123

[108] III, 10, 10, p. 123

[109] II, 33, 1, p. 144

[110] „sweet prostration" (Partea I, 21, 1, p. 418 – ed. Deisis)

[111] II, 30, 5, p. 135; „by means of body and intellect being crucified, he spends his days in life with Christ." (II, 30, 6, p. 135)

[112] II, 34, 3, p. 147. Before Isaac, *akedia*, as an "anchorite sickness" par excellence, had been an essential element in Evagrius Ponticus' description of the eight evil thoughts (cf. *Praktikos* 12).

[113] „Les prières continuelles (sont) une méditation continuelle sur Dieu." (III, 3, 1, p. 41)

[114] I, Epist. IV, p. 500

[115] I, 2, p. 8

[116] I, 2, p. 8

CONCLUSION

From the "ground of passions" to the "valley of purity", the man feeds upon the lecture and meditation on Scriptures, for "the word of God warms the mind"[117], and „(the recitation of the Scriptures) is a fortification of the mind and, principally, a cause of prayer, a helper and a companion of vigils, a light of the mind, a guide on the way."[118] .

The image of holiness is mirrored in the pages of the Scriptures, for, in it, "the faith mingles with behavior"[119]: "Do not approach the mysterious words in the Scriptures without prayer and without asking help from God, saying: Lord, grant me to perceive the power that is in them. Deem prayer as the key to the insight of truth in Scripture."[120]

If "light shows the veracity of things entirely"[121], "the light of the soul consists in constant meditation upon the Scriptures. For they trace in the intellect profitable recollections with regard to watchfulness against the affections and for perpetual abiding with God, in love and in purity of prayer. They trace before us the way which is made peaceful by the steps of the saints."[122]

Knowledge of created beings, of God's creation, is hidden in the Scriptures and the books of the saints who have been taught by God. Therefore, Abba Isaac always sends us to the sources: "Be occupied with the books of God`s providence intensely, without becoming satisfied. They have been composed by holy men and show the aim of His establishing the different species of the world. […] Read in the two Testaments which God has destined for the instruction of the whole world, so that it should be dazzled by the power of His Providence in every generation and be enveloped in wonder"[123]. Reading and deepening the meanings of the Scriptures by meditation are not intellectual exercises, but part of the spiritual life in which psalmody and prayer of tears awaken the senses of the soul to the rousing experience of repentance.

---

[117] I, 6, p. 64
[118] I, 17, p. 92. „The Scriptures are thus made a guide full of hope on the way of repentence, so that man could know the subtle movements prompting to sin." (cf. I, 56, note 317 – Pr. D. Stăniloae, p. 288)
[119] I, 53, p. 254
[120] I, 45, p. 220
[121] I, 27, p. 133
[122] I, 53, pp. 254-255
[123] I, 4, p. 34

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

[1] *** *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, A.J. Wensinck (ed.), Konihlijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Amsterdam, 1923 (ed. a II-a Wiesbaden, 1969).

[2] ALFEYEV, Hilarion, *L'Univers spirituel d'Isaac le Syrien*, SO 76, trad. Dom André Louf, Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 2001.

[3] BLUM, G.G., *Die Geschichte der Begegnung christlich-orientalischer Mystik mit der Mystik des Islams*, Wiesbaden, 2009.

[4] BROCK, Sebastian, *Studies in Syriac christianity: history, literature and theology*, Aldershot, Variorum, 2001.

[5] CHIALÀ, Sabino, *Isaac Sirianul – asceză singuratică şi milă fără sfârşit*, traducere de Maria-Cornelia şi Diac. Ioan I. Ică jr, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2012.

[6] CHIALÀ, Sabino, *La perla dei molti riflessi. La lettura della Scrittura nei Padri Siriaci*, Ed. Qiqajon, Bose, 2014.

[7] CORBU, Hieromonk Agapie, Avva Iosif Hazzaya Văzătorul de Dumnezeu, *Scrieri duhovniceşti*, Editura Sf. Nectarie, Arad, 2019.

[8] ISAAC le Syrien, *Œuvres spirituelles II. 41 Discours récemment découverts*, présentation, traduction et notes par Dom André Louf, o.c.s.o., Éd. de Bellefontaine, 2003.

[9] ISAAC le Syrien, *Œuvres Spirituelles III. D'après un manuscrit récemment découvert*, introduction, traduction et notes par Dom André Louf, o.c.s.o., Éd. de Bellefontaine, 2009.

[10] ISAAC OF NINEVEH (ISAAC THE SYRIAN): "the second part", chapters IV-XLI, trans. Sebastian Brock, CSCO 225, Louvain, Peeters, 1995.

[11] ISAAC Sirul. *Cuvinte către singuratici despre viaţa duhului, taine dumnezeieşti, pronie şi judecată. Partea a II-a recent descoperită*, studiu introductiv şi traducere diac. Ioan I. Ică jr, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2003.

[12] ISAAC Sirul. *Cuvinte către singuratici. Partea a III-a recent descoperită*, cuv. înainte, introd. şi text Sabino Chialà, trad. diac. Ioan I. Ică jr. Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2005.

[13] Sfântul ISAAC SIRUL, *Cuvinte despre sfintele nevoinţe*, traducere, introducere şi note de Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucureşti, 1981.

[14] VESA, Valentin, *Cântând milele Domnului. Scurtă introducere în teologia Sfântului Isaac Sirul,* Alba Iulia, Reîntregirea, 2010.

ICOANA CREDINŢEI
International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research

AIMS

Icoana Credinţei – Icon of Faith. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research (IFIJISR) promotes scientific research into various fields. The Journal has two issues, online (ISSN-L 2393-137X) and in print (ISSN 2501-3386) version, twice a year in January and June. *Icon of Faith. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research* is a journal published and promoted at international level by Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association (IFIASA) in collaborations with members of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Education Sciences, "Valahia" University, Târgoviște, Romania.

This Journal provides a platform for the latest scientific research theological and moral-education, encouraging approaches from different areas and points of view. Therefore, the theme of the journal is, from the beginning, a religious one with a wide opening towards universal cultural values.

SUBJECT AREAS

Icoana Credinţei promotes interdisciplinary approaches to any of the world's religious/spiritual traditions and in various fields:

THEOLOGY; COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN RELIGION AND POLITICS; PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION; PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION; HISTORY OF RELIGIONS; ROLE OF RELIGION IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY;

ABSTRACT AND INDEX

Icoana Credinţei is abstracted and indexed in:

ERIHPLUS https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/erihplus/index
https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/erihplus/periodical/info.action?id=486240
CROSSREF https://search.crossref.org/?q=icoana
CEEOL https://www.ceeol.com/search/journal-detail?id=1398
DOAJ doaj.org/search#.WIswbdJ95dg
SCIPIO http://www.scipio.ro/web/icoana-credintei
OAJI http://oaji.net/journal-detail.html?number=1743
EBSCO host. https://help.ebsco.com/interfaces/EBSCOhost
GOOGLE SCHOLAR https://scholar.google.ro/scholar
EZB://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit/search.
WORLDCAT http://www.worldcat.org/title/icoana-credintei-icon-of-faith/oclc/907452557

PLAGIARISM POLICY

The editorial board is very strict regarding plagiarism. The journal believes that taking the ideas and work of others without giving them credit is unfair and dishonest. The editorial board retains the absolute authority to reject the review process of a submitted manuscript if it is suspect at plagiarism or subject to plagiarism.

HOW TO SUBMIT THE PAPER

The author should submit the paper via e-mail to the executive editor at:
ifiasa@yahoo.com; iconfaith_journal@yahoo.com