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Email: iconfaith_journal@yahoo.com

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Preface

The 17th issue year 2023 of Icon of Faith (Icoana Credinței), International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research (IFIJISR) encompasses a group of articles on various themes, dedicated to the areas of Theology and Christian life.

The commencing paper: *THE CANONICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN ORTHODOX ICONOGRAPHY*, by Rev. Prof. PhD. Cristian GAGU, present the iconography of the Holy Trinity represents an extremely important issue, considering that the icon must fully express the truth of the Church's faith, and current at the same time since in church painting we can easily observe deviations from the canon of orthodoxy.

The subsequent paper, *THE SYMBOL, THE REAL AND THE SACRED IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIRCEA ELIADE (1907-1986)* is signed by Rev. Assoc. Prof. PhD. Alexandru-Corneliu ARION. From the idea that man is a "religious being" (homo religious) follows all the basic concepts and ideas of the history of religions as understood by M. Eliade and which inevitably lead to the postulate of the indestructible, absolute unity of the human spirit. The next paper belonging to Rev. PhD. Marin BUGIULESCU presents the *RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REASON, FAITH AND RELIGIOUS IDEAS*. The connection between reason, faith and religious ideas is a specific issue addressed by ancient philosophy, centered on the structure of religion, mythology, history and the relations of the gods with the world.

Prof. PhD. Roberto Parra DORANTES, signs the paper: *AKRASIA, WEAKNESS OF THE WILL AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD*. The phenomenon of *akrasia* (committing wrong actions while knowing them to be wrong, also known as weakness of the will or incontinence) has puzzled philosophers at least since the time of Socrates, who nevertheless concluded that it is never instantiated in reality, since according to him any person who has knowledge of the good will always act rightly, and thus the only reason people ever commit wrong deeds is ignorance. Rev. Prof. PhD. Leontin POPESCU signs the paper *ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION IN THE CHRISTIAN MORAL EVALUATION*, whose central idea is the ethic issue of organ transplant. Organ transplant medicine faces not only technical problems but also moral and cultural ones. Future medical science must seriously consider the possibility of creating a true culture of solidarity and of the gift that can be expressed through organ transplantation. Prof. PhD. Gheorghe F. ANGHELESCU and Ionuț CHIRCALAN sign the paper: *A BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE VENERATION OF ICONS IN THE FIRST ICONOCLASM*. However, in the 8th and 9th centuries they would be exposed to a fierce reevaluation, through the Byzantine iconoclasm, 726-780, 815-842. The Church would confirm, in the end, both the importance of iconography and the veneration of the icons, arguing it on the bases of Christ incarnation and on the antiquity of the tradition. Lastly, PhD. Student Cosmin Iulian CÎRSTEA, signs the paper: *THE DICHOTOMOUS NATURE OF MAN, PREMISE OF HIS PRIESTLY VOCATION*. The dichotomous nature of man, a prerequisite for his priestly vocation. The fact that man is at the same time a spiritual and material being shows his role as mediator between Creator and creation.

Therefore, the content of the current issue is a good and interesting opportunity to reading research on specific themes presented in the journal book, exhibited in a dynamic Christian tradition and culture, open for a constructive dialogue between Sciences, Religion & Education.

January 2023

Editor Rev. Marian BUGIULESCU

THE CANONICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN ORTHODOX ICONOGRAPHY*

Rev. Prof. PhD. Cristian GAGU,
Univerity “Dunărea de Jos” – Galați,
ROMANIA
Email: pr.cristi_gagu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The iconography of the Holy Trinity represents an extremely important issue, considering that the icon must fully express the truth of the Church's faith, and current at the same time, since in church painting we can easily observe deviations from the canon of orthodoxy. That is precisely why, appealing to both the Orthodox and the Catholic bibliography, the present study aims to bring to the attention of theologians, clergy, iconographers and, why not, the laity alike, in a succinct presentation, the question of iconography and, implicitly, of the iconology of the Holy Trinity, to understand which representations are canonical and which are not, to correctly choose the icon of the Holy Trinity that can be painted and honored, in churches or in the home of every Christian.

Keywords: icon; orthodox iconographic canon; Holy Trinity; Philoxenia of Abraham; Andrei Rublev.

INTRODUCTION

Captives of the “dilemma”¹ according to which the icon represents either the divine nature of Christ or the human nature separated from His Godhead, the iconoclasts denied the possibility of representing the Savior, which is why the Fathers gathered in the 7th ecumenical council in Nicaea, from the year 787, showed that nature is not represented in the icon, but the Person² who hypostasizes and unites the two threads as „unmixed and unchanged, undivided and unseparated”³. Resolving the issue of the iconic representation of the incarnate Son of God, the synodals did not explicitly address the issue of the possibility of the iconic representation of the other two Persons of the Holy Trinity.

However, this did not go unanswered either. In one of the epistles addressed to Emperor Leo III Isaurus (717-741) on the subject of honoring holy icons, Bishop Gregory II of Rome wrote: „Why don't we realize the icon of God the Father? Because the divine

* Revised and added study. In its initial form, substantially different from the one proposed now, this study was published in Romanian, in: *Omagiu Profesorului Emilian Popescu la 90 de ani*, † Varlaam Ploieșteanul și Pr. Emanoil Băbuș (eds.), Ed. Basilica, București, 2020, pp. 758-792.

¹ L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, ediție integrală, prefață de pr. Nikolai Ozolin, traducere de Ciprian Vidican și Elena Derevici, Ed. Renașterea/Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, p. 113; F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, ”Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident de l'époque carolingienne au IV^e Concile du Latran (1215)”, în: *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 37^e année (nr.147), juillet-septembre, 1994, p. 198.

² SFÂNTUL TEODOR STUDITUL, *Tratatul III contra ereticilor*, cap. I, 34, în: *Despre sfintele icoane: contra ereticilor*, traducere, introducere și indici de protos. Teodosie Paraschiv, Ed. Fotini, Galați, 2008, p. 95; SFÂNTUL TEODOR STUDITUL, *Antireticul III*, cap. I, 34, în: *Iisus Hristos prototip al icoanei Sale – tratatele contra iconomahilor*, studiu introductiv și traducere diac. Ioan I. Ică jr., Ed. Deisis, 1994, p. 141.

³ C. J. HEFELE, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, t. III, première partie, l. XVI, chap. II, 322, Paris, 1909, pp. 508-509.

nature cannot be represented. If we had seen the Father as we saw the Son, we would have been able to represent him”⁴. Therefore, the synod showed clearly, albeit indirectly, that the Person of the Father cannot be represented in the icon because He did not manifest Himself in visible form, and the divine nature cannot be represented. It follows, by way of consequence, that it cannot be an icon of the Holy Trinity; or, in any case, not imagined anyway, because, at the time when the Church, gathered in the VII Ecumenical Synod, theologized about the icon, there was an iconographic representation of the Holy Trinity, whose tradition goes down in history to in the era of early Christianity.

1. THE ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY UNTIL THE VII ECUMENICAL SYNOD

The first iconographic theme of the Holy Trinity, called the Triandric Trinity, since the Persons of the Holy Trinity are represented under the image of three men, is based on the episode of the creation of the protoparents Adam and Eve (Gen 1, 26-27) and that of the reception of the Three Guests by Abraham at the Mamre Oak (Gen 18, 1-5). Each of the two biblical episodes has its own iconographic composition, the common elements being the way chosen to represent the Persons of the Holy Trinity, symbolized as three youths or three bearded men, and the era in which they were made, both belonging to the 4th century.

The first compositional type, called *The Creative Trinity*, because it narrates the creation of the progenitors Adam and Eve, has been preserved on the friezes of two sarcophagi, one dating from the first half of the 4th century, now in the Museum of Antiquities in Arles (fig. 1), the other dated two decades later than the first, exhibited in the Pio Cristiano Museum in the Vatican⁵ (fig. 2). Although they show some differences in the arrangement of the characters in the composition, the scene depicted on the two friezes shows three adult men, dressed in Roman clothes. On the frieze of the Arles sarcophagus, two figures have identical faces and wear beards, while the third has the face of a young, beardless Jesus, with whom he appears on the same frieze and in another composition, between adult Adam and Eve, on the left being the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with the serpent coiled upon it. On the Vatican sarcophagus all three men have identical faces. The one in the center of the composition, who sits on a robed throne in majesty, and is turned to his left, with his right hand raised as if speaking, symbolizes God the Father. Behind the throne, symbolizing the Person of the Holy Spirit, is the second man. In front of the throne, with his right hand on the naked head of Eve, slightly turned on his right shoulder to the one who sits on the throne, is the one who symbolizes the Son. The scene, by the arrangement of the three, and especially by the orientation of the gaze of the two men on the side towards the central figure, whose raised hand suggests the expression of a thought, seems to capture the moment of the advice of the Persons of the Holy Trinity regarding the creation of man: „Let us make man after image and after Our likeness [...] And God made man in His own image [...] male and female He made them” (Gen 1, 26-27).

⁴ C. J. HEFELE, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, t. III, deuxième partie, l. XVIII, chap. I, 332, Paris, 1910, p. 665.

⁵ Robin M. JENSEN, "The economy of the Trinity at the Creation of Adam and Eve", in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 7:4, 1999, p. 530; Adelheid HEIMANN, "Trinitas creator mundi", in: *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1938, pp. 43-44.

Although not all researchers agree⁶ that the scene on the two sarcophagi represents the Holy Trinity creating Adam and Eve, the arguments presented by R. Jensen in this regard are indubitable⁷, so it can be stated with certainty that the scene in question narrates the biblical episode of the creation of the forefathers of the human race. As for the doctrine transmitted through this scene, considering the context of the other biblical episodes carved on the friezes of the two sarcophagi, the Birth of the Savior Jesus Christ, which appears in both cases exactly below that of the creation of Adam and Eve, the healings and resurrections performed by the Savior Jesus Christ, with whom he obviously must have an organic unity, is most likely that of the role of the Holy Trinity in the economy of salvation and the restoration of human nature in and through Jesus Christ⁸.

I believe that there remain, however, some unanswered questions regarding the iconological significance of the composition and the birthplace of this iconographic type. The first of them is whether through the way of representation of the one who symbolizes God the Father, the plastic transposition and transmission of heretical subordinationist Arian ideas was pursued or only the highlighting of the Person of the Father from the other two Persons of the Holy Trinity. Considering that on the frieze from Arles the person of the Son is highlighted not only by the gesture of placing his hand on the crest of Eve, like the one in the Vatican, but also by the figure with the face of a young beardless Jesus, and also taking into account the fact that halfway in the 4th century, Arles was the center of Arianism in the West, here the Arian emperor Constantius established his residence, between the fall of 353 and the spring of the following year, the bishop being the Arian Saturninus⁹, we could believe that the goal pursued was the representation and transmission of Arian ideas.

However, given the fact that the Arian heresy was never received in Rome, and it is difficult to believe that the sarcophagus discovered in Rome comes from a workshop in Arles, the most plausible hypothesis is rather the opposite, considering the similarities in regarding the arrangement on the two friezes of the three men who symbolize the Persons of the Holy Trinity, I think the second hypothesis is required, i.e. that of highlighting the Person of the Father from the other two Persons of the Holy Trinity.

The second question concerns the source from which the creators of the two sarcophagi were inspired to symbolize the Persons of the Holy Trinity in the form of three men. R. Jensen, analyzing the similarities between the *Adoration of the Three Magi* scene on which the creation of Adam and Eve is juxtaposed, concludes that the three Magi represented the model for the three persons who symbolize the Holy Trinity¹⁰, a hypothesis also supported by A. Grabar¹¹. I think, however, that it is much more likely that the source of inspiration for the symbolization of the Persons of the Holy Trinity as three men was the biblical episode of the reception of the Three Guests by Abraham. This hypothesis seems to me all the more probable since this episode was the source of another iconographic composition dealing with the theme of the *Triandric Trinity*, in which also the three Persons are symbolized in the form of three similar men. Opining in this sense, I think we implicitly

⁶ L. DeBRUYNE, "L'imposition des mains dans l'art ancien", în: *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, 20 (1943); A. GRABAR, *Christian iconography: A Study of Its Origins*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968.

⁷ R. M. JENSEN, "The economy of the Trinity...", pp. 542-546.

⁸ R. M. JENSEN, "The economy of the Trinity...", pp. 527-528.

⁹ C. J. HEFELE, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, t. II, l. V, 73-76, Paris, 1869, pp. 32-45; Carl L. BECKWITH, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity, from De Fide to De Trinitate*, Oxford university Press, 2008, pp. 9, 30, 45-46.

¹⁰ R. M. JENSEN, "The economy of the Trinity...", pp. 544-545.

¹¹ A. GRABAR, *Christian Iconography:...*, p. 113.

answer the question regarding the place of origin of this iconographic type, because it is hard to believe, if not impossible, that the same iconographic type appeared almost at the same time in two places far from each other the other one. Therefore, this iconographic type most likely appeared in Rome, having as a source of inspiration for the representation of the Persons of the Holy Trinity in the form of three persons the *Filoxenia of Abraham*. As for the source of inspiration for the iconographic scheme, A. Heimann believes that it should be sought in the classical pagan imaginary of the time¹².

Better known as the *Philoxenia of Abraham*, as it is based on the biblical account of the reception of the Three Guests by Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (Gen 18, 1-5), the representation of this biblical episode is considered the oldest icon of the Holy Three. In the *Demonstratio evangelica*, a work written before the year 320, the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea testifies to the existence of a painted image of this biblical episode, which he briefly describes, showing that the angels „who were entertained by Abraham, as represented in the picture, sit one on each side, and He in the midst surpasses them in honour”¹³.

From the account of Eusebius of Caesarea, it is not clear if the image described was in the grove of Mamre, a place honored as sacred and where the Oak under which Abraham met the Three Young Men was still kept, as G. Bunge opines¹⁴, or if he saw it painted elsewhere in the East. Both hypotheses may be equally plausible. Although Eusebius does not specify the way in which the Lord was highlighted so as to illustrate the fact that he “exceeds in honor” the two angels, the information is important, because the representations preserved from the period of the 4th-6th centuries of this theme are all from the West and in the oldest of them, belonging to the 4th century, there is no such particularization of the Lord. Only in the following century did such a highlighting of the Lord appear in the iconography of the theme in the West. We could conclude, thus, that *Philoxenia of Abraham* had two slightly different iconographic representations in the East and in the West in the 4th century and that from the following century the Eastern version influenced this iconographic type in the West by particularizing the Lord.

The oldest representation of the biblical episode of the reception of the three Guests by Abraham that has been preserved is a fresco from a catacomb on the Via Latina (fig. 3), which dates from the first half of the 4th century. In this illustration of *Abraham's Philoxenia* the three Guests are represented as three young men, whose size, gesture and clothing show that they are equal in honor, without any of them being individualized by any detail that suggests which of them is “The Lord” and who are the angels¹⁵.

On the other hand, in a mosaic located in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome (fig. 4), dating from the first half of the 5th century, in which this biblical episode is reproduced in several successive scenes united in the same image, the three young men appear with nimbus, the one in the middle being represented in the upper scene, that of the worship of Abraham, completely enveloped in a mandorla, which separates him from the others and shows him to be “the Lord”. However, in the lower scene, that of sitting at the table, the three young men are no longer distinguished by anything, instead each has a specific gesture, the one on the left raising his arm to bless, the one in the center pointing to

¹² A. HEIMANN, “Trinitas creator mundi”, p. 44.

¹³ EUSEBIUS of Caesarea, *The Proof of the Gospel being the Demonstratio Evangelica*, vol. I, book V, chap. 9, translated by W. J. Ferrar, London-New York, 1920, p. 254.

¹⁴ Gabriel BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, cuvânt înainte și traducere de diac. Ioan I. Ică jr., Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 1996, p. 97.

¹⁵ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, pp. 22-23.

the calf, while the one on the right he points to the three loaves of bread on the table. In this representation, unlike the previous one, in which, apart from the three Guests, only Abraham appeared, with the sacrificial calf next to him, the other symbolic elements of the story also appear, namely the oak, the tent, the bread, the calf¹⁶.

A third representation of the *Filoxenia of Abraham*, dating from the first half of the 6th century, is preserved in the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna. The mosaic in this church also brings together several scenes in a single image, one of which represents the sacrifice of Isaac, which gives the iconographic program a typological character, with an obvious reference to the Eucharistic sacrifice that it imagines¹⁷.

It can be said, therefore, that since the IV-VI centuries, the iconographic representation of the Holy Trinity was well determined and was based on the biblical account of the reception by the patriarch Abraham of the three Guests, the visit of the three men being understood not as „a display of To the Holy Trinity, but a prophetic vision of its mystery”¹⁸. The constitutive elements of the scene are also well defined and appear, with small changes, in all representations, besides the three young men, depicted with nimbus, to indicate their heavenly character, sometimes the one in the middle being individualized with a mandorla, to indicate Him on “the Lord”, representing Abraham, Sarah, their tent, the oak tree, the sacrificial calf and the loaves.

In addition to these typological representations of the Holy Trinity, at the beginning of the 5th century there were already two other symbolic images that referred to the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The first of them is recorded by Saint Paulinus of Nola in *Epistle 32*¹⁹, in which he describes an image in the church of San Felix in Nola. He refers to the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and to the lamb as a symbol of the incarnate Son, without indicating whether the Father’s voice was symbolized in any way. In the 6th century this symbolic image would be completed by adding a hand emerging from a cloud, symbolizing the work of the Father. Such an image, first appearing in the *Gospel of Rabula*, from the year 586, is still preserved in the basilica of Sant’Apollinare in Cllase and in the basilica of San Marco in Rome (9th century)²⁰. The source of this symbolic iconographic type seems to have been the representations of the Baptism of the Savior Jesus Christ in the catacombs of Rome²¹.

¹⁶ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 23.

¹⁷ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 24.

¹⁸ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 20.

¹⁹ SANCTUS PAULINUS NOLANUS, *Epistula XXXII*, 10, in: *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. XXVIII, S. Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani Opera, pars I, *Epistulae*, ex recensione Guilelmi de Hartel, 1894, p. 286: “Pleno coruscet trinitas mysterio: / Stat Christus agno, uox patris caelo / Et per columbam spiritus sanctus fluit. [...] Habente et ipsa trinitate insignia: / Deum reuelat uox paterna et spiritus, / Sanctum fatentur crux et agnus uictimam, / Regnum et triumphum purpura et palma indicant.”; Susan BALDERSTONE, “The Evolution of Trinity Images to the Medieval Period”, în: *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, 13 (2017), pp. 95-96; F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, “Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 186.

²⁰ S. BALDERSTONE, “The Evolution of Trinity Images to the Medieval Period”, p. 96.

²¹ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, “Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 185; S. BALDERSTONE, “The Evolution of Trinity Images to the Medieval Period”, p. 96; Frédérick TRISTAN, *Primele imagini creștine. De la simbol la icoană secolele II-VI*, traducere de Elena Buculei și Ana Boroș, Ed. Meridian, București, 2002, pp. 176-181; Robin JENSEN, “Art”, în Philip F. ESLER (ed.), *The Early Christian World*, volume I-II, Routledge, London & New York, 2000, p. 756; J. STEVENSON, *The Catacombs. Rediscovered monuments of early Christianity*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1978, p. 89.

The second symbolic representation of the Holy Trinity was realized through the image of the *hetoimasia*, a symbol taken over by Christians from the Roman imperial ceremonial. The composition consisted of the image of a throne on the cushion of which the Holy Gospel is placed, behind the throne appearing the Holy Cross in glory, adorned with precious stones, framed by the spear with which the Savior's rib was pierced and the reed with a sponge from which He was given to drink vinegar. The dove is depicted either resting on the Holy Gospel or coming in flight above the throne. In a trinitarian sense, the Throne symbolizes God the Father, the Holy Gospel and the other instruments of the Crucifixion, God the Son incarnate, and the dove, the Holy Spirit²².

2. THE ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY AFTER THE VII ECUMENICAL SYNOD

As evidenced by G. Bunge, the scene of the reception of the Three Guests by Abraham, as it was conceived in the IV-VI centuries, constituted for a long time the almost unchanged model reproduced in the iconography of the Church²³. It was, moreover, the only way in which the mystery of the Holy Trinity could be expressed through forms and colours, in accordance with the biblical revelation and the teaching of the Church about the uncircumscribing and, therefore, about the indescribability of the divine nature.

In the XI-XIII centuries, this type of representation of the Holy Trinity was enriched by the appearance of details that undoubtedly identify "the Lord". Although in the East this icon was called the *Holy Trinity*²⁴, from a formal point of view it represents the "Christological" type, being „an icon of Christ, a distant echo of the Christological interpretation given by early Christianity to chapter 18 of the book of Genesis”²⁵.

In the mosaics in the *Palatine Chapel* (Fig. 5) of the Norman palace in Palermo, Sicily, as well as in the Dome of Monreale (Fig. 6), both dating from the 12th century, the spiritual nature of the Three Youths is indicated by the presence of wings, and the nimbus of the One in the middle has a red edge, the way chosen to designate the "Lord". Also, the Three Youths carry staffs in their hands, in the case of the Palermo chapel, while in the case of the Monreale image only two angels carry staffs, the middle one holding a scroll, this being another way to identify the "Lord". An almost similar representation, dating from the 13th century, appears in the church of San Marco in Venice (Fig. 7)²⁶.

Except for the representation in the catacomb on the Via Latina, in all other representations the three youths/angels are positioned behind the table on which the offerings are presented, standing side by side, with no element to give them unity in these linear compositions. As Alpatov observes, it was only in the San Marco scene that the unity of the three was suggested, by the tilting of the heads of the angels on the side towards the one in the center, but only to a certain extent, as they remained still positioned behind the table in a plane rectilinear²⁷.

If this iconographic type of the *Filoxenia of Abraham* specific to Italy, also called the Byzantine type, since it reflects Constantinopolitan art from the 6th century, does not

²² S. BALDERSTONE, "The Evolution of Trinity Images to the Medieval Period", pp. 104-105; F. TRISTAN, *Primele imagini creștine...*, p. 354.

²³ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 25.

²⁴ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 27.

²⁵ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 71.

²⁶ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 25.

²⁷ Michel ALPATOV, "La «Trinité» dans l'art byzantin et l'icône de Roublev. Études comparatives", în: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 26, no.146, 1927, pp. 154-156.

visualize the unity of the Three, it is visually captured in another iconographic type, specific to the East, called the Oriental type. Thus, if the elements of the representation - Abraham, Sarah, the calf, the richly decorated table, the oak, the rock - are the same in both iconographic types, in the oriental one the three angels are no longer arranged shoulder to shoulder, along one side of the table, as in the Byzantine type, but grouped around it, whether it is semicircular or rectangular.

Along with the particularization of the angel in the center as the Lord, the arrangement of the Three around the table could be a second element specific to the composition reported by Eusebius of Caesarea in the 4th century, which was not taken over in the Byzantine type, but which perpetuated in the Oriental until the 11th century, when its oldest known representations date. Among these, the most famous are the miniature from a *Psalter* at the British Museum, the one from an *Octateuch* conserved at the Vatican, the frescoes from the Tokali churches, from the century 10th, and Çarikli, from the first half of the 11th century, from Göreme, in Cappadocia²⁸ (fig. 8), or the one printed on the coin minted by Mihail Trichas²⁹.

In the late Byzantine period, from this second type of representation of the *Philoxenia of Abraham*, a third one developed, the "trinitarian" type, in which the frontal perspective not only of the two angels on the sides, but also of the one in the center, which is slightly turned towards himself, with his head bowed, he was looking towards the table, the scene giving the impression that the perspective closes in a circle. The angels are distinguished from each other only by gesture and mimicry, the central figure not being separated from the other two except by the symbol of the nimbus in the cross or by the inscription IC XC or O ΩN. For their part, Abraham and Sarah no longer appear in the bent position, bringing their gifts, but standing, among the angels³⁰.

This last type of iconographic representation of the *Philoxenia of Abraham*, spread on the Greek line throughout the Orthodox space, constituted the model of the famous representation of the icon of the *Holy Trinity* or *Troika from the Old Testament* (fig. 9) by the no less famous Russian monk Andrei Rublev³¹.

3. THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF ANDREI RUBLEV

Unlike all the previous representations, in which either the three young men, undifferentiated by anything, were presented as a symbol of the Holy Trinity, or only the angel in the middle was individualized in different ways, to denote the "Lord", Andrei Rublev, „and only he”, as stated by G. Bunge³², wanted to connect each angel with one of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, which, from a theological perspective, meant a new approach, which uses the biblical account from chapter 18 of the book Making only as a pretext.

²⁸ Margarita KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God: Trinity Imagery in Eastern Orthodox Art*, Sofia, 2020 (în bulgară – *Ликът на Бога, изображенията на света Троица в православното изкуство*), pp. 32-33; Diac. Vasile DEMCIUC, *Cappadocia - Istorie, credință, artă și civilizație bizantină*, Ed. Basilica, București, 2020, pp. 178, 114.

²⁹ M. ALPATOV, „La «Trinité» dans l'art byzantin...”, p. 158.

³⁰ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, pp. 29, 71.

³¹ M. ALPATOV, „La «Trinité» dans l'art byzantin...”, p. 174.

³² G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 32.

The three angels are no longer, as in the “trinitarian” type, „three identical figures and interchangeable with each other, [...] but three irreducible and unmistakable persons”³³, both by the play of the hands, by the direction of the eyes, by the arrangement around the table, as well as through the symbolism of the colors of the clothes. Thus, the angel in the center points with his right to the chalice in the middle of the table and, further, to the angel on the left, the angel on the right blesses the chalice, looking towards the angel on the left, who is in front of him, while the angel on the left reaches out to the piece of bread on the table. The biblical background was reduced to the essential symbolic elements, the house, the tree and the rock, Abraham and Sarah not finding their place in the composition.

This is, by far, the best-known iconographic representation of the Holy Trinity, on which renowned theologians³⁴ have learned in an attempt to identify the “key” to the symbolic and theological understanding of this icon, which has been stated to „represent the most complete approximation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity”³⁵ or „the icon that fully expresses the meaning of the appearance of the three angels”³⁶.

Going through even a partial bibliography on this topic highlights the fact that there is no unified interpretation, either from a symbolic or theological point of view, of Andrei Rublev’s *Holy Trinity* icon. Summarizing, Gabriel Bunge notes that, from a theological point of view, the icon can be interpreted as presenting „the timeless mystery of the intratrinitarian relations between the Father, the Son and the Spirit”, that is, the “theological” Trinity, or „the eternal counsel of sending the Son”, i.e. the “oikonomic” Trinity, or „the mystery of the Holy Eucharist and the role of each of the Three divine Persons in this sacramental actualization of the Son’s sacrifice”, i.e. the “liturgical-eucharistic” Trinity³⁷.

In the interpretation of Gabriel Bunge, for whom the identity of the three angels is indispensable for a correct interpretation of the icon³⁸, the angel on the left is the symbol of the Father, the one in the middle is the Son and the one on the right symbolizes the Holy Spirit³⁹. These identifications of the Three Persons are justified, in Bunge’s view, both compositionally, by the location around the table, by the dynamics, by the gestures and by the mimicry of the three angels, as well as symbolically, by the color of the clothes and by the decorative elements behind each Angel.

As for the theological meaning of the icon, G. Bunge, excluding with solid theological arguments the interpretation of the *Trinity* in a “theological” sense, highlights, beyond the “oikonomic” meaning, which is imposed at first glance, a new, pneumatic

³³ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 72.

³⁴ M. ALPATOV, “La «Trinité» dans l’art byzantin...”, pp.150-186; Tomas ŠPIDLÍK, Marko Ivan RUPNIK, *Credință și icoană*, traducere de Ioan Milea, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, pp. 23-35; Daniel ROUSSEAU, *Icoana-lumina Feței Tale*, traducere de Măriuca Alexandrescu, Ed. Sophia, București, 2004, pp. 159-166; Egon SENDLER, *Icoana, chipul nevăzutului: elemente de teologie, tehnică și estetică*, traducere de Ioana Caragiu, Florin Caragiu și monahia Ilie Doinița Teodosia, Ed. Sophia, București, 2005, pp. 77, 108-109; Grigorie KRUG, *Cugetările unui iconograf despre sensul și menirea icoanelor*, traducere Carmen și Florin Caragiu, Adrian Tănăsescu-Vlad, Ed. Sophia, București, 2002, pp. 95-106; Michel QUENOT, *Sfidările icoanei: o altă viziune asupra lumii*, traducere de Dora Mezdrea, Ed. Sophia, București, 2004, pp. 124-129; Constantine CAVARNOS, *Ghid de iconografie bizantină*, traducere de Anca Popescu, Ed. Sophia, București, 2005, p. 162; Lev GILLET, “La signification spirituelle de l’icône de la Sainte Trinité peinte par André Roublev”, în: *Irenikon*, 26, 1963, pp. 133-139.

³⁵ M. QUENOT, *Sfidările icoanei:...*, p. 125.

³⁶ G. KRUG, *Cugetările unui iconograf...*, p. 95.

³⁷ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, pp. 74-75.

³⁸ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 74.

³⁹ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, pp. 81-82.

emphasis, observable in the reverse perspective of the image, the key to interpreting the composition being the Person of the Holy Spirit, towards whom the Son sends with his right hand and towards whom the Father looks. From this perspective, in Bunge's interpretation, Andrei Rublev's *Holy Trinity* icon is rather an icon of the feast of Pentecost⁴⁰.

An interpretation similar in all aspects to that of Gabriel Bunge is found in the monk Grigorie Krug⁴¹ and Michel Quenot⁴². Instead, in Špidlik and Rupnik, the composition is interpreted in the "liturgical-eucharistic" sense, the identification of the three angels being the same⁴³. The "oikonomic" aspect of Rublev's Trinity is also highlighted by Lev Gillet, for whom „the icon therefore evokes the advice of the three divine persons with a view to the salvation of the human race”⁴⁴. The identification of the three angels, however, is different from that of Gabriel Bunge. For Lev Gillet, the angel in the middle is the symbol of the Father, the one on the right symbolizes the Son, and the one on the left the Holy Spirit.

An identification similar to Lev Gillet's of the three angels is also supported by Sorin Dumitrescu. The iconological interpretation that he makes of the famous Rublevian icon, however, is significantly different from that of the theologians mentioned above. According to him, the scriptural source from which Rublev was inspired is not the Old Testament text from *Genesis* (18, 1-5), but the theology of the Holy Apostle Paul from the *Epistle to the Hebrews* regarding the Archpriest of Christ (Heb 9, 11-12; 10, 12). Therefore, in Sorin Dumitrescu's interpretation, the topos of the Rublevian *Troika* is not the Mamre Oak, but the Holy of Holies not made by human hands, into which Christ entered after dying on the Cross, sitting „on the throne of glory together with the Father and the Holy Spirit”, the Father blessing and consecrating the Sacrifice and Resurrection of His Son, an act symbolized by the gesture of blessing that the Angel in the middle makes over the chalice on the table. In Sorin Dumitrescu's view, this would constitute the true meaning of Andrei Rublev's *Troika*⁴⁵. However interesting this interpretation of S. Dumitrescu may be, it cannot be accepted because there is no scriptural or theological basis to justify the symbolic representation, in the form of angels, of the Father and the Holy Spirit „on the throne of glory”, just as the representation of the Son after the Incarnation can no longer be a symbolic one, in the form of an angel, but only with his human form, with which he died and resurrected. Moreover, the symbolic representation of the Savior Jesus Christ was forbidden by canon 82 of the Quinisext synod (691-692), which, even if it expressly refers to the symbol of the lamb, in reality has in mind any symbol referring to Him, as it specifies: „we decree that the figure in human form of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, Christ our God, be henceforth exhibited in images, instead of the ancient lamb - and any other symbol, we conclude – so that all may understand by means of it the depths of the humiliation of the Word of God, and that we may recall to our memory his conversation in the flesh, his passion and salutary death, and his redemption[...]”⁴⁶.

Constantine Cavarnos has a separate and contrary opinion to the one presented above in the interpretation of Andrei Rublev's icon, for whom the omission of some elements that appear in chapter 18 of the book of Creation, such as Abraham and Sarah, „is a

⁴⁰ G. BUNGE, *Icoana Sfintei Treimi a Cuviosului Andrei Rubliov*, p. 84-91.

⁴¹ G. KRUG, *Cugetările unui iconograf...*, pp. 95-106.

⁴² M. QUENOT, *Sfidările icoanei...*, p. 125.

⁴³ T. ŠPIDLÍK, M. I. RUPNIK, *Credință și icoană*, pp. 30-35.

⁴⁴ L. GILLET, „La signification spirituelle de l'icône de la Sainte Trinité...”, p. 136.

⁴⁵ Sorin DUMITRESCU, *Noi și Icoana*, Ed. Anastasia, 2010, pp. 44-46.

⁴⁶ Arhid. Ioan N. FLOCA, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe*, Note și comentarii, Sibiu, ²1993, p. 151.

serious error”, since it „suggests the idea that the Holy Trinity is a group of three angels”⁴⁷. For Cavarnos „the inclusion of all these components is essential to show or remind the viewer that this is only a vision, not a representation of God, according to His real nature”⁴⁸. Cavarnos’ opinion, although it might seem to be slightly exaggerated, is completely correct, since not all exegetes of the icon of the Holy Trinity consider the three angels, whom they identify with one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, as symbols, *typoi*, and not as representations or likenesses of the Three Persons. Beyond the way in which the three angels are identified or interpreted, as *typoi* or likenesses of the Three Persons, the representation of the Holy Trinity under the face of three angels around the table at the Mamre Oak, regardless of which type it belongs to, and the one made by Andrei Rublev in especially, it has become the canonical model to follow in this regard, as one that is in accordance with Revelation and the Church’s teaching of faith.

4. NON-CANONICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The issue of the canonicity of the icon of the Holy Trinity received special attention for the first time in the Orthodox world during the *Synod of the 100 Heads, Stoglav*, held in Moscow in 1551, and was resumed two years later by a synod convened in Moscow⁴⁹, in the context in which serious deviations from the right faith and the revealed truth had already appeared in Orthodox iconography that any iconographic representation must testify to, deviations that appeared as a result of various heterodox influences received indiscriminately from the West. Later, the subject would be taken up again by the *Great Synod of Moscow*, from the year 1666, which also issued an important decision by which it was forbidden to paint God the Father in the various heterodox compositions of the Holy Trinity⁵⁰. The meeting of these synods was necessary because over time not only the canonical image of the Holy Trinity had known some non-canonical variants, but in the entire Orthodox area non-canonical representations of the Holy Trinity had appeared which had become extremely widespread, more popular even than *Abraham’s Philoxenia* or Rublev’s *Troika*.

Well, if in some canonical representations of the Holy Trinity in the form of three angels only the angel in the middle had a cross in a nimbus around his head, over time there appeared some in which all three angels had the cross in a nimbus, which was in equally a heresy and an absurdity, because it was suggested either that there are three Christs, or that the divine nature is passionate. Also, starting from the 9th-10th centuries, in addition to the traditional canonical model, various other representations of the Holy Trinity had appeared, two of which were extremely widespread, namely the one called *Paternity* (fig. 10) and another, known as the *New Testament Trinity, Sintronia*⁵¹ or the *Trinity of the psalter*⁵² (fig. 11). In addition to these, two other non-canonical representations of the Holy Trinity entered the Orthodox iconography, namely the *Throne of Mercy* or the *Throne of Grace* (fig. 12) and the one called by Grimaldi-Hierholtz „enigmatic and monstrous”⁵³, namely the *Tricephalic Trinity* (fig. 13), with the variant *Trifaces Trinity* or *vultus trifrons* (fig. 14), which, however, did not have the same spread and popularity as the first two.

⁴⁷ C. CAVARNOS, *Ghid de iconografie bizantină*, p. 162.

⁴⁸ C. CAVARNOS, *Ghid de iconografie bizantină*, p. 162.

⁴⁹ L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, pp. 263-305; G. KRUG, *Cugetările unui iconograf...*, pp. 69-72.

⁵⁰ L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, pp. 358-360.

⁵¹ L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 391.

⁵² F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 207.

⁵³ R. GRIMALDI-HIERHOLTZ, *Images de la Trinité dans l’art*, Fontainebleau, 1995, pp. 82-83.

4.1. *The origin and antiquity of these non-canonical representations of the Holy Trinity*

The origin and antiquity of these non-canonical representations of the Holy Trinity are topics of controversy for researchers to this day, who attribute them either to the Catholic West or to the Orthodox East, theological, historical and artistic arguments being invoked in favor of each statement. From the studies in which these representations are analyzed, it appears that they originally appeared as illustrations of some scriptural texts from the Psalter or from the Holy Gospels or some liturgical texts from cult books. These representations, which have become so widespread, are part of a much larger number of variants from the X-XIV centuries, which appeared especially in the West following the attempts of miniaturists to illustrate the Holy Trinity, which, however, did not “career” because they remained between the covers of the manuscripts, not becoming subjects for parietal or easel painting.

According to the study published by F. Bloespflug and Y. Załuska, „most autonomous and non-narrative representations of the Holy Trinity can be seen as variations, multiplications and developments of the *Majestas Domini* theme”⁵⁴, that is, of the Christ in majesty theme. Thus, appeared in the manuscripts of the time the so-called Binity or Binity, in different variants, in which next to Christ in majesty appears one of the symbols used for the other Persons of the Holy Trinity, and the Trinity, with its variants, in which either Christ appears in majesty replicated three times, either together with the symbols of the other Persons of the Holy Trinity.

In a first subgroup of the Binity in the composition, Christ appears on the throne, in majesty, above Him being represented either the hand, as a symbol of the Father, or, in a second subgroup, the dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit⁵⁵. There is also a third subgroup, in which Christ appears in a double representation, Christ in majesty or in the form of the Ancient of Days and Christ carrying the Cross or Christ Logos, an iconographic type very widespread in the illustrated Psalters. The earliest known representation of this type in the West appears in the *Utrecht Psalter*, which dates from the end of the 9th century⁵⁶ (fig. 15).

Among the Trinitarian images, a first group appeared through the triple replication of the Christ in majesty theme, images that fit into the *Triandric Trinity* theme. The oldest image of this type illustrates the opening page of the Gospel according to Saint John the Evangelist, in *Grimbald's Gospels*, being made around 1010-1020⁵⁷. Another one, called the *Triandric Creative Trinity* (fig. 16), which illustrated the work *Hortus deliciarum* of Herrad of Landsberg, executed between 1167-1185, today lost, would surprise the advice of the Persons of the Holy Trinity to create the world. A. Heimann classifies this iconographic type as the Byzantine type, since, along with other researchers, he considers it to be of Byzantine origin⁵⁸. The earliest Byzantine miniature with the theme of the *Council of the Holy Trinity* captures the advice of the Holy Trinity to send the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary and

⁵⁴ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, “Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 188.

⁵⁵ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, “Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 194-195.

⁵⁶ Ernst KANTOROWICZ, “The Quinity of Winchester”, in: *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 29, no.2, 1947, p. 75; F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, “Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie”, p. 200, 213-220.

⁵⁷ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, “Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 189.

⁵⁸ A. HEIMANN, “Trinitas creator mundi”, pp. 46-48; E. KANTOROWICZ, “The Quinity of Winchester”, p. 77, nota 25; F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, “Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 236.

was created towards the end of the first half of the 11th century by the monk Jacob Kokkinobaphos to illustrate the homily at the Annunciation⁵⁹ (fig 17).

The source of inspiration for this iconographic type seems to be a pagan one, such a scheme, in which two or three people, represented frontally, share the same throne, being characteristic of Roman imperial art from the 1st-4th centuries. A representation of this type is preserved on a gold medallion, minted in 338, in which Constantine II (337-340), Constans (337-350) and Constantius II (337-361), the sons and successors of Constantine the Great (306-337), sit on the same throne, frontally, in a composition that captures the majesty and imperial equality of the three⁶⁰. Since such a scheme survived in the West until the 7th century in the coins struck by the Germans, Franks and Anglo-Saxons⁶¹, it would perhaps not be improbable to hypothesize that this scheme was taken directly from a model in West, and not from an intermediate Byzantine one.

Two centuries later, a new iconographic type appeared in the West, the *Triandric Eucharistic Trinity*, a composition in which the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, figured with the face of Christ, stand behind the Holy Table, each blessing a chalice. This iconographic theme seems to have been inspired by the visions of the monk Rupert de Deutz, with the difference that in his vision one of the Three Persons, probably the Son, was a young man with royal features, while the other two had the features of very old people⁶². The iconographic type made by the triple replication of the theme *Christ in majesty* survived in Catholic art, without being very widespread, until the 19th century, in the form of a stained glass window, from the 17th century, from the chapel of Saint Philomen of the church of Saint Mary of Paris, and in bas-relief form the 16th-century in Holy Trinity Abbey of Fécamp and the 19th-century in Church of the Holy Trinity in Caen⁶³.

The second group is made up of the Trinity in two medallions, so named because Christ in majesty is flanked on the right by the zoomorphic symbol of the lamb and that of the dove on the left, each of them being inscribed in a circle, which also dates from the twelfth century⁶⁴ (fig. 18).

Obviously, this iconographic type also raises problems of interpretation, since, although it is meant to be an image of the Holy Trinity, in fact it visualizes twice the Son, incarnate, as Christ in majesty, and symbolically, in the form of a lamb, together with the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the Father being absent. Images of this type are therefore a distortion rather than a canonically and dogmatically correct representation of the Holy Trinity. Another trinitarian iconographic type, which is also the only one that does not cause confusion in its interpretation, is the one in which Christ appears in majesty, the dove, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the hand, as a symbol of the Father, coming out of a cloud at the top of the image. Although the earliest image of this type dates from the 10th century, this type also did not survive the 12th century⁶⁵.

⁵⁹ Linardou KALLIRROE, "The Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts Revisited: The Internal Evidence of the Books", in: *Scriptorium*, 61 (2), 2007, pp. 384-407.

⁶⁰ E. KANTOROWICZ, "The Quinity of Winchester", p. 77.

⁶¹ E. KANTOROWICZ, "The Quinity of Winchester", p. 78.

⁶² F. BOESPFLUG, "La vision de la Trinité de Norbert de Xanta et de Rupert de Deutz", în: *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, tome 71, fasc. 2, 1997, pp. 205-229.

⁶³ R. GRIMALDI-HIERHOLTZ, *Images de la Trinité dans l'art*, pp. 38-41.

⁶⁴ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...", pp. 191-193.

⁶⁵ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...", pp. 196-197.

Some of these iconographic types were the basis of the trinitarian types mentioned above, *Paternity*, *Syntronoï*, *Throne of Mercy*, *Tricephalous-Triphrons*, which appeared through the „enrichment” of some variants of the one called Binity, in particular.

4.1.1. *Paternity*. This iconographic type has attracted, and continues to do so, the attention of many researchers, who have not reached a common opinion regarding its origin and antiquity, on the contrary.

Those who argue for the Byzantine origin⁶⁶ of *Paternity* identify the first representation of this type in a miniature in the Vatican codices. gr. 394, fol. 7, which dates from the beginning of the 11th century, and which illustrates the *Ladder* of St. John the Ladder⁶⁷. The source of *Paternity* in the Vatican codices. gr. 394, fol. 7 would be the miniature from Codex 587 of the Dionysius monastery in Athos, which dates from 1059⁶⁸. In this miniature that illustrates the text from John 1, 18, in the letter Θ (theta) of the word θεος (theos-God) the Ancient of Days is depicted holding Christ-Emmanuel on his knees (fig. 19), an image which, through the addition of the dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, would have become the representation of the Holy Trinity of the *Paternity* type. Therefore, according to them, the origin of this composition, which „is closer to the teachings of the Orthodox faith”⁶⁹, should not be sought in the West, its „appearance being the result of an independent process carried out in the East.

As for the cause of the appearance of this type of representation of the Holy Trinity, various hypotheses have been advanced. Some have identified the source of inspiration for this iconographic type in the adoption ritual practiced by pagans in antiquity⁷⁰, a hypothesis that cannot be retained, since, being related to the plan of intratrinitarian relations, it expresses a heresy. Others are of the opinion that the influences of the heretical ideas of the Bogomils⁷¹, from Byzantium of the 10th-12th centuries and later, about the anthropomorphism of God⁷² are what led to the appearance of this iconographic type. Last but not least, there are also researchers who attribute the appearance of this iconographic type to the doctrinal struggle of the Orthodox against the addition of the Filioque, seeing in this image „a visualization of the Orthodox position in this dispute”⁷³.

⁶⁶ H. GERSTINGER, „Über Herkunft und Entwicklung der anthropomorphen byzantinisch-slavischen Trinitätsdarstellungen des sogenannten Syntroni- und Paternitas Typus”, in: *Festschrift W. Sas-Zaloziecky*, Graz, 1956, pp. 78-95; Adelheid HEIMANN, „L’iconographie de la Trinité; Une formule byzantine et son développement en Occident”, in: *L’Art Chrétien*, oct. 1934, pp. 37-59; Ágnes KRIZA, „Pro or contra Filioque? Trinitarian Syntronoï Images at the Crossroads of the Catholic West and the Orthodox East (ca. 1300-1500)”, in: Alice Isabella Sullivan and Maria Alessia Rossi (eds.), *Eclecticism at the Edges: Medieval Art and Architecture at the Crossroads of the Latin, Greek and Slavic Cultural Spheres (c. 1300-c.1550)*, Berlin, Boston: Walter DeGruyer, 2021, p.158; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, pp. 56, 88.

⁶⁷ Adelheid HEIMANN, „L’iconographie de la Trinité”, pp. 39-40; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, p. 88; Á. KRIZA, „Pro or contra Filioque?...”, p.158, n. 6.

⁶⁸ H. GERSTINGER, „Über Herkunft und Entwicklung...”, p. 81; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, pp. 85-86.

⁶⁹ Á. KRIZA, „Pro or contra Filioque?...”, p.158.

⁷⁰ S. A. PAPANICOLAOU, „Essai d’interprétation du thème iconographique de la Paternité dans l’art byzantin”, in: *Cahiers archéologiques*, t. XVIII, 1968, pp. 121-136 la F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 198.

⁷¹ Cu privire la bogomili, a se vedea Steven RUNCIMAN, *Maniheul medieval, studiu asupra ereziei dualiste în Evul Mediu*, traducere de Mihai-D. Grigore și Damian Alexandru Anfile, col. *Byzantium*, Ed. Nemira, București, 2016, pp. 91-127.

⁷² L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, pp. 396-397, 403-404.

⁷³ Á. KRIZA, „Pro or contra Filioque?...”, p. 160.

From a compositional point of view, *Paternity* presents two variants according to the way in which Christ is depicted, with the face of an adult, but much reduced, or as Christ-Emmanuel, the first variant being called Italo-Byzantine, the other, Slavo-Byzantine⁷⁴, and two others variants according to the place where the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the dove, is placed, in the arms of Christ or on the chest of the Father, between the Father and Christ. Specific to the representations of *Paternity* in the Orthodox East is the depiction of the Father in the face of the Ancient of Days, this being one of the fundamental differences from those in the West, in which the Father is depicted with the face of Christ.

Interpreting *Paternity* iconologically, the researchers who affirm the Byzantine origin of this iconographic type believe that, through the compositional arrangement of the Father and the Son and the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the aim was to transmit the teaching about the divinity and the perichoretic unity of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Also, the composition would capture the hypostatic properties of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. The image of the Father, which dominates in size, is understood as expressing the teaching about the monarchy of the Father, who gives birth to the Son, figured near the womb, and proceeds the Holy Spirit⁷⁵. Last but not least, the followers of the Eastern origin of *Paternity* see in the version in which the dove is positioned in the arms of Christ the reflection of the Orthodox teaching about the “shining” of the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son⁷⁶, and in the one in which the dove is positioned between the Father and the Son, on the one about the procession of the Holy Spirit only from the Father⁷⁷.

The opinions of those who support the Byzantine origin of this type of representation are refuted with solid arguments by other researchers⁷⁸. They showed that *Paternity* in the Vatican codices. gr. 394 fol. 7 is the oldest representation of this type in the East, but in the West the representations of this type are „prior to the oldest Byzantine examples”⁷⁹. They referred in this regard to the capital of the cathedral in Bayeux, France, and to a miniature from the oldest copy of the *Utrecht Psalter*, Harley manuscript 603, in the British Library, which dates from the late 10th century⁸⁰. These are the oldest, but they are

⁷⁴ H. GERSTINGER, „Über Herkunft und Entwicklung...”, p. 80.

⁷⁵ Sophia KALOPISSI-VERTI, „Aspects of Byzantine Art after the Recapture of Constantinople (1261-c.1300): Reflections of Imperial Policy, Reactions, Confrontation with the Latins”, in: J.-P. Caillet and F. Joubert, (eds.), *Orient et Occident Méditerranéens au XIIIe siècle: les programmes picturaux*, Paris 2012, pp. 41-64; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, pp. 56-57, 89; Á. KRIZA, „Pro or contra Filioque?”, pp. 160-161.

⁷⁶ The first among the Orthodox theologians who theologized about the “shining” of the Holy Spirit through the Son was the Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory of Cyprus (1283-1289), in: *De processione Spiritus Sancti*, P.G. 142, 269-300; a se vedea, pe această temă, și Olivier CLÉMENT, „Grégoire de Chypre, De l’ekporèse du Saint Esprit”, in: *Istina*, 17 (1972); Vitalien LAURENT, „Les signataires du second synode des Blakernes”, in: *Échos d’Orient*, 146 (1927); in Romanian: Ioan I. ICĂ jr., „Sinodul constantinopolitan din 1285 și învățătura despre Sfântul Duh a patriarhului Grigorie II Cipriotul în contextul controversei asupra lui Filioque”, in: *Mitropolia Ardealului*, anul XXXII, nr. 2, 1987; Pr. Cristian GAGU, *Teologie și umanism în epoca Paleologilor*, Ed. Episcopiei Dunării de Jos, Galați, 2007, pp. 163-169.

⁷⁷ H. GERSTINGER, „Über Herkunft und Entwicklung...”, p. 80; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, p. 90; Kuyumdzhieva adopts Gerstinger’s view, as one that „more precisely covers the meaning of the image”.

⁷⁸ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 197-201; Saška BOGEVSKA, „The Holy Trinity in the Diocese of the Archbishopric of the Ohrid in the second half of the 13th Century”, in: *Patrimonium*, 10(2012), pp. 146-154.

⁷⁹ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 198.

⁸⁰ E. KANTOROWICZ, „The Quinity of Winchester”, p. 75; F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 199; F. BOESPFLUG, „Dieu en Mère? Féminité et

not the only representations from the 10th-12th centuries in the West of this iconographic type. We find this representation in the *Bible* of the Benedictine Abbey of Dijon, from 1130-1140, in the Prague *Psalter* of the Codex Ostroviensis, in a *Gradual* of the monastery of Weingarten, in the capitals of some churches in Spain⁸¹, which shows its popularity in the world catholic

This type would have appeared, therefore, in the Catholic West as an illustration of the scriptural text of the Prologue of the Gospel according to Saint John the Evangelist, especially of the verse „The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father” (Jn 1, 18), and of the one in Psalm 2, 7, „You are my Son, today I have begotten You!”. F.Boespflug and Y.Zaluska believe that, from a compositional point of view, the different variants of *Paternity* are inspired by the models of the *Virgin Platytera*, *Eleusa* or *Nikopeia*⁸². The specificity of this iconographic type in the West is the representation of the Father with the face of Christ and the Son as Christ-Emmanuel. Interpreting this way of representing the Father and the Son, F. Boespflug states that the Father, because he cannot be represented, since „no one has ever seen God” (Jn 1, 18), was represented by Western artists through the face of the incarnate Son, based on the word spoken by Christ Himself to the Holy Apostle Philip, „He who has seen Me has seen the Father [...] I am in the Father and the Father in Me [...]” (Jn 14, 9 -11), and the Son, as Emmanuel⁸³.

Considering that Boespflug concludes, following the analysis made of this iconographic type, that „the Byzantine origin of *Paternity* is still not demonstrated”⁸⁴, and that rather the evidence converges towards affirming its Catholic origin, also taking into account the particularity of the Father’s figure in the image of Christ, it follows that it is much more likely that the Byzantines borrowed this iconographic type from the West⁸⁵ and replaced the representation of the Father in the face of Christ with the one in which he is figured as the Ancient of Days.

4.1.2. *Synthronoi*. The foundation of the second type of the trinity representation, the *Synthronoi* or *Trinity of the Psalter*, resides, according to the researchers, in the interpretation of Psalm 109, v.1, „The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand until I put the enemies You make a bed for Your feet”, which, by the way, he illustrates very frequently in the *Psalter*, which is why the composition has been called by some researchers the *Trinity of the Psalter*. From a scriptural point of view, this type also illustrates the text from the *Gospel* according to the Saint Evangelist Mark, which relates the Ascension of the Savior Jesus Christ and the sitting at the right hand of the Father (Mk 16, 19), as well as the vision of Saint Archdeacon Stephen before being stoned (Acts 7, 55)⁸⁶.

This theme was illustrated in the *Psalter* in both the West and the East, but the differences are essential in how the composition was designed to faithfully express the doctrine of the Holy Trinity specific to each Church.

maternité de la figure de Dieu le Père dans l’art médiéval d’occident (XI^e - XV^e siècle)”, în: *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 83/1, 2009, p. 24.

⁸¹ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 200-201; F. BOESPFLUG, „Dieu en Mère?”, pp. 24-29.

⁸² F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 199-200.

⁸³ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 187-188, 200-201.

⁸⁴ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 198.

⁸⁵ S. BOGEVSKA, „The Holy Trinity in the Diocese of the Archbishopric of the Ohrid...”, pp.146-154.

⁸⁶ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 209.

In the Catholic West the oldest illustration of Psalm 109, v.1 appears in the *Utrecht Psalter*, which dates from the 9th century, in the form of a duality of the Father, figured, as in other cases, with the face of Christ, and of the Son, figured also like Christ, but distinguished from the Father by the cruciform nimbus, at the feet of which are Judas and Arius. The representation created confusion among researchers, some considering that Christ is represented in the icon in a double pose, of glory, the Christ of glory, and of humility, the Christ of history, and that the two poses personify the two natures, divine and human⁸⁷. From a theological point of view, as Kantorowicz also noted, this iconographic type illustrates Nestorian Christology⁸⁸.

The Binity, which in the 10th-12th centuries became the usual illustration of verse 1 of Psalm 109 in the Western Psalters⁸⁹, formed the basis for the *Synthronoi* or *Trinity of the Psalter*. First, for the first time in *Roda's Bible*, executed in the first half of the 11th century, the representation of the Father with the face of Christ was replaced within the Binity with the image of the Ancient of Days⁹⁰. The next step was taken in the same period by introducing into the composition the dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, positioned between the Father and the Son to symbolize the procession *ab utroque*⁹¹. The first preserved image of the Syntronia, however, adorns not a manuscript of any *Psalter*, but Godwin's seal⁹². After the 11th century, the number of psalters and Catholic worship books that contain the representation of the Holy Trinity according to this compositional scheme of the *Synthronoi* or very close to it is quite large. Interestingly, most of these representations come from the Anglo-Saxon world.

Unlike the Catholic West, in the Orthodox East God the Father was symbolized either by the right hand that blesses the Son, on which the Holy Spirit descends, in the form of three rays, as in the *Hludov Psalter*, or by the *Throne of hetoimasia*, which emphasizes transcendence absolute of God, as in the 11th century psalter preserved in the Library of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the codices ms. Taphou 53⁹³.

Starting from the 14th century, however, *Synthronoi* also entered Orthodox iconography, first in the form of a miniature, and then as a wall and easel painting. The reason for borrowing this iconographic type from Catholic art would lie in the theological disputes between East and West, especially on the subject of the Filioque. A. Kriza even states that „Orthodox painters borrowed this Western iconographic type to challenge it: the choice served as a sign or visual reference to visually identify the subject of the polemic”⁹⁴. It is certain that if after the twelfth century in Western iconography the dove, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, is positioned between the Father and the Son, whose mouth it touches with its wings, to symbolize the procession *ab utroque*, in Eastern iconography the positioning of

⁸⁷ E. KANTOROWICZ, „The Quinity of Winchester”, pp. 76, 79.

⁸⁸ E. KANTOROWICZ, „The Quinity of Winchester”, p. 81.

⁸⁹ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 213-226.

⁹⁰ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 224-225.

⁹¹ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 232-234; Á. KRIZA, „Pro or contra Filioque?...”, p. 158.

⁹² F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 227.

⁹³ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 211-212, 228; S. BALDERSTONE, „The Evolution of Trinity Images to the Medieval Period”, pp. 104-105.

⁹⁴ Á. KRIZA, „Pro or contra Filioque?”, p. 174; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, p. 102, states that in East the scheme was „completely reworked”.

the dove was changed, to symbolize the teaching of the Orthodox faith about the Holy Spirit proceeding only from the Father and “resting” in the Son. Thus, in some compositions the dove is positioned either on the right hand raised as a sign of the Father’s blessing, with its wings folded and its head turned towards the Son, as in the church of St. Nicholas in Tzortza, Kastoria, or equidistant above the Father and the Son, but always turned towards the Son, as in most such representations in the Orthodox space, to symbolize the procession from the Father and the “rest” in the Son⁹⁵.

The anti-filioquist intentionality impregnated in this iconographic type in the Orthodox space would be even more evident in the *Synthronoi* preserved in the Benaki museum in Athens, an icon executed around the year 1500. The particularity of this icon consists in the presence, on one side and the other of the iconographic scheme, of the saints hymnographers Cosmas and Anastasius, holding scrolls inscribed with anti-Filioquist trinitarian hymns. On the scroll of Cosmas it can be read: „I glorify the Son from the Father and the Spirit, as from the sun, the light and the ray; but on the Son after the birth, because there is also a birth, and on the Spirit after the exit [procession], because there is also an exit [procession]; on the divine Trinity that is together without beginning, Whom all creation worships” (*Triodion*, Glory at the 4th Canticle from the Matins of the Sunday of the Last Judgment), and on that of Anastasios: „And the births of the one without beginning and the procession I worship: the Father, the One who gave birth, I glorify the Son who was born, I praise the Holy Spirit, the One who shines together with the Father and the Son” (*Triodion*, Glory to the Beatitudes, Canon of Saint Andrew the Critean, Thursday in the Vth week from Lent)⁹⁶. Although, as it emerges from the studies on this trinitarian iconological type, it would seem that in the Orthodox environment it transmitted an anti-filioquist and, therefore, anti-Latin message, which would explain its spread after the 15th century throughout the Orthodox area, however, the Orthodox Church banned the *Synthronoi* or *Trinity of the psalter* in 1776, in a synod held in Constantinople under the pastorate of Patriarch Sophronius II (1774-1780), the argument being that „this alleged icon of the Holy Trinity is an innovation”, which „entered the Orthodox Church through the Latins”⁹⁷. Even if this synodal decision was not respected everywhere and by all the Orthodox, be they painters, founders or donors, the argument invoked by the Constantinople Synod - Latin innovation - refutes, I think, without right of appeal, all the statements of contemporary researchers who have attributed to this iconographic scheme an assumed anti-Latin character.

4.1.3 Throne of mercy-Gnadenstuhl. In this iconographic type, God the Father in majesty rests between his calves and supports with both hands the cross on which His incarnate Son is crucified, which he seems to present to the viewer, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove is positioned on the Father’s chest, in the vertical axis of the cross. This composition became the most popular image of the Holy Trinity in the Catholic Church between the 13th and 16th centuries, with Catholics calling it simply the Holy Trinity.

From one of the writings of the Latin liturgist Sicard de Cremona (1160-1215), it appears that this iconographic type was born from the juxtaposition in some Catholic Liturgies from the twelfth century of the theme of *Majesty*, in which the place of Christ was

⁹⁵ Á. KRIZA, “Pro or contra Filioque?”, pp. 164-167.

⁹⁶ Á. KRIZA, “Pro or contra Filioque?”, pp. 168-169.

⁹⁷ Sergius MACRAIOS, *Ecclesiastical History*. In: Konstantin SATHAS, *Bibliotheca graeca medii aevi*, vol. III, Venetia, 1872, p. 317; L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 393, correctly gives the name of the Patriarch Sophronius II, but the year is wrongly indicated as 1176, and not 1776, when the Constantinople synod was convened to put an end to „the controversy of the alms”

taken by the Father, figured as the Ancient of Days, with that of the *Crucifixion*⁹⁸. However, the earliest such image is not a manuscript miniature, but a late 11th-century fresco in a church in Norfolk, England, and appears not in a Eucharistic context, but in a scene of the *Last Judgment*⁹⁹. The oldest miniatures of this type adorn the *Cambrai Missal* (fig. 20) and the *Perpignan Missal*, both of which belong to the twelfth century. Some compositions of this type visually convey the Catholic dogma of procession *ab utroque*, as is the case with the one in the *Cambrai Missal* in which the wings of the dove touch both the mouth of the Father and that of the Son¹⁰⁰. In the Orthodox world, this new Catholic model entered only towards the end of the 14th century, more precisely in the years 1380-1381, in the wall painting of the church of the Holy Virgin in Roustika, Crete. Following the Cretan model, two other representations of this iconographic type were made in the churches of Holy Cross, at the end of the 15th century, and Saint Irina, in the 16th century, in Cyprus¹⁰¹.

If in the Balkans and in the Romanian Countries this iconographic type was not successful, it instead became very popular in Russian Orthodoxy, starting from the 16th century. Those who brought this iconographic type to Russia were the painters from Pskov who were called to paint the Annunciation cathedral, rebuilt by Ivan IV the Terrible (1533-1584) after the fire that destroyed Moscow in 1547. They brought with them also some innovations that had made their way into the School of Pskov under the influx of Catholic religious art that had influenced the master painters of this city on the border of Russia with the Western world. Like *Syntronoï*, the *Throne of Mercy*, called by the Russians the *Crucifixion in the bosom of the Father*, was painted by them on the famous four-part icon intended for the iconostasis of the Moscow cathedral, attracting the attention of the deacon Ivan Viskovatâi, who contested the representation of the Father as the Ancient of Days¹⁰². Unfortunately, the attitude of Metropolitan Macarie and the Russian synodals in the dispute with the deacon Viskovatâi, who supported the representation of the Father with the ancient face on the basis of church custom and the erroneous interpretation of the Old Testament messianic prophecies, led to the spread of these iconographic types in Russia. From there, *Syntronoï* penetrated into other Orthodox countries, such as Moldova and Bulgaria, but not the *Throne of mercy*, however, which did not penetrate these Orthodox areas, remaining an iconographic type specific to Russian Orthodoxy.

4.1.4. Tricephalic Trinity. The fourth non-canonical iconographic type of the Holy Trinity present in the Orthodox space is the *Tricephalic Trinity*, with the version of the *Three-faced Trinity* or *Trifrons Trinity*. And regarding the origin of this iconographic type there are divergences among researchers. While most of them affirm its Western origin, there are also some who opine that it is of Byzantine origin and that in the East the image would have appeared and evolved independently from the West¹⁰³.

⁹⁸ Á. KRIZA, "The Russian Gnadenstuhl". in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 29 (2016), p. 102 ; F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...", pp. 204-205.

⁹⁹ John MUNNS, *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Normand England*, The Boydell Press, 2021, pp. 46-49; Á. KRIZA, "The Russian Gnadenstuhl", p. 96.

¹⁰⁰ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident...", p. 207.

¹⁰¹ M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, pp. 145-146.

¹⁰² „It is not appropriate to represent the unseen Deity”, wrote Viskovatâi in one of his writings addressed to the Synod: L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 285.

¹⁰³ M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, "The three-headed Angel and the three-headed Christ", in: *Laudator Temporis Acti. Studia in Memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, vol. II, Ius, Imperium, Potestas, Litterae, Ars et Archaeologia, curavit I. A. Biliarsky, Serdicae 2018, pp. 498-523; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, pp.120-137.

The circumstances surrounding the association of the tricephalic type with the Holy Trinity in the West are not very clear, especially since it was originally associated with the devil¹⁰⁴. According to the most widespread theory, „Trinitarian tricephalism arose through the Christianization of a mythological figure who had the merit, in the eyes of artists and theologians, of solving the artistically impossible problem of «three in one»”¹⁰⁵. It is certain that, under the influence of the Carolingian renaissance, the West took over the gryls images from the Greco-Roman glyptic tradition, using them in miniatures, on the friezes and capitals of cathedrals, either to represent Time, Wisdom or Philosophy, or the devil. The first associations of tricephalic images with the Holy Trinity appeared as early as the 12th century, such a tricephalic gryl, accompanied by the text *Caput nostrum trinitas est*, adorning the ring of Archbishop Roger of York (1154), while another, with the inscription *Trinitatis imago*, appears in the ring seal of Henry Lancaster Earl of Derby on the deed to Thomas Wake¹⁰⁶.

Another 12th-century representation of this tricephalic type, which researchers interpret as referring to the Holy Trinity, is carved in the capital of the church of the monastery of Santa Maria d’Alquezar, in Aragon (fig. 21). Inscribed in a mandorla, the image shows a three-headed figure holding a man with his left hand, while touching his face with his right, as if to breathe life into him, which is why it has been said to represent the *Creative Trinity*. The image is considered „a possible and even probable” representation of the Holy Trinity¹⁰⁷. The oldest undoubted representation of this kind of the Holy Trinity dates from the second half of the 13th century and appears in a Bible made in England, preserved today in St. John’s College, Ms. K 26. In the miniature depicting the biblical episode of the reception of the Three Guests (fig. 22), Abraham appears prostrate before a tricephalus, in flagrant contradiction with the scriptural text, which clearly speaks of the presence of three men¹⁰⁸. As for the *vultus trifrons* type, it seems that the source of inspiration was one of the representations of Prudence (fig. 23), with its three qualities, *memoria*, *intelligentia* and *providentia*, through which it rules time, with its categories, *praeteritum*, *praesens* and *futurum*¹⁰⁹. After Petrarch brought it back to attention in 1338, the theme of *Prudence* adorned some churches in the West starting from the 14th century¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁴ F. BOESPFLUG, „Le diable et la trinité tricéphales. A propos d’une pseudo-«visione de la Trinité» advenue à une novice de saint Norbert de Xanten”, in: *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, tome 72, fascicule 2, 1998, pp. 166-169; Jurgis BALTRUSAITIS, *Evul mediu fantastic*, traducere de Valentina Grigorescu, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1975, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁵ Raffaele PETTAZZONI, „The Pagan Origin of the Three-Headed Representation of the Christian Trinity”, in: *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, IX, London, 1946, pp. 135-151; F. BOESPFLUG, „Le diable et la trinité tricéphales...”, 169; J. BALTRUSAITIS, *Evul mediu fantastic*, pp. 19-20, lists the various pagan deities from the Greco-Roman religions that were represented with two or three faces or heads, dicephals or tricephals, biphrons or triphrons.

¹⁰⁶ J. BALTRUSAITIS, *Evul mediu fantastic*, p. 30; F. BOESPFLUG, „Le diable et la trinité tricéphales...”, p.170.

¹⁰⁷ F. BOESPFLUG, „Le diable et la trinité tricéphales...”, p. 171.

¹⁰⁸ F. BOESPFLUG, „Le diable et la trinité tricéphales...”, p. 171.

¹⁰⁹ Erwin PANOFKY, „Tabloul lui Tișian «Alegoria Prudenței». Un postscriptum”, în: *Artă și semnificație*, traducere de Ștefan Stoenescu, Ed. Meridiane, București, 1980, pp. 202-203; J. BALTRUSAITIS, *Evul mediu fantastic*, pp. 29-30; Nicolae SABĂU, „Între Occident și Orient. «Sfânta Troiță într-un trup» și «vultus trifrons», în câteva exemple ale picturii religioase transilvănene”, în: *Studia UBB Historia Artium*, LXII, 1, 2017, p. 22.

¹¹⁰ E. PANOFKY, „Tabloul lui Tișian «Alegoria Prudenței»...”, pp. 208-219.

Another source for the trinitarian three-headed type seems to have been the image of the god Janus, the two-faced one, with one facing the past and the other looking into the future, to which was added a third, symbolizing the present¹¹¹. Such a symbolization of the Holy Trinity, in the form of a bifrons with wings, these symbolizing the Holy Spirit, whose two faces symbolize one the Father and the other the Son, appears in the form of a miniature from the *Hamilton Bible*, produced in the workshops of the School of Naples and dating from the mid-14th century¹¹². Also, the representatives of the School of Naples are the authors of the fresco in the church of *Santa Croce Andria*, in which the Father and the Son are depicted in the form of a dicephalus in majesty and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove sitting on the shoulder next to the Father's head. An image similar to this is preserved in the church of *Saint George* in Omorphokklesia, near Kastoria. From a chronological point of view, the one in the church of *Saint George* precedes the one in Naples by almost a century, which is why A. Heimann states that the source for this "fusion" is the ancient classical models taken over in the West through Byzantine art¹¹³. The arrangement of the symbol of the Father in the middle, between that of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit, would express the Orthodox teaching about the procession of the Holy Spirit only from the Father, which would be an additional argument in favor of the Byzantine origin of the image. S. Bogevska¹¹⁴, on the contrary, is of the opinion that the source of inspiration for the three-headed trinitarian type should be sought in the West, especially since the oldest representations of this type belong to Western art. This type didn't make a career, unlike the other one. The Catholic Church condemned this iconographic type only in 1628, Pope Urban VIII pronouncing a solemn condemnation in this regard¹¹⁵, which did not stop its spread even after this date, which is why Pope Benedict XIV felt compelled to ban it again in 1745¹¹⁶. Although the oldest tricephalic representations of the Holy Trinity belong to the West, dating from the 12th century, there are researchers¹¹⁷ who state that Byzantine art created its own tricephalic iconographic type, „radically different” from the Western one, the fundamental difference from it consisting in the representation of the Father as the Ancient of Days¹¹⁸.

Beyond this common view, opinions differ as to the origin of this iconographic type and the cause that led to its appearance in Byzantium. Radoslav Grujić, who paid special attention to the presence of this iconographic type in the space of the former Yugoslavia during the 14th-18th centuries, stated that the appearance of the tricephalic type in the Orthodox East must be seen as a reaction against the Bogomil heresy, which denied the unity

¹¹¹ J. BALTRUSAITIS, *Evul mediu fantastic*, p. 29.

¹¹² A. HEIMANN, "Trinitas creator mundi", p. 48, pl. 6a.

¹¹³ A. HEIMANN, "Trinitas creator mundi", p. 48.

¹¹⁴ S. BOGEVSKA, "The Holy Trinity in the Diocese of the Archbishopric of the Ohrid...", p. 156.

¹¹⁵ R. GRIMALDI-HIERHOLTZ, *Images de la Trinité dans l'art*, p. 83; J. BALTRUSAITIS, *Evul mediu fantastic*, p. 31.

¹¹⁶ F. BOESPFLUG, *Dio nell'arte. Sollicitudini nostrae di Benedetto XIV*, Marietti, Casale Monferro, 1986, pp. 15-51; N. SABĂU, "Între Occident și Orient...", p. 16.

¹¹⁷ M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, "The three-headed Angel...", p. 516; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, 136; Radoslav GRUJIĆ, "Ikonografski motiv sličan induskom Trimurtiu u staroj srpskoj likovnoj umetnosti", in: *Tkalčićev zbornik*, I, Zagreb, 1955; Sreten PETKOVIĆ, *Зидно сликарство на подручју Пећке патријаршије: 1557–1614*, Novi Sad, 1965; L. M. EVSEEVA, "Две символические композиции в росписи XIV в. монастыря Зарзма", in: *Византийский временник*, 43 (1982), pp. 134-146.

¹¹⁸ M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, "The three-headed Angel...", p. 504; M. KUYUMDZHIEVA, *The Face of God...*, p. 125.

of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity¹¹⁹. This hypothesis was reconsidered by Sreten Petković. Considering that during the 17th-18th centuries, when this type of image became very widespread in the Orthodox space, Bogomilism no longer represented a problem for the Church, he advanced the hypothesis that the appearance of the tricephalic type is due to the painters' desire to expose in images the dogma of the Holy Trinity as understood by ignorant Christians¹²⁰.

As for the source of inspiration for the tricephalic iconographic type in Byzantium, Grujić believes that this would be the iconographic theme of *Abraham's Hospitality*¹²¹, a hypothesis also embraced by other researchers. His statement, however, links the Byzantine tricephalic type, at least in terms of the source of inspiration, to that of the Bible made in England in the 13th century, preserved at St. John's College, Ms. K 26, which reproduces this very biblical episode. Although those who support the Byzantine origin and the independent evolution in the East of the tricephalic iconographic type from that of the West present some arguments in favour of this view, it is difficult to believe that the same iconographic type, having the same source of inspiration, appeared independently in East a short distance after West. The Western origin and influence of this tricephalic iconographic type for the Eastern one remains plausible, even if for now it cannot be demonstrated with certainty.

4.2. The heretical theological content of these representations of the Holy Trinity

The non-canonical representations of the Holy Trinity, although they spread throughout the Orthodox area starting from the 11th-12th centuries, were not analyzed from a doctrinal point of view by the Orthodox Church until the 16th century. The issue of the canonicity of these representations was addressed first by the *Stoglav* synod, from 1547, and then by the Moscow synod (1553-1554), being taken up again by the *Great Moscow synod*, from 1666. Even so, they have not all heretical iconographic types were analyzed, but only *Paternity*, and the synod did not proceed with the judgment to the end, contenting itself with stating that in this representation an impermissible mixture of the intratrinitarian or theological plan was made with the oikonomic one¹²², or, in other words, that what was wanted was the reproduction of the intra-trinitarian relations, the birth of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father from eternity, by appealing to the oikonomic plan, the Son being represented, according to the oikonomic plan, as the baby Emmanuel, and the Holy Spirit as a dove, while the Father appears with an anthropomorphic face by misinterpreting the prophetic visions.

This so-called icon of the Holy Trinity expresses no less than three Trinitarian heresies. The introduction of the temporal category into the theological plan of intra-trinitarian relations by representing the Father as an old man and the Son as a baby induces the idea that there was a time when God the Father did not have His Son, so He was not the Father¹²³, and this is not other than Arius' heresy, Arianism, condemned at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325. Secondly, the fact that the image of the dove, in which the Holy Spirit is represented, which is only one of His modes of oikonomic manifestation, cannot capture „the fullness of His Hypostatic dignity” and „cannot convey a glory equal to

¹¹⁹ R. GRUJIĆ, „Ikonografski motiv sličan...”, pp. 106-107.

¹²⁰ S. PETKOVIĆ, *Зидно сликарство...*, pp. 73-75.

¹²¹ R. GRUJIĆ, „Ikonografski motiv sličan...”, p. 103.

¹²² L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, pp. 373-376.

¹²³ L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 374.

that of the representation To the Father and the Son”, as the monk Gregory Krug¹²⁴ rightly observes, induces the idea of the pneumatomachian heresy, fought by the Second Ecumenical Synod in Constantinople, from the year 381.

Also, the way in which the Three Persons are represented, the Holy Spirit in the bosom of the Son and the Son in that of the Father, suggests the Catholic doctrine Filioque, meaning the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and from the Son. In some variants of the *Paternity* icon, the Holy Spirit is represented between the Father and the Son, some researchers seeing in this composition an attempt to counteract the Catholic propaganda about the procession of the Holy Spirit and from the Son¹²⁵. Finally, this type of images introduces anthropomorphism into the bosom of the Holy Trinity¹²⁶.

For the Catholic theologian Egon Sendler, the representation of the Holy Trinity in the form of *Paternity* does not raise any doctrinal problem, on the contrary, he believes that „it shows a later evolution, which departs from the biblical tradition to represent the divine persons and the way in which they originate from one another: purely theological conception”¹²⁷. Interpreting this representation of the Holy Trinity in a theological sense, Sendler sins precisely by the fact that he resorts to the mixture of the two planes, theological and oikonomic. In order to argue the theological meaning of this type of representation of the Holy Trinity, Sendler cited the irmos of the second canon of the fourth canticle from the Matins of Pentecost, in which reference is made to the oikonomic sending of the Holy Spirit by the Son¹²⁸, which he invoked as a proof of the procession of the Holy Spirit and through the Son¹²⁹, thus following the same confusion or mixing of plans.

Since *Paternity* differs from *Syntronoï* only from the point of view of composition, of the arrangement of the Three Persons in the composition, not of the manner of their representation, the latter type expresses the same heresies too. Theologians, and not only the Orthodox ones, but also the Catholic ones, have particularly shown that these two types of representation of the Holy Trinity visualize the Catholic doctrine Filioque¹³⁰, Constantine Cavarinos even considering them as means of spreading this doctrine¹³¹.

F. Boespflug observes, in this sense, that in these two types of representation of the Holy Trinity, „according to all appearances this arrangement was dictated to the artists by the concern to visually satisfy the exigencies of the Filioque doctrine”¹³² (fig. 24) and that „plastic expression is more direct and striking than all verbal rhetoric: in this sense, the image is at once silent and reveals more than a speech”¹³³.

¹²⁴ G. KRUG, *Cugetările unui iconograf...*, p. 79.

¹²⁵ L. S. RETKOVSKAIA, „Despre apariția și dezvoltarea compoziției «Paternitatea» în arta rusă”, în *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo XV-XVI vecov*, Moscova, 1963 la L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 401, nota 79.

¹²⁶ L. USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 374.

¹²⁷ E. SENDLER, *Icoana, chipul nevăzutului...*, p. 77.

¹²⁸ „Monarch of monarchs, Alone from the Alone, / Word issuing from the Father who has no cause, / As Benefactor you have unerringly sent out / To the Apostles your Spirit, equal in strength, / As they sing ‘Glory to your might, O Lord!’ ”, *Penticostar*, Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1999, p. 321.

¹²⁹ E. SENDLER, *Icoana, chipul nevăzutului...*, pp. 77-78.

¹³⁰ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, pp. 207, 230.

¹³¹ C. CAVARNOS, *Ghid de iconografie bizantină*, pp. 163-164.

¹³² F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 207.

¹³³ F. BOESPFLUG, Y. ZAŁUSKA, „Le dogme trinitaire et l’essor de son iconographie en Occident...”, p. 220.

CONCLUSION

The causes of the appearance of „these meaningless images” of the Holy Trinity were, therefore, the loss of the ontological link between word and image, on the one hand, and, on the other, the departure from the patristic tradition, which led to the loss of the theological criterion with regarding what is and what is not representable in art, i.e. the perception of the face, as well as regarding how the sacred should be represented¹³⁴.

This mutation, which represents a fall from the right faith, occurred as a result of doctrinal innovations in the theology of the Catholic Church - Filioque, the theory of satisfaction, and liturgical ones, on the one hand, and, on the other, freedom of expression on the which the painters in the West assumed, a freedom that went as far as taking over some pagan images and adapting them, totally wrong, of course, to the mystery of the Holy Trinity. These deviations from the right faith, which Western sacred art has transposed into images, become vehicles for transmitting the wrong, heretical teachings that it visualizes, have also penetrated the space of Eastern Orthodoxy either as a result of some influences of Catholic theology, or of Western sacred art, and although the Orthodox Church officially rejected them, the effects of these influences can be seen to this day, some gaining the status of the norm in Eastern sacred art.

The normative status in Eastern sacred art obtained by some representations of the Holy Trinity, such as the *Syntronoï*, by itself or in compositions, *Paternity* and the *Throne of grace*, or of God the Father in the image of the Ancient of Days, consecrated even by the herminia of Byzantine painting, do not constitute by no means an argument in favour of their perpetuation, but we must return to the canonical norm and to the old tradition of the Church, according to which the only representation of the Holy Trinity in accordance with the revealed truth and the teaching of the Orthodox faith is the *Philoxeny of Abraham*.

The return to the canonical norm and its observance is imperatively necessary because, as a Catholic theologian very well summarizes the consequences of the deviation from this norm, „the visible representation of a fact, which by being is invisible, is for the theology of the icon not only madness, but also heresy and blasphemy: because this means an arbitrary completion of the Revelation and the divine oikonomia, and in this case, in moreover, it is also a heresy that supports the incarnation of the Father and the Holy Spirit”¹³⁵.

¹³⁴ L.USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, pp. 406-407.

¹³⁵ H. J. SCHULZ, „Die Hollenfahrt als Anastasis”, în: *Zeitschrift fur katolische Theologie*, 81, vol. I, 1959, p. 12 la L.USPENSKY, *Teologia icoanei*, p. 391.

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THE SYMBOL, THE REAL AND THE SACRED IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIRCEA ELIADE (1907-1986)¹

Rev. PhD. Alexandru-Corneliu ARION,

Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology and Sciences of Education,
“Valahia” University of Târgoviște,
ROMANIA

Email: alexcoarion@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

From the idea that man is a “religious being” (homo religious) follows all the basic concepts and ideas of the history of religions as understood by M. Eliade and which inevitably lead to the postulate of the indestructible, absolute unity of the human spirit. The centrality of phenomenology over history in Eliade is reflected in his general understanding of the religious phenomenon as 'hierophany', that means any 'manifestation of the sacred'. Meaning is found in the 'modalities of the sacred' revealed by the hierophany. And the identification of the modalities of the sacred is 'more important' than 'tracing the history of a hierophany. The experience of the sacred as construed by Eliade in terms of coincidentia oppositorum draws inspiration from Rudolf Otto's notion of mysterium tremendum et fascinans. Eliade asserts that 'myth reveals the actual structure of the divinity, which transcends all attributes and reconciles all contraries'. On the other hand, the symbol has a unifying function, and it highlights the fact that man has a synthetically structured consciousness and that he can intuit the cosmos in a unitary way. Homo religiosus manifests at all levels of culture, the desire to live according to the symbol, so he can be also called «homo symbolicus». Like the sacred, the symbol is a given of the integral consciousness of man. For Eliade the desire to live in the sacred is equated with the desire to possess sacred power and live in objective reality. He equates the sacred with being, hence, the existential desire for the sacred is reflected in a thirst for being. “Homo religiosus always believes that there is an absolute reality, the sacred, which transcends this world but manifests itself in this world, thereby sanctifying it and making it real”.

Keywords: Eliade; symbol; the real; the sacred; hierophany; phenomenology; myth; coincidentia oppositorum; divinity.

INTRODUCTION

Mircea Eliade, who died in April 1986 at the age of seventy-nine, had a remarkable career, first as a major literary figure in his native Romania and then as a historian and phenomenologist of religion. Romanian was his literary language, but his major scholarly works, from *Traité d'histoire des religions* and *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* in 1949 through the third volume of *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses* (1983) and *Briser le toit de la maison* (1986), were written in French. Approximately thirty-five of Eliade's books have been published in English.²

¹ This study was presented at International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education, Session 2, Romania, 29-30th July 2022.

² Douglas ALLEN (University of Maine at Orono), “Eliade and History”, in: *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Oct. 1988), p. 545.

Nowadays, Mircea Eliade is more studied than ever. This is evidenced by the high number of volumes on Mircea Eliade's life and work, which are being published all over the world. Whether one refers to his correspondence, his literary or scientific works, or to his slightly political articles from the interwar period, Mircea Eliade – his oeuvre as well as his personal life – is still taken up by specialists and the public.

The Romanian historian of religions is an ecumenical thinker, who raises the issue from the perspective of a "total hermeneutics" of religious facts. Being "totality-oriented" it cannot be "totalitarian", i.e. exclusive. Eliade's concepts are those of a history of religions, in the true sense of the term. The universality and the orientation towards the archetype are the consequences of practicing such a hermeneutics. This is based on two principles that connect the various themes of the Romanian scholar's thinking; the first principle pertains to the perenniality of the sacred, from a structural point of view, embedded even in the structure of consciousness, and the second concerns the thesis of man's religiosity, so that all religions are a kind of extensions of religious feeling. The foundation of religions is religiosity, not a particular religion. From the idea that man is a "religious being" (*homo religious*) - and not a practitioner of a certain religion - results all the basic concepts and ideas of the history of religions as understood by Eliade and which inevitably lead to the postulate of the indestructible, absolute unity of the human spirit³.

2. ELIADE, HISTORY, AND PHENOMENOLOGY

Eliade identifies himself as a 'historian of religions', a designation that turns out to be misleading. Historical method, for Eliade, is only a first step, leading to a phenomenological or philosophical approach to religion;⁴ 'the history of religions does not merely describe religious phenomena - it goes on to 'systematize ... and ... reflect on [their] structure'⁵. Setting aside Eliade's own claims to consider what he actually does, this second step turns out to be definitive of his method as whole. Eliade's approach is guided and shaped by implicit presuppositions and concerns that are essentially phenomenological. 'General structures', 'universal systems', 'the sacred', 'modes/modalities of the sacred' are primarily used in a phenomenological sense to refer to structures of consciousness, elements in such structures, or systems of structures that constitute a religious mode of relating to one's world. The structure Eliade considers fundamental – that which defines the religious as religious – is the intentional relation between believer and the sacred, where 'sacred' is phenomenologically understood as that category of objects construed in the mind of the believer as both ultimately real and other with respect to the profane/material world.

The centrality of phenomenology over history in Eliade is reflected in his general understanding of the religious phenomenon as '*hierophany*'. For Eliade, the hierophany is any 'manifestation of the sacred', and as such, has two elements: 1. the 'modality of the sacred' and 2. the expression of that modality as a concrete historical phenomenon. 'Modality of the sacred' is a phenomenological expression, referring at its most basic level to the structure of relation between the believer and the sacred. The hierophany as 'historical incident', on the other hand, is the historically particularized form of this underlying

³ Bogdan SILION, *Mircea Eliade și misterul totalității*, Eikon, București, 2016, p. 11.

⁴ Mircea ELIADE 'Methodological remarks on the study of religious symbolism', in Mircea ELIADE and Joseph M. KITAGAWA (eds) *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1959, 88.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

structure, 'reveal[ing] some attitude man has had toward the sacred'.⁶ At this level, the hierophany represents a concrete, historically conditioned way in which the sacred was conceived and therefore experienced. Approaching the religious phenomenon as hierophany, then, involves focusing on 'the religious significance to the believer'⁷, either in terms of conscious experience, attitudes, and beliefs (which are historically particularized) or in terms of the phenomenological structures informing these attitudes, i.e., the modalities of the sacred⁸.

Eliade states that 'the history of religions is ... largely the history of the devaluations and the revaluations which make up the process of the expression of the sacred'⁹ – in other words, the history of what people have valued as sacred. Historical analysis is also concerned with a given phenomenon's context. Eliade claims that 'all expressions or conceptual formulation of... religious experience is imbedded in a historical context'¹⁰. But Eliade does not practice this level of analysis. 'I have not tried', he writes, 'to study religious phenomena in their historical framework, but merely as hierophanies.'¹¹ He goes on to claim that historical context is irrelevant to the extent that one's focus is on the content and structure of religious experience itself¹².

Meaning is found in the 'modalities of the sacred' revealed by the hierophany. Eliade's approach, then, naturally focuses on these modalities', downplaying historical considerations in favour of phenomenological analysis. As Eliade states, 'the religious historian ... must first of all understand and explain the modality of the sacred that that hierophany discloses'. Identifying the modalities of the sacred is 'more important' than 'trac[ing] the history of a hierophany'¹³.

3. MIRCEA ELIADE AND THE STUDY OF THE SACRED

The influence of Rudolf Otto on Eliade's notion of the sacred is apparent in the title of Eliade's book *The Sacred and the Profane*. Originally published in German in 1957 as *Das Heilige und das Profane*, the first lines from that text cite Otto's *Das Heilige*.¹⁴ In addition, in *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*, Eliade explicitly acknowledges Otto's influence: "From the penetrating analysis of Rudolf Otto, let us retain this observation: that the sacred always manifests itself as a power of quite another order than that of the forces of nature."¹⁵ In this way, Otto's description of the holy does provide a starting point for Eliade. Bryan Rennie concurs: "There is no doubt that Eliade accepts as his starting point Otto's concept of the sacred as *ganz andere*, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, which is seen as the source of numinous experience."¹⁶

⁶ Mircea ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, New York NY: Sheed & Ward, 1958, p. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

⁸ Randall STUSTILL, "Eliade, phenomenology, and the sacred", in *Religious Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jun., 2000), Cambridge University Press, p. 178.

⁹ Mircea ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, p. 25.

¹⁰ M. ELIADE 'Methodological remarks', p. 89.

¹¹ ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, p. 461.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 462.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴ Mircea ELIADE, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, tr. W. R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959; reprint, 1987; originally published as *Das Heilige und das Profane* (Munich: Rowahlt Deutsche Enzyklopädie, 1957).

¹⁵ Mircea ELIADE, *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*, tr. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), p. 124.

¹⁶ Bryan S. RENNIE, *Reconstructing Eliade* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 27.

However, taking Otto's concepts as starting point, Eliade seeks to develop his own notion of the sacred in its dialectic with the profane. The distinction of the sacred and profane is not unique to Eliade, and one can easily see that starting with Emil Durkheim and his celebrated „Elementary Forms of the Religious Life”¹⁷. It is by construing the sacred in terms of its dialectic with the profane that leads Bryan Rennie to claim that Eliade was more influenced “by Durkheim than by Otto in his conception of the sacred.”¹⁸ However, some other scholars disagree. While it is impossible to determine exactly how much Eliade is indebted to either of these thinkers, there is at least enough evidence (and sufficient agreement among scholars) that Otto's *Idea of the Holy* had a substantial influence on Eliade's notion of the sacred, points out John Dadosky¹⁹.

In an essay on the power of hierophanies Eliade states: “From the penetrating analysis of Rudolf Otto, let us retain this observation: that the sacred always manifests itself as a power of quite another order than that of the forces of nature”²⁰. He makes a similar statement when referencing Otto in *The Sacred and the Profane*: “The sacred always manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from ‘natural’ realities”²¹. Hence, he invokes Otto's language albeit he goes on to say that Otto's language of the holy as “irrational” is not sufficient in and of itself. Therefore, he suggests that the “first possible definition of the *sacred* is that it is *the opposite of the profane*”. In this manner, Eliade invokes the distinction of Durkheim, although he makes no direct reference to Durkheim in this regard. In fact, unlike his references to Otto, one is hard pressed to find any direct references to Durkheim whenever Eliade defines the sacred. According to Eliade, Durkheim's fundamental explanation for religion is totemism – not, as one might expect, the distinction between the sacred and the profane. However, we can assume that Durkheim's dialectic of the sacred at least indirectly influenced Eliade²².

The experience of the sacred as construed by Eliade in terms of *coincidentia oppositorum* (a coinciding of opposites) draws inspiration from Otto's notion of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. Moreover, Otto's antireductionism, according to Douglas Allen, would appeal to Eliade. Allen writes: “Here we have the twentieth-century, antireductionist claim made not only by Eliade but also by Rudolf Otto, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Joachim Wach, and many others; investigators of mythic and other religious phenomena must respect the irreducibly religious nature of religious phenomena.”²³ Durkheim was not an antireductionist.

According to Eliade, the field of research for the historian of religions is inextricably intertwined with the study of the sacred. “It could be said that the history of religions – from the most primitive to the most highly developed – is constituted by a great number of *hierophanies*, by manifestations of sacred realities” (SP, 11). As such, the data collected by historians of religions yield a plethora of information. Therefore, in order to organize and interpret this vast

¹⁷ Emil DURKHEIM's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, tr. K. E. Fields (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), pp. 34–39.

¹⁸ B. RENNIE, *Reconstructing Eliade*, p. 172.

¹⁹ John D. DADOSKY, *The Structure of Religious Knowing Encountering the Sacred in Eliade and Lonergan*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2004, p. 22.

²⁰ Mircea ELIADE, *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*, p. 124.

²¹ M. ELIADE, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 10.

²² See DURKHEIM, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, pp. 34–39.

²³ Douglas ALLEN, *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade* (New York: Garland, 1998), p. 9.

amount of data, the history of religions involves a search for a general hermeneutic theory for understanding the various manifestations of the sacred (hierophanies).²⁴

Despite the existence of historical misinterpretations of religious data, the history of religions, according to Eliade, retains the task of searching for a “total hermeneutics,” wherein scholars are “called to decipher and explicate every kind of encounter of man with the sacred”²⁵. This can seem like an immense task. Eliade concedes that historians of religions can at best only master the knowledge of a few religions, and they should then attempt to “formulate general considerations on the religious behavior” of humanity.²⁶

Hence, the historian of religions “does not act as a philologist, but as a hermeneutist” anticipating the emergence of a general perspective – that is, a heuristic structure for the interpretation of religious data.

As a phenomenologist, Eliade is interested in discovering the structures of consciousness that constitute religious experience. The fundamental structure he identifies is the relation between the believer and 'the sacred'. The phenomeno-logical nature of Eliade's approach would immediately suggest what he means by this term. As stated above, 'the sacred' is a cover-term for that category of 'objects' constituted in the mind of the believer as both 'ultimately real' and as distinct from the profane world.

Many scholars would dispute this interpretation, arguing that Eliade's 'sacred' refers to what he considers to be a really existing divine reality. According to Eliade, 'every religious act and every cult object aims at a meta-empirical reality [i.e., the sacred]’²⁷. Religious symbols (a medium of the sacred) 'reveal reality' or 'a profound structure of the World '.

'The religious symbols which point to the structures of life reveal a more profound, more mysterious life than that which is known through everyday experience. They unveil the miraculous, inexplicable side of life, and at the same time the sacramental dimensions of human existence.' Eliade also asserts that 'myth reveals ... the actual structure of the divinity, which transcends all attributes and reconciles all contraries'.²⁸ Furthermore, this 'divine personality is not to be simply looked upon as a mere projection of human personality'. 'Sacredness', Eliade states, 'is, above all, *real*’.²⁹

Dialectics. Eliade has concentrated the links between the complexes of the sacred and the profane on the plane of appearances, introducing the inspired concept of hierophany. A hierophany exposes the sacred in the profane. Since there are numerous hierophanies (though the same ones do not always appear everywhere), he sets up a dialectic of hierophanies to explain why an object or an occurrence may be sacred at one moment but not at another. Such an approach makes it possible to examine every historical datum and identify it as sacred or profane – and in so doing to write a new history of religions within profane history. In addition, one can draw conclusions about the objectivity of the sacred, which is satiated with being and therefore has the power, functioning through the hierophanies (including even their profane element), to become apparent. Eliade does both. The former demonstrates a historical phenomenology, and points toward an as yet unrealized

²⁴ John D. DADOSKY, *The Structure of Religious Knowing Encountering the Sacred*, p. 23.

²⁵ M. ELIADE, *Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, (QT), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 59.

²⁶ Mircea ELIADE, 'Methodological remarks on the study of religious symbolism', p. 89.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

²⁸ ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, p. 419.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 459. See also RENNIE, *Reconstructing Eliade*, pp. 20, 196.

historical psychology of religion. The latter is subject to the same criticism as the ontological proof of God.³⁰

4. THE SACRED SYMBOLS

“The historian of religions,” states Eliade, “is preoccupied uniquely with religious symbols, that is with those that are bound up with a religious experience or a religious conception of the world.”³¹ So it is through religious symbolism that the historian of religions seeks to understand the nature of the sacred and the religious life of human beings.

For Eliade the historian of religions interprets data from religious traditions in order to “decipher” general structures or patterns from the vast amount of data while simultaneously attempting to understand the cultural historical context of the specific religious facts. Obtaining a balance between these two tasks is difficult, and Eliade has been accused of making “uncritical universal generalizations.”³² Conversely, Eliade has been described as an “intuitive genius.”³³ That is, his ability to “decipher” patterns of religious symbolism is one of the strengths and enduring qualities of his method. Nevertheless, an elaborate response to the criticism lies beyond the scope of this study and is further complicated by the fact that Eliade never responded to his critics in any substantial way.³⁴

The primary function of symbols for Eliade is to “reveal” various levels of meaning some of which are at profound depths. Specifically, “religious symbols are capable of revealing a modality of the real or a structure of the World that is not evident on the level of immediate experience.”³⁵ He means by this that the sacred, which human beings are not always directly conscious of in their profane everyday experience, can be mediated through sacred symbols. For Eliade, the “primitive” or “archaic” mind is constantly aware of the presence of the sacred and it is no surprise that for them all symbols are religious. Accordingly, through symbols human beings can get an immediate apprehension or “intuition” of certain features of the “inexhaustible” sacred.

In keeping with the function of religious symbolism to reveal the structures of reality there is the *multivalence* of symbols. By this he means a symbol’s “capacity to express simultaneously a number of meanings whose continuity is not evident on the plane of immediate experience.”³⁶

”Images by their very structure are *multivalent*. If the mind makes use of images to grasp the ultimate reality of things, it is just because reality manifests itself in contradictory ways and therefore cannot be expressed in concepts. (We know what desperate efforts have been made by various theologies and metaphysics, oriental as well as occidental, to give expression to the *coincidentia oppositorum* – a mode of being that is readily, and also abundantly, conveyed by

³⁰ Carsten COLPE (1987), “The Sacred and the Profane”, in: Lindsay JONES (editor in chief), *Encyclopedia of Religion (ER)*, 2nd edition, vol. 12: *Rnying Ma Pa School • Soul*, Macmillan Reference, USA, p. 7976.

³¹ Mircea Eliade, “Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism,” in *History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, p. 88.

³² Douglas ALLEN, *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade*, xi; see also Robert F. BROWN, “Eliade on Archaic Religion: Some Old and New Criticisms,” *Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religieuses* 10/4 (1981), 432; and John A. SALIBA, “*Homo Religiosus*” in *Mircea Eliade* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 104–16.

³³ ALLEN, *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade*, xii, xiv.

³⁴ John D. DADOSKY, *The Structure of Religious Knowing Encountering the Sacred*, p. 84.

³⁵ Mircea ELIADE, “Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism”, p. 98.

³⁶ ELIADE, “Methodological Remarks,” 99. For an overview of the various meanings that Eliade ascribes to lunar symbolism see chapter 4, Mircea ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion (PCR)*, p. 8.

images and symbols.) It is therefore the image as such, as a whole bundle of meanings, that is *true*, and not any *one* of its meanings, nor one alone of its many frames of reference”.³⁷

Imparting the idea that human nature is that of an animal which symbolizes (*animal symbolicum*), Eliade speaks of the need for the existence of a *mediation*, facing the absolute otherness that is revealed by the chance of coming into contact with the sacred. For the positioning of man in the world, one always relies on words that express the idea of "connection". The sacred is introduced into people's experience through the mediation made by the symbol, whose essence is *dual*: it has a rational side that can be made known to people and also a mysterious or irrational one.

The Romanian philosopher notes the idea that the symbol refers primarily to *hierophany* and that it makes a connection between the sacred and the profane. Furthermore, the symbol prolongs a hierophany, gives it spatial and temporal reality. Moreover, “a symbol is important not only because it extends or replaces a hierophany, but, above all, because it can continue the process of hierophanization and, especially, because at that particular moment, it is itself a hierophany, that is, it rediscovers a sacred or cosmological reality that no other revelation could discover ”.³⁸

If according to Eliade, the religious history of mankind begins with the experience of the sacred, with those infinite hierophanies that organize the world and load it with meanings, then we are justified to assert the anthropological importance wherewith Eliade invests religious symbolism. The fact that *homo religiosus* discovers, at all levels of culture, the desire to live according to the symbol, demonstrates that religious symbolism created humanity, in other words it differentiated it from animals. The symbol has a unifying function, and it highlights the fact that man has a synthetically structured consciousness and that he can intuit the cosmos in a unitary way. Regarding the function of the symbol, Eliade noted: “once constituted, the symbol is invested with a double function: existential and cognitive. On the one hand, a symbol unifies various sectors of reality (...); on the other hand, the symbol is always open, in the sense that it is likely to reveal transcendent meanings, which are not given (not obvious) in the immediate experience”.³⁹

Eliade refers to those symbols that reflect a *coincidentia oppositorum*, or those that represent the “passage from a profane mode of existence to a spiritual existence.”⁴⁰ In addition, for Eliade, “an important consequence” follows from the multivalent feature of religious symbolism. He explains: “the symbol is thus able to reveal a perspective in which heterogeneous realities are susceptible of articulation into a whole, or even of integration into a «system»” He clarifies: “the religious symbol allows man to discover a certain unity of the World and, at the same time, to disclose to himself his proper destiny as an integrating part of the World.”⁴¹ In other words, the religious symbols convey to the religious person a profound sense of meaning and purpose. That is, there is an existential function to religious symbolism, which enables human beings to apprehend a surplus of meaning in existence. “The religious symbol not only unveils a structure of reality or a dimension of existence; by the same stroke it brings a meaning into human existence.” This is why even symbols aiming

³⁷ Mircea ELIADE, *Images and Symbols*, tr. P. Mairet (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 15.

³⁸ Mircea ELIADE, *Tratat de istoria religiilor*, transl. by Mariana Noica, Bucuresti, Humanitas, 1992, p. 407.

³⁹ Mircea ELIADE, *Jurnal*, Humanitas, vol. 1, 1993, p. 58.

⁴⁰ ELIADE, “Methodological Remarks,” pp. 101–102.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

at the ultimate reality conjointly constitute existential revelations for the man who deciphers their message.⁴²

It is necessary to underline the *existential value* of religious symbolism, that is, the fact that a symbol always aims at a *reality or a situation in which human existence is engaged*. It is above all this existential dimension that marks off and distinguishes symbols from concepts. Symbols still keep their contact with the profound sources of life; they express, one might say, the "spiritual as lived" (*le spirituel vécu*). This is why symbols have, as it were, a "numinous aura"; they reveal that the modalities of the spirit are at the same time manifestations of life, and, consequently, they directly engage human existence.

§§

In the present condition of modern man, the symbol no longer corresponds to the human nature of being-into-sacred, the symbol is but a personal, individual, contingent initiative⁴³. But from the religious experience of the archaic world, we learn that the symbol is the product of the spiritual activity of a given community. Therefore, the symbol obeys the laws of the spirit that are meant to integrate the individual in an order that transcends him.

Homo religiosus manifests at all levels of culture, the desire to live according to the symbol, so he can be also called «homo symbolicus». Like the sacred, the symbol is a given of the integral consciousness of man. It is also a concrete phenomenon or object, to which is added the sacred (the divine), the absolute reality as an external force, which becomes immanent, so that it appears more clearly than if it were expressed in words⁴⁴. If the **symbol** as a sign, image, derives from the fullness of the original image or absolute reality, then **symbolon** means what is put together, meeting point between *esse* and *non esse*, between eternity and time. To tell how this paradoxical encounter takes place, Eliade uses the formula "coincidentia oppositorum", which is related to what he calls the *dialectic of the symbol*, as the function of the symbol is to hide and reveal, at the same time, the Ultimate Reality⁴⁵.

In short, here is what the symbols reveal to Eliade:

1. Firstly, symbols may reveal a **mode** of reality or a structure of the world that are not manifest in the immediate experience.
2. Secondly, for primitive populations, the symbols are always religious, because they aim at the real. And the **real** is equivalent to the **sacred**.
3. Thirdly, religious symbolism is **plurivalent**, i.e. it can simultaneously express several meanings whose solidarity is not obvious in terms of immediate experience. Consequently, the symbol can reveal a perspective that would allow heterogeneous realities to be articulated as a whole or even to be integrated into a system. The most important function of the symbol, according to Eliade, is its ability to express paradoxical situations or certain structures of the Ultimate Reality impossible to render otherwise.
4. Finally, symbolism has an **existential** value, in the sense that it always refers to a reality or situation that directly engages human existence. The man who understands a symbol opens up to the objective world of the universe and transforms his individual existence into a spiritual act. Through the symbol, man opens himself up to the dimension of the Spirit who creates history.⁴⁶

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴³ ELIADE, *Fragmentarium.*, pp. 72-73.

⁴⁴ Wilhelm DANCĂ, *Mircea Eliade – Definitio Sacri*, Ars Longa, București, 1998, p. 235.

⁴⁵ ELIADE, *Mefistofel și Androginul.*, p. 191.

⁴⁶ Mircea ELIADE, *Oceanografie*, Humanitas, București. 1991, p. 146.

5. THE SYMBOL AND THE HIEROPHANIES

It is interesting the idea that symbolism not only reveals the position of man in the cosmos, but also capitalizes on man's position towards the divine, as absolute reality, and towards history as well. In other words, the symbols with cosmic structure are the product of the intuition of the cosmos as a unit and of man as a way-of-being in history. For example, the feeling provoked by the presence of the symbol – be it the branch, the tree – ends in the same fundamental intuition and in the same tendency to celebrate the cosmic event in a microcosm and to celebrate it symbolically.⁴⁷

Due to its integrative function, the symbol transforms an object or an act into something different from what is to be found in the profane experience⁴⁸, as in the example of life that is manifested through a plant symbol. Vegetation becomes a hierophany – it incorporates and reveals the sacred – insofar as it signifies something different from itself.

"A tree or a plant is never sacred as a tree or a plant. They become sacred through their participation in a transcendent reality. By its consecration, the concrete, profane plant species is transubstantiated. According to the dialectic of the sacred, a fragment (tree or plant) is worth as much as the whole (cosmos, Life), a profane object becomes a hierophany⁴⁹. Therefore, if the symbol mediates participation in a transcendent reality, hierophany consecrates a profane object and makes it sacred. However, the *symbol* is superior to hierophany, in the sense that everything that is not directly consecrated by a hierophany can become sacred thanks to its participation to a symbol. Moreover, most hierophanies can become symbols⁵⁰.

Mircea Eliade speaks of a progressive hierophanization of the world, which manifests itself by the need of man to find doubles, substitutes and participations in a given hierophany or by the tendency to identify hierophany with the whole Universe.

"Strictly speaking, the term symbol should be reserved for symbols that extend a hierophany or are themselves an inexpressible revelation through another magical-religious form. In the broadest sense of the word, however, anything can be a symbol or can play a symbolic role, from the most rudimentary kratophany (...) to Jesus Christ, who, from a certain point of view, can be considered a symbol of the miracle of the divinity's incarnation into man"⁵¹.

The ability of symbols to continue the dialectic of hierophanies calls into question the validity of the sacred-profane dichotomy, in the sense that emphasizing the complete dissimilarity between sacred and profane makes the dialectic of the symbol not the same as the dialectic of hierophany. In the perspective of the opposition between sacred and profane, the symbol is closely related to hierophany, because the symbol translates at the noological level, the relationship established through hierophany.⁵² Thus, on the one hand, Eliade recognizes that most hierophanies are capable of becoming symbols⁵³, and on the other hand he conceives the dialectic of the symbol in a different way from that of hierophany.

⁴⁷ Mircea ELIADE, *Morfologia religiilor*, pp. 130-131.

⁴⁸ Mircea ELIADE, *Tratat de istorie a religiilor*, p. 406.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁵⁰ Wilhelm DANCĂ, *Mircea Eliade – Definitio Sacri*, p. 246.

⁵¹ Mircea ELIADE, *Tratat de istorie a religiilor*, p. 408.

⁵² Sergiu AL-GEORGE, *Arhaic și universal. India în conștiința culturală românească (Archaic and universal. India in the Romanian cultural consciousness)*, Herald, București, 1999, p. 188.

⁵³ Mircea ELIADE, *Tratat de istorie a religiilor*, p. 407.

Our author speaks only once about the *dialectic* of the *symbol*: "The symbol continues the dialectic of hierophany, transforming objects into something other than what they appear to profane experience."⁵⁴

Finally, based on Indian ontology, Eliade introduces another type of dialectic of the sacred, namely the true dialectic of the sacred, in which he capitalizes on the concepts of *symbol*, *coincidentia oppositorum* and (ontological) level rupture.⁵⁵

Turning to **semiotics**, religious symbols raise equally fundamental questions. Early in the twentieth century, the Swiss linguistic theoretician Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) set the tone for much of general symbolic theory. He had *three objectives*: to identify the signifier, to determine just what it is signifying, and to describe the mechanism by which the signifying process takes place. Yet another aspect, one that Saussure purposefully neglected in his own work, has proved to be essential to many of the most creative modern studies of religious symbolism: namely, the nature and extent of the relationship between signifier and signified, apart from the actual mechanism by which it is established.

Mircea Eliade made one of the boldest attempts to describe this relationship in terms appropriate to *religious symbolism*. (Echoing the Symbolists and Romantics) Eliade contended that the symbol reveals certain *dimensions of reality* that would otherwise elude understanding. For him, these deeper dimensions are disclosed not only through the reflection of the interpreter of the symbols, but also in the "internal logic" of the symbols. This idea, however, depends on the premise that there is something contained "in" the symbol that is being disclosed. He and Rudolf Otto, call this embedded something "the sacred," a reality of an order distinct from the natural and possessed of a power beyond humans' comprehension and control. This shift away from the knowing subject does not deny the assertion that symbols are constituted subjectively, nor that they are basically cultural phenomena. Rather, it moves away from the anthropological approach to one that seeks to remove the arbitrariness from the symbol, through an assertion that the symbol reveals something else, something outside the closed system of human cultural production. This attitude opens a path to understanding "natural symbols" that goes beyond investigations into the natural capacity of mind and establishes symbolic conventions in order to capture invariable patterns of meaning that those conventions communicate.⁵⁶

6. THE SACRED AS "THE REAL"

The problem with Eliade's presuppositions regarding the sacred and profane is that it is questionable whether or not in his view objects belonging to the sphere of the profane exist or not. One is left with the impression that the profane sphere is illusory. He states:

"For primitives as for the man of all premodern societies, the sacred is equivalent to a power, and, in the last analysis, to reality. The sacred is saturated with being. Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacy. The polarity sacred-profane is often expressed as an opposition between real and unreal or pseudoreal. [...] Thus, it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires to be, to participate in reality, to be saturated with power".⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Wilhelm DANCĂ, *Mircea Eliade – Definitio Sacri*, p. 248.

⁵⁵ Wilhelm DANCĂ, *Mircea Eliade – Definitio Sacri*, p. 254.

⁵⁶ Peter T. STRUCK (2005), "Symbol and Symbolism", in: Lindsay JONES (editor in chief), *Encyclopedia of Religion (ER)*, 2nd edition, vol. 13, p. 8913.

⁵⁷ ELIADE, *Sacred and Profane*, 1959, pp. 12–13.

Eliade claims that, when the manifestation of the sacred in profane space occurs, the hierophany reveals “absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse” (SP, 21). The surrounding expanse or “profane space represents absolute nonbeing” (SP, 64). He also indicates that sacred time “is an ontological, Parmenidean time; it always remains equal to itself, it neither changes nor is exhausted” (*Ibid*, 69). His reference to Parmenides suggests a possible monistic interpretation of the distinction between sacred time and profane time in the sense that profane time functions as a veil of illusion concealing sacred time. Indeed, Eliade’s claim that the sacred “unveils the deepest structures of the world” would seem to indicate that the profane world is illusory, disguising a deeper sacred reality.⁵⁸

For Eliade the desire to live in the sacred is equated with the desire to possess sacred power and live in objective reality:

”The sacred is pre-eminently the *real*, at once power, efficacy, the source of life and fecundity. Religious man’s desire to live *in the sacred* is in fact equivalent to his desire to take up his abode in objective reality, not to let himself be paralyzed by the never-ceasing relativity of purely subjective experiences, to live in a real and effective world, and not in an illusion. (ELIADE, SP, 28)

He equates the sacred with *being*: “on the archaic levels of culture *being* and *the sacred* are one” (ELIADE, SP, 1959, 210). Hence, the existential desire for the sacred is reflected in a *thirst for being*:

”This is as much to say that religious man can live only in a sacred world, because it is only in such a world that he participates in being, that he has a *real existence*. This religious need expresses an unquenchable ontological thirst. Religious man thirsts for *being*”. (ELIADE, SP, 64).

Moreover, the existential thirst for being is at once a thirst for the real (*Ibid*, 80).

Finally, one gets a sense of the ontological status of the sacred and profane from Eliade’s juxtaposition of *homo religiosus*, or the paradigmatic person committed to living in the sacred, with the nonreligious person. For Eliade *homo religiosus* is exemplified by archaic, or primitive, religious living; however, for the modern secularized person, this mode of being lies dormant for the most part in the unconscious. On the one hand, “*homo religiosus* always believes that there is an absolute reality, *the sacred*, which transcends this world but manifests itself in this world, thereby sanctifying it and making it real” (ELIADE, SP, 202). On the other hand, the nonreligious person “refuses transcendence, accepts the relativity of ‘reality,’ and may come to doubt the meaning of existence”⁵⁹ Hence, one could say that for Eliade, a fundamental difference between the religious person and the nonreligious person is the pursuit of fundamental truth and meaning by the former as contrasted with the relativity of truth and lack of meaning espoused by the latter.

CONCLUSION

There are philosophical presuppositions in Eliade’s notion of the sacred that suggest he posits for the archaic person that the sacred is the *real* while the profane is *illusory*. He indicates that the **sacred** is equivalent to the **real**, to absolute truth, and to being. It appears that he construes the profane, at least for the archaic or primitive person, to be unreal or

⁵⁸ John D. DADOSKY, *The Structure of Religious Knowing...*, p. 100.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 203.

illusory⁶⁰. In addition, we can add that the sacred is meaningful or valuable while the profane is meaningless.

Homo religiosus is at the same time *homo symbolicus*. In his *Treatise*, speaking of the logic of symbols, Eliade states: “The magical-religious experience allows the transformation of man himself into a symbol. All anthropocosmic systems and experiences are possible to the extent that man himself becomes a symbol.”⁶¹

In the last resort, we might say that in Eliade’s phenomenology the **symbol** is to be identified with the **sacred** (*Homo religiosus* and *homo symbolicus*), while the latter is pertaining or even more, coincides with the Real.

Once Eliade paid a high tribute to his friend and colleague, Paul Tillich, at the latter’s memorial service in Chicago, and if the name of Tillich is replaced with that of Eliade, it portrays the latter admirably: “Faithful to his vocation and his destiny [Eliade] did not die at the end of his career, when he had supposedly said everything important that he could say. Thus, his death is even more tragic. But it is also symbolic.”⁶²

Perhaps everything that the great Romanian historian of religions thought about the problem of the sacred and the symbol is summarized in the following sentences, a legacy of the Eliadian thesaurus:

”If God does not exist, everything is ash ...
Death is a second birth, the ultimate initiation.
Any cosmic existence is doomed to passage.
You have to die to be reborn in immortality.”⁶³

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⁶⁰ John D. DADOSKY, pp. 101-102

⁶¹ Eliade, *A Treatise on the History of Religions*, 1992, p. 414.

⁶² *Criterion* 5, no. 1, 1968, p. 15, apud Joseph M. KITAGAWA (1987), ”Eliade, Mircea” [First Edition], in Lindsay JONES, (ER), vol. 4, p. 2757.

⁶³ Mircea ELIADE, in *Eliadiana*, Cristian Bădiliță (ed.), Polirom, Iași: 1997, p. 24.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REASON, FAITH AND RELIGIOUS IDEAS*

Rev. PhD. Marin BUGIULESCU,

Professor, Associate Member of "Dumitru Stăniloae" Scientific and Interdisciplinary
Research Center, "Valahia" University of Târgoviște,

ROMANIA

Email: m_bugiulescu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The connection between reason, faith and religious ideas is a specific problem addressed by ancient philosophy centered on the structure of religion, mythology, history and the relations of the gods with the world, theogony. That is precisely why the Greek philosophers conceived the world as something self-evident, something belonging to the order of logically compelling evidence. They did not seek to see who its author is, or what His being and activity consist of. Philosophical theology, in fact, ancient philosophy rediscovered in the medieval period, strictly represents a power of reason directed towards the knowledge of divinity, towards the relationship with the gods.

Keywords: *faith; reason; mind; religious ideas.*

INTRODUCTION

Looking at religion only from its subjective aspect, many researchers have asked the question: What is the essence of religion? As a being bearing the divine image, man has both a transcendent and an immanent dimension in the context of the world. Spiritual qualities give it the power to manifest scientifically. This orientation acquires a real content supported by the logical knowledge of the cosmos and of one's own being, but above all by the revealed faith that does not abstract from the logical knowledge that it deepens through mystical or spiritual knowledge. From the rational-philosophical point of view, we can talk about a series of specific features of human nature, on which the material, cultural and psychological evolution of man was based. Plato speaks, in the Republic, about the three parts of the human soul: the rational part, the active part and the appetitive part.

The rational part is what distinguishes man from animals and is understood as the highest part of the soul. Reason has the quality of divine instinct and is eternal. The active part works together with the rational part, by itself, being also characteristic of some animals. The appetitive part refers to natural impulses and bodily desires and is on the lowest rung in the soul hierarchy. This brings man closer to animal instincts¹.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The origin of religion has been analyzed and conceptualized over time in three theories: 1. evolutionist (religion developed together with man), 2. rationalist (it is based on

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¹ PLATO, *Republica*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest 1986, p. 341

human reason that invented religion) and 3. nativist (religious ideas are innate in the human mind). According to Darwinian evolution, man is the result of a form of primates, extinct, but still having evolved representatives in certain species of apes. There are also naturalists, who contradict this idea by supporting evolution in different species. Others talk about parallel evolutions, from which people emerged in different places and periods. Of course, all these assumptions cannot be called theories, because there is no evidence of any kind, but only speculations that are given the value of truth by some institutions and researchers, biologists, and anthropologists, deliberately ignoring the historical reality of man as a being religious that has always had the idea of a creative and protective deity or deities². Evolutionary theory is very often used as an argument for the emergence of the world and man. The idea of progress, of evolution, is also found in the biblical revelation preserved unchanged by Orthodox Christianity. Unlike Darwinian evolutionism, the development-evolution process is possible only within the same species, and not from one species to another, without excluding the possibility of regression.

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REASON, FAITH AND RELIGIOUS IDEAS

Researching the being of religion, under the inner or subjective aspect, from a scientific point of view answers were given that form three major types of theories: 1. intellectualist, 2. sentimentalist and 3. voluntarist.

1. Intellectualist theories. The basis of the human being is thought or contemplation. Man, since the beginning of his existence had the impulse to research. This is the cause of things and phenomena around him. On the chain of effects and causes, man discovered the ultimate, absolute, supreme, primary cause, which can only be God.

Rationalism represents the intellectualist theory that attributes to reason the role of source and theme of knowledge according to which man is the measure of all things. This orientation was promoted in antiquity by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and in the modern period it constituted a European school of thought through Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant. In the history of contemporary thought, phenomenological rationalism (Husserl) or critical rationalism (Karl Popper) can be considered representative.

The central idea of intellectualist theories is that divinity is the result of the thought process through which man came to know the world. This knowledge is causally teleologically related to a divine reality, identified by Max Muller, through the desire to acquire the absolute, personified and called by the concept of God. Modern rationalism, formulated by Rene Descartes, closely related to empiricism, is a meditation of the intellect, which tries to explain the being of the world, of things, of religion, only by means of the powers of human reason, abstracting from feelings, love, and revelation divine. In empirical theory, Nature or the World, seen as an object of contemplation, is researched thanks to the technological revolution in scientific laboratories, which want, on the one hand, the decryption of nature, and on the other hand, a recreation of the world, a reconstitution of it through the invention of the God particle. Of course, we are not talking about an eternal God, but one created by man in the laboratory. Therefore, as a theory, rationalism and scientific and technological empiricism are insufficient and one-sided because religion is not reduced to the intellectual and experimental element. God is not just an opinion or a principle as in ideology and philosophy, but a Tri-Personal Being, who pours out His love freely and consciously, a love that man perceives both at the intellectual, gnostic level, but

² David HUME, *Research on the human intellect*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1987

especially in concrete way at the level of life, of faith practiced consciously and freely with piety and love.

2. Sentimentalist theories emphasize human emotions and feelings that are the basis of individual and social life and especially of religion. The theoretician of this idea is Bro. Schleiermacher. In Schleiermacher's view, the feeling of absolute dependence on the unknown is defined by God. Schleiermacher, starting from Spinoza's pantheism, defines the infinite identified with God, in a logical confusion, because He remains unknown, but which at the level of feelings can be perceptible, perceived. The central idea of sentimentalist theories is the form of manifestation of divinity through aesthetics, universally expressed through art. Supporters of this theory are Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Feuerbach, D.F. Strauss, W. Wundt. Standing at the opposite pole of intellectualist theories, the error of sentimentalists is that they reduce religion to emotion and happiness only and exclude the role of intellect and will in religious acts.

3. Voluntarist theories. Briefly defined, the will is the internal function specific to the soul through which man expresses himself externally and through which he acts. Will is related to freedom. "Freedom being the ability of the will to determine its own action, without any internal or external constraint". This whole process (will, freedom, actions) is conscious and directed towards a goal, which means that it involves the intellect as the source of ideas transposed concretely through feeling. Therefore, the will puts into practice what the intellect has planned, and the feeling has prepared, generating the impulse towards actions. The will represents the ability of man as a person to be a free being open to communion with God and his fellow men, but also to the whole creation. Within this manifestation, man commits morally good and morally bad deeds.

Taking these considerations into account, voluntarist theories claim that the essence of religion lies in morality, which is expressed either in acts of worship or in the moral deeds of people. That is why some thinkers and philosophers identify and reduce religion to morality. Moralistic theories support the replacement of religion with morality, as Immanuel Kant expresses very clearly in the Critique of practical reason, and in the Critique of pure reason, where from the very beginning he expresses the idea that science is the result of the collaboration between sensibility and reason, but especially of metaphysics. In the Kantian conception, metaphysics is the knowledge of the Absolute, respectively of the three traditional-fundamental problems: the World, God, the Soul. The questions regarding the knowledge of the truth were conceptualized by Kant from the perspective of didactic logic, where knowing means possessing judgments. They have a necessary and universal character (they are valid everywhere and always and logically compel us to accept their meanings). Thus, metaphysics generates judgments, only that it is somehow unable to issue such judgments related to God, to the immortality of the soul. That is why Kant analyzes the power, extent and limits of our thinking by deriving some concepts from others. Assembling the intellectual processes that start from the ascertainment of a fact to the research of its conditions of possibility, Kant defined the transcendental method, a research, an analysis of the pre-conditions of knowledge. The transcendental method is a pure research, because it represents the intimate examination of thought by itself, in other words, the research of the preconditions of thought, it is carried out independently of experience. Sensitivity is the one that makes it possible to understand the experience through the senses through the reason that perceives and conceptualizes the realities, but this knowledge cannot go beyond the limits of the phenomenal world, that is, the world in which we live. The senses offer a chaotic material, which, however, is processed and organized by our intellect through the a

priori forms of sensitivity, space and time, and through the categories of reason. Here metaphysics intervenes and claims that it is not only a form of knowledge of the world, but a super-knowledge since it investigates the Absolute. Its fundamental problems are the World, God, the Soul. For Kant, beyond the phenomenal world is the noumenal world, in which are the things themselves, which can be thought but not known, because there theoretical reason cannot operate alone, without the help of sensibility, but only practical reason.

The Critique of Pure Reason supports the analysis and foundation of knowledge that does not come from experience. This is the apothetic, noumenal form. Kant identifies two faculties of knowledge: sensitivity (the ability to be influenced by objects) and intellect or the spontaneity of concepts (the ability of the human mind to think). Knowledge is a synthesis between sensitivity and intellect. Immanuel Kant develops the theory of knowing consciousness. Thus, Judgments/knowledge are products of the human mind, and they synthesize the data of experience with cognitive structures. The unit of knowing consciousness, called by him the original-synthetic unit of apperception, has three faculties: sensitivity, intellect, and reason, which in turn have substructures that intervene in the process of knowledge. Sensibility has two substructures called pure a priori intuitions under the representation of space and time.

The intellect has its own structures, called concepts or categories, by means of which different experiences are connected. And Reason is not exactly a faculty of knowledge because it has a regulative function, in the sense that it indicates the path that knowledge must follow. Therefore, the intellect is not only the holder of the constitutive forms and categories through which it arranges the material offered by sensibility in the phenomenal world, but also possesses some regulative ideas, which have a fundamental value for life. The ideas of reason are the World, God, and the Soul. Human thinking is oriented towards them. Ideas are not knowable; they do not belong to the space of knowledge but of faith; they do not belong to the domain of theoretical reason but to the domain of practical reason - which Kant identifies with consciousness and will. Thus, the ideas of freedom, of the immortality of the soul, as well as that of God, are "postulated", that is, requirements of practical reason, of the will. According to this logic, the moral law in man is autonomous, springing from practical reason. It is the fundamental law of human being that we must obey. This is imposed on the conscience through that "categorical imperative": "You must do..." or "You are forbidden to do...". By postulating a reality of justice, we infer a world in which good must always be rewarded and evil punished, because in the world there is no fair relationship between virtue and happiness, between good and evil. In the same at the same time, this presupposes the existence of a just judge in the noumenal world, who can only be God. The fundamental ideas of religion: God, freedom of the will, immortality of the soul, future life, happiness – as a reward for virtue cannot be objects of knowledge, but only of faith, they being postulates of practical reason, therefore for Kant they are unknowable. Kant omitted the fact that religion is essentially affirmed by faith, by living and by contemplating the divine. Religion is the domain of faith and divine revelation and not only of rational thought and knowledge. Kant, instead of basing morality on religion, on the contrary, bases religion on morality, reducing the former to the latter, or even subordinating religion to morality.

The attempt to construct a human meaning regarding God is tributary to the limitation of human reason, but the fact of limitation, far from being a handicap for the openers of ontological horizons that were Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus, turned out to be a point starting point that considered the limitation as such, including at the level of

the possibility of meaning and comprehension. For the Greeks from the beginning of ontology, there was a very clear awareness of the limit, and from here the first definitions of the being as no-limit, as that completely different, and completely different for a space enslaved to the limited can only be unlimited, although in the Greek mentality, the limit was the positively valorized one. Even this conception was given to be overcome as one tributary to nature in contradiction with which the model of the supernatural was constituted, the model of the being that makes the world of nature to be as it is. Man can reflect through his intellect the existing rational relationships in the sphere in which he lives, but he cannot build an understanding of what makes his reality and himself, to be. In this sense, perhaps the first great challenge addressed to human thought took place: to capture what constitutes the source of the real, what by the very relationship with the real must be thought of as not belonging to the real. This was the very operation of building metaphysics. In this human effort, there was a continuation of the first Adamic action: that of giving names, through these names man manages to establish a space of intelligibility in the proximity of his life, but the names that will be given to solve this problem will they stand as signs rather than as names as long as the reality they designate is incomprehensible to reason.

Proper to our mind and reason is God, therefore it is proper to reason to organize and regulate the movement of the body towards the good that has been revealed to the understanding mind³. Father Dumitru Stăniloae says that: "Reason is a kind of engineer of movement, and not only of the movement of our nature but of the movement of the entire physical nature"⁴. And this is because the reason of man is in close connection with the whole fabric of the reasons of things, it has the purpose of defining and gathering them in itself consciously with the aim of directing the human subject to them according to their nature, in this way achieving closeness to God.

So that through creation man passes from the plane of thought to the ontological plane, and if God's act of creation produced a ramification of the reasons from their unity in the Divine Logos, their free and conscious movement produces their re-gathering in this unity, in the Logos Divine. This is the notion and meaning that Saint Maximus attributes to created reason, therefore drawing a more general conclusion, he says that "everything in the world is made by God rational and worthy of the understanding Spirit"⁵.

Reason as the organ of thinking things indicates the world of intelligence or intelligent knowledge. It is either intelligence (with its intuitive-intellectual and discursive-rational valence), or the object of intellect (the concept, judgment or reasoning), or the expression of the object of understanding (the word or term, sentence, argumentation and, in general, speech). In the Greek language, the reason is expressed by the term "logos", which means both reason and word. In this sense, the Greeks defined man as the animal that has the logos. "The word, says Father Dumitru Popescu, is the expression of reason and through its purpose of maintaining communion and love, it is the expression of the relationship between an I and a you"⁶. In Greek philosophy, the concept of "logos" in addition to the usual term of reason includes both the meaning and the cause of what exists, or better said, everything finds its justification and motivation if it has a logos, a reason for being. Logos, therefore, designates not only the ordinary word, but also the deep reason of those who are (God) and those who exist. Reason therefore also involves the word, and the word is always the word of

³ Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua*, PG. 91, col. 1108A

⁴ D. Stăniloae, *The Immortal Image of God*, Metropolis of Oltenia, Craiova 1987, p. 37

⁵ Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, PG. 91, col. 1404C

⁶ Dumitru Popescu, *Jesus Christ Pantocrator*, Ed. IBM al BOR, Bucharest 2005, p. 430

a person directed to another person as stated by Father Dumitru Stăniloae. In this sense we say that reason is a function of the person who is in a relationship with another person.

The Logos, the personal Reason, at the fullness of time hypostasizes human nature in Himself, resulting in a culminating personal human achievement. God "accommodates" the law of nature in a way above nature, guarding both it and Himself unchanged, so that creation is maintained in the ambiance of God which strengthens both spirit and reason. Divine reason strengthens and enlightens human reason, making it master over the sensible rationality of matter, His human will being deified by the divine. The Word through His Incarnation did not alter the nature that God and the Word made, says Father Dumitru Stăniloae, but He deified nature. Because nothing natural, like nature, is opposed to Him who is the cause of nature. And if the Word had the natural will as a man, he certainly willed those that He as God planted in nature when He established it through creation⁷.

Between Divine Reason and created reason, says Saint Maximus the Confessor, there is a supreme personal affinity or love, the world being rational and related to God. God endowed man with reason after the pattern of His Reason, or more properly He endowed him with His image as Supreme Reason. "God created man incorruptibly and made him in the image of his being" (Wisdom of Solomon 2,23). The image of God refers to reason, will, and feeling as attributes of the soul in man. Man is thus endowed with a soul that has a mind, reason, and feeling. Mind, reason and feeling have a double cognitive function in man: one understanding and one sensitive.

That is why Saint Gregory of Nyssa talks about the "feeling of the mind" this being nothing more than a feeling of God's presence or of spiritual realities. That is why reason on the one hand defines a thing and on the other hand, expresses it. The expressed product of reason is words made external and the unexpressed product is inner words. In this sense, Greek philosophy uses the same term "logos" for both reason and word, both meanings of logos uniting things and persons between them. "The following comparison, says Basile Tatakis, clearly shows the mystical attitude of Saint Maximus the Confessor. You pray, in the atrium when you abandon yourself against nature, and sensible knowledge; Sacrifice in the temple if you go to the truth, as it is according to our nature, through the soul, the reason, and the mind. Finally, you bring glory to the altar if you only perform the supernatural work of the mind"⁸.

Besides, mysticism is not a subjective state of mind, linked to the psychological state of man, but it has an objective character; it involves coming out of oneself and entering a relationship with the Supreme Person, a spiritual encounter.

CONCLUSION

With the passage of time, in the spirit of modern thinking, the description of human nature in terms of knowledge, focused only on the powers of the human mind due to the autonomy of science and technology, which claim to explain everything that exists. Thus, the truth does not come from God, nor from a public authority, imposed by tradition, but from the authority of individual reasoning, and the individual self is defined by the capacity for autonomous judgment, by individual reason. If the ancient thought spoke of a human nature full of transcendental capacities, of the knowledge of the transcendent infinity, modern thought focuses on the autonomy of the man dominated by instincts who leads a permanent

⁷ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Second Edition, vol III, Ed. IBM of BOR, Bucharest, 1997, p. 203

⁸ Basile Tatakis, *Byzantine Philosophy*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest 2013, p. 127

struggle for survival and the acquisition of material goods. The only generally valid explanation is given by technique, empirical research and science. If the thinking of the ancient philosophers also implied some religious experience, together with modern rationalism and empiricism, religion is excluded from the systems of knowledge of man and the world, although in the recent period certain steps have been taken to establish a dialogue between science and faith. By replacing God with the man of science, the Renaissance contributed to the intellectual desacralization and dehumanization of man.

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AKRASIA, WEAKNESS OF THE WILL AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD

PhD. Roberto Parra DORANTES,
Associate Professor at Universidad del Caribe,
MEXICO,
Email: rdparra@ucaribe.edu.mx

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of akrasia (committing wrong actions while knowing them to be wrong, also known as weakness of the will or incontinence) has puzzled philosophers at least since the time of Socrates, who nevertheless concluded that it is never instantiated in reality, since according to him any person who has knowledge of the good will always act rightly, and thus the only reason people ever commit wrong deeds is ignorance. Many other philosophers, including Aristotle, have thought that acratia actions exist and are actually quite frequent, and they have tried to explain akrasia in a way that stays true to those appearances. In this article the position of Aristotle on this topic is presented and then contrasted with that of Donald Davidson; after finding similarities in both approaches, a hypothesis about the relation between akrasia and the emotions is defended, and temporary forgetfulness is proposed as the underlying mechanism through which this phenomenon operates.

Keywords: *Akrasia; weakness of the will; Aristotle.*

INTRODUCTION

Aristotle defines the incontinent man, or *akrates*, as one who commits wrong actions knowing them to be wrong, thus departing from the judgment of reason. Common sense and experience seem to prove conclusively that such cases exist: briefly put, people often do things they know they should not do. Socrates, however —as Aristotle explains—, stated that if knowledge is present in the agent, it and only it can be able to govern his deeds, being impossible for any other principle to dominate knowledge possessed by the subject of the action “and drag it around like a slave”. (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1145b; it is a quote from Plato, *Protagoras*, 352b) From this statement it follows that, according to Socrates, no one ever really does evil knowingly since all wrong actions are performed because of ignorance and *akrasia* does not really exist. Aristotle is ready to point out that this theory “manifestly disagrees with the facts”, and takes this problem as the starting point for his analysis.

Note that this problem is similar to what Augustine calls *concupiscentia*, and is a problem that generalizes to questions about sin and faith. For one who knows righteous conduct, is sin possible? For one who has sincere faith, is even momentary doubt possible?¹

¹ Augustine, for example, says “‘To will is present with me, but to do that which is good I find not.’... These are the words of a man set under the law and not yet under grace. He who is not yet under grace *does not do the good he wills but the evil which he does not will*, being overcome by concupiscentia . . . There is nothing easier for a man under the law than *to will to do good and yet to do evil*.” (*Ad Simplicianus*, letter 1; quoted by Ann A. Pang-White in “The Fall of Humanity: Weakness of the Will and Moral Responsibility in the Later Augustine”, 2001, 58; emphasis added).

1. ARISTOTLE ON AKRASIA

Aristotle's study of *akrasia*, which occupies most of sections 2-10 of *NE*² book VII, can be interpreted in at least two different ways: as an attack on Socrates' theory to prove that it is possible for someone to knowingly act in a wrong way, or as an attempt to find a way to fit Socrates' theory with the "facts" (people often seem to act wrongly knowing that they are doing so) and thus save it. Aristotle's goal when introducing this study is clearly stated by himself before starting the discussion:

Our proper course with this subject [*akrasia*] as with others will be to present the various views about it, and then, after first reviewing the difficulties they involve, finally to establish if possible all or, if not all, the greater part and the most important of the opinions generally held with respect to these states of mind; since if the discrepancies can be solved, and a residuum of current opinion left standing, the true view will have been sufficiently established. (*NE*, 1145b)

As we can observe from this, then, that Aristotle's stated strategy consists simply in trying to solve the difficulties posed by the most authoritative opinions received on this matter after all the facts about it have been presented, and if that is possible, his goal—to arrive at a satisfactory explanation of *akrasia*— will have been achieved.

Aristotle explores the possibility that the ignorance that allows incontinent or *akratic* action, which Socrates speaks of, is of a special kind. He draws a distinction between two forms of "knowing"; first, as possessing knowledge, and, second, as making use of knowledge. It is possible for someone to possess knowledge and not make use of it, that is, not consider it when acting (*NE*, 1146b). Although Aristotle does not use an example to clarify this point, it would seem to be a situation of the general type in which someone momentarily forgets a certain fact or norm that he knows when performing a certain action, such as leaving home and forgetting his keys. The agent knew he would soon need to enter his home again and for this he would need his keys; he knew this in the sense that he possessed this information but did not use it in acting. Thus, Aristotle states that it is not surprising at all that someone does what he knows to be wrong if he does not make use of that knowledge and consider it to be wrong at that time.

While developing this point, Aristotle turns to the explanation of action using the concept of a practical syllogism. (*NE*, 1147a) This syllogism is composed of two premises, namely, a universal one which states that there are certain kinds of things that are in some way desirable (because they are healthy, or pleasurable, or good) and a particular one which claims to be in the presence at that time of such a thing. The conclusion or consequence of such practical syllogism—just as for a theoretical syllogism is assent— would be an action. Thus, Aristotle affirms that it is possible for the *akrates* to possess both premises of syllogism, to have knowledge of them, and not apply them, that is, not make these premises operative in his reasoning at the time. It is even possible for someone in that situation, internally dominated by his passions, to speak at the same time "the language of moral knowledge" without actually making use of it, in a disposition analogous to the insane or the drunkard who correctly recites the verses of the wise Empedocles.

Moreover, it is not only possible for those who do evil not to follow the appropriate practical syllogism which they could employ if their passion did not dominate them, but it is also possible for them in that case to follow a different practical syllogism, one based on some other desire (it was already mentioned that the major premise of the practical syllogism

² *Nichomachean Ethics*, henceforth abbreviated as *NE*. The edition used is *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 19, translated by H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1934.

according to Aristotle needs only to state that something is desirable in any way) that moves the agent away from what reason dictates. Aristotle says:

When therefore there is present in the mind on the one hand a universal judgement forbidding you to taste and on the other hand a universal judgement saying ‘All sweet things are pleasant,’ and a minor premise ‘Yonder thing is sweet’ (and it is this minor premise that is active), and when desire is present at the same time, then, though the former universal judgement says ‘Avoid that thing,’ the desire leads you to it (since desire can put the various parts of the body in motion. (*NE*, 1147a)

This is how, according to Aristotle, it is possible for *akrasia* or incontinence to be practiced “under the influence of reason and an opinion [which is] contrary to that reason, but not in itself, but only by accident, for *it is the appetite and not the opinion* which would actually contradict it”. (*NE*, 1147b, emphasis added)

This explanation achieves the objectives set by Aristotle at the beginning; on the one hand he has explained how it is possible to act wrongly knowing that one acts wrongly, and, on the other, he has in a way rescued Socrates’ theory, explaining that in these cases there is a special ignorance that does not conflict with the fact that the agent possesses, before, after and during his action, the relevant knowledge. Recognizing this special type of ignorance is what distinguishes Aristotle’s position from that of Socrates.

This kind of ignorance does not consist simply in temporarily misjudging a wrong action as a good one and then proceeding to execute it. That would be mere ignorance. Something that distinguishes the incontinent man from the unbridled man is that only the first one judges rightly, before acting, his action as wrong. The same thing happens at a later moment, when the *akrates*, after having executed the action, again correctly judges it as bad. This distinguishes the incontinent from the unbridled too, for only the first one, and not the latter, repents of his action. Aristotle says: “If we ask how the unrestrained man’s ignorance is dissipated and he returns to a state of knowledge, the explanation is the same as in the case of drunkenness and sleep, and is not peculiar to failure of self-restraint.” (*NE*, 1147b) Making use of an analogy borrowed from medicine, Aristotle says that being unbridled is a continuous disorder, like tuberculosis. Incontinence, on the other hand, is not continuous but episodic, like epilepsy.

We can notice Aristotle’s explanation is not complete, even if he achieved what he set out to do. In the end we are left with no account of exactly how it is that knowledge and reason can be overcome by an appetite in incontinent action. Moreover, we can wonder, based on this account, how the particular mechanism that allows for this type of incontinent ignorance to which he refers is activated, or why after the incontinent action knowledge systematically returns like a hangover. Borrowing some terms from present-day technology, Aristotle’s explanation amounts to this: the knowledge the subject possesses is like the information stored on a computer’s hard drive. This information cannot be useful (is not operational) unless it or some portion of it is accessed and converted into RAM, or random-access memory, where it is temporarily held in order to be actively used. The *akrates* possesses all the relevant information, but in acting wrongly he omits the important step of making this relevant information operational, of taking it through reflection and deliberation to the place where it can actually be used. Well, even assuming that this analogy is correct, it has not yet been explained why it is that the *akrates* fails to operationalize that knowledge.³

³ A different and interesting approach is put forth by Robinson (1975). Aristotle is assuming that (right) moral principles and judgments are a proper object of knowledge. However, we can also think of them not as truths to get right or discoveries to be made, but consider them instead as resolutions or norms to be adopted. Practical

2. DAVIDSON ON WEAKNESS OF THE WILL

Donald Davidson's approach to this issue (1980), presented in his article "How is Weakness of the Will Possible", is fundamentally similar to Aristotle's, albeit with some qualifications. For Davidson, the most important thing in characterizing weakness of the will (the term he uses for what Aristotle calls *akrasia*) is not if the agent acted rightly or wrongly, with or without true knowledge, but simply the fact that the agent acted against what he himself judged to be best. Davidson attempts to circumscribe the problem within the area of philosophy of mind and philosophy of action, without resorting to ethical considerations, or even considerations of pleasure and pain or prudence, which have traditionally been seen as essentially linked to the problem of incontinence.

To make this clear he uses an example of incontinent action that has nothing to do with morality or even pleasure: someone, after a busy day, finally goes to sleep but then remembers that he has not brushed his teeth. This person weighs his reasons for and against getting out of bed to brush them. Taking into account that his teeth are strong and that getting up would probably cause him to lose sleep and then perhaps not be able to sleep at all, he judges that overall it is better to stay in bed. But he then gets up to brush his teeth nonetheless. Examples of this kind are not uncommon: on many occasions we sacrifice what we judge best in favor of courtesy, shyness, costume, guilt, etc. Irrationality is what interests Davidson here, and what seems irrational in such cases, he says, is just the fact that the agent acts against his own assessments, even if in the end the agent ends up doing something he judged to be, in a certain way, desirable but not preferable.

According to Davidson, any explanation of intentional action which makes reference to the agent's reasons for acting must allow the conflict of reasons, which in turn must allow the conflict between the agent's desires or motivations. Thus, a person may have reasons to perform an action but at the same time have reasons against that action, or reasons for other courses of action that are incompatible with the first. Davidson points out that Aristotle's proposal of a practical syllogism which has as its conclusion an action (or an intention) seems not to allow for that, since it is sufficient for the agent to have a certain desire and a certain appropriate belief for a practical inference to occur, and thus also action or at least intention, to spring immediately.

Davidson instead represents desires and reasons that allow for such conflicts in the form of *prima facie* judgments, that is, different judgments that may identify the same thing at the same time as both desirable and undesirable, for different reasons, which are not contradictory. Action does not spring merely from coming to believe that a certain action falls in the category of being desirable. The connection between reason and action cannot be merely logical, but must be somehow causal. Thus, it is possible (as anyone facing a difficult decision can testify) for sets of reasons that are directed to incompatible actions to coexist within the mind of the agent coexist, and in the end only one of these sets determines the resulting action.

Weakness of the will then, according to Davidson, occurs in the context of a conflict between reasons. The desires or motivational states that support those reasons are

principles, in this view, do not tell us how the world is constituted, but instead are a vehicle by which the agent takes a stance on the world. From this perspective, the *akrates* is not someone who acts based on an alleged contradiction in his soul; he is instead someone who acts against a generalized decision he himself has taken previously, and who is likely to later regret his action for that reason. Aristotle gets close to this approach when he compares the *akrates* to a city that promulgates all the right laws, but does not enforce them, while the evil man is like a city that enforces its laws, but those laws are wrong. (*NE*, 1152a)

represented as judgments that support certain action in a conditioned, *prima facie* manner. What we call our “best judgment” is something that results from the process of having considered all the reasons that may be relevant, and takes the form of “after all considerations have been made, it is better to do *x* than *y*”, but this is *still* a *prima facie* judgment. If the reasoning uses *prima facie* judgments as premises, the operation of removing the *prima facie* clause from the conclusion invalidates the reasoning. On the other hand, the judgments that are necessary to form an intention (which is in turn necessary for there to be intentional action) are not *prima facie*, but unconditional judgments, of the type “*x* is better than *y*” simpliciter.

Therefore, says Davidson, there is no error that can be properly called logical in not using the best judgment as the determinant for action, because there is no proper deductive procedure to find out what set of reasons, when there is a conflict, must have primacy. From deliberating about the comparative value of his various reasons, the agent may arrive at an “all relevant considerations taken in to account” conditional judgment which states that “reason *x* is, *prima facie*, better than reason *y*”. But there is nothing that logically precludes the possibility of the agent forming anyway an unconditional judgment to the effect of saying that “*y* is better than *x*”, and guide his action with the latter.

In summary, for intentional action to be possible, Davidson says, an agent must have a desire and a belief that relate in the appropriate manner forming a reason which then causes that action. For the agent there may be different reasons or sets of reasons leading to incompatible potential actions. The “best judgment” of the agent will always be that which weighs in all the reasons (for and against) a certain action, but an action does not always need to be based on such a “best judgment”. An agent can still make use of any of the other conflicting reasons or sets of reasons in order to act; such an action is possible, and explainable.

3. MOTIVATION AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD

Davidson’s explanation of weakness of the will, although more sophisticated, is not very different to that of Aristotle, who concluded that the *akrates* can possess knowledge and yet not use it in his actions. Davidson and Aristotle, each in their own way, solve the logical difficulty which apparently underlay the proper approach to the problem of explaining the possibility of *akrasia*. Resolving this issue is an important and necessary step in explaining *akrasia*, but the most fundamental question, about motivation, remains: why do we sometimes act against our best judgment?

In Davidson’s approach, incontinent action can be characterized as a case in which an agent acts intentionally reasoning from a more limited set of his own reasons for action rather than from another more complete set of his own reasons for action, which is equally available to him. We can ask now: can the explanation of why this type of reasoning occurs (which evidently has something that sounds irrational, or at least not rational) include the ingredient that the agent intentionally chooses to reason from a more limited set of reasons?

The answer is no. Examine this example written in second person but loosely based on real events that happened to the author of this paper: you are rushing to an important appointment, a job interview on which the future wellbeing of you and your family could depend, and along the way you find in a park a group of fragile senior citizens who ask you for help to find the way to a nearby museum. Your reasons for getting to the appointment as soon as possible are pressing; on the other hand, these senior citizens, although lost, do not seem to be in danger and most probably will be helped by someone else if you don’t. You

know that if you stop even for a moment, it is possible you will end up walking with them all the way until they find the museum in question. You think about this for a second. You remember your important appointment and judge it would be best to not stop under the circumstances. But then you stop and help them anyway. This action is intentional, voluntary and purposeful, but it is contrary to your “all things considered” best judgment.

According to the explanation of incontinence we have given, the person in this case reasoned from a more limited set of reasons (for example, “we must help those who need it whenever possible”) than a more complete one that was at his disposal (for example, “we must help those who need it whenever possible, unless doing so may bring serious harm to ourselves and not doing so will probably not bring serious harm to that person; moreover, we must also look after the wellbeing of our loved ones, especially our own family”). He helps the group of senior citizens intentionally, but did he intentionally choose to act upon a more limited set of reasons rather than upon the best and more complete reasons that were available to him?

If it were possible to make such a choice (to act upon a more limited set of reasons rather than upon a more complete set), making that choice itself would count as a distinct instance of *akrasia* or weakness of the will, an acratia reasoning, which then in turn would have to be explained in a similar way, and thus *ad infinitum*. In the example, the person did not choose to reason defectively; he simply chose to help the group of senior citizens, by reasoning defectively. This shows that, although particular incontinent actions are intentional, choosing to reason defectively and hence act incontinently cannot be intentional (it cannot be a new case of incontinence to reason in the manner that leads to incontinent action). If the error of reasoning from a more limited set of reasons than the best available consisted in somehow judging that in this case it is better to reason from the more limited set than from the more complete set after making a comparison between the two options and weighing in the reasons in favor of each (for example, reasoning that “it would be boring or mechanical to always and necessarily conform to our best rules of practical reasoning, sometimes you have to reason in another way under specific circumstances”), that, it seems, would turn our reasoning that leads to an incontinent action into an intentional choice of acting incontinently. A prominent alternative explanation of how making that error is possible, without any comparative judgment between which set of reasons we are to reason upon, is *temporary forgetfulness*, or a special kind of temporary forgetfulness: we forget for a while that there is an alternative (and better) way of reasoning that would lead to a different conclusion.

By “temporary forgetfulness” I am referring here to those cases in which, when recalling the relevant information after the crucial moment has passed, we are sincerely authorized to say that we *knew better*, and that we should have remembered or kept it in mind at that relevant moment; for example, when we left home without bringing the keys with us. This kind of forgetfulness can be due to a deficiency in our attention (which was at the relevant moment focused on something else), which caused us not to take into account an aspect we consider relevant. This lack of care may be similar to the one displayed when one acts under some kind of pressure or coercion or stress or threat, or under the effect of some drug. In cases of weakness of will, however, we must discard these and similar circumstances, because, by definition, it is a requirement of incontinent action to have been performed freely, intentionally and for a purpose.

The only plausible alternative that remains open to be the cause of this kind of forgetfulness (that there is a better way to reason) in clear cases of weakness of the will is

one that has to do with an interesting aspect of emotions. Emotions share the characteristic of frequently making the agent focus an unproportioned amount of his attention on a partial aspect of a situation, overestimating that aspect.⁴ I think it's important to note here that someone can act influenced by an emotion without necessarily acting in a wild, passionate, agitated way. Someone can fail to act (that is, perform an omission) influenced mainly by an emotion, such as when disappointment causes someone to lose enthusiasm for a project.

The example that Davidson puts together in a more or less artificial way to make it clear that an action can be incontinent without going against the moral or prudential considerations of the agent or be performed in some wild or agitated manner (his example is about someone brushing his teeth), is described by him as something that seems to be closely linked to emotions: the man who incontinently brushes his teeth in Davidson's example, does so because "his feeling that he should brush his teeth is too strong for him". I suggest that this is not an accident, and that in any example of incontinent action (whether or not it has to do with morals) some emotional element that plays an important role can be found.

We can easily admit that recognizing the reliability of our beliefs and the correctness of certain reasoning available to us are not always the factors that drive us to act; many times we let ourselves be led to action by those alternative desires that are attractive to us for other reasons, for example, because they cause us certain emotions (even very calm or delicate emotions, such as benevolence or aesthetic delight), without there being in us even a trace of a calculation of possible benefits to obtain or harms to avoid compared to our other options, and thus circumventing even the most basic instrumental rationality that accords to our own judgments and values.

Clear instances of incontinent action would then be due, if this explanation is correct, to the fact that certain beliefs (broadly speaking, including perceptions and other cognitive states) have a power of casing in us certain feelings or emotions that make us focus our attention on some partial features of the situation and temporarily forget relevant considerations (specifically, that there are alternative and more complete ways of reasoning). In helping the group of senior citizens in the example above the person does so because some emotion in him makes him temporarily focus his entire attention on their present problem and their circumstances, and for a moment that constitutes his universe of reasons to act; he does not forget at that moment that he has an important appointment, but he does temporarily forget that having that important appointment is a good reason for in this case reasoning in an alternative way and not stopping.

CONCLUSION

Aristotle and Donald Davidson ultimately explain *akrasia* or weakness of the will in a similar way, by saying that at the time of action the incontinent agent loses touch with the knowledge he has, or with his own best judgment.

Neither of them, however, gets to the bottom of the question on how the mechanism that allows *akrasia* to happen is set into motion. According to the hypothesis that has been

⁴ Descartes reflects on this aspect of emotions when he writes in *The Passions of the Soul* (section 138): "the passions nearly always exaggerate the size and importance of the goods and evils they represent, inciting us to pursue the goods and flee from the evils with more ardour and zeal than is appropriate. Likewise, we see that beasts are often deceived by lures, and in trying to avoid small evils they throw themselves into worse ones. That is why we must use experience and reason to distinguish good from evil and know their true value, so as not to take the one for the other and not to rush into anything immoderately." (Translation by Jonathan Bennett.)

presented and argued for in this paper, that mechanism is a temporary forgetfulness that is brought about by the power that emotions can have to make parts of a situation appear more important than they are.

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ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION IN THE CHRISTIAN MORAL EVALUATION

Rev. Prof. PhD. Leontin POPESCU,
Faculty of History, Philosophy and Theology,
“Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați,
ROMANIA
Email: prleonpopescu@yahoo.it

ABSTRACT

Organ transplant medicine faces not only technical problems but also moral and cultural ones. Future medical science must seriously consider the possibility of creating a true culture of solidarity and of the gift that can be expressed through organ transplantation. The free and conscious act of donation and organ transplantation must continue to be of high moral value in the future: it is a heroic service in the service of life, but it is also a precious opportunity to exercise and use Christian love and compassion for one's brothers and sisters to the end, i.e. to the point of self-donation.

Keywords: *transplant; gift; donor; retrieval; morality.*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of organ transplantation has become part of the daily life in contemporary society as a result of the great progress made in surgical techniques and medical sciences, arousing great interest due to the hope of even total healing that some people have gained from these extraordinary results. A burning, painful and difficult matter which has opened up a great deal of medical, legal, philosophical, psychological and no less theological debate on the subject. This is because the current culture on the issue of transplants is marked by numerous ambiguities. If from a normative-legal¹ point of view most of the aspects concerning organ transplantation have been clarified, from a moral-theological point of view, even if there is an almost unanimous agreement of the Christian denominations, it should be noted that, from this perspective, there are still many things to be explained and clarified. Thus, for example, the Orthodox Church in its ecumenical dimension did not provide a final answer, but locally² defined organ transplantation as a "*deed of love*,

¹ In Romania, a new law on the removal and transplantation of human tissues and organs was published in the Official Bulletin of January 13, 1998. The law comprises 5 chapters, which state, among other things, the purpose of the removal and transplantation of human tissues and organs and also what donor and recipient mean, etc. cf. Gheorghe SCRIPCARU, Aurora CIUCĂ, Vasile ASTĂRĂSTOAE, Călin SCRIPCARU, *Bioethics, life sciences and human rights*, Polirom, Iași, 1998, p. 140-143.

² See Document of the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church of December 10, 1999, *Fundamental Positions on the Morality of Transplantation*, paras. 8-9; Document of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, *Fundamentals of Social Doctrine*, Moscow, 2000, translated in French. Paris 2007, chap. 11, par. 7; see also: "Fundamentals of the Social Understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church", in: Ioan I. ICĂ jr., Germano MARANI, *Social Thinking of the Church*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2022, p. 46-248; Document of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Organ Transplantation*, in: Opera social-filantropică/Bioetica/transplantul de organe, <https://patriarhia.ro/transplantul-de-organe-1451.html>; Dr. Marc ANDRONIKOF, "An Orthodox Perspective on Organ Transplantation", in: *Theological Review*, no. 1, (1998), Sibiu, pp. 105-110, here p. 105.

dedication and charity" addressed to one's fellow human being³. The Church thus blesses the work of doctors in their life-sustaining exercise, but in the wake of enthusiasm about the conquests of medicine, it cannot become a vehicle for advertising a slogan: "donate and save", because otherwise it would abandon its true purpose by falling into the spirit of consumerism and secularization⁴. Orthodox Christianity should not promote science without conscience and moral responsibility. This is why constant spiritual evaluation and active discernment of stated and unstated goals are necessary when it comes to medical research⁵. It is true that technological progress in the medical sciences has also brought an enthusiasm that has imposed itself on daily life, giving an even greater impetus to man's desire to acquire an earthly immortality, a tendency that carries with it the danger of losing his orientation towards the ultimate goal of his existence: becoming holy⁶. We can very well see how fluctuating and even limited this enthusiasm for organ transplants is when a statistical assessment is conducted on how many lives are saved by organ transplants compared to how many are destroyed by abortions and all the instruments of family planning⁷. According to Christian tradition, organ transplantation in its elementary forms has been practiced since Christian antiquity and the Church did not forbid it, but, on the contrary, approved it as something willed by God, as we can see in St. Spyridon in the 4th century, and in the 6th century in Rome at the time of Pope Felix IV (526-530), the leg transplant performed by the Christian doctors Cosmas and Damian⁸. There are countless examples, either from Holy Scripture (Jesus Sirach 38:1-9) or from Holy Tradition, of various miraculous healings. We will only add that the Church has never been against the medical act, nor has it ever urged its faithful to avoid medicine and medication. On the contrary, the Church has regarded medicine as a gift from God that comes to comfort the sick⁹, and the Christian doctor is considered a practicing member who knows that his act is charged with sacredness¹⁰. This can very well be seen throughout the history of the Church where we find saints¹¹, bishops and men of the Church who studied medicine or had medical knowledge, and last but not least from liturgical worship where we find a number of prayers and ecumenical prayers for the sick. Moreover, one of the seven Sacraments is dedicated to the sick.

³ See in this respect the study: Sebastian MOLDOVAN, "Organ transplantation and the Christian-Orthodox argument of love", in: *Romanian Journal of Bioethics*, Vol. 7, No. 4, October - December 2009, p. 84-95, here p. 91: "The moral evaluation of organ transplantation, which its social validation implies, requires the acknowledgement of the most profound anthropological changes it entails, and this calls for a broader perspective than that of the organ crisis. What the argument of sacrificial love helps us see is precisely the obviousness of the situation: organ transplantation is a confrontation with death, and therefore the moral issue is to assess our choices when faced with death. Organ transplantation is in fact an attempt at a new survival strategy for humanity, in addition to the natural one of procreation".

⁴ Georgios MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, Byzantine Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 473.

⁵ Costel CIULINARU, "Organ transplantation and the value of the human person", in *Studia UBB Bioethica*, LV, 1, 2010, p. 37-49, here p. 40.

⁶ Pr. prof. dr. John BRECK, *The Sacred Gift of Life*, Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 309.

⁷ G. MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, p. 473.

⁸ ACTA SANCTORUM, Septembris 27, Tomus septimus, Societe des Bollandistes, 1760, p. 461, par. 187.

⁹ G. MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, p. 474.

¹⁰ Pavel CHIRILĂ, *The Concept of Christian Medicine*, Ed. Christiana, Bucharest, 2001, p.16-17.

¹¹ See the lives of St. Basilus Magnus and St. John Chrysostom, considered the protector of epilepsy sufferers; also equally St. Gregory of Nyssa; in the 5th century Nemesius of Emesa wrote a treatise, *On the Nature of Man*, highly appreciated in the Middle Ages for his outstanding medical knowledge: cf. Johannes QUASTEN, *Patrology*, vol. II, Marietti, Genoa, 1969, p. 354-358; Paul of Eghina: writes a medical encyclopaedia in which, for the first time, the disease of cancer is mentioned: cf. Nicolae Vătămanu-Gheorghe Brătescu, *A History of Medicine*, Albatros Publishing House, Bucharest, 1975, p. 156.

1. ATTITUDES IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLD FOR AND AGAINST ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION

The impressive scientific breakthroughs are most often seen as autonomous, merely the fruit of human intellectual prowess, unrelated to God¹². Thus, they can be used without any limit or moral norm because they are only human. If they serve man and the world, and are not merely an end in themselves, this entails the uniqueness and holiness of every human being¹³.

From a theological point of view, health corresponds to the normal state of human nature, that of the heavenly condition, and therefore it can be considered a commodity. But for man, bodily health cannot be an asset acquired forever. Moreover, in this world, it never actually exists in an absolute and permanent way, it is nothing but a partial and provisional equilibrium, and one might even say, a state of less illness. The very notion of ideal health escapes our human grasp because it cannot refer to any possible experience for us now. Health, in our present condition, is always, in some balance¹⁴.

The Holy Fathers equate human health to the state of perfection to which it was destined by its very nature. St. Basilus Magnus, in answering Question 55 of the Great Rules¹⁵, says that medicine is an art that comes from God to heal the body as a school and bestow wisdom on the soul. And he draws a very beautiful parallel between the healing of the body from suffering through the art of medicine and the cleansing of the soul from sins. If, to heal the body, - he says - we endure surgery, cauterization and drink bitter medicines, so, also, to heal the soul we must withstand the harshness of reprimanding words and the bitter medicines of epigrams. What St. Basilus Magnus wants to point out, according to the biblical example in the New Testament where the Saviour first cures the soul of sins and then cures the sickness of the body, is that there is a close connection between the sickness of the body and the sickness of the soul. Medicine is an art in the vision of the Holy Father, but, like any earthly art, it is limited and, therefore, a good collaboration is necessary between the art of healing the body and the art of healing the soul, which is the spirit. Healing both body and soul - he says in the same question 55 - must be undertaken with gratitude towards God for His care which sometimes manifests itself unnoticed and, at other times, through tangible signs, so that we can readily acknowledge His grace¹⁶. True healing

¹² Mircea Gelu BUTA, Liliana BUTA, "The struggle for the ethics of life", in: *Studia UBB Bioethica*, LVII, 1, 2012, p. 25 – 31, here p. 28.

¹³ Pr. prof. dr. Leontin POPESCU, *Suffering as proof of freedom*, TRITONIC Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019, p. 23.

¹⁴ L. POPESCU, *Suffering as proof of freedom*, p. 23.

¹⁵ S. BASILIUS MAGNUS, "Regulae fusius tractatae", in: *PG*, 31, col. 890-1050, here col.1046D -1047A: "Et quemadmodum illic secari, uri, et amara medicamenta sumere non recusamus, corporis sanadicausa: ita etiam hic, sermonem obiurgatorium quantumvis secantem, et amarulenta reprehensionum remedia pro animae medela operae pretium est perferre [...] Atque hoc etiam, quod in morbis inveteratis, per longum tempus, perque auxilia simul dolorem creantia et varia, exspectatur sanitas indicio est, animae quoque peccata per sedulas preces et diuturnam poenitentiam, ac disciplinam severiorem, quam ratio ad sanationem nobis sufficientem esse monuerit, a nobis corrigi debere"; ("And, the same as in the case of medicine, we do not refuse to be cut, burnt and take bitter medicine in order to heal the body, so also here, no matter how sharp a speech of rebuke and bitter remedies of criticism, the effort of the soul is worth it [...] And, just as with chronic diseases, where cure requires much time and various treatments for pains, this is an indication that, in the same way, the sins of the soul must also be corrected by us through diligent prayers and prolonged penance and through more severe discipline, as reason also tells us what would suffice in order to heal")

¹⁶ S. BASILIUS MAGNUS, "Regulae fusius tractatae", in: *PG*, 31, col. 1047D: "Collatum autem nobis sanitatis beneficium, sive per vinum oleo admistum, ut in eo qui incidit in latrones, sive per ficus, ut in ezechia, cum gratiarum actionem recepimus. Nec quidquam differre arbitremur, sive modo onvisibili Deus nos curet, sive

is achieved when it concerns both soul and body, as we see in the New Testament, when Our Saviour Jesus Christ heals both soul and body. Therefore, according to the urging of the saints and ecclesial recommendations, every Christian will not avoid medicine and its benefits, but will always seek the remedy and the most skillful physician to cure any illness: simple, chronic or incurable¹⁷. Thus, the Church discovers the meaning of the spiritual benefit which the extension of life by transplantation should and is desirable to bring to the recipient, so that he does not seek only the extension of physical life, but, in this, he may discover the divine will which continues to give him time to do good in the world¹⁸.

The real organ and tissue transplants, however, were carried out in modern times¹⁹, as pharmaceutical developments in the field of immunology and anti-rejection drugs, particularly Cyclosporine²⁰, led to the creation of specialized transplant centers²¹. In these centers, less than 50 years after the first human transplant, some 350,000 kidney transplants, 40,000 liver transplants, 36,000 heart transplants, 4,200 lung transplants and around 1,600 pancreas transplants²² have been performed worldwide. In addition to these statistics, there are the very long so-called "waiting lists" of patients, each with a medical file containing all the clinical information needed to identify a patient who is compatible at the right time for a transplant with a high success rate. These great medical achievements in this regard cannot overlook the complex moral issues inherent in the whole transplantation issue. The consent of the donor and the recipient, the ascertainment of the death of the person from whom an organ is removed, the conditions under which an organ is harvested from a person who is still alive or from a dead body, are just a few of the moral issues to be faced in this field of activity. Moreover, the whole issue of organ transplantation can be said to be moral in

corporeum quiddam adhibeat: quae corporelia saepenumero efficacius non conducunt ad munus Domini intelligendum"; (*And good health has been bestowed on us, whether through wine mixed with oil, as in the case of the one who fell among robbers, or through figs, as in the case of Hezekiah, we receive them with gratitude. And let us not resolve to delay anything, whether God cares for us in an invisible way, or whether He uses a material buffer that often leads us to a more effective understanding of God's work.*)

¹⁷ S. IOANNES CHYSOSTOMUS, "Epistolae ad Olympiadem", in: *PG* 52, col. 549-596, here col. 590: "Quamobrem te oro, ut et varios peritosque medicos adhibeas, et iis medicamentis utaris, quae huiusmodi morbospellere queant"; (*Therefore, please hire various medical experts and use those medicines that can ward off such diseases*)

¹⁸ Ștefan ILOAIE, "Morality and Life. Documents of the Romanian Orthodox Church on bioethics", in: *Romanian Journal of Bioethics*, vol. 7, No. 2, April-June 2009, p.18-29, here p. 20.

¹⁹ In 1954, at the Birgham Hospital in Boston, the first kidney transplant between twins was performed; in 1962, at the same hospital, the first kidney transplant from a dead body was performed; in 1966, at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, the first pancreas transplant was performed; then in 1967, the first liver transplant was performed at Denver, and on December 13 of the same year, the first heart transplant was performed at Groote Shuur Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa - cf. Dionigi TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, Piemme, Casale Monferrato, ³2001, p. 488.

²⁰ Cf. Francesco ROSSI – Vincenzo CUOMO – Carlo RICCARDI, *Pharmacology*, Minerva Medica Editions, Turin, 2005, p. 745-748: "Cyclosporine together with Rapamycin are identified as those that hinder the transplant rejection process (selective immunosuppressants), as they act by blocking the signal of lymphocytes whose activation and proliferation processes they inhibit"; see also: Michele ARAMINI, *Bioethics for all*, Paoline Editions, Milan, 2008, p. 229; S. MOLDOVAN, "Organ transplantation and ...", p. 85.

²¹ Over the last 4 decades, some 1650 centres specialising in human organ transplantation have been registered worldwide. Cf. Mario CASCONI, *The Diakonia of life. Handbook of Bioethics*, EDUSC, Rome, ²2008, 428 p., p. 323.

²² M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 324.

nature, because the whole dimension of accepting organ donation and the criteria of altruism and solidarity that define donation are moral in nature²³.

In contemporary times, the progress of biotechnology has generated numerous debates not only among specialists, but also at the level of public opinion, while many important issues concerning birth and death, patients' rights and medical responsibility, scientific ethics and moral impact are all issues that challenge opinions which often remain diverse and opposed. The current situation is well-known: the human transplant field is continually expanding, ever more frontiers of knowledge and research are being conquered and opened up. Beyond the practices that are now validated or are in the process of being validated, we are faced with the creation of a genuine "transplant medicine", the outcome of a "transplant mentality"²⁴. The various Christian views, developed over time with negative or reluctant undertones regarding scientific enthusiasm, both in the West and in the East, are also part of this path of transplant culture.

In the Catholic West, due to the advance of medical scientific research, centres, institutes, schools and faculties²⁵ dedicated to bioethical research have been created in various universities, which has led to an easier dialogue between religion and science.

Western moral theology, especially the Catholic one, at the time of the first transplant, was divided into two debate fronts²⁶: one side, which rejected transplantation on the grounds that man cannot arbitrarily make decisions regarding his own body, considering organ removal and transplantation as a mutilation of the human body; and the other side, which approved of transplantation, structured itself around three principles: the principle of love or charity, the principle of solidarity and the principle of the unity or wholeness of the human being²⁷. The body thus becomes the environment or place that invites man to design his own life according to the logic of proximity²⁸. Pope Pius XI was the first to express this view in his Encyclical *Casti connubii* on December 31, 1930²⁹. In a context dealing with the problems of the Christian family, the Roman Pontiff speaks of the inviolability and integrity of the human body, reacting against those who legitimise the intervention of doctors to deprive someone of the "natural faculty" of producing offspring. We find the same endorsement of the principle of physical integrity in Pope Pius XII's 1943 *Address to the first congress on the nervous system histopathology*³⁰, where, following in the footsteps of his

²³ Michele ARAMINI-Silvana DI NAUTA, *Organ transplantation ethics. For a donation culture*, Pauline Editions, Milan, 1998, p. 17.

²⁴ D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 487.

²⁵ A simple internet search, at least for Italy, would yield a surprising number of departments and institutes dedicated to bioethical research, sponsored either by the church or the secular state.

²⁶ Cf. Giovanni Battista GUZZETTI, "Organ Transplantation in Morals and Law. Points Acquired and Discussed," in: *The Catholic School*, 84/4 (1956) 241-262; Giovanni Battista GUZZETTI, "Problems of the Fifth Commandment," in: *The Catholic School*, 86/3 (1958) 161-185.

²⁷ MAURIZIO CHIODI, *Ethics of Life. The challenges of practice and theoretical issues*, Glossa Editions, Milan, 2006, p. 375

²⁸ M. ARAMINI-S. DI NAUTA, *Organ transplantation ethics...*, p. 150.

²⁹ PIUS PP. XI, "Matrimonio christiano spectatis praesentibus familiae et societatis condicionibus, necessitatibus, erroribus, vitiis", in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volumen 22, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Romae, 1930, p. 539-592, p. here p. 566: "Nobilis quidem castorum coniugum animus commenta haec, vel sola natura duce, ut vana et turpia respuit profecto atque contemnit; et hanc naturae vocem approbat sane atque confirmat cum Dei mandatum « Non moechaberis », tum illud Christi : «Omnis, qui viderit mulierem ad conce cupiscendum eam, iam moechatus est eam in corde suo». Nullae autem humanae consuetudines vel exempla prava, nullaque progressae humanitatis species poterunt unquam huius divini praecepti vim infirmare".

³⁰ PIUS PP. XII, "De mystico Iesu Christi corpore deque nostra in eo cum Christo coniunctione", in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volumen 35, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Romae, 1943, p. 191-248, here p. 221: "Dum enim

predecessor, he reasserts the inability of a person to exercise control over his own body by depriving it of certain organs. We find the same attitude not only of acceptance, but rather of denial in a later speech in 1956 addressed to those who attended the meeting of doctors held in the town of "San Giovanni Rotondo" and who participated in the "Symposium" on the diseases affecting the "coronary arteries"³¹, where he again reiterated the principle of the wholeness and uniqueness of the human being. For all his intransigence in defending the inviolability of the integrity of the physical nature of the human person, Pius XII nevertheless acknowledges in this speech the legitimacy of organ transplants for patients in need, when he speaks of removing corneas from a dead body to be grafted onto the body of a living being in need³², giving the example of a Catholic priest (Don Gnoch) who donated corneas to two children: Silvio Colagrande and Amabile Battistello.

Later Pope John Paul II in a complex Encyclical on the value and inviolability of human life³³, with an emphasis on the 6th commandment of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not kill", expresses two moral values: the unity of the human race and brotherly love which should be the foundation of any social relationship for the protection of human life³⁴. In this pastoral, John Paul II is resolute in his defence of the embryo and equally uncompromising against abortion and euthanasia³⁵, but, at the same time, he accepts organ donation as an

in naturali corpore unitatis principium ita partes iungit, ut propria, quam vocant, subsistentia singulae prorsus careant; contra in mystico Corpore mutuae coniunctionis vis, etiamsi intima, membra ita inter se copulat, ut singula omnino fruantur persona propria"; also see: PIUS PP. XII, "At the First Congress of Histopathology of the Nervous System (September 14, 1952)," in: PIO XII, *Addresses to Physicians*, edited by F. Angelini, Rome, 1960, p. 197-198;

³¹ PIUS PP. XII, "Is qui interfuerunt Conventui medicorum, in oppido «San Giovanni Rotondo» habito, quique «Symposium» de morbis «arterias coronarias» afficientibus celebrarunt", in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volumen 48, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Romae, 1956, p. 454-474, here p. 461: "To demonstrate that the extirpation of organs necessary to the transplantation performed from one living being to another is in conformity with nature and legal, it is considered on the same footing as the extirpation of a certain physical organ made in the interest of a total physical organism. The individual's limbs would be considered here as parts of the whole organism that is humanity, in the same way - or almost - as they are parts of the individual organism of man. It is then argued that if it is permitted, if necessary, to sacrifice a particular part of the body (hand, foot, eye, ear, kidney, sexual gland) to the organism of 'man', it would also be permitted to sacrifice such a particular part to the organism of 'humanity' (in the person of one of its sick and suffering members). The purpose of this argument, to remedy or at least mitigate the evil of others, is understandable and commendable, but the method proposed and the evidence on which it is based are wrong".

³² PIUS PP. XII, "Is qui interfuerunt Conventui medicorum ...", p. 460-461.

³³ IOANNES PAULUS PP II, "Evangelium vitae", in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volumen 87, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Romae, 1995, p. 401-523.

³⁴ IOANNES PAULUS PP II, "Evangelium vitae", III57, p. 466: "Hoc in vitae iure omnis innocens homo ceteris cunctis est omnino par. Illa aequalitas fundamentum est cuiuslibet verae necessitudinis socialis, quae, ut talis reapse sit, haud potest quin veritati ipsi innitatur aequitatie, dum agnoscit unumquemque virum et feminam unamquamque tamquam personam non ut rem de qua quidlibet decerni liceat. Moralem sic ante regulam quae directam vetat hominis innocentis occisionem, « non dantur privilegia neque exceptiones: mundi esse dominum vel miserrimum omnium in terra nihil refert: prae moralibus postulatis omnes sumus omnino aequales". ("By virtue of the right to life, every innocent human being is absolutely equal to all others. This equality underpins any genuine social relationship which, to be truly so, cannot but be based on truth and justice, acknowledging and protecting every man and woman as a person and not as something to be eliminated. Confronted with the moral norm that forbids the direct suppression of an innocent human being, "there are no privileges or exceptions for anyone. To be the master of the world or the last wretch on Earth makes no difference: we are all absolutely equal when it comes to moral requirements").

³⁵ IOANNIS PAULI PP II, "Evangelium vitae", III73, p. 486: Abortus ergo et euthanasia crimina sunt quae nulla humana lex potest rata facere. Huiusmodi leges non modo conscientiam non de vincunt, verum graviter nominatimque compellunt ut iisdem per conscientiae repugnantiam officiat. ("Abortion and euthanasia are

acceptable gesture that can provide health to people in need³⁶. Along the same lines, in another speech, this time addressed to surgeons involved in organ transplants, he reiterates the unity of the human race but also expresses the fact that not everything that is technically possible is morally acceptable³⁷. In the same speech to the surgeons, John Paul II acknowledges the irreversible cessation of all brain function as a criterion for declaring a person dead, thus providing important support for the cause of transplantation. Thus, he states: *”Considering the current parameters of death - whether we refer to "encephalic" signs or to more traditional cardio-respiratory signs - the Church does not make scientific choices, but limits itself to evangelical arguments in order to compare the data offered by medical science with a unitary understanding of the person according to the Christian perspective, highlighting similarities and possible contradictions, which could jeopardize respect for human dignity. From this perspective, one could say that the recent criterion for ascertaining death mentioned above, i.e. the total and irreversible cessation of all brain activity, if applied scrupulously, does not seem to be in contrast with the essential elements of a correct anthropological understanding. Consequently, the health professional, who has professional responsibility for such an assessment, can rely on them to achieve, on a case-by-case basis, that degree of certainty in ethical judgement which moral doctrine qualifies by the term 'moral certainty', certainty which is necessary and sufficient to be able to act in an ethically correct manner. Only in the presence of this certainty will it therefore be morally legitimate to activate the technical procedures necessary to obtain the removal of the organs to be transplanted, subject to the informed consent of the donor or his legal representatives.”*³⁸.

therefore crimes that no human law can claim to legitimise. Laws of this kind not only create no conscience obligation, but rather entail a serious and precise obligation to oppose them by conscientious objection”).

³⁶ IOANNES PAULUS PP II, “Evangelium vitae”, IV86, p. 498: “Quos inter plurimi ducenda est organorum donatio rationibus ethica disciplina probabilibus effecta, ut salutis vel etiam vitae ipsius opportunitas aegris praebeatur omni nonnumquam spe destitutis”. (*“Among these gestures, organ donation performed in ethically acceptable ways deserves special appreciation, as it offers a chance to health and even life to patients who are sometimes hopeless”*).

³⁷ IOANNES PAULUS PP II, “ALLOCUTIONES, II Ad eos qui conventui de chirurgicis transplantationibus interfuerunt”, in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volumen 92, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Romae, 2000, p. 822-826, here p. 822-823: “In this area of medical science too the fundamental criterion must be the defence and promotion of the integral welfare of the human person, in keeping with that unique dignity which is ours by virtue of our humanity. Consequently, it is evident that every medical procedure performed on the human person is subject to limits: not just the limits of what it is technically possible, but also limits determined by respect for human nature itself, understood in its fullness: what is technically possible is not for that reason alone morally admissible”. (*“In fact, in this matter too, the fundamental criterion of assessment is the defence and promotion of the integral welfare of the human person, in accordance with their particular dignity. In this regard, it is worth recalling that any medical intervention on the human person is subject to limitations, which are not confined to the possible technical impossibility of performing it, but are related to respect for human nature itself, understood in its integral sense: this is technically possible, but for this reason it is not morally acceptable.”*).

³⁸ IOANNES PAULUS PP II, “ALLOCUTIONES, II Ad eos qui conventui de chirurgicis transplantationibus interfuerunt”, p. 824: “With regard to the parameters used today for ascertaining death — whether the "encephalic" signs or the more traditional cardio-respiratory signs — the Church does not make technical decisions. It limits herself to the Gospel duty of comparing the data offered by medical science with the Christian understanding of the unity of the person, pointing out the similarities and the possible conflicts capable of endangering respect for human dignity. We can say here that the criterion adopted in more recent times for ascertaining death, namely the complete and irreversible cessation of all brain activity, if rigorously applied, does not seem to contradict the essential elements of a sound anthropology. Therefore, a healthcare professional responsible for ascertaining death can use these criteria in each individual case as the basis for

Later, Benedict XVI calls for the utmost caution to avoid a situation where someone can be considered a dead body and not yet be in that condition, including the manipulation of the human embryo. He also seeks clarification on the removal of organs from a dead body where consent must be clearly expressed³⁹. Benedict XVI clearly calls for avoiding any abuse related to possible abstract understandings about the body, or trafficking the organs removed, so that the living person who donates will benefit from an adequate quality of life in the future⁴⁰. To the question of whether the Roman Catholic Church accepts organ transplantation, the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church answers as follows: *”Organ transplantation is morally acceptable with the donor's consent and without undue risk to the donor. For the noble act of organ donation after death, the actual death of the donor must be fully established. Organ transplantation complies with the moral law if the physical and mental harm and risks undergone by the donor are proportionate to the welfare sought for the recipient. Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and should be encouraged as an expression of generous solidarity. It is not morally acceptable if the donor or his recipients have not given their explicit consent. It is also morally unacceptable to directly cause the mutilation or death of a human being, even with a view to delaying the death of others.”*⁴¹.

In contemporary times, the Western Catholic ecclesiastical authority who re-addresses the issue of transplantation and who synthesizes the views of his predecessors, is to be found in Pope Francis' speech addressed to *Volunteer members of the Italian Association for the Donation of Organs, Tissues and Cells of the Human Body*, restating the three principles of love, solidarity and wholeness of the human being⁴².

In conclusion, Roman Catholic Moral Theology has been somewhat cautious about transplantation, on the one hand acknowledging human solidarity, but at first understanding transplantation as a threat to the human body, seeing it as a serious mutilation of the person. On the other hand, especially in recent times, Roman Catholic Moral Theology has been called upon to reflect on the meaning of the act of donation, thus acknowledging love for fellow human beings, the unity of the human race and the sanctity of life. The moral issues

achieving that degree of certainty in ethical judgement which moral teaching describes as "moral certainty". This moral certainty is considered the necessary and sufficient basis for an ethically correct course of action. Only where such certainty exists, and where informed consent has already been given by the donor or the donor's legal representatives, is it morally right to initiate the technical procedures required for the removal of organs for transplant”.

³⁹ BENEDICTUS XVI PP., “ALLOCUTIONES VII: Ad Congressum Internationalem de organorum donatione”, in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volumen 100, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Romae, Novembris 2008, p. 802-805, here p. 803: “Informed consent is a prerequisite for freedom, as transplantation has the characteristics of a gift and is not interpreted as an act of coercion or exploitation”.

⁴⁰ BENEDICTUS XVI PP., “ALLOCUTIONES VII: ...”, p. 804.

⁴¹ CATECHISMO DELLA CHIESA CATTOLICA. COMPEDIO, San Paolo Editions, Milan, 2005, p. 129, n. 476-2296; https://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism_it/p3s2c2a5_it.htm#II.%20II%20rispetto%20della%20dignit%C3%A0%20delle%20persone

⁴² FRANCISCUS PP., “Ad voluntarios Consociationis Italicae pro Humani Corporis Membris, Textibus et Cellulis donandis (AIDO)”, in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volumen 111/5, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Romae, 13 Aprilis 2019, p. 710-712, here p. 711: “It is therefore important to promote a donation culture which, through information, awareness and a constant and valued commitment, favours this gift of a part of one's own body, without disproportionate risks or consequences, in donation during life, and of all organs after death. Out of our own death and gift can come the life and health of others, sick and suffering, helping to strengthen a culture of help, giving, hope and life. Confronted with the threats to life, which unfortunately we have to witness almost daily, as in the case of abortion and euthanasia - not to mention the beginning and end of life - society needs these concrete gestures of solidarity and generous love to make it clear that life is a sacred concept”.

debated in relation to organ transplantation have thus focused on three branches: the donor, the recipient and the gift received.

On the Eastern side, the Orthodox Church in particular, even if synthetic anthropological research was not unitary but local, as stated above, still had to provide an answer to the special achievements of medicine. Orthodox bioethicists, who have debated the issue of organ transplantation, have not raised any moral or spiritual objection to blocking this medical technique⁴³. Some orthodox theorists⁴⁴ have gone so far as to say that all parts of the human body except the brain are suitable for transplantation, which does not lead to transplantation or destruction of the person.

Orthodox theological debates⁴⁵ on organ transplantation have explored, as in the West, the principle of compassionate love, the unity of soul and body, the sanctity of life and death, the priority, necessity and purpose of transplantation, the moment of declaration and explicit ascertainment of death, brain death, the definition of living or dead donor, informed consent, human rights.

What hinders Orthodox reflection in welcoming organ transplantation without any reservation is the theology's understanding of the notion of the person as encompassing body and soul in equal measure, the moral and existential value of both being equal. The human body⁴⁶ cannot be reduced to its biological significance alone. It is not a container but an organ of the soul. Science studies the body as a material existence in the world, but its value is given only by its principle of unity: the soul.

Tertullian wrote about this as early as the second century: "But it is not because the body and the soul are two that they differ from each other; on the contrary, they are rather a pair, for they both form a unity, and no one can distinguish since by distinguishing the two elements, so as to think that one is lighter and the other more serious. Both body and soul are the work of God, the one molded with His hand, and the other with His breath. Since both

⁴³ JEAN-CLAUDE LARCHET, *The Christian end of our life, without pain, without suffering, in peace...*, Basilica, Bucharest, 2021, p. 254.

⁴⁴ HUGO TRISTRAM ENGELHARDT JR., *Fundamentals of Christian bioethics. Orthodox Perspective*, Deisis, Sibiu, 2005, p. 431.

⁴⁵ cf. Document of the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church of December 10, 1999, *Fundamental Positions on the Morality of Transplantation*, paras. 8-9; Document of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, *Fundamentals of Social Doctrine*, Moscow, 2000, trans. in English. Paris 2007, chap. 11, par. 7; see also: "Fundamentals of the Social Understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church", in: Ioan I. ICA jr., Germano MARANI, *Social Thinking of the Church*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2002, p. 46-248; Document of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Organ Transplantation*, in: Opera social-filantropică/Bioetica/transplantul de organe, <https://patriarhia.ro/transplantul-de-organe-1451.html>; *DOCUMENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE OF THE GERMAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE (ADOPTED BY THE BISHOPS AT THEIR MEETING IN BERLIN ON FEBRUARY 22, 2014), ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION*, <https://www.cbrom.de/index.php/despre-noi/decizii-bisericessti/pozitii-obkd/632-donarea-si-transplantul-de-organe>; Pr. prof. dr. Vasile, RĂDUCĂ, "Organ Transplantation", in: *Ortodoxia Journal*, no. 4 (2004), p. 31-33; Dr. Marc ANDRONIKOF, "An Orthodox view on organ transplantation", in: *Theological Journal*, no. 1, (1998), Sibiu, p. 105-110; Sebastian MOLDOVAN, "Organ transplantation and the Christian-Orthodox argument of love", in: *Romanian Journal of Bioethics*, vol. 7, No. 4, October - December 2009, p. 84-95; Sebastian MOLDOVAN, "Transplantation, a kinship?", in: *Doctors and the Church*, vol. VII, Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 108-128; Costel CIULINARU, "Organ transplantation and the value of the human person", in: *Studia UBB Bioethica*, LV, 1, 2010, p. 37-49; Ștefan ILOAIE, "Morality and life. Documents of the Romanian Orthodox Church on bioethics", in: *Romanian Journal of Bioethics*, Vol. 7, No. 2, April-June 2009, p.18-29;

⁴⁶ See Leontin POPESCU, "Healing the body between medical practice and Christian moral theology", in: *Icon of Faith. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research*, vol. 3 No. 5(2017), p. 69-81.

have their origin in the Lord, either of these sins offend the Lord equally. Or can you distinguish between the deeds of the flesh and those of the soul? Their union and combination are such in life and death, that they shall both rise again one day alike either to life or to judgment, because their guilt or their innocence has been of equal value.”⁴⁷.

The body is the expression of the individual in the different stages of life. The value of the human body lies not only in its biological superiority to everything around it, but above all in the fact that it carries within itself the special work of the soul with all the complexity of its rational activities and forms of sensitivity⁴⁸. "There is no part of the human body," says Minucius Felix, "which does not fulfil a need, or which does not constitute an adornment"⁴⁹. In the light of the patristic texts, the soul is understood as the centre of human life, the root of the life of the body. The soul shows man to be an understanding and immortal being, the life of the body being a work that radiates from the soul, man being both body and soul⁵⁰. The relationship between body and soul is so intimate that no activity can be thought of as dissociated, as being solely of the soul or as being solely of the body, but according to the Church fathers, the body is the consort, the heir of the soul, but at the same time transcends its materiality in that, according to the Christian view, it is of a divine nature⁵¹. And, if this is true of earthly life, the same can be said of eternal life⁵².

Disease is not only a biological problem, but also an existential problem. It is not only suffering, pain and isolation, but also a faith challenge. Man may see another man as a mere "body", but it will be almost impossible for him to experience himself only "bodily". Any conscious experience of the self is always a whole, bodily-spiritual event and not just a bodily experience. The origin of an illness must always be attributed to the concurrence of different components: physical, psychological, social and moral. If the body is seen only as a reality in its own right, existing independently of the soul, illness can be seen as a simple malfunctioning of this mechanism, medicine being the science that deals with its repair. Once the mechanism has been restored to its regular functioning state, the soul will automatically be able to have the machine at its disposal to operate as it pleases. Healing at any risk is not the correct indicator to assess the quality of medical care. It is, however, an indicator of the efficiency of the medical system as a whole, considering that this system also includes the patient as a party contributing to their own interest in healing⁵³.

⁴⁷ QUINTUS SEPTIMIUS FLORENS TERTULLIANUS, "Liber de Poenitentia", in: *PL* 01, 160-220, here, 1341: "*Sed non eo interse fifferunt, quod corpus et spiritus duo sunt; alioquin eo magis patia sunt, quia duo unum efficiunt: ne quis pro diversitate meteriarum peccata eorum discerunt, ut alterum altero levius aut gravius existimet. Siquidem et caro et spirituas, Dei res: alia, manu eius expressa; alia, afflatu eius consummata. Cum ero ex pari ad Dominum pertineant: quodcumque eorum deliquerit, ex pari Dominum offendit. An tu discernas actus carnis et spiritus? Quorum et in vita et in morte, et in resurrectione, tantum communionis atque consortii est ut pariter aut in vitam aut in iudicium suscitentur: quia scilicet pariter aut deliquerint aut innocenter egerint*".

⁴⁸ Pr. prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Dogmatic Orthodox Theology*, vol. I, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, ³2003, p. 392.

⁴⁹ MARCUS MINUCIUS FELIX, "Octavius", in: *PL*. 03, 231-366, here 287B: "*Nihil membrorum est, quod non et necessitatis causa sit, et decoris*".

⁵⁰ Adrian Sorin MIHALACHE, *The Light of the Unseen*, vol. I, Basilica, Bucharest, 2016, p. 283; 285.

⁵¹ D. STĂNILOAE, *Dogmatic Orthodox Theology*, vol. I, ³2003, p. 191.

⁵² Q. S. F. TERTULLIANUS, *De resurrectione carnis*, in: *PL* 02, 837-934, here 851C: „Ita caro, dum ministra et famula animae deputatur, consors et cohaeredes invenitur. Si temporalium, cur non est aeternorum?”

⁵³ George Cristian CURCĂ, "Conceptual aspects of ethical liability and medical malpractice", in: *Romanian Journal of Bioethics*, vol. 8, nr. 1, (2010) Iași, p. 51-59, here p. 54.

On the other hand, another root of this prejudice, whereby man is considered healthy only if his body does not suffer, stems from the implicit materialistic mentality, which considers as genuinely existing only that which can be somehow perceived by the senses (even if they are reinforced with all kinds of devices, amplifying their powers). The concepts of soul and body make the proper functioning of the human being possible. But man is more than that, he is a person. The definition of man as a person clearly reveals the essential relational dimension: man as a person is an "I" open to a "you", a being "with" and "for" another. This can be defined as the interpersonal space where organ transplantation can be chosen⁵⁴.

The theological evaluation of this concept has brought particular Orthodox reluctance especially in the case of heart transplantation⁵⁵, as the heart is considered in Orthodox Christianity as the centre and seat of self activity⁵⁶. This is why the mechanistic understanding of organ transplantation cannot be accepted by Orthodox theology, but only from the perspective of self-giving and self-sacrifice⁵⁷. Man is not created for technique, but technique has been created for man⁵⁸. We must also point out that the purpose of human life is not eternity and the prolongation of life sine die, but spiritual life, yet, by virtue of the love of the Spirit, any Christian can, under conditions of freedom and with respect for human dignity, donate to sustain the life of another who is in need.

2. WHAT IS AN ORGAN TRANSPLANT?

Most bioethical studies and treatises define organ transplantation as the surgical operation by which an organ or tissue taken from a donor⁵⁹, either from the same person or from a dead body, is introduced into the recipient's body. The parts taken from a donor can be: small pieces of tissue, skin, cornea, whole organs such as kidney, liver, pancreas, lungs or heart; or other major parts: marrow, bones, adrenal parts, etc. From a strictly technical

⁵⁴ D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 493.

⁵⁵ J-C. LARCHET, *The Christian end of our life...*, p. 242-252. In this passage, Father Larchet introduces a trichotomous combination of the person as body, soul and spirit, which is proper to Protestant theology and less to Patristic theology, as we can see above in Tertullian; see also Dr. Marc ANDRONIKOF, "An Orthodox point of view on organ transplantation", in: *Theological Review*, no. 1, (1998), Sibiu, pp. 105-110, here 107: "Many 19th and 20th century theological studies, especially Russian ones, conclude that the heart is 'the centre of man's spiritual and psychological life'".

⁵⁶ J-C. LARCHET, *The Christian end of our life...*, p. 249; G. MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, p. 476. What needs to be said here is that theological interpretation must consider the spiritual meaning of the heart and not that of a physiological organ: cf. Arch. Spiridonos LOGOTHETIS, *The Heart in the Writings of the Holy Fathers*, Sofia, Bucharest, 2001, p. 21-22; A. S. MIHALACHE, *The Light of the Unseen I*, p. 292: "Ultimately, in the Patristic vision, the place through which man as a personal subject participates in communion, 'the centre of his soul and spiritual life', is the heart (kardia). As one can easily see, the heart has a spiritual meaning, not that of a physiological organ. It is the headquarters of the mind, the 'inner man', the centre of the human being, the root of the active faculties, of the intellect and of the will, the point from which all spiritual life originates and to which it returns."

⁵⁷ G. MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, p. 483.

⁵⁸ D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 490.

⁵⁹ Lino CICCONE, *Bioethics. History, principles, issues*, Ares, Milan, 2003, 408 p., p. 258; M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 324; Giacomo PERICO, "Human transplants", in: Francesco Compagnoni, Giannino Piana, Salvatore Privitera, *New Dictionary of Moral Theology*, San Paolo, Turin, 1993, p. 1383-1391, here p. 1383; Sandro SPINSANTI, "Physical life", in: Tullio GOFFI-Giannino PIANA (coord), *Course on Morality 2*, Queriniana, Brescia, 1990, p. 127-281, here p. 236; Maurizio Pietro FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands. Handbook of Theological Bioethics*, Camillian Editions, Turin, 2004, p. 193; Lucreția TITIRICĂ, *Dictionary of terms for nurses*, Romanian Medical Life, Bucharest, 2008, p. 471.

point of view, there are three types of transplant⁶⁰: isotransplant: tissue transplant when the donor and recipient have the same genetic profile, in the case of twins; auto transplant: tissue transplant in/on the same body, the donor and recipient are the same person, in the case of burns or cosmetic surgery; Hom transplant or allotransplant: refers to the transplantation of tissue or of an organ from a living or deceased human donor to a human recipient, in the case of non-renewable organ transplantation; and Heter transplantation or xenotransplantation: the transfer of tissue or organs from an animal to a human, in the case of heart valve transplantation from pigs to humans⁶¹.

From the donor's point of view, the transplant can be from one living person to another, as in the case of kidney transplantation – and here, obviously, the donor's body will be required to retain functional integrity; and from a person declared dead, or from a dead body, as in the case of heart homotransplantation, where the donor must be definitely declared dead. In these cases, very different moral and legal questions and issues arise. The most common technical problems for a transplant are related to the difficulty of preserving the organs that have been removed for as long as possible, which is limited to a few hours, as well as compatibility problems between the organ removed and the recipient⁶².

From a moral point of view, there are some questions that we logically have to ask when talking about organ transplantation, namely: is any organ transplantation legal and absolutely necessary? Is there a limit to the practice of transplantation? Are all human organs suitable for transplantation? What is the safe time for organ removal, bearing in mind that some organs, in order to be successfully removed and transplanted, require life to still be present in them⁶³?

These simple questions lead us to the need to fundamentally reflect on what is technically possible and what is legal and moral to do about organ transplantation. From this point of view, science, which must be of help and service to man, must not reduce man to a mere object which can be arbitrarily disposed of. The human body can never be considered an end and a means in itself, and its exploitation contradicts the identity and dignity of the human being, defined as the unified entity of the physical and of the invisible spiritual part⁶⁴. According to Christian morality, the life of the human body constitutes the same fundamental value of the person as the spiritual life, even if the bodily life does not totally exhaust the reality of the person, which is of a transcendental nature, nevertheless the body is the necessary foundation of the individual's existence in time and space. The human being in its wholeness, body and soul, is morally inviolable. Therefore, the scientific equation that everything is possible and must be put into practice cannot be accepted⁶⁵.

Autotransplantation does not, one might say, raise major problems from the point of view of moral assessment, because it concerns healing parts of the same body, which have been destroyed or damaged by various accidents and which require surgery even of an aesthetic nature. The moral legality of such medical intervention is dictated by the same principle of the integrity of the individual, by virtue of which a person may sacrifice a part of

⁶⁰ Cf. M. CHIODI, *Ethics of Life...*, p. 371; G. PERICO, "Human transplants", p. 1383; Giacomo PERICO, *Problems of health care ethics*, Ancora, Milan, ²1992, p. 177-179.

⁶¹ M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 325.

⁶² cfr. M. CHIODI, *Ethics of Life...*, p. 373; M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 326.

⁶³ D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 487; M. ARAMINI, *Bioethics for all*, p. 234; J-C. LARCHET, *The Christian end of our life...*, p. 264; S. SPINSANTI, "Physical life", p. 237; M. ARAMINI-S. DI NAUTA, *Organ transplantation ethics...*, p. 67.

⁶⁴ D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 492.

⁶⁵ M. ARAMINI, *Bioethics for all*, p. 234.

their body in order to save the whole body. The removal of skin parts or other tissues from the same body to heal other parts that have been affected by accidents or disease is morally correct⁶⁶. The same principle of the individual's unity and wholeness can also be applied to cosmetic surgery, with the reservation that such interventions can be morally acceptable when a person suffers from a serious inner disorder due to a physical defect, and not in the case of the so-called "beauty transplant", which is a big commercial problem and has nothing to do with therapeutic transplantation⁶⁷. The same unwavering moral reserve is shown by ecclesial anthropology when speaking of organ transplants, which are not intended to save a life, but which, because of selfishness, are performed to counterfeit or build another body again. This is the case of the transplantation used to change genital organs, which has no moral, natural, cultural or social justification⁶⁸.

Major moral issues arise when we speak of homotransplantation, from one person to another where the gesture of donation must be granted the noble value of sacrifice and love in favour of one's fellow human being.

The principles to be observed at this point are the freedom and gratuitousness of donating an organ, in virtue of which there should be no constraint, so that the altering of one's own physical integrity through donation is a free and conscious gesture, expressing the value of sacrifice in favour of one's fellow human being.⁶⁹ It is very easy to imagine that there will be a lot of psychological pressure on the members of a family where there is a potential organ recipient. The urgency of a transplant to save someone's life, even in the case of relatives with a very high degree of compatibility, must be made by virtue of the actual free will choice, without any external or emotional obligation or constraint⁷⁰. This is the case of kidney transplantation where the question is: what indirect pressures prompted this gesture⁷¹?

Technically, this has led to informed (written) consent, which the donor can withdraw, if it is considered that the donation of an organ would seriously harm the preservation of their life. The donation of an organ from one living person to another must ensure the preservation of the donor's biological integrity and functionality⁷². Nothing can force someone to donate something of their body either during their lifetime or after their death. The body should not be treated mechanistically, as mere therapeutic material or as a spare parts shop⁷³. Therefore, what can be donated are double organs, such as kidneys, or renewable organs, such as blood, bone marrow and liver. It is against Christian morality for anyone to deliberately give up vital and irreplaceable organs, even for altruistic purposes. Donating one's own heart, for example, while one is alive, is forbidden because it results in certain death⁷⁴.

The moral debate becomes more articulate when we are talking - in the case of an organ taken from a dead body - about a potential donor who has not explicitly expressed himself in favour of the donation act. Technically, so-called presumed (assumed or silent) consent has been given, which is usually expressed by relatives in a state of shock and

⁶⁶ M. ARAMINI, *Bioethics for all*, p. 235; M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 330.

⁶⁷ M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 330.

⁶⁸ M. ARAMINI, *Bioethics for all*, p. 238.

⁶⁹ M. P. FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands...*, p. 198.

⁷⁰ J-C. LARCHET, *The Christian end of our life...*, p. 254.

⁷¹ Salvino LEONE, *Bioethics Handbook*, Sicilian Institute of Bioethics, Palermo, 2003, 367p., here p. 258-259.

⁷² M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 331; M. CHIODI, *Ethics of Life...*, p. 381.

⁷³ G. MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, p. 482.

⁷⁴ S. SPINSANTI, "Physical Life", p. 236; L. CICCONE, *Bioethics...*, p. 258.

bereavement, bringing an even greater psychological and emotional burden. Christian morality does not agree with such consent, in the case of assumed (or silent) consent, considering the decision to transplant a violation of the integrity of the person and an annulment of the principle of self-sacrifice and brotherly love as expressed in the case of informed consent. At the same time, assumed consent unilaterally nullifies the role of the family in the case of so-called brain-dead or deceased persons, if they have not explicitly expressed their consent to organ removal during their lifetime⁷⁵.

The question of assumed consent necessarily intersects with that of respect and care for the earthly remains of the so-called "donor" and the question of whether abuse may be detected. In order to avoid possible abuse not only of the dead body, but even abuse of a person's entire life, it is necessary to establish who ascertains death and how an individual's death is declared with certainty; the lack of organs for transplant may lead some doctors with too few scruples not to be rigorous in doing everything possible to save a person's life, and thus rush to declare someone dead. The pressure that transplant medicine exerts on a patient can also lead to a sense of plundering, which makes potential donors and their family members feel vulnerable; the same is true of trafficking lifeless bodies because of organ shortages, not to mention in vitro fertilization techniques and the practice of abortion, which have led to the creation of veritable organ and tissue banks⁷⁶. All these are not only morally but also legally detrimental to the integrity and dignity of the human person.

From the Christian perspective, the human body after death cannot be abandoned or used as a mere object for any purpose. It is certainly no longer a living being, but it bears in it the imprint of the one who lived and, in its form, it retains a high symbolic value, a sign of a presence that we remember (memory). The human body is human precisely because it is the way and the place in which the individual discovers himself as a gift that is given for another⁷⁷. Consequently, after the actual ascertainment of death, if it does not have ante mortem consent for organ removal, the body cannot be used either for scientific research or for the removal of a possible organ for transplantation, but it must follow the natural course of respect found in all human cultures⁷⁸.

As for the **recipient** of an organ removed either from a person still alive or from a dead body, he too must give his free and informed consent, in the sense that he has the right to be informed on the type of intervention he will have to undergo and on the risks he will have to take and overcome. The technical, psychological, religious and cultural complexity of transplantation means that, when it comes to the recipient, this must be the only therapeutic and highly successful option for healing. Otherwise, the recipient may undergo unnecessary intervention and go through the so-called process of therapeutic rejection, which in the case of complete organs can even lead to the patient's death. Most Christian

⁷⁵ cf. Document of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Organ Transplantation*, in: Opera social-filantropică/Bioetica/transplantul de organe, <https://patriarhia.ro/transplantul-de-organe-1451.html>; *DOCUMENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE OF THE GERMAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE (ADOPTED BY THE BISHOPS AT THEIR MEETING IN BERLIN ON 22 FEBRUARY 2014)*, *ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION*, <https://www.cbrom.de/index.php/despre-noi/decizii-bisericessti/pozitii-obkd/632-donarea-si-transplantul-de-organe>; also see Beatrice IOAN, Vasile ASTĂRĂSTOAIIE, Cristina GAVRILOVICI, Mihaela VICOL, "Informed consent versus presumed consent in organ donation for transplantation", in *Doctors and the Church*, vol. VII, p. 42-53, Cluj-Napoca, Renaissance Publishing House, 2009, p. 42.

⁷⁶ M. P. FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands*..., p. 204.

⁷⁷ D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 503.

⁷⁸ M. ARAMINI-S. DI NAUTA, *Organ transplantation ethics*..., p. 143-147.

moralists⁷⁹ share the view that there can be no obligation on the part of the recipient to undergo a transplant procedure even if they meet the technical requirements for transplantation and even more so when there is the slightest doubt about their survival after the transplant intervention. Transplantation with a high degree of rejection or experimental transplantation cannot be morally acceptable. Both the donor and the recipient must be guaranteed quality of life following such a therapeutic procedure⁸⁰.

Another aspect of moral contemplation focuses on the gift offered to be transplanted. For Christian morality, the organ removed for transplantation, or the gesture of donation cannot be described as "something, a thing or a mere object", but as sacrifice or offering. Christian morality rejects organ donation as a mere material or utilitarian gesture, or as a transfer of a "piece, part", an "exchange" in the mechanical sense, but considers the heart, liver, kidney, lung that can be transplanted as more than an organ, a muscle or a tissue: organ donation is morally the gesture of giving oneself for the life of one's fellow human being not only during life but also after death. In concrete terms, organ donation, morally speaking, is a concrete manifestation of the Christian commandment to love your fellow human being⁸¹. This is why the gesture of donating an organ must be based on this understanding of a free gift, without any emotional, psychological, economic or other constraints. That is why no one can be blamed if they do not perform this gesture⁸². Organ donation should always be a free and responsible gift and not an obligation.

3. ASCERTAINMENT OF DEATH

The ascertainment of death has been a hot debate in the case of organ removal and transplantation, with a wide range of opinions, often at odds.

Before tackling this complex issue, we should make it clear from the beginning that we are not dealing here with ontological death, which consists in the separation of the soul from the body, which for us, Christians, is a SACRAMENT and which, in the Christian faith, does not mean the absolute disappearance and destruction of the individual; on the contrary, man is destined to live eternal life via the soul and to rise again with the same body he has lived in. In this section of our debate, we are concerned with physical death or so-called biological death, which is found in the various clinical expressions of medicine and which morality uses to pass its judgments. This, however, puts us in a position to state with

⁷⁹ Pr. prof. dr. Vasile, RĂDUCĂ, "ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION", IN: ORTHODOXIA JOURNAL, NO. 4 (2004), p. 31-33; DR. MARC ANDRONIKOF, "A ORTHODOX VIEW ON ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION", IN: *THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL*, NO. 1, (1998), SIBIU, p. 105-110; SEBASTIAN MOLDOVAN, "ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION AND THE CHRISTIAN-ORTHODOX ARGUMENT OF LOVE", IN: *ROMANIAN JOURNAL OF BIOETHICS*, VOL. 7, NO. 4, OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2009, p. 84-95; SEBASTIAN MOLDOVAN, "TRANSPLANTATION, A KINSHIP?", IN: *DOCTORS AND THE CHURCH*, VOL. VII, RENĂȘTEREA, CLUJ-NAPOCA, 2009, p. 108-128; COSTEL CIULINARU, "ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION AND THE VALUE OF THE HUMAN PERSON", IN: *STUDIA UBB BIOETHICA*, LV, 1, 2010, p. 37-49; ȘTEFAN ILOAIE, "MORALITY AND LIFE. DOCUMENTS OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ON BIOETHICS", IN: *ROMANIAN JOURNAL OF BIOETHICS*, VOL. 7, NO. 2, APRIL-JUNE 2009, p.18-29; DIONIGI TETTAMANZI, *NEW CHRISTIAN BIOETHICS*, PIEMME, CASALE MONFERRATO, ³2001; MARIO CASCONI, *DIAKONIA OF LIFE. BIOETHICS HANDBOOK*, EDUSC, ROME, ²2008; MAURIZIO CHIODI, *ETHICS OF LIFE. THE CHALLENGES OF PRACTICE AND THEORETICAL ISSUES*, GLOSSA EDITIONS, MILAN, 2006; MICHELE ARAMINI-SILVANA DI NAUTA, *ORGAN TRANSPLANT ETHICS. FOR A DONATION CULTURE*, PAOLINE EDITIONS, MILAN, 1998; LINO CICCONE, *BIOETHICS. HISTORY, PRINCIPLES, ISSUES*, ARES, MILAN, 2003.

⁸⁰ cf. M. ARAMINI, *Bioethics for all*, p. 236; M. CHIODI, *Ethics of life...*, p. 383-384; M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 332.

⁸¹ cf. D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 503; M. CHIODI, *Ethics of life...*, p. 385; S. SPINSANTI, "Physical life", p. 236.

⁸² cf. S. LEONE, *Bioethics Handbook*, p. 259; M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 332.

the greatest certainty that it is not the task of morality, whether Christian, non-Christian or secular, to determine when a person can be declared physically or biologically dead, but, on the contrary, it is the task of medical science, which is called upon to give a just and well-founded verdict on the basis of what is legally established⁸³.

It is well known that certain organs - such as the kidney, pancreas, liver or heart - in order to be successfully transplanted, must experience a very short time between the cessation of heart beating and blood circulation and the moment of removal, which means that, from a moral point of view, there is some doubt about the actual death of the donor⁸⁴.

The classical principle for ascertaining physical death was, until the use of artificial resuscitation techniques, the cessation of the cardio-respiratory function, on the basis of which it was assumed that, when an individual was unable to breathe autonomously and their heart had stopped beating, they could be declared dead. This criterion was deemed to include cessation of brain function⁸⁵. This criterion has been overturned in modern times due to artificial resuscitation techniques which are able to keep the cardio-respiratory function active even for a long time, giving the impression that the patient in this situation is still alive. This has led modern medicine to regard the brain as the central organ for sustaining life rather than the heart, as it used to be. The cessation of brain activity - the only organ that cannot function artificially and which also supports the cardio-respiratory function -, brain death or clinical death becomes the criterion that can attest to biological death⁸⁶. This re-opens the moral debate on the definition of what being human means. What defines man as a human being? the heart? breathing? the brain? Or some other organ that is part of the human being?

From an Orthodox point of view, it is not possible to equate the irreversible cessation of brain function, expressed by medical research as the actual death of the person, with what Church anthropology understands in terms of the separation of the soul from the body. Human death is not simply organic disintegration. Man is a multi-dimensional reality that cannot be reduced to somatic structures whose degradation in no way fully encompasses the complexity of human death, just as the life of the body does not fully encompass the complexity of human life⁸⁷. In medicine, for example, brain necrosis means the cessation of the soul's possible active manifestation, but not in moral research, where it cannot necessarily be equated with the soul's separation from/leaving the body⁸⁸. From the ecclesiastical point of view, it is not possible to firmly state whether the exit of the soul from

⁸³ The document of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church is very clear from this point of view; cf. Document of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Organ Transplantation*, in: Opera social-filantropică/Bioetica/transplantul de organe, <https://patriarhia.ro/transplantul-de-organe-1451.html>; see also Archbishop IRINEU POP Bistrițeanu, *Course on Bioethics*, Renaissance Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 67; M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of Life...*, p. 335.

⁸⁴ The Romanian Orthodox Church mentions three conditions to be simultaneously fulfilled in order to avoid possible errors in ascertaining physical death: brain death, heart cessation, lack of spontaneous breathing; cf. Document of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Organ Transplantation*, in: Opera social-filantropică/Bioetica/transplantul de organe, <https://patriarhia.ro/transplantul-de-organe-1451.html>; also see J-C. LARCHET, *The Christian end of our life...*, p. 273; M. P. FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands...*, p. 200; S. SPINSANTI, "Physical life", p. 237;

⁸⁵ G. MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, p. 501.

⁸⁶ cf. Archbishop IRINEU, *Course on Bioethics*, p. 67; D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 496; M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of Life...*, p. 335.

⁸⁷ M. P. FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands...*, p. 211.

⁸⁸ Valer BEL, "Organ transplantation between necessity and abuse", in *Doctors and the Church*, vol. VII, Cluj-Napoca, Renaissance Publishing House, 2009, 103.

the body occurs at the same time as, after, or following the cessation of cerebral activity. Even for medical science, the onset of death is a process that occurs progressively, in successive stages; the first cells to die are the neurons, and then the most differentiated and sensitive cells as a result of the lack of oxygen in the blood⁸⁹. In other words, it is not possible to define death by pragmatic parameters in order to directly indicate when a person is no longer a personal presence⁹⁰. That is why Orthodox theology ranks the moment when the soul leaves the body, even detached from the modern devices, among the moments full of mystery and sacredness.

The Church always looks at man in his eschatological dichotomous unity: soul and body in the individual's quest for eternal life. In Eastern patristic teaching, man is never evaluated without a body, both during his earthly life and after death⁹¹. Therefore, none of his organs, smaller or larger in importance for the support of his biological life, can exclusively contain the soul of the human being, they are rather "ornaments"⁹², instruments through which the soul manifests itself, contains and activates them, and their role is determined by their relational function that they perform or from which they deviate. An organ must never be seen separately from the system that connects it to the other organs of the body: namely the whole individual⁹³.

According to the most authoritative bioethicists⁹⁴, a pronouncement of physical death should be issued when the team of doctors assessing the patient's condition is not the same as the team that will perform the retrieval and transplantation. In this case, all three conditions that can ascertain death must also be taken into account: cessation of heartbeat, lack of autonomous breathing and irreversible cessation of all brain functions⁹⁵. Avoiding only one of these conditions can lead to doubt and confusion regarding the medical act.

4. XENOTRANSPLANTATION OR ANIMAL-TO-HUMAN ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION

Replacement surgery, as transplant surgery is also called, is the therapy that can choose between different human pathologies. However, the limiting factor to the number of transplants that can be performed is the shortage of human organs and tissues. Studies in the 1990s led to the conclusion that one of the most promising approaches for the treatment of serious pathologies in humans could become transplantation of organs and tissues from animals to humans, which could, in fact, eliminate the serious problem of human donor shortage, even though there are many difficulties to be faced in using these techniques⁹⁶.

⁸⁹ Yan YANG, Karl HERRUP, "Paved with Good Intentions: The Link between Cell Cycle and Cell Death in the Mammalian Central Nervous System", in: Agata COPANI-Ferdinand NICOLETTI, *Cell-Cycle. Mechanism and Neuronal Cell Death*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publisher, New York, 2005, p. 22-29, here p. 23; Dumbravă Dan PERJU, *Bioethics and Medical Responsibility*, Hipparrion Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, p. 12.

⁹⁰ M. P. FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands...*, p. 211.

⁹¹ M. ANDRONIKOF, "An Orthodox view...", p. 106.

⁹² M. MINUCIUS FELIX, "Octavius", col. 287B.

⁹³ M. ANDRONIKOF, "An Orthodox view...", p. 108; Archbishop IRINEU, *Course on Bioethics*, p. 63; G. MANTZARIDIS, *Christian Morality*, p. 478; J-C. LARCHET, *The Christian end of our life...*, p. 273.

⁹⁴ Archbishop IRINEU Pop Bistrițeanu; Jean-Claude LARCHET; Dr. Marc ANDRONIKOF; Georgios MANTZARIDIS; Dionigi TETTAMANZI; Mario CASCONI; Maurizio CHIODI; Lino CICCONE.

⁹⁵ Cf. Document of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Organ Transplantation*, in: Opera social-filantropică/Bioetica/transplantul de organe, <https://patriarhia.ro/transplantul-de-organe-1451.html>; D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 496.

⁹⁶ M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 340; D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 505; M. P. FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands...*, p. 206.

A problem for the full functionality of the transplanted animal organ in humans is the molecular compatibility of the proteins produced with the human body and whether the transplanted organ can be controlled by the recipient body. The reasons why organ cells transplanted between different species rapidly lose their functionality are a result of the complex range of reactions and processes produced after transplantation by antibody molecules in the recipient's blood that bind to the tissue of the transplanted organ. Antibody binding activates specific proteins in the blood called complement proteins, which lead to the destruction of the transplanted tissue or organ. Such immediate rejection of foreign tissue destroys the capillaries of the transplanted body, causing massive bleeding. Another problem, in addition to the immunological one, stems from the possibility of infection with pathogens present in animals; in fact, animals from which an organ has been removed may harbor pathogenic organisms that are potentially harmful to the human species⁹⁷.

In an attempt to overcome the problem of rejection, numerous studies⁹⁸ have been carried out using transgenic, i.e. genetically modified animals, a field which is becoming ever more science fiction. As far as animal-to-human transplantation is concerned, it has been concluded that the pig may be the animal of choice because the morphological and functional characteristics of its organs are similar to those of humans⁹⁹.

One of the particular bioethical issues specific to xenotransplantation focus on all the experimental genetic modification interventions to which donor animals are subjected, which can sometimes be uncontrollable and which could bring significant changes to the biodiversity and balance of the animal world in the first place, but also on the contamination risk of the recipient, its family members and the human population with new infectious agents of animal origin. There is also increasing talk of ensuring that the recipient's psychological and genetic identity is preserved without the transplanted organ posing a threat in this respect. Finally, there is the question of informed consent of the recipient and, secondly, of family members. As these are experimental transplants, it is necessary to exclude minors and people who, because of a physical deficiency from the outset, cannot cope with such a transplant.

In addition to scientific issues, xenotransplantation raises other questions that require theological, anthropological, psychological and ethical considerations, as well as consideration of legal and procedural issues.

Moral questioning in the use of animals for transplantation would not raise principle-related problems, but a moral evaluation is necessary, given that Christian theology regards man as the most important creature and the centre of all creation. In the Christian view, expressed in the first chapters of Genesis, it is clear how God established a hierarchy of values among creatures. Man, created in the image and likeness of God, is placed at the centre and summit of creation, not only because all that exists is destined for him, but above all because, mirroring the radiance of the divine image and imitating his Creator in love, it is his duty that, through him, all creation should attain complete perfection. From this perspective, out of all creatures, only man can be and is a person¹⁰⁰: his personal dignity

⁹⁷ M. P. FAGGIONI, *Life in our hands...*, p. 206.

⁹⁸ M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 340.

⁹⁹ M. CASCONI, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 340.

¹⁰⁰ MANLIUS SEVERINUS BOETIUS, "Liber de persona et duabus naturis", in: *PL* 64, 1337D-1354D, 1343B: "Hence, it is clear that there can be no person in lifeless bodies; no one says that there is a person in stone, in lifeless things. There is no person in the tree or in beings without intelligence and reason, in the horse or the ox or the other animals that lead their lives dumb and without reason, living only according to their senses. But we say that there is a person in man, in God, in the angel."

demands that he should always be considered and treated as a definitive end and not as a purpose or means of use for others¹⁰¹. This is why it is not possible to equate humans and animals, even though nowadays there are many legal decisions that rightly speak of the obligation to respect animals. It is true that this is why we must not go to either extreme: either by overestimating respect for animals to the detriment of man, or by leaving them at the mercy of human free will to be used without any particular moral limit¹⁰². By his particular manner of creation, man has a dominion over creation, but it is an ontological dominion, subordinated to the wise and loving plan of the Creator. St. Gregory of Nyssa states in this regard: „It is so pleasing to see the emperor's posture, straight, facing the sky, and looking upwards, which is of course a sign of nobility and denotes that the man has been given a royal dignity. For man alone among all that was created in this way, while in all living creatures the body posture is downwards, towards the earth, it is clear that they are destined to obey, whereas man has been given the power to rule”¹⁰³.

This shows that man was created not to be considered separate from the other creation of the world, but he is and remains part of the same creation. "The sages call man," St. Gregory of Nyssa again states, "a microcosm or a small world, because, within himself, man is made up of the same elements, which the whole universe is composed of and completes itself"¹⁰⁴. Therefore, man cannot arbitrarily "rule" over other creatures, reducing them to a kind of demeaning and destructive slavery in order to satisfy his desires, but has the right to use creatures in relation to the original destination willed by the Creator. From the very beginning, according to the Creator's command from the moment he gives each one a name, man has used animals for his primary needs (food, work, clothing, etc.), in a kind of natural 'cooperation' that has constantly marked the various stages throughout the progress and development of civilization¹⁰⁵. Based on these considerations, the use of a donor animal for perceived human welfare can be accepted subject to those conditions that do not morally and legally fall into the category of abuse: such as unnecessary suffering to animals; ignoring the precautionary principle in introducing uncontrollable genetic modifications (transgenesis) that may cause unnecessary pain or significantly alter the biodiversity and species balance of the animal world.

The difficult issue in the case of xenotransplantation is protecting the identity of the human subject who receives an animal organ which raises doubts as to whether the implant can objectively alter the person's identity¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰¹ D. TETTAMANZI, *New Christian Bioethics*, p. 506.

¹⁰² M. CASCONE, *Diakonia of life...*, p. 341.

¹⁰³ S. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, "De hominis opificio", in: *PG* 45, 123-257, here 143B: "Convienunt et illa imperatori, regiaeque Dignitatis indicia sunt, quod recta homini figura tributa sit, qua ad coelum tendit, ac sursum spectat. Nam quod solus homo inter alias res reatas huiusmodi sit, reliquis omnibus corpore deorsum vergentibus: clarissime demonstrat, quanto potestas naturae supra caetera eminentis praestantior illis sit, que se huius imperio submittunt".

¹⁰⁴ S. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS: "De anima et resurrectione dialogus", in: *PG* 46, 11-160, here 27C: "Sapientibus homo parvus quidam esse mundus, qui in sese haec elementa contineat, ex quibus reurm universitas constat atque completa est".

Alexander GANOCZY, "Creation", in: *THEOLOGICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA*, Queriniana, Brescia, ²1990, p. 157-164, here p. 162.

¹⁰⁵ Giovanni RUSSO, *Animal bioethics*, Elle Di Ci, Leuman-Turin, 1998

¹⁰⁶ Maurizio Pietro FAGGIONI, "The Ethical Problems of Xenotransplantation," in: *Studia Moralia* 41 (2003) p. 243-275.

CONCLUSION

Organ transplantation is certainly a revolutionary opportunity to save human life with great legal, cultural, sociological and moral resonances. Transplant medicine shows how profound the dialogue between science and theology is, which used to be so controversial in the past. The medical world has thus become an interesting place of interdisciplinary crossroads, a place where the natural, human and religious sciences, with their corresponding personalities, come closer together and dedicate themselves to helping the sick/suffering person. From this point of view, the greatest challenge is precisely the ability to integrate the various skills in order to provide the patient with the best possible care. This is only possible if the human being is considered not as an individual but as a person, as an original and unrepeatable "unicum" who offers himself as self-sacrifice and gift. The model followed by the Church is that of the Merciful Samaritan, which translates into philanthropy and responsibility. Giving in sacrifice and service does not mean self-denial and cancellation of the person, but, on the contrary, affirmation. Sacrifice gives new content and radiance to the person, transfiguring and ennobling them.

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A BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE VENERATION OF ICONS IN THE FIRST ICONOCLASM

Prof. Ph.D. Gheorghe F. ANGHELESCU, Ionuț CHIRCALAN,
Ovidius University of Constanța,
ROMANIA

Email: anghelescug@gmail.com, ionutchircalan@365.univ-ovidius.ro

ABSTRACT

Icons became an increasingly familiar presence to Christians, especially with the spread of the faith outside the Jewish space, more restrained from iconographic representations, although assiduously honoring the revealed scriptural text, as well as the temple adorned with figurative images and religious representations. However, in the 8th and 9th centuries they would be exposed to a fierce reevaluation, through the Byzantine iconoclasm, 726-780, 815-842. The Church would confirm, in the end, both the importance of iconography and the veneration of the icons, arguing it on the bases of Christ incarnation and on the antiquity of the tradition. There were still less emphasised the fact that God is sharing His all-blessing-grace and reveals Himself through the icons.

Keywords: *adoration; Christology; iconoclasm; theophany; veneration.*

INTRODUCTION

Iconoclasm, that is the breaking of icons, significantly reduced the Christian iconographic treasure inherited from the first seven centuries of Church's existence. Only a few testimonies of the popularity of iconographic representations, their presence in private but also public life, as well as their worship since ancient times, escaped the fury of the imperial iconoclastic policy. Proof of Christian figurative art also survived in the Christian areas of the West European territories as well as in the Eastern part of the old Roman Empire which was under Muslim occupation. Whether we are referring to the iconography in the Roman catacombs¹, to that of the old Christian sites, like Dura Europos², or to the icons in the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai, each of these confirms both a tradition of the Christian iconographic art as well as of the ritual of their veneration.

If, at the beginning, the religious images were symbolic, refraining from representing Christ anthropomorphically, having a biblical content with a pedagogical role, gradually, once the danger of idolatry had been excluded³, they became less and less symbolic and were widely used, being promoted by the painting on the walls of the imposing places of worship built by the Byzantine emperors. They had several roles, as simple decoration, as didactical anamnesis of the events in the history of salvation, as protection against the enemies of the faith and of the empire. It is interesting to see, after a look at the history of iconoclasm, why we should not discard the icons from the walls of our schools and other public places.

¹ André Grabar. *L'arte paleocristiana (200-395)*. Milano: Rizolli, 1979, p. 116.

² Lea Cline and Nathan T Elkins. *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Imagery and Iconography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022, p. 477.

³ After emperor Justinian's closure of the School of Athens in 529AD.

1. THE CONTEXT OF FIRST BYZANTINE ICONOCLASM

The icons, confirmed alongside the Holy Cross in the canons of the Quinisext Council, Trullan II, 691/692, as a constitutive part of the Christian universe and honored privately as protectors of homes or publicly like a safeguard (*palladium*) in military confrontations, they were considered legitimate by the great mass of the Christian population and honored as visual means of God's manifestation. Canon 74 forbade representation of the holy symbol of the Cross on the floors to prevent involuntary profanation and canon 82 forbade symbolic iconography in favor of anthropomorphic one. These canons initiated the discussion of iconography from the perspective of more authoritative doctrinal grounds. What accelerated the formation of a theology of the icon was the iconoclastic policy led by the Byzantine emperors of the 8th and 9th centuries, the first among them being Leo III the Isaurian (717-741).

Eager to restore the successful politics of the emperor Constantine the Great, under the victorious sign of the Cross, the emperor Leo III considered it his duty to ban, following the model of the Jewish prophet-kings, any deviation of society from the Christian faith, but was also against any form of idolatry which, between 726 and 741 would include the icons, too. In the context of a prolonged period of instability in the Byzantine Empire (695-717), characterized by the rapid succession to the throne of several emperors and their military failures, Leo III announced himself as the leader capable of ending the Umayyad (Arab) rise. On the eve of the decisive confrontation in 718, patriarch Germanous of Constantinople (715-730) and the clergy held a procession with the icons⁴, matched by another in which Emperor Leo III hit the sea with a cross, like Moses, with the staff.⁵

The defeat of the Arabs on the date of the Assumption, August 15 718, with divine help, gave Germanous the opportunity to institute an annual religious holiday.⁶ In the sermon delivered on the commemoration of this occasion a year later, the patriarch omitted to mention the contribution that the emperor, as a political leader and militant Christian, had made to the miraculous success. "This naturally led to a growing enmity between emperor and patriarch, between cross and icon, and it was an intimation of things to come."⁷ The new emperor, Leo III, forced upon enthronement to promise to keep intact the teaching of the Church, would see in this dominant position of patriarch Germanous, an insult to the status he assumed, according to the ancient model, of emperor and high priest.

The contact with the iconophobic Jewish and Muslim space of the regions of Asia Minor (Phrygia, Isauria, Armenia) made some Christian communities considered circumspectly the iconographic representations and some bishops even ordered the removal of icons from churches on the charge of idolatry. As early as 720, patriarch Germanous had to advice three bishops by epistles⁸, leaving this way to posterity a first defense of the iconographic representation in itself, as well as the justification of honoring the icons of the

⁴ It is memorable the support brought by the icons to repel the Persians during the siege of Edessa in 544 AD and to repel the invasion of the Avar-Persian coalition that besieged Constantinople in 626 AD while the Byzantine emperor was missing from the city.

⁵ Erin Michael Doom, *Patriarch, monk and empress: a Byzantine debate over icons*, Wichita State University, 2005, p. 83.

⁶ Pope Gregory II congratulated the patriarch of Constantinople for this success and praised the protective role of the Mother of God manifested as a result of the the procession with her icon.

⁷ Erin Michael Doom, *Patriarch, monk and empress...*, p. 83.

⁸ In the 4th session of the Council of Nicaea II, were read three epistles of patriarch Germanous of Constantinople addressed to the Metropolitan John of Synada and to the bishops Constantine of Nakoleia and Thomas of Claudiopolis.

Savior, the Mother of God, the angels and the saints. First of all, Germanous called upon the attention of the iconoclasts to the disservice they were doing to the Church by exposing it to the mockery of iconophobic Jewish and Muslim communities.⁹ If the Church had fallen into idolatry by the veneration of icons, then it would have meant that this fact had remained unnoticed at the six ecumenical councils held until then¹⁰ and its purity and guidance by the Holy Spirit promised by Christ, the Head of the Church, could have been regarded as false or impotent. In addition to the venerable iconographic tradition, the patriarch of Constantinople added the fact that there was an irreconcilable antagonism between the icon and the idol: the idol being the occasion for the manifestation of the passions and subhuman attitudes of those who honor them, and the icons, instead, memories of the work of redemption accomplished by the Son of God incarnate, and examples of holy living. Even more, the Church was freed by Christ from idolatry through His incarnation, which allowed His representation according to His human depiction. Idolatry would be the situation in which Christians would visually represent the uncreated and limitless God as creation and manufactured idol, as well as visible and invisible creature. The icons were not only allowed by God, but they also had a didactic and commemorative role, helping the uneducated learn about the lives of the saints and be inspired to follow their example.

There was also a major distinction regarding worship between cultic adoration (*latreia*) offered by Christians only to the Holy Trinity and veneration as a sign of reverence (*proskynesis*).¹¹ Honoring the saints based on the words of Saint Basil the Great, implied honoring the Almighty God.¹² The final argument brought by Germanous was that of the famous icon of Christ placed by the righteous emperors above the Bronze Gate (Chalke) of the imperial palace.¹³ The patriarch remembered to mention that both the Jews and the Muslims, the possible origin of this contention, were as iconophobic as they were idolaters. The former, according to the Old Testament, fell many times into idolatry, and the latter, worshiped an inanimate stone, the so-called Chobar (Kaaba in Mecca)¹⁴.

There are two types of iconoclasm, one was due to a heretic misconception within the Byzantine Empire, the other took place in the context of the Muslim persecution of the Melkite Christians. The second type of iconoclasm commenced under the caliph of Damascus, Yazid II (720-724), as a consequence to the defeat suffered by the Arabs in 718. However, the Muslim ban on Christian depictions lasted initially only for one year. Rakuten between 730-750, this time was proven archaeologically by replacement of the icons with floral designs on the walls of the churches.¹⁵

⁹ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima Collectio*, XIII, Florence, 1759–1798, 123D.

¹⁰ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima Collectio*, XIII, Florence, 1759–1798, 115D.

¹¹ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima Collectio*, XIII, Florence, 1759–1798, 99C.

¹² Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima Collectio*, XIII, Florence, 1759–1798, 123C; Basil the Great, *Homily 19 Concerning the Forty Martyrs*; PG 31, 509A.

¹³ A detail from the letter addressed by German to bishop Thomas of Claudiopolis [Isauria] suggests that the place of origin of the emperor Leo III was not alien to an iconoclastic tendency inspired by the influences of the Mosaic Law interpreted literally. From here to the incrimination of icons as idols and, therefore, factors of attracting the wrath of God (as in Old Testament times), it was only a small step.

¹⁴ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et amplissima Collectio*, XIII, Florence, 1759–1798, 109E.

¹⁵ Ioan I. Ică jr. *Canonul Ortodoxiei: Sinodul VII Ecumenic*. [Vol.] 1 *Definind Dogmatic Icoanele (691-810)*. Sibiu: Deisis, 2020, p. 39.

2. BANNING ICONS AND THEIR DEFENCE IN THE FIRST BYZANTINE ICONOCLASM (726-780)

In 726 the Byzantine emperor emitted his own decree to ban the icons. This acted as a *coup de grâce* given to Christians everywhere, both to the ones under Arab occupation, as well as to the ones in Christian territories. Some reasons for this part of iconoclasm were the dissensions between Germanous and the emperor himself. Another reason was the volcanic eruption in the summer of 726 which led to the appearance of the island of Thera in the Aegean Sea. That event influenced the mindset of the time to take drastic religious measures.

2.1. THE ICONOCLASTIC POLICY OF LEO III ISAURUS

The removal of the famous icon of Christ from the entrance to the imperial palace and its replacement with an imposing cross will mark the beginning of his imperial iconoclasm policy. The attached inscription gave a glimpse of the reasons that led the emperor to this unexpected gesture. “The Lord not suffering Christ to be portrayed in voiceless form devoid of breath, by means of earthly matter which the scriptures reject.”¹⁶ To the emperor there was an incompatibility between the Holy Scriptures, which portrayed a living God and the icon, which was an inanimate representation. Basically, the emperor could not see beyond the material, tangible nature of the icon. The ostentatious gesture, followed by three successive imperial edicts, the first in 726, the others in 729 and 730, culminated with a pseudo-council/theological conference (*silentium*) in 730, after the dismissal of Germanus, who had remained faithful to the icons. These events would open the first Byzantine iconoclasm. The religiously abusive measures of Leo III, who arrogated to himself the double quality of emperor and priest, manifesting an attitude contrary to the tradition of the Church, will not go unpunished by the other patriarchs of the Pentarchy. They will follow like an avalanche: Rome’s rejection of the letter of presentation (*synodika*) of the new patriarch of Constantinople, Anastasios (730-754), a letter of protest from patriarch John of Jerusalem (supported by John Damascene), two letters of rebuke addressed to emperor Leo III by pope Gregory II of Rome, and in November 731 the official condemnation of iconoclasm by a Roman council and, no later than the year 732, the anathematization of Leo III by the Eastern bishops in a similar council against-iconoclasm.

Summarizing all these positions, we can say that initially both pope Gregory II¹⁷, as well as patriarch John of Jerusalem, through John Damascene, tried to find a return to the initial state through dialogue with the emperor. They reminded him of the illegality of the interference of political power in the pronouncement on the Church’s teaching of faith and in the election of the hierarchs. They also argued in favor of iconographic representations and their veneration by calling on patristic and biblical texts. Only after using all the exhaustion of this peaceful way, the hierarchs pronounced themselves by anathemas, realizing that the emperor had maintained his own iconoclastic and heretical opinion, despite the very pertinent clarifications brought by them.

¹⁶ Cited by John Moorhead, “Byzantine iconoclasm as a problem in art history,” *Parergon* 4(1986), p. 15.

¹⁷ Pope Gregory II clarifies the absence of previous conciliar legislation regarding icons (older than the 6th Ecumenical Synod), based on the naturalness of this generally accepted and practiced tradition: “Nothing was said about bread and water, whether that should be eaten or not; yet these things have been accepted from the beginning for the presence of human life. So also have images been accepted; the popes themselves brought them to councils, and no Christian would set out on a journey without images, because they were possessed of virtue and approved of God.” (*Letters of Pope St. Gregory II (+731) to Emperor Leo Against Heresy of Iconoclasm*, available in English translation at: <https://nftu.net/letters-of-pope-st-gregory-ii-731-to-emperor-leo-against-heresy-of-iconoclasm/>, accessed on 26.02.2023)

In a second epistle to Leo III (729 AD), pope Gregory II advised the emperor that, in his constant iconoclastic attitude, he allowed himself to be deceived by his own thinking and was distracted from the truth under the pressure of the difficult political issues he had to manage.¹⁸ He was even suggesting the existence of evil counselors who could influence him in this regard.¹⁹ The pope also accused the emperor of violating the traditional relationship between the state and the Church, in which the emperor, although called a bishop (“of external affairs”), did not have the competence to act in matters of faith outside a general council of bishops. Gregory II limited the emperor’s reach to the administrative problems of the state because the latter failed to follow the example of his predecessors, who embellished churches instead of stripping them of their beauty and religious symbols.²⁰ After this clarification, the pope expounded on the importance of the icons that the emperor had disparaged as man-made idols. Gregory II showed that, according to the emperor’s reasoning all edifices dedicated to God, including churches, should be demolished, which was totally absurd. Regarding the icons, the pope explained that they were, first, a decorative art, a preoccupation pleasing to God to be made at the expense of the rich. The role of icons was pedagogical, anamnestic, and missionary.²¹ By rejecting the icons, Leo was doubly wrong, as he replaced them with instrumental music and useless words.²² An important mention regarding the value of icons was that “by means of these pictures the hearts and minds of men are directed to God”²³, a fact that absolved those who worshiped them from the charge of idolatry.

Patriarch Germanous I and Pope Gregory II, in epistolary writings, argue for the creation and veneration of icons because of the antiquity of this tradition, their educational and missionary character, as well as because of the distinction between icon and idol. We see the first philosophical and doctrinal exposition of the theology of the icon in the three successive treatises written by John Damascene, the spokesman of patriarch John V of Jerusalem. He justified the necessity of painting icons because they were testimonies of the Incarnation of Christ and of the salvation of man. The foundation of iconography was, in the opinion of John Damascene, the Son of God incarnate, Who opened a new era in which God made Himself available through tangible representations.

John Damascene gave the first definition of the icon by saying it reminds us of the original without claiming to be a perfect reproduction. The icons bring the distant object of veneration close to the believer and give the spiritual being a physical representation. The purpose of the icon is to transcend distances, but also realities. They challenge the observing

¹⁸ *Ibidem*: “But you have followed the guidance of your own wayward spirit and have allowed the exigencies of the political situation at your own court to lead you astray.”

¹⁹ *Ibidem*: “you have followed the teaching of perverse and wicked men who wander from the truth.”

²⁰ *Ibidem*: “[Previous emperors] proved themselves to be both emperors and bishops by following the true faith, by founding and fostering churches, and by displaying the same zeal for the faith as the popes. These emperors ruled righteously; they held synods in harmony with the popes, they tried to establish true doctrines, they founded and adorned churches. Those who claim to be both emperors and priests should demonstrate it by their works;”

²¹ *Ibidem*: “[Churches are] also adorned with pictures and representations of the miracles of the saints, of the sufferings of Christ, of the holy mother herself, and of the saints and apostles; and men spend their wealth on such images. Moreover, men and women make use of these pictures to instruct in the faith their little children and young men and maidens in the bloom of youth and those from heathen nations; by means of these pictures the hearts and minds of men are directed to God.”

²² Possible reference to the poems that were associated with heretics in the propaganda of their own ideology.

²³ <https://nftu.net/letters-of-pope-st-gregory-ii-731-to-emperor-leo-against-heresy-of-iconoclasm/>, accessed on 26.02.2023.

Christian to follow the example of the depicted object. The icon also has a cathartic role: it purifies the mind and also the eyes which are the gate through which the depicted reality enters the soul. Its didactic function was already universally recognized: “For what writing presents to the unlearned who behold, since in it even the ignorant see what they ought to follow; in it the illiterate read.”²⁴ The icons depict scenes from the Holy Scripture and from the Holy Tradition. Their motives are often those of the triumph of good over evil, in order for the viewer to be inspired.

John Damascene clearly stated the distinction between the cultic service (*latreia*)²⁵, due only to Holy Trinity (the Creator, never to creatures), and that due to superiors or equals as a sign of reverence (*proskynesis*).²⁶ Regarding the accusations related to the materiality of the icon, he warned about the Manichean character of such an opinion. The identification of matter with something evil was contrary to the biblical Revelation at the end of creation that all that had been made was “very good” (Genesis 1, 31). Moreover, God included matter in the economy of salvation by filling it with His divine energy for transfiguration. In the icon, we honor the saints, the objects of worship, not the material or the substance that was used to create their representation, not the paint, the wood, not the glass itself. The emperor was still honoring the Holy Cross, the Holy Bible, the Holy Tomb of the Lord and John Damascene reminded him that these objects were as material as icons, without bearing the image of the Son of God incarnate and of other saints.²⁷ John Damascene considered these images of valued addition to these sacred objects. The proof that we do not worship the material substance was that the damaged icons and crosses were burned.²⁸ Regarding the icons dedicated to the Mother of God and the saints, John Damascene specified that the glorification and the final target of worship was God Himself, Who rests in saints and is honored through their life. The saints are living temples of God. They form His victorious army. Saint Basil the Great said that, just like in the case of the imperial statues, from the visual representation of the icon, “the honor given the image passes to the prototype”.²⁹

John Damascene’s writings, had they been known at the time, would have destroyed emperor Leo’s views, which subordinated the icons to the crosses in value, disparaging the formal in favour of the latter.

2.2. THE ICONOCLASTIC POLICY OF CONSTANTINE V

Constantine V worsened the iconoclastic heresy by the attempt to impose an iconoclastic theology sanctioned by an ecumenical council.

Based on 19 questions expressed regarding the icons, some of them being aporias³⁰, the emperor came to accuse the iconodules of crypto-Monophysitism and crypto-Nestorianism. In his view, the icon and the prototype should have an identity of nature, such

²⁴ Gregory the Great. *Epistle XIII to Serenus, Bishop of Massilia*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd Series, Vol. XIII. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997, p. 133

²⁵ St. John of Damascus. *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, III.26, translation and introduction by Andrew Louth. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 2003, p. 102.

²⁶ St. John of Damascus. *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, III.27, p. 104.

²⁷ St. John of Damascus. *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, III.34, p. 107-108.

²⁸ St. John of Damascus. *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, II.19, p. 75.

²⁹ St. Basil the Great. *On The Holy Spirit*, 16, 45, translation by David Anderson. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1980, p. 72.

³⁰ Ioan I. Ică jr. *Canonul Ortodoxiei: Sinodul VII Ecumenic*. [Vol.] 1 *Definind Dogmatic Icoanele (691-810)*, pp. 191-195. These questions will find their due answer only through the works of St. Nicephorus the Confessor and Theodore the Studite, in the time of the second iconoclasm. The latter will clarify the fact that in the icon it is the person/hypostasis who is venerated and not the nature/natures of the one depicted.

as the Son, the natural uncreated icon of God the Father, had with Him. In the opinion of Constantine V, the only icon that fulfilled this requirement was the Eucharist, able to encompass unseparately the two natures of Christ.³¹ Consequently, the icons painted and venerated were inappropriate to these criteria, so they should be considered idols made by human hands, unsanctified because they were not consecrated by a special prayer. Constantin V considered icons being both material, therefore not consubstantial with the risen and spiritualized Christ, as well as devoid of life and in effected.

Taken by this own understanding of the theology of the icon, Constantine V will take all the steps to formalize it in a council with ecumenical claims met in Hieria in 754 AD, but which did not enjoy the presence of representatives of the Pentarchy. Although, formally, they aligned themselves with the decisions of the other six Ecumenical Councils, the assembly of bishops ended up supporting a “new” Christology.³² Their doctrine was based on the theological vision of the semi-Arian Eusebius of Caesarea according to which the resurrected Christ was incommensurable.

2.3. THE END OF THE FIRST ICONOCLASM UNDER LEO IV AND THE FIRST TRIUMPH OF THE ICONS AT THE SECOND COUNCIL OF NICAIA

Without going into details, it must be stated that the iconomach Caesaro-papism established by Leo III and consolidated through a much more subtle and dangerous argumentation by his son Constantine V (741-775), managed to impose itself due to military successes that were interpreted as proof of divine confirmation and support. Despite opposition from the exterior and a few personalities in the monastic world steadfast to the veneration of icons, the Church was dispossessed of the iconographic representations that were mostly banned and destroyed for almost five and a half decades. The few supporters of the icons suffered humiliation, beatings, imprisonment and even martyrdom.

With Leo IV the Khazar, the harsh repressive measures imposed by his father were relaxed, the iconophiles being allowed to return from exile, and some of the monks were accepted for promotion to the episcopate. His death in 780 AD meant that his young son Constantine VI, aged only 9, already associated as co-emperor, succeeded him on the throne under the regency of his mother Irina.

Through Irina, a recognized iconophile, the Church would know for a while the much-desired peace and the restoration of icons through the meeting of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea II in 787 AD. With impeccable diplomacy, having the new patriarch on her side, in the person of Tarasios, former imperial secretary, she would succeed in organizing a council attended by representatives of the five patriarchs. Held between September 24 and October 13, 787 AD, there were seven sessions of communication – the sixth being dedicated to the rejection of the Council of Hieria³³ and the seventh to the formulation of the doctrinal

³¹Promoting through these ideas a Monophysite spiritualistic ideology, Constantine avoids the Chalcedonian attributes regarding the unmixability and immutability of the divine and human natures in Christ.

³² The consequences of the new Christology from Hieria were multiple: Christ's Resurrection annulled or suspended the Incarnation in the Hellenistic sense, contrary to what was expressed by Scripture and the Holy Fathers; Christ was implicitly considered, in the Monophysite sense, as being substantially different from humans, through the deification of His resurrected humanity, uncircumscribable according to his human nature, therefore unrepresentable iconographically; the artificial, material icon was forbidden precisely on the basis of its materiality, in a dualistic, Manichean sense, the only accepted icon being the Eucharist, wrongly understood as different from the Resurrected Christ, although, also, considered to be consubstantial with Him.

³³ The text which rejected of the decision from the Council of Hieria, had been probably composed by Tarasios or a commission under his leadership. Although focused on emphasizing the antiquity of iconography, it nevertheless signaled the slippages of the iconomachs and the lack of relevance of their doctrine. The false

decision. the council represented a first triumph of Orthodoxy over iconoclasm. The main merit was the bold specification of the fact that the icons did not paint the nature/natures of the person represented, but the person, identified by the likeness and the name inscribed on it.³⁴

Finally, it was concluded that icons were profoundly Christian, being a confession of the Incarnation of God. It was also argued, and that the transfigured human nature preserves human qualities and, therefore, Christ and the Saints could be depicted in the icons.

CONCLUSION

From what has been presented so far, regarding the first iconoclasm, we understand that in their writings the iconophiles authors had more of a defensive attitude, without insisting on the mystery of the icon through which God speaks to those who pray with faith. The iconophiles did not argue that the icon was a pretext of seeing God's glory because this idea was not part of the discussion.

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opinion that the true, "living" icon is only that which is substantially identical to its original, i.e. the Eucharist consecrated within the Holy Liturgy, was dismantled, affirming that the Eucharist is not just an icon, but is the very reality of the Body and Blood of Christ.

³⁴ The Council of Nicaea II ratified the definition of the icon, noting that the icon only bears a resemblance to its prototype. It also specified that the icon does not participate neither in the nature of the prototype nor in its properties, but only shares with it the "name" (homonymy), understood as a distinctive element of the person depicted.

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THE DICHOTOMOUS NATURE OF MAN, PREMISE OF HIS PRIESTLY VOCATION

Cosmin Iulian CÎRSTEA,

PhD. Student at Faculty of Orthodox Theology "Justinian the Patriarch",
University of Bucharest,
ROMANIA

Email: cosminiulian93@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The dichotomous nature of man is a prerequisite for his priestly vocation. The fact that man is at the same time a spiritual and material being shows his role as mediator between Creator and creation. His dichotomous constitution is the essential premise of his vocation to the world. He is taken from the general matter of the world, endowed with a living soul, and placed in the world as a leaven to transform it. The world cannot sanctify itself, because this process presupposes communion with the tripersonal God, and it is impersonal. But together with man, it can enter relationship with its Creator. It is man, therefore, who also transmits to it what he becomes through the sanctifying grace. Man is therefore by his very constitution the priest of creation. All that he does as an incarnate soul will also be passed on to the world. By ascending through his special relationship with the Creator to eternal life, he draws along with him the body and the material world to which he is bound, like a train.

Keywords: *soul; body; dichotomic; man; creation.*

INTRODUCTION

According to revelation, man is made up of the body, which belongs to matter, and the soul of God's breath. Man is therefore both a material and a spiritual being, made up not of two elements forcibly put together, but of two realities that form a single whole, without being confused.¹ The body is permeated by the soul and is in ontological unity with it. However, the soul transcends the materiality of the body and is the principle that gives the body the quality of personhood. Neither of the two constitutive elements of man can be understood in isolation from the other. Only together do they make up man, who by his dichotomic constitution is a conscious, free and unique subject.²

1. BODY AND SOUL, CONSTITUENT REALITIES OF MAN

In order to better understand the complexity of the dichotomous human nature, we will first refer in turn to the two constituent realities of man. With regard to the body, in the Old Testament, the main terms used to describe it are *gufa* and *basar*. The basic meaning of the first word is corpse, lifeless body, but it is also sometimes used to denote a living human body (Genesis 47:18). The second word means flesh and refers both to the body of animals

¹ LARS THUNBERG, *Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Open Court Publishing Company, Illinois, 1995, pp. 97–98.

² PR. PROF. DR. DUMITRU STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, Ed. IBM BOR, București, 2010, p. 391.

that man can consume and to the human body with God's breath of life. We should note, however, that the Jews did not conceive of the body, when it was a human body, as separate from the soul. Thus, when the term *basar* referred to a person, it defined man in his entirety, body and soul. When the distinction between the two constitutive elements of man was to be emphasized, the term was contrasted with *ruah* or *nefesh*, words referring to the soul.³

No New Testament understanding departs too far from this perception of the body. Thus, the Greek *sarx* refers not only to flesh, to a body without soul, but in some contexts defines the whole man, body and soul: "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14). It is clear that by incarnation the Son of God took not only the body but the whole human being. So here we see how St John uses the term *sarx* (flesh, body) implying its indissoluble link with the soul. Similarly, *soma*, the word most often used to denote the body, does not speak of a reality totally separate from the soul, even though in New Testament thought the distinction between soul and body becomes clearer than in the Old Testament.⁴

Thus, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the body and the soul are not considered to be two totally opposite realities that are forcibly held together, but are two realities that together make up a whole, the human person. Of course, this does not mean that body and soul are confused. There are numerous passages where Scripture shows a clear distinction between them. Thus, the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (I Cor. 15:50), but the body is called to rise as the Lord (I Cor. 6:14).⁵ The body can hinder the soul in its pursuit of God (Gal. 5:17; II Cor. 5:6), but nevertheless, the soul does both good and evil only in union with the body (II Cor. 5:10).⁶

"New Testament somatics emphasizes that the body also expresses the person. It is not just an object of this world, but fundamentally someone, the manifestation, the language of a person. It is the breath that carries thought, it is the forward movement and rest that structures time and space. It is the one through which I am always ready to act. It is the one through which I offer myself to the gaze of the other. It refers to the whole of human existence. The experience of the *tup* is revealed to us as something that coincides directly with my presence. My body is neither thing nor instrument, but I in the world for others. And this is because it is in a reciprocal relationship with the soul."⁷

The human body is part of the material world, so it has ontological continuity with it. However, its constitution surpasses the material world in the superiority of its reasoning. Father Dumitru Stăniloae maintains that matter is plasticized rationality, but in the human body this plasticized rationality reaches its maximum complexity.⁸ This is because it is brought into existence by a special act of God and is created at the same time as the rational soul that pervades it. In other words, the body is made up in accordance with the spiritual

³ JEAN-CHRISTOPHE ATTIS, ESTHER BENBASSA, *Dicționar de civilizație iudaică (Dictionary of Jewish Civilization)*, (traducere în limba Română), Ed. Univers Enciclopedic, București, 1997, p. 267.

⁴ J. D. DOUGLAS, *Dicționar biblic (Bible Dictionary)*, trad. LIVIU PUP și JOHN TIPEI, Ed. Cartea creștină, Oradea, 1995, p. 1323.

⁵ VLADIMIR LOSSKY, *Introducere în Teologia Ortodoxă (Introduction to Orthodox Theology)*, trad. LIDIA și REMUS RUS, Ed. Enciclopedică, București, 1993, p. 125.

⁶ SFÂNTUL MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua* (PSB 80), trad. PR. PROF. DR. DUMITRU STĂNILOAE, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1983.

⁷ PR. DR. ION STOICA, *Adevărul, lumea și omul (Truth, the world and man)*, Ed. ASA, București, 2006, p. 62.

⁸ PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, pp. 392–393.

reality of the soul; it does not merely remain in the materiality of this world, but is capable of spiritual life and not merely of biological survival.⁹

The human body is superior to the matter of the world and by, or especially by, the vocation it has in relation to the world. It is the exponent of all materiality and its synthesis. Through it, or rather, through the quality of subject that is given to it by its union with the soul, it represents the substrate endowed with consciousness and free reactions capable of giving voice to all creation and placing it in dialogue with the Creator.¹⁰ In union with the soul, it is called upon to spiritualize and empower all matter.¹¹ It follows from all this that the body is not just matter or just plasticized rationality as an object. It is subjectivized matter, which participates in spirit as subject. Subject and object at the same time, it is a participant in my act of feeling and thinking of all objects, but it is also an object that can be thought and felt.¹² The human body is a mystery that transcends our limited understanding and we must give it due respect. It is not the product of us, of our parents or of nature. He must be taken beyond the lower drives that conform to fallen nature. Otherwise, we may fall ourselves from the state of fully conscious and free subject to the state of subservience to nature. The destiny of the body is that by the work of the soul inserted in it, it may be transfigured¹³ and to involve the whole of nature in this movement beyond nature. Only in this way can the human body acquire the qualities of Christ's body after the resurrection, a body with which it tasted food but also entered through locked doors.¹⁴ As for the soul, it is the spiritual, living and immortal substance that pervades the body and together with it forms the human subject. It is therefore not an impersonal substance, but is a self-conscious entity, but it does not exist as pure spirit, but in an indissoluble connection with the body.¹⁵

So, the soul is not to be confused with the life-force, which is merely its power, and he its personal support.¹⁶ Life is the fundamental note of the soul, representing the very principle that initiates biological movement, but this does not mean that the soul is merely the principle that animates the human person. It is also the source of spiritual and rational movement. Its existence or non-existence means the existence or non-existence of life and of man's intellectual and spiritual functions and faculties; through it, man has the capacity to understand, to feel and to enter a relationship with God and the world.¹⁷

⁹ Pr. Prof. Dr. D. STANILOAE, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu (God's Immortal Image)*, *Opere complete V*, Basilica, București, 2013, pp. 483–484.

¹⁰ PR. PROF. DR. D. STANILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, pp. 392–393.

¹¹ SFÂNTUL MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua*, Io., 7, PG 91, 1073D-1076A, 1076C, 1088C, 1113B, 1137BC [trad. rom. SFÂNTUL MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua*, Io., 7, PSB 80, trad. PR. PROF. DR. D. STANILOAE, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1983 p. 74, 77-78, 90, 111, 136-137].

¹² PR. PROF. DR. D. STANILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, pp. 383–384.

¹³ POLYCARP SHERWOOD, *St. Maximus the confessor: The ascetic life. The four centuries on charity*, Longmans, Green and Co, Londra, 1955, p. 48.

¹⁴ PR. PROF. DR. D. STANILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, p. 385.

¹⁵ PR. PROF. DR. ISIDOR TODORAN, ARHID. PROF. DR. IOAN ZĂGREAN, *Teologia Dogmatică (Dogmatic Theology)*, *Renașterea*, București, 2009, pp. 132–133.

¹⁶ PR. PROF. DR. ION BRIA, *Dicționar de Teologie Ortodoxă (Dictionary of Orthodox Theology)*, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1994, p. 368.

¹⁷ OLIVER CLEMENT, *Întrebări asupra omului (Questions on man)*, trad. IOSIF POP și PR. CIPRIAN SPON, Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 1997, p. 95.

In Old Testament Hebrew, the most commonly used word for soul is *nefesh*¹⁸, and its meaning in most cases is that of life or breath of life (Is. 57:16), so that it is also used of animals (Acts 1:20, 24, 30; 9:12, 15-16; Ezek. 47:9). At other times, it is identified with blood, the essence of physical existence (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10-14; Deut. 12, 22-24. In the book of Psalms, it is frequently used to denote the principle of life, but it is not limited to this sense alone.¹⁹ The word *nefesh* did not refer only to the biological life principle, even though in the Hebrew tradition there was no clear distinction between the soul as a spiritual principle and the life force.²⁰ Sometimes it is: the source of emotions (Job 30:25; Isa. 1:14), the seat of conscience, moral action or will (Acts 49:6; Deut. 4:29; Job 7:15; Ps. 24:4; 25:1; 119, 129, 167) or the seat of desires (Num. 21:15; Deut. 12:15; Job 33:20). At other times it designates a person (Ezek. 18:4) or even a dead body (Lev. 19:28; Num. 6:6), showing us the connection that exists even after death between the body and the soul that leaves it at the moment of death (Acts 35:18). There are also other terms such as *ruah*, which means spirit, and *leb*, which translates as heart. All these terms were used interchangeably.²¹

In the specific Greek of the New Testament the corresponding term for *nefesh* is *psihi* (breath of life) and refers primarily to biological life (Mt. 10:39; Mk. 8:35; Lk. 17:33; John. 12:25). The other term used is *pnevma*²² and is broadly similar to *ruah*. Both terms define the same reality, the soul, except that in some cases the former refers to the breath of life specific to both humans and animals, and the latter refers to the spiritual function of the soul.²³ This different naming of certain faculties of the soul has led some to become advocates of a trihomist conception of man. The best-known scriptural texts which are often brought as arguments in support of this view are found in the writings of St. Paul. In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he says: "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you perfectly, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thess. 5:23) In the Epistle to the Hebrews, too, the same apostle states, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is able to judge the feelings and thoughts of the heart (...)" (Heb. 4:12). According to these verses, soul and spirit would designate two different realities, one referring to the biological life principle and the other to the generative element of spiritual movement. If we accept this reasoning as correct, we should see man, not only as a creature that unites three elements in itself, but as composed of four different principles, because we find in the last verse references not only to soul and spirit, but also to "the division...between the joints and the marrow". Thus these two elements of the body, the joints and the marrow, should logically have two different natures, which is absurd.²⁴ We saw earlier that in Holy Scripture the concepts of soul and spirit are used in place of each other, defining the same reality of human nature, and sometimes soul and spirit indicate two different aspects of the same element: on the one hand, the soul is shown as the principle of bodily life, and on the other hand, when speaking of spirit, aspects of the spiritual life are indicated. Thus, the same

¹⁸ LECT. UNIV. DR. LAURENȚIU IONESCU, *Dicționar de limbă ebraică biblică (Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew)*, Editura Societății Biblice Interconfesionale din România, București, 2006, p. 209.

¹⁹ J. D. DOUGLAS, *Dicționar biblic (Bible Dictionary)*, p. 1244.

²⁰ J.-C. ATTIS, E. BENBASSA, *Dicționar de civilizație iudaică (Dictionary of Jewish Civilization)...*, p. 267.

²¹ J. D. DOUGLAS, *Dicționar biblic (Bible Dictionary)*, p. 1244.

²² MAURICE CARREZ, FRANÇOIS MOREL, *Dicționar grec-român al Noului Testament (Greek-Roman Dictionary of the New Testament)*, p. 234.

²³ J. D. DOUGLAS, *Dicționar biblic (Bible Dictionary)*, p. 1244.

²⁴ O. CLEMENT, *Întrebări asupra omului (Questions about the man)*, p. 89.

spiritual substance is called soul, when it relates to the bodily, performing the functions of animating the body, and spirit, when it performs functions in the spiritual sphere.²⁵

The dichotomous constitution of the human being also follows from the moral implications that other places in Scripture attribute to the soul and spirit. Thus, man who clings to earthly things cannot rise to a deep, spiritual life, remaining a psychic, natural or bodily man. Of this type of people, Saint Jude, the relative of the Lord, writes: "In the last time they will be scoffers, walking according to their ungodly lusts. These are the divisive, natural (people), who do not have the Spirit." (Jude 1:18-19). So, these people who live according to the fallen nature cannot be called spiritual people, because they have not made room for the Holy Spirit in their heart, or rather, they are external to themselves and do not feel God who is in their heart.²⁶

2. THE INDISSOLUBLE LINK BETWEEN SOUL AND BODY

Having clarified the dichotomous nature of man, we need to look more closely at the indissoluble link between soul and body. As we have mentioned, these two realities are not dispersed elements that are forcibly put together but are made for each other. In other words, they exist only in tandem. Even death does not definitively break their bond, they remain united for eternity, for the body will be resurrected and spiritualized and will be adequate to the eschatological needs of the soul, as Holy Scripture testifies. (I Cor. 15:20-44; Phil. 3:21).²⁷

The insertion of the soul into the body is such an intimate fact that it is impossible for the human spiritual factor to be conceived for a moment as a pure spirit, but must be understood from the beginning as an incarnate soul, or as an embodied body. Thus, the soul is within the body, but the body is also within the soul.²⁸ The latter permeates the body so intimately that it forms a homogeneous composition with it, just as fire enters the being of iron and makes it incandescent.²⁹

The union between soul and body is a very deep one. It goes far beyond a simple superimposition of two principles, one material and the other spiritual. The two interdependent elements not only exist together, but they share both vital power and other faculties, such as the ability to perceive both the material world, thanks to the senses, and the spiritual world, thanks to the capacities of the soul. If in man it were merely a question of a non-homogeneous interweaving of the two realities, the soul would not be able to share fully in the sensitivities and passions of the body, and the latter would remain incapable of spiritualization.³⁰

²⁵ IEROTHEOS VLACHOS, *Dogmatica empirică a Bisericii Ortodoxe Sobornicești (Empirical Dogmatics of the Sovereign Orthodox Church)*, vol. II, trad. TATIANA PETRACHE, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2014, p. 191.

²⁶ PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, pp. 394–395.

²⁷ JEAN-CLAUDE LARCHET, *Îndumnezeirea omului la Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul (The deification of man to Saint Maximus the confessor)*, trad. MARINELA BOJIN, Ed. Basilica, București, 2019, p. 719.

²⁸ PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, p. 382.

²⁹ PR. PROF. DR. ȘTEFAN BUCHIU, *Dogmă și Teologie. Curs de teologie dogmatică și simbolică ortodoxă (Dogma and Theology. Course on Orthodox dogmatic and symbolic theology)*, vol. I, Sigma, București, 2006, pp. 250–251.

³⁰ PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, p. 399; E. STEPHANOU, „La coexistence initiale du corps et de l'âme dans l'homme d'après saint Grégoire de Nysse et saint Maxime l'Homologète”, *Revue des études byzantines* 31, 167 (1932), Persée-Portail des revues scientifiques en SHS, pp. 307–309.

The union between soul and body is a very deep one. It goes far beyond a simple superimposition of two principles, one material and the other spiritual. The two interdependent elements not only exist together, but they share both vital power and other faculties, such as the ability to perceive both the material world, thanks to the senses, and the spiritual world, thanks to the capacities of the soul. If in man it were only a question of an inhomogeneous joining of the two realities, the soul could not fully share the sensitivities and passions of the body, and the latter would remain incapable of spiritualization.³¹

If things were different, and one of the two realities were pre-existing the other, then the work and their unitary existence would be affected. The body would no longer fully share in the subject quality of the soul, remaining only a shell of it, or rather a prison, as the Platonists claim. At the same time, the soul would no longer be able to be in such a strong connection with the material world and would not be able to influence it to the extent it does now.³² At the same time, if the soul were not present in the body from the very first act of its formation, the body could not develop in accordance with the spiritual needs and movements of the soul and could not have the complexity appropriate to the soul. The fact that the biblical account of creation states that God made man from the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7) does not suggest a temporal primacy of the soul³³, but the fact that God relates directly to man, "breathes into his face the breath of life" and makes him a living being, not only biologically but also spiritually; he calls him to dialogue and shows his dignity as the "alter ego" of the Creator. In this way, man is not only the bearer of a body that represents the most complex plasticized rationality of the world, but he is a conscious bearer of it.³⁴

Therefore, man is subject to a whole, body and soul, showed to us by the moment of his creation.³⁵ God breaks the thread of bringing into being by uttering the words "let there be" and in the case of man, works directly. Man is created by a work that is more like a dialogue than an action on an object. God takes the body from the general matter and breathes into it a living soul.

3. THE DICHOTOMOUS NATURE OF MAN, PREMISE OF HIS PRIESTLY VOCATION

In connection with the dichotomous nature of man, one might ask: why did it take an unmediated work of the Creator to bring Adam out of the dust? Why didn't he say "you" to some animal and make him a representative of creation? Clearly, it needed someone who had more than fellowship with nature, someone who also had an element superior to matter, such as the soul. But then, why did he not give this soul to an already existing body, which would thereby become man, but needed to bring man into existence, as a dichotomous being? This act of God shows us that the soul cannot be superadded to a previously existing body, because in that case the body would not share from the beginning the character of subject, and this would have repercussions on man's entire existence and his organic

³¹ SFÂNTUL MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua*, Io., 42, PG 91, 1341D [trad. rom. SFÂNTUL MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua*, Io., 42, p. 291].

³² PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, p. 395.

³³ Pr.Prof.Dr. Ș. BUCHIU, *Dogmă și Teologie... (Dogma and Theology...)*, vol. I, pp. 249–250.

³⁴ SFÂNTUL MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua*, PG 91, 1324 [trad. rom. SFÂNTUL MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua*, pp. 276-278]. PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, p. 396.

³⁵ L. THUNBERG, *Microcosm and Mediator...*, pp. 100–101.

relationship with nature, keeping the soul in the body as in a kind of dungeon and before the world as before a foreign existence which cannot enrich it and which it cannot transfigure.³⁶

Through the unmediated work and breath of the Creator, there emerges from the general matter a "you", which can in turn say You to God, for this you can also say I as a subject fully aware of its existence. The spiritual breath of the Creator produces a spiritual breath of the human being, namely the spiritual soul which is rooted in man. By virtue of this, he will be able to be in conscious dialogue with his fellow men and with God.³⁷ So the direct work that God has done to bring man into existence is of crucial importance. It shows the authentic connection that the Supreme Person wants to achieve with the person through participation, who is man. God does not relate to man as one with whom he can have a possessive relationship, but as a *you* with whom he can look him in the eye and with whom he can have a living relationship.³⁸ The direct bringing into existence of man also shows that he has a special position, not only in relation to God, but also within creation. The world cannot by itself be a subject and cannot enter a dialogue with God alone; that is why man is needed to represent its consciousness and its spirit.³⁹ Only in this way does the world become together subject with man and can enter through man into dialogue with God. The direct bringing into existence of man also shows that he has a special position, not only in relation to God, but also within creation. The world cannot by itself be a subject and cannot enter a dialogue with God alone; that is why man is needed to represent its consciousness and its spirit. Only in this way does the world become together subject with man and can enter through man into dialogue with God.

The soul-body unity that makes up the human person is the conscious factor embedded in creation. By means of the body, the human person is inserted into the general nature, taking it out of the monotony of its cyclical processes and channeling it towards a specific meaning. But this is only because the body is animated and not merely matter. If it were not so, it would be impossible for it to actualize nature in a spiritual direction and lead it towards overcoming its automatism. At the same time, it is not merely spirit either, for then it could not act upon the world. The spiritual growth of the soul could not be transmitted to the world. This is why the Orthodox tradition has also preferred the notion of soul to that of spirit, since the soul is bound to the body in the strongest way, whereas the spirit can also exist outside the body, the body being only an alien reality.⁴⁰ So, the fact that man is both a spiritual and material being shows his role as mediator between Creator and creation. His dichotomous constitution is the essential premise of his vocation to the world. He is taken from the general matter of the world, endowed with a living soul, and placed in the world as a leaven to transform it. The world cannot be deified on its own, since this process presupposes communion with the tripersonal God, but together with man it can enter a relationship with its Creator. It is therefore man who transmits to it what he becomes by sharing in the ennobling grace. Man is therefore by his very constitution the priest of creation. All that he does as an incarnate soul will also have an effect on the world. By

³⁶ PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILĂE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, p. 395.

³⁷ PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILĂE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, pp. 409–410.

³⁸ MARTIN BUBER, *EU și TU (ME and YOU)*, trad. ȘTEFAN AUGUSTIN DOINAȘ, Ed. Humanitas, București, 1992, p. 15.

³⁹ DIAC. DANIEL GLIGORE, *Sacerdotiul omului. Omul preot al creației (Priesthood of man. Man the priest of creation)*, Ed. Dacpress, Curtea de Argeș, 2004, p. 6

⁴⁰ Pr.Prof.Dr.D. STĂNILĂE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, p. 399; E. STEPHANOU, „La coexistence initiale du corps et de l'âme...”, pp. 304–309.

ascending through his special relationship with the Creator to eternal life, he also drags along with him the body and the material world to which he is bound, like a train.⁴¹

In conclusion, we can say that without a lively subject inserted in it, the world would be condemned to the monotony of repeating narrower or wider cycles. Only the freedom of a conscious spirit overcomes repetition, making even creation cross the boundary of the natural and rise above the natural. This influence that man has over the world is due to the fact that his body is ontologically linked to its plasticized rationality, having been put into by God, like a dough that "leavened all the kneading".

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⁴¹ PR. PROF. DR. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. I, pp. 380–381.

Annexes
**THE CANONICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN
ORTHODOX ICONOGRAPHY**

Rev. Prof. PhD. Cristian GAGU,
Fig. 1. Trinity sarcophagus, Arles, IVth century



Fig. 2. Dogmatic sarcophague, Vatican, IVth century



Fig. 3. Via Latina catacomb, Rome, IVth century



Fig. 4. Santa Maria Maggiore church, Rome, Vth century



Fig. 5. Palatine chapel, Palermo, 1130.

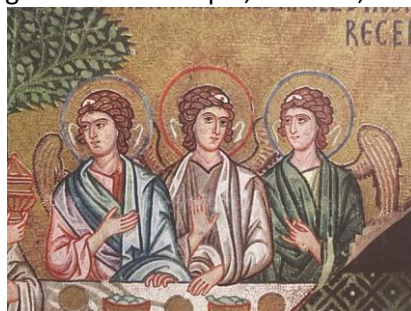


Fig. 6. The Cathedral of Monreale, Sicily, XIIth century.

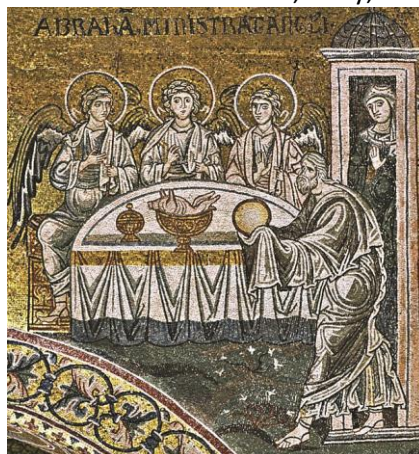


Fig. 7. Saint Mark's Basilica, Venice, XIIIth century.



Fig. 8. Çarikli (Sandal) Church, Göreme, Capadocia, IXth century



Fig. 9. Holy Trinity, Andrei Rubliov, cca. 1425, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Fig. 10. Paternitas, School of Novgorod, XIVth century.



Fig. 11. Synthronoi, Heisterbach bible, 1240, Berlin state library.

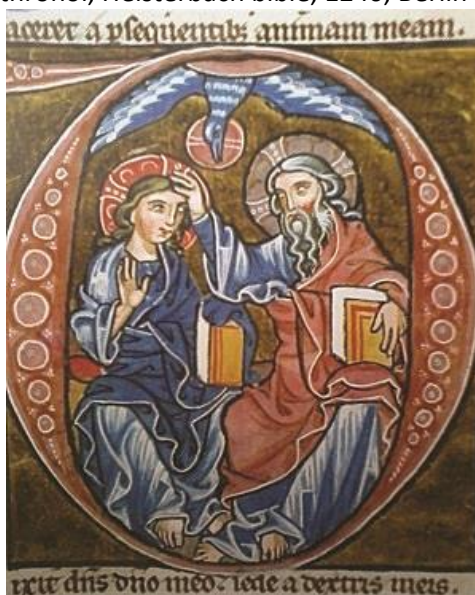


Fig. 12. Gnadestuhl, The National Gallery, London.



Fig. 13. Tricefalous Trinity, Santa Maria Assunta cathedral, Abruzzes, 1430.



Fig. 14. Trifrons Trinity, Provins, France, XVth century.

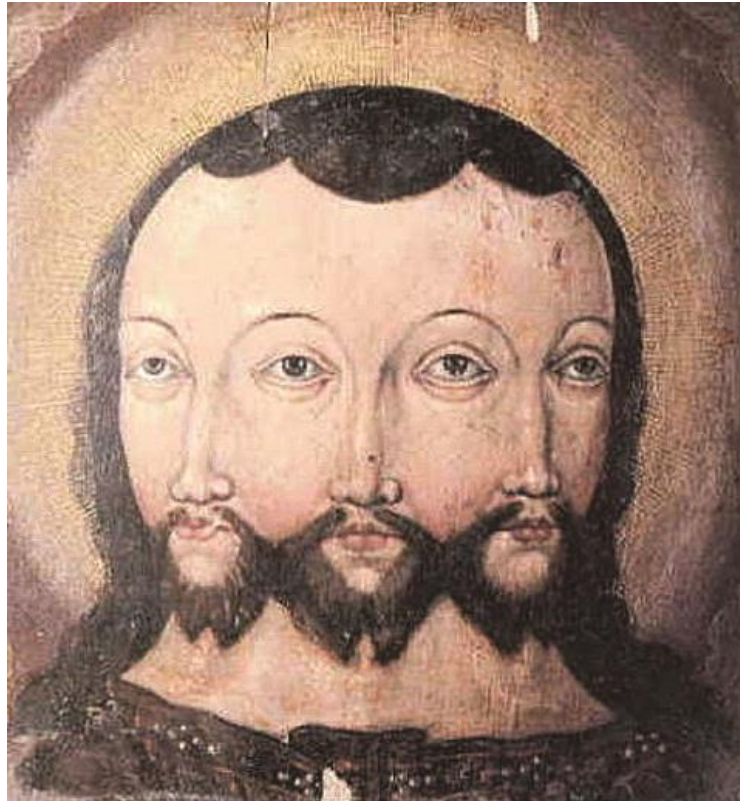


Fig. 15. Utrechts Psalter, page 1351, IXth century

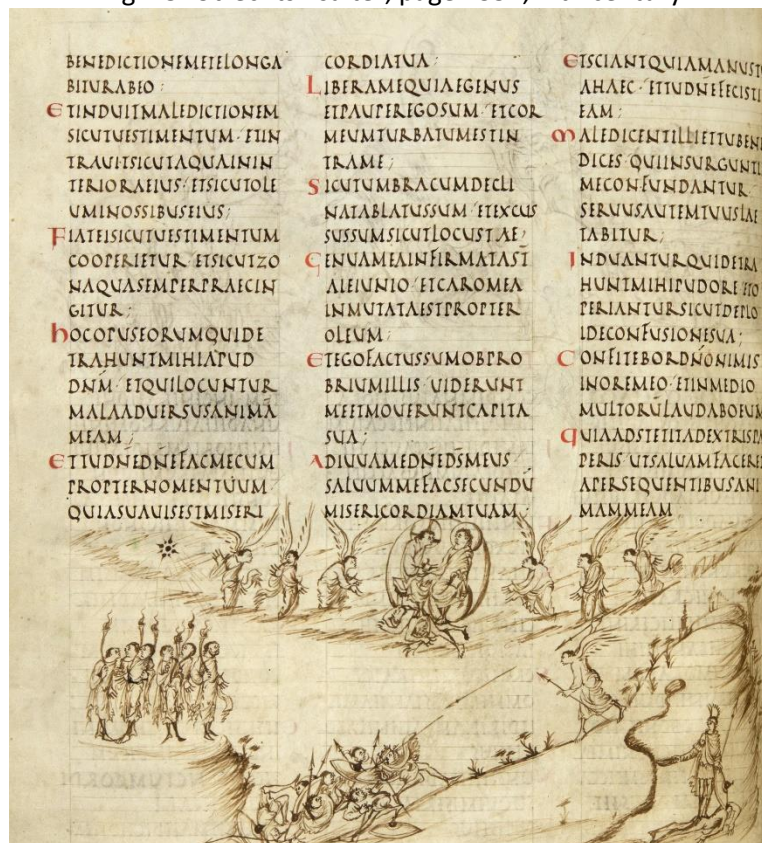


Fig. 16. Triandric Trinity, Hortus deliciarum, fol. 8r, 1167-1185.



Fig. 17. James Kokkinobaphos, Gabriel is sent from heaven, Vat. gr. 1162, XIth century, Pallasweb.com



Fig. 18. Kollektar of Zwiefalten, Stuttgart, Cod. brev. 128, fol. 49v, 1131

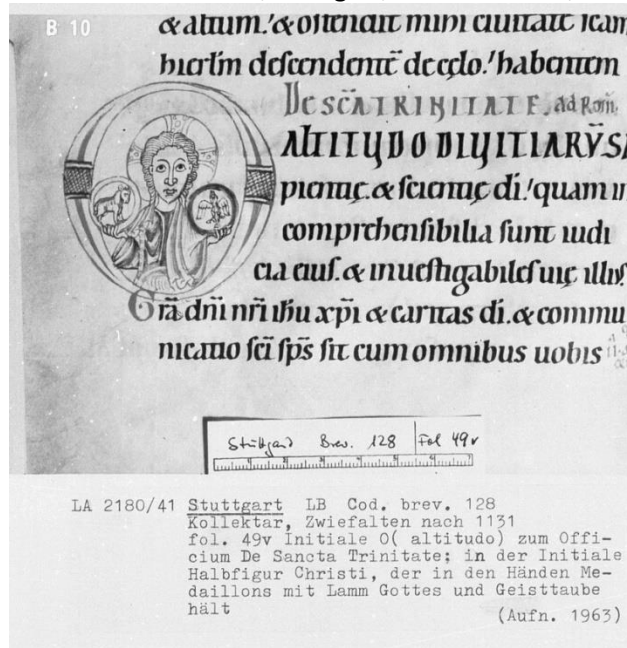


Fig. 19. Dionysiou Lectionary Codex 587, fol. 3v, Athos, sec. XI.



Fig. 20. Missel de Cambrai, France, 1120.



Fig. 21. Trifrons, Santa Maria d' Alcazar, sec. XII



Fig. 22. Abraham`s hospitality, miniature, bible, Cambridge, st. John`s College, ms. K 26, fol. 9v, 1270.



Fig. 23. Vultus trifrons or an allegory of prudence

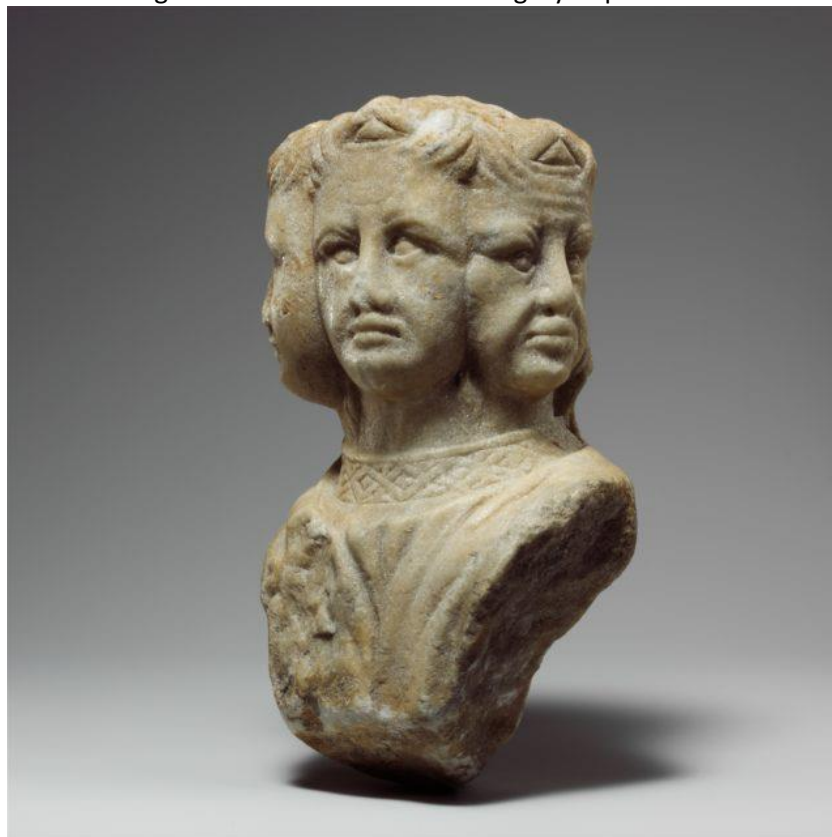
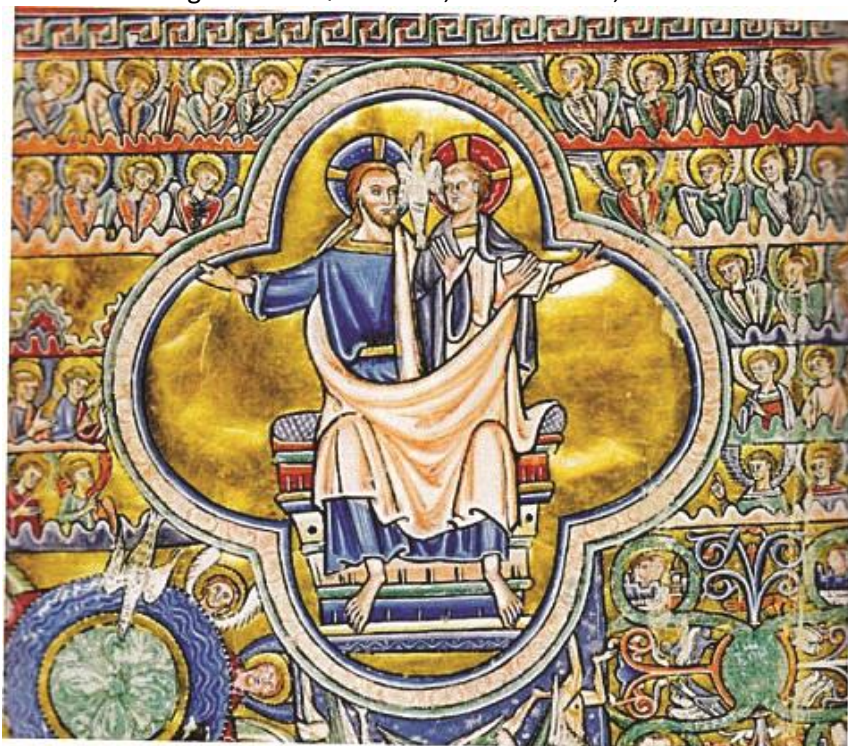


Fig. 24. The Quadrilobe, Lothian Bible, 1220.



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